

The Hobbit – An Introduction

Introduction

This pack provides some basic and essential information about the book, including:

- a list of major characters, places and objects
- a short summary of the whole story
- a chapter-by-chapter summary

Additional information and connections between *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings (LotR)* are given in square brackets - [].

The full title of the book is *The Hobbit, or There and Back Again*

It is set in **Middle-earth** in the Third Age. Tolkien did not make up the name Middle-earth. It is in fact a modernised version on the name of the world inhabited by humans that was used in ancient northern European languages such as Anglo-Saxon (middangeard - Old English) and Middle English (middelerde).

It tells the story of **Bilbo Baggins** - the hobbit of the title - and the adventures he becomes involved in with Gandalf the wizard and a group of dwarves.

The Hobbit was originally a story Tolkien told to his children. In this form it was composed sometime between 1929 and 1936.

It was **published** in 1937.

It is described as a fantasy novel, a story of heroic quest, and a children's story.

It is a third-person narrative and has an omniscient narrator. This means that the narrator tells the reader the thoughts of the hobbit and also comments on them and the progress of the quest.

The narrator and the tone of the narration are sometimes comic, and sometimes condescending to the reader. This condescension was not unusual in books for children in the early 20th century.

Tolkien uses a variety of styles of writing. Sometimes the narration becomes almost poetic. Many of the characters are given their own kinds of speech.

- Bilbo sometimes is offended by Gandalf or the dwarves and then his speech changes to sound more formal and 'dignified'.
- Thorin is usually terse, sometimes angry
- The trolls use colloquial language and bad grammar
- Gollum always seems to be talking to someone else, and his speech is full of 's' sounds
- The language of the goblins is full of violence
- Tolkien introduces many old and unusual words into the story because he loved language.

Themes:

- The development of a reluctant hero
- Luck and how it serves characters who are brave even when scared
- Power and its misuse [the Ring symbolises power]
- Leadership [the Master of Lake-town is not a good leader]
- The relationship between the natural world and that of humans or humanlike beings.

Main Characters in the Story:

- **Bilbo Baggins** the hobbit of the title
- **Gandalf** the wizard
- **Thorin Oakenshield**, leader of the dwarves. His dwarf companions are: Dwalin, Balin, Kili, Fili, Dori, Nori, Ori, Oin, Gloin, Bifur, Bofur, Bombur. [The names of all the dwarves, and 'Gandalf' come from the Icelandic stories written in the Prose Edda. In *LotR* Gloin is Gimli's father]
- **The three trolls**
- **Elrond Half-Elven**, master of Rivendell
- **Gollum** - possesses and loses a Ring which confers invisibility
- **Beorn** - a shape-shifter who helps the travellers
- **The Elvenking**, lord of the Elves of Mirkwood [His name is Thranduil and in *LotR* we learn he is Legolas's father]
- **The Master of Lake Town**
- **Smaug the Dragon**
- **The thrush**
- **Bard the Bowman**
- **Goblins**
- **Wargs**
- **The Lord of the Eagles**

Many of these characters and beings appear again in *The Lord of the Rings*.

Important Places:

- **Bag End** - the name of Bilbo's home
- **Hobbiton** - the place where he lives
- **Rivendell** - the deep valley where Elrond and his household live
- **The Misty Mountains** - where the Great Goblin and his soldier live in caves, and where Gollum lives on an island in a lake
- **The Edge of the Wild** - the land on the far side of the Mountains
- **The Carrock** - a great rock in a river, close to Beorn's home
- **Mirkwood** - a vast dark forest where giant spiders live. It also surrounds the underground realm of the Elvenking and his people.
- **The Long Lake** - Bilbo is astonished that any expanse of water could be so big without being the Sea.
- **Lake-town**, also called Esgaroth, built out over part of the Long Lake
- **Dale** - a town ruined by Smaug
- **The Desolation of Smaug** - all the lands that have been destroyed and defiled by the Dragon

- **The Lonely Mountain** - ancient home and realm of Thorin's people. Taken over by the dragon who guards the treasure he has also taken.
- **Middle-earth** - the place where everything in the story happens. [Not somewhere Tolkien invented, but a modernised form of the medieval name for the whole world in which we live. As 'middangeard' or 'middelearde' it meant the land in the middle - that is between heaven and the underworld. Tolkien chose this name for his world because the events that happen in it are supposed to have happened in a very distant or mythic past time before the history we know about.]

Important Objects:

- **The Arkenstone** - a great white jewel. It was the dwarves' most prized treasure but was left behind when they fled from Smaug. Also called the Heart of the Mountain.
- **Thror's Map**
- **The Ring**
- **Glamdring** (elvish for Foe-hammer)
- **Orcrist** (elvish for Goblin-cleaver)
- **Sting** [These three swords were made in ancient times by elves. They shine when enemies are near. They are again important in *LotR*.]

Connections with *The Lord of the Rings*:

Bilbo's adventures in *The Hobbit* happen before the story told in *The Lord of the Rings*, but the story includes moments of foreshadowing:

Things happen in *The Hobbit* which will later be important in *LotR*, such as Gollum calling the Ring his 'Precious'. The petrification (turning to stone) of the trolls in *The Hobbit* becomes a playful sign of Sam's special qualities in *LotR*.

There are many echoes of *The Hobbit* in *LotR*, but they are often on a larger scale in *LotR*, or more dangerous and serious. For example, on the quests in both books the travellers visit Rivendell for rest and advice. After this, in both stories, they experience storms in the mountains.

The Hobbit includes many songs, rhymes, and riddles that form part of the story, help to create characterisation, or explain earlier events. Some are more comic, others are more childish, than songs and poems in *LotR*, but they are all important in their own ways within the stories. They also help to create the distinctive tone of Tolkien's storytelling.

A note on pages before Chapter 1:

The map at the very start of the book is important - it is Thror's map and is not like modern maps. It is like medieval maps that showed important places and things in pictures.

If you look closely, the compass directions are not like modern maps. Tolkien explains that this is how dwarf maps are made. But medieval maps did not use modern compass points.

Tolkien chooses to use plural form of 'dwarf' that is not spelt as it is in modern English. He explains his choice at the very start of the book, where he also explains the occasional use of 'orc' rather than 'goblin', and gives an introduction to the use of runes.

The Story of *The Hobbit* in Brief

Bilbo Baggins the hobbit is persuaded to accompany Gandalf the wizard and the dwarves led by Thorin on a quest to take back the treasure that was long ago stolen from them by the dragon Smaug. He is reluctant but goes anyway.

The first adventure is the encounter with 3 great cannibalistic trolls. Bilbo manages to escape capture. All the dwarves are captured and put in sacks. Gandalf rescues everyone by tricking the trolls into staying outside until daybreak. The sunlight turns them to stone.

They find weapons in the trolls cave before continuing the journey to Rivendell, home of the Elves. There, Elrond translates the runes on Thror's map.

The journey continues. Sheltering from a storm in the Misty Mountains the travellers are captured by goblins. They escape but Bilbo is knocked out. When he recovers he is alone. In search of the dwarves he comes across Gollum, who wants to play the riddle game. If Gollum cannot guess what Bilbo asks he will show him the way out of the caves. If Bilbo cannot guess his riddles Gollum threatens to eat him.

In a panic, Bilbo finally asks What have I got in my pocket? He has picked up a ring from the floor of a cave tunnel and forgotten it till now.

Gollum now knows it is precious ring that he has lost, and hunts Bilbo, but the ring has slipped onto his finger and he is invisible. He and the dwarves escape the goblins for a while but find themselves trapped by wargs - evil wolves - in a forest glade. They seek safety by climbing the trees. Gandalf tries to drive off the wolves by throwing burning pine cones at them. The fire and noise bring goblins who set fire to the trees.

Bilbo, Gandalf and the dwarves are rescued by the Lord of the Eagles and his companions.

They are later taken to a great rock in the midst of a river called the Carrock and released to find Beorn.

This strange character is a man who can transform into a bear. He can be dangerous, but helps the travellers to reach Mirkwood. Here Gandalf leaves them.

This is a dark and dangerous place. In it, Thorin is captured by Wood elves, the rest of the dwarves and Bilbo are caught by giant speaking spiders. Bilbo makes them angry by singing insulting songs at them and manages to free himself and the dwarves. Then they are captured by the elves who take them to their King. Bilbo, invisible again, follows.

He finds Thorin and the dwarves in dungeons and rescues them by putting them in empty wine barrels which are floated by the elves down the Forest River. So Bilbo and the dwarves reach Lake-town in the Long Lake.

The people there help them, with boats, horses and ponies, to continue their journey to the Lonely Mountain, which can be seen in the far distance. The land closer to the Mountain is desolate.

The travellers have to climb up the side of the Mountain to a ledge, but cannot work out how to open the secret door. A thrush finally arrives to crack open a snail on a flat stone.

This is part of what Elrond translated from the runes on Thorin's map. At sunset, a shaft of light hits the rock face and a 'keyhole' is revealed. This is the secret door.

The dwarves insist it is Bilbo's job as the 'burglar' to go in and scout out the place. He reluctantly does so and finds Smaug asleep on the treasure. He steals a golden cup and goes back to the dwarves who are still on the ledge. The dragon wakes, feels he has been robbed, and goes out to blast the mountain with fire.

The next day Bilbo, invisible, goes back to the dragon's lair. Smaug speaks to him. The dragon is vain and boastful, and reveals his weak spot. Bilbo reports this back to the dwarves after a narrow escape. The thrush is back by the stone. Bilbo urges the dwarves to get into the tunnel behind the door. Smaug attacks the ledge and flies off.

Bilbo and the dwarves go down to his lair and find the treasure. Thorin gives Bilbo a shirt of mithril mail.

Meanwhile Smaug has gone to destroy Lake-town. The archers try to shoot him down. Bard the Bowman has only one arrow left when the thrush lands on his shoulder and tells him about Smaug's weak spot. Bard shoots and hits it. Smaug falls into the Lake and dies.

Lake-town has been destroyed. The Master is almost deposed in favour of Bard. Messengers have reached the Elvenking in Mirkwood with news of Smaug's death. He sets out with many elves. Some help to build shelters for the Lake people. Others, with armed Lake men go off to the Mountain to claim some of the treasure. Thorin begs Roac the raven to get word to Dain his kinsman that they need help.

A large force of elves and men gather and besiege the Mountain. Bilbo is afraid that there will be another terrible battle like the ones that had happened in the ancient history of Middle-earth. He slips away from the Mountain and goes to meet Bard and the Elvenking. He offers them the Arkenstone to bargain with.

Dain and his dwarves arrive, and Thorin will not exchange any gold even for the Arkenstone. As everyone prepares for battle Gandalf notices a great black cloud. It is a cloud of bats which accompany the goblin army of the North, and the wild Wolves.

The Battle of the Five Armies begins. It is desperate and the Men, Elves and dwarves are almost defeated but Bilbo sees the Eagles coming to help. Even so, the goblins are still winning the battle. Then Beorn attacks the goblin army from the rear, saves Thorin, crushes Bolg the goblin chief, and terrifies the other goblins.

Bilbo has been knocked out again. When he recovers and returns to camp he finds Gandalf with his arm in a sling, and Thorin so badly wounded that he is dying. Bilbo and Thorin are reconciled and Thorin is buried under the Mountain with the Arkenstone.

Dain becomes King under the Mountain and shares out the treasure. Bilbo is rewarded with a chest of silver and a chest of gold. With Gandalf he returns West. When he reaches home the following summer he finds he had been declared Presumed Dead and his cousins the Sackville-Bagginses are having his belongings auctioned off. Eventually he settles down again in Bag End and starts to write the story of his adventures which he calls *There and Back Again, a Hobbit's Holiday*.

Chapter-by-chapter Summary

Chapter 1 An Unexpected Party

This chapter describes hobbits and where they live, as well as the reason for the quest
Bilbo Baggins is a hobbit. He lives a comfortable, rather self-satisfied life. While sitting outside on a sunny May morning he is visited by Gandalf the wizard. He invites Gandalf to tea next day but in fact 13 dwarves arrive as well as Gandalf, all expecting food and lodging. [*LotR* begins with *A Long-Awaited Party*]

Bilbo is not pleased, but hearing the dwarves sing of their lost treasure, and their desire to find it again he is almost persuaded to go along with them. This is Gandalf's plan - to recruit Bilbo to become their 'burglar' and help steal back the dwarf treasure from Smaug the dragon who drove them from their home under the Lonely Mountain and took their treasure.

Chapter 2 Roast Mutton

Bilbo wakes next morning to find his visitors have left. He is relieved, until Gandalf arrives and shows him the letter the dwarves have left on his mantelpiece. It urges him to meet them. Flustered, he runs out of the house without even taking a pocket-handkerchief.

The first part of the journey is wet and miserable. When firelight is seen through the branches of forest trees, as the burglar, Bilbo is nominated to go and see if they can all find warmth and food.

Bilbo finds 3 huge trolls cooking mutton but longing for man-flesh. Trying to keep out of sight, Bilbo climbs into the pocket of one of the trolls. In the pocket is a purse that shrieks a warning to its owner. Bilbo is caught but escapes. The dwarves are caught and put in sacks. Gandalf mimics the trolls' speaking, causing a fight. As daylight appears it turns the trolls into stone and everyone escapes. A search of the trolls' cave reveals food and weapons; one of which is the sword Glamdring. It becomes Gandalf's sword. [Trolls speak a kind of colloquial English that was considered characteristic of English people of low status and poor education in the 1930s. It is ungrammatical at times, uses frequent abbreviations, and colloquialisms such as calling Bilbo a blighter.]

Chapter 3 A Short Rest

The travellers soon reach Rivendell and the Last Homely House. Rivendell is the home of Elrond Half-Elven and many other Elves. They sing to welcome the travellers. [Tolkien has depicted the Elves in this version of Rivendell as rather silly and childish. They are not, at this point in *The Hobbit*, as solemn and stately as the Elves in *LotR*.]

Elrond interprets the runes on the map Thorin inherited from his father Thrór. This is the map shown at the start of the book. The Runes Study Pack on the Tolkien Society website might be useful if you want to find out more about the writing around the map.

Chapter 4 Over Hill and Under Hill

Bilbo, Gandalf and the dwarves travel on to the Misty Mountains. They experience a thunderstorm which causes avalanches of rock but this is described as stone-giants hurling rocks around. The travellers shelter briefly under an overhanging rock. [In *LotR* the Fellowship shelter in a similar place on Caradhras]

The travellers find shelter in a cave. A crack opens in the back [compare the crack opening in Old Man Willow (*LotR*)]

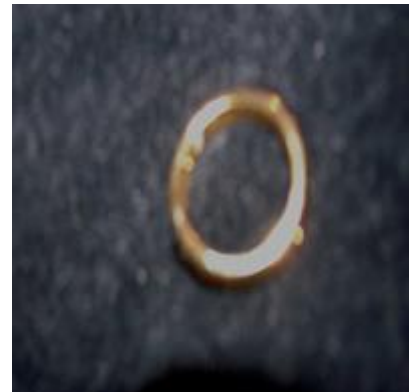
Goblins leap out and capture everyone except Gandalf. They are taken to the Great Goblin in his cavern under the mountains. He intends to execute them but they are rescued by Gandalf who kills the Great Goblin.

Because Bilbo cannot run as fast as dwarves he is carried on the shoulders of the dwarves. He doesn't enjoy it and when the dwarf Dori, who is carrying him, is tripped by pursuing goblins, he falls, bumps his head, and when he wakes, is all alone and lost in the dark.

Chapter 5 Riddles in the Dark

As the quest gets more difficult and frightening Bilbo spends a good deal of time wishing he was back home in his cosy hobbit hole but he has an ancestry that gives him spirit and determination. Alone in the dark, he reaches for his pipe and tobacco. [Tolkien himself was a habitual pipe-smoker.]

Searching his pockets, he finds the small dagger he had taken from the trolls' cave when Gandalf took Glamdring. Like this sword, Bilbo's dagger shines when enemies are near. He will later name it Sting. [The naming of swords was traditional in medieval storytelling and Tolkien follows this tradition. Swords



were named because they were important and symbolic of the strength of the hero to whom they belonged. Famous swords in medieval adventure stories were Excalibur which belonged to King Arthur; Durendal, which belonged to the French hero Roland; Naining, which was used by Beowulf.]

Encouraged by finding his dagger, which is big enough for him to wield as a sword, he moves on and discovers the underground lake where Gollum lives on a slimy island in the middle.

Gollum's speech is characterised by the hissing sound he makes. Tolkien shows this by adding several 's' letters to words that contain them anyway, e.g. preciousss. Gollum also speaks as though he is always talking to his precious, which is what he calls his Ring.

Bilbo asks him Who are you? Gollum does not speak directly to Bilbo but asks e.g. What iss he, my precious? [This way of speaking continues throughout this book, and through most, but not all, of *LotR*]

Gollum pretends to want to play a game of riddles, as if he is just lonely. Then he offers a bargain - if Bilbo guesses his riddles he will show him the way out. If he cannot guess them, then he will eat Bilbo! Gollum is always very hungry.

They ask each other a number of rhyming riddles until Bilbo runs out of ideas and asks what have I got in my pocket? It isn't a riddle: he has picked up the Ring from the floor of a passage and forgotten about it. Gollum cannot guess.

He returns to his island and there discovers that his precious Ring is lost.

Bilbo runs for his life as Gollum chases him. He searches his pocket and the Ring slips onto his finger, and he disappears. This enables him to avoid Gollum and the goblins guarding the exit of the caves.

Ring photo © Lynn Forest-Hill

Chapter 6 Out of the Frying Pan into the Fire

Bilbo is now on the far side of the Misty Mountains and discovers Gandalf and all the dwarves have escaped too. [In *LotR* there is a similar exit of the fellowship from a system of caverns - Moria. But in that story Gandalf has been lost.]

As the travellers move down the forested mountain slopes darkness arrives and wolves begin to howl. Everyone seeks safety up in the tree-tops. Soon they are surrounded by howling Wargs - the most evil wolves. [Warg is an Anglo-Saxon word for 'wolf']



Gandalf understands their speech. The clearing by the trees is their meeting place. They are planning an attack on humans after the death of the Great Goblin, and are expecting goblin soldiers to come and remove the intruders up in the trees.

Gandalf sets fire to some pine cones and uses them to 'bomb' the wolves. The bursts of fire alert goblins who come and pile brushwood under the trees to catch the fire burning in the clearing so the trees will burn.



Meanwhile the Lord of the Eagles has seen and heard what is happening. He and his eagles fly down and find Bilbo, Gandalf and the dwarves trapped in burning trees while the goblins sing gruesome songs below. The Eagles lift the trapped company from the trees and fly with them to the eagles' eyries. [This is similar to the episode in the story of Sinbad the Sailor when the great bird called the Roc carries Sinbad to its nest. In the Anglo-Saxon poem *Andreas* eagles carry the souls of disciples up to heaven, but they are not in any danger.]

Eagle photo: Tina Phillips / FreeDigitalPhotos.net, Pine Cones photo ©Lynn Forest-Hill

Chapter 7 Queer Lodging

The eagles are not friendly birds, but their lord knows Gandalf and so the eagles transport the travellers far on their journey. They land on a great rock in a river.

Gandalf knows who lives nearby and warns them to be careful of Beorn the skin-changer [a kind of shape-shifter, someone who is supposed to be able to transform into an animal]. He is a good person, but dangerous if angered, and can transform into a great black bear. [Beorn means bear in Scandinavian languages]

This chapter contains an interesting insight into Tolkien's views on language. Gandalf says the rock on which the company are set down is called the Carrock. Bilbo asks why? Gandalf explains it is because Beorn calls things like that 'carrocks', and since this is the only one close to his home he calls it the Carrock.

The travellers meet Beorn who lives in a strange house with animals for servants and helpers. He is a vegetarian living on cream and honey. He gives them food and lodging and warns them not to go outside during the night. Bilbo wakes up to hear the sound of a large animal outside.

When they leave, Beorn gives them food for the journey and advice not to eat anything that grows in the Forest of Mirkwood, through which they must travel, nor to touch the water in its rivers, nor wander off the path. He also lends them ponies. [In *LotR*, Tom Bombadil lends ponies to the four hobbits, and Galadriel warns Frodo and Sam not to touch the water of her Mirror. Mirkwood is an English form of a name used in Icelandic mythology, but Anglo-Saxon 'mirce' meant dark, black, uncanny or evil, all of which describe Tolkien's Mirkwood.]

As they ride towards the forest, Bilbo thinks he sees a great black bear away in the distance going in the same direction. Gandalf leaves the company on the edge of the forest and they have to send back Beorn's ponies.

Chapter 8 Flies and Spiders

Mirkwood is an unpleasant and unnerving place. It is dark and stuffy. [In *LotR* Fangorn is rather like this.] The travellers find a boat to cross a stream but the dwarf Bombur is knocked in by a fleeing black hart (male deer). Bombur is not hurt but falls into an enchanted sleep.



Everyone else hears the dim sound of a hunt and they see a white hind (female deer) and her fawns. [The dimly heard and seen hunt (the fairy hunt) and the white deer are familiar in the legends and stories of Wales, Ireland and Brittany (the ancient Celtic lands) where they are signs of the supernatural.]

Tolkien also knew the medieval English story of Sir Orfeo in which the harper Orfeo sees the fairy hunt only dimly because it does not belong to his mortal world.]

After 6 days in the forest, Thorin decides Bilbo should climb a tree to see where they are. They have heard sweet singing and laughter, but seen no one. Bilbo climbs and sees small spiders hunting for dark-coloured butterflies, but not signs of the forest ending. Everyone is angry and despondent but firelight is seen and elves are discovered feasting. When Thorin approaches silence, darkness and confusion end with Bilbo alone again.



But he is not alone. When he tries to move he finds he is being wrapped up by a giant spider. He cuts the strands with his sword and kills the spider. He now names the sword 'Sting'. [Many years later he will pass Sting on to Frodo.]

More spiders have captured the dwarves and Bilbo sets out to rescue them. To lure the spiders away, he sings a song that insults them, calling them Attercop a word made of 2 old words 'attor' meaning 'poison' and 'cop' meaning 'head'.

Bilbo frees the dwarves but they find Thorin missing. He had been captured by the Wood-elves and taken to their great cave realm. [Elves and dwarves are unfriendly towards one another as a

result of ancient wars.] The elves do not treat Thorin well and imprison him in the king's dungeon.

All the dwarves are then captured by the elves. Bilbo avoids capture by slipping on the Ring and becoming invisible. But he follows the dwarves who are blindfolded and taken into the king's cavernous realm. [The members of the fellowship who enter Lothlorien in *LotR* are all blindfolded, not just Gimli the dwarf.]

Stag photo © David Forest-Hill, butterfly photo © Lynn Forest-Hill

Chapter 9 Barrels Out of Bond

['Bond' in this title plays on 2 meanings. One is in the sense bondage or imprisonment. The other refers to storage of wine in barrels 'in bond' until customs duty has been paid on the wine.]

Bilbo slips unnoticed into the King's palace and eventually finds the imprisoned dwarves. Bilbo devises a plan to help everyone escape. The elves guarding the King's wine cellar drink themselves to sleep. Bilbo sneaks in and steals the keys. He releases the dwarves, and in spite of some objections, gets them all into empty wine barrels. He knows these will be pushed out of the cellar by elves to drop down into the river below. He cannot secure himself into a barrel so he jumps on to the last one as it is pushed out. [The elves sing a song like a journey charm as they push out the barrels. There are journey charms in Anglo-Saxon.]

Chapter 10 A Warm Welcome

In and on the barrels the travellers arrive on the shores of the Long Lake. Bilbo has caught a cold from being ducked in the cold river when he fell with his barrel. While Wood elves and Lake-men are feasting Bilbo releases the dwarves from their barrels, and having no better idea, they all head for Lake-town, where they are again taken prisoner.

Lake-town is built on stilts in the lake and joined to the land only by bridges.

Thorin declares his identity as King under the Mountain, who has returned. The Master of Lake-town is concerned mainly with trade and money, but the people are excited and sing of the return of the King under the Mountain. [This song contains some old forms of words: 'carven' for 'carved', 'upholden' rather than 'upheld', and 'yore', meaning 'of times long ago'. These old word forms give the song an ancient feel.]

The Master of Lake-town gives the travellers 3 boats, plenty of provisions, and ponies and horses as pack animals to help them on their way. He is pleased to see them leave because they have interrupted the town's business! [In *LotR*, Celeborn and Galadriel provide boats for the fellowship to travel down the River Anduin.]

Chapter 11 On the Doorstep

From Lake-town Bilbo had seen the Lonely Mountain in the far distance. The company disembarks from the boats at the foot of the cliffs of Ravenhill. A long valley runs on towards the mountain. In it they see the ruins of Dale, an ancient town destroyed by the dragon. The great entrance to the caverns under the mountain is known as the Front Gate. Steam and smoke come from it. All around is ruined and destroyed.



The company climb up onto a mountain ledge. They know the secret entrance to the mountain is hidden up on the rock face but cannot find it. Elrond has told them about 'moon-letters' and this 'doorstep'. Autumn has almost passed. This is Durin's Day - a special day for dwarves recalling their forefather Durin.

Bilbo sees the sunset and a new moon rising and then sees a large dark thrush knocking a snail on a great stone. Now he understands what Elrond translated from the map: Stand by the grey stone when the thrush knocks, and the setting sun with the last light of Durin's Day will shine upon the key-hole. In the last ray of sunlight a hole opens in the rock face. The key Thorin has carried on a chain round his neck fits it and opens the hidden door. [The magic for this door is more complicated than that for Moria in *LotR*]

Thrush photo: Paul Brentnall / FreeDigitalPhotos.net

Chapter 12 Inside Information

This is the situation for which Bilbo has been recruited. He is not happy. None of the dwarves is willing to go with him to scout out the inside of the mountain. He slips on his Ring.

[The forgotten pocket handkerchief is mentioned now in the narration as a symbol of how much Bilbo has changed or developed from the plump complacent hobbit who was flustered by the arrival of the dwarves. Now we are told that he had not had a pocket-handkerchief for ages. He loosened his dagger in its sheath, tightened his belt, and went on. The construction 'pocket-handkerchief' suggests a fussy preciseness. Here it is set against the practical readiness to confront danger.]

Bilbo goes slowly down until he sees a glow growing. Going on he hears a sound like a gigantic cat purring. This is a homely, pleasant idea, but the sound grows to become the noise of some vast animal snoring. Bilbo finds Smaug the red-golden dragon asleep on great piles of treasure. [Scandinavian and Germanic literature includes famous dragons such as Fafnir - killed by the hero Sigurd/Siegfried, and the dragon in the Anglo-Saxon poem *Beowulf*. Red gold was considered a magical or especially valuable metal in Celtic stories.]

Intrepidly, Bilbo steals a huge two-handed cup from the hoard and escapes without waking the dragon. He presents it to the dwarves and they are overjoyed to see evidence of their lost treasure. But the dragon senses his loss, wakes and leaves his lair to seek the thief. The dwarves hide in the tunnel Bilbo used as Smaug sears the mountain and surrounding land with fire. [The theft of a cup from a dragon's treasure hoard by a small and humble person can be traced back to Tolkien's deep knowledge of the Anglo-Saxon poem *Beowulf*. In this long poem it is a slave who steals a cup from a dragon's underground lair. The dragon then destroys all the lands and people in revenge.] (The theft of the cup appears at line 2207 in the poem.)

After the horrors of the night, Bilbo finally volunteers next day to put on his Ring and go to see if Smaug is again asleep. He is not, and speaks to Bilbo when he approaches. Bilbo replies in elaborately flattering language calling the dragon Smaug the Tremendous, and Smaug the Chiefest and Greatest of Calamities, at which he is well-pleased.

he dragon is clever and tricky but open to flattery and boastful. Bilbo inadvertently manages to get Smaug to roll over and display his armoured underside where diamonds have stuck to his scales. Bilbo, however, notices a bare patch, a weak spot.

Again Bilbo manages to escape from Smaug, but not without being badly singed by a spurt of flame and vapour. Rejoining the dwarves outside on the doorstep he sees the thrush again and objects that it seems to be listening. Thorin explains that he might be one of the magical race of birds used by the men of Dale to communicate messages to Lake-town. Bilbo explains what he has seen.

After Bilbo's account of his speech with Smaug he urges the dwarves to return into the top of the tunnel again - just in time. Smaug attacks the ledge with flame. Then: He rose in fire. This is a simple but very powerful statement and image. Its simplicity comes from the use of single-syllable words, but they are made slow and stately by the long vowel sounds 'o' and 'i' which prolong the sense of action happening. The careful construction together with unnaturalness of any living creature being able to rise up surrounded by fire makes this short statement impressive. Smaug is heading for Lake-town sure that the Lake-men must have helped Bilbo and the dwarves.

Chapter 13 Not at Home

With the dragon away, the dwarves accompany Bilbo down to his lair. The cavern is so huge the dwarves almost lose sight of Bilbo and he climbs the great mound of treasure. As he climbs he finds the Arkenstone a great jewel cut and shining like a huge diamond. Bilbo manages to put it in his pocket and is reluctant to tell the dwarves he has found their greatest treasure.

Finally all the dwarves move into this cavern that was once a great hall of their realm. They take coats of chain mail and weapons from the walls. Thorin gives one to Bilbo that was made in ancient times for an elf-prince. It is made of mithril and has a belt of pearl and crystal. [this is the mithril shirt and belt Bilbo will give to Frodo in *LotR*]

The dwarves briefly rejoice at their return but Bilbo points out that they will not be safe until Smaug is dead, so they leave the cavern.

Chapter 14 Fire and Water

The narrator of the story now looks back to the evening when Smaug had left the Mountain. At Lake-town, now named Esgaroth, men see light on the Mountain and think the King is forging gold and everyone will be rich.

One grim man predicts that the light means the dragon is on its way, and orders the bridges to be destroyed to make their town into an island. Smaug attacks but cannot land near the town. As he flies over the archers shoot at him but he is unharmed and sets the town ablaze. The people flee in their boats and he hunts them. Bard, the grim captain of the archers is about to shoot his last arrow when a thrush lands on his shoulder with the news of the dragon's weak spot. Bard shoots and hits Smaug, who falls into the Lake and is quenched.

The people still in their boats grow angry with the Master who left early. They want to make Bard their new king. [There are a number of similarities between Bard and Aragorn: he is a fighting man, grim-faced, and helps to care for the sick.] Bard sends messengers to the Elvenking in Mirkwood. Some elves helped the men to build shelters. Others, with armed men, marched off to the Mountain to claim some of Smaug's treasure hoard

Chapter 15 The Gathering of the Clouds

The narrator returns to Bilbo and the dwarves who see many birds of different kinds, including the Thrush. Balin wishes they were ravens who used to be friendly to dwarves. [Many myths,

legends and stories include ravens, from Noah's raven in the Bible, to Odin's raven messengers in Norse mythology. In England the most famous ravens are those at the Tower of London]

The thrush flies off and returns with a very old raven, who introduces himself as Roäc. He knows that Smaug is dead. The dwarves rejoice but Roäc warns Thorin that forces are gathering to claim parts of the treasure.

Thorin begs Roäc to send messages to Dain his cousin to bring his dwarves to help defend their treasure. Thorin's companions fortify the Front Gate. The watch fires of the invaders appear in the ruins of Dale. To counteract the elf music they hear, the dwarves sing their own song. Bard's messenger declares the Mountain besieged.

Chapter 16 A Thief in the Night

Thorin and the dwarves search for the Arkenstone. Bilbo says nothing. Roäc advised Thorin that a winter siege would mean starvation. Thorin is unmoved. Bilbo has a plan. He offers to take over the watch at the fortified Front Gate from Bombur so he can go to get warm. When Bombur has gone Bilbo slips on his ring, throws a rope over the defensive wall and slips away in the dark. He is caught by elves when he sneezes.

He is taken to the camp of the Elvenking and Bard. He tries to negotiate in order to stop war breaking out when Dain and his dwarves arrive, and offers them the Arkenstone. They are surprised and treat him with honour. As he leaves the camp he passes an old man who greets him and congratulates him - it is Gandalf! Bilbo returns to the Mountain and waits.

Chapter 17 The Clouds Burst

The next day the Elvenking, Bard, and Gandalf come to the fortified Gate to ask Thorin again for some of the treasure in recompense for Smaug's plundering. Thorin refuses again, until Bard produces the Arkenstone and offers it as a bargain. Thorin wants to know how they got it and Bilbo admits giving it to them. Thorin seizes Bilbo and shakes him, cursing him, and cursing Gandalf, who now reveals himself.

Thorin is furious and sends Bilbo to join Bard and Gandalf. He still will not negotiate, thinking Dain's army may take the Arkenstone by force. Dain's army arrives and tries to get close to the Mountain. While the opposing forces of dwarves, men and elves prepare for battle a great cloud of bats appears. Gandalf understands and shouts a warning that goblins of the North are coming commanded by Bolg, whose father had been killed by Dain in Moria.

So Dain and his dwarves joined Bard and his Men and the Elves of Mirkwood, to confront the goblin army and a force of wild Wolves, and this was the Battle of Five Armies. Things go badly and the goblins seem to be winning. Bilbo takes his last stand with a company of elves and the Elvenking. As sunset flares red, Bilbo looks up and shouts The Eagles are coming! Then he is knocked out by a flying stone. [The cry The eagles are coming is repeated in *LotR* when all seems hopeless in the battle before the Black Gate.]

Chapter 18 The Return Journey

Bilbo wakes but is invisible and the man who approaches cannot see him. Bilbo removes the ring and the man takes him back to camp. Gandalf is there with his arm in a sling. Thorin is badly wounded and dying, but wishes to take back his angry words to Bilbo, and speaks kindly to him now.

Bilbo learns that even with the Eagles on their side the Men, elves and Dwarves were losing the battle until Beorn joined them in his bear shape. He rescued Thorin, terrified the goblins, and crushed Bolg. So victory was achieved.

Thorin is buried under the Mountain with the Arkenstone and the Elvenking lays Orcrist beside him. Dain becomes King under the Mountain and gives much treasure to Bard, who sends some to the Master of Lake-town. Dain gives emeralds to the Elvenking. Bilbo is rewarded with a chest of gold and a chest of silver.



Bilbo returned westwards with the Elvenking, Beorn (in man shape) and Gandalf. Bilbo and Gandalf spend Yule at Beorn's house.

At their parting, Bilbo presents the Elvenking with a necklace of silver and pearls as payment for all the wine and bread he had eaten while waiting to free the dwarves! The Elvenking names him and elf-friend.

Although not detailed, the narrator tells us that Bilbo had other adventures before he reached home.

Stream photo © Lynn Forest-Hill

Chapter 19 The Last Stage

Bilbo returns first to Rivendell (on the first of May) where the Merry People (elves) greet him with songs again. It is mid-summer when he arrives back at Bag End - to find his possessions are being auctioned because he was Presumed Dead and his cousins the Sackville-Bagginses are about to move into his home.

the resulting legal problems lasted for years, but Bilbo settled down again and lived quietly. He started writing his book *There and Back Again, a Hobbit's Holiday*. Gandalf and Balin came to visit and brought news that the Master of Lake-town had stolen much of the gold Bard had sent and had run away with it and died in the Wild of starvation. But Bard had rebuilt Dale and Lake-town was busy again.

The problems Bilbo finds when he returns home are a faint echo of the troubles that Merry, Pippin, Sam and Frodo have to face when they return to the Shire in *LotR*. Tolkien seems to insist that just because heroic deeds have been done, that is no guarantee of an easy return to ordinary life, and other people may not be impressed, or may be intent on their own lives. This may reflect the feelings of men like Tolkien, who returned from the horrors of the First World War to find England and their homes were not what they had hoped and expected.

The story of *The Hobbit* changes in style and tone from the light and conversational tone of the narration in the early chapters to more poetic tones and then to grimmer and even political tones later in the story, until finally confronting the reader with what seems like an anticlimax after the dangers of the quest and the rewards of the victory. It is part of Tolkien's characteristic style to follow such high moments with the cold practicalities of the everyday. He does not allow

his heroes to find endless glory. Although they may eventually find comfort and contentment for a while, it is, like all human life, only a temporary condition.

Hard and Unusual Words in *The Hobbit* – Chapter-by-chapter

The following are lists of some of the hard or unusual words which will be found in each chapter of *The Hobbit* and gives an explanation and where possible some additional information. They are not necessarily in alphabetical order. Watch out for them as you read! You could tick them off as you come across them in the book.

Chapter 1

Nouns:

Throng	a very large group of people
Ancestor	the people to whom someone is related in the very distant past
Depredations	destroying, laying waste
Porter	someone who carries bags, boxes, and other things
Laburnam	a tree with long trailing yellow flowers in early summer
Larder	a large walk-in cupboard kept cold for storing food in the days before refrigeration
Necromancer	a sorcerer or wizard who uses black (evil) magic
Expedition	a long journey for a purpose, often to explore somewhere (called a quest in old or fantasy stories when something has to be found)
Fells	high moor land
Ire	great anger
Shriek	a very loud sharp scream
Hoard	a great deal of treasure – gold, jewels, often buried in the ground or secretly hidden away.
Parchment	Animal skins specially prepared for writing on, used before paper was known in western Europe
Prudent	cautious and wise
Remuneration	payment for doing something
Rune	a symbol made up of straight strokes, used for writing in northern Europe. Each rune had a name. See the map at the start of <i>The Hobbit</i> for Tolkien's version of runes.
Worm	not the small wiggly garden variety. Tolkien uses the word in its Old English (Anglo-Saxon) meaning. It comes from OE <i>wyrm</i> , meaning a dragon.
Desolation	Tolkien uses this to mean the landscape that has been ruined by Smaug, burned, polluted, and from where living things have been destroyed. This word could be applied to modern industrial landscapes, open-cast mines, and places that have been badly polluted. Tolkien, who had fought in the First World War, may have been thinking of the ruined landscapes of the Somme.

Verbs (words that show actions – doing things):

Bewilder	to confuse someone
Fluster	to confuse someone so they rush about
Sprout	when said of a person it means they grow quickly
Stride	to walk with long strides
Scuttle	to walk quickly with short strides and in a manner that suggests a desire not to be noticed.
Blunder	to walk without care and attention so as to bump into things, or said of speech - to say things by accident that upset others

Adjectives (words used to describe, or tell us more about people, places, or things):

Ingenious	clever about making things
Solemn	said of a person: dignified, not likely to laugh or seem cheerful
Dignified	quiet, calm and commanding respect
Haughty	proud and inclined to look down on other people
Prosy	dull (in Bilbo's case it suggests he was trying to be unimpressed)
Estimable	worthy of respect

Chapter Two

Nouns

Requisite	something indispensable, essential (can also be used as an adjective).
Threshold	the step marking the boundary between indoors and outside.
Blighter	an old-fashioned slang word for a man, a chap, a fellow.
Lout	an uncouth and violent man or youth
Incantation	a magic spell that is chanted
Hilts	the handle and protective side pieces of a sword
Embers	the glowing ashes of a fire, also called 'gledes' in older English.
Cavalcade	a procession of horses
Paraphernalia	lots of bits of equipment and/or personal belongings
Scabard	see 'sheath' in the list for Chapter 3

Verbs

ain't	a shortened and ungrammatical form of 'is not'.
defray	to pay someone for money they are likely to have to pay out
cleave	to cut through sharply, usually with an axe
grieve	to feel deep sadness
bolt	to run away, often said of horses
purloin	to steal, often in the sense to stealing slyly.
bicker	to quarrel without being violent, annoying one another
waylay	to ambush, to attack by jumping out from a hiding place
throttle	to strangle

Adjectives

Toothsome	having a delicious and appetising flavour, small, or look
Punctual	on time
Esteemed	respected, highly regarded
Applicable	relevant

Chapter 3

Nouns

Dell	a small wooded hollow
Faggot	a bundle of sticks for making a fire
Gullies	channels or ravines worn away by water
Ravine	a deep sheer-sided valley, often rocky

Folly	a foolish action
Bannocks	flat bread rolls
Bog	a wet area of land
Parapet	a low wall along the edge of something high such as a wall, tower, or mountain road.
Lair	a place where a dangerous animal lives

Verbs

Riven (as used in 'Rivendell')	like 'cleave' an old word meaning deeply and sharply cut
Slither	to slide, often said of sliding in mud
Hark	to listen attentively (an old-fashioned word)
Vexed	angry
Palpitate	to beat very fast (usually said of heart and pulse)

Adjectives

Homely	comfortable and welcoming like a home, used here specifically to mean the kind of place Elves would find homely.
Venerable	old and worthy of respect
Gruesome	a sight that is horrible to look at because of unnatural injury
Cunning	slyly clever. This word used to mean someone who was just very clever with their hands, or had special knowledge.
Gruff	having a rough voice or manner
Drear	gloomy

Chapter 4

Nouns

Haymaking (this looks like a verb but is used as a noun)	the time or activity when grass is cut to make hay
Hordes	great crowds
Nook	a little corner
Nosebag	a bag hung over a horse's head for it to eat from while working
Alliances	partnerships made for political advantage especially in time of war
Sheath	the narrow leather or wooden container for a sword, it hung from the wearer's belt and could be decorated with gold, silver or jewels.
Grudge	ill will, bad feeling towards someone. This can also be a verb meaning to be unwilling to give someone something.
Descendants	people who are 'descended' from ancestors. The distance in time is the difference between relatives - who are close in time and descendants who are separated by centuries from their ancestors.
Realm	a kingdom
Deception	fraud, trickery

Verbs

Infested	filled with something nasty or bad, such as rats, fleas. Used to name the unwelcome presence of enemies.
Skriking	giving shrill harsh sounds
Gnash	to force the teeth together usually in anger
Scurry	to run with short hurried steps
Thrive	very old past tense of 'to thrive' to grow well and healthily.
Guffaw	a loud rough laugh
Whinny	to neigh gently
Drench	soak suddenly with water
Thrive	has done well, prospered. [Look at the ending of this unusual word, it is the past tense of the old verb 'to thrive' and uses the same '-en' ending as in the familiar word 'driven'.]
Rummage	to search thoroughly but untidily
Champing	chewing hard
Yammer	loud noises often of distress or complaint
Shirk	to avoid work or effort or duty
Quaff	to drink
Inconvenience	to do this to someone means to make things rather difficult, but not very difficult.
Warrant	to guarantee something, be certain about something
Astray	away from where something or someone should be

Adjectives

Uncanny	unnatural and eerie
Stuffy	lacking fresh air, or said of people - dull and old-fashioned
Sturdy	strongly built, robust
Convenient	handy, well adapted to its purpose

Chapter 5

Nouns

Chestnut	not a nut in this instance but something that has become old and boring through much use and familiarity.
Wretch	someone who deserves to be despised and/or pitied
Oddments	odds and ends, bits and pieces
Outcry	a sudden shouting, noise
Hallooing	calling out loudly. This word has come from hunting.
To-do	colloquial compound noun [two words joined by a hyphen] for a commotion, a lot of noisy activity caused by some possibly unknown event or action.
Betterment	improvement
Resolve	this can be a noun or a verb. As a noun it means a firm intention, sureness. As a verb it means to make up your mind to do something e.g. he resolved to escape.

Verbs

glimmer	to shine faintly
slink	to move in a sly, secretive way
durstn't	shortened and old colloquial form of 'dared not'.

Smote	past tense of 'smite' and old word meaning to strike fiercely
Ventured	dared (to do something)
Flummoxed	bewildered, confused.

Adjectives

Subterranean	underground
Ajar	said of doors and windows, slightly open
Antiquity	oldness, great age
Sacred	regarded as holy, dedicated to a Divine being, not to be taken lightly
Scrumptious	delicious

Chapter 6

Nouns

bracken	a kind of fern with coarse fronds, it turns russet in autumn
turf	lush, thick, short grass
pinnacle	a spike of rock high on a mountain
eyrie	an eagle's nest
glint	a bright gleam or flash of light from something bright
bewitchment	as a noun: a spell put on something
marjoram	a herb used in cooking
thyme	a herb used in cooking
sage	a herb used in cooking. (Forms of all these herbs are found wild in the English countryside and suit a hobbit's interest in food!)
Onslaught	a violent and sudden attack
Glade	a small grassy open space among trees
Reek	not a foul smell in this use, but smoke
Talons	an eagle's claws
Tumult	a great noise made by a vast crowd
Precipice	a sheer cliff in the mountains
Proverb	a well-known saying that has come to be thought of as wise

Verbs

Clamber	to climb with difficulty
Confusticate	to confuse and bewilder
Snuffle	to sniff rapidly
Benighted	overtaken by night

Adjectives

abominable	hateful, really horrible
uncanny	unnatural and eerie
decent	respectable, considerate and kind
giddy	dizzy
Afoot	happening, taking place

Chapter 7

Nouns

Cony	an old name for a rabbit
Drowsiness	sleepiness coming on
Quart	an old measure of liquid
Tassels	decorations made of many strands of yarn
Rush-bottoms	seats for chairs or stools made from weaving rushes
Ford	a shallow place where a river may be crossed without a bridge
Furrier	someone who trapped and skinned animals for their fur
Muff	a hollow tubular pad usually made of fur into which the hands could be placed to keep them warm
Tunic	a knee-length garment
Trestles	wooden frames used to support boards that served as tables
Peril	danger
Platter	large plate for serving food
Troop	an orderly group
Hive	a small wooden or straw place in which bees are kept.
Enchantment	a charm or spell, originally one that was sung or recited
Smith-craft	the art of working metal
Temptation	almost irresistible desire
Vengeance	punishment inflicted by an aggrieved person for a wrong they have suffered
Waistcoat	sleeveless garment, often in a decorative material worn under a jacket. Tolkien liked fancy waistcoats.
Mead	a drink like wine but made from honey
Hart	a male deer
Tippet	a small cloak for the neck and shoulders
Carrock	Gandalf gives the explanation of this word!
Veranda	a long porch. This word is not at all what we would expect to find Tolkien using because it is quite a recent arrival in English and he preferred old words for his stories. He may have chosen it to suit the strangeness of Beorn and his household.
Reputation	what is known about a person. There are good reputations and bad ones.

Verbs

Crop up	to appear or happen unexpectedly
Glower	to scowl
Lop	to chop or cut off
Snuggle	to lie down warm and comfortable under blankets or quilts that are pulled up close around the head. Or to lie close to something for warmth.
Withered	can be a verb or and adjective. To be withered means something has shrunk and wrinkled with age, usually said of plants rather than people. As an adjective it shows something has shrunk e.g. a withered tree.
Rent	torn apart (as in 'torn and rent', not as a noun meaning money paid for something)
Scour	to search thoroughly
Trudging	marching steadily and wearily
Westering	said of the sun going down in the west
Browse	to eat leaves and twigs (said of animals, and can be a noun used of the food)

Lade an old word meaning to load up, put a load on something

Adjectives

Queer peculiar, very unusual
Unwholesome unpleasant, not healthy
Wearisome making someone weary, tired
Embroidered decorated with designs made by sewing
Gangling tall and thin and awkward when moving
Unimpeachable blameless, cannot be accused of doing anything wrong
Gnarled twisted and knotted
Glum feeling rather miserable
appalling dreadful, terrible, really horrible
stark bare, desolate, absolute (e.g. Beorn's hospitality was in stark contrast to the way he behaved when he was transformed as a bear.)

Chapter 8

Nouns

lichen a very low growing plant without flowers, of various colours but rarely green, that forms small areas like a crust on stones and the bark of trees.
fungus toadstools, mushrooms and other similar plants that do not flower but feed on dead wood and leaves. Common in damp forests. Can be very poisonous.
glimmer a faint light
gloaming twilight
portcullis a large gate made of iron or wood used to defend a castle gateway.
heirloom an object or thing passed down through many generations of a family and considered precious
lullaby a quiet, soothing song used to send babies to sleep
hauberk a thick shirt of leather or chain mail used as protection in battle
maiden an old-fashioned word used in stories for an unmarried girl
precipice a sheer inland cliff usually in the mountains
tuppence 2 old English pennies (2d.)
quoits an old game played by throwing circles of rope at a flat target
hind a female deer
painter a rope used for tying a boat to a river bank, or jetty
froth foam made of saliva
snare a cruel trap usually made of wire or twine for catching small birds and animals.
commons food

Verbs

Rove to wander, roam, travel great distances for no definite purpose
Straggle usually said of a group of people or animals wandering about and not keeping together.
Implore to beg
Ponder to think quietly and deeply
Twined woven or twisted around
Stoop to bend down with the back bent
Goggling looking with staring bulging eyes.

Glint	to shine
Blundering	moving about very awkwardly. Can also be said of speaking.
Hacking	chopping without care
Vexed	made annoyed or angry
Tilling	farming by ploughing the land and raising crops
Falter	to become unsteady in walking or uncertain about something
Infuriate	to make someone or something very angry, furious.
Lament	to complain bitterly, to express great sorrow. Can also be a noun: e.g the dwarves sang a lament for Thorin.

Adjectives

Desolate	uninhabited (no one lives there), dreary, barren - said of places.
Bleak	cold, uncomfortable and exposed to the weather
Barren	usually said of land where nothing can grow, unproductive
Ominous	silently threatening, menacing, sinister
Slender	thin or narrow
Stealthy	secret and cautious
Inquisitive	very curious, wanting to find things out
Bulbous	small, round and plump like a flower bulb
Loathsome	repulsive, very horrible
Taut	tight, pulled tight
Disquieting	causing worry, taking away calmness
Accursed	deserving to be cursed, already cursed
Grimed	covered with grime or dirt
Dratted	an old-fashioned minced oath - a mild oath to express annoyance but not offend anyone.
Wary	cautious

Chapter 9

Nouns

Portcullis	a high grating or barred gate at the entrance to a castle in addition to a door. It is wound upwards on chains or great ropes
Flagon	old word for a large wine jug
Kine	old plural for of 'cows', cattle
Tosspot	someone who drinks too much beer or ale
Ransom	money demanded for prisoners to be released
Plight	a difficult and dangerous situation
Kennel	a small shelter for a dog
Slowcoach	someone who moves slowly
Turnkey	a jailer, someone who keeps the keys to a prison.
Vintage	the summer's harvest of wine

Verbs

Hewn	had been cut (past tense), usually with an ax or large knife.
Carven	alternative and old form of 'carved'
Suppressed	stopped, held back
Fretted	rubbed together, worn away

Jostling	bumping about
-----------------	---------------

Adjectives

Potent	powerful and strong
Remotest	furthest away
Dreariest	most miserable, depressing
Surly	grim and irritable
Heady	likely to make a person drunk
Nimble	light on one's feet when moving
Downcast	dejected, depressed, sad
Eddying	swirling
Shingly	a shore or river bed made up of small pebbles

Chapter 10

Nouns

gammer	an old woman - the word is an old shortened form of 'grandmother'
promontory	an area of land that stands out from the surrounding land
vagabond	someone who wanders from place to place because they have no home
enmity	hatred between two or more people
fortnight	two weeks (shortened form of 'fourteen nights')
drought	severe lack of water
solemnities	formal occasions
quays	large areas where ships can tie up alongside parallel to a river bank or sea shore to load and unload. Compare 'jetty' and 'hythe' which stick out into the water.

Verbs

Loomed	suddenly appeared (often above)
Famished	starving hungry
Floundering	moving awkwardly (usually in water)
Waylaid	held up while travelling by robbers or other dangerous circumstances
Laden	weighed down with goods, baggage
Receded	slowly went away into the distance
Moored	tied up (said of ships, boats)
Buffeted	knocked about (by wind or a person)
Cramped	confined in a small space so movement is difficult or impossible
Waterlogged	completely soaked with water
Hinder	to get in the way or something
Pampered	treated with great care and fussed over
Alluding	suggesting
Molesting	assaulting, attacking without great violence

Adjectives

Ominous	suggesting evil or danger
Upholden	held up high

Circuitous winding, twisting, bending a great deal

Chapter 11

Nouns

Escort	a group of people protecting someone, or accompanying a person of high status
Lintel	a board or short beam above a door
Spur	a ridge of rock sticking out from a mountain
Gloom	low spirits, depression, OR grey and darkening weather
Bay	a large depression in the landscape (a coomb) or curve in a sea shore or on the water's edge
Mason	someone who works with stone to build
Threshold	a plank or short beam beneath the opening of a door
Mishap	an unfortunate or unlucky accident
Crannies	little holes, corners
Vapour	steam, or other visible gas
Waste	a lifeless and wild area of land
Reek	may be smoke, but here, a bad smell

Verbs

Disembarked	gone ashore from a ship or boat
Waning	decreasing in size
Exposed	open to attack
Plodding	walking heavily from being tired, miserable or unwilling
Shuddered	shivered, shook
Pondering	thinking deeply
Brooded	thinking deeply, waiting silently (properly said of a bird sitting on its eggs to hatch them, it can be used of people to mean deeply thoughtful, or of mountains to mean silently threatening)
Hailed	called loudly to

Adjectives

Desolate	lonely, deserted, lifeless
Bleak	not protected from wind and weather, so without signs of life
Barren	lifeless (said of a landscape)
Cavernous	having great caves
Perilous	dangerous
Marauding	roaming about with the intention of robbing, stealing
Glummer	even more glum - even more depressed and miserable
Brighter	usually meaning giving or having more light, here it means feeling happier

Chapter 12

Nouns

Cartage	the price for moving goods by cart
Waistcoat	a short sleeveless garment worn under a jacket

Foreboding	a feeling of something bad about to happen
Stealth	cautious and quiet movement usually secretive so as not to be seen
Thrumming	a deep steady humming sound
Coats of mail	protective garments made of linked metal rings
Helms	helmets
Staggerment	Tolkien's own invented word, meaning sudden astonishment - Rumour - a low distant sound
Dragon-lore	knowledge about dragons
Marrow	the soft inside of bones
Smithereens	shattered pieces
Lust	very intense desire to have something
Wrath	rage linked to a desire for revenge
Facets	small flat surfaces on gem stones to reflect light
Strategems	the tricks and techniques used in battles
Undercuts	punches with the fist moving upwards
Whiff	a slight smell, a small puff of air or scent
Calamities	profoundly unfortunate things that happen
Marrow	the centre of bones - used figuratively to mean a feeling deep inside e.g. chilled to the marrow means very cold;

Verbs

Cowered	shrank down and away in fear
Perplexed	puzzled
Replenish	to build up again (a store of something), to refill
Surpassed	exceeded
Flattered	delighted by praise
Skulking	concealing ones-self in order to possibly do something bad;
Roving	travelling about actively
Gloated	took an evil pleasure in something
Fortified	strengthened
Antiquated	old and out of date, out of fashion
Detain	to prevent someone from moving; stop
Frizzled	scorched and withered
Forged	heated and beaten with a hammer, usually said of metal objects
Tame to the hands	trained, domesticated, unafraid

Adjectives

Smouldering	burning without flames
Ruddy	reddish
Grievous	very harmful
Impenetrable	not able to be pierced, or got through (if said of undergrowth)
Wrought and unwrought	made and not yet made
Dire	horrifying
Treacherous	likely to betray someone or something
Insignificant	not important

Inevitable	unavoidable, certain to happen
Devastating	disastrous, causing a sense of helplessness
Flawless	perfect
Ghastly	horrifying
Wily	sly, cunning
Frontal	directed at or towards the front
Dubious	doubtful, uncertain
Creditable	believable, or worth acknowledgement e.g. he did a creditable job.

Chapter 13

Nouns

Devilry	serious evil such as a devil might create
Stench	a foul smell
Radiance	shining, glowing brightness
Goblets	elegant bowls for drinking wine - usually having long stems.
Adornments	expensive decorations
Draughts	small currents of air usually coming through small gaps
Mithril	in the story, a metal mined and worked by dwarves - a form of silver but much stronger, shines in starlight.
Wits	powers of reasoning, quick senses
Looking glass	a mirror
Cram	Usually a verb meaning to stuff something full, Tolkien uses this word as the name of a biscuit-like food easily packed and eaten on journeys.

Verbs

Mouldered	decayed
Dazed	slightly stunned, groggy
Rekindled	lit again (said of fires, candles, anything that burns)
Clad	dressed
Hafted	handled
Befouled	made filthy, foul, disgusting

Adjectives

Grumpy	irritable
Pallid	pale
Fleeting	vanishing quickly
Furtive	sly, secretive probably for bad reasons
Charred	burnt on the surface but not completely destroyed
Decaying	rotting
Sustaining	nourishing
Alight	on fire (not to be confused with the old verb form meaning to get down from a vehicle).

Chapter 14

Nouns

Dart	a short spear
Gledes	very old word for the embers of a fire
Benefactor	someone who does good things for another person or people
Prophecies	predictions about future events
Mirth	happiness and laughter
Barb	projection backward from the tip of an arrow
Shaft	the stick or stem onto which the tip of an arrow is fixed
Throes	great pains
Array	a formation of soldiers
Recompense	payment for services especially if they have caused trouble

Verbs

Foiled	stopped from doing something
Quench	to put out a fire or cure thirst with a drink
Deposed	removed from an official position
Strode	walked with long strong strides
Contrived	managed to do something difficult

Adjectives

Gilded	decorated with gold
Drear	a form of the word 'dreary', meaning miserable, depressing
Eminent	very important (usually said of people)
Hotfoot	said of someone moving quickly, in a hurry
Laden	carrying a lot of heavy things
Huger	bigger, larger
Twanging	a ringing sound like a stringed instrument that has been plucked or a bow string that has just fired an arrow
Ablaze	burning fiercely
Unquenchable	cannot be put out - said of fires but may be used to describe other things
Silvered	as if covered in silver
Waxing	growing larger. The opposite term is 'waning' - growing smaller.
Imperishable	not likely to decay, or die
Ample	generously sized

Chapter 15

Nouns

Parley	a formal discussion between enemies - the word comes from French parler to speak
Carrion	dead animals. Carrion birds are those that feed on dead animals
Fells	high moorland
Amends	something like money, goods or a service given to make up for an injury that has been done to someone
Breed	a group of related animals
Kindred	relatives, including very distant ones
Sires	ancestors
Truce	an agreement to stop fighting

Verbs

Succoured	gave help and relief to
Coveted	very much wanted something belonging to another person
Linger	to delay going away, to be slow leaving
Alighted	landed
Caper	to dance and prance excitedly
Wrung	obtained as though by twisting (used figuratively)
Mingled	mixed together
Reckon	to consider carefully
Repent	to feel sorry for some thing you have done wrong
Besieged	surrounded by the enemy in a fortress or city so it is impossible to leave

Adjectives

Decrepit	old and weak
-----------------	--------------

Chapter 16

Nouns

Siege	the surrounding of a city or fortress by an enemy so as to force it to surrender
Oddments	bits and pieces of things

Verbs

Bade	ordered or requested. The word is an old past tense of the verb 'to bid' someone to do something
Avenged	took revenge; after something wrong had been done, punished the person who did it
Hastening	hurrying (away)
Daresay	think it is likely
Rouse	to wake (someone), wake up
Brewing	used figuratively to mean 'in the process of happening', about to happen
Beset	attack

Adjectives

Comely	beautiful, handsome
Tattered	torn and ragged
Stiff necked	used figuratively to describe someone who is stubborn

Chapter 17

Nouns

Hauberk	a shirt or tunic of chain mail
Mattocks	digging tools with axe-like blades
Precipice	a sheer cliff
Scimitar	sword with a curved blade
Eyrie	an eagles nest (always high up and hard to reach)

Embassy	messengers often of high status who take messages between leaders
Casket	a small box for jewels
Heirloom	something of value passed from one generation to the next
League	an alliance,
Deceit	secretive trickery
Mesh	a fine kind of net
Flank	the right or left side of an army in battle
Reconciliation	renewal of a broken friendship
Dread	great fear
Dominion	lordship, kingship, power to rule over others
Assault	an attack
Vanguard	soldiers in front of the main part of the army
Feint	a pretended movement

Verbs

Redeem	to buy back
Plaited	braided
Tarry	to wait
Rent	torn apart (past tense of the old verb 'to rend')
Wielding	carrying and intending to use
Forbear	to hold back from doing something
Hemmed	surrounded
To get wind of	to hear a rumour about
Hurtling	moving extremely fast without control

Adjectives

At bay	trapped in one place and facing the enemy
Idle	worthless, useless.
Aloft	up in the air
Stricken	overcome with grief or fear as if physically struck
Ravening	intent on killing, destroying, and greedily eating, often said of wolves
Nimblest	most athletic, most light-footed

Chapter 18

Nouns

Yule-tide	the pagan mid-winter festival
Fray	a fight
Fugitives	anyone running away from danger, war, or captivity
Pursuit	following in order to capture or kill
Abode	a home, house, place to live

Verbs

Amend	to put something right (if a wrong has been done)
Mustering	gathering together a group of soldiers, or army
Notched	sharply dented, having small v-shaped dents

Slain	killed
Stunned	almost unconscious from a blow to the head (can be used figuratively to mean the reaction to any kind of shock)
Dislodged	moved out of position by something
Perished	died

Adjectives

Trackless	without paths or tracks
Hoarse	having a rough or husky voice

Chapter 19

Nouns

Brink	the very edge
Lore	ancient and traditional knowledge
Jest	a joke
Auction	the selling of goods to the highest bidder
Prosperity	sufficient wealth to feel secure
Effects	personal possessions (left after someone dies)
Gloaming	twilight

Verbs

Cherish	to love and hold dear
Commence	to begin
Presumed	thought to be
Refounded	re-establish, restart an institution

Adjectives

Extravagant	more than something is really worth, more than can be sensibly afforded
Extensive	wide ranging
Sole	only

Some interesting phrases and their meanings

Out of pocket	having paid for things personally and so lost money
Now-a-days	at this time
Well-to-do	having enough money to live comfortably
Pop-gun	a child's toy gun that makes a popping sound when fired.
The mischief seemed to have got into the fire	the fire would not light and seemed it be misbehaving.
Lumme	(pronounced lummy) this is a shortened form of the harmless oath 'Lord love me'.
A nice pickle	a really difficult situation
Jibbering and jabbering	making chattering noises that may be language but are not recognisable

Shrieking and skriking	loud, harsh cries of alarm and distress (If you look at the repeated 'J' sounds above, and the repeated 'S' sounds here - they make sound patterns (alliteration) that make the noises more impressive.
The waning of the year	the year was fading, summer was over and autumn was turning to winter
What he was driving at	what he meant
Beady eyes	eyes small, dark and bright like beads
The sun dancing on the water	the sun sparkled as though the light was dancing
Tinder and flint	an old way of lighting a fire before matches
A crooked way	a road or track that twisted and turned - suggests also a wrong road to take
Nipped inside	ran quickly inside
Rabbit-cropped turf	grass that has been eaten down very short by rabbits.
Wide-armed oaks	oak trees with widely spreading branches, like arms open wide in embrace
Skin-changer (compare 'shaman', 'werewolf')	Beorn can literally change his skin in the story - he changes from man to bear and back again
Blind-man's-buff	an old game in which one player was blindfolded and had to find the others
Blood-curdling	describes a loud, horrible cry of pain, anger, or distress
Helter-skelter	moving very fast and rather out of control
Stiff with goblins	with goblins everywhere
Rendered a service	had done something helpful
With small kindness	with little gratitude or affection
Greybeards and gammers	grandfathers and grandmother (old men and old women)
Shod with iron	had iron shoes
Long will I tarry	I will wait a long time
Misery me	Oh dear, I'm so miserable!
How it fell out	how it all happened
Whither so laden	where are you going with such a load
Share and share alike	let everyone have equal shares
Nine days wonder	some person or event that is new and interesting, but only for a little while