

Book III, Chapters 10 & 11

*Strange powers have our enemies, and strange weaknesses!
But it has long been said: oft evil will shall evil mar.*

Vocabulary:

Using context as your guide, write a definition for each of the underlined words below. Then check your definition against that given in a standard dictionary.

1. “Peace!” said Saruman, and for a fleeting moment his voice was less suave, and a light flickered in his eyes and was gone. “I do not speak to you yet, Gimli. . . . Far away is your home and small concern of yours are the troubles of this land. But it was not by design of your own that you became embroiled in them, and so I will not blame such part as you have played—a valiant one, I doubt not.”

suave

Your Definition:

Dictionary Definition:

embroiled

Your Definition:

Dictionary Definition:

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2. “But will you parley with this dealer in treachery and murder?”

Your Definition:

Dictionary Definition:

3. “When you hang from a gibbet at your window for the sport of your own crows, I will have peace with you and Orthanc.”

Your Definition:

Dictionary Definition:

4. But they were shut out, listening at a door to words not meant for them: ill-mannered children or stupid servants overhearing the elusive discourse of their elders, and wondering how it would affect their lot. Of loftier mould these two were made: reverend and wise.

lot

Your Definition:

Dictionary Definition:

reverend

Your Definition:

Dictionary Definition:

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5. All the mists were gone. A chill wind blew. The moon, now waxing round, filled the eastern sky with a pale cold sheen.

Your Definition:

Dictionary Definition:

6. “So you heard that?” said Gandalf. “Don’t let it rankle! Be thankful no longer words were aimed at you.”

Your Definition:

Dictionary Definition:

7. They lit a fire in a hollow, down among the roots of a spreading hawthorn, tall as a tree, writhen with age, but hale in every limb.

writhen

Your Definition:

Dictionary Definition:

hale

Your Definition:

Dictionary Definition:

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8. “How long, I wonder, has he been constrained to come often to his glass for inspection and instruction, and the Orthanc-stone so bent towards Barad-dûr that, if any save a will of adamant now looks into it, it will bear his mind and sight swiftly thither?”

Your Definition:

Dictionary Definition:

Questions:

1. Why does Gandalf say his “farewell visit” with Saruman is a “dangerous” task?
2. What is the *palantír*; and how does Gandalf acquire it?
3. As the king’s company leaves Isengard, what does Gandalf ask Treebeard to do about Saruman? What does Treebeard promise?
4. What leads Pippin to look at the *palantír*?

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5. When Pippin encounters Sauron through the *palantír*, what mistaken assumptions does Sauron make?

6. What event prompts Gandalf and the company to ride for Minas Tirith?

Thinking About the Story:

7. Before Gandalf and the rest of the company go to face Saruman, Gandalf tells them, “Those of you who wish may come with me—but beware! And do not jest! This is not the time for it.” To whom might Gandalf be directing the instruction to “not jest”? Why do you think this might be important?

8. Responding to a proposed script for a never-filmed screen adaptation of *The Lord of the Rings*, Tolkien stated that the screenwriter was

too fond of the words hypnosis and hypnotic. Neither genuine hypnosis, nor scientific variants, occur in my tale. Saruman’s voice was not hypnotic but persuasive. [*Letters*, 276.]

What do you think Tolkien means by drawing this distinction? Support your answer with specific references to the text. Note how Saruman attempts different approaches to persuading each person to whom he speaks from Orthanc. Why might persuasion be considered more powerful and dangerous than hypnosis?

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9. What is the significance or symbolism of Saruman's cloak, "the colour of which was not easy to tell, for it changed if they moved their eyes or if he stirred"?

10. How might Pippin's reaction to the *palantír* parallel the reaction of other characters to the One Ring in Book I of *The Fellowship of the Ring*? What conclusions might you draw from these parallels about the nature of temptation?

11. Gandalf tells Pippin, "[T]he burned hand teaches best. After that advice about fire goes to the heart." Explain what he means. Do you agree?

12. Four people have direct contact with the *palantír*: Saruman, Gandalf, Aragorn, and Pippin. For each of these characters, list his response to and actions concerning the *palantír*. Which characters responded similarly?

Saruman:

Gandalf:

Aragorn:

Pippin:

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Dig Deeper:

13. Saruman attempts to persuade King Théoden that through an alliance they could bring peace to Rohan. Théoden, however, replies, “[W]e will have peace, when you and all your works have perished.” Read Jeremiah 6:13–15 and Matthew 10:34–39. According to these verses, when is conflict a necessary part of true peace?

14. Read John 1:4, 5; 3:19–21. Review the exchange between Saruman and Gandalf. How does their exchange illustrate these verses?

15. Compare Romans 12:2–5 with Gandalf’s offer and statements to Saruman. How are they similar? What does Saruman’s response tell us about what he thought of himself and others?

16. Gandalf tells Saruman, “You can leave Orthanc, free—if you choose You might still have turned away from folly and evil, and have been of service. But you choose to stay and gnaw the ends of your old plots. Stay then!” Read Galatians 5:1–6. How might Saruman’s choice illustrate the problem the apostle Paul addresses in this passage?

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17. When Pippin tries to plead ignorance of the consequences of looking into the *palantír*, Gandalf responds, “You knew you were behaving wrongly and foolishly; and you told yourself so, though you did not listen.” How does Pippin’s situation, as Gandalf perceives it, mirror the situation Paul experiences in Romans 7:7–25?

Have you found yourself doing something you knew to be wrong, even as you told yourself not to do it? Did you also justify your actions to yourself as Pippin did, both as he was committing his offense and after?

Optional Activities:

1. From the description in these chapters, draw or paint a picture of Isengard and Orthanc as it once was. You may wish instead to create a diorama of Isengard.