

“Tolkien” starring Nicholas Hoult, Lily Collins, Colm Meaney, 2019, PG-13, 112 minutes

Major themes:

- Imagination
- Living fully
- Friendship
- Journeys
- Adventure
- Words
- Beauty
- Treasure
- Love
- Quests
- Courage
- Fellowship

Major characters:

- J. R. R. Tolkien
- Edith Bratt
- Father Francis Morgan
- Professor Joseph Wright
- Geoffrey Bache Smith
- Robert Q. Gilson
- Christopher Wiseman
- Private Sam Hodges

Movie Nights for Thinkers and Seekers

Background info:

- John Ronald Reuel Tolkien (January 3rd, 1892 – September 2nd, 1973) was an English writer, poet, philologist, and academic, who is best known as the author of *“The Hobbit,” “The Lord of the Rings,”* and *“The Silmarillion.”*
- Philology is the study of language in oral and written sources. Tolkien was a genius with language. He mastered many languages, including Latin, Greek, French, Finnish, Old Norse, and Middle English. In addition, he invented and developed dozens of languages (with comprehensive grammar and vocabulary) throughout the course of his life. He also developed nine scripts (the letters or characters used in writing by hand).
- Tolkien worked on the Oxford English Dictionary with a number of words starting with the letter W.
- This film was directed by Finnish Director Thomas “Dome” Karukoski and is his first English language movie. The late Roger Ebert’s website declares that *“‘Tolkien’ is a movie about people who think about things.”*
- T.C.B.S. is an acronym for *“Tea Club, Barrovian Society.”* Tolkien and his friends at King Edward’s School met regularly at an upmarket department store in Birmingham (England) started by Richard Cadbury, of the Cadbury chocolate family, called Barrow Stores, from which the club name was derived. The core members were J. R. R. Tolkien, Geoffrey Bache Smith, Christopher Wiseman, and Robert Gilson.
- One member of the T.C.B.S. in this film speaks critically of Wagner’s music drama, *“Das Rheingold,”* saying it shouldn’t take six hours to tell a story about a ring. Film adaptations of Tolkien’s *“The Hobbit”* and *“The Lord of the Rings”* took nearly 8 hours and just over 9 hours respectively.
- In Norse mythology, warriors who die of old age or disease, and those not killed in battle, go to Helheim. Those who die bravely on the battlefield go to Valhalla.
- Tolkien fought in the Battle of the Somme (July 1st – November 18th, 1916), one of the bloodiest battles in human history, in which one million of the more than three million men who fought were wounded or killed.

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Scriptures:

Genesis 45:24 (The Message) – *“As they left he told them, ‘Take it easy on the journey; try to get along with each other.’”*

Exodus 33:14 (The Message) – *“God said, ‘My presence will go with you. I’ll see the journey to the end.’”*

1 Kings 19:5-8a (The Message) – *“He came to a lone broom bush and collapsed in its shade, wanting in the worst way to be done with it all—to just die: ‘Enough of this, God! Take my life—I’m ready to join my ancestors in the grave!’ Exhausted, he fell asleep under the lone broom bush. Suddenly an angel shook him awake and said, ‘Get up and eat!’ He looked around and, to his surprise, right by his head were a loaf of bread baked on some coals and a jug of water. He ate the meal and went back to sleep. The angel of God came back, shook him awake again, and said, ‘Get up and eat some more—you’ve got a long journey ahead of you.’ He got up, ate and drank his fill, and set out.”*

Psalms 84:11-12 (The Message) – *“All sunshine and sovereign is God, generous in gifts and glory. He doesn’t scrimp with his traveling companions. It’s smooth sailing all the way with God-of-the-Angel-Armies.”*

Proverbs 2:6-15 (The Message) – *“God gives out Wisdom free, is plainspoken in Knowledge and Understanding. He’s a rich mine of Common Sense for those who live well, a personal bodyguard to the candid and sincere. He keeps his eye on all who live honestly, and pays special attention to his loyally committed ones. So now you can pick out what’s true and fair, find all the good trails! Lady Wisdom will be your close friend, and Brother Knowledge your pleasant companion. Good Sense will scout ahead for danger, Insight will keep an eye out for you. They’ll keep you from making wrong turns, or following the bad directions of those who are lost themselves and can’t tell a trail from a tumbleweed, these losers who make a game of evil and throw parties to celebrate perversity, traveling paths that go nowhere, wandering in a maze of detours and dead ends.”*

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Discussion points:

1. Discuss this quote: "*There's a comfort to distance, to ancient things.*" In what ways do you notice this in our world today?
2. In what ways are words significant?
3. What do you find most fascinating about language?
4. What's the difference between friendship and fellowship? How does your fellowship, your community, inspire you to grow and flourish?
5. Think of the person or people in your life who most embody what it is to love and be loved. What stands out to you?
6. What surprised you the most about this film?
7. In what ways did the circumstances of Tolkien's life influence his storytelling?
8. What kinds of stories do you feel have been the most impactful in your life?