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*This article is about the fictional character. For the animated being from Jewish folklore, see*[*Golem*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Golem)*. For other uses, see*[*Gollum (disambiguation)*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gollum_(disambiguation))*.*

*"Smeagol" redirects here. For the sea slug, see*[*Smeagol (gastropod)*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Smeagol_(gastropod))*.*

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| **Gollum** | |
| [*The Hobbit*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Hobbit)and[*The Lord of the Rings*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Lord_of_the_Rings) character | |
| [A fish from a ceiling  Description automatically generated](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Gollum_at_Wellington_Airport.jpg)  Sculpture of Gollum catching fish at [Wellington Airport](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wellington_Airport), 2013, to mark the release of [*The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Hobbit:_An_Unexpected_Journey)[[1]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gollum#cite_note-1) | |
| **In-universe information** | |
| **Full name** | Sméagol |
| **Race** | [Hobbit](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hobbit) ([Stoor](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stoor_(Hobbit)) branch) |
| **Gender** | Male |
| **Book(s)** | * [*The Hobbit*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Hobbit) (1937) * [*The Lord of the Rings*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Lord_of_the_Rings) (1954–1955) * [*Unfinished Tales*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Unfinished_Tales) (1980) |

**Gollum** is a [fictional character](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tolkien%27s_monsters) in [J. R. R. Tolkien](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._R._R._Tolkien)'s [Middle-earth legendarium](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tolkien%27s_legendarium). He was introduced in the 1937 [fantasy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fantasy_(genre)) novel [*The Hobbit*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Hobbit), and became important in its sequel, [*The Lord of the Rings*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Lord_of_the_Rings). Gollum was a [Stoor Hobbit](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hobbit#Types)[[T 1]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gollum#cite_note-2)[[T 2]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gollum#cite_note-Letter_214-3) of the River-folk who lived near the [Gladden Fields](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gladden_Fields). In *The Lord of the Rings* it is stated that he was originally known as **Sméagol**, corrupted by the [One Ring](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/One_Ring), and later named Gollum after his habit of making "a horrible swallowing noise in his throat".[[T 3]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gollum#cite_note-Riddles_in_the_Dark-4)

Sméagol obtained the Ring by murdering his relative [Déagol](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/D%C3%A9agol" \o "Déagol), who found it in the [River Anduin](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/River_Anduin). Gollum referred to the Ring as "my precious" or "precious", and it extended his life far beyond natural limits. Centuries of the Ring's influence twisted Gollum's body and mind, and, by the time of the novels, he "loved and hated [the Ring], as he loved and hated himself."[[T 4]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gollum#cite_note-Shadow_of_the_Past-5) Throughout the story, Gollum was torn between his lust for the Ring and his desire to be free of it. [Bilbo Baggins](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bilbo_Baggins) found the Ring and took it for his own, and Gollum afterwards pursued it for the rest of his life. Gollum finally seized the Ring from [Frodo Baggins](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frodo_Baggins) at the Cracks of Doom in [Mount Doom](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mount_Doom) in [Mordor](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mordor), but he fell into the fires of the volcano, where both he and the Ring were destroyed.

Commentators have described Gollum as a psychological [shadow figure](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shadow_(Jung)) for Frodo and as an evil guide in contrast to the [wizard](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Istari) [Gandalf](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gandalf), the good guide. They have noted, too, that Gollum is not wholly evil, and that he has a part to play in the will of [Eru Iluvatar](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eru_Iluvatar" \o "Eru Iluvatar), the omnipotent god of [Middle-earth](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Middle-earth), [necessary to the destruction](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Economy_of_Salvation) of the Ring. For Gollum's literary origins, scholars have compared Gollum to the shrivelled hag Gagool in [Rider Haggard](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rider_Haggard)'s 1885 novel [*King Solomon's Mines*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/King_Solomon%27s_Mines) and to the subterranean [Morlocks](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Morlocks) in [H. G. Wells](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/H._G._Wells)'s 1895 novel [*The Time Machine*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Time_Machine).

Gollum was voiced by [Brother Theodore](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brother_Theodore) in [Rankin-Bass](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rankin-Bass)'s animated adaptations of [*The Hobbit*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Hobbit_(1977_film)) and [*Return of the King*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Return_of_the_King_(1980_film)), and by [Peter Woodthorpe](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peter_Woodthorpe) in [Ralph Bakshi](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ralph_Bakshi)'s [animated film version](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Lord_of_the_Rings_(1978_film)) and the [BBC](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/BBC)'s [1981 radio adaptation of *The Lord of the Rings*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Lord_of_the_Rings_(1981_radio_series)). He was portrayed through [motion capture](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Motion_capture) by [Andy Serkis](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Andy_Serkis) in [Peter Jackson](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peter_Jackson)'s [*Lord of the Rings*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Lord_of_the_Rings_(film_series)) and [*The Hobbit*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Hobbit_film_trilogy) film trilogies.

Name

In Appendix F of *The Lord of the Rings*, the name "Sméagol" is said to be a "translation" of the [Middle-earth](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Middle-earth) name *Trahald* (having to do with the idea of "burrowing"), and rendered with a name based on [Old English](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Old_English) *smygel* of similar meaning.[[2]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gollum#cite_note-6)

The rhyming name of his relative "Déagol" is from [Old English](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Old_English_language): *dēagol*, meaning "secretive, hidden".[[3]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gollum#cite_note-7) In Tolkien's [*Red Book of Westmarch*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Red_Book_of_Westmarch), the name "Déagol" is supposedly a translation of the "original" name in the author-invented language of [Westron](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Westron" \o "Westron), *Nahald*, with the same meaning.[[4]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gollum#cite_note-ntc-8)

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Names and**[**etymology**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Etymology) | | | |
| [**Old English**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Old_English) | **Tolkien** | [**Westron**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Westron) | **Meaning** |
| [*smygel*](https://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/smugan#Old_English) | Sméagol | *Trahald* | creeping |
| [*dēagol*](https://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/deagol#Old_English) | Déagol | *Nahald* | secretive |

Appearances

***The Hobbit***

Gollum was introduced in [*The Hobbit*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Hobbit) as "a small, slimy creature" who lived on a small island in an underground lake at the roots of the [Misty Mountains](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Misty_Mountains). He survived on cave fish, which he caught from a small boat, and small [goblins](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Orc_(Middle-earth)) who strayed too far from the [stronghold of the Great Goblin](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Goblin_Town). Over the years, his eyes adapted to the dark and became "lamp-like", shining with a sickly pale light.[[T 3]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gollum#cite_note-Riddles_in_the_Dark-4)

[Bilbo Baggins](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bilbo_Baggins) stumbled upon Gollum's lair, having found [the Ring](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/One_Ring) in the network of goblin tunnels leading down to the lake. At his wits' end in the dark, Bilbo agreed to a [riddle game](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Riddle) with Gollum on the chance of being shown the way out of the mountains.[[T 3]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gollum#cite_note-Riddles_in_the_Dark-4) In the first edition of *The Hobbit*, Gollum's size is not stated.[[5]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gollum#cite_note-9) Originally, he was also characterised as being less bound to the Ring than in later versions; he offered to give the Ring to Bilbo if he lost the riddle game, and he showed Bilbo the way out of the mountains after losing. To fit the concept of the ruling Ring that emerged during the writing of *The Lord of the Rings*, Tolkien revised later editions of *The Hobbit*. The version of the story given in the first edition became the lie that Bilbo made up to justify his possession of the Ring to the [Dwarves](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dwarf_(Middle-earth)) and [Gandalf](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gandalf).

In the new version, Gollum pretended that he would show Bilbo the way out if he lost the riddle-game, but he actually planned to use the Ring to kill and eat him. Discovering the Ring missing, he suddenly realised the answer to Bilbo's last riddle – "What have I got in my pocket?" – and flew into a rage. Bilbo inadvertently discovered the Ring's power of invisibility as he fled, allowing him to follow Gollum undetected to a back entrance of the caves. Gollum was convinced that Bilbo knew the way out all along, and hoped to intercept him near the entrance, lest the goblins apprehend Bilbo and find the Ring. Bilbo at first thought to kill Gollum in order to escape, but was overcome with pity, and so merely leaped over him. As Bilbo escaped, Gollum cried out, "Thief, Thief, Thief! Baggins! We hates it, we hates it, we hates it forever!"[[T 3]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gollum#cite_note-Riddles_in_the_Dark-4)

***The Lord of the Rings***

Gollum's real name was Sméagol, and he had once been a member of the secluded branch of the early Stoorish [Hobbits](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hobbit). He spent the early years of his life with his extended family under a [matriarch](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Matriarch), his grandmother. On Sméagol's birthday, he and his relative Déagol went fishing in the [Gladden Fields](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gladden_Fields). There, Déagol found the Ring in the riverbed after being pulled into the water by a fish. Sméagol fell immediately under the Ring's influence and demanded it as a birthday present; when Déagol refused, Sméagol strangled him.[[T 2]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gollum#cite_note-Letter_214-3)[[T 4]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gollum#cite_note-Shadow_of_the_Past-5)

Sméagol later used the Ring for thieving, spying and antagonising his friends and relatives, who nicknamed him "Gollum" for the swallowing noise he made in his throat, until his grandmother disowned him. He wandered in the wilderness for a few years until he finally retreated to a deep cavern in the [Misty Mountains](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Misty_Mountains). The Ring's malignant influence twisted his body and mind, and prolonged his life well beyond its natural limits.[[T 4]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gollum#cite_note-Shadow_of_the_Past-5)

Gollum left his cave in pursuit of Bilbo a few years after losing the Ring, but the trail was cold. He made his way to the edge of [Mordor](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mordor), where he met the monstrous spider [Shelob](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shelob" \o "Shelob) and became her spy, worshipping her and bringing her food. He was eventually captured by Sauron's forces and tortured, revealing to Sauron the names of "Baggins" and "the [Shire](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shire_(Middle-earth))". His testimony alerted Sauron to the existence and significance of hobbits in general and the Baggins family in particular. He was freed, but was soon caught by [Aragorn](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aragorn) and placed in the care of the [Wood Elves](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Silvan_Elves) of [Mirkwood](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mirkwood). Gandalf interrogated him about the Ring. He escaped from them (with the help of Sauron's [Orcs](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Orc_(Middle-earth))) and descended into [Moria](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Moria_(Middle-earth)).[[T 4]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gollum#cite_note-Shadow_of_the_Past-5)

Gollum began following the [Fellowship of the Ring](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fellowship_of_the_Ring_(characters)) in Moria, but was noticed by [Frodo Baggins](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frodo_Baggins), Gandalf, and Aragorn. He trailed the Fellowship to the edge of [Lothlórien](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lothl%C3%B3rien" \o "Lothlórien). He picked up their trail again as they left,[[T 5]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gollum#cite_note-Great_River-10) following them all the way to [Rauros](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rauros), then pursued Frodo and [Samwise Gamgee](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Samwise_Gamgee) across the [Emyn Muil](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Emyn_Muil) when they struck out on their own towards Mordor.[[T 6]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gollum#cite_note-The_Taming_of_Sm%C3%A9agol-11)

Frodo and Sam confronted Gollum in the Emyn Muil; Gollum nearly strangled Sam, but Frodo subdued him with his Elvish sword, [Sting](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sting_(Middle-earth)), which had once belonged to [Bilbo](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bilbo_Baggins). Sam tied an Elvish rope around Gollum's ankle as a leash, but the mere touch of the rope pained him. Taking pity on the wretched creature, just as Bilbo once had, Frodo made Gollum swear to help them. Agreeing to the oath, Gollum swore by the Ring itself, and Frodo released him.[[T 6]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gollum#cite_note-The_Taming_of_Sm%C3%A9agol-11) The unlikely company, guided by Gollum, made their way to the [Black Gate](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Morannon), the main entrance to Mordor. Frodo's kindness brought out Gollum's better nature, and he made at least some effort to keep his promise. Sam, however, despised Gollum upon sight, and often warned Frodo of the creature's deception and slipperiness.[[T 7]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gollum#cite_note-12)

When they reached the Black Gate and found it well-guarded, Gollum offered to lead them toward an alternative entrance into Mordor. Along the way, Frodo and Sam were seized by [Faramir](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Faramir), and Gollum slipped away uncaught (but not unseen) and followed them.[[T 8]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gollum#cite_note-Of_Herbs_and_Stewed_Rabbit-13) When Frodo allowed Faramir to briefly take Gollum prisoner in order to spare his life, Gollum felt betrayed, and began plotting against his new "master". Faramir found out that Gollum was taking them to the pass of [Cirith Ungol](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cirith_Ungol), an entrance to Mordor through the [Ephel Dúath](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ephel_D%C3%BAath" \o "Ephel Dúath) mountains. He warned Frodo and Sam of the evil of that place, as well as the treachery he sensed in Gollum.[[T 9]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gollum#cite_note-The_Forbidden_Pool-14)

Frodo, Sam, and Gollum left Faramir and climbed the stairs to Cirith Ungol. Gollum slipped away and visited Shelob, planning to feed the hobbits to her and then get the Ring for himself when she was done. When he returned, he found the hobbits asleep, and the sight of Frodo sleeping nearly moved Gollum to repent. However, Sam woke up and spoke harshly to him, and the opportunity for redemption was lost.[[T 10]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gollum#cite_note-15)

Gollum followed through with his plan and led Frodo and Sam into [Shelob's Lair](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shelob%27s_Lair" \o "Shelob's Lair). There, Frodo was stung by Shelob, taken prisoner by Orcs, and hauled to the Tower of Cirith Ungol.[[T 11]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gollum#cite_note-Shelob's_Lair-16) Sam rescued Frodo from the [Tower of Cirith Ungol](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tower_of_Cirith_Ungol) and, dressed in scavenged [Orc-armour](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Middle-earth_weapons_and_armour), the two made their way across the [plateau of Gorgoroth](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gorgoroth_(Middle-earth)) to [Mount Doom](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mount_Doom). When Frodo and Sam had almost reached their destination, Gollum attacked them, but Frodo threw him down. Sam faced Gollum on his own, letting Frodo continue up the mountain to finish their mission. Like Bilbo and Frodo before him, Sam spared Gollum's life out of pity, turned his back on the creature, and followed Frodo.[[T 12]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gollum#cite_note-17)

Moments later, Frodo stood on the edge of the Crack of Doom, but claimed the Ring for himself and put it on. Gollum struck, struggled with the invisible Frodo, bit off Frodo's finger, and seized the Ring. Gloating over his "prize" and dancing madly, he stepped over the edge and fell into the Crack of Doom, taking the Ring with him with a last cry of "Precious!" Thus, the Ring was destroyed and Sauron defeated. Sam cursed Gollum after his death, but Frodo urged his friend to forgive him, as without him the quest would have failed.[[T 13]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gollum#cite_note-18)

Characteristics

[A cartoon of a creature in water

Description automatically generated](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Large_Gollum_by_Tove_Jansson.jpg)A very large Gollum in [Tove Jansson](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tove_Jansson)'s illustration for the 1962 [Swedish translation of *The Hobbit*](https://sv.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bilbo_%E2%80%93_En_hobbits_%C3%A4ventyr), before Tolkien stated that the monster was small[[6]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gollum#cite_note-Holownia_2014-19)

*Further information:*[*Tolkien's monsters*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tolkien%27s_monsters)

In the first edition of *The Hobbit*, Tolkien made no reference to Gollum's size, leading illustrators such as [Tove Jansson](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tove_Jansson) to portray him as very large.[[6]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gollum#cite_note-Holownia_2014-19) Tolkien realised the omission, and added in later editions that Gollum was "a small slimy creature."[[T 3]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gollum#cite_note-Riddles_in_the_Dark-4) [*The Two Towers*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Two_Towers) characterises him as slightly larger than Sam;[[T 11]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gollum#cite_note-Shelob's_Lair-16) and later, comparing him to Shelob, one of the Orcs describes him as "rather like a spider himself, or perhaps like a starved frog."[[T 14]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gollum#cite_note-20)

*The Hobbit* states that Gollum had pockets, in which he kept a tooth-sharpening-rock, goblin teeth, wet shells, and a scrap of bat wing;[[T 3]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gollum#cite_note-Riddles_in_the_Dark-4) it describes him as having a thin face, "big round pale eyes", and being "as dark as darkness".[[T 3]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gollum#cite_note-Riddles_in_the_Dark-4) In *The Two Towers*, [rangers of Ithilien](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rangers_of_Ithilien) wonder if he is a tailless black squirrel.[[T 9]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gollum#cite_note-The_Forbidden_Pool-14) According to Sam in [*The Fellowship of the Ring*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Fellowship_of_the_Ring), he had "paddle-feet, like a swan's almost, only they seemed bigger" when Gollum was following their boat by paddling a log down the [River Anduin](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/River_Anduin).[[T 5]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gollum#cite_note-Great_River-10) In a manuscript written to guide illustrators to the appearance of his characters, Tolkien explained that Gollum had pale skin, but wore dark clothes and was often seen in poor light.[[7]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gollum#cite_note-FOOTNOTEHammondScull2005447-21)

In *The Fellowship of the Ring*, [Aragorn](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aragorn) states that "his malice is great and gives him a strength hardly to be believed in one so lean and withered."[[T 15]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gollum#cite_note-Council_of_Elrond-22) In *The Two Towers*, Gollum's grip is described as "soft, but horribly strong" as he wrestles with Sam.[[T 6]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gollum#cite_note-The_Taming_of_Sm%C3%A9agol-11)

Sam notes that Gollum has two distinct personalities: the sinister "Stinker" and the submissive "Slinker", with a green glint in his eyes showcasing the change between them. In "The Passage of the Marshes" chapter, Sam overhears a debate between the two, with the nefarious "Stinker" ultimately coming out on top.[[T 16]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gollum#cite_note-23) However, as shown in "The Stairs of Cirith Ungol" chapter, Gollum often oscillates between good and evil. When Gollum stumbles upon Frodo and Sam outside of Shelob's Lair, he is briefly overcome and nearly repents, but this is ultimately ruined by Sam's skeptical remarks.[[T 17]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gollum#cite_note-24) Tolkien describes this as the story's most tragic moment, and he claims "Sam failed to note the complete change in Gollum's tone and aspect. Gollum's repentance was blighted, Frodo's pity was wasted, and Shelob's Lair became inevitable."[[T 18]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gollum#cite_note-25)

**Personality**

[A person with a scary face

Description automatically generated with medium confidence](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Gollum_s_journey_commences_by_Frederic_Bennett_(detail).jpg)Gollum by Frederic Bennet, 2014 (detail)

Tolkien describes Gollum's personality after he had been captured by Frodo and Sam:[[T 6]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gollum#cite_note-The_Taming_of_Sm%C3%A9agol-11)

For that moment a change, which lasted for some time, came over him. He spoke with less hissing and whining, and he spoke to his companions direct, not to his precious self. He would cringe and flinch, if they stepped near him or made any sudden movement, and he avoided the touch of their elven-cloaks; but he was friendly, and indeed pitifully anxious to please. He would cackle with laughter and caper if any jest was made, or even if Frodo spoke kindly to him, and weep if Frodo rebuked him.[[T 6]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gollum#cite_note-The_Taming_of_Sm%C3%A9agol-11)

Gollum hates everything [Elf](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Elf_(Middle-earth))-made. In [*The Two Towers*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Two_Towers), Sam bound Gollum's neck with Elven rope, which caused Gollum excruciating pain by its mere presence.[[T 6]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gollum#cite_note-The_Taming_of_Sm%C3%A9agol-11) He was unable or unwilling to eat the *lembas* bread Sam and Frodo carried with them, and rejects cooked rabbit in favour of raw meat or fish.[[T 8]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gollum#cite_note-Of_Herbs_and_Stewed_Rabbit-13)[[T 9]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gollum#cite_note-The_Forbidden_Pool-14)

**Speech**

Gollum speaks in an idiosyncratic manner, often [referring to himself in the third person](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Illeism), and frequently talks to himself. In *The Hobbit*, he always refers to himself as "my precious".[[T 3]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gollum#cite_note-Riddles_in_the_Dark-4) When not referring to himself in the third person, he sometimes [speaks of himself in the plural as "we"](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nosism), hinting at his alter ego. The rare occasions when he actually says "I" are interpreted by Frodo as an indication that Sméagol's better self has the upper hand. Gollum also uses his own versions of words similar to the original words. He usually [adds -es to the end of a plural](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reduplicated_plural), resulting in words such as "hobbitses" instead of hobbits or "birdses" instead of birds. When forming the present tense of verbs, he frequently extends the third person singular ending -s to other persons and numbers, resulting in constructions like "we *hates* it" (by analogy with "he hates it"). Gollum's speech emphasises [sibilants](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sibilant), often drawing them out.[[T 19]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gollum#cite_note-26)

**Age**

Through the influence of the Ring, Gollum's life was extended far beyond that of other members of his clan. An average hobbit lifespan is over 100 years, but a span of 556 years separates Gollum's finding of the Ring and its destruction, by which time he was almost 600 years old.[[T 4]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gollum#cite_note-Shadow_of_the_Past-5)

Analysis

[A painting of a person kneeling on a rock

Description automatically generated](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Hugo_Vogel_-_Kain_erschl%C3%A4gt_Abel.jpg)The story of Sméagol's murder of Déagol echoes the Biblical story of [Cain and Abel](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cain_and_Abel).[[8]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gollum#cite_note-Nelson_2008-27) *Cain Kills Abel* by [Hugo Vogel](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hugo_Vogel_(painter)), 1922

**Sméagol and Déagol**

**Cain, Abel, and Grendel**

*Further information:*[*Beowulf in Middle-earth*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Beowulf_in_Middle-earth)

Commentators including the theologian [Ralph C. Wood](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ralph_C._Wood),[[9]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gollum#cite_note-Wood_2003-28) and the critics Brent Nelson and Kathleen Gilligan, have remarked that Sméagol's murder of Déagol echoes [Cain's killing of Abel](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cain_and_Abel) in [Genesis](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Genesis) (4:1-18). Cain is jealous of his brother Abel; Sméagol is jealous of the shiny gold ring that his friend Déagol has found. Nelson observes that the names of the friends are similar, hinting that at least figuratively they are "brothers". Cain is guilty of Abel's murder, and ends up as a restless wanderer, never finding peace; Sméagol likewise is disowned and exiled by his family, and "wandered in loneliness".[[T 4]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gollum#cite_note-Shadow_of_the_Past-5) Nelson notes that Tolkien was a famed scholar of the [Old English](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Old_English) poem [*Beowulf*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Beowulf), which he acknowledged was [a major source of his own fiction](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Beowulf_and_Middle-earth);[[T 20]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gollum#cite_note-29) and that the *Beowulf* poet calls the monster [Grendel](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grendel) one of the sons of Cain. Among the many parallels between Gollum and Grendel are their affinity for water, their isolation from society, and their bestial description.[[10]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gollum#cite_note-Gilligan_2011-30)[[8]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gollum#cite_note-Nelson_2008-27)

The Tolkien scholar [Verlyn Flieger](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Verlyn_Flieger) suggests that Gollum is [Tolkien's central monster](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tolkien%27s_monsters)-figure, likening him to both Grendel and [the *Beowulf* dragon](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Beowulf_Dragon), "the twisted, broken, outcast hobbit whose manlike shape and dragonlike greed combine both the *Beowulf* kinds of monster in one figure".[[11]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gollum#cite_note-Flieger_2004-31)

**Wagner's *Der Ring des Nibelungen***

*Further information:*[*Tolkien and the Norse*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tolkien_and_the_Norse)

[A drawing of a person holding an object

Description automatically generated](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Arthur_Rackham_Siegfried_and_Mime_(detail).jpg)The shrunken gold-obsessed [Mime](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Regin), described as a Gollum-like figure,[[12]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gollum#cite_note-McGregor_2011-32) cowers behind the celebrating [Siegfried](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sigurd) in [Wagner](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wagner)'s [*Der Ring des Nibelungen*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Der_Ring_des_Nibelungen). Illustration by [Arthur Rackham](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arthur_Rackham), 1911

Jamie McGregor, writing in *[Mythlore](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mythlore" \o "Mythlore)*, compares Sméagol's murder of Déagol to [Fafner](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fafnir#In_Wagner)'s murder of his brother [Fasolt](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fasolt) in [Richard Wagner](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Richard_Wagner)'s [*Der Ring des Nibelungen*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Der_Ring_des_Nibelungen). He notes that Tolkien denied any comparison of his Ring with Wagner's, and that this was accepted by his biographer [Humphrey Carpenter](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Humphrey_Carpenter).[[12]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gollum#cite_note-McGregor_2011-32) All the same, McGregor notes that Arthur Morgan identified evident parallels, starting with [Alberich](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alberich)'s curse: there is only one ring; it is cursed; it gives limitless power; owning it brings only misery, and it consumes its owner, who becomes its slave; its owner is called the Lord; owning it is living death.[[13]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gollum#cite_note-Morgan_1992-33)

McGregor further compares Déagol's delight in the ring with the [Rhinemaidens](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rhinemaidens" \o "Rhinemaidens)' innocent rejoicing in their gold: "And behold! when he washed the mud away, there in his hand lay a beautiful golden ring; and it shone and glittered in the sun, so that his heart was glad".[[T 4]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gollum#cite_note-Shadow_of_the_Past-5) He draws a parallel between Sméagol's asking for the Ring with Fafner's; Déagol refuses, saying "I'm going to keep it", just as Fasolt says "I hold it: it belongs to me"; Sméagol derisively says "Oh, are you indeed, my love", and strangles him, turning by degrees into the wretched creature Gollum, while Fafner sourly says "Hold it fast in case it falls" and clubs Fasolt to death, becoming by degrees a treasure-fixated dragon.[[12]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gollum#cite_note-McGregor_2011-32)[[T 4]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gollum#cite_note-Shadow_of_the_Past-5)

Much later, Bilbo blunders into Gollum's cave and finds the Ring by accident; he holds off Gollum with his sword, and escapes by winning a peaceful battle, a riddle contest; [Siegfried](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sigurd) is led by [Mime](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Regin) to the dragon's den, kills Fafner to save himself from being eaten; and takes the ring as a bird's voice suggests it. Alberich had cursed the "thief" who took the ring; Gollum curses Bilbo for taking his Ring. On the other hand, McGregor writes, Siegfried is a hero, Bilbo, an [anti-hero](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anti-hero); and the shrunken Mime is the most Gollum-like character in Wagner's Ring Cycle.[[12]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gollum#cite_note-McGregor_2011-32)[[T 3]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gollum#cite_note-Riddles_in_the_Dark-4)

**Psychological "pairing" with Frodo**

*Further information:*[*Reception of J. R. R. Tolkien § Jungian archetypes*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reception_of_J._R._R._Tolkien#Jungian_archetypes)

A variety of commentators have suggested that Gollum constitutes a "[shadow figure](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shadow_(Jung))" for Frodo, as his dark [*alter ego*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alter_ego) ("other self") according to [Carl Jung](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carl_Jung)'s theory of psychological [individuation](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Individuation). Some have identified many such "pairings", such as [Denethor](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Denethor) as a shadow for [Théoden](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Th%C3%A9oden), [Boromir](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Boromir) for [Aragorn](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aragorn), [Saruman](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saruman) for [Gandalf](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gandalf), [Ted Sandyman](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ted_Sandyman) for Sam Gamgee, the [Barrow-wight](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Barrow-wight) for [Tom Bombadil](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tom_Bombadil), and [Shelob](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shelob" \o "Shelob) for [Galadriel](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Galadriel), but the Gollum/Frodo pairing is by far the most widely accepted.[[14]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gollum#cite_note-VV.2019-34)

**Evil guide**

*Further information:*[*Psychological journeys of Middle-earth*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Psychological_journeys_of_Middle-earth)

The Tolkien scholar Charles W. Nelson described Gollum as an evil guide, contrasted with Gandalf, the good guide (like [Virgil](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Virgil) in [Dante](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dante)'s [*Inferno*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Inferno_(Dante))) in *Lord of the Rings*. He notes, too, that both Gollum and Gandalf are servants of The One, [Eru Ilúvatar](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eru_Il%C3%BAvatar" \o "Eru Ilúvatar), in the struggle against the forces of darkness, and "ironically" all of them, good and bad, are necessary to the success of the quest.[[15]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gollum#cite_note-Nelson_2002-35)

**Playing a part in a cosmic game**

*Further information:*[*Christianity in Middle-earth § Moral conflict*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christianity_in_Middle-earth#Moral_conflict)

David Callaway, writing in *[Mythlore](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mythlore" \o "Mythlore)*, notes that Tolkien, a devout [Roman Catholic](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roman_Catholic), had made [Middle-earth](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Middle-earth) a place where good and evil are in conflict under an omnipotent god, Eru Ilúvatar: in other words, "his [cosmology](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cosmology) is [Christian](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christian)".[[16]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gollum#cite_note-Callaway_1984-36) Callaway describes Gollum as fitting into this framework as a being not wholly evil, able to make moral choices.[[16]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gollum#cite_note-Callaway_1984-36)

The [Episcopal](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Episcopalianism) priest [Fleming Rutledge](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fleming_Rutledge) writes that at the [Council of Elrond](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Council_of_Elrond), Frodo angrily resists the notion that Gollum was a Hobbit like himself. She adds that Gandalf describes the tale of Gollum's enslavement to the Ring as "a sad story" rather than as Frodo's description of him, "loathsome". Gandalf says that Gollum "had no [will](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Free_will_in_theology) left in the matter", and could not get rid of the Ring; instead, "the Ring itself .. decided things".[[T 15]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gollum#cite_note-Council_of_Elrond-22) Rutledge comments that the sad story has happened to everybody, trapped, as Christians believe, in "Sin and Death", and states that[[17]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gollum#cite_note-Rutledge_2004-37)

The genuinely revolting Gollum is central not only to the surface narrative, ... but also to the underlying theological drama.[[17]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gollum#cite_note-Rutledge_2004-37)

Eru makes use of every being's choices for good: Callaway gives as example the way that [Gríma Wormtongue](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gr%C3%ADma_Wormtongue)'s angry throwing of the *[palantír](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palant%C3%ADr" \o "Palantír)*, a crystal ball-like stone of seeing, enables [Pippin Took](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pippin_Took) to look in the stone and reveal himself to [Sauron](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sauron); in turn, Sauron jumps to a wrong conclusion about the stone and the hobbit, which assists the Fellowship in completing their quest, destroying the One Ring. Similarly, Callaway argues, Gollum "is being partly manipulated by Eru in this cosmic chess game"[[16]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gollum#cite_note-Callaway_1984-36) citing Gandalf's remark that Gollum "has some part to play yet, for good or ill".[[16]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gollum#cite_note-Callaway_1984-36) Indeed, Gollum's [*alter ego*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alter_ego), Sméagol, struggles to be good, speaks the truth when questioned by Frodo, and guides them through the [Dead Marshes](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dead_Marshes). In short, as Tolkien writes, Gollum is "not altogether wicked".[[16]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gollum#cite_note-Callaway_1984-36) Finally, at the end of the quest inside Mount Doom, Gollum takes the Ring from Frodo, and causes it to be destroyed, completing the quest successfully at the moment that Frodo had announced that he would keep the Ring. Callaway calls this "the ultimate heroic self-sacrifice", arguing that Gollum acted "consciously" using "the good fraction in his mind finally overpowering the Ring's evil".[[16]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gollum#cite_note-Callaway_1984-36)

**Degenerate**

[A person in a robe with a cane and a person in a suit

Description automatically generated with medium confidence](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Walter_Paget_-_H._Rider_Haggard_-_King_Solomon%27s_Mines_-_To_those_who_enter_the_hall_of_dead_(detail).jpg)Gollum may derive from the "shrunken" Gagool in [Rider Haggard's](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/H._Rider_Haggard) [*King Solomon's Mines*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/King_Solomon%27s_Mines). 1888 illustration by [Walter Paget](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Walter_Paget_(illustrator))[[18]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gollum#cite_note-Rogers_2000-38)

*Further information:*[*King Solomon's Mines*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/King_Solomon%27s_Mines)

English literature scholars William N. Rogers II and Michael R. Underwood compare Gollum to the similarly named[[18]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gollum#cite_note-Rogers_2000-38) evil and ancient hag Gagool in [Rider Haggard's](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/H._Rider_Haggard) 1885 novel [*King Solomon's Mines*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/King_Solomon%27s_Mines); Tolkien acknowledged Haggard, especially his novel [*She*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/She_(novel)), as a major influence. They note that Haggard's tales share many motifs with Tolkien's *The Hobbit*, including a non-heroic narrator who turns out to be brave and capable in a crisis; a group of male characters on a quest; dangers in caves; a goal of treasure; and return to a happy countryside. Gollum and Gagool both have a monstrous character, Gagool being described as

a withered-up monkey [that] crept on all fours ... a most extraordinary and weird countenance. It was (apparently) that of a woman of great age, so shrunken that in size it was no larger than that of a year-old child, and was made up of a collection of deep yellow wrinkles ... a pair of large black eyes, still full of fire and intelligence, which gleamed and played under the snow-white eyebrows, and the projecting parchment-coloured skull, like jewels in a [charnel-house](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charnel-house). As for the skull itself, it was perfectly bare, and yellow in hue, while its wrinkled scalp moved and contracted like the hood of a [cobra](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cobra)." —*King Solomon's Mines*, 1885[[18]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gollum#cite_note-Rogers_2000-38)

Rogers and Underwood note that Gagool rejoices in "blood and death".[[18]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gollum#cite_note-Rogers_2000-38) Like Gollum, she is human-like but distorted to a parody; she is shrunken and extremely old; her large eyes and speech are distinctive; and she is wholly materialistic, with a "terrible greediness and self-referencing" and "the insatiable claims of the naked ego".[[18]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gollum#cite_note-Rogers_2000-38) They mention also the cultural background of the late 19th century, combining [economic recession](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Economic_recession), fear of moral decline and degeneration leading indeed to [eugenics](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eugenics), and a "for-the-moment [hedonism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hedonism)" in the face of these concerns. They comment that Gagool can be seen as a "worst-case" embodiment of such [Victorian era](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Victorian_era) fears.[[18]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gollum#cite_note-Rogers_2000-38)

Dale Nelson, writing in the [*J. R. R. Tolkien Encyclopedia*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._R._R._Tolkien_Encyclopedia), suggests that Gollum may derive from [H. G. Wells](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/H._G._Wells)'s [Morlocks](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Morlocks) in his 1895 novel [*The Time Machine*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Time_Machine). They have "dull white" skin with a "bleached look", "strange large grayish-red eyes" with "a capacity for reflecting light", and run in a low posture somewhere close to all fours, looking like "a human spider", through having lived for generations underground in darkness.[[19]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gollum#cite_note-Nelson_2013-39)

Tom Birkett, writing in [*A Companion to J. R. R. Tolkien*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/A_Companion_to_J._R._R._Tolkien), likens Gollum to [Hreiðmarr](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hrei%C3%B0marr)'s son in the *[Völsunga saga](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/V%C3%B6lsunga_saga" \o "Völsunga saga)*, who took the shape of an [otter](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Otter) to catch fish; in the myth, the gods pay a ring as ransom when they kill the otter. Birkett comments on the resemblance to Gollum of "this semi-aquatic creature, greedily devouring fish in a mountain pool".[[20]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gollum#cite_note-40)

A 2004 paper in the [*British Medical Journal*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/British_Medical_Journal) by supervised students at [University College London](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/University_College_London) argued that Gollum meets seven of the nine diagnostic criteria for [schizoid personality disorder](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Schizoid_personality_disorder).[[21]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gollum#cite_note-41)

Adaptations

[A drawing of a cartoon character

Description automatically generated](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Gollum_in_Deitch_1967_Hobbit_film.jpg)Gollum in his boat, in [Gene Deitch](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gene_Deitch)'s 1967 short [*The Hobbit*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Hobbit_(1967_film))

**Animations**

Gollum's first known screen adaptation is in [Gene Deitch](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gene_Deitch)'s 1967 short film [*The Hobbit*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Hobbit_(1967_film)), where his role is reduced to a scene depicting him sitting in his boat.[[22]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gollum#cite_note-42)

[A cartoon of a lizard

Description automatically generated](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Gollum_1977_225x169.jpg)Gollum in [Rankin/Bass](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rankin/Bass)'s animated 1977 [*The Hobbit*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Hobbit_(1977_film))

In the 1977 [Rankin/Bass](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rankin/Bass) adaptation of [*The Hobbit*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Hobbit_(1977_film)) and its 1980 [*The Return of the King*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Return_of_the_King_(1980_film)), Gollum was voiced by [Brother Theodore](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brother_Theodore).[[23]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gollum#cite_note-43) He appeared somewhat froglike.[[24]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gollum#cite_note-44)

[A cartoon of a person with a mustache

Description automatically generated](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:BakshiGollum.JPG)Gollum in [Ralph Bakshi](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ralph_Bakshi)'s animated 1978 version of [*The Lord of the Rings*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Lord_of_the_Rings_(1978_film))

In [Ralph Bakshi](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ralph_Bakshi)'s 1978 animated film adaptation of [*The Lord of the Rings*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Lord_of_the_Rings_(1978_film)), as in the [1981 BBC radio dramatisation](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Lord_of_the_Rings_(1981_radio_series)), Gollum was voiced by [Peter Woodthorpe](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peter_Woodthorpe).[[25]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gollum#cite_note-45)[[26]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gollum#cite_note-Radio_Riel_2009-46) Austin Gilkeson, writing on *TOR.com*, called the prologue with the "snaring and transformation of Gollum" "beautifully rendered as black shadows cast against a red canvas" like a [shadow play](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shadow_play) or a medieval [tapestry](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tapestry) come to life, with a mix of animation, painted backgrounds, and [rotoscoping](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rotoscoping).[[27]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gollum#cite_note-Gilkeson_2018-47)

**Television plays**

[A person in green garment

Description automatically generated](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Khraniteli_Gollum.jpg)A green-clad Gollum in Leningrad Television's 1991 *[Khraniteli](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Khraniteli" \o "Khraniteli)*

In the [Soviet](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Soviet_Union)-era television film *Сказочное путешествие мистера Бильбо Бэггинса, Хоббита* ([*The Fairytale Journey of Mr. Bilbo Baggins, The Hobbit*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Hobbit_(1985_film))) of 1985, a green-faced Gollum is portrayed by [Igor Dmitriev](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Igor_Dmitriev).[[28]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gollum#cite_note-48)

A different Russian Gollum was played by Viktor Smirnov in [Leningrad Television](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leningrad_Television)'s two-part 1991 TV play *[Khraniteli](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Khraniteli" \o "Khraniteli)*, rediscovered in 2021.[[29]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gollum#cite_note-5_TV_2021-49) *Variety* reported that "he's speaking Russian, sports orange eye-shadow and has what appears to be bright green cabbage leaves pasted to his head."[[30]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gollum#cite_note-Variety_2021-50)

[Kari Väänänen](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kari_V%C3%A4%C3%A4n%C3%A4nen) portrayed Gollum ([Finnish](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Finnish_language): *Klonkku*) in the 1993 live-action television miniseries *[Hobitit](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hobitit" \o "Hobitit)* [The hobbits] produced and broadcast by the Finnish network [Yle](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yle" \o "Yle).[[31]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gollum#cite_note-51)

**Feature films**

[A person with long hair and a very skinny face

Description automatically generated with medium confidence](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Gollum.PNG)Gollum was voiced and performed by [Andy Serkis](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Andy_Serkis) in [Peter Jackson](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peter_Jackson)'s live-action version of [*The Lord of the Rings*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Lord_of_the_Rings_(film_series)), using [motion capture](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Motion_capture).[[32]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gollum#cite_note-rotoanimation-52)

In [Peter Jackson](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peter_Jackson)'s [*The Lord of the Rings* film trilogy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Lord_of_the_Rings_(film_series)), Gollum is a [CGI](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Computer-generated_imagery) character voiced and performed by actor [Andy Serkis](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Andy_Serkis). He is smaller than both Frodo and Sam, but still has considerable strength and agility. Barely glimpsed in [*The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Lord_of_the_Rings:_The_Fellowship_of_the_Ring) (2001), he becomes a central character in [*The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Lord_of_the_Rings:_The_Two_Towers) (2002) and [*The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Lord_of_the_Rings:_The_Return_of_the_King) (2003). The CGI character was built around Serkis's facial features, voice, and acting choices, and is depicted naked but for a loincloth. Serkis based the iconic "*gollum*" throat noise on the sound of his cat coughing up hairballs.[[33]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gollum#cite_note-53) Using a digital puppet created by [Jason Schleifer](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jason_Schleifer) and [Bay Raitt](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bay_Raitt) at [Weta Digital](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Weta_Digital), animators created Gollum's performance using a mixture of [motion capture](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Motion_capture) data recorded from Serkis and the traditional animation process of [key frame](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Key_frame), along with the laborious process of digitally [rotoscoping](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rotoscoping) Serkis's image and replacing it with the digital Gollum's in a technique coined *rotoanimation*.[[32]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gollum#cite_note-rotoanimation-52)

In *The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King*, Serkis himself appears in a [flashback](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Flashback_(narrative)) scene as Sméagol before his degeneration into Gollum. This scene was originally earmarked for *The Two Towers*, but was held back because the screenwriters felt audiences would relate better to the original Sméagol once they were more familiar with who he became. The decision to include this scene meant that Raitt and Jamie Beswarick had to redesign Gollum's face for the second and third films so that it would more closely resemble Serkis'.[[34]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gollum#cite_note-Lewis2012-54) Serkis once again played Gollum in the 2012 prequel film [*The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Hobbit:_An_Unexpected_Journey).[[35]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gollum#cite_note-55) In Jackson's films, Gollum has a split personality: the childlike "Sméagol" and the evil "Gollum". Screenwriters [Fran Walsh](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fran_Walsh) and [Philippa Boyens](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Philippa_Boyens) included scenes in *The Two Towers*, *The Return of the King* and [*An Unexpected Journey*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Hobbit:_An_Unexpected_Journey) in which "Gollum" and "Sméagol" argue, with Serkis slightly altering his voice and body language to play the two as separate entities. This style was praised by the Tolkien scholar [Tom Shippey](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tom_Shippey) who described the Jackson interpretation as "masterful" and the additional scenes as "especially good".[[36]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gollum#cite_note-Shippey_2005_p422-56)

Serkis and Gollum appeared on the [2003 MTV Movie Awards](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2003_MTV_Movie_Awards), when Gollum won "Best Virtual Performance" and went on to deliver an obscenity-laden acceptance speech in character, so well received that it won the [Hugo Award for Best Dramatic Presentation, Short Form](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hugo_Award_for_Best_Dramatic_Presentation,_Short_Form).[[37]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gollum#cite_note-57) [*Wizard*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wizard_(magazine)) magazine rated Jackson's Gollum as the 62nd-greatest villain of all time, from among 100 villains from film, television, comics and video games.[[38]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gollum#cite_note-58) In addition, Serkis as Gollum was placed thirteenth on [*Empire*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Empire_(film_magazine)) magazine's "100 Greatest Movie Characters of all Time".[[39]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gollum#cite_note-59)

**Fan film**

Gollum is the eponymous character in [*The Hunt for Gollum*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Hunt_for_Gollum), an independently produced 2009 prequel to the Jackson films directed by [Chris Bouchard](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chris_Bouchard). Bouchard's CGI Gollum, voiced by Gareth Brough,[[40]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gollum#cite_note-FilmFront-60) looks much like the Gollum of the Jackson films.[[41]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gollum#cite_note-61)

**Other media**

In Canada, Gollum was portrayed by [Michael Therriault](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Michael_Therriault) in the three-hour stage production of *The Lord of the Rings*, which opened in 2006 in [Toronto](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Toronto).[[42]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gollum#cite_note-62) He won a [Dora Award](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dora_Award) for the performance.[[43]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gollum#cite_note-63)

Gollum appears in a 1989 three-part comic book adaptation of *The Hobbit*, scripted by [Chuck Dixon](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chuck_Dixon) and Sean Deming and illustrated by David Wenzel.[[44]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gollum#cite_note-64)

[*The Lord of the Rings: Gollum*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Lord_of_the_Rings:_Gollum), a video game centred on Gollum, was released in 2023, for [Microsoft Windows](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Microsoft_Windows), [PlayStation 4](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/PlayStation_4), [PlayStation 5](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/PlayStation_5), [Xbox One](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Xbox_One), and [Xbox Series X/S](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Xbox_Series_X/S), by [Daedalic Entertainment](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Daedalic_Entertainment).[[45]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gollum#cite_note-Gollum_2023-65)