

The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey



By [Daniel Derksen](#)

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The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey is here at last and it's worth its weight in gold, 10 times over! It is unquestionably one of the greatest cinematic experiences ever and a proud prequel to the equally consummate The Lord Of The Rings trilogy.

Spectacular beyond belief, this emotional and visceral visual flight of fantasy truly celebrates the art of storytelling and story making at its most enchanting and mesmerising. It is one of the most imaginative and gripping stories ever and is what cinema and the art of filmmaking is all about.

It's astounding to think that one of the greatest stories ever told, brought to life by one of the greatest filmmaking teams in the world, sprung from the fertile imagination of Bloemfontein-born JRR Tolkien - it is interesting that, as a child, Tolkien was bitten by a large baboon spider, which is echoed in The Hobbit. Also, the themes of personal growth and forms of heroism are central themes of the story and, along with motifs of warfare, these themes reflect Tolkien's own experiences during World War I.





And, no, I am not going to reveal anything about The Hobbit's story; it would be a deadly shame to ruin such a refined and illuminating experience.

Overwhelming epic grandeur and gallant mythology

What makes The Hobbit such an endearing and memorable journey, is that its magnificent and overwhelming epic grandeur, and gallant mythology are grounded in an astounding magic realism. There are moments that take your breath away and wilfully imprison your imagination, unlike anything you have experienced before. Even if you are not a Lord Of The Rings follower, you can't deny its artistic merits and intelligent storytelling. And if you experience The Hobbit fresh, without having read the book and still have some vivid recollections of The Lord Of The Rings films, you will most definitely make a point of watching the entire saga all over again; this is one marathon you can look forward to.

One of the most charming aspects of The Hobbit is its characters; good or bad, meaningful or malevolent, each and every creation is unique and perfectly brought to life - from Bilbo Baggins and Gandalf The Grey, to 13 fortune-seeking dwarves, the legendary dwarf warrior Thorin Oakenshield, dragons, to giant spiders, hostile elves, ravenous wolves, and - perhaps the most perilous of all - a subterranean creature named Gollum, they are all magnificent in both performance and realisation.

Director Peter Jackson's passion deserves every award bestowed on him and his team, particularly his dynamic co-screenwriting team of Fran Walsh and Philippa Boyens, his fellow Oscar-winning co-writers on The Lord Of The Rings films, along with Guillermo del Toro.

An additional treasure trove of material

They pieced together an additional treasure trove of material from a revered English writer, professor and philologist developed in the decades after *The Hobbit* was first published, as well as 125 pages of appendices at the end of *The Lord Of The Rings*, which provided more back-story to the history of Middle Earth, describing some of the politics and events that occur during the years pertaining to *The Hobbit* and was more serious, darker in tone, and more in line with *The Lord Of The Rings*.

Although there are moments of pure terror, its nightmarish horror never offends or becomes overbearing; the dark forces of antagonism become a worthy opponent in the war zone for supremacy. Another great aspect of *The Hobbit* is that it underlines an important message during a time of war and dispute, and shows that home is indeed where the heart is and that outside familiar comfort zones lies an adventure that challenges the endurance of the human spirit and, ultimately, reveals our true humanity.

The Hobbit also shines a beacon of hope for outsiders who grow up in the shadow of destitution and loneliness, showing that friendship can be found in the most unlikely of places and that it can indeed make the world a better and more peaceful kingdom for all to share and rejoice in.

Behind the scenes

For Peter Jackson, the process of dreaming and doing never ends. Once he and his team have wrapped this film, they will begin on the central film in the trilogy, *The Hobbit: The Desolation Of Smaug*, and then on to the finale, *The Hobbit: There And Back Again*. But, the filmmaker says, even then, it's never over, "because the day that we finish the movie, usually within a day or two of it premiering, suddenly the movie exists in a whole different form. People still write us who have seen *The Lord Of The Rings*, kids who have just seen it for the first time. And that's part of the joy of making films. You're realising that you've created something that is entertaining people and will hopefully entertain people for years to come after we're all gone. It doesn't end with the completion of the film, not really. The real satisfaction comes when the movie begins screening in cinemas - it leaves your hands and passes into the hands of those it was made for - the audience."

Read more at www.writingstudio.co.za/page4389.html

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Daniel Dercksen has been a contributor for Lifestyle since 2012. As the driving force behind the successful independent training initiative The Writing Studio and a published film and theatre journalist of 40 years, teaching workshops in creative writing, playwriting and screenwriting throughout South Africa and internationally the past 22 years. Visit www.writingstudio.co.za

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