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BY MICHAEL GILTZ & FRIENDS

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But Where Will "The Hobbit" Part I Stop?

Wonderful news that Peter Jackson will oversee "The Hobbit." If it had dragged on, Ian McKellen might have become too old to reprise his role as Gandalf. Right now, Jackson is going to produce only, with a director to be named (why try and top yourself?). But with pre-production beginning right away, I wouldn't be terribly surprised if he just couldn't resist. Filming begins in 2009 and the two movies made out of the book will be released in 2010 and 2011.

So the question: where will they break them up? My guess is that it stops after they escape the Misty Mountains and are rescued by the Great Eagles (who consider the hobbit and the dwarves prisoners for a while). Gandalf then leaves them to make their way into Milkwood. (I imagine they'll drop the scene with Beorn, the shapeshifter.) So they make a grand escape from the goblins, hook up with Eagles and say goodbye to Gandalf while -- gulp -- preparing to plunge into Milkwood. Makes sense to me. My next question is tone, since The Hobbit is very much a children's book, quite a bit simpler and old-fashioned compared to the dark and violent Lord of the Rings.

My final question: will I head off to New Zealand to write the making-of book?

NOTE: I'm wrong. It's going to be The Hobbit as one film and then a "bridge" to LOTR based on all the material out there. I hate to question Jackson, but why craft an entirely new story to make a bridge? Is there something inherently thrilling in the intervening years or is he just delighted to get to muck about more in the LOTR world? I thought you could do plenty with "The Hobbit" on its own but of course I'll wait to hear what they have in mind.

POSTED BY MICHAEL IN NEW YORK AT 12:15 PM



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