

## INTERVIEW WITH ELIAH WOOD

Below is an on the set interview with Elijah Wood, who stars as the hobbit Frodo Baggins, during the filming of The Lord of the Rings in New Zealand.

### Part One-

"My name is Elijah Wood and I'm Frodo Baggins."

**Q:** What's it like in New Zealand?

**EW:** I'll tell you what it's like in New Zealand. New Zealand is gorgeous. It's so beautiful and with this project, we've been able to travel around and we're going to continue to travel to various locations and many places that people don't normally get to see, so that's been really great.

**Q:** How do you think the landscape of New Zealand compares to Middle-earth?

**EW:** That's actually the first thing I thought when Peter showed me all the pictures and things of the locations... this is Middle-earth. I mean it has every sort of geographical, geological formation, landscape, it's got everything, you know. So, it's absolutely perfect for New Zealand.

**Q:** What is it like physically, going by helicopter to locations, etc.? Have you done this before?

**EW:** There's so many elements to what we do everyday. We fly to locations in helicopters, to the tops of mountains and to remote locations. It's overwhelming, but absolutely brilliant. It's such an adventure. It actually feels in some ways like the adventure that's taking place in the film, because we're working hard and we're going everywhere and there's just all of these magical, magical elements to what we're doing. It's really, really incredible and it's an experience of a lifetime. I'll never have another experience like this. It's truly wonderful.

**Q:** What was your first meeting like with Peter Jackson?

**EW:** I met Peter after he had seen my audition tape. I auditioned prior to meeting him and I was so set on meeting him, initially, because I really wanted to just talk to him and sit down. I read first and then he came to Los Angeles and I got to read for him again, for him personally, and I met Fran and Peter and that was just incredible. I had been waiting for that for a while. I mean, I'm a fan of his work. Heavenly Creatures is one of my favorite films.

So I was thrilled in a geeky sort of way, you know. And it was just wonderful. I found him to be really sweet and lovely, both of them. And talking to him about the movie was just wonderful. I mean, he's so, so passionate about the project and he's been working on it for almost three years now. So, really, it's kind of in his blood, you know. And I remember the moment I met him. After I read for him, he actually showed me a lot of the drawings and sketches and pictures of locations to kind of give me an idea of what the vision of the film was and where he was going with it.

But one of the things that I really loved about his ideas for the film was that he really wanted to make the movie realistic because it is a fantasy film and fantasy books. But the thing about these books and what we're doing with the movie is that they are so real that you believe that Frodo existed. You believe that Gandalf existed. There's a certain quality in some fantasy novels that you don't feel as if they really existed. They feel too far away. And one thing he really wanted to convey with this film is the realism.

The Hobbits were to be slightly dirty and the sets and the atmosphere to be lived in and to be realistic and aged, so it didn't have that weird, sort of cheesy fantasy look to it and that was just music to my ears, because that's what I wanted it to be as well. It's just wonderful. The guy is so excited and he never loses energy. And he seems to have this endless energy, you know, constantly has ideas and is thinking and moving forward. It is inspiring.

**Q:** How does this project, when you know you're going to be on the film for eighteen months, feel differently than other projects you've worked on?

**EW:** I think that on every film that I've worked on, as a rule the people that you work with become a bit of a second family because you tend to work together for an average of about three, four months, and so you have that family atmosphere. This makes me look at everything



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because this is a year of my life and a year spent with these people, they will become even more of a second family to me.

It really etches in stone that a lot of these people will end up becoming lifelong friends. And the thing that I realize now is that when the movie is over, it's going to be the most impossible thing to leave because I will have spent so much time with it. And that's when it hit me, on New Years. Usually at New Years, you think, well, what am I going to do this year. I've got so much on my plate and so many things can happen and the only thing that was in my head was, well, I'm doing The Lord Of The Rings, that's all year and that's amazing.

It's really incredible. Three movies at one time over the span of a year. I'm living in New Zealand for a year. It's absolutely overwhelming, but I couldn't ask for a better crew, better cast and the cast I'm working with is just amazing! I'm so blessed and lucky to be a part of this project and to be playing Frodo. It is just the most wonderful, brilliant role and he ends up being a hero, so you can't beat that.