Peter Jackson’s Latest Effort: A Towering Epic

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The second installment of one of the most highly-anticipated trilogies in cinema history, The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers, does not disappoint. From beginning to end, audiences feel the intensity of Tolkien’s epic story as gorgeous landscapes combine with amazing effects sure to leave viewers breathless.

The Two Towers begins where the first installment, The Fellowship of the Ring, left off. While the first movie devoted much of its time to establishing the characters and storyline, the second delves straight into the action. Since the Fellowship has been forced to divide, three separate groups of main characters form the plot of the movie, each struggling to protect Middle Earth against the forces of evil.

The hobbits Frodo (Elijah Wood) and Sam (Sean Astin), my personal favorite, team up with Gollum (voiced by Andy Serkis), a former ringbearer who claims a large role in this film, to travel to Mordor where they hope to destroy the ring.

Gollum’s split personality makes him one of the highlights of the film as he switches between being the sweetest and then suddenly the most frightening character. His actions are based on digitalizing a real actor’s movements, making him strikingly lifelike.

Meanwhile, Aragorn (Viggo Mortensen), Legolas the elf (Orlando Bloom) and Gimli the dwarf (John Rhys-Davies) search for hobbits Merry (Dominic Monaghan) and Pippin (Billy Boyd), who have been captured by the orcs. They end up in a dense forest where they meet Treebeard (voiced by John Rhys-Davies), another new character, and his fellow ents. These ents are walking, talking tree creatures, yet another example of the awesome special effects of The Lord of the Rings trilogy.

The final storyline finds Frodo Baggins (Elijah Wood) battles Gollum (Andy Serkis) in the most recently released section of the Lord of the Rings trilogy.

The main criticism of The Two Towers comes from true Tolkien-lovers concerning the way this middle installment strays from the book. However, at almost three hours long, it is understandable why trimming was necessary. Director Peter Jackson has turned a humble hobbit story into mainstream action, but audiences still feel the enchantment of this magical world in which different creatures must come together against an evil threat. Jackson does an excellent job considering his nearly impossible task. The Two Towers will leave audiences spellbound in anxious anticipation of the final conclusion to the epic trilogy.