

Plot Summary Proposal for Feature Film *The Hobbit*
Adapted from *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings* by J.R.R. Tolkien.

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The Hobbit

Prologue

The film opens in the green rolling hills of the Shire, on a fair autumn morning. We arrive at the perfectly round front-door of Bag End. Inside this homely dwelling the sounds of cooking are heard, as *Bilbo Baggins* the hobbit is making breakfast. Bilbo serves up his golden eggs and crispy bacon, and happily tucks in. After satisfying his appetite the hobbit stretches and yawns indulgently; then he makes preparations for a day's hiking. Studying a map of the Shire at his desk, Bilbo picks out one his favourite walks. He then puts on his backpack and strolls out of his door.

Along the road Bilbo meets his old friend Hamfast ('the Gaffer'), who is out tending his garden. The Gaffer has a fine crop this year, he proudly shows Bilbo. Hamfast wonders where Bilbo is off wandering to- he shouldn't go too far; there's no knowing what's out there beyond the Shire. Bilbo says not to worry, wishes Hamfast good day and sets off.

Bilbo strolls through woods and streams, singing as he goes. He reaches the top of a hill as the sun is setting. Staring out at the view, Bilbo smiles at the pleasant hills and fields of the Shire. He then turns eastwards, where hills and mountains begin to rise. What lies out beyond the Shire and over the mountains? Bilbo ponders the view for a time, looking both curious and a little frightened. The cold evening air brings a shiver to the hobbit, and he decides it is time to head homewards.

The stars come out. We leave the Shire and see the mountains come closer. A campfire kindles on a hillside where three figures huddle round. They are dwarves, bearded and stocky. One of the dwarves, Dwalin, complains of hunger. The white-haired Balin replies that they'll reach an inn tomorrow where he can eat his fill. The last dwarf Thorin does not heed the conversation. His proud face stares grimly into the flames. Thorin drifts into an uneasy sleep.

Thorin dreams of the large open fires in the great hall of Erebor. The music of golden harps echoes around the chamber- there is feasting and merrymaking. At the high table the venerable King Thrain sits with his son- a young Thorin. With them is Girion Lord of Dale and his wife. Thrain drinks from a ceremonial silver cup toasting the friendship of the mountain and the lake- there is no better match than dwarven silver with Lakemen wine! Girion drinks gladly. He asks Thrain if a work he commissioned from the dwarves is ready. Thrain nods and his craftsmen bring forth an elaborate silver framed yew bow and arrow. Girion handles the bow in wonder, as Thrain assures him it will grant him good hunting so they may feast together for many years to come. The Lord of Dale expresses his thanks and toasts the continued fortune of the King Under the Mountain. Thorin joins in the toast, looking on proudly at his father.

The scene changes. Thrain is saying farewell to Thorin at the gates of Erebor. Thorin is leading a trading mission to the south. Thrain jokes with Thorin not to sell their goods away cheaply. The dwarves set off at a fair pace chanting as they go. They reach Dale and begin the loading of their boats. Suddenly a deafening roar is heard from the north, and a great gust like a hurricane sends the forests and the boats reeling. Thorin turns to see black smoke rising from the mountain. An almighty flame erupts across the sky. Thorin cries out.

Thorin wakes from his dream, finding himself back around the campfire. Balin looks on at him concerned. He tries to console Thorin- he must not despair, they will return to the mountain. Words are all very well, Thorin replies, but these wanderings have brought them no closer to their homeland. Where is this lore master they have been searching for? Up and down the lands they have journeyed on a wild goose chase, without finding a sign of this *Gandalf*. Balin replies that Gandalf is known to be very wise and they are in need of his council. Dwalin says lore masters are all very well, but what they really could use is a good hot meal.

The conversation continues around the campfire. We see a wide shot of the dwarves with their silhouette against the night sky. On the other side of the hill a figure comes into view. The figure carries a staff and wears a tall pointed hat. It is Gandalf. Gandalf looks intrigued by the dwarves around the firelight, and he strides towards them.

Chapter 1- An Unexpected Party

Several years pass. We return to Bag End on a sunny spring morning. Inside Bilbo is again cooking breakfast. After his meal Bilbo strolls outside and relaxes in the garden, smoking his pipe.

A tall figure in a pointed hat appears on the road, startling Bilbo. The hobbit wishes the stranger a good morning, and the man introduces himself as *Gandalf*. The name seems familiar to Bilbo. Then he remembers the wizard

visiting the Shire long ago bringing exciting tales and spectacular fireworks. Gandalf invites Bilbo to take part in an adventure he is arranging to distant lands. The hobbit replies he has no use for adventures; he is quite content in the Shire. Yet he can't hide his curiosity in the wizard's suggestion. Gandalf wonders aloud how the son of Belladonna Took came to be so lacking in spirit. For the sake of Bilbo's mother he will give him what he asked for, and send him on the quest. The hobbit takes fright at this. He hurriedly invites Gandalf to come to tea the next day, before rushing inside away from the wizard's company. Gandalf laughs to himself. He then carves a rune on Bilbo's front door, and strides away.

The next day to Bilbo's shock dwarves begin to arrive at Bag End- as if they had been invited! Bilbo is flustered by the dwarves knocking at his door, but he feels he must show good manners to his guests. He invites them into his dining room, and brings food and drink. Dwarves *keep on* arriving, with Dwalin, followed by Balin, followed by Oin and Gloin, followed by Dori, Nori and Ori... Thorin is the last of the dwarves to appear, looking more finely dressed and authoritative than before, accompanied by Gandalf. Thirteen dwarves and a wizard are now in Bilbo's front room! They order more food and drink from Bilbo, and to the hobbit's concern they swiftly work their way through his larder. The party settle down to discuss their plans.

Bilbo overhears confusing conversation around the table- talk of treasure, trouble with orcs and the dreadful Smaug. He plucks up his courage to ask what is being discussed- how did the treasure get there, where did it come from, who is this Smaug? Thorin asks gruffly why Bilbo has not been listening. The proud dwarf then composes himself for the telling of his full story.

Many years ago Thorin's grandfather Thrór came out of the far north. After years of wandering his people settled at Erebor, the Lonely Mountain. Here they mined, and carved out great halls and workshops; and they found a good deal of *gold*, and other treasures. Thrór grew immensely rich, and was honoured by the town of Dale and the lands around. He became King Under the Mountain as spoken in song. Erebor was filled with music and feasting, and adorned with magnificent treasures forged by craft long forgotten. (Bilbo is enchanted by these descriptions). In time the kingship passed to Thorin's father Thráin. But his rule was to be short lived. News of the great wealth of Thrór had spread far. And it brought the most ferocious and terrible enemy to the mountain... the *dragon Smaug*! The first that was heard of him was a noise like a hurricane from the north. The bells were ringing in Dale and the warriors were arming. Smaug stormed into the town with a great torrent of flame! Dale was left in ruin. The dwarves in the mountain made to flee, and rushed to the front gate, but there was the dragon waiting for them. None escaped that way. Smaug routed all the halls and mansions, destroying all in his path. When Erebor had emptied he took all the wealth for himself. "Smaug

destroyed our kingdom, killed many of our people and stole our treasure! We must return to Erebor and take back what is ours, and have our vengeance on the cursed Smaug. Gandalf has agreed to aid us in this quest.”

Gandalf advises that they have little hope in defeating the dragon in combat. Instead they should use stealth. A great thief could enter the Erebor undetected and discover what condition the dragon lies in. The weapons within Thror’s horde could even be seized and used against Smaug. Gandalf has chosen Bilbo as the burglar.

Bilbo is shocked to learn that he is the intended burglar! Thorin scoffs mockingly at the hobbit’s reaction. Gandalf insists there is more to Bilbo than Thorin, or even Bilbo himself, knows. He will become the burglar when the time comes. Thorin questions whether he has the courage to face the ferocious Smaug, knowing that he may never return alive to his cosy hobbit hole. This thought sends Bilbo into a fit of fear. Thorin’s scepticism is confirmed: Bilbo is too soft for the quest.

Gloin says that Bilbo looks more like a grocer than a burglar. The frightened hobbit overhears this jibe, and it hurts his pride, rousing his Tookish side. Bilbo soon recovers from his shock. He stands back up at the table, puffs out his chest as best he can, and says what ever needs to be done he’ll do it. How, Bilbo asks nervously, might a burglar enter the dragon’s lair?

Gandalf has a plan, and brings news that even Thorin has not heard. Gandalf unveils a map of Erebor, and reveals that there is a secret entrance into the mountain. Bilbo looks on excitedly at the map. Thorin’s interest is also sparked- Thrain must have used the passage to escape when Smaug attacked. The runes say the passage is narrow and too small for the dragon to have explored. Bilbo says the tunnel sounds very large to him. With a secret entrance a plan of stealth could work.

Thorin wonders where the map came from. Gandalf replies that when he learned Thorin’s father had gone missing attempting to return to Erebor, he searched for him. Thrain did not reach the mountain, instead Gandalf found him in the dungeons of the Necromancer. He had lost his wits and all he could remember was to give Gandalf the map, and a key, which the wizard now gives to Thorin. Furious at his father’s imprisonment, Thorin is determined to have revenge. Gandalf replies the Necromancer is a foe beyond all the dwarves: even Gandalf barely escaped from him alive. Thorin must reclaim his kingship at Erebor and remove the dragon. That will be service enough. Now that the map and key have been recovered there is hope in the quest.

Bilbo cheers happily that the plan is settled, and he suggests they retire for a good night’s sleep. The dwarves agree while Gandalf and Thorin remain around the fire. Thorin argues the hobbit is too inexperienced, while the

wizard insists that hobbits' natural stealth makes them ideal for the task. Does Gandalf have some other purpose in taking Bilbo along? The wizard does not deny this- he would not be helping Thorin if the quest did not fit into his greater scheme. Thorin must trust Gandalf's judgement if he is to succeed, otherwise he will likely meet the same fate as his father. The dwarf is persuaded to go along with Gandalf's plan.

Chapter 2- The Journey Begins

Bilbo wakes and finds the house empty and silent, and he wonders rather sadly if yesterday's excitement had been a strange dream. To revive himself, he settles down to his usual large breakfast. Then Gandalf strides in. When is Bilbo going to come, what about the early start? Bilbo has only ten minutes to reach the dwarves at the Green Dragon Inn. Before he knows what he is doing Bilbo rushes down the road to meet the dwarves.

Bilbo arrives panting and flustered just as the dwarves are saddling up. He worries that he hasn't got his hat or cloak, or his pipe. Balin replies kindly he will have to do with a many things before journeys end, and he lends him his spare hood and cloak. Gandalf arrives on horseback and they set off, Bilbo riding on a small pony. Thorin is in a merry mood and leads the dwarves in song. Bilbo cheers up and is excited.

After several days pleasant travel through the eastern Shire, the party venture into wilder lands at the foothills of the mountains. The weather turns ill. When crossing a ford one of the ponies trips in the swelling current and looses all its baggage, containing much of their food. They make camp soaking wet and are unable to make a fire. Then the party notice Gandalf has disappeared. The dwarves sit gloomy and wet, and Bilbo complains of hunger.

Balin spots a light in the distance, through the trees. The dwarves argue over whether they should go or not. Eventually they decide that the burglar should investigate. Bilbo sneaks towards the fire. As he approaches he sees three giant figures around the firelight, roasting meat on a spit- *trolls!* Bilbo is frightened by the sight of these gruesome creatures, and turns to go back to the dwarves. But then he remembers Gloin's remark: *'He looks more like a grocer than a burglar'*. Bilbo's expression hardens at this thought. He looks back at the trolls and he spots a large key on a ring peeping out from one of the troll's pockets. He decides to show the dwarves that he can be a burglar.

Bilbo sneaks in the shadows up to the trolls. Their talk is rough, complaining that mutton is all they get to eat. Bilbo manages to get his hand on the key and eases it from the troll's pocket. Just as he takes it out the key jangles on the ring and the troll turns round. Bilbo is grabbed by the troll's giant hand! The troll holds the tiny figure of the hobbit upside down by the fire, and Bilbo finds himself staring right into their horrible faces! The slow witted trolls wonder what kind of creature he is, and complain he barely has any meat on

him. Are there any others around so they can make a pie? Bilbo tries desperately to talk his way out of being eaten.

After a short time Oin and Gloin appear at the edge of the clearing, shouting at the trolls. The trolls cry in delight and two of them chase after the dwarves who run away quickly. Bilbo is left in the hands of the last troll. Suddenly the rest of the dwarves jump out to rescue Bilbo (Oin and Gloin had been a diversion). The dwarves fight the troll, dodging its clumsy blows. Dwalin jumps from a branch of a tree and puts his cloak over the troll's eyes. The troll goes berserk and rushes head first into a tree trunk, knocking himself out. Thorin orders everyone to get out of sight quickly. Where are Oin and Gloin? The other trolls return, with Oin and Gloin captured in their hands. They are angry at the remaining troll- how was he knocked out by the tiny burrahobbit? The trolls begin to argue. Another voice is heard, that the trolls think comes from each other. The voice keeps them arguing through the night. One of the trolls warns than dawn will soon be here. Then Gandalf strides into the clearing- dawn has come! The light of the rising sun strikes the trolls, and they are turned to stone.

The dwarves go to help Oin and Gloin. Bilbo realises it was Gandalf's voice that kept the trolls arguing into the morning. Thorin thanks Gandalf, and asks how Bilbo got caught by the trolls. The hobbit admits he was trying to pick a troll's pocket, and the dwarves agree it was a foolish time to practice burglary. Gandalf says they should look for the trolls' lair. Following the large footprints, they discover a tunnel with a great boulder lying next to the entrance. Inside they find the grisly remains of the trolls' victims along with some food, and in the corner they find a heavy iron chest. Bombur tries beating the lock with an axe to open it, but it is too strong. Bilbo then tries the troll's key, and this opens the chest. Inside there is a magnificent sword and some silver. Gandalf remarks that the burglar's pick pocketing turned out to be useful after all. On closer investigation of the sword, the wizard finds is a fine elven blade inscribed with runes. He says they shall wait for master Elrond to recount the full history of the blade. Gandalf entrusts the sword to Thorin. At the bottom of the chest is a short sword, which Gandalf gives to Bilbo, who takes it proudly.

The party takes what food they can from the trolls and rest for a time. Then they continue towards the mountains. Gandalf explains that his earlier absence was to send a message ahead to Rivendell, and now they will be expected at Elrond's house.

Chapter 3- Rivendell

After climbing a steep bank the party see they have come near the feet of the great mountains. Bilbo has never seen such a landscape before and wonders if the nearest snow crested peak is the Lonely Mountain. Balin grins, and explains these are only the start of the Misty Mountains. They must cross this

great range into Wilderland beyond, and then travel a good deal further before they reach Erebor. This thought makes Bilbo feel terribly weary.

Gandalf leads the party on, following the subtle path to the valley of Rivendell. Their route winds round the foothills, and they pass by deep gorges and ravines. As evening falls the wizard announces they have reached the entrance to the valley. The path winds down into a rich wooded dell. Bilbo can smell the heady scent of pine trees and fancies he can hear the music of elves. As the party descends, glowing lights surround them and there is merry singing in the trees around. Bilbo hears the enchanting voices and he gazes around in wonder trying to spot the elves. The dwarves are less impressed. Gloin explains to Bilbo that the elves can only be seen if they want to be. The dwarves do not care too much for elves- they are too full of themselves, and their magic. Up ahead elves emerge from the trees and Gandalf greets them. The party are invited to the Midsummer feast, and they are led to the bridge, where the lights of Elrond's house shine from across the water. The elves laugh at the sight of the hobbit, and tell Bilbo not to eat too many cakes or he will be too fat for a burglar! The bridge is narrow and one by one the party lead their ponies across by the bridle. Thorin is unsure of his footing on the bridge and crawls forward for balance. 'Do not water your beard', the elves joke- 'it is long enough already!' This irritates the proud dwarf, but Gandalf hushes Thorin and wishes the elves good night.

The noble and fair Elrond greets the party and welcomes them to the valley. Gandalf introduces Thorin, and the elf's gracious words repair any earlier offence. The wizard then introduces Bilbo and the dwarves, and Elrond invites them to rest and feast on this Midsummer evening. Their spirits soon rise with good food, wine and music under the stars.

Elrond has heard rumour the party were waylaid by trolls, and the dwarves and Bilbo describe the encounter. Gandalf says that their danger was not without reward: a fine elven blade was found in the trolls' lair. Elrond asks to see the blade, and Thorin brings it. The great elf is most impressed: the blade is named Orcrist made by the elves of Gondolin for the goblin wars many ages ago. The trolls must have stolen it from an orc horde. Elrond urges Thorin to keep the blade well, and the dwarf wishes that it shall soon cleave goblins once again. Elrond replies solemnly that his wish may soon be granted. The mountains have grown wild since the dwarves took vengeance on the orcs for the death of Thrór. The party must be careful. And beyond the mountains, Mirkwood too is a dangerous road to reach Erebor. Gandalf assures he will be there to guide them as far as he can, and Elrond replies that is well. The noble elf wishes the party to forget the dangers ahead this night, and enjoy the hospitality of Rivendell.

The party's relaxed time in the valley passes all too quickly for Bilbo, and in a few days the dwarves are ready to leave. Elrond and the elves wish them farewell, and they depart, refreshed for their journey.

Chapter 4- The Misty Mountains

The party toil on the steep roads to the mountain pass. Narrow rocky ledges wind between the peaks, with steep cliff faces and sheer drops. The weather closes in and becomes wild. Rain lashes against them and gales roar, causing rocks to fall from the heights above. The ponies rear, nearing falling to their death. Bilbo shivers with cold and fright. Thorin sends Kili and Fili ahead to look for shelter. In a short time they return, saying they have found a cave. Gandalf is concerned the cave may be occupied, and they assure him it is empty.

The dwarves and Bilbo are relieved to reach the shelter of the cave which is large and dry. Using his wand for light, Gandalf inspects the cave, and finds it is empty. The party settle down to rest. Bilbo sleeps uneasily. He feels like he is slipping, and falling through cracks in the floor, and can hear the sound of sliding rock. Suddenly Bilbo wakes with a start- an opening is emerging at the back of the cave! Bilbo cries out!

Suddenly a horde of goblins leap through the hole, surrounding the dwarves, blades thrust at their chests! Their captain shouts to take them alive. They are grabbed and chained in pairs, then thrown down the tunnel. Bilbo is terrified- he cries out for Gandalf but cannot see him, and is shoved back into line. Spears dig into their backs as they are marched into the deep dark of the mountains. After a painful march in the dark, a red glow emerges up ahead and they arrive in a cavern. It is filled with orcs and flickering torches, the walls lined with trophies seized from captors. The Great Goblin Boldog sits at the centre of the cavern. A cry of delight erupts as the orcs see the prisoners. The dwarves and Bilbo are lined up for Boldog to view, and their baggage is broken open and rummaged by goblins. Thorin is identified as the party's leader and is thrown at the foot of Boldog. Boldog hates dwarves since the wars of Moria. The mountains are now ruled by the orcs: what are the dwarves doing here? Thorin says they are travelling to visit their people east of the mountains. Boldog replies he should kill them now for trespassing on his lands. Or he has another fate in store- Boldog has heard the Necromancer pays a good price for dwarven prisoners. This enrages Thorin and Boldog laughs. Then an orc sifting through the dwarves' baggage discovers Thorin's sword, and brings it to Boldog. Boldog lets out a cry of rage- Orcrist! "This accursed sword has slain hundreds of goblins. Slash them! Kill them!"

Then all the lights in the room go dark: the fire vanishes, transforming into a tower of blue glowing smoke that stretches to the cavern roof. Jets of blue flame fly into the orcs knocking them dead. Gandalf has returned! The room

erupts in screaming and yelling orcs. In the commotion Thorin jumps onto the goblin carrying Orcrist and rips the sword from him. Orcrist glows brightly in the dark. Boldog cries in rage, and Thorin leaps at him, and with a mighty stroke he cleaves Boldog's head clean off. The orcs flee from the sword, and the dwarves throw off their guards. Gandalf shouts to the dwarves leading them out of the cavern by the light of his wand. Bilbo grabs his elven dagger from the floor and runs with them. They flee from the cavern.

Gandalf leads them running through the dark tunnels. He shouts they must be swift as the orcs will be after them. Bilbo cannot keep up and he cries for help to the dwarves. Gloin takes him on his shoulders and catches up with the others. Soon they hear the cries of orcs in pursuit, gaining on them. Gloin tires and the hobbit is passed onto Bombur's shoulders. The cries grow closer. Suddenly goblin hands grab Bilbo and Bombur and they yell, falling to the floor. Bilbo rolls on the ground then knocks his head on the cavern wall. Gandalf and Thorin fight back the orcs, while for Bilbo all goes dark.

Chapter 5- Riddles in the Dark

Bilbo wakes in the pitch black, completely alone and lost. He sits for a while, afraid and despairing. The hobbit's hand comes across the grip of his sword, and this gives him encouragement. Bilbo draws the blade: it emits a faint glow like Thorin's sword- it must be an elven blade too. Bilbo picks himself up, guesses which direction to head in as best he can, and sets off. Hours seem to pass as he journeys in the deep dark, not knowing where he or where he is going. Bilbo walks on for a long time, not encountering anyone. Suddenly he spots a glint of light on the tunnel floor. Fumbling on the ground he finds a ring, which he places in his pocket.

He continues walking until his foot splashes in the icy cold water of a lake. Pale eyes emerge menacingly from the dark and Bilbo encounters *Gollum*. Bilbo holds up his sword in defence. Gollum is curious of this strange creature, and asks who he is and where he is from, and Bilbo answers. Gollum then challenges Bilbo to a Riddle Contest. If Bilbo wins Gollum will show him the way out, and if Gollum wins... he will eat Bilbo! Bilbo is not given a chance to consider this dreadful bargain, as Gollum begins the first riddle. They both guess each others early riddles, indicating that this strange Gollum may not be so unlike a hobbit. Gollum then tells a very difficult riddle, leaving the hobbit floundering for an answer. Gollum closes in licking his lips... By luck Bilbo guesses the correct answer. Struggling to think of another riddle, Bilbo asks the first question that comes to him- 'What have I got in my pocket?' This angers Gollum who thinks it unfair. He tries to guess anyway and fails to get it right. Gollum reluctantly agrees that he must show Bilbo the route out of the mountains. He slinks back to his island on the lake to get something he claims he needs to stay hidden in the tunnels.

Bilbo wonders what he does have in his pocket, and putting his hand inside he remembers the ring. Gollum then erupts with rage on the island shouting that his precious has vanished. "What does the nasty hobbit have in its pockets?" Gollum advances on Bilbo menacingly, and the hobbit shakes with fear. Bilbo soon guesses who the ring belongs to, and he puts it on. He flees up the tunnel, with Gollum in close pursuit. Bilbo's foot hits a snag on the rocks and he falls on the ground. Rolling round he sees that Gollum is right behind him and will surely catch him! Gollum then runs straight past, without seeing him. How did he escape? Bilbo follows Gollum and overhears his frantic chatter. He realises that the ring is magical, and has made him invisible! Following as quietly as he can, Bilbo is led by Gollum to the east gate.

Gollum blocks the passage to the gate waiting for Bilbo. He crouches on all fours sniffing for any sign. Bilbo takes the handle of his sword, knowing he could kill Gollum. Yet Bilbo does not wish to hurt the wretched creature, and he releases his grip on his sword. Instead Bilbo runs towards Gollum and leaps over him and sprints away. The sound of Gollum's desperate curses fade behind him. The gate is ahead and after a last trick of the ring nearly revealing him, Bilbo squeezes through the gate and out to freedom.

In the evening light Bilbo can see the sun set behind the mountains to the west. He has come all the way under the mountains into the land beyond! But he is completely alone. Feeling thirsty and hungry, Bilbo looks for water. Where are Gandalf and the dwarves? What should Bilbo do? He realises that since he has the magic ring he should return to the dreadful tunnels and look for the others. Then in the bank of a stream Bilbo spots the footprints of many pairs of boots.

The dwarves and Gandalf rest in a clearing nearby, arguing whether they should return to rescue Bilbo. Bilbo then suddenly appears right in the middle of the group! The dwarves are amazed; Gandalf is delighted and laughs heartily- his faith in Bilbo's ability has been repaid. The dwarves demand to know how Bilbo's escaped. Bilbo enjoys their new respect for him, and he quickly recounts his adventures with Gollum (without mentioning the ring). Gandalf gives him a knowing look, but does question further. The wizard orders that they depart as night is falling, and orcs will soon be on their tail.

Chapter 6- Fight and Flight

The party marches quickly down rocky slopes and into woodland. Soon the chilling sound of wolves on the hunt echoes menacingly around them. Red eyes of wargs emerge between the trees. The wargs outpace them and cut them off. The party huddle together for protection; the dwarves shouting challenges at the beasts, while Bilbo cowers in fright. Gandalf casts a circle of fire around the group, shielding them. A warg tries to break through the circle, but its fur catches light and the beast squeals in pain. The other wargs keep

their distance, but they know the dwarves are trapped. Gandalf sends a bright red flare from his staff high into the air.

Soon they hear the sound of drums and marching. The orc host is arriving from the mountain. The orcs show no fear of fire and jump through the flames. The dwarves fight them back, but can barely hold them. It seems there is no hope. Gandalf prepares himself for what is surely a final charge. Suddenly a great shadow swoops down from the sky and Gandalf vanishes. The eagles have come! More eagles arrive and the party are carried high into the air. The orcs scream below, and throw spears, but they fall well short. The great birds circle higher and higher and the sun begins to rise. Bilbo looks in amazement at the great mountain peaks to the west and the grassy plains and forests to the east. They are flown eastwards over the plains.

The party are released on a rocky shelf overlooking the river. Gandalf bows low to his bearer, the lord of the eagles. He speaks in a strange tongue to the great eagle, and the bird calls in acknowledgement. The eagles then turn and soar away.

Bilbo runs to Gandalf- why did the eagles help them? Gandalf explains that the eagles live in the Misty Mountains, and are the sworn enemies of goblins. Several years ago Gandalf healed the lord of the eagles from a terrible arrow wound, and since then their friendship has grown. Gandalf says they have been lucky- the eagles have flown them several days march ahead of the orcs. The dwarves and Bilbo complain of hunger and exhaustion, and Thorin agrees they must find food and rest. The party march down to the river and drink. In the shallows they spot large fish swimming, and Thorin leads the dwarves in trying to catch them. Gandalf laughs at the dwarves comical attempts at fishing by hand. Bilbo, Balin, Oin and Gloin are sent to gather what fruits they can find. The grasslands are pleasant in the late summer sunshine, and they find nuts and berries. Come late afternoon the party are resting and eating round a good fire.

Gandalf describes how the next day they will reach Greenwood the Great. The shadow has fallen on the forest and it is now named Mirkwood. Gandalf cannot follow the dwarves into the forest: he has pressing business in the south that he must attend to. The dwarves grumble at this and Bilbo despairs. The wizard replies he has already come far further with the dwarves than he intended to, and will have no argument.

Bilbo speaks to Gandalf alone and expresses his fear. Surely a great warrior or a courageous dwarf would be better than him at facing the dragon? Gandalf smiles- Bilbo must find his courage. He has shown bravery and quick thinking already in the mountains, and he must use the same courage and wit when he faces the dragon, and learn what he can. A great warrior or heroic dwarf would not do: Smaug stole his gold from dwarves and men, and they ever plot

to recapture it and have their revenge. Smaug knows this and is suspicious of them. It is because Bilbo is no warrior or fearless dwarf that he can succeed. He will need luck on his side of course, and he has shown already he has more than his fair share... as when found the magic ring. Gandalf smiles- he reveals he knows of Bilbo's ring of invisibility, and it will help against the dragon. He advises keeping it hidden from the dwarves.

Chapter 7: Journey Through Mirkwood

The party reach the eaves of Mirkwood. Gandalf warns that the Necromancer has servants in the forest. Thorin must be wary if he is to avoid the fate of his father Thrain. They must not stray from the path that the wood elves guard. Thorin says he needs no help from the wood elves- they failed to aid his people when Erebor fell. Gandalf admits the wood elves are not as wise as the high elves of the west, but Thorin can little afford to refuse the help of anyone.

Gandalf says farewell, whispers encouragement to Bilbo; and then is gone. The dwarves and Bilbo must continue on their own. Thorin tries to raise spirits- "Think dwarves of the treasure at the journey's end!". The party sets off through the dark forest, the path winding its way between the gnarled and twisted boughs. Food soon becomes scarce, and they find nothing wholesome to eat; only dark creatures move in the shadows. The party journey on for many days, and the forest becomes ever more dense and tangled. Soon the food and water runs out. Bilbo is sent to climb a tree to look for the end of Mirkwood. The hobbit manages to reach the topmost branches and enjoys the warm sun on his face, but looking out he can only see miles of forest in all directions. The party become desperately hungry. They see a stag on the path ahead and they chase it into the woods. Soon in the darkness they lose the path.

The dwarves wander in the dark, and strange bulbous eyes begin to surround them. Giant spiders circle them and attack. Bilbo draws his sword and leads the dwarves in defending themselves. The hobbit shows his agility- his sword darts to and fro, beating the spiders into retreat. The party think they have escaped, but the spiders soon return in much greater numbers. Hundreds of them spin webs on the trees surrounding them!

The spiders have them trapped, and manage to grab some of the dwarves, stinging them and pulling them into the trees to be covered in cocoons of thread! Bilbo and the remaining dwarves are helpless and cry out in fear. Suddenly horns sound and arrows fly through the dark killing many spiders. The wood elves have arrived! The spiders quickly retreat. Exhausted and with few weapons, Thorin reluctantly orders not to resist the wood elves. Bilbo slips into the shadows and puts on the ring. The elves march the dwarves to the Elven King's fortress, and Bilbo follows in secret.

Chapter 8: Barrels out of Bond

The dwarves are taken to the court of the Elven King. Thranduil demands to know where the dwarves are travelling to. Thorin refuses to answer, but Thranduil recognises him and knows he will be returning to Erebor to claim his kingdom. Has Thorin no gratitude for being rescued from the spiders, or would he rather have been left to be taken to the Necromancer? Thorin argues it is no crime to be lost and hungry in the forest. Thranduil retorts it is a crime to wander in his realm without leave.

What would happen if the dwarves are let free, and they succeed in renewing their kingdom under the mountain? Many elven treasures lie in Thrór's horde, would these be returned to their rightful owners? Thorin is angered, saying no elven treasure was ever wrought without dwarven aid. Thranduil replies that he knows better than to trust a dwarf bearing a stolen elven blade. Thorin fumes- Thranduil can take Orcrist, he needs no help from the elves. Thranduil brought no aid when Erebor fell. The Elven King replies that dwarven greed brought the terror of the dragon on themselves. He orders that the dwarves are taken to the cells.

Bilbo is left to fend for himself. He sneaks around the palace, stealing food from the kitchens, watching the elven nobles ride out hunting, and in the evening listening to enchanting music around the fire. In the cavernous dungeons Bilbo finds the dwarves, imprisoned and guarded. The news that the burglar has evaded capture gives the dwarves hope that Bilbo can free them. During Bilbo's wanderings he discovers a room near the dungeons where barrels of wine are stored, with a trapdoor leading to an underground river. A daring plan forms in his mind

A feasting day comes and the guards join in the drinking in the wine cellar. By nightfall all is quiet and the guards are asleep. Bilbo steals the keys to the prison and one by one he releases the dwarves. The thirteen dwarves attempt to sneak silently, but they are clumsy and Bombur nearly wakes the guards. They creep to the wine cellar and open the trap door. Taking empty barrels with them to hold on to, the party leap into the freezing water below and are carried from the Elven King's palace to the forest river. The current is swift and Bilbo and the dwarves rather comically try to ride on the barrels but are unable to keep their balance are rolled into the water. Further downriver the party steal a raft from the bank and, with drenched beards and loud sneezes, they float onwards towards the Long Lake.

Chapter 9: In Sight of the Lonely Mountain

The party comes in sight of their quest, Erebor. Bilbo does not like the look of the ominous mountain at all. Thorin announces they have faced many trials together and they have overcome them. Now they have reached their goal! Their kingdom and treasure shall be returned. Thorin expresses his thanks to Bilbo. At first he doubted the hobbit's courage and his skill, but Bilbo has

proved his worth twice over. The dwarves give a cheer for their burglar, and the hobbit smiles proudly.

The party make camp by the riverside. Thorin brings out the map by the moonlight. He discusses what has become of the men of the lake, whose town of Dale was destroyed by the dragon, and who now dwell in Esgaroth on the water just a few miles from their camp. The town of Dale was part of his father's realm, and Thorin hopes the Lakemen will welcome the dwarves' return. But it is many lives of men since the dwarves were at the Long Lake- will they remember the King Under the Mountain? In the moonlight runes emerge on the map that before had not been visible. The runes read "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 keyhole". Bilbo asks what Durin's Day is and Thorin explains it is when the last moon of autumn and the setting sun are in the sky together. The day may well come soon! The dwarves' hope is buoyed.

Chapter 10: Arrival at Esgaroth

The party march to Esgaroth, a trading town built on the Long Lake, accessed by a long wooden bridge from the shore. They go to meet with the master of the town, who is feasting and drinking at noon. The captain of the town guard, Bard the Bowman, is with the master and declares that the dwarves are the escaped prisoners of the Elven King. Thorin replies that the dwarves were falsely imprisoned by the elves, but neither lock nor bar can hinder the homecoming spoken of old. Esgaroth should not be under the rule of the Elven King, as it was part of his father Thrain's kingdom when the men of the lake were rich and prosperous. The master of the town asks what he would gain in return for aiding the dwarves, and Thorin promises great riches for him when the dwarven kingdom is restored. The master is satisfied by this, while Bard looks on grimly.

Bard questions how they will combat the dragon. His ancestor Girion was Lord of Dale when the dragon came and devastated the town. Thorin assures Bard that plans are in place to remove Smaug, if he still lives. Bilbo looks doubtful at this claim, and this is noticed by Bard. The master dismisses Bard's complaints- for years the master's money has been wasted on defences for a threat long gone. The coming of the dwarves will mean a new age of prosperity for the Lakemen.

The master announces to the town the return of the dwarven kings of old, and that great riches will follow. The dwarves and Bilbo are invited to feast that night, and are treated as guests of honour with much celebration and singing of old songs. Thorin and the dwarves enthusiastically join in the merry making. Bilbo joins in the dancing for a time, but he does not feel in a party mood and he sneaks out of the hall. The ominous site of the mountain

dominates the view of the lake, and Bilbo stares out, imagining what fate lies ahead.

Bilbo notices the silhouette of a tall man on a peer ahead, staring out across the lake. The man strides towards Bilbo: it is Bard. A great yew bow adorned with silver (seen in the prologue) hangs across his shoulders. Bard stands next to Bilbo looking out at the view, and he speaks to him. Often Bard stares at the mountain, dreaming of winning back the riches of Dale that long ago belonged to his ancestors. Yet the *dragon* must be forgotten! Long has Bard prepared his defences for Smaug's return. When the dragon attacked Dale there was no warning, but if he comes again Bard will be ready. The tall stern man then looks down at the little hobbit, intrigued. He wonders what has brought Bilbo on this dangerous quest- his ancestors were not killed by the dragon, he does not seem to share the dwarven lust for gold. Bilbo considers this, and answers that he left his homeland in the west to learn what lay over the mountains into the land beyond. The hobbit laughs- his curiosity has landed him in many troubles in his time! Now after coming through many dangers together he wishes to help his friends- the dwarves and the wizard Gandalf. Bard's eyes light up at the mention of this name. It is many years since Gandalf has wandered in these parts, but if Bilbo's quest is the work of the wizard then he has hope.

They spot a bird darting across the lake from the shore. The bird lands near Bard, and Bilbo sees it is a large brown thrush with a bright white breast. The thrush carries an earthworm in its mouth, and it gobbles down the worm, then tweets merrily. Bard seems to know the bird and is pleased to see it. 'If only the great wyrm under the mountain could be caught as easily!' Bard muses. Bilbo is impressed how friendly the thrush is, and Bard explains that the men of Dale used to tame these handsome song birds, even use them as message carriers. This thrush has not forgotten the days of old. After a time enjoying the bird's song, Bard tells Bilbo he must return to his watch. The Lakeman kneels down by Bilbo and puts a hand on his shoulder. He wishes the little hobbit good luck. Then standing back up, the guardsman returns to his post. Bilbo looks comforted, his earlier fears eased. The hobbit heads back to the dwarves.

After several days' rest, the dwarves and Bilbo make ready to leave. They depart for Erebor by boat, with much fanfare from the Lakemen. Horses, ponies and supplies have been provided- these will be taken overland to the mouth of the River Running. Bilbo stares ahead at the mountain, drawing ever closer.

Chapter 11: Smaug the Golden.

The dwarves arrive at the wastelands surrounding Erebor, and the ruined town of Dale. The Lakemen who escorted them by boat fear the mountain and will go no further.

The dwarves make camp. The next morning they creep towards the front gate. It looks ominous, with a wasteland leading to the entrance where smoke and a foul reek rises out. Thorin orders that they turn away and travel round to the western side of the mountain to look for the secret entrance. The dwarves make expeditions up the mountainside to search for the door. After two failed attempts they discover an old worn path that leads far up the mountainside to a ledge. They try with great frustration to find an opening on the bare rock but to no avail. Bilbo sits brooding on the cold and barren landscape. Then as the evening fades Bilbo sees the thrush arrive. The bird breaks a snail's shell on the smooth rock. Bilbo then remembers the runes on the map- he looks at the sky and sees the new moon and the setting sun up together- it must be Durin's Day! The party wait as the last glint of the sun vanishes over the horizon. Suddenly a shaft of red sunlight shines on the keyhole, just as the runes on the map foretold! Thorin uses the key, and they push open the ancient door.

Thorin announces that the time has come for Bilbo's great service to earn his share of the treasure. Bilbo points out he has got the dwarves out of a tight spot or two already, and has earned some reward. But he has come to trust his luck more than he did, and he will venture into the tunnel to see what Smaug is up to. Bilbo begins his journey down the deep tunnel. Soon all becomes dark, then as Bilbo creeps forward a faint red glow can be seen. Bilbo journeys onwards and the light ahead strengthens to a deep fiery red. Suddenly a terrible low rumbling sound is heard, and the hobbit freezes with fear. *Smaug* is dreadfully close! Bilbo cannot bring himself to go any further, and he stands still for a time not daring to go on. Then he remembers the words of Gandalf- he must find his courage. Bilbo rouses himself, puts on the ring, and tiptoes forward.

The magnificence of the dragon and the horde is revealed to Bilbo. He is mesmerised by the sight. The dragon stirs. Though Smaug cannot see Bilbo he can smell him, and Smaug growls! His booming voice appears in Bilbo's head as if he can read his very mind. Smaug is curious of this thief whose smell he does not recognise, and asks who he is. Bilbo gives himself riddling names- 'the Ring Winner and the Barrel Rider'. This amuses the dragon, though Smaug soon figures out that Bilbo has come from the Lakemen. Smaug invites the thief to take what treasure he wants, there is plenty to spare. Bilbo replies he has not come to steal treasure, but to look upon Smaug and see if he is as great as the legends tell. 'Well am I as great as the tales say?', Smaug demands, and the hobbit flatters the dragon that the tales fall short in capturing his magnificence. Bilbo then tries his luck, and asks whether it is true that dragons are weaker on their underside. Smaug proudly boasts he is armoured above and below, and rolls over to reveal armoured scales and gems on his chest. Bilbo is frightened and a little amused at the sight of Smaug rolling over like a dog. Then he spots a bare patch below the dragon's left breast where the scales have come loose! A scale falls off onto the cavern floor and,

while complimenting Smaug on his 'impenetrable armour', Bilbo sneaks towards the loose scale and picks it up. The hobbit then becomes overconfident, and speaks of the revenge of the dwarves and the Lakemen. This infuriates the dragon, who vows to destroy the Lakemen, and prove who is the real King Under the Mountain.

Bilbo flees back up the tunnel, chased by a jet of Smaug's flame. The dwarves cheer to see Bilbo return alive, but Bilbo is all in a panic. The dragon lives and is coming! Smaug means to attack the Lakemen and Bilbo must tell Bard of the dragon's weakness, but how? Bilbo looks at the dragonscale in his hand: he cuts his finger on the sharp edge. He then notices the thrush on a rock nearby and he thinks of a desperate plan. Bilbo calls to the thrush, who comes to him. He places the dragonscale in the bird's claws and marks a cross on its white breast on the same spot where Smaug's weakspot is found. Bilbo shouts at the bird to go to Bard, but the thrush only tweets happily in reply. Then Smaug's roar is heard as the dragon swoops down on the mountainside! The dwarves and Bilbo flee inside the tunnel shutting the door. In a rage the dragon flails against the mountainside, destroying the door and causing the roof to fall in, trapping the dwarves in the tunnel.

All goes silent in the dark tunnel. The dwarves despair that they are trapped in the dragon's lair. Bilbo cries that it is his fault that the dragon attacked as he let his tongue slip when speaking to Smaug. Balin tells him that he did well; it was the glamour of the dragon led Bilbo into revealing what he said. Thorin takes command, hushing the dwarves. They all knew the quest may well come down to this. The time for stealth is over, and they must march into the great hall of Erebor and meet their fate. Thorin leads the party onwards, expecting that they will meet their doom at the hands of the dragon. They arrive in the great hall, and to their shock all is deathly silent- Smaug is nowhere to be found! Lighting torches, they marvel at the horde. The dwarves are mesmerised by the riches. Bilbo cries that they must move on- the dragon will surely soon return! The dwarves agree and they quickly move to the front gate.

Chapter 12: Fire and Water

At Esgaroth flames can be seen erupting from the mountain. The drunken master thinks the dwarves are forging gold. Bard shouts that the dragon is coming and raises the alarm; panic spreads. Bard commands the people to flee across the bridge and take cover in the woods, and Bard's wife organises the evacuation. The Lakemen archers take position on the highest points of the town to draw the dragon towards them.

A thunderous storm draws near as the dragon soars across the land towards Esgaroth. Bard demands his troops hold firm. Smaug roars over the town with a torrent of flame, setting Esgaroth ablaze. Bard shouts 'Fire!' and his archers unleash a volley. But the arrows are too weak, and deflect off the dragon's

armoured scales. Smaug wheels and swoops again on Esgaroth. His tail crashes into the buildings flattening them. Smaug's flames burn more of Esgaroth, and the dragon flies towards Bard, trying to seize him in his claws. Bard leaps from the roof of a building just as the dragon destroys it. The dragon grabs two of Lakemen archers in his claws, and soars back up into the air. Esgaroth burns and the remaining archers flee for their lives. Bard cries desperately they must fight on to the last man!

The thrush then flies to Bard. He tries to shoo the bird away- it must fly off or it will die with him. But the bird will not leave. Bard then notices the glimmering dragon scale it carries. He takes the scale, puzzled by what it might mean. He then notices the mark on the bird's breast, and he guesses the meaning of Bilbo's message.

The dragon swoops on the town again towards Bard, and Bard spots the hollow in the dragon's armour. Bard dodges the dragon's attack. As the dragon wheels Bard draws his great bow and he fires Thrain's arrow into the weakspot, burying itself deep in Smaug's breast! A deafening shriek erupts from the dragon. Smaug writhes and flails in pain and fury. Then finally the dragon collapses onto Esgaroth. Steam and ashes rise from the ruins of the town. Smaug is dead! The people at the shore cry and cheer. But Bard is nowhere to be seen.

The deafening cry of the dying dragon echoes for miles around, and is heard by Bilbo and the dwarves at the mountain. They rush to the watchtower to discover what has happened.

Chapter 13: The Gathering of the Clouds

At the Long Lake, the people of Esgaroth look on the ruins of their town. Bard's wife grieves for her husband, and the people speak of Bard's heroism. The master of town, who ran from the dragon instead of aiding the defences, is set upon by the people, who take his chains of office and throw him out.

Bard emerges from the water alive. He embraces his wife and there is great cheering. Bard learns that the master has been removed, and he agrees to become the town leader for the rescue effort. He organises shelters and fires, and tends to the injured.

At Esgaroth the dwarves and Bilbo reach the watchtower. In the dawn light they can see smoke in the far distance rising from the smouldering Esgaroth. Smaug is nowhere to be seen. Where is he? Was it the dragon that made the great screaming sound last night? Is Smaug hurt, or is he hiding somewhere waiting for them to come into the open?

Bilbo and dwarves anxiously wait at the watchtower. Bilbo watches the smoke in the far distance, and fears that Esgaroth is destroyed and the Lakemen slain.

Then the silhouette of a bird appears coming towards them- it is the thrush bringing a message! The bird flies straight to Bilbo, and the hobbit excitedly opens the message. The letter is from Bard, and it proclaims that by his hand the dragon has been slain! The dwarves roar with joy at the news, jumping and hugging each other. Bilbo learns that his plan of telling Bard the weakspot worked and he joins in the cheering. Bard wishes to know if any of Bilbo's party has survived the dragon's attack. Thorin proudly tells Bilbo to reply that Thorin and his followers live, and that the Kingdom Under the Mountain is renewed.

While Bilbo writes a message in reply to Bard, Thorin's thoughts turn to securing the treasure. Dori, Nori, Kili and Fili are sent to find what remains of the ponies, horses and supplies, and bring them to the front gate. Everyone else will return to the mountain to begin work on the restoration of their kingdom. While on the march Thorin speaks to Gloin, whom he entrusts with a vital mission. When the horses return, Gloin will ride as fast he can to the Iron Hills where Thorin's cousin Dain dwells. News that the kingdom is restored will rouse all the dwarves, and many will come bearing arms to protect the mountain.

We follow the thrush as it flies back to Esgaroth. The message arrives and Bard is pleased to learn that Bilbo survives, though is less happy at Thorin's declaration that the kingdom is renewed. Bard fears for his people- the lack of food and the oncoming winter could cost many lives. He sends a messenger to travel quickly by boat to the Elven King to ask for aid. After the messenger departs, a dark orc spy is seen in the cover of the trees. He looks on Esgaroth and Smaug's corpse in the lake with great interest; then secretly rides off northwards.

Chapter 14: The Mountain Besieged

Messengers arrive at Mirkwood and the Iron Hills. The elven and dwarven hosts go on the war march.

At Erebor the dwarves bring light to the great halls. They sort through the vast horde of magnificent treasures. Balin finds a golden harp, and plays wonderful music that pleases the dwarves and Bilbo. Thorin speaks of the greatest treasure of all- the Arkenstone- a beautiful shimmering white gem that lies within the horde. The dwarves and Bilbo must help him find the stone. Thorin is in a merry mood, and tells Bilbo he has a reward to present him for his great service. As a first payment Bilbo is given a wonderful mail shirt of mithril from the horde. Bilbo tries the shirt on and feels magnificent (if a little self conscious) in the princely coat.

The elven host arrives at Esgaroth. Thranduil has brought food and supplies for the stricken Lakemen. What remains of Bard's troops unite with the elven king, and they march on Erebor.

The dwarves manage to repair the front gate (Smaug first attacked Erebor without warning and the gate had been open. It was damaged but not destroyed). With a mighty heave of ropes from all the dwarves, the stone barrier slides back into place, sealing the mountain. To the side of the gate an ancient watchpost cuts into the mountain, overlooking the rocky ground beyond the gate.

That night from the watchpost, Bilbo and the dwarves see a great number of lights emerge from the gloom. The elven host and Lakemen have arrived, and they make camp in the valley. The host looks very large and some of the dwarves become anxious, though Thorin is unmoved. The next morning Bard and the Elven King march on the gate for a parley.

Bard proclaims that by his hand the dragon was slain. He is the heir of Girion and much of the wealth of Dale lies within the horde. Esgaroth now lies in ruin due to Smaug's attack. Will Thorin not aid in the rebuilding of the town as the Lakemen aided him in his need? There are also elven treasures that lie in the horde that rightly should be returned to Thranduil.

Thorin retorts that he will give nothing under threat of force. The elves, who he remembers with little kindness, have no claim and must return to the woods before any bargaining begins. In response Bard declares the mountain besieged- Thorin can return to his gold: eat that if he will.

Thorin is angered by Bard's claims over his horde. He returns to plotting, reckoning how long it will take Dain's troops to arrive at Erebor. Bilbo looks on miserably at these events, saddened that his friends have come to this bitter conflict.

Chapter 15: A Thief in the Night

Bilbo looks from the watchpost towards the many lights of the elven and Lakemen camp. He can faintly hear the sound of music and merrymaking around the fires, and his heart sinks further. Bilbo is tired of the siege and the dwarven gold, and he wishes that the dispute was resolved and that he could return home to the Shire.

The next day Bilbo tries to convince Thorin that Bard's claim is reasonable, and Thorin angrily rebukes him. Bilbo leaves Thorin to his plotting, and idly tours the great empty halls and passages of Erebor. In a remote chamber a shimmering light catches his eye. He goes to the light and finds a magnificent white gem. It must surely be the Arkenstone, Thorin's most prized treasure, for there could be no two gems like it. Bilbo looks thoughtfully at the stone for a while; then his face becomes determined as if he has reached a decision. He hides the great jewel under his coat.

At nightfall Bilbo sneaks down a rope from the watchpost and goes to the camp of Thranduil and Bard. The elven guards agree to take him before the king. Thranduil and Bard are surprised to see him and the Elven King questions whether Bilbo is the thief who freed the dwarves from his prison. Bard speaks of Bilbo's vital role in slaying the dragon, and Thranduil gracefully apologises to the hobbit. Bard wonders if Bilbo has finally left the company of the arrogant and greedy Thorin, as he would be most welcome in the camp of the Elven King. Bilbo replies that he has cannot leave friends after all they have been through. He brings news. Thorin sent word to his cousin Dain from the Iron Hills two weeks ago, and his troops will now be close. Bilbo fears a needless battle. He has brought the Arkenstone, which Thorin prizes above all treasures, to aid Bard in his bargaining. The stone can stand against Bilbo's share of the treasure. Bard and the Elven King thank Bilbo greatly for his help, and they again they urge him to join their side, but the hobbit politely refuses and returns to the dwarves.

The next day Bard and Thranduil come again to parley. Thorin asks why they have needlessly returned, since none of his demands have been met. Still they are bear arms and the elven host has not departed as he bid. Bard says he has something which may change Thorin's mind- he reveals the Arkenstone. Bard promises the Arkenstone will be returned for a fourteenth share of the treasure.

Thorin rages, demanding to know how Bard came by his property. Bilbo nervously admits that it was him- he gave the stone to Bard. Thorin shakes with fury- he curses the traitor Bilbo and Gandalf choosing him. Bilbo tries to explain that Thorin said he was free to choose his share of the treasure. Thorin threatens to kill Bilbo- the hobbit is terrified by Thorin's anger. Bard demands Thorin cease- if he wants to receive the Arkenstone then he must release Bilbo unhurt. Were it not for the brave deeds of the hobbit then Smaug would still be alive. Thorin scornfully lets Bilbo go, calling him traitor as he climbs down to Bard. Thorin never wishes to see Bilbo again. As he lowers himself down the rope, Bilbo sees the sad faces of Balin and Bombur looking down at him leaving.

Bard restates that the Arkenstone will be returned when a fourteenth share of the treasure is delivered. Thorin reluctantly agrees to these terms. His dwarves will prepare the 'thieves' their payment for collection the next day.

Chapter 16: The Battle of the Five Armies

The next day Dain and his troops arrives at Erebor and approach the valley. Bard and Thranduil are ready for his coming and have positioned archers on the ridge above, while spearmen guard the gate. Dain is not deterred, and his dwarves go on the attack towards the gate. The dwarves break into a charge. The elves draw their bows, ready for Thranduil's command to release. Just before the Elven King gives the order to fire, Bilbo shouts excitedly, pointing

to a grey rider that appears galloping between the two forces. The rider shouts 'Halt!' with a booming voice that echoes across the valley. The dwarves stop and the elves lower their bows. Gandalf has returned! The wizard calls everyone to look to the north. The black smoke of a gigantic orc host can be seen marching on Erebor. They have come for the treasure. Gandalf calls the commanders together.

Gandalf, Dain, Thranduil and Bard meet in the elven king's camp. Bilbo joins them. Dain demands to know why the mountain is under siege after the kingdom has been restored. Bard tells him of the destruction of Esgaroth and Thorin's refusal to provide recompense. Dain begins to argue they have stolen the Arkenstone when Gandalf interrupts- they must unite against the orc host or all will perish. Gandalf puts forward a plan where they will draw the orcs into the valley. The elven archers will take up position high on the spurs of the mountain and the dwarves will take the centre ground. Thranduil protests that the dwarves will retreat into the mountain leaving the elves and men to face the orcs. Gandalf insists the Lakemen spearmen will take position at the gate, and the wizard himself will join them. Dain and Thranduil eye each other coldly, but they agree to the plan and leave to organise their troops.

The orc host quickly advances, moving into the valley. Bilbo stands with Gandalf and Bard, nervously watching the enemy approach. Orc spearmen lead the charge. Elven arrows rain down on them. The orcs charge into centre at the dwarves. The dwarves fight fiercely and beat them back. It appears the orcs will be contained.

Then the warg riders come: orcs riding giant wolves. They crash into the dwarves throwing them back. The Lakemen in the centre join the fray to prevent the retreat. Goblins appear on the spurs of the mountain outflanking the elves and forcing them onto lower ground. Thranduil joins the fighting wielding Orcrist to hold the line.

The orc king Bolg charges with his bodyguard of giant troll like orcs. They break the centre, killing at will. The dwarves and Lakemen are thrown back, trapped against the mountainside. Gandalf and Bard are forced into the fray, and Bilbo draws his sword to join the terrible battle.

The allies find themselves forced against the main gate, desperately trying to hold off the orc onslaught. Then the gate begins to open. The orcs shout victory, thinking the allies are retreating into the mountain. But from the gate is heard a great war-cry. Out charges Thorin and his dwarves- armed to the hilt with great axes and spears, shining mail of silver and golden helms. Thorin bellows a great rallying call for elves, men and dwarves to come to him. Thorin's dwarves charge straight for Bolg; throwing-axes fly into his bodyguard. They slay the orcs and wargs. Thorin throws himself at Bolg. The great orc's spear pierces Thorin's flank. He fights on, slaying Bolg with his

axe, and the orcs are broken, and fall back. The elves then charge down from the spurs of the mountain, and the orc retreat becomes a rout, as they fly from the charging dwarves and elves.

Chapter 17: The Funeral of Thorin

Bilbo rests on a rock and sadly surveys the battlefield. Victory belongs to the allies but the cost has been great. Fallen dwarves, elves and men litter the valley. Gandalf comes, and he is relieved to find Bilbo unhurt. Thorin wishes to see the hobbit: he must come quickly as the king is grievously wounded. They go to Thorin's dwarves. Several dwarves kneel grieving by the bodies of Kili and Fili who have been killed in the fighting. Tears come to Bilbo's eyes.

Dain and the other dwarves stand in a circle around the Thorin, who is close to death. Thorin is speaking to his cousin Dain. He wishes his kingdom to pass into Dain's hands. Dain came to Thorin's aid when called and fought valiantly. May his rule see the mountain and the valley become green and fair once again. Thorin then asks for Bilbo, and the hobbit comes to him. Thorin says he is now going to a place where gold and silver are of little worth. He wishes to part in friendship with Bilbo, and take back his words at the gate. Thorin thanks the hobbit for his great help in restoring his kingdom and honour. Tears stream from Bilbo's eyes. Bilbo thanks Thorin for letting him share in his great adventure, it was more than any hobbit deserves. The dwarf replies there is more good in Bilbo than he knows. Thorin's eyes close.

Gandalf comforts Bilbo. Bilbo sobs- he tried to prevent a battle. They won the treasure, but Thorin, Kili and Fili have not lived to see it. Gandalf says that no blame is on Bilbo, he has done well, better than Gandalf had hoped. No one can foresee all the twists of fate; even Gandalf did not know of the goblin army's advance, until it was nearly too late.

Thranduil and Bard come to the dwarves, and they grieve at the news of Thorin's death. Dain says there must be a great funeral, with dwarves, elves and men present, just as they fought and fell together on the battlefield.

Thorin's funeral is held in the great hall of Erebor. Bard lays the Arkenstone on Thorin's breast, wishing that it brings good fortune to all his folk, and lies there until the mountain falls. Thranduil lays Orcrist upon Thorin's tomb, saying it was never wielded by a mightier hand. He vows that the friendship of Mirkwood and Erebor will long endure.

Dain asks if Bilbo still wishes his share of the treasure to go to Bard, and Bilbo replies that he does. Dain orders that the agreement of the dead will be kept. Thorin has his Arkenstone and a thirteenth of the treasure will go to Bard of the Lakemen. Bard pledges the money will be used for the people of Esgaroth and rebuilding the town of Dale. Dain then orders that the Emeralds of Girion will be given to the elves in return for their help defending the

mountain. Thranduil is grateful, and says Dain shall be a worthy king. Bard speaks to Bilbo- Bilbo must accept some gift from Bard in tribute for his great service. Bilbo modestly says that a small chest of gold and one of silver would be all he can manage.

Chapter 18: Return to the Shire

Bilbo speaks to Gandalf. He says that their adventure has been great and terrible, and now he longs for home. All in good time, Gandalf assures. They will return westwards when the Elven King's host departs.

Bilbo says a fond farewell to all the dwarves. The dwarves bow low in honour of Bilbo, and look kindly on the hobbit, tears coming to a few eyes. Balin says he must return to Erebor when the valley is green and fair once again and the feast will be splendid. In return Bilbo invites the dwarves to tea at Bag End anytime they are near the Shire. Bilbo then speaks a sad farewell to Kili, Fili and Thorin; and he departs with Gandalf, Bard and the elven host.

The march is relaxed and merry, with the elves in good voice now that the dragon had gone and the goblins are too few to trouble them for many years. In time Bilbo arrives with Gandalf back home in the Shire. Bilbo sees in the distance his very own hill. A verse comes to him-

“The road goes ever ever on,
Under cloud and under star,
Yet feet that wandering have gone,
Turn at last to home afar.
Eyes that fire and sword have seen,
And horror in the halls of stone,
Turn at last on meadows green
And trees and hills they long have known.”

Gandalf laughs- Bilbo is not the hobbit he once was! Bilbo joins in his laughter, and they ride on homewards.

End of Film