



8th Grade Fellowship Summary

Since *The Lord of the Rings* is a trilogy of works and *The Two Towers* is the middle book, below is a summary of the first book, *The Fellowship of the Ring*, in case you have forgotten or have never read it. [Written by Geneva alumni Alex Ryden and Erica Shelton.]

The Fellowship of the Ring Summary

(This first section is a summary of events from the *Silmarilion*, which occurs prior to *The Lord of the Rings* series.)

The story of Middle Earth starts long before the Fellowship, or even the *Hobbit*. All the books are set at the end of the Third Age, meaning quite a bit happened before them. In fact, in terms of importance, the War of the Ring is one of the smaller wars in Middle Earth history. Sauron is powerful, but he was only ever a second in command. His master is a fallen Valar. The Valar are the spirits who watch over the world of Middle Earth. They are similar in power to the ancient Greek gods, but they act more as protectors than rulers. Melkor was one of these, but he became obsessed with the desire to control the newly created world of Middle Earth. He attacks the other Valar. The land is torn apart and rebuilt constantly in their struggle, but eventually Melkor, also called Morgoth, is driven into hiding. The Valar create their own island to live on where they can watch Middle Earth.

The first age starts with the appearance of the Elves in middle earth. They are first discovered by Morgoth, who seizes some of them and corrupts them into orcs. The rest are saved by the Valar, who take Morgoth into captivity and take the Elves to their own island. There is a long period of peace, during which an Elven smith creates jewels of incredible beauty called the silmarils. Morgoth eventually escapes, however, and takes the jewels. The elves, despite the warnings of the Valar, follow him to Middle Earth and fight him for many years. Men appear during this time, but Morgoth once again finds them first, this time seducing many into worshipping him. Though some resist his charm and join the elves in their war. Many elves and men are killed, but eventually a man manages to cross the seas to the island of the Valar and persuades them to come and aid the Elves. The Valar take Morgoth again and this time seal him in the void. They create a home called Numenor for the men who aided the elves. Many elves return with the Valar to their island, but some remain in Middle Earth. This ends the first age.

The second age begins with peace and the founding of a great kingdom on Numenor. Eventually, Sauron, the lieutenant of Morgoth, arises. He seduces the men of Numenor, turning them away from the Valar. Also during this time, he seduces a group of elves, from whom he learns the art of forging rings of power. He uses this knowledge to forge the one ring. His influence grows over the

men, turning many of them evil. Eventually, they try and attack the Valar, with the result being the destruction of the entire island of Numenor. Some of the men had never trusted Sauron, however, and they managed to escape to Middle Earth, where they founded the Kingdoms of Gondor in the south and Arnor in the north. Sauron manages to escape as well though, and he attacks Middle Earth with a large army. Men and Elves band together and stop him, ending the second age.

The third age starts with the loss of the one ring and the death of the king of Gondor. The two kingdoms of men start to decay. The northern kingdom, Arnor, is destroyed by a sorcerer called the witch king, while Gondor is repeatedly attacked by barbarian peoples. Eventually, Gondor manages to suppress them, but the servants of Sauron, the Nazgul, attack Gondor from Mordor, Sauron's former kingdom. They take one of Gondor's chief cities, killing the last king. After the king's death, the throne of Gondor is held by stewards instead. They give land to a group of people who form the Kingdom of Rohan, in return for an allegiance. In the midst of all this chaos, two small but important events occur. The first is the arrival of the wizards, a group of mysterious men who work to prevent the spread of evil in Middle Earth. The other is the appearance of the Hobbits in history. It is never revealed when they first appeared in Middle Earth, but they quickly settle a piece of land they call the Shire, from which they rarely stir. Evil continues to happen around them, as Sauron begins to gather armies of orcs in secret, leading up to:

The Fellowship of the Ring

Three Rings for the Elf-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.

Book One

Chapter 1: A Long-expected Party

The book opens many years after the events of the Hobbit. Bilbo is preparing to celebrate his 111th birthday, but is still as robust as he was when he was younger. The book quickly introduces the character of Frodo Baggins, a nephew of Bilbo's whom he has adopted. They are preparing for a huge party to be thrown in Bilbo's honor. It is a huge affair, with plenty of food and drink to satisfy even the hungriest hobbit. Gandalf even arrives, bringing fireworks to enliven the affair. However, Bilbo throws a twist at the end. At the end of his birthday speech, he puts on his magic ring and disappears. He returns to his house, where Gandalf is waiting for him. He reveals that he is leaving the Shire to travel

to Bree and see the dwarves again. Before he goes, Gandalf asks him to leave his ring. Bilbo is very hesitant and has to be pressured into giving it up, but expresses relief upon doing so. This puts Gandalf into a thoughtful mood and when Frodo returns, Gandalf informs him of Bilbo's departure and then leaves himself, telling him to keep the ring secret and safe.

Chapter 2: The Shadow of the Past

The second chapter begins roughly a decade after the first. Gandalf has not been seen in the Shire for many years, and Frodo has taken to wandering the Shire, often talking with elves and dwarves traveling through. Frodo shows little sign of aging, just like Bilbo. As he approaches his fifties, however, Gandalf returns. He reveals that he had spent his time finding Gollum, the creature from whom Bilbo had found the ring. From Gollum and from research he had undertaken in the Kingdom of Gondor, he discovered that the magic ring Frodo has is in fact the Ring which Sauron had forged and stored his power in. Gandalf reveals that when Sauron was last defeated, a king of men named Isildur took the ring, but lost it when he was ambushed by orcs. Gollum found it and kept it with him under the mountains for centuries, until Bilbo found it. Gandalf also reveals that the ring is why Bilbo always looked so young. But Gandalf cautions that the Ring is evil and slowly corrupts whomever uses it. They discuss the history of the ring for a little while, before Gandalf realizes that Samwise Gamgee, a close friend of Frodo, is eavesdropping. He brings him into their discussion, where they decide the ring must be taken to Rivendell (Rivendell is one of the last dwelling places of the elves still living in Middle Earth) where they will hold a council to decide what is best to be done.

Chapter 3: Three is Company

However, they do not leave immediately. Gandalf, before he rides off again, warns them to bring no suspicion to themselves. But none of them expects any real danger. So Frodo sells Bag End and announces that he plans to move to the eastern edge of the Shire, which is where he lived before Bilbo adopted him. He hopes that by moving there he can more easily avoid detection when he leaves. So He, Sam, and another friend of his, Pippin, begin their journey across the Shire. A fourth friend, Merry, rides on ahead with their luggage. As the three friends walk across the Shire, they are almost caught at various points by mysterious riders in black, only escaping from the last of the riders when they run into a group of elves. The three friends spend the night with the elves. Frodo mentions the riders and the elves reveal that the riders are servants of Sauron, but they give no more information than that. The friends fall asleep listening to the songs of the elves.

Chapter 4: A Short Cut to Mushrooms

When they awake, they continue their journey. Pippin decides to take a shortcut, only to get the group lost. They end up at the house of a farmer named Maggot, who Frodo used to know. He feeds them and gives them a ride to a ferry, where they meet Merry.

Chapter 5: A Conspiracy Unmasked

When the hobbits reach Frodo's new home, Frodo's friends reveal that Sam had told them all about the ring and that they want to help him get to Rivendell. Frodo reluctantly agrees to their offer for aid. They then discuss their options and decide that the best option is to take the road through the Old Forest, an ancient forest filled with trees that are so old they can still think and talk to some degree, though not in a way obvious to anyone besides other trees. The path is risky, as the hobbits of the Shire had burned many of the trees years before. They end up agreeing to take the route, since they wager it is safer than running into the black riders again.

Chapter 6: The Old Forest

They wake up early in the morning and begin the journey through the forest. They lose their way, however, and end up next to a large ancient willow. There they fall asleep, only to wake up with Merry and Pippin trapped by the tree. Frodo and Sam call for help, and are surprised when a man calling himself Tom Bombadil appears and forces the tree to release the two hobbits. He then takes them all to his house.

Chapter 7: In the House of Tom Bombadil

When they get to the house, Tom reveals that he knows of the ring, but he shows them that it has no power over him. They quickly forget about all their troubles though, as Tom tells them many stories and feeds them a wonderful supper. They are then given fresh beds to sleep in.

Chapter 8: Fog on the Barrow-Downs

Tom gives them fresh supplies and sends them on their way. They begin traveling through an area called the Barrow Downs. They eventually reach a large stone pillar, where they eat and fall asleep again. When they awake, they find the downs covered in fog. They try traveling through, only to get separated and lost. Frodo is left alone, trying to find his friends, when a strange apparition knocks him unconscious. He awakes to find himself in a cave, dressed in white. His friends lie beside him. A strange voice is chanting in the room next to theirs. A hand slowly extends towards a sword lying near Frodo's friends. Frodo picks up another sword and cuts off the hand, calling to Tom Bombadil for help. Tom appears and destroys the cave, which is actually a tomb. He frees the hobbits, gives them new clothes and sets them on their way again, promising to escort them out of the Barrow Downs.

Chapter 9: At the Sign of the Prancing Pony

The hobbit companions eventually reach a town called Bree, where they were supposed to meet Gandalf. They proceed to an inn called The Prancing Pony. There they find rooms and a meal. After they eat, they go into the main room of the inn to drink and socialize. Bree has a hobbit population and some of Frodo's friends begin to recite the story of the party. Frodo tries to stop them, only to accidentally put on the ring and disappear (among its other powers, the ring causes the wearer to disappear). He causes a huge stir and many of the guests leave, even after Frodo tries to explain he only fell.

Chapter 10: Strider

When they return to their rooms, a man named Strider is waiting for them. He says that the hobbits have drawn too much attention to themselves and offers to help them. Frodo and his friends are wary, until the innkeeper remembers to bring them a letter from Gandalf which reveals that Strider is a man to be trusted. Not only is he a man to be trusted, he is a strong and noble ranger from the north and his name is Aragorn. They accept his offer and Frodo reveals that Gandalf was supposed to have met them at the inn. Strider expresses worry at the disappearance of the wizard. Just then, Merry comes in and says that he saw a black rider. Strider tells them to go to his room and stay in there for the night.

Chapter 11: A Knife in the Dark

When they wake up in the morning, the group finds the room they were going to sleep in torn up. Strider tells them to prepare to leave immediately, but they are delayed when they discover their ponies missing. They manage to find others, but unfortunately the story of Frodo's disappearance had spread and they leave with many watching. Strider takes them off the road, however, and they manage to make good time. (rangers have great skill maneuvering themselves through different landscapes). Eventually, after several days, they reach an ancient ruin called Weathertop, where they make camp for the night. The black riders find them, though, and the hobbits are driven onto the top of the tower. There Frodo puts on the ring and sees through the riders' cloaks. They appear as pale men with keen, merciless eyes clothed in robes and armor. One of them comes forward and stabs Frodo in the shoulder with a knife, and he passes out.

Chapter 12: Flight to the Ford

When he awakes, he finds the riders gone and his friends worrying over him. Strider gives Frodo temporary relief from the wound and then has the group move. They eventually stumble upon the trolls that Bilbo had stumbled upon, now turned to stone of course. This cheers them up, but the hobbits and Strider soon return to worrying about Frodo, whose arm is completely numb and who is starting to grow very weak. Soon, however, an elf lord by the name of Glorfindel finds them. He puts Frodo on his horse and directs the company towards Rivendell. But they are found by the riders again, who give chase. Glorfindel sends Frodo ahead on the horse, and Frodo manages to cross the river into Rivendell just ahead of the riders. The river then suddenly rises up and overwhelms the black riders, just as Frodo passes into unconsciousness.

End of Book One

Book Two

Chapter 1: Many Meetings

Frodo awakes to find himself in the House of Elrond, the lord of Rivendell. Gandalf is sitting next to him and reveals that Frodo was starting to fade away, but was saved by Elrond. They talk for a little while, with Gandalf refusing to explain more till Elrond decided Frodo was fully recovered. Gandalf does reveal that Strider and the rangers he is a part of were actually the remnants of the northern Kingdom of Arnor. Gandalf also talks a little about the black riders, or Nazgul. He explains that they were trying to turn Frodo into a wraith, like themselves. They would then be able to control him and bring him to Sauron. Elrond saved Frodo with the flood, however, and the Nazgul, Gandalf notes, were temporarily disabled, though they would eventually reach Mordor and acquire new mounts. After they talk Frodo goes out and says hello to his friends, who are all rested and recovered. He also meets Biblo during diner, who returned to Rivendell after his travels and now sleeps and writes poetry. They eat dinner with the elves together, and Frodo finds a group of dwarves, who have come to talk to Elrond. After they eat, Frodo goes to bed again.

Chapter 2: The Council of Elrond

The next day, Elrond holds a great council to discuss the ring, among other issues. First, the dwarves stand up and express concern over the fate of a group of dwarves who had re-colonized the ancient dwarven city of Moria. They had lost contact with them, and were then confronted by a messenger from Sauron, asking for information about Bilbo and the ring. There were also armies gathering along their borders. Elrond then steps forward and begins to tell the story of the ring Sauron demanded. It was taken during the Last Alliance, when the king of Gondor, Isildur, took it from Sauron. Isildur lost it, however, and it disappeared from the world. Gondor struggled without her king and began to wane afterwards. It is here revealed that Strider is named Aragorn and is actually a direct descendant of the ancient kings. A man named Boromir, a warrior coming to seek advice from Elrond on behalf of Gondor, expresses surprise and doubt at this. After some discussion, the story of the ring continues, with Gandalf picking up the thread. It was found by Gollum, who hid it in the mountains until Bilbo found it. Gandalf then goes on to explain the events in the Shire, and then explains why he never met up with Frodo and his friends. He announces that the great wizard Saruman had turned evil, corrupted by his desire for the ring. He held Gandalf captive, but Gandalf managed to escape and tracked Frodo's group to Rivendell. The council then discusses the issues presented until it is decided that the ring must be destroyed. Frodo volunteers to take it, and the council adjourns.

Chapter 3: The Ring Goes South

After the decision is made, the hobbits rest and discuss the journey ahead while Elrond and the rest make preparations. When Frodo leaves, he is accompanied by eight others, together forming the fellowship. The other three hobbits volunteer to accompany him, along with Aragorn and Gandalf. Also accompanying them are Legolas the elf, Gimli the dwarf, and Boromir, the warrior from Gondor. They begin their journey by aiming for a mountain pass, which Gandalf believes to be the quickest and safest route through the mountains. Unfortunately for the fellowship, the mountain pass

turns out to be dangerous. A massive blizzard hits the pass as the group tries to struggle through, until they realize that the storm will not let up. They leave the mountain pass, defeated.

Chapter 4: A Journey in the Dark

They backtrack and discuss their next move. It is eventually decided that the only option they have left is to attempt passage through the ancient dwarven city of Moria, long ago overrun by orcs and now supposedly deserted. As they travel towards the entrance, however, they are attacked by wolves. They drive them away, but the wolves follow them, cutting off any route of escape and leaving Moria the only option. Gandalf reveals the entrance and after some thought manages to open the door. Before they enter, Sam says goodbye to the pony (whom he had grown attached to and named Bill) they had brought from Rivendell. Then the fellowship is attacked again though, this time by a serpent monster in the lake near the door. The fellowship manages to escape into Moria, but the way behind them is blocked with rubble by the monster. So, they begin to journey through the caves. The caves are treacherous, with many chasms and pitfall, but the fellowship makes it safely almost all the way to the end. Near the exit, they find a tomb with the body of the leader of the dwarves who tried to colonize Moria.

Chapter 5: The Bridge of Khazad-Dum

Gandalf searches around the tomb and finds a battered, torn book which contained records of the dwarves' time in Moria. He discovers the dwarves were overrun by goblins. Gandalf also uses the book to find the exit. He no sooner puts the book down, however, than the fellowship hears the sound of drums and the pattering of feet. A quick glance confirms the presence of goblins. The fellowship fights them off and barricade themselves in the room containing the tomb, only to be attacked by some unknown force, which tears the room to pieces. They escape through a side door and make it to the bridge which leads to the exit. There they discover the force was a Balrog, a fire demon, who proceeds to attack them. Gandalf holds it off and throws it into the chasm under the bridge, but falls in after it. The rest of the fellowship escapes.

Chapter 6: Lothlorien

When they put distance between themselves and the entrance, the group collapses, tired and grieved at the loss of Gandalf. Aragorn gives them a little time to rest and then forces them to continue on, knowing that the goblins would pursue them when night fell. They escape into the forest of Lothlorien, where a group of elves find them and take them deep into the safety of the forest. They are blindfolded most of the way, but when they approach the elven city their blindfolds are removed. They find themselves in a land where long lost, ancient powers still live.

Chapter 7: The Mirror of Galadriel

When they arrive at the city, they meet with Lord Celeborn and Lady Galadriel, who tell the fellowship to rest and recover from their grief. While they rest, Galadriel takes Frodo and Sam aside and shows them her mirror, which she uses to see events in the world. Frodo looks in and sees the great eye of Sauron. After he looks, Galadriel reveals that she carries one of the three great elven rings, which she uses to protect her people.

Chapter 8: Farwell to Lorien

Soon afterwards, the fellowship departs. The elves give them boats and food for their journey down the river. The elves also give the members of the company cloaks which have the power to hide them from sight to some degree. They also give individual gifts to each member of the company, with the most precious being a vial of starlight that Galadriel gives to Frodo. The company bids farewell to the elves and set off down the river.

Chapter 9: The Great River

The company journeys down the river for many days with no trouble, but Frodo begins to suspect something is following them. He mentions it to Aragorn, who reveals that he has known about the stalker for some time and believes it to be Gollum. Frodo actually sees him one night, as Gollum tries to sneak up on the camp. Afterwards, he disappears, but a few days' later orcs appear on the bank of the river and attack the fellowship with arrows. The fellowship move their boats to the opposite shore, only to be attacked by a great winged creature. Legolas shoots it, however, and both the orcs and the creature retreat. They journey safely for a few more days, but they soon reach the last stage of the quest, where the company must make a decision. Boromir wants the fellowship to continue to Gondor, where they can rest and recover their strength. But others have doubts and believe the company should travel straight to mordor. The members of the fellowship must make a final decision.

Chapter 10: The Breaking of the Fellowship

Aragorn goes to Frodo and asks him to decide the fate of the company. He asks whether Frodo will go west or east and whether the company should follow him or split up, each member going his own way. Frodo asks for time to decide and walks away from the camp to think. He is followed by Boromir, who asks Frodo to go with him to Gondor. He then shows that he has become corrupted by greed for the ring, ranting about how he would use it to command the armies of men and destroy Sauron. Frodo realizes that his presence endangers his friends and decides to go alone to Mordor. He slips away from Boromir, who snaps out of the trance and tries to find Frodo to beg for forgiveness. He then returns to the camp and reveals what happened to Aragorn. Aragorn tells him to go with Pippin and Merry and look for Frodo, while Aragorn himself takes Sam and strikes off in another direction. Sam falls behind and realizes what Frodo's plan must be. He goes back to the camp to find Frodo in a boat moving away from shore. Sam follows him and tells Frodo he will not leave. Frodo decides to let Sam come with him and the two travel across the river to the east bank, where they start walking towards Mordor.

End of Book 2

The Themes of the Fellowship

The fellowship is not a very nuanced book. It does not have very many hidden themes or subtleties. It does, however, have many themes interwoven throughout the plot and, while they may not be subtle, they are very powerful. Of course, one does have to make a distinction between the themes of the world of Middle Earth and the themes of the Lord of the Rings trilogy. Of the two, though, the ones from the books are the only ones which will be mentioned here. Read the *Silmarillion* if you want to find out more about the world itself.

Perhaps the most apparent theme is the story of Frodo. He is the main protagonist, although the story of Aragorn does play a large part as well, especially in the second and third book. Frodo seems at first glance an odd choice for the lead role. Several other characters have many more “heroic” qualities and would seem better suited. But once one begins to read the story, one realizes that Frodo fits perfectly into the role he has been thrust into. He is small, but he is strong-willed and very brave. He is self-sacrificing, offering to take the ring himself, instead of giving the job to someone else. He is not a leader, or a warrior, or a philosopher, but he does not need to be. His main “weapon” is his humility. It is what allows him to make the journey that many others would never succeed. He does not need glory or honor, he just wants to save his home and protect his friends. In fact, all the four main hobbit characters follow this pattern. All four are much more brave and courageous than they appear, and all four eventually go on to do fantastic things, though not in the first book.

Intertwined with the story of Frodo is the ring itself. It is a little thing, a small band of gold with no apparent markings or decorations, but it is the source of all contention. The ring is best described as a physical representation of temptation. It slowly eats away at the mind of whoever holds it, eventually leading them to evil. Gandalf himself says that the rings would eventually tempt him into using its power. It is never revealed what the power of the ring is, except for the fact that it scales according to the power of the wielder. Gollum used it to hunt, Bilbo used it to hide, and Boromir desires it to be successful in battle and become a great leader. The ring tempts people with what they want, offering to make their deepest dream come true. But, this is merely a lie, and like all temptations, the ring leads to evil.

The third most important theme is only mentioned in the first book. It is developed much more in the second and third, but it helps to be aware of it. It revolves around Aragorn. When the book first introduces him, he is just a mysterious ranger who knows quite a bit about traveling and all the things one would expect a ranger to know. But as he takes the hobbits through the wilderness, it quickly becomes apparent that he is more than he appears. He knows many ancient songs and tales and he know much about the history of the land. When Frodo is stabbed he knows how to counteract the effects of the Nazgul for a time. When the group reaches Rivendell, it is eventually revealed that Aragorn is the last descendant of the ancient line of kings. When he volunteers to travel with the

fellowship, he does so as he has decided that it is time for him to take up the crown. His hesitation is in his devotion to Frodo and at the end he is wondering whether he should continue on to Gondor or follow Frodo to the end. The book leaves the character of Aragorn here, but his development into a great leader starts in the first book.