

GANDALF (*as DORI leaves*). And Ori.

(*DWARF enters, bowing as he walks past.*)

ORI. At your service. Dining room?

BILBO (*bowing*). That way.

GANDALF (*as ORI leaves*). And Nori.

(*DWARF enters, bowing as he walks past.*)

NORI. At your—

BILBO (*bowing*). That way.

GANDALF. And Fili. And Kili.

(*Each DWARF enters, bowing as he says "At your—" and BILBO bows saying "That way" as GANDALF continues.*)

GANDALF. And most specially let me introduce Master Thorin Oakenshield.

(*THORIN is dressed in a more military manner than the rest, with some regalia of rank. He bows slightly.*)

THORIN. At your service, Mister Baggins.

BILBO. Yes yes, that way.

THORIN. What is that way?

BILBO. The dining room.

THORIN. In good time, Mister Baggins. Gandalf and I have much to discuss first. May we sit here while you prepare the necessities for the rest?

GANDALF. That will be fine.

BILBO. Well, uh, I imagine that will be...what do you mean by necessities?

(*Reenter BOMBUR from dining room.*)

BOMBUR. Pardon me, Mister Baggins, but we have come a long way and are rather famished, if you don't mind.

BILBO. Yes, of course; ummm...what would you like?

BOMBUR. Oh, nothing special, whatever you have on hand. Just some pork pie, perhaps, and salad.

BIFUR (*poking his head in*). Raspberry jam and apple tarts for me.

GLOIN (*poking his head in*). Mince pie and cheese, if y' got 'em.

BALIN (*poking his head in*). Cold chicken and pickles, some tea, and ale, of course. That should do it.

THORIN. Perhaps you could throw on a few eggs, if you please.

BILBO. Yes, well, certainly, of course, um. This may take a little bit of a while, seeing as there are...er...several of you...

BALIN. Well, of course, but we'll lend a hand, won't we?

GLOIN. Of course!

BOFUR. Of course!

BOMBUR. I suppose.

BALIN. Onward, gentlemen! Into the kitchen and out with the finest china! (*DWARVES exeunt; BILBO follows quickly.*)

BILBO. Just a moment! You don't need to—CAREFULLY!! (*He's gone. Noise of clattering dishes offstage. THORIN looks after BILBO skeptically.*)

THORIN. And this is your Mister Baggins?

GANDALF. It is.

THORIN. Looks more like a grocer than a burglar to me. Soft as the mud of this Shire he lives in.

GANDALF. He has gotten a little thick round the middle, I grant you. But there's more about him than meets the eye.

THORIN. There would have to be. What meets the eye is pathetic.

*(BILBO enters, panting, carrying stacks of foodstuffs.)*

BILBO. Well, your friends certainly have healthy appetites, Gandalf, all twelve. If you include Master Oakenshield, thirteen—

THORIN. DON'T! say that number, Mister Baggins.

BILBO *(taken aback)*. Sorry.

THORIN. Terrible luck. I would think someone in your profession would know better.

BILBO. My profession?

*(Enter GLOIN.)*

GLOIN. Beg your pardon, Mister Baggins, but we've run flat out of biscuits, and the bread is too soft to dip in the rare-bit. Is there any...?

BILBO *(dourly, going off with him)*. Yes, of course, be glad to, be happy to, nothing would please me more...

THORIN. More than meets the eye indeed. I'm still blind to whatever you see in this rabbit.

GANDALF. Hobbit. Let's look at the map, shall we?

THORIN. Yes. *(While plates and dishes clatter offstage, with shouts and laughter of the DWARVES, GANDALF draws out a rolled piece of fabric; hooks it on a wall somewhere, and unrolls a HUGE hand-scrawled map, with runes, dragons, rivers, directions, and a large mountain on it.)*

GANDALF. As I read it, there is a secret door to the side, as well as the main entrance. That side door will be your best entry.

THORIN. And why should I use a secret door into my own home?

GANDALF. To avoid getting eaten, perhaps, or burnt to a cinder?

THORIN. There are worse things than death.

GANDALF. True: and one of them is foolish pride.

*(Enter BILBO, sticking his head around from behind the huge map; he is holding a stack of dirty dishes now, looks with amazement at the map.)*

BILBO. What's all this?

THORIN. Mister Baggins: would you please set aside that plateware and attend to us. We've little time, and much business.

BILBO. Why, yes. I suppose. Of course. *(Sets down plates, stands listening to them. THORIN clears throat and proceeds.)*

THORIN. Mister Baggins, I am a plain straightforward dealer: I don't bandy words, I'll come straight to the point.

BILBO. Fine with me.

THORIN. What you see here is a map of the Kingdom of Erebor, come to be known as the Lonely Mountain. It is the ancestral kingdom of my people. *(Lights dim: the map becomes a screen on which shadow-figures enact this story.)* The Mountain is full of huge and beautiful chambers and halls, mined and built and covered with jewels and fine metals by the skill of my fathers and grandfathers. My grandfather Thrór was King Under the Mountain, and my father Thráin was King after him; but in my father's