



The Lord of the Rings: Book Two

TEA WITH TOLKIEN BOOK CLUB NOTES

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The Lord of the Rings: Book II Summary

Book Two of *The Lord of the Rings* begins as Frodo awakens in the Last Homely House of Elrond. He has been healed of the Morgul blade, and is reunited with Gandalf, Samwise, Merry, and Pippin. As soon as he recovers, a great council is called—The Council of Elrond. There, the history of the Ring is discussed at length and its fate is decided: the Ring must be carried to Mount Doom and destroyed. Frodo stands before the council and says, "I will take the Ring... though I do not know the way."

The Fellowship of the Ring is chosen to accompany Frodo on his Quest. Its members are chosen to represent all of the peoples of Middle-Earth: Frodo, Sam, Gandalf, Legolas, Gimli, Aragorn, Boromir, Pippin, and Merry. The Fellowship sets out traveling south, attempting to pass through Caradhras. However, they are unable to travel through the deep snow, so they return down the mountain and instead make for the Mines of Moria.

As they travel through the darkness of Moria, they are attacked by orcs and cave-trolls and pursued by a Balrog. Gandalf uses all of his skill and power to fight against the Balrog, ultimately sacrificing his own life to allow the remainder of the company to escape across the Bridge of Khazad-dûm.

Overwhelmed with grief but urged on by Aragorn, the company comes to the woods of Lothlórien. There, they are welcomed by Galadriel and Celeborn, who offer them refuge and aid. Galadriel brings Frodo and Sam to her Mirror, which offers them glimpses of "things that were, and things that are, and things that yet may be." Greatly troubled, Frodo offers to give the Ring to Galadriel, but she refuses.

As the company prepares to depart, they are each given gifts of special significance from Galadriel, as well as boats, Lembas, cloaks, and rope. They travel by boat down the Great River, unsure if they will turn towards Minas Tirith or Mount Doom when the time comes.

When the time to decide their course finally arrives, the burden of choice is laid upon Frodo. He asks for an hour alone to decide and wanders into the woods. He is followed by Boromir, who first attempts to persuade Frodo to come with him to Minas Tirith but then tries to take the Ring for himself by force. Terrified, Frodo puts on the Ring and disappears. Frodo decides he will go to Mordor alone, though Sam realizes his plan and hurries to his side. Together, they leave the rest of the Fellowship behind and begin on toward the Land of Shadow.

Book Two Resources

Book Two Resources:

- [Interactive Online Map: LOTR Project](#)
- [The Atlas of Middle-earth by Karen Wynn Fonstad](#)
- [Large File Size Map of Middle-earth](#)
- [Tolkien Gateway entry, The Council of Elrond](#)
- [Reddit Post: Council of Elrond: why no rep from Lothlórien?](#)



Ch. I: Many Meetings

Frodo awakens to find himself in the home of Elrond, where he is overjoyed to see Gandalf sitting before him. As they talk, Gandalf recounts what happened at the Ford and on their journeys beforehand. He assures Frodo he is safe for now, dwelling in the Last Homely House east of the Sea. Frodo learns that although the Black Riders have not been defeated, they have been driven away by the flood.

"Frodo was now safe in the Last Homely House east of the Sea. That house was perfect, as Bilbo had long ago reported, 'a perfect house, whether you like food or sleep or story-telling or singing, or just sitting and thinking best, or a pleasant mixture of them all.' Merely to be there was a cure for weariness, fear, and sadness."

After a rest, Sam comes to Frodo and brings him to see the others. Together, they come into the hall of Elrond's house where a great feast has been prepared and they are met by many unfamiliar guests. Frodo is seated beside Glóin, one of the dwarves which accompanied Bilbo on his great adventure.

As the feast comes to a close, the guests follow Elrond and Arwen into the Hall of Fire, where they gather to talk. In the hall, Frodo is surprised and overjoyed to see Bilbo resting beside the fire. Bilbo tells Frodo that he shall not travel again, but instead intends to spend the rest of his days in Rivendell.

Bilbo asks to see the Ring, but when Frodo draws it out, a shadow comes between them and Bilbo seems to appear as a "little wrinkled creature with a hungry face and bony groping hands." Horrified, Frodo puts the Ring away.

Strider joins them and after a while, Frodo sinks into a deep sleep. As he dreams, he hears Bilbo singing a great long song and awakes to find he had been singing for everyone. Afterward, Frodo and Bilbo sit talking of their adventures late into the night.



Ch. 2: The Council of Elrond

Council of Elrond Attendees (source: Tolkien Gateway):

- **Elrond**. As convener of the council and de facto ruler of Rivendell, Elrond headed the Council.
- **Gandalf**, one of the Wizards, was one of the Wise.
- **Frodo Baggins**, the Ring-bearer, came to Rivendell on the advice of Gandalf.
- **Bilbo Baggins**, a former Ring-bearer, and the "Ring-finder".
- **Glorfindel**, a Noldo of Rivendell who had aided Frodo earlier on his travel to Rivendell.
- **Erestor**, and several unnamed advisers of Elrond's household.
- **Aragorn**, a Ranger, Chieftain of the Dúnedain and Heir of Isildur, who had been Frodo's travel companion, guide and aide since Bree.
- **Boromir**, son of the Steward of Gondor. His brother Faramir had a prophetic dream thrice, and he himself once. It spoke of "the Sword that was broken", "Imladris", "Isildur's Bane" and a "Halfling". In order to find the meaning of the dream, Boromir went to "Imladris" - Rivendell.
- **Glóin** and his son Gimli were sent by Dáin II Ironfoot to warn Bilbo about a messenger from Mordor who appeared at the gate of Erebor, and asked for information of the One Ring. As king Brand of Dale was also encountered, Dáin decided to send messengers to Rivendell. They also came to seek news of what happened to Balin's Colony, which entered Moria thirty years before.
- **Legolas**, was sent by his father Thranduil with ill news. Gollum, put in the custody of the Elves of Mirkwood by Aragorn, managed to escape after a surprise attack of Orcs.
- **Galdor of the Havens**, a messenger of Círdan who just happened to be present at the time. His role in the Council was no larger than asking a couple of questions.



Ch. 2: The Council of Elrond (summary)

In the morning Frodo is met by Gandalf and Bilbo, who walk alongside him to the Council of Elrond. There, Elrond draws Frodo a seat beside him and introduces him to the others present, saying, "Here, my friends, is the hobbit, Frodo son of Drogo. Few have ever come hither through greater peril or on an errand more urgent." Elrond introduces Frodo to Gimli, Galdor, Legolas, and Boromir.

Speaking first, Glóin tells of a disquiet that has fallen upon the dwarves; rumors have grown of a "nameless fear" that dwells in Moria. He explains that about a year ago a messenger came from Mordor, claiming Sauron the Great wished for friendship and information about hobbits. The messenger asked that the dwarves find this hobbit that they had once known and retrieve from him a ring that he had stolen. The dwarves have left this request unanswered as it greatly troubled their hearts, prompting Glóin and Gimli to seek the wisdom of Rivendell.

Elrond reveals they have all been called together to determine what to do with this Ring, "the trifle that Sauron fancies." He recounts the history of the Ring from its very beginning. He tells of Sauron, the creation of the Ring, the Last Alliance of Elves and Men as they stood against Mordor, Isildur's victory against Sauron and his claiming of the Ring, and of Isildur's death. Elrond explains that Mordor is weakened but not defeated, and Sauron is growing in power now.

At this, Boromir stands and begins to speak of the struggles of Gondor against the forces of Mordor. He then tells the members of the Council that he has come to Rivendell seeking wisdom, not allies in war; he is troubled by a dream both he and his brother have had. In it, the eastern sky grew dark but in the West a pale light lingered and from it he heard a voice speaking of a sword that was broken, of Isildur's Bane, and of a halfling.

Aragorn stands up, showing Boromir the Sword that was Broken; at this, Elrond reveals that Aragorn is the heir of Isildur. Gandalf solemnly asks Frodo to bring out the Ring, which Elrond calls Isildur's Bane. Boromir gazes at the Ring, filled with doubt at what he hears. At this, Bilbo recites the poem he had written about Aragorn, "All that is gold does not glitter, not all those who wander are lost..." Afterward, Bilbo tells the story of how he found the Ring and how it passed to Frodo. Then, Frodo tells of the part he has played so far in the tale of the Ring.



Ch. 2: The Council of Elrond (continued)

After this, Galdor questions why Saruman is not present at their Council. Gandalf begins to speak of Saruman's betrayal, explaining that Saruman had counseled him against seeking out the Ring, lulling him with his perceived wisdom. Gandalf then says he desired to know about how the Ring came to Gollum so he had asked Aragorn and the other Rangers to search for him. After this, Gandalf went to Gondor to read the records of ancient days, where he found the writings of Isildur as he described the Ring.

Aragorn tells of how he captured and brought him to Mirkwood, where Gandalf met them and spent much time speaking with Gollum. He learned the Ring had allowed him to live for many life- times, a power only the Great Rings held. He also learned from Gollum that the Enemy knows that the Ring had been found, that it was in the Shire, and they will soon know that it is in Rivendell. After hearing this, Legolas is greatly distressed to share that Gollum has escaped from Mirkwood.

Gandalf then returns to the question of Saruman. He explains that as he was traveling near Bree, he was met by Radagast the Brown who brought him news from Saruman, that the Nazgul are abroad and asking for news of The Shire. At this, Gandalf goes to Saruman immediately.

However, when he arrived at Orthanc, he found Saruman changed. He now called himself Saruman Ring-maker, Saruman of Many Colors. " 'White!' he sneered. 'It serves as a beginning. White cloth may be dyed. The white page can be overwritten; and the white light can be broken.' 'In which case it is no longer white,' said I. 'And he that breaks a thing to find out what it is has left the path of wisdom.' " Saruman tells Gandalf the time of the Elves is over, the time when they must rule over Men is at hand; a new Power is rising that they must join with. Gandalf explains that Saruman believes he can take the Ring for himself and wield its power, which is folly.

"This then is one choice before you, before us. We may join with that Power. It would be wise, Gandalf. There is hope that way. Its victory is at hand; and there will be rich reward for those that aided it. As the Power grows, its proved friends will also grow; and the Wise, such as you and I, may with patience come at last to direct its course, to control it. We can bide our time, we can keep our thoughts in our hearts, deploring maybe evils done by the way, but approving the high and ultimate purpose: Knowledge, Rule, Order; all the things that we have so far striven in vain to accomplish, hindered rather than helped by our weak or idle friends. There need not be, there would not be, any real change in our designs, only in our means."



Ch. 2: The Council of Elrond (continued)

After refusing to join with Saruman, Gandalf was held prisoner on the pinnacle of Orthanc. But an eagle had been sent from Mirkwood to bring news to Gandalf, and so he was found and carried away from Orthanc by Gwaihir the Windlord. He carried Gandalf to Rohan, where he then took a horse and rode to Hobbiton to find Frodo already gone. After being unable to find Frodo, Gandalf came to Rivendell, arriving only three days before him.

It is suggested that the Ring be brought to Tom Bombadil, but they come to the conclusion that he would not be a good caretaker of the Ring, despite his ability to resist its power. Others suggest casting it into the sea to be lost, but Gandalf urges them to seek an end to the Ring forever.

At last, the Council comes to understand that the Ring must be destroyed. It can only be destroyed in the fires of Mount Doom where it was made, and so it must be taken there to be unmade. Despite this counsel, Boromir still wishes to use the Ring against the Enemy, but Elrond reminds him that only Sauron can truly wield it. He says, "It is altogether evil."

While Sauron is wise, he has assumed that anyone who held the Ring would seek to use it; Gandalf explains, "Into his heart the thought will not enter that any will refuse it, that having the Ring we may seek to destroy it. If we seek this, we shall put him out of reckoning." At this, Bilbo assumes it will become his responsibility to take the Ring to Mordor, but Gandalf tells him that he won't need to carry it any longer. With great effort, Frodo stands to speak, "I will take the Ring... though I do not know the way." Elrond agrees that Frodo should be the one to carry it, although he will not have to go alone.

"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



Ch. 3: The Ring Goes South

After the Great Council, Elrond sends scouts to survey the lands before the company will depart. Frodo and his companions spend two months growing in renewed strength as they await the beginning of their journey. When the scouts return, they report that no signs of the Black Riders or Gollum have been seen.

At last, Elrond chooses to send nine companions to match the nine Riders, calling them The Fellowship of the Ring. Its members are chosen to represent all of the peoples of Middle- Earth: Frodo, Sam, Gandalf, Legolas, Gimli, Aragorn, Boromir, Pippin, and Merry. Elrond originally hoped to send Merry and Pippin back to the Shire, but Gandalf (to everyone's surprise) sides with the hobbits and suggests that they should be included in the Fellowship.

On their last morning in Rivendell, Bilbo gives Frodo his sword, Sting, as well as his Mithril coat. As they depart, Elrond reminds the companions that only Frodo is bound to the Ring and the others have taken no oath or pledge to go farther than they will.

They journey through bitter cold and wind, traveling south alongside the mountains, until they come to the borders of Hollin. From there, they plan to journey toward the pass called the Redhorn gate, under the far side of Caradhras. Gandalf and Aragorn seem to be in debate about their path concerning Minas Tirith and the Gap of Rohan, but they decide to face the weather in the high pass of the mountains.

After struggling through the deep snow, they are at last defeated by the mountain and agree to turn around. Boromir and Aragorn go ahead to wade a path through the snow, while Legolas weightlessly walks across the top of the snow to scout ahead. After they have all come down, the path behind them is covered in fallen stones and snow. At this, the mountain seems satisfied to have defeated them.



Ch. 4: A Journey in the Dark

Defeated by the mountain, Gandalf suggests the Fellowship should journey through the Mines of Moria. They soon realize they are being pursued by wolves, so they hurry toward the entrance into Moria, despite dreading the idea of it.

As the Fellowship comes to the West-door of Moria, Gandalf explains that they stand at the passageway which was made chiefly for the Elves in their business with the Dwarves of Moria. "Those were happier days, when there was still close friendship at times between the folk of difference race, even between Dwarves and Elves," he says. The dwarvish doors are marked with the phrase, Speak friend and enter, and open when the elvish word for friend is spoken. However, the ancient friendship between the two races has long been broken, and both the road and Moria lie abandoned. Gandalf guesses that the doors are governed by words, and he speaks many Elvish phrases to the door but the stones do not budge. At last, Gandalf springs to his feet and cries, "Mellon," the Elvish word for friend, which opens the doors.

As they step across the threshold something seizes Frodo by the ankle, dragging him towards the water. Sam slashes at it with his knife and it releases Frodo; together, they run through the open doors. The creature follows them, slamming the doors closed and trapping the Fellowship inside. They have no choice but to go forward.

Gandalf leads them, guessing their journey will be 40 miles to the East-gate. For the most part they walk in deep silence, but Frodo keeps hearing, or thinking he hears, the "faint fall of soft bare feet" behind them. Gandalf comes to a dark arch opening into three passages, of which he had no memory at all.

As Gandalf tries to decide which path to take, they come to a great room with a large hole in the ground. Overwhelmed with curiosity, Pippin drops a stone into it and is scolded harshly. Gandalf decides upon the passage to the right, and they soon come to a great hall where they rest. Guessing they are only a day away from the Great Gates, they continue forward and come to the tomb of Balin.



Ch. 5: The Bridge of Khazad-dûm

The company stands besides Balin's tomb, realizing his people had been trapped in this room and had died in a last stand. At this Gandalf urges them to get out quickly. But before they are able to flee, they hear a terrible boom echoing throughout Moria and soon find themselves in the midst of a great battle. They fight off a cave-troll and many orcs until the rest retreat, then Gandalf urges them to run. Frodo is hit by an orc spear, but to the great relief of his friends, he is not badly wounded.

They rush out of the chamber and fly downward as quickly as they can, stumbling in the dark. Gandalf is weary, having faced something he has not met before, remarking, "There is some new devilry here." They continue to flee towards the Bridge of Khazad-dûm. At last Legolas understands they are being pursued by a Balrog.

Gandalf urges the company to run as he stands to face the Balrog, and all but Aragorn and Boromir race across the bridge. "You cannot pass," he said. The orcs stood still, and a dead silence fell. "I am a servant of the Secret Fire, wielder of the flame of Anor. You cannot pass. The dark fire will not avail you, flame of Udûn. Go back to the Shadow! You cannot pass." "

Gandalf uses his staff to crack the bridge beneath the Balrog; it falls, but the Balrog's whip wraps around Gandalf's knees and drags him to the edge. "Fly, you fools!" he cries, and falls. Aragorn leads the remainder of the Fellowship, running toward the light before them. They pass out of the Gates and down the threshold of Moria, where they are met by the shining sun.



Ch. 6: Lothlórien

Though overcome with grief, Aragorn urges the Company to continue on away from the Gates and towards Lothlórien. Soon, they come into the outer borders of Lothlórien and find a place to rest. They wade across the waters of the Nimrodel and are soon met by elves who wish to speak with Frodo. They drop down a ladder, and Legolas leads Frodo and Sam up to meet them. They come to a wooden platform where the elves speak with Frodo about the course of the Fellowship.

That night, Frodo awakens in the dark to the sounds of clashing metal; he realizes that Orcs have been near. He notices something climbing slowly up the tree with two pale eyes, but it suddenly stops, turns away, and vanishes. In the morning, the company follows Haldir through the trees and across the river Celebrant. After they cross, the elves insist on blind-folding Gimli. When he protests, however, Aragorn suggests that they all be blindfolded together.

The Company slowly follows Haldir throughout the woods. After a while, they are met by elves who bring word that Gimli and all of the Company are to walk freely, so their blind-folds are removed. After this, they continue on to Cerin Amroth, the heart of Lothlórien.

"The world is indeed full of peril, and in it there are many dark places; but still there is much that is fair, and though in all lands love is now mingled with grief, it grows perhaps the greater." - Haldir



Ch. 7: The Mirror of Galadriel

The Company continues to Caras Galadhon where they are summoned to speak with Celeborn and Galadriel. They climb up many flets until they come to a wide landing, where Celeborn and Galadriel sit. The elves cry out in grief as the remaining members of the Fellowship tell them of Gandalf's fall into shadow in Moria. Galadriel offers them shelter and aid, saying their quest is known to her.

After many days, Galadriel comes to Frodo and Sam, bringing them to the Mirror. Sam looks into it first, hoping for a glimpse of the Shire. In the Mirror, he sees Frodo lying with a pale face under a dark cliff; himself going along a dim passage, climbing an endless stair; Ted Sandyman cutting down trees, and the Old Mill gone. He cries, turning away from the Mirror, wishing desperately to go home. Yet he resolves to stay true to his Quest and his commitment to Frodo.

Frodo looks into the Mirror next, seeing a long grey winding road; a figure resembling Gandalf or Saruman clothed in white; Bilbo walking restlessly in his room; many scenes of the History of Middle-earth; the Sea in a great storm; a banner with a white tree on it, then smoke from fire and battle. Then suddenly he stands staring into the black abyss as a single Eye wreathed in fire grows larger. Frodo senses that the eye is searching for him, and feels the mirror pulling Frodo toward it. Galadriel calls for him not to touch the water, and the vision fades.

After this, Frodo offers to give the Ring to Galadriel. She is at once tempted, admitting that she has long desired it, wishing to rule as a Queen. But she resists, saying, "I pass the test... I will diminish, and go into the West, and remain Galadriel."



Ch. 8: Farewell to Lórien

The Company is summoned to the chamber of Celeborn, where they speak of their plans for departure. The members of the Fellowship are offered the choice to continue on the quest or to end their part in it, but they all choose to continue forward. They realize they must choose soon whether to take the western shore to Minas Tirith, or the eastern shore towards the land of Mordor. Celeborn supplies the Fellowship with boats, enabling them to travel by the River as they discern their course.

That evening, they debate their path late into the night. Boromir seems to be thinking aloud, saying he will go to Minas Tirith alone if he needed to, and muttering that it would be "folly to throw away." Frodo wonders uneasily if Boromir were referring to the Ring.

In the morning, the Elves bring gifts of food and clothing to the company. They then come to the banks of the Silverlode where three small grey boats have been prepared for them. Galadriel comes to bid them farewell, and together they enjoy a parting feast in the grass. Before they leave, they drink from the cup of parting and are each given a gift from Galadriel. They slowly paddle away into the currents of the Great River, where their boats begin to move quickly southward.



The Gifts of Galadriel

- To all of the Fellowship: Lembas, elvish cloaks, and rope.
- To Aragorn: A sheath made to fit his sword, a green stone set in a silver brooch, and the name Elessar, the Elfstone of the House of Elendil.
- To Boromir: a belt of gold.
- To Legolas: a bow of the Galadhrim and a quiver of arrows.
- To Samwise: a small box which holds earth from her orchard, to be used when he returns to his gardens.
- To Gimli: three strands of her hair, which he vows to set into a crystal as a "pledge of good will between the Mountain and the Wood until the end of days."
- To Frodo: A small crystal phial which holds the light of Eärendil's star; "May it be a light to you in dark places, when all other lights go out."
- To Merry and Pippin: small silver belts with clasps like golden flowers.



Ch. 9: The Great River

The company continues southwards down the river, traveling past barren lands and growing evermore uneasy. Boromir grows increasingly restless, filled with apparent unease and doubt. Sam reports to Frodo that a "log with eyes" has been following them; Frodo suspects the eyes belong to Gollum, which Aragorn confirms.

By the eighth night, they come near to Sarn Gebir, where the Anduin has grown into dangerous rapids. They slowly paddle back against the current toward the western shore, feeling Orc arrows whistling over them. A great, black winged creature flies above them and Legolas uses the bow given by Galadriel to strike it down. Afterward, they bring their boats back upstream until they are able to find a small shallow bay in which to spend the rest of the night.

Aragorn decides that they will go to Amon Hen and there, at last, they will decide whether or not to go to Minas Tirith. Although Boromir protests, he at last agrees to travel with them to this point and then return to his home. They continue on towards Argonath, the Pillars of the King. They pass beneath them, and when Frodo looks upon Strider he sees him in a new light as a future king. Aragorn desperately wishes that Gandalf were there to counsel him; he greatly desires to go to Minas Tirith but can't decide the right path. On their tenth day of travel they come to Tol Brandir, where they know they must finally choose whether to go east or west.

Tolkien writes, "The last stage of the quest was before them."



Ch. 10: The Breaking of the Fellowship

In the morning, Aragorn calls the Fellowship together to finally decide which course to take: east to Mordor or west to Minas Tirith. Aragorn places the burden of choice on Frodo, who asks for an hour to decide. He walks alone into the woods to think, unaware that he is silently followed by Boromir.

Boromir finds Frodo and counsels him to bring the Ring to Minas Tirith, where he believes they will be able to wield it against Sauron. At first, he speaks to Frodo as a friend, saying he was concerned for his safety and offering him wisdom. "Are you sure that you do not suffer needlessly?" he asks. When Frodo resists him, Boromir grows angry and eventually tries to take the Ring from him by force. Trembling, Frodo puts on the Ring and disappears from Boromir's sight. At this, Boromir curses him, but is soon filled with regret for betraying him.

At the riverside, the remainder of the Fellowship await Frodo's return. They realize Boromir is not with them but he soon returns, telling them that Frodo had put on the Ring and disappeared. Realizing that Frodo must have chosen his path toward the Cracks of Doom and suspecting he may be trying to leave on his own, Sam searches desperately for him.

Sam runs after a boat which appears to be sliding into the river by itself, missing it and falling into the water. Frodo pulls him into the boat and tries to tell Sam that he intends to go to Mordor without him — but Sam refuses to let him go alone. Frodo is ultimately relieved to have Sam at his side, and they depart without telling anyone. They come to the southern slopes of Amon Lhaw, where the hobbits hide their boat and begin on foot toward the Land of Shadow.



Book Two Recap: Major Themes

- **You Do Not Have to Go Alone:** In this book, we see the formation and departure of the Fellowship of the Ring. Finally, the quest has fully begun. While Frodo is willing to take the burden of the Ring onto himself, he acknowledges that he doesn't even know where to begin in terms of getting it to Mordor. And Elrond understands that he cannot go alone. However, he doesn't send him forth with a host of great warriors, rather he sends him in a small group meant to represent all the peoples of Middle-earth, a group formed largely around friendship! So we see the theme of Fellowship carrying through into Book II. The life-saving, life-giving virtue of friendship.
- **Rivendell & Lothlórien:** In this book we are introduced to two of the great homes of Elvendom in Middle-Earth, Rivendell and Lothlórien. Within the bounds of these two realms, the world feels different entirely. It has been preserved and protected by the power of the Elves, and serves as a refuge for those who visit.
- **Heroic Leadership Requires Sacrifice:** Looking at Gandalf and Aragorn specifically, we see in this book the way that great leadership requires sacrifice. In Gandalf's case, he was willing to give up his own life to protect the Fellowship from the Balrog. In Aragorn's case, we see that he is willing to deny his own desires -- both to stay in Rivendell and to go straight to Gondor -- for what he realizes are the greater good of the Fellowship.
- **The Protection of Elbereth:** Despite being referenced several times by hobbits and elves even in these first two books, the character of Elbereth remains relatively unexplained throughout *The Lord of the Rings*.
 - Elbereth Gilthoniel is the Sindarin name for Varda, one of the Ainur and Queen of the Valar. As the creator of the stars and most beloved by the Elves, the name of Elbereth is invoked in times of distress, darkness, and great need. Her beauty is beyond measure or description, and she is feared and hated most by Melkor.
 - In *Three is Company*, Gildor says to Frodo, "May Elbereth protect you!"; in *A Knife in the Dark*, Frodo cries out, "O Elbereth! Gilthoniel!" as he is stabbed by the Morgul blade. And as we journey deeper into the story of *The Lord of the Rings*, her name will be invoked many more times—keep an eye out for it.



Discord Chat Discussion Prompts:

- Thoughts on The Council of Elrond: Did you learn anything new? Did anything surprise you?
- Discuss Saruman's plans as recounted in the Council of Elrond. Do you think he is lying to Gandalf, or do you think he truly believes that he can still achieve his original purpose in the end?
- Do Balrogs have wings? (Trick Question, Sorry)
- The Elves as "Perilous and Fair"? Discuss the different approaches towards Galadriel from the different members of the Fellowship as they enter into Lothlórien, especially that of Gimli and Boromir.
- How has Gimli's heart softened towards the Elves? At what point did this change occur, and how is its timing significant?
- How does Galadriel's gift to Gimli mark the beginning of a renewed friendship between Dwarves and Elves? What about his friendship with Legolas?
- Of all of Galadriel's gifts, which stood out to you as the most interesting or meaningful? How did each gift correspond to its recipient, equipping them according to their needs?
- Thoughts on Boromir: Do you feel sympathetic towards him? Do you find him relatable?

