

Gandalf and the Finding of the One Ring from *The Fellowship of the Ring* by J.R.R. Tolkien

Gollum could not get rid of the Ring. He hated and loved it, just as he hated and loved himself. But he had no will left in the matter. A Ring of Power looks after itself. It may slip off treacherously, but its keeper never abandons it. As far as I know, only Bilbo Baggins alone in history ever passed it on to someone else's care. And even so, it was not Gollum, but the Ring itself that decided things. The Ring left *him*. Just in time to meet Bilbo Baggins.

It was the strangest event in the history of the Ring so far: Bilbo's arrival just at that time, and putting his hand on it in the dark. There was more than one power at work. The Ring was trying to get back to its master. It had slipped from Isildur's hand and betrayed him; then when a chance came it caught poor Deagol, and he was murdered; and after that Gollum, and it devoured him. It could make no further use of him: he was too small and mean. So now, when its master was awake once more and sending his dark thought from Mirkwood, it abandoned Gollum, only to be picked up by the most unlikely person imaginable: Bilbo of the Shire! Behind that was something else at work, beyond any design of the Ring-maker. I can put it no plainer than by saying Bilbo was *meant* to find the Ring, and not by its maker. In which case, Frodo, you also were meant to have it. And that may be an encouraging thought. ... You have been chosen, and you must therefore use such strength and heart and wits as you have.