

"In a hole in the ground there lived a hobbit."

Reading Notes

Bilbo Baggins	well-to-do hobbit living at The Hill in Hobbiton
The Bagginses	hobbit family respected for their wealth and sensibleness
hobbits	little people, half the height of humans, who relish comfort
The Took	hobbit family living across The Water; known for adventures
Gandalf	wizard who knew Bilbo's grandfather, the Old Took
dwarves	people of short, stout stature, with beards and a love of treasure
Thorin	important dwarf leading a band of twelve other dwarves
Smaug	dragon who stole the dwarves' home and treasure

Vocabulary

Write the meaning of each bold word or phrase.

1. Mr. Baggins was not quite so **prosy** as he liked to believe adj. commonplace, dull
2. who was feeling positively **flummoxed** adj. bewildered, confused
3. the **depredations** of dragons n. plunderings
4. Thorin with his feet on the **fender** n. fireplace screen
5. this most excellent and **audacious*** hobbit adj. fearlessly bold, fearless
6. The **estimable** Mr. Baggins adj. worthy of esteem
7. **singed** beards adj. scorched; surface-burned

*Look up "audacious" in the dictionary and write out the complete definition, the alternate forms, and 2-3 synonyms. adj. 1. willing to take bold risks; daring 2. not showing due respect

alternate forms: audaciously - adv. audaciousness - n. audacity - n.

synonyms: 1. reckless, adventurous, fearless, risky 2. defiant, arrogant, rude, impudent

Comprehension Questions

Answer the following in complete sentences.

1. The Took are richer than the Bagginses, but not as respectable. Why? One of the Took ancestors is said to have taken a fairy wife, and they are known for going on adventures.
2. What are the dwarves planning to do? The dwarves plan to win back their home and gold from the dragon Smaug.

3. Gandalf says Bilbo is “as fierce as a dragon in a pinch.” Why does Gandalf say this? _____
Gandalf is trying to assure the dwarves that Bilbo will be of use to them, and he also knows more of Bilbo’s abilities than Bilbo does.
4. Why does Gandalf choose Bilbo? _____ Gandalf trusts in Bilbo’s Tookish qualities. (And Bilbo makes a lucky fourteen to add to the dwarves’ thirteen.)
5. Does Thorin have faith in Bilbo? How can you tell? _____ Thorin doesn’t have faith in Bilbo. He seems to guess that Bilbo is not a real burglar and that he is timid of adventures. He catches Bilbo speaking as if he were not going on the journey.

Quotations

“I am looking for someone to share in an adventure that I am arranging, and it’s very difficult to find anyone.”

Who said this? _____ Gandalf

“We are plain quiet folk and I have no use for adventures. Nasty disturbing uncomfortable things! Make you late for dinner!”

Who said this? _____ Bilbo

“He looks more like a grocer than a burglar!”

Who said this? _____ Gloin

“Tell me what you want done, and I will try it, if I have to walk from here to the East of East and fight the wild Were-worms in the Last Desert.”

Who said this? _____ Bilbo

Discussion Questions

1. Explain why the second and fourth quotations show us two different sides of the speaker.
2. From where have the dwarves first come? Why did they move south?
3. Describe the glory days of the dwarves and their relationship with the men of Dale.
4. Explain the decline in the work and prestige of the dwarves as they changed from craftsmen to blacksmiths to coal miners.

Enrichment

1. Read Thorin’s story aloud in class (beginning with “O very well,” and ending with “the rightful heir”). Write a one-paragraph summary of the history of the dwarves.
2. Begin filling in the Book Notes in the Appendix.

The Dwarves' Song

1

Far over the misty mountains cold
To dungeons deep and caverns old,
We must away ere break of day,
To seek the pale enchanted gold.

2

The dwarves of yore made mighty spells,
While hammers fell like ringing bells
In places deep, where dark things sleep,
In hollow halls beneath the fells.

3

For ancient king and elvish lord
There many a gleaming golden hoard
They shaped and wrought, and light they caught
To hide in gems on hilt of sword.

4

On silver necklaces they strung
The flowering stars, on crowns they hung
The dragon-fire, in twisted wire
They meshed the light of moon and sun.

5

Far over the misty mountains cold
To dungeons deep and caverns old,
We must away ere break of day,
To claim our long-forgotten gold.

6

Goblets they carved there for themselves
And harps of gold; where no man delves
There lay they long, and many a song
Was sung unheard by men or elves.

7

The pines were roaring on the height,
The winds were moaning in the night.
The fire was red, it flaming spread;
The trees like torches blazed with light.

8

The bells were ringing in the dale
And men looked up with faces pale;
Then dragon's ire more fierce than fire
Laid low their towers and houses frail.

9

The mountain smoked beneath the moon;
The dwarves, they heard the tramp of doom.
They fled their hall to dying fall
Beneath his feet, beneath the moon.

10

Far over the misty mountains grim
To dungeons deep and caverns dim,
We must away ere break of day,
To win our harps and gold from him!

Vocabulary

Write the meaning of each bold word or phrase.

1. We must away **ere** break of day _____ before _____
2. The dwarves of **yore** _____ times long past _____
3. In hollow halls beneath the **fells** _____ mountains or hills _____
4. here many a gleaming golden **hoard** _____ hidden funds _____
5. They shaped and **wrought** _____ put together; worked _____
6. To hide in gems on **hilt** of sword _____ handle _____

Comprehension Questions

Answer the following in complete sentences.

1. What were the dwarves' mighty spells? The spells were the dwarves' craft of making beautiful things from precious metals and gems, the beauty of which casts spells over men and other races.

2. Paraphrase: "... and light they caught / to hide in gems on hilt of sword." The dwarves' magic method of cutting and setting gems to make them catch light and reflect it makes the gems and gold seem to capture light.

3. What item did the "dwarves of yore" make, out of what materials, and for whom? They made swords and other things from precious metals and gems for ancient kings and elvish lords.

4. Rewrite verses 1-3 in prose. Example: At the break of day we must go to seek pale enchanted gold far over the cold misty mountains to deep dungeons and old caverns. In times long past the dwarves made mighty spells in hollow halls beneath the hills. They hammered in deep places where dark things sleep. There they shaped and wrought gold for ancient kings and elvish lords, and they cut and fashioned gems on the hilts of swords.

