



## Wait is over for die-hard Lord of the Rings fans

*Theaters around the U.S. hold marathon screenings of all 3 films*

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Winston-Salem's Wynnsong 12 movie theater became a portal out of the dark days of winter yesterday for die-hard Lord of the Rings fans. Wan-nabe hobbits, wizards and lords were transported, via a 12-hour trip to the movies, into a medieval fight between light and dark forces.

Here and across the country, Rings fans enjoyed "Trilogy Tuesday," a back-to-back-to-back ma-ra-thon of all three films, including the first public screenings of the third and final movie, Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King.

Most of the tickets had been purchased hours after they went on sale in October. At Wynnsong 12, on Hanes Mall Boulevard, trilogy tickets at \$25 apiece sold out in just 20 minutes, said Heyward Garner, a manager at the cinema. But, for devoted fans, the desire to be among the first in the country to see the final chapter of J.R.R. Tol-kien's books acted out on the big screen led them in their mission.

For Thomas Konneker and five of his friends, desire dropped them off at the theater's front door ... 18 hours early. The college students, who came from various North Carolina universities, slept on Wynnsong's sidewalk Monday night, determined to be the first ones into the theater in the morning.

"It's a once in a lifetime thing," said Andy Wales, 19. "A couple of us slept in a tent, one guy slept in the car because he's sick, but he stuck it out and he's still here today. He's a trouper."

Though they waited all night, they said they drew the line at dressing like the characters in the movie.

"We're die-hard, but we're not dorks," Wales said.

But for Kevin Long of High Point, going in costume was a part of the experience.

"I'm probably one of the largest Lord of the Rings fans you're going to find in the area," said Long, 27. "It's a good story ... the eternal struggle of good vs. evil," Long said.

Yesterday, Long, 27, arrived at the Winston-Salem theater dressed as Legolas the elf, complete with a full-sized bow and cape.

James and Sharon Bell could have seen the movie in their hometown of Wytheville, Va., but preferred to see the trilogy - even if Sharon Bell, who is deaf, couldn't hear it.

James Bell interpreted all three movies in sign language for his wife.

"This new movie, I will have to interpret more than the other two because we've seen them so many times," James Bell said. "Well, I'm going to try to interpret. Sometimes I get so involved in the movie, she has to poke me."