

The Hobbit Study Guide

The Hobbit by J. R. R. Tolkien

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Plot Summary

One day Bilbo Baggins, a hobbit who lives at Bag End in Hobbiton, receives a visit from Gandalf, the wizard. Gandalf is known for leading young hobbits off on adventures, although respectable hobbits do not do such things. Bilbo is not interested in going on an adventure so he sends Gandalf away. The wizard returns the next day along with Thorin Oakenshield, a dwarf of great standing and twelve other dwarves. They seek a burglar to travel with them to the home of their ancestors in the Lonely Mountain to take back their families' treasure that is now being guarded by a fearsome dragon named Smaug.

Much to his dismay Bilbo finds himself joining the dwarves, although he does not have any qualifications as a burglar. The thirteen dwarves and hobbit are soon joined by Gandalf, and their quest to reclaim the treasure begins. Their first misfortune happens when they stumble onto a threesome of trolls in the forest while making camp. They are all captured, except for Gandalf, who had disappeared earlier in the day. The trolls are trying to decide how best to eat the dwarves and hobbit when a voice keeps them continually arguing with one another until the sun rises. The trolls are then turned to stone and it is revealed that Gandalf's was the voice that saved the dwarves and hobbit.

Gandalf then takes the travelers to his elf friends in Rivendell. Their leader is Elrond, a wise and venerable elf. The travelers receive much needed rest and supplies before they continue on their way East. Their travels take them through the Misty Mountains, where they encounter terrible weather which compels them to seek shelter in a cave. During the night they are jumped upon by goblins, except for Gandalf who escapes, and are taken deep into the mountain. Gandalf rescues the dwarves and hobbit and kills the goblin leader, the Great Goblin, as well. At one point Bilbo gets separated from the others and finds a ring of gold that turns the wearer invisible. This ring belongs to a treacherous creature named Gollum, who lives in the middle of a lake in a deep, dark cave the goblins avoid. Gollum tries to attack Bilbo, but the hobbit escapes with the ring and finds his friends once again.

The travelers escape from the goblins only to be trapped in trees in a glade by wild wolves called Wargs. The Wargs are waiting to meet the goblins when they discover the dwarves, hobbit and wizard. Luckily, the fifteen adventurers are rescued by eagles that fly them away from the Misty Mountains and take them safely out of the reach of the goblins. Gandalf then leads them to the home of Beorn, a skin changer who can turn into a large black bear. Beorn gives the travelers ponies to get them to Mirkwood and enough supplies to see them further on their travels. When they reach Mirkwood, they send the ponies back and Gandalf leaves them for business of his own. He tells the dwarves and hobbit to not leave the path while in the forest.

The path through the forest of Mirkwood seems endless and in the end the dwarves and hobbit leave the path to follow lights they see within the trees. It is an elven feast that quickly disappears each time they approach. After a while, the group is captured by giant spiders and Bilbo must use his ring and sword, Sting, to rescue them. Once the



travelers are free of the spiders they realize Thorin is missing. They continue to seek the help of the elusive elves and are eventually taken prisoner by them, as Thorin has been. Bilbo is the only one who remains free. The dwarves are taken to a great cave where the Wood-elves live, and are held prisoner. Bilbo rescues them and they escape by riding inside empty barrels down the river to Lake-town. Bilbo has to ride on the top of the barrels wearing his ring to maintain his invisibility.

The dwarves and Bilbo arrive at Lake-town and present themselves to the Master of the town. Thorin identifies himself as the son of Thrain and grandson of Thrór, who was King under the Mountain, and tells them he has returned to reclaim his treasure from the dragon, Smaug. The Men of the lake give them supplies and ponies to help them on their trek to the Lonely Mountain. The Master hopes that once they have the treasure they will share it with the town. The dwarves and hobbit soon make it to the Lonely Mountain. There, they begin their search for the secret door that will lead them into the hall of the dwarves without the dragon knowing they are there.

It takes the travelers a great deal of time, but they do find the door. Bilbo goes into the passage and follows it to the lair of the dragon, which is asleep on a huge pile of treasure. Bilbo steals a two handled cup, and the dragon realizes someone has taken a piece of his treasure. To keep the travelers from taking the rest of his hoard, Smaug destroys the secret entrance and flies to Lake-town to seek his revenge upon the men there. Smaug is killed by an archer named Bard. Once the people realize that the dragon is dead and the treasure is not guarded, a contingent of men and elves go to the Lonely Mountain to reclaim it. Thorin is waiting for them and refuses to share any of the treasure. Dain, Thorin's cousin from the Iron Hills, comes to his aid.

A battle begins between men, dwarves, and elves, when they have to band together to fight the goblins and wolves that also come to claim the treasure. The Battle of Five Armies ends with the defeat of the goblins and wolves. Thorin is killed along with his nephews, Kili and Fili. The rest survive and Dain becomes King under the Mountain and the remaining dwarves stay with him. The Men of the lake, led by Bard, remain to rebuild the town of Dale nearby. Bilbo and Gandalf return to Hobbiton, where Bilbo is not seen as respectable any longer due to his adventurous ways and strange companions.



Chapters 1-2

Summary

Chapter 1. Bilbo Baggins is a hobbit who lives happily and contentedly in his house in Hobbiton. One morning, Gandalf the wizard comes to Bilbo's home looking for someone to go on an adventure. Respectable hobbits do not go on adventures, so Bilbo wishes him good day. Gandalf returns the next day along with thirteen dwarves.

Thorin Oakenshield, the most important dwarf of the group, tells Bilbo that they are going to the Lonely Mountain in the East to regain the treasure of his father and grandfather that was stolen by the dragon, Smaug. When Thorin was small, the dragon came to the Mountain, killing many dwarves and making the rest flee in fear. He destroyed the nearby town of Dale and gathered all of the gold and silver in the dwarves' fortress. Gandalf has a map and key to a secret door within the Mountain that leads to a secret passage into the fortress. The dwarves need a burglar to help them retrieve their treasure and Gandalf has brought them to Bilbo, who he identifies as a burglar. Part of the hobbit thrills at the prospect of going on an adventure, while the more respectable part of him does not want anything to do with it.

Chapter 2. Bilbo wakes the next morning to find that the dwarves have left without him; he is both relieved and disappointed. Gandalf arrives soon after and tells Bilbo that the dwarves are waiting for him at the Green Dragon Inn and he must hurry. Bilbo runs out of his house without anything he needs for a journey. He meets up with the dwarves and they set out.

Gandalf joins Bilbo and the dwarves along the way, but mysteriously disappears one day before they stop to make camp in a forest. Having lost a good deal of their supplies, the travelers are curious when they see firelight in the forest and go to investigate. There are three trolls, William, Bert, and Tom, having dinner around a campfire. Bilbo tries to pick William's pocket, but is caught and soon so are the dwarves.

The trolls have an argument as to how they want to cook their prisoners before they eat them. A mysterious voice keeps them arguing until the sun rises and turns them to stone. Gandalf shows himself and they realize he is the owner of the mysterious voice. The travelers find the trolls' cave and take food and coins. Gandalf and Thorin take swords and Bilbo takes a knife he wears as a short sword.

Analysis

In the first chapter the reader is introduced to the fifteen primary characters. The author gives a background not only on hobbits, but Bilbo's family in particular so that it is known that Bilbo's association with dwarves and a wizard is unusual, as is going on an adventure of any kind. The reader learns that Bilbo comes from an unusual family on his mother's side who are known for their adventurous ways and their association with odd



individuals. The Took side of Bilbo surfaces continually while he listens to the dwarves plan their journey.

When the dwarves are gone the next morning Bilbo professes to be relieved, but the reader knows where his heart really lies when he runs out of the house to meet them at the Green Dragon with very little urging from Gandalf. The author soon lets the reader know what dangers await the travelers on their journey when they meet up with three trolls in the forest. This is the first of many situations the dwarves thrust Bilbo into, rather than going themselves. Bilbo shows his first sign of bravery as he approaches the trolls. It is Gandalf who saves them, though, when they are captured. The reader wonders what would have happened to them all if Gandalf had not been there to save them.

Vocabulary

blundering, discreetly, luxurious, immovably, laburnums, flustered, throng, depredations, haughty, detachable, flummoxed, yore, wrought, delve, dale, conspirator, audacious, estimable, intricate, obstinately, remuneration, defrayed, requisite, paraphernalia, cavalcade, incantations



Chapters 3-4

Summary

Chapter 3. The travelers need to replenish their supplies and to rest for a time in a place of safety before they travel on to the Misty Mountains. Gandalf takes them to Rivendell, home of the elves and where his friend Elrond lives in the Last Homely House. Bilbo loves the elves, but dwarves have never gotten on well with them and think them rather foolish. As they enter the valley where the elves live, the travelers are greeted with singing from the trees. They spend at least fourteen days with the elves.

The elves provide the travelers with provisions to help them to traverse the mountain passes awaiting them in the Misty Mountains. Elrond looks at the swords Thorin and Gandalf took from the troll's cave; they were made by the High Elves of the West for the Goblin-wars. Thorin's is named Orcrist, the Goblin-cleaver and Gandalf's is named Glamdring, Foe-hammer. Elrond also deciphers the runes on their map: they are moon-letters that can only be read when the moonlight shines upon them. The letters are instructions for finding the secret door located in the Lonely Mountain. The next morning the fifteen travelers continue on their journey.

Chapter 4. The dwarves, hobbit and wizard make their way to the Misty Mountains. It is important that they follow the right path since many dangers await them within these mountains. One night, two terrible thunderstorms meet in a thunder battle. The travelers shelter under a hanging rock as the storm rages around them. They not only have the storm to contend with, but there are also stone giants hurling rocks at one another, catching them, and then tossing them into the darkness. The travelers are in danger of being hit by one of these stray rocks and they are being soaked by rain, so they must find alternate accommodations for the night. Fili and Kili are sent out and find a cave nearby. Unfortunately, during the night goblins jump out of a secret opening and grab the dwarves and hobbit, though Gandalf escapes.

Bilbo and the dwarves are brought before the Great Goblin who accuses them of being thieves. The goblins do not believe that the dwarves are on their way to visit family and they take Thorin's sword, which they recognize as a fearful goblin killer. This sends the Great Goblin into a rage and he rushes toward Thorin. The lights go out and a flash of fire appears. The Great Goblin is killed, and Gandalf's voice urges the dwarves and hobbit to follow him. They are pursued through the passages by goblins and are eventually overtaken. Bilbo, who is riding on Dori's back, falls to the ground, bumps his head and is unconscious.

Analysis

The reader is introduced to the elves in Chapter 3. They are frivolous and fond of silly songs, but they are also wise and know much of the world. The dwarves are much more



serious than the elves and do not like their teasing ways; the elves find the dwarves more amusing than anything else. Bilbo, on the other hand, has always found the elves fascinating and would stay with them longer if he could. He has a more open mind with regard to other races than the dwarves do. Elrond, the chief elf, provides them with important information about the runes on their map that will be useful to them later when they get to the Lonely Mountain.

The travelers are introduced to yet another danger on their journey in Chapter 4. Goblins attack them on their way through the Misty Mountains, and the reader learns just how mean and treacherous these creatures are. The travelers make an enemy of the goblins when Gandalf kills the Chief Goblin. This is not something they will soon forget. They also carry swords that the goblins hate for they have killed many of their kind during the Goblin wars. It is Gandalf, once again, who has to save the dwarves and hobbit from immediate peril and the reader is left to wonder once again if they would have made it out of their predicament without him. They seem to rely heavily upon his assistance.

Vocabulary

forded, astonished, wondrous, parapet, palpitating, venerable, provisions, lair, remnants, infested, uncanny, deceptions, thriven, astray, guffawing, champing, tinder, flint, quaff, yammering, bleating, ingenious, alliances, realm



Chapters 5-6

Summary

Chapter 5. Bilbo awakens to find that his companions have deserted him. He crawls along the tunnel he is in and finds a ring on the floor. He sticks it in his pocket and forgets about it. The tunnel leads Bilbo downward and he eventually splashes into water; he is uncertain as to whether it is merely a small pool or much larger. He cannot swim so he does not dare to investigate further. Gollum, who lives in the lake, sees Bilbo and approaches him on the little boat he uses for fishing and traversing the lake. Bilbo and Gollum make a bargain that if they exchange riddles and one does not answer the other wins. If Bilbo wins Gollum will lead him out of the caves, and if Gollum wins he will eat Bilbo.

Bilbo and Gollum exchange many riddles and both know the answers. Bilbo finally stumps Gollum by asking him what he has in his pocket. Gollum does not answer correctly after three tries. Instead of holding up his end of the bargain, Gollum goes to his island to look for his ring that he uses to sneak up on young goblins and discovers the ring is missing. He fears that Bilbo has taken it and chases Bilbo, who falls and accidentally puts the ring on his finger. Gollum does not see him and Bilbo is able to follow Gollum as he runs through the tunnels. Bilbo realizes that the ring makes him invisible. He is able to get away from Gollum and make it to a door that leads to the outside. The door is guarded by goblins, but Bilbo is able to squeeze through the small opening and escape.

Chapter 6. Bilbo walks for hours, but cannot find his friends. He fears that they are still in the goblins' clutches and has just made up his mind to go back for them when he hears voices. Bilbo finds his companions having a discussion as to whether or not they should go back into the tunnels to look for him. Still wearing the ring, Bilbo approaches the dwarves and reappears within their midst, surprising them. Their esteem for Bilbo increases and he keeps the ring a secret. The travelers have to hurry on their journey, since Gandalf knows the goblins will be hunting them once darkness falls.

The group walks for hours even after darkness has fallen and they can barely see before them. They enter a glade when they hear the howling of wolves close by and must climb nearby trees for safety. Bilbo is the only one who cannot climb into a tree and Dori has to come down and lift him, narrowly escaping the clutches of a wolf before he can climb back up himself. The wild Wargs are there to meet the goblins and plan a raid on some nearby villages when they discover the travelers in the trees. Gandalf sets pinecones on fire and throws them at the wolves.

The goblins arrive at that point and put out the fires except for the fire around the trees where the captives are. To that fire, they add fuel to make it climb higher. The Lord of the Eagles is attracted by all of the noise and comes to investigate. He and some of the



Eagles save the dwarves, hobbit and wizard by carrying them away. The Eagles provide them with food and a place to sleep for the night.

Analysis

It is at this time that Bilbo finds the ring of invisibility and makes the acquaintance of Gollum, the treacherous creature who owned the ring before Bilbo. Through the exchanging of riddles, the reader is able to realize that Gollum was once very much like Bilbo and came from a similar place. They are both familiar with the same riddles. The reader is left to wonder how the creature went from living with his grandmother to creeping around in the darkness eating goblin imps.

The ring shows that it is far from ordinary, not only when Bilbo slips it on and becomes invisible, but also when it slips off of Bilbo's finger exposing him to the goblins at the gate. The ring has a will and designs of its own: it seems to choose its own master, but the reader does not know for what purpose. The ring does give Bilbo a sense of bravery, and he is very much willing to do his duty to go back and rescue his friends from the goblin's cave when he fears they are still there. The reader must ask whether it is the ring that makes Bilbo brave enough to face it or would he have considered the possibility if he were not able to become invisible. Already the ring begins to work its magic on Bilbo and he does not share its existence and thus its capabilities with his friends, but chooses to keep it a secret.

The author introduces the reader to a new enemy as well as a new friend in Chapter 6. The Wargs are shown to have an alliance with the goblins and a willingness to help them in whatever destructive plan they can fathom, as long as the Wargs are given a share of the plunder. This example of foreshadowing shows how these creatures will come together to seek revenge against those who killed the Great Goblin. The reader also meets the Eagles for the first time and learns of their distrust of and hatred for goblins. They also will return later on, once again in role of savior when the need is dire.

Vocabulary

breeches, subterranean, antiquity, oddments, galled, smote, hither, thither, confusticate, onslaught, bracken, fronds, larch, boughs, plunder, pinnacle, afoot, tumult, giddy, eyrie, precipice



Chapters 7-8

Summary

Chapter 7. The Eagles fly the dwarves, hobbit and wizard away from the mountains and set them down near Mirkwood. Gandalf tells the travelers that he plans to leave them soon, once he has the provisions that he needs and he sees them once again on their own journey. He takes them to the house of Beorn, a skin-changer, who is not only a large man, but also a large black bear. Gandalf makes the dwarves approach the house two at a time with five minutes between each pair. Gandalf tells Beorn the story of their journey and is frequently interrupted by the appearance of the dwarves. Beorn finds their tale fascinating and is less gruff than he would have been had they all come upon him at once. Beorn allows the travelers to stay for a while, and they get plenty of rest and lots of food.

Beorn disappears for a day and comes back in a very good mood. He has been out verifying the stories they told him and finds that they were telling him the truth. Beorn is much more willing to help the travelers now that he knows that they have killed the Great Goblin, and provides them with ponies and food. The ponies are only meant to take them to the entrance to Mirkwood and then they must send them back. Beorn warns them that Mirkwood is very dangerous and they must not stray from the path. When they reach Mirkwood, the dwarves are reluctant to give up their ponies until Gandalf warns them that Beorn is close by, keeping an eye on his ponies. Gandalf is keeping his horse because he is not going with the dwarves and hobbit, but must leave on business of his own. He warns them once again to not stray from the path.

Chapter 8. Mirkwood forest is very dark and the path that winds through it is very narrow. The dwarves and hobbit grow tired of the place after several days. One day, they come across a stream blocking their path; there is a boat that they use to cross it. Bombur is the last one to come across when a deer comes leaping across the stream. Bombur falls into the water. He is fast asleep when they pull him out, does not waken for many days, and they are forced to carry him. The dwarves finally decide to have Bilbo climb one of the trees to see how close they are to the end of the forest. Unfortunately, Bilbo is not able to see completely over the tops of the trees and he reports that he could not see an end to the forest and it went on forever in all directions. The travelers are all disheartened, and become even more so when their food runs out. Bombur wakes up at this time and is desolate that they are out of food, for he was having dreams about a wonderful elven feast.

The dwarves and hobbit begin to see lights in the woods and smell roasting meat. They all leave the path together and approach the lights. In the woods, they find elves having a feast. As soon as they get close, though, the elves and lights disappear, leaving them in darkness. They try several times to talk to the elves, but without luck. At one point, when they are plunged into darkness after the elves depart, Bilbo loses his companions.



Bilbo sits down to rest and finds himself being tied up by a giant spider. He kills the spider with his sword, Sting, and suddenly feels bold and fierce. Bilbo finds that his companions have been taken by other spiders and are wrapped in cocoons, hanging from trees. Wearing his ring, Bilbo throws stones at the spiders and makes his way to the dwarves. He is able to free them and he kills many spiders with his sword. Bilbo has to let the dwarves into the secret of his ring in order to disappear and lead the spiders away from his friends. Bilbo has to once again save the dwarves using his sword to fight the spiders, but soon the spiders give up and return to their colony.

The group then returns to one of the abandoned campfires left by the elves. They are amazed that Bilbo has such an amazing ring and are very grateful for his rescue. It is a while before they realize that Thorin is not with them; he was taken by the elves as the others were being carried off by the spiders. The elves took Thorin away to the large cave that the Elvenking uses for a palace, and where they store their treasure and their prisoners. Thorin is questioned by the Elvenking about why he and the dwarves attacked his people. The Elvenking wants to know where the other dwarves are, but Thorin refuses to answer any questions. He is thrown into a cell until he is ready to speak.

Analysis

Beorn is not someone with whom the dwarves can easily relate. He does not care for the tales of treasure that they tell when staying at his house. He is perfectly happy living a simple life with the animals he loves. He does not understand the dwarves' desire and need for gold and silver. Beorn is the dwarves' ally due to their role in the death of the Great Goblin and he is willing to help them, which he proves later in the story when his help is most needed.

The reader is continually given examples of how much more observant Bilbo is than the dwarves. Bilbo realizes that Gandalf sends the dwarves to see Beorn two at a time and spaced apart to make sure that the gruff skin-changer keeps an interest in his tale and does not throw them all out in displeasure. Bilbo also sees Beorn following them on their way to Mirkwood. Partly due to this, Gandalf looks to Bilbo as the one to get the dwarves safely through their journey when he leaves them.

Bilbo lives up to the confidence Gandalf places in him by saving the dwarves when they are captured by spiders. The dwarves rely upon Bilbo to save them, but Bilbo has only himself to rely upon when attacked by a giant spider. His confidence grows because he is able to kill the spider without any help from Gandalf or the dwarves, nor does he need his ring. He has proven he can be brave and fill the role of the absent wizard.

Vocabulary

furrier, tippet, tunic, unimpeachable, veranda, embers, harts, lichen, bulbous, vexed, accursed, hoisted, tuppence, abominable, watercourse, quoits, gloaming, tilling



Chapters 9-10

Summary

Chapter 9. The next day, the remaining dwarves are captured by the Wood-elves. Bilbo slips on his ring and thus avoids capture. He follows the elves as they return to the cave with their prisoners. The dwarves are questioned by the Elvenking, but they also refuse to tell him anything. In anger, the Elvenking demands the dwarves be placed in separate cells around the palace until they are ready to talk. Bilbo has to remain invisible and find food where he can. He is able to find all of the dwarves' cells and he learns that Thorin is also a prisoner. The dwarves trust Bilbo to figure out how to free them and begin to look to him as they had Gandalf.

One day Bilbo discovers that there is a stream that runs through the lower part of the cave and it connects with the Forest River. There is a water-gate that allows supplies to go in and out that way. He learns that the elves send empty barrels through the water-gate and the river carries them down to Lake-town. When Bilbo learns that a shipment of empty barrels is going out that night he makes a plan. First, he steals the keys from the guard and unlocks the dwarves' cells. Bilbo places each dwarf into an empty barrel and closes it up after them. Bilbo does not realize until too late that he forgot to provide a barrel for himself, and at the last minute he has to jump on one of the barrels and hang onto it. At one point on the barrel's travels, they are caught by some elves waiting on the riverbank and tied together to make a raft. The barrels then continue on their journey down the river to Lake-town.

Chapter 10. The raft finally comes to Lake-town, which is a town of men and not elves. The men remember some of the legends of life before the dragon and when the dwarves lived at Lonely Mountain. They also still sing songs of the dwarves' return and how the river will run with gold. Once darkness falls Bilbo releases the dwarves from their barrels. When they find all of the dwarves, Thorin, Fili, Kili, and Bilbo make their way to the guard hut, where Thorin identifies himself and demands to see the Master of the town. The Master does not really believe the songs and legends of old or that Thorin is the heir to the King of the Mountain; he owes his allegiance to the Elvenking. However, the King of the Mountain's people embrace Thorin and accept him for whom he says he is. The travelers are given a house in which to rest and lots of food to eat. At the end of two weeks, Thorin decides they must continue their journey to the Lonely Mountain. The Master gives them plenty of provisions and ponies to help them on their way.

Analysis

Bilbo has gone up in the esteem of the dwarves since they learned of his magic ring and since he saved them from the spiders, so they look to him once again to save them from their imprisonment by the elves. The hobbit shows himself to be clever and resourceful



when he finds a way out of the elves' cave for all thirteen dwarves. Bilbo risks much and suffers a great deal, but he gets the dwarves to safety.

The dwarves face greed in both men and elves. The Elvenking knows that they are in his wood for a purpose and since dwarves are well-known for their amassed treasure, he believes he will somehow benefit from keeping them prisoner. The Master of Laketown only cares about wealth and the riches he hopes the dwarves will bestow upon him once they reclaim their treasure. This desire for treasure runs deep in many whom the dwarves meet, and the lust the dragon's hoard inspires plagues the dwarves for their entire journey.

Vocabulary

carven, portcullis, throve, flagons, heady, vintage, nimble, turnkey, yonder, mere, kine, alluding, buffeted, solemnities, quays, vagabond, waylaid, enmity, clamour, circuitous



Chapters 11-12

Summary

Chapter 11. In three days the dwarves and hobbit make it to the Mountain. The Men of the lake refuse to stay with them and they are left to continue on their own. They do not see any sign of the dragon. Thorin sends Bilbo, Balin, Fili, and Kili to check out the Front Gate. Balin points out the ruins of the town of Dale. The only evidence of the dragon is steam and dark smoke coming from the Front Gate entrance. Bilbo spends a good deal of time looking at Thorin's map and makes the dwarves begin the search for the secret door on the western slope. One day, Bilbo finds a set of steps and this leads them to the secret entrance, although they do not know how to open it. While the dwarves use picks and various other tools to try to open the door, Bilbo spends his time sitting on the doorstep thinking. One evening, Bilbo is sitting on the doorstep when the moon comes out. He calls the dwarves and they watch the door. There is a cracking sound, a hole appears in the rock, and Thorin places the key within it. The dwarves push on the rock and it moves inward exposing an opening.

Chapter 12. Bilbo is sent into the passage to see what is inside. Balin agrees to go with him, but only for a short distance. Bilbo slips on his ring and continues alone. The tunnel grows hotter the further he gets and Bilbo hears a noise like that of a giant cat purring. At the end of the tunnel he finds what seems to be the dungeon-hall of the ancient dwarves. There, Bilbo finds the dragon, Smaug, asleep on his great mound of treasure. Bilbo takes a large two-handled cup from the pile and hurries back to the dwarves. Smaug awakens and realizes that a piece of his treasure is missing. His rage is great and his roar echoes through the Mountain. The dwarves and hobbit have to hide in the tunnel as Smaug flies around looking for the thieves. He breathes fire on the mountainside where the door is and he chases the dwarves' ponies that are tethered down below. The dragon does not find any thieves and returns to his pile of treasure to rest.

The next day the dwarves ask Bilbo what they should do and he offers to go back down the tunnel to see what Smaug is up to. Bilbo has become the leader of the expedition and the dwarves look to him for direction. The hobbit creeps down to Smaug's lair where he believes the dragon is fast asleep; however, Bilbo discovers that he is only pretending in order to catch the thief. Smaug may not see Bilbo, but he smells him. They have a conversation from which the dragon deduces that Bilbo is from Lake-town. He knows that Bilbo is accompanied by dwarves since he knows their smell. Smaug begins to weave doubts within Bilbo about the honesty of his companions and the fact that they will not share their wealth with him. In his smugness to demonstrate to Bilbo how indestructible he is, the dragon shows him his underbelly, which is covered in jewels except for one large spot over his left breast.

Bilbo returns to the dwarves and tells them what he learned from his conversation with the dragon and what the dragon may have inadvertently learned in return. Bilbo is



uneasy and believes Smaug will attack them again. He strongly advises that they go into the tunnel and close the door. Bilbo is so agitated the dwarves agree, but keep the door open a crack. The dwarves spend their time talking about the treasure and Thorin mentions the Arkenstone for the first time. Bilbo begs them to close the door and they finally do. Within seconds of its closing, Smaug attacks the side of the Mountain and sends rocks falling around the dwarves as they hurry along the passage to safety. Smaug had made his way silently around the Mountain hoping to catch the dwarves off guard. He unleashes his fury and then flies away to seek revenge upon the Men of the lake.

Analysis

Bilbo takes the role as leader at this time. Once the dwarves reach their destination, they do not seem to know what to do so it is up to Bilbo to give them instructions. While they use their tools, he uses his brain to find the secret door. When the dwarves are in despair of ever finding the door, Bilbo shows his resourcefulness once again by remembering what Elrond told them about the moon letters.

It is Bilbo who must brave the danger of the secret tunnel and see where it leads. The dwarves look to him to be the brave one and venture where they themselves would rather not. The reader can see the change that has occurred in Bilbo from the hobbit at the beginning of the story. The question is whether he would have taken such a risk had he not had the ring to hide him from anything harmful. Due to his willingness to face Smaug more than once, Bilbo is able to learn of the dragon's weak spot, which may not be directly advantageous to him, but will be to others.

Vocabulary

desolate, laden, barren, waning, cavernous, ominous, reek, perilous, runes, marauding, toiled, lintel, mishap, roving, esteemed, pretence, ruddy, dire, hoard, inevitable, surpassed, grievous, cartage, wily, antiquated, dubious, stratagems, marrow, smote



Chapters 13-14

Summary

Chapter 13. The dwarves stay hidden in the tunnel for days before they get up enough courage to try to open the door, but they find it blocked. Bilbo offers to go once again to Smaug's lair and see if he is there. He makes his way, finding the room in complete darkness and Smaug absent. Bilbo calls for a light and begins to look around. He finds the Arkenstone and puts it in his pocket without telling Thorin he has found it. There is no sign of Smaug anywhere and Bilbo's light goes out, so he calls for the dwarves to come out and give him a light. They reluctantly come out of hiding and join him. At the sight of the treasure, the dwarves lose their caution and fear and begin to look around. They give Bilbo a coat of mail made from mithril. The treasure has lost its enchantment over Bilbo and he urges Thorin to find them a way out. The dwarves come to their senses and Thorin leads them toward a gate that will take them outside. The group decides to make their way to an old lookout post, which is a five hour march. Once there, they rest and wait to see if the dragon returns to his lair.

Chapter 14. The people of Lake-town see light flickering on the Mountain. They have seen this previously and think that it is the dwarves forging gold. The light moves closer and Bard, a grim-faced man, realizes that it is the dragon making its way to their town; they cut the bridges to the town and arm themselves. When Smaug gets to Lake-town he finds his enemies on an island in deep water. The archers shoot arrows at him, but they have no effect. Smaug begins to set the buildings on fire as well as smashing others with his tail. The people begin to desert the town and make for the shore. The only archer left is Bard, a descendant of Girion, Lord of Dale. He has one arrow left when a thrush alights on his shoulder and tells him about the bare spot on Smaug's left breast. Bard aims his last arrow and it hits the dragon on its bare spot. The dragon falls through the air and lands on the town.

The Men of the lake hail Bard as a hero. There are hard feelings against the Master of the town because he was the first to desert it, leaving his people behind. Bard busies himself making camp for the townspeople. The people are all talking about the dragon's treasure that awaits in the Lonely Mountain, and the news of Smaug's death travels to the Wood-elves, the goblins in Misty Mountain and to Beorn. The Elven-king travels to Lake-town on his way to the Lonely Mountain. The elves and the Men of the lake band together and set off together to claim the treasure of the dragon.

Analysis

When the dwarves and hobbit are trapped in the tunnel, Bilbo offers to go and see if Smaug is around. The dwarves only emerge once they are certain it is safe for them, but it is not long before they succumb to the lure of the treasure. This lust makes them forget their danger and everything else. Bilbo, over whom the treasure has lost its effect,



has to force them to realize their continued danger and convinces them to leave the treasure and move to safety. Unlike Bilbo and his companions, the reader does know where Smaug was headed and his continued absence gives doubt to the fact that he will ever return.

Since Bilbo is not present at the demise of Smaug, the author takes the opportunity to change the perspective of the story to allow the reader to have information Bilbo cannot. The story moves away from the Lonely Mountain and the dwarves and switches to Lake-town, where the reader is able to witness the death of Smaug and the usefulness of Bilbo's information regarding the bare spot on the dragon's breast. The author also introduces Bard, the archer, descendant of the Lord of Dale, who has a claim to a portion of the dwarves' treasure. The reader is also informed that the death of Smaug is traveling to far regions and there is foreshadowing of what this news will bring.

Vocabulary

pallid, radiance, draught, furtive, trudged, rockhewn, dominion, marauding, foreboding, prophecies, hindered, mirth, gilded, throes, gledes, eminent, benefactors, imperishable, deposed, recompense, treacherous, array



Chapters 15-16

Summary

Chapter 15. The dwarves have still not seen any sign of the dragon, but they know that something unusual has happened by the presence of numerous birds. The thrush that told Bard of the dragon's weakness helps the dwarves out by bringing them a raven that speaks their language. The raven tells the dwarves that Smaug is dead and that the elves and the Men of the lake are coming to lay claim to the treasure. The raven cautions Thorin to not trust the Master of the town, but assures him of the trustworthiness of Bard. He counsils the dwarf to deal fairly with Bard and give him a portion of the treasure since part of it belongs to the people of Dale. Thorin refuses to consider the thought, seeing the men as thieves. He asks that the raven send messengers to his kin, including his cousin Dain, who is closest in the Iron Hills.

The dwarves return to the Mountain and begin to fortify the gates against intruders. One night, the dwarves see campfires in Dale and they know that the men and elves have arrived. The elves and men send a contingent to talk to the dwarves led by Bard. He tells Thorin that they come in peace, and all he wants is a share of the treasure that belongs to the people of Dale and what Thorin owes the people of Lake-town for the provisions they provided to the dwarves. Thorin does not see the justice of the request and refuses to give them anything while the Elvenking is with them. The elves must leave before he will talk to them again. They send another emissary later with terms that Thorin may find more agreeable, but he shoots an arrow at the messenger. The other dwarves dare not go against Thorin's decision, but Bilbo does not like the dwarf's greedy meanness.

Chapter 16. The dwarves spend their days going through the treasure and putting it in order. Thorin looks everywhere for the Arkenstone, but cannot find it. He threatens anyone who dares to keep it for himself. The ravens tell the dwarves that Dain and five hundred dwarves are two days away. That night, Bilbo takes Bombur's place on watch and sneaks down to the camp of the men and elves. He asks to be taken to see Bard. Bilbo tells them that Thorin is stubborn enough to sit on his treasure as long as the men and elves are camped here. He also tells them about Dain's imminent arrival. Bilbo gives the Arkenstone to Bard and the Elvenking to aid them in their bargaining, as Thorin will give up a great deal to get it back. The Elvenking tries to convince Bilbo to stay with them since he knows that Thorin's wrath will be great against the hobbit. Bilbo refuses because he does not want to leave his friends and he promised Bombur he would wake him at midnight. As Bilbo is making his way through the camp he is greeted by Gandalf, who is impressed by Bilbo's behavior. Gandalf tells Bilbo that things should be coming to an end soon and there is news that not even the ravens are aware of yet. Bilbo returns to the mountain, wakes Bombur and goes to sleep.



Analysis

The author introduces a way for the dwarves and Bilbo to learn of Smaug's death and the imminent arrival of the Men of the Lake with the Wood Elves by presenting them with a bird that speaks their language. This is also a way for the dwarves to send messages to their kin—something they otherwise would not have been able to do. This is when the reader is able to witness the power that the dragon's hoard can have over a person. Thorin seems to be affected the most as his greed does not allow him to foster any thoughts of charitableness.

What the reader believes to be a moment of weakness for Bilbo—when he takes the Arkenstone—turns out to be a clever way for him to help Bard get his share of the treasure. Bilbo is the only one of Thorin's companions who no longer cares about the treasure and is willing to stand up against the dwarf and see justice done. He feels guilty for what he is doing and knows there will be consequences, but as usual he is trying to save his friends. Because of that friendship, Bilbo returns to them knowing that Thorin's wrath will be great. Gandalf is proud of Bilbo for his behavior. The reader senses that Gandalf has always known what kind of hobbit Bilbo is, but he just needed an adventure to bring out all of the good qualities that he had deep within. It is only because of Bilbo that the dwarves make it to the Lonely Mountain.

Vocabulary

carrion, decrepit, caper, remnant, bidden, parley, succored, besets, sentinels, thrice



Chapters 17-18

Summary

Chapter 17. The next day, Bard and the Elvenking return to see if Thorin has changed his mind. He has not, so they show him the Arkenstone and offer it for their share of the treasure. Bilbo admits that he is the one who gave it to them and Thorin's wrath is great toward the hobbit. Gandalf reveals his presence to keep Thorin from doing any harm to Bilbo. The hobbit is banished from the Mountain and sent to join Gandalf. Bard gives Thorin more chance to consider their offer and in the meantime they keep the Arkenstone. The next day, Dain and his dwarves arrive and Bard and Bilbo go to meet his emissaries. Bard knows that if they allow the dwarves to get past them they will have enough warriors and provisions to hold the mountain for weeks.

Neither Bard nor the Elvenking want to fight the dwarves; they prefer to find a way to reconcile with them without violence. The dwarves realize this and they attack first. At the same time, a strange black cloud hurries across the sky. Gandalf throws himself between the two armies and tells them that the goblins, a common enemy of them all, are upon them. The goblins are riding upon wolves and Wargs with bats flying up above, hence the black cloud. Dwarves, men, and elves must band together to fight these foes, and so begins the Battle of Five Armies. The hatred for the dwarves has been rekindled in the goblins with the death of the Great Goblin. When they heard of the death of Smaug, they hurried as fast as they could to the Lonely Mountain.

The battle is a terrible one. Bilbo puts his ring on early to keep himself safe. The dwarves, elves, and men do well against the goblins at first, but as the battle wears on they begin to lose ground. At that point Thorin and his dwarves join the battle. They fight well, but are soon about to be overcome by the goblin army. Bilbo sees the Eagles flying toward the battle but before they arrive he is hit on the head by a rock and loses consciousness.

Chapter 18. When Bilbo awakens, he finds himself alone and forgets that he is still wearing his ring so that no one can see him. Once he takes it off, he is found and taken to the camp at Dale. Thorin has been wounded during the battle and is asking for Bilbo. The dwarf wishes to apologize to Bilbo and part with him in friendship. Thorin dies and Bilbo is greatly saddened by his passing, but glad that they parted as friends. Bilbo learns what happened with the battle after he lost consciousness. The Eagles had been keeping an eye on the goblins for quite some time. When they scented a battle they came as quickly as they could and were able to help the men and elves turn the tables on the goblins.

The men and elves were still outnumbered until Beorn arrived in the shape of a bear. Goblins fell before him and he picked up the wounded Thorin and carried him off of the battlefield. Beorn returned to the battle and soon the goblins were fleeing in all directions. The others were able to chase down the goblins and dispose of them. So



many goblins perished that day that the mountains had peace for a long time after that. Thorin is buried deep in the Mountain and the Arkenstone is placed upon his breast. The Elvenking lays Orcrist upon his tomb. Dain becomes King of the Mountain and ten of the original twelve dwarves remain with him. Fili and Kili fell in battle defending their uncle Thorin from the goblins. Dain gives a share of the treasure to Bard, who sends some of it to the people of Lake-town. Bard also gives the emeralds of Girion to the Elvenking. Bilbo only agrees to take a small chest of gold and one of silver, although Dain wishes to give him more. Bilbo wishes his friends goodbye and he and Gandalf make their way homeward. They are accompanied by the Elvenking and Beorn. Before they part with the elves, Bilbo makes a present of a necklace of silver and pearls to make up for all of the food he ate while in the king's palace. They then travel to Beorn's house where they stay until the spring. Then they journey through the Misty Mountains, which is safer without the goblins. The closer he gets to home the stronger the Baggins part of Bilbo grows and all he wishes is to be home in his armchair.

Analysis

The lust of the treasure burns so deeply within Thorin that he turns against Bilbo and Gandalf, forgetting anything that either of them has done for him. He only sees them as betrayers and curses Gandalf for ever introducing him to Bilbo. So great is his lust for gold and silver, he is willing to fight the Men of the lake and the Wood elves rather than give up even a piece of it.

The Battle of Five Armies sees the return of friend and foe. The goblins still lust after the blood of the dwarves who were responsible for the death of their Great Goblin. The news of Smaug's death traveled to them and they now arrive to seek revenge with the help of the Wargs and gain treasure as well as territory. The Eagles' watchfulness and distrust of the goblins is advantageous to those fighting the battle against the goblins, since the Eagles fly to the aid of the men, dwarves and elves.

The author gives Thorin a worthy end. The dwarf comes to the aid of his fellow dwarves, the men, and the elves when his help is most needed. When he is mortally wounded he is able to see more clearly and once again understands the value of Bilbo and of friendship.

Vocabulary

embassy, bade, literally, hauberk, mattocks, astir, flank, tarry, forging, multitude, vanguard, faint, onslaught, ravaging, scimitars, stricken, onset, mustering, fray, abode



Chapter 19

Summary

Chapter 19. Gandalf and Bilbo make it to Rivendell on the first of May. They are given a warm welcome. They spend the evening telling their adventure to Elrond. It is at this point that Bilbo learns what Gandalf had been doing when he left the dwarves and hobbit at Mirkwood. Gandalf was at a great council of the white wizards and together they drove the Necromancer from his stronghold in Mirkwood. Bilbo is eager to get home, so after a week they say goodbye to Elrond and make their way to Hobbiton. They stop along the way and dig up the trolls' gold they had buried, taking it with them. Bilbo arrives home on June twenty-second to find that he is presumed dead and that his possessions are being auctioned off. Bilbo has to use a good deal of his gold to buy back his possessions and the Sackville-Bagginses are very upset that they will not get to move into Bag End after all. Bilbo also discovers that he has lost his reputation. He visits the elves whenever he can and begins to write poetry. He keeps his ring a secret and only uses it to hide from unwanted visitors.

Years later, Bilbo is visited by Gandalf and Balin. The dwarf tells him that Bard rebuilt the town of Dale and it is prospering. Lake-town was rebuilt as well and is more prosperous than ever since it has a new Master. The old Master stole most of the gold given to them by Bard and died of starvation in the Waste. The prophecies of the old songs appear to have come true.

Analysis

At the end of the story Bilbo returns home a different hobbit than when he left. He is happy to see his home once again and realizes how much he has missed it, but he cannot quite give up all aspects of his adventurous life. His life is no longer the quiet and respectable one he had, but rather he continues to associate with strange creatures such as dwarves, who visit his home. Bilbo also visits the elves from time to time.

A visit from Balin allows Bilbo and the reader to find out the fate of the other characters in the novel. Thus, the story ends on a satisfactory note and the reader is satisfied.

Vocabulary

brink, whither, lore, heather, slumber, jest, daresay, commotion, presumption, memoirs, extensive, magnificence



Characters

Bilbo Baggins

Bilbo Baggins is a hobbit who lives in the West in Hobbiton. He is sent on an adventure as a burglar with thirteen dwarves by Gandalf, the wizard. Bilbo finds a magic ring on his journey, which makes him invisible and helps him out of many difficult situations. He helps the dwarves retrieve their treasure from Smaug, the dragon, and fight a war against goblins. Bilbo returns home as a hero and with great wealth.

Gandalf

Gandalf is a wizard who recommends Bilbo as the burglar needed to help the dwarves retrieve their gold from Smaug, the dragon. Gandalf does not stay with the travelers for their entire journey, but he does return when they need him most. He is at the Battle of Five Armies to help the men, elves, and dwarves fight the goblins.

Dwalin

Dwalin is the name of one of the dwarves who travels with Thorin to the Lonely Mountain. He wears a dark green hood and is the brother of Balin. Dwalin stays with Dain at the Mountain once the dragon is killed and the goblins are defeated.

Balin

Balin, a dwarf, is one of Thorin's traveling companions. He wears a red hood and is the brother of Dwalin. Balin stays with Dain in the Lonely Mountain once the dragon is killed and the goblins are defeated. He is a good friend to Bilbo and visits him after the adventure.

Kili

Kili is the nephew of Thorin and brother of Fili. He wears a blue hood. He is killed defending Thorin during the Battle of Five Armies against the goblins.

Fili

Fili is the nephew of Thorin and brother of Kili. He wears a blue hood. He, like his brother, is killed defending Thorin during the Battle of Five Armies against the goblins.



Dori

Dori is a dwarf and one of Thorin's traveling companions. He wears a purple hood. He saves Bilbo from the Wargs at great risk to himself. Dori stays with Dain in the Lonely Mountain when the dragon is killed and the goblins are defeated.

Nori

Nori, another dwarf, is one of Thorin's traveling companions. He wears a purple hood. He stays with Dain in the Lonely Mountain when the dragon is killed and the goblins are defeated.

Ori

Ori is one of the dwarves and one of Thorin's traveling companions. He wears a gray hood. He stays with Dain in the Lonely Mountain when the dragon is killed and the goblins are defeated.

Oin

Oin, a dwarf, is one of Thorin's traveling companions. He wears a brown hood. He and his brother Gloin are good at making fire. He stays with Dain in the Lonely Mountain when the dragon is killed and the goblins are defeated.

Gloin

Gloin is another of the dwarves and one of Thorin's traveling companions. He wears a white hood. He and his brother Oin are good at making fire. He stays with Dain in the Lonely Mountain when the dragon is killed and the goblins are defeated.

Bifur

Bifur, a dwarf, is one of Thorin's traveling companions and wears a yellow hood. He stays with Dain in the Lonely Mountain when the dragon is killed and the goblins are defeated.

Bofur

Bofur, a dwarf and one of Thorin's traveling companions, wears a yellow hood. Bofur stays with Dain in the Lonely Mountain when the dragon is killed and the goblins are defeated.



Bombur

Bombur is the largest dwarf that accompanies Thorin. He wears a pale green hood. He stays with Dain in the Lonely Mountain when the dragon is killed and the goblins are defeated.

Thorin Oakenshield

Thorin Oakenshield is the grandson of Thrór and the son of Thráin. He wears a sky blue hood with a long silver tassel. Thorin wishes to reclaim his family's treasure from Smaug, the dragon. He succeeds and becomes King under the Mountain for a short while. He is killed during the Battle of Five Armies by goblins.

Gollum

Gollum is a small, slimy creature who lives in the middle of a lake in a deep, dark cave in the Misty Mountains. Bilbo finds Gollum's ring, and he and Bilbo exchange riddles to see if he will lead the hobbit out of the cave or eat him. Gollum loses the riddle game, and Bilbo uses the ring to turn invisible and escape from the creature.

Goblins

Goblins are cruel, wicked creatures that eat anything and are always hungry. They live in caves deep in the Misty Mountains. They capture the dwarves, hobbit and Gandalf, but their Great Goblin is killed when the travelers escape. The goblins travel to the Lonely Mountain to claim the dragon's hoard when they hear Smaug is dead, but they are defeated by men, dwarves and elves.

Wargs

Wargs are evil wolves that live on the Edge of the Wild. They help the goblins with raids and share in the plunder. Wargs trap the dwarves, hobbit and Gandalf in trees when they catch them in the glade where they are to meet the goblins. They help the goblins in the Battle of Five Armies and are defeated.

Lord of the Eagles

The Lord of the Eagles and his subjects save Gandalf, Bilbo and the dwarves from the Wargs. They fly the travelers away from the Misty Mountains during their journey to the Lonely Mountain. Eagles help them fight the goblins in the Battle of Five Armies as well.



Beorn

Beorn is a skin-changer who transforms into a large black bear or a large man and lives on the edge of Mirkwood. The travelers stay with Beorn after they escape from the goblins. There, they have time to regain their strength and he provides them with supplies to help them on their journey. Beorn helps them defeat the goblins at the Battle of Five Armies and carries the wounded Thorin from the battlefield.

King of the Elves of the Wood

The King of the Elves of the Wood and his elves live in a great cave on the edge of Mirkwood. He captures Thorin and his dwarves when they stumble upon the elves' feast in the forest. He and his subjects are friends of the people of Lake-town. He and some of his elves come to claim the dragon hoard when Smaug dies. They fight against the goblins in the Battle of Five Armies.

Master of Lake-town

The Master of Lake-town provides the dwarves with supplies in the hope that they will share their treasure once they have recovered it. He tries to flee, leaving his people behind, when Smaug attacks the town. Once a portion of the treasure is passed onto the people of Lake-town, the Master steals most of it and dies of starvation in the Waste alone, abandoned by his companions.

Smaug

Smaug is a large and cunning red-golden dragon that once killed or drove the dwarves and men away from the Lonely Mountain. He hoarded all of their treasure and kept it for himself. Smaug is killed by Bard, a Lake-town archer, since he did not realize his jewel encrusted belly was not completely covered and protected.

Bard

Bard is the captain of the archers in Lake-town and the descendant of Girion, Lord of Dale. Bard kills the dragon Smaug with an arrow and recovers Dale's share of the dragon's hoard, which he uses to rebuild the town. He also fights the goblins in the Battle of Five Armies.

Dain

Dain is Thorin's cousin from the Iron Hills who comes to his defense against the men of Lake-town and the Wood elves. Dain and his dwarves end up fighting with them against the goblins in the Battle of Five Armies instead. After the death of Thorin, Dain makes

his home in the Lonely Mountain and becomes King under the Mountain in his cousin's place.



Objects/Places

Map

Gandalf has a map made by Thrór, Thorin's grandfather. It is a plan of the Lonely Mountain where the dwarves once lived and shows the whereabouts of a secret entrance.

Secret Entrance

There is a secret door hidden in the Lonely Mountain and protected by magic. This door leads into a secret passage to the Lower Halls of the dwarves' fortress where the dragon hoards his treasure.

Key

There is a key with the map that is used to unlock the secret door. It is small, silver, with a long barrel and intricate words.

Sting

In the troll's cave, Bilbo finds a knife he uses as a short sword which glows when goblins are near. He names it Sting.

Misty Mountains

In the Misty Mountains, the travelers are captured by the goblins and kill the Great Goblin. This is also where Bilbo finds the ring and encounters Gollum.

Rivendell

Rivendell is on the edge of the Wild. This is the home of the elves and where Elrond lives in the Last Homely House.

Orcrist

Thorin finds a sword named Orcrist in the troll's cave. Its name means Goblin-Cleaver, but the goblins call it Biter. Orcrist killed many goblins in its time.



Glamdring the Foe-hammer

Gandalf finds a sword named Glamdring the Foe-hammer in the troll's cave. The goblins call it Beater. They hate it worse than Biter.

Ring

Bilbo finds a ring of gold on the floor in the Goblin's cave. This ring belonged to Gollum, but he lost it. It is a powerful ring and turns its wearer invisible.

Mirkwood

Mirkwood is a dark, dangerous forest filled with unusual creatures and strange lights. When the dwarves leave the path in Mirkwood, they are captured by giant spiders and then by Wood elves.

Lake-town

Before Smaug the dragon came Lake-town, the area was known as Esgaroth. The people in Lake-town give the dwarves and hobbit supplies to help them make it to the Lonely Mountain. It is here that Smaug is killed by an archer.

Dragon's Hoard

Smaug accumulated the treasure of the dwarves and men and hoarded it away in his lair, placing it in a big pile that he sleeps upon. The dragon's hoard frequently causes lust within those who look upon it or possess it.

Lonely Mountain

Thorin's family had built a great hall within the Lonely Mountain. They mined it and accumulated great wealth from the gold and jewels they found. Thorin, his father, and grandfather were forced to flee when Smaug came and took up residence.

Dale

Dale was the old town in the valley, under the shadow the Lonely Mountain. It was destroyed and plundered by Smaug, but some residents managed to escape.

Arkenstone of Thrain

Thorin is interested in finding above all else the Arkenstone of Thrain, also known as the Heart of the Mountain. It is a large white gem. It is buried with Thorin.



Themes

Greed

Greed is a predominant feeling amongst the characters within the novel. The dwarves begin their quest due to a desire to retrieve the treasure that their family had lost when the dragon took their home. It is the thought of the treasure that keeps them going no matter what happens to them along the way. Once Thorin finds the treasure and spends long hours amongst it, the lust of the treasure works into Thorin's heart and hardens it against requests that he would otherwise have found just. He does not want to share the treasure with the descendants of Dale, who rightfully have a claim to a percentage of it, nor does he want to pay the Men of the lake back for the help they gave him in reaching the Lonely Mountain.

The treasure is infected with feelings of greed and lust after being lain upon by the dragon, Smaug. A dragon does not need treasure nor can it ever use it, but it loves to acquire it if only to lie upon it and brood over it. People who come across this treasure are then affected by these feelings. Thorin is, as is the Master of Lake-town, who instead of using the treasure he receives to help his people, runs away with it and dies of starvation in the Waste where he is abandoned. Even Bilbo experiences an overwhelming feeling of lust when he looks upon the treasure and this drives him to take and keep the Arkenstone of Thrain. Bilbo, however, is able to overcome these feelings and use the Arkenstone for the good of everyone.

Even the Elvenking is infected with greed and has a weakness for treasure. The king has a great deal of treasure already, but he is always eager to acquire more. He wishes to amass as great a treasure as the elf-lords of old. The Elvenking has a pretty good idea that Thorin's presence in his realm has something to do with treasure, and when he hears of the death of Smaug, the Elvenking sets out immediately to acquire a share of the treasure. His desire for treasure does not consume him so much that he wishes to go to battle with the dwarves in order to gain it. The king, along with Bard, prefers to seek a peaceful compromise with Thorin rather than spill blood.

Bravery

When Bilbo begins his journey, he is a meek hobbit who scares easily although he has a desire for adventure deep down. During his quest he changes greatly and becomes more confident and commanding. Toward the end, the dwarves look to him as their leader since he is the one who often saves them from certain peril. Bilbo is the one who saves them from the spiders when they are about to be eaten. When he kills a giant spider without the assistance of Gandalf or any of the dwarves, Bilbo feels empowered and realizes that he is braver and stronger than he believed. He is always the one sent to see if places are safe for the dwarves, such as down the tunnel behind the secret door. Bilbo readily accepts these duties and is made braver by the use of his ring, which



provides him with invisibility. He is even willing to go back into the goblin caves to save his friends when he barely escaped himself. His bravery allows him to take risks that are to the benefit of all.

Bilbo is not the only one who displays bravery during the long quest to the Lonely Mountain. Dori puts himself in grave peril to save Bilbo from the Wargs, climbing down from his tree where he is safe to help Bilbo into it. He does not rush the hobbit, but allows him to take his time although he almost does not make it back to safety himself. Bard, the descendant of Girion, Lord of Dale, is the only one of the Men of the lake who stands his ground when Smaug attacks Lake-town. As the others flee for their lives, Bard fights with his last arrow, which luckily allows him to penetrate the dragon's one weak spot and kill it, thus saving the town as well as the dwarves hiding in the Lonely Mountain.

Friendship

Hobbits are a respectable, quiet race who keep mostly to themselves. Bilbo is very unusual for having not only gone out on an adventure, but for having acquired unusual friends. A respectable hobbit does not keep company with dwarves or elves and Bilbo does both. Even after he returns from his adventures he often goes to visit the elves and dwarves come to visit him.

Before Bilbo met Thorin and the other dwarves he did not think very well of them. As he spends months in their company and they all begin to rely upon one another, Bilbo sees them as his friends. He is always ready to help them if they need it and faces terrible foes for them. Even after giving the Arkenstone to Bard, Bilbo wishes to return to Thorin and the dwarves despite knowing that Thorin's wrath will be great. The Elvenking wishes him to stay with them for he knows a dwarf's anger is dangerous, but Bilbo does not wish to leave his friends in such a way and he has made a promise to Bombur to wake him at midnight. Bilbo's duty to his friends is great.



Style

Point of View

The Hobbit is written in the third person omniscient point of view. The reader witnesses the story through the eyes of Bilbo Baggins, the hobbit. The novel follows Bilbo and his companions as they travel from Hobbiton in the West where he lives all the way to the Lonely Mountain in the East and back again. There is one point where the narration changes to other characters briefly to inform readers of events that Bilbo did not personally witness, which allows for a fuller account of the tale.

The third person point of view is not as intimate as the first person point of view, but it does allow the reader to learn things about Bilbo, such as his feelings of fear, that he may not have admitted were he telling the tale through first person. It also gives the author the opportunity to show the reader what is happening elsewhere so that they have the full picture of the story even when the participants do not. This point of view works well for the story, giving the reader the opportunity to know all of the characters involved and care about what happens to all of them.

Setting

The novel is not set in one particular place, but encompasses lands from the West to the East as Bilbo and the dwarves travel through them. The tale begins in Hobbiton, the home of the hobbits in the West. The reader then follows the travelers to the Misty Mountains where the goblins live in deep, dark caves, to Mirkwood where strange creatures lurk in the forest, to Lake-town and then to the Lonely Mountain where the dragon waits.

The novel is set in a time long ago, and as the hobbit and dwarves journey to their destination in the East the reader is able to learn about the lands and creatures that used to exist at that time. The multiple settings work well for this reason. It also helps the reader to understand the dangers the travelers face in their quest and some of the history of their races. The adventures the characters encounter in these different locations provide the reader with an exciting story that keeps him reading until the end.

Language and Meaning

The language of the novel is more formal than that of a modern novel. The language is appropriate to the time period, which is long ago when speech was more lyrical and had more of a formality to it. The reader gets a sense of actually being within the time when men lived amongst the dwarves, elves and hobbits.

The language is appropriate not only to the author's education level, but also to the characters represented. The races depicted are those whose history is ancient and



whose language reflects the dignity and age of their cultures. The dwarves, elves and hobbits are all fond of singing songs and reciting poems. Their greetings and departures follow prescribed customs in their wording which are eloquently spoken. The language works well with the plot of the story and is an authentic reflection upon the creatures depicted within the tale.

Structure

The novel is divided into nineteen chapters. Each chapter is between seven and twenty-seven pages long. The chapters tell the story both in exposition and dialogue.

The novel contains one main plot and one subplot. The main plot follows Bilbo Baggins as he travels with the dwarves to the Lonely Mountain and back again to Hobbiton. The subplot follows Smaug's attack on Lake-town and lets the reader witness the dragon's demise and the Men of the lake's determination to return to the Lonely Mountain and retrieve the dragon's treasure. This subplot helps the reader to get the complete story and thus contributes to the main plot coming to a satisfying end.



Quotes

This is a story of how a Baggins had an adventure, and found himself doing and saying things altogether unexpected. (Chapter 1)

Dragons steal gold and jewels, you know, from men and elves and dwarves, wherever they can find them; and they guard their plunder as long as they live (which is practically forever, unless they are killed), and never enjoy a brass ring of it. (Chapter 1)

To the end of his days Bilbo could never remember how he found himself outside, without a hat, walking-stick or any money, or anything that he usually took when he went out; leaving his second breakfast half-finished and quite unwashed-up, pushing his keys into Gandalf's hands, and running as fast as his furry feet could carry him down the lane, past the great Mill, across The Water, and then on for a whole mile or more. (Chapter 2)

Elves know a lot and are wondrous folk for news, and know what is going on among the peoples of the land, as quick as water flows, or quicker. (Chapter 3)

Now goblins are cruel, wicked, and badhearted. They make no beautiful things, but they make many clever ones. They can tunnel and mine as well as any but the most skilled dwarves, when they take the trouble, though they are usually untidy and dirty. (Chapter 4)

He was Gollum--as dark as darkness, except for two big round pale eyes in his thin face. (Chapter 5)

It seemed that the ring he had was a magic ring: it made you invisible! (Chapter 5)

The Wargs and the goblins often helped one another in wicked deeds. (Chapter 6)

Stick to the forest-track, keep your spirits up, hope for the best, and with a tremendous slice of luck you may come out one day and see the Long Marshes lying below you, and beyond them, high in the East, the Lonely Mountain where dear old Smaug lives, though I hope he is not expecting you. (Chapter 7)

Somehow the killing of a giant spider, all alone by himself in the dark without the help of the wizard or the dwarves or of anyone else, made a great difference to Mr. Baggins. (Chapter 8)

They had escaped the dungeons of the king and were through the wood, but whether alive or dead still remains to be seen. (Chapter 9)

The Elvenking was very powerful in those parts and the Master wished for no enmity with him, nor did he think much of the old songs, giving his mind to trade and tolls, to cargoes and gold, to which habit he owed his position. (Chapter 10)



A door five feet high and three broad was outlined, and slowly without a sound swung inwards. It seemed as if darkness flowed out like a vapour from the hole in the mountain-side, and deep darkness in which nothing could be seen lay before their eyes, a yawning mouth leading in and down. (Chapter 11)

Smaug lay, with wings folded like an immeasurable bat, turned partly on one side, so that the hobbit could see his underparts and his long pale belly crusted with gems and fragments of gold from his long lying on his costly bed. (Chapter 12)

Each now gripped a lighted torch; and as they gazed, first on one side and then on another, they forgot fear and even caution. They spoke aloud, and cried out to one another, as they lifted old treasures from the mound or from the wall and held them in the light, caressing and fingering them. (Chapter 13)

With a shriek that deafened men, felled trees and split stone, Smaug shot spouting into the air, turned over and crashed down from on high in ruin. (Chapter 14)

The news of the death of the guardian has already gone far and wide, and the legend of the wealth of Thrór has not lost in the telling during many years; many are eager for a share of the spoil. (Chapter 15)

Many of the dwarves spent their time piling and ordering the treasure; and now Thorin spoke of the Arkenstone of Thráin, and bade them eagerly to look for it in every corner. (Chapter 16)

So began the battle that none had expected; and it was called the Battle of Five Armies, and it was terrible. Upon one side were the Goblins and the wild Wolves, and upon the other side were Elves, Men and Dwarves. (Chapter 17)

There is more in you of good than you know, child of the kindly West. Some courage and some wisdom, blended in measure. (Chapter 18)

It is true that for ever after he remained an elf-friend, and had the honour of dwarves, wizards, and all such folk as ever passed that way; but he was no longer quite respectable. (Chapter 19)



Topics for Discussion

Topic 1

Discuss the effect of the dragon's hoard on those who come in contact with it. Does it affect Bilbo? What about Smaug? Do people have to even see it to feel lust for it? Why or why not? Explain.

Topic 2

What is Bilbo like when he first meets Thorin and the other dwarves? How does he change during the adventure? How does this affect his life when he returns home?

Topic 3

Who is Beorn and where does he live? What is his home like? Why does Gandalf make the dwarves meet him only two at a time? How does Beorn help the dwarves and Bilbo? Why does he help them?

Topic 4

Why are the dwarves and hobbit not supposed to leave the path through Mirkwood? What happens when they do? How does Bilbo save the dwarves?

Topic 5

Why does Bilbo keep the Arkenstone of Thorin for himself? What does he do with it? When the Elvenking asks Bilbo to stay with them rather than return to the Mountain what does Bilbo answer? What is the reason behind his choice?

Topic 6

What happens when Bilbo takes a piece of the dragon's treasure? What does the dragon learn from his conversation with Bilbo? What are the consequences of that conversation to the dwarves and the Men of the lake? What becomes of Smaug?

Topic 7

To whom does the news of Smaug's death spread and what happens because of this news? What is the outcome of the Battle of Five Armies and how does it affect the five races involved?



Topic 8

Do you believe that Bilbo should have kept the ring he found in the goblin caves? Why or why not? Why do you think he kept it a secret for so long? Bilbo did many dangerous things while wearing the ring; do you think it is what made him brave? Would he have been as brave without it? What acts of bravery did he perform while not wearing the ring?