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The Hobbit Movies In Order

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Embarking on a Journey to the Lonely Mountain: The Hobbit Movies in Order

Few literary works have captured the imagination of readers quite like J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Hobbit*. When director Peter Jackson returned to Middle-earth nearly a decade after *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy, fans were eager to see Bilbo Baggins' unexpected journey brought to life on the big screen. However, instead of a single film, Jackson expanded the relatively slim novel into a sprawling trilogy of epic proportions. Understanding **the Hobbit movies in order**is essential for anyone looking to experience the story as it was intended, whether you are a first-time viewer or a longtime fan revisiting the Shire.

The trilogy consists of **An Unexpected Journey**, **The Desolation of Smaug**, and **The Battle of the Five Armies**. While the narrative follows a linear path, the films incorporate additional material from Tolkien's appendices, creating a richer, though sometimes more complex, prelude to the events of *The Lord of the Rings*. This guide explores each installment in detail, offering insights into the plot, key characters, and the overall viewing experience.

The Hobbit Movies in Chronological Order

Unlike some film franchises that jump back and forth in time, **the Hobbit movies in order**are presented in a straightforward chronological sequence. The story begins with Bilbo Baggins living a quiet life in the Shire and concludes with the aftermath of a massive battle that reshapes the landscape of Middle-earth. To get the full experience, you should watch them in the order of their release.

1. The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey (2012)

The first installment introduces us to an older Bilbo Baggins, portrayed by Ian Holm, who is preparing to write his memoirs on the day of the great party that opens *The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring*. This framing device immediately connects the two trilogies, establishing that we are about to witness the backstory of the ring-bearer's beloved uncle.

The narrative then shifts back sixty years, where we meet a younger Bilbo, played brilliantly by Martin Freeman. The Shire is peaceful, and Bilbo's primary concerns revolve around his pantry, his handkerchiefs, and his comfortable armchair. This tranquility is shattered when the wizard Gandalf the Grey, portrayed once again by Ian McKellen, pays a visit. Soon, a company of thirteen dwarves led by Thorin Oakenshield arrives at Bag End, uninvited and remarkably hungry.

Thorin's company includes memorable dwarves such as Balin, Dwalin, Kíli, Fíli, and the ever-complaining Bombur. Their mission is nothing less than the reclamation of their ancestral homeland, the Lonely Mountain of Erebor, which has been taken over by the fearsome dragon Smaug. Gandalf persuades the skeptical Thorin that a burglar is needed for the journey, and Bilbo, despite his initial reluctance, reluctantly joins the quest.

The film follows the company as they travel through the Misty Mountains, encounter trolls, and are captured by goblins in the depths of the mountain. It is during this chaotic escape that Bilbo becomes separated from the group and stumbles upon a small, slimy creature named Gollum. This pivotal scene leads to a riddle game that tests Bilbo's wits and cunning. As a reward for solving the riddles, Bilbo discovers the One Ring, a small band of gold that grants invisibility but carries a terrible curse. This moment is arguably the most important event in the entire trilogy, as it sets the stage for the later war against Sauron.

2. The Hobbit: The Desolation of Smaug (2013)

The second film picks up immediately where the first left off. The company has escaped the Misty Mountains, but they are far from safe. They are pursued by Azog the Defiler, a pale orc chieftain who has sworn vengeance against Thorin and his line. This storyline, while not present in Tolkien's original novel, adds a persistent sense of threat and urgency to the journey.

Gandalf leads the company through the dark and treacherous Mirkwood Forest, a place where the very air seems to sap their will and direction. Within the forest, they encounter giant spiders, and it is here that Bilbo's courage truly begins to shine. He uses the ring to rescue the dwarves, becoming a more confident and resourceful member of the group.

After escaping the spiders, the company is captured by the Elves of Mirkwood, led by King Thranduil, played by Lee Pace. Thranduil is a complex character, driven by a desire for the gems of Erebor but unwilling to risk his people to retrieve them. The dwarves escape from the Elvenking's halls in a series of clever sequences, making their way to the human settlement of Laketown.

Laketown is a grim and desperate place, overshadowed by the proximity of the dragon. The Master of Laketown, a corrupt and cowardly politician, provides a stark contrast to the heroic ideals of Thorin. It is here that the character of Bard the Bowman, voiced by Luke Evans, is introduced as a reluctant hero who will later play a crucial role in the story.

The climax of the film is the long-awaited encounter with Smaug, the last great dragon of Middle-earth. Voiced and motion-captured by Benedict Cumberbatch, Smaug is a terrifying and intelligent creature. His lair inside the Lonely Mountain is filled with gold, treasure, and a palpable sense of menace. Bilbo, having been sent ahead as the burglar, attempts to steal a precious cup and engage the dragon in conversation.

This scene is a masterclass in tension and dialogue. Smaug is not merely a beast; he is cunning, vain, and deeply perceptive. He quickly deduces that Bilbo is working with the dwarves and that Laketown has aided them. Enraged, he leaves the mountain to descend upon the town in a fiery blaze of destruction. The film ends on a spectacular cliffhanger as Smaug flies toward Laketown, smoke billowing from his nostrils, while the dwarves watch in horror from the mountain's gate.

3. The Hobbit: The Battle of the Five Armies (2014)

The final installment opens with a breathtaking sequence depicting the destruction of Laketown by the dragon Smaug. Bard the Bowman, using his last black arrow, manages to slay the beast, but the damage is done. The town lies in ruins, and its people are left homeless and leaderless. This event triggers a chain reaction that draws multiple armies to the Lonely Mountain.

Meanwhile, Thorin Oakenshield succumbs to a condition known as "dragon sickness," a form of gold lust that clouds his judgment and turns him against his closest allies. He becomes obsessed with the treasure hoard, refusing to share any of it with the people of Laketown or the Elves who helped in the struggle. This greed fractures the company and tests Bilbo's loyalty.

The title of the film refers to the massive clash that occurs at the gates of Erebor. The five armies are the Dwarves, the Elves, the Men of Laketown, the Orcs, and the Eagles. The arrival of the Orc legions, led by Azog and Bolg, forces the other factions to set aside their differences and unite against a common enemy.

The battle itself is a sprawling, chaotic, and visually spectacular affair. It features devastating war beasts, aerial combat, and moments of individual heroism. Thorin, having overcome his sickness, leads a desperate charge against the Orc forces. The tragic death of Thorin, along with his nephews Kíli and Fíli, adds a layer of melancholy to the victory. Bilbo is deeply affected by these losses, and the experience shapes the hobbit he will become in the later years.

In the aftermath, Bilbo bids farewell to the remaining dwarves and returns to the Shire with Gandalf. He arrives back at Bag End to find his possessions being auctioned off, having been presumed dead. The film ends with a quiet, poignant scene of Bilbo settling back into his armchair, a changed hobbit with a ring in his pocket and an epic story to tell.

Why Watch the Hobbit Movies in Order?

While it might seem obvious to watch a trilogy in sequence, there are several reasons why adhering strictly to **the Hobbit movies in order** is particularly important.

- Character Development: Bilbo's transformation from a timid homebody to a brave adventurer is a gradual process. Watching the films in order allows you to appreciate his growth as he learns to navigate danger, negotiation, and moral dilemmas.
- Plot Continuity: The films are tightly interconnected. A decision made in An Unexpected Journey may have consequences that only become apparent in The Battle of the Five Armies. Skipping ahead would mean missing crucial context.
- Building Tension: The trilogy builds toward the climactic battle and the resolution of Smaug. Watching the films out of order would ruin the carefully crafted pacing and the suspense of the first two films.
- Emotional Payoff: The tragic moments in the third film hit much harder because you have spent several hours with these characters. You have seen their camaraderie, their struggles, and their hopes. Watching the films in order maximizes this emotional investment.

Key Differences from the Book

It is worth noting that Peter Jackson's adaptation differs significantly from Tolkien's original novel. The book is a single volume, much shorter and lighter in tone than the films. Jackson expanded the story by incorporating material from the appendices of *The Lord of the Rings*, including the backstory of the Necromancer (who is later revealed to be Sauron).

This expansion explains why there are three films instead of one. For purists, this can be a point of contention. However, for viewers who enjoy a more cinematic and epic treatment of Middle-earth, the added material provides a richer experience. The inclusion of characters like Legolas, who does not appear in the book, and Tauriel, an original character, adds new dimensions to the story, particularly through the romantic subplot involving Kíli.

How to View the Hobbit and The Lord of the Rings as a Six-Film Series

Many fans argue that the best way to experience Middle-earth is to watch all six films as a continuous saga. If you plan to do this, the chronological order of **the Hobbit movies in order** followed by the *Lord of the Rings* trilogy is the recommended approach.

Start with **An Unexpected Journey**, then **The Desolation of Smaug**, and finally **The Battle of the Five Armies**. After that, move directly into **The Fellowship of the Ring**, **The Two Towers** , and **The Return of the King**. This gives you a complete narrative arc spanning from Bilbo's first adventure to the final destruction of the One Ring and the coronation of King Aragorn.

Watching them in this order allows you to see the decline of Middle-earth from a relatively peaceful era into a time of war, and then its eventual restoration. It also gives you a deeper understanding of the history of the Ring

and the threat posed by Sauron.

The Legacy of the Hobbit Trilogy

Despite mixed critical reception upon release, the Hobbit trilogy has found a dedicated audience over time. The decision to split the book into three films was controversial, but it allowed for a more detailed exploration of the world and characters. The films are visually stunning, with the New Zealand landscapes once again serving as a breathtaking backdrop. The score, composed by Howard Shore, is as evocative and memorable as his work on *The Lord of the Rings*.

For new fans, **the Hobbit movies in order**serve as a perfect entry point into the world of Tolkien. They are lighter and contain more humor than the later trilogy, making them accessible to younger viewers. The story of a small person rising to meet a great challenge is a timeless

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