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Dear Mr. Tolkien,

As I closed your book, *The Lord of the Rings*, several questions popped into my head. Why did Frodo have to leave? Why did the Elf-Lords go with him? What happens to the civilization of Middle Earth? Where do Frodo, Gandalf, Bilbo and the Elk-Lords go? None of these answers could be found immediately. For a long time my head was under a thinking cap.

When I finally read the last word on the last page in the last chapter in the last book, a wave of sadness swept over me. I realized that this was the end. The Lord of the Rings saga was over. Some books are books where you can miss things. This is not one of those books. It is so precise, I simply could not read it again. It would be a crime.

Then I got to thinking about *friendship*. It is an irreplaceable thing in life. I would not be able to live without friendship. It's as valuable as platinum, maybe even more. I'm not saying that you could go to the store and say, "How much change would I get if I paid you with five friends?" It doesn't work that way. The Fellowship of the Ring had lost all of their specially preserved platinum-plus. They all struggled with out each other, especially Frodo and Sam. That alone taught me one of life's most valuable lessons, perhaps the most valuable; friendship is precious.

It seemed as though I had put on a pair of glasses when I finished your book. Through those glasses I saw the Middle-Earth in this world. Some places were Mordor, others were Hobbiton. Some people were Frodo, others were Gandalf or Saruman.

The book is done. The fun is over. My obsession is not.

Sincerely,
Troy Ikeda

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