

The Merit of English Section

Junior Division

Name of Winner : Ko Hei Wai Heather

Name of School : Marymount Secondary School

Book Title : *The Fellowship of the Ring*

Author : J. R. R. Tolkien

Publisher : Harper Collins Publishers

Memoir of Magic

“One Ring to rule them all, One Ring to find them, One Ring to bring them all and in the darkness bind them.” Round, smooth, gilded. Who could’ve guessed at the malice lurking beneath such an innocuous exterior?

Written by literary genius J.R.R Tolkien, The Fellowship of the Ring is the first in the Lord of the Rings Trilogy. It chronicles Frodo Baggins’ heart-thumping quest to banish darkness from Middle

Earth by destroying the pinnacle of evil—the One Ring. Tolkien's voice flows loud and glad through the arteries of Middle Earth, his charm very much like the bringing of spring—every sway of a gossamer thread captured in mesmerising detail. This flavourful blend of flutterby lashes and shadowed magma has captivated readers for decades, whisking readers along on an impossible quest to reclaim good from evil.

Never before have I seen good against evil on such an earth-breaking scale. It all begins in a drowsy village in the Shire, where a homely hobbit finds in his palm a curious golden object—the One Ring of Depravity, of Dominion, of Death. It was then that the fate of the whole of Middle Earth fell on his frail shoulders. Shadows were rising in the southeast sky; Sauron, the Dark Lord, was rising from the veiled shadows of Mordor, desiring dominion and desolation. Frodo must dispose of it in the fiery inferno—the Cracks of

Doom—Or Middle Earth shall be reduced to a barren wasteland.

This novel is by no means a tiresome, muggy read—not with the specks of delight Tolkien scatters here and there. His writing flows like the purling of river-water, every phrase sparkling with literary value, painted with deep undertones many fantasy reads lack. Frodo and Company do not trudge through marshes in a sour, mundane fashion; instead, their adventure is masterfully leavened with feathery lightness. One of the things I love about the Fellowship is their eternally optimistic spirit—their voices glad as mountain gale in their jovial songs. My spirits were entirely uplifted by the cheer of Tom Bombadil, a truly mirthful spirit with a tinge of shrouding enigma. Tolkien's idea of light is philosophical—the kind that makes you reflect. I fell in love with the simplistic charm of the Shire immediately: A homely village where a sense of comfortable

immutability nestles. Overflowing valleys and common, bumbling folk. Simple, satisfying lives. Charming, that is true, but I was also saddened by the absence of such simple goodness in our age. Bright, yet not so. The resulting work is a flavourful blend of flutterby lashes and shadowed magma—This striking balance is an ace in my book.

Though crafted with a fair swab of light, Tolkien's words are not lacking in depth, sweeping readers off their feet at an unexpected lunge in the marshes. One of the deeper themes, deep as the Mines of Moria where the ferocious Balrog dwells, is the corrupting influence of power. Naturally, all began with the creation of the Ring. Under its placid exterior lies Sauron's parched thirst for dominion and devastation in Middle Earth—a malicious power that warps and corrupts the minds of those near it. Through it, even the wisest were deceived, slain—mighty kings now reduced to nothing but servants

of the Shadow. Another example would be the fell dwarves of Moria; their dark ventures for precious Mithandril awakened the Balrog, a venomous fiend melded of fire and death—Moria is their tomb. “All that is gold does not glitter”, many may say that fantasy can’t quite hit the mark of reality, but this is a lesson many could learn—before they are wholly devoured by the malice of gold.

In that, one must mention the admirable Frodo Baggins. His physical prowess is far from that of a warrior—in fact, he’s never left the comforts of the Shire before embarking on the Road. However, his strong willpower to do good has never faltered despite him being in such close proximity with the Ring; It could not devour him, as it did to many others. Frodo gave me courage, as I now know that my strongest demons could be beaten through stoutness of heart. The courage, strong will and dogged temperance Frodo exhibits is truly

admirable—and through that, he might just make it. He might not know how to defend himself, but after all, no shield is sturdier than the wielding of will and courage.

Tolkien's writing has a charm as light as the snowflakes that drift down on one's nose, before melting away into dewy goodness. Interestingly, I feel only deep regret at the closing of this enchanting tale as I could find the aching absence of magic in our dreary, mugged world. Light chanting of the agile elves, song and beer trembling in the air... the Fellowship of the Ring is nothing but a wistful memory of the simplicity that had been. This is not only an enthralling trek through plains, woodlands, stone; but a journey of self-discovery and testament. Rediscover magic by delving into this novel—a faded, wistful memoir of lost sorcery and simplistic charm, a suspended primrose in full bloom.