

the hobbit the five armies

the hobbit the five armies is the thrilling conclusion to the cinematic adaptation of J.R.R. Tolkien's beloved novel, *The Hobbit*. This epic fantasy film brings to life the climactic battle involving five distinct armies vying for control over the treasure hoarded by the dragon Smaug. The movie combines stunning visual effects, intricate storytelling, and rich character development to portray the struggles and alliances that shape the fate of Middle-earth. Exploring themes of courage, greed, and heroism, *The Hobbit: The Five Armies* captures the essence of Tolkien's world while expanding the narrative to include new perspectives and dramatic confrontations. This article delves into the film's plot, characters, production details, and its significance within the broader context of the Middle-earth saga. The discussion will also cover critical reception and the legacy of the movie in both literary and cinematic realms.

- Plot Overview of *The Hobbit: The Five Armies*
- Main Characters and Their Roles
- Production and Direction
- The Battle of the Five Armies Explained
- Critical Reception and Impact

Plot Overview of *The Hobbit: The Five Armies*

The Hobbit: The Five Armies serves as the final installment in the trilogy that follows the journey of Bilbo Baggins and the company of dwarves seeking to reclaim their homeland from the dragon Smaug. The film picks up immediately after the events of *The Desolation of Smaug*, focusing on the aftermath of Smaug's attack on Lake-town. As the survivors regroup, tensions rise among the different factions interested in the vast treasure within the Lonely Mountain. The narrative intensifies with the arrival of multiple armies preparing to claim the riches, leading to an epic confrontation. Throughout the film, key themes such as loyalty, sacrifice, and the cost of greed are explored in depth, culminating in a heroic stand that reshapes the political landscape of Middle-earth.

Summary of Key Plot Points

The movie begins with the destruction wrought by Smaug on Lake-town, forcing the inhabitants to seek refuge and assistance. Bard the Bowman emerges as a leader determined to protect his people and claim justice by targeting the dragon. Meanwhile, Thorin Oakenshield, the dwarf king, becomes consumed by his desire to secure the treasure, leading to internal conflict within the company. As external forces converge—elves, men, dwarves, and goblins—the fragile alliances are tested. The film

builds up to the titular battle, where courage and strategy determine the fate of the five armies involved.

Connection to Previous Films

This installment closely ties to the established storylines from *The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey* and *The Desolation of Smaug*. It resolves character arcs and narrative threads introduced earlier, particularly focusing on Thorin's transformation and Bilbo's growth as a hero. The film also bridges the story to *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy, highlighting the impact of the treasure and the growing darkness in Middle-earth.

Main Characters and Their Roles

The characters in *The Hobbit: The Five Armies* are central to driving the plot and embodying the themes of the story. Each major figure represents different motivations and values, contributing to the complexity of the narrative and the dynamics of the conflict.

Thorin Oakenshield

Thorin is the determined leader of the dwarven company, whose quest to reclaim Erebor and its treasure is marked by both bravery and a tragic descent into obsession. His struggle with "dragon sickness" influences his decisions and relationships, ultimately shaping the course of the battle.

Bilbo Baggins

Bilbo serves as the moral compass and reluctant hero, whose courage and wit often provide crucial advantages. His journey from a timid hobbit to a courageous adventurer is showcased as he navigates the dangers surrounding the treasure and the escalating war.

Bard the Bowman

Bard is the human archer who plays a pivotal role in defending Lake-town and confronting Smaug. His leadership qualities and sense of justice position him as a key figure in the alliances that form before the battle.

Supporting Characters

The film also features important roles played by characters such as Legolas, Thranduil, and various dwarves and elves. Their interactions and personal motivations add depth to the story and highlight the diverse perspectives involved in the conflict.

- Thorin Oakenshield – Dwarven leader and central figure
- Bilbo Baggins – The hobbit protagonist
- Bard the Bowman – Human archer and leader
- Thranduil – Elvenking with vested interests
- Gandalf the Grey – The wizard guiding the heroes

Production and Direction

The Hobbit: The Five Armies was directed by Peter Jackson, who also helmed the Lord of the Rings trilogy. The production entailed extensive use of cutting-edge visual effects, elaborate set designs, and intricate costumes to authentically recreate Tolkien's world. Filming took place primarily in New Zealand, leveraging the country's diverse landscapes to represent the varied environments of Middle-earth.

Visual Effects and Cinematography

The film features groundbreaking visual effects to depict the massive battles and fantastical creatures. Innovative techniques were employed to create realistic portrayals of dragons, orcs, and epic battle sequences. The cinematography emphasizes both grand scale and intimate character moments, enhancing the immersive experience.

Score and Sound Design

Composer Howard Shore returned to provide the musical score, integrating thematic elements from previous Middle-earth films while introducing new motifs to reflect the story's darker and more intense tone. The sound design complements the action sequences and emotional beats, enriching the atmosphere throughout the film.

Challenges and Innovations

Producing the final installment posed challenges such as managing large-scale battle scenes and coordinating a vast ensemble cast. The filmmakers balanced fan expectations with the need to deliver a satisfying conclusion, incorporating new material inspired by Tolkien's appendices and related works.

The Battle of the Five Armies Explained

The titular battle is the centerpiece of the film, involving five distinct armies clashing over

control of the Lonely Mountain and its treasure. This conflict is not only a physical confrontation but also a representation of conflicting interests, alliances, and the consequences of greed.

Armies Involved

The five armies that engage in the battle include:

- Dwarves, led by Thorin Oakenshield and his kin
- Elves, under the command of Thranduil, seeking a share of the treasure
- Men of Lake-town, led by Bard, aiming to rebuild their community
- Orcs and goblins, led by Azog the Defiler, intent on destruction
- Wargs, allied with the orcs, providing additional forces

Strategic Elements and Key Moments

The battle unfolds with shifting alliances and tactical maneuvers. Initial hostilities between men, elves, and dwarves give way to a united front against the orc and warg forces. Heroic acts, sacrifices, and leadership decisions define the outcome. Notable moments include Thorin's final stand and the intervention of unexpected allies, which turn the tide of the battle.

Symbolism and Themes

The battle symbolizes the destructive nature of greed and the potential for unity in the face of common threats. It also serves as a narrative device to conclude character arcs and set the stage for future events in Middle-earth's history.

Critical Reception and Impact

The Hobbit: The Five Armies received mixed to positive reviews from critics and audiences alike. Praise was often directed at the visual effects, action sequences, and performances, particularly the portrayal of Thorin and Bard. However, some critics noted issues with pacing and the extension of the original novel's story into a trilogy format.

Box Office Performance

The film performed strongly at the box office worldwide, contributing to the overall success of The Hobbit trilogy. Its commercial performance demonstrated the enduring

popularity of Tolkien's works and the interest in cinematic fantasy epics.

Legacy within Middle-earth Adaptations

As the concluding chapter of The Hobbit films, The Five Armies solidified the cinematic portrayal of Tolkien's prelude to The Lord of the Rings. It influenced subsequent fantasy filmmaking and expanded the fan base for Middle-earth stories. The film's depiction of epic battles and character complexity continues to be referenced in discussions of fantasy cinema.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the main plot of 'The Hobbit: The Battle of the Five Armies'?

The main plot centers around the aftermath of the dragon Smaug's attack on Lake-town and the ensuing battle among five armies vying for control of the treasure hoarded in the Lonely Mountain.

Who directed 'The Hobbit: The Battle of the Five Armies'?

Peter Jackson directed 'The Hobbit: The Battle of the Five Armies.'

Which armies participate in the Battle of the Five Armies?

The five armies are the Dwarves, Elves, Men, Orcs (and Wargs), and the Eagles.

How does 'The Hobbit: The Battle of the Five Armies' connect to 'The Lord of the Rings' trilogy?

The film serves as a prequel, setting up events and characters that appear in 'The Lord of the Rings,' including the rise of Sauron and the One Ring's significance.

Who plays the character Thorin Oakenshield in the movie?

Richard Armitage plays Thorin Oakenshield in 'The Hobbit: The Battle of the Five Armies.'

What role does Bilbo Baggins play in the battle?

Bilbo Baggins acts as a mediator and participates in the conflict, struggling with his

loyalty to Thorin and his own moral compass during the chaotic battle.

What is the significance of the Arkenstone in the film?

The Arkenstone is a precious gem sought by Thorin as a symbol of his right to rule, and its possession becomes a source of conflict among the characters.

How was 'The Hobbit: The Battle of the Five Armies' received by critics and audiences?

The film received mixed to positive reviews, praised for its visual effects and action sequences, but some criticized its pacing and length.

Are there any major differences between the film and the book regarding the Battle of the Five Armies?

Yes, the film expands on the battle with additional characters and action scenes, and includes material from other Tolkien writings, making it more elaborate compared to the book's concise description.

Additional Resources

1. The Hobbit: The Battle of the Five Armies - Official Movie Novelization

This novelization by Brian Sibley closely follows the events of the movie adaptation, expanding on the climactic battle between dwarves, elves, men, goblins, and wargs. It provides readers with a detailed account of the alliances, betrayals, and heroic feats that shape the outcome of the battle. Fans of the film and Tolkien's work will appreciate the vivid descriptions and added insights into the characters' motivations.

2. The Hobbit by J.R.R. Tolkien

The original novel that sets the stage for the Battle of the Five Armies, "The Hobbit" follows Bilbo Baggins on his unexpected journey with a company of dwarves to reclaim their homeland. The story builds up to the fateful battle, introducing key characters and the treasure that sparks the conflict. This classic fantasy tale is essential for understanding the context and stakes of the battle.

3. Unfinished Tales of Númenor and Middle-earth by J.R.R. Tolkien

This collection of stories and essays provides expanded lore and background on Middle-earth, including details about the races and events involved in the Battle of the Five Armies. It offers deeper insights into the history of the dwarves, elves, and men, enriching readers' understanding of the forces at play. The book is valuable for fans seeking a comprehensive view of Tolkien's world.

4. The Silmarillion by J.R.R. Tolkien

Though focused on events long before "The Hobbit," "The Silmarillion" lays the foundation for many of the themes and histories relevant to the Battle of the Five Armies. It explores the origins of Middle-earth's races and the enduring conflicts between good and evil. Readers gain a broader appreciation of the epic scale and significance of the battles in

Tolkien's legendarium.

5. *The History of Middle-earth: The Peoples of Middle-earth* edited by Christopher Tolkien
Part of a twelve-volume series, this book delves into the genealogies, cultures, and histories of Middle-earth's inhabitants, including dwarves, elves, and men. It sheds light on the background of the factions involved in the Battle of the Five Armies. Scholars and devoted fans will find detailed commentary and unpublished material enriching their understanding of the conflict.

6. *The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King* by J.R.R. Tolkien
While centered on the War of the Ring, this final volume of Tolkien's epic trilogy shares thematic parallels with the Battle of the Five Armies, such as the clash of great armies and the struggle for Middle-earth's future. It provides a continuation of the world's history after the events of "The Hobbit." Readers interested in the consequences of the battle and its impact on Middle-earth will find this essential.

7. *The Dwarves of Middle-earth* by David Day
This illustrated guide explores the culture, history, and notable figures of the dwarves, the central race in the Battle of the Five Armies. It includes detailed profiles that help readers understand the motivations behind the dwarves' quest and their role in the conflict. The book enhances appreciation of the dwarven perspective in Tolkien's narratives.

8. *The Elves of Middle-earth* by Elizabeth Solopova
Focusing on the elves, this book provides an in-depth look at their history, society, and involvement in Middle-earth's major events, including the Battle of the Five Armies. It highlights the complexities of elven alliances and their relationship with other races. This resource is ideal for readers wanting to explore the elven dimension of the story.

9. *The Atlas of Middle-earth* by Karen Wynn Fonstad
This comprehensive atlas maps the geography of Middle-earth, including detailed depictions of the locations relevant to the Battle of the Five Armies. It helps readers visualize the strategic movements and terrain that influenced the battle's outcome. The atlas is a valuable companion for fans seeking to immerse themselves fully in Tolkien's world.

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