

## Film Review: Too-Long ‘The Hobbit: The Battle of the Five Armies’ Delivers on Intimate, Hand-to-Hand Combat

Submitted by [HollywoodChicago.com](http://www.hollywoodchicago.com) [1] on December 17, 2014 - 4:36pm

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CHICAGO – Though he’s never been called it before in scientific speak, I’m saying it now: *Peter Jackson is a master of mitosis*. He’s one of Hollywood’s best in splitting up the cinematic cellular DNA of one story into three because, apparently, he can’t do epics unless they’re in groups of three.



Rating: **3.5/5.0**

After directing a previous trio of *precious* ring-obsessed films one year apart, Jackson’s back with another threesome. “The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring” released in 2001, “The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers” in 2002 and “The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King” in 2003. Now we have his “The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey” in 2012, “The Hobbit: The Desolation of Smaug” in 2013 and the current “The Hobbit: The Battle of the Five Armies,” which opened in theatres everywhere today.

J.R.R. Tolkien’s book “*The Hobbit*” is only 320 pages long. Because of the success of the previous books and films, though, Tolkien thought it necessary to scribe another 125 pages of the little man’s backstory called “*The Appendices*”. That came in a later edition of the final “The Lord of the Rings” novel “*The Return of the King*”.



[Read Adam Fendelman’s full review of “The Hobbit: The Battle of the Five Armies”.](#) [24]

Even if you add the backstory to the original book, that’s only 445 pages. And that’s still less than the whopping 513 minutes of big-budget Hollywood screen time allotted to Jackson’s three “The Hobbit” films once they survived the edit bay and hit the silver screen.

You know how much time and money can go into a single minute of Hollywood film, and if you include the backstory, that’s 1.15 minutes of screen time given to every much less costly paperback page. Is that generosity for the fans or Jackson’s obsession and inability to cut? It’s a mix of both.

This year’s “The Hobbit: The Battle of the Five Armies” feels too long. Clocking in at 144 minutes, though, it’s actually the shortest of the three “The Hobbit” films and significantly so – by nearly 40 minutes. The previous two films hover right around the 3-hour mark with “The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey” in 2012 at 182 minutes and “The Hobbit: The Desolation of Smaug” in 2013 at 187 minutes. Comparing them to a famously long beloved film, “Schindler’s List” also exceeds 3 hours at 195 minutes.

*“The Hobbit: The Battle of the Five Armies” stars Martin Freeman, Ian McKellen, Richard Armitage, Evangeline Lilly, Luke Evans, Cate Blanchett, Benedict Cumberbatch, Christopher Lee, Hugo Weaving, Orlando Bloom, Lee Pace, Billy Connolly, James Nesbitt, Ken Stott and Aidan Turner from director Peter Jackson and writers Fran Walsh and Philippa Boyens based on the novel “The Hobbit” by J.R.R. Tolkien. The film has a running time of 144 minutes and opened on Dec. 17, 2014. It is rated “PG-13” for extended sequences of intense fantasy action violence and frightening images.*

 [Continue for Adam Fendelman’s full review of “The Hobbit: The Battle of the Five Armies”.](#) [24]



Smaug is played by Benedict Cumberbatch in “The Hobbit: The Battle of the Five Armies”.  
Image credit: Warner Bros. Pictures

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