***The Hobbit***

***Chapter 2- Roast Mutton***

***Summary***

* Bilbo oversleeps the next morning and finds that the dwarves have left by the time he gets out of bed.
* He's both relieved and disappointed – no more adventures for him!
* But then Gandalf turns up and points out a note Bilbo missed.
* The note gives Bilbo Thorin's "grateful acceptance" for his offer of "professional assistance" (2.8).
* Bilbo rushes to meet Thorin & Co. at a local inn at 11:00. And they're off to steal Smaug's treasure!
* As Bilbo and the dwarves ride off on their ponies, they hit a patch of bad weather.
* Bilbo heartily misses home. This adventure business is cold, wet, and uncomfortable!
* One night, the dwarves are feeling thoroughly bad-tempered and everyone is damp.
* Gandalf has also mysteriously disappeared.
* They notice a light flickering in the forest, and they send their burglar out to investigate.
* Bilbo finds three giant trolls sitting and roasting meat over the fire.
* The trolls are named Bert, Tom, and William.
* Bilbo wants to show the dwarves that he's worth something, so he tries to pick William's pocket.
* But William has a magic wallet that speaks up when Bilbo attempts to steals it.
* So the trolls capture Bilbo.
* They aren't hungry, though, so they don't eat him right away.
* They fall to arguing about what they should do with Bilbo.
* Of course, just then, two of the dwarves – Bifur and Bofur – come to the fire to check out what's going on.
* The trolls catch the two dwarves – and every dwarf who comes after them – in sacks.
* Bilbo takes advantage of the ruckus to get clear of the trolls.
* So, by the end, all the dwarves are tied up in sacks and Bilbo is crouching in the forest shadows wondering what to do.
* The trolls are "arguing whether they should roast them slowly, or mince them fine and boil them, or just sit on them one by one and squash them into jelly" (2.75) – not an ideal situation for the dwarves, to be sure.
* As the trolls argue, a mysterious voice keeps egging them on.
* Sometimes it sounds like William and sometimes it sounds like Tom. Who could it be?!
* The voice finally tells the trolls, "Dawn take you all, and be stone to you!" (2.101).
* It's Gandalf!
* He got back to the party just in time to keep the trolls arguing until the sun came up.
* So Gandalf frees the dwarves from their sacks and they all go to the trolls' cave.
* Inside the cave is lots of treasure, which they bury near the road for later.
* Gandalf and Thorin pick up two beautiful swords, and Bilbo takes a knife of the same make.
* All the dwarves grab the trolls' bread and cheese and beer for the road.

Gandalf tells the dwarves and Bilbo that they should head to Rivendell, the house of Elrond.

***Brief Summary:***

[Bilbo Baggins](https://www.coursehero.com/lit/The-Hobbit/character-analysis/#Bilbo_Baggins)'s fierceness and desire for adventure are tested as the cold, wet, and hungry party searches for a meal and a place to sleep. Bilbo is sent to explore a warm light shining through the woods and comes upon three man-eating trolls cooking their mutton. Bilbo knows he has three choices: warn his friends, kill the trolls, or steal from them. He chooses to steal from the trolls, but he is instantly caught. His dwarf friends become worried about him and end up getting caught by the trolls. The trolls get in a long argument about what to do with the dwarves: roast them, boil them, or smash them. They argue for so long that they are eventually turned to stone by the light of dawn.

[Tolkien](https://www.coursehero.com/lit/The-Hobbit/author/) seems to take us back to the beginning as Bilbo wakes to find his house a mess, but the dwarves are gone. Could Bilbo be so fortunate as to have his life go back to normal? But alas, no. [Gandalf](https://www.coursehero.com/lit/The-Hobbit/character-analysis/#Gandalf) shows up and rushes Bilbo out the door to his new adventure before he can pack a thing. This step in the hero's journey (crossing the first threshold) begins easily enough as the group crosses out of the Shire. However, as Bilbo starts to get comfortable and gain his equilibrium, he and the group face their first challenge, and the step of the road of trials begins. Their group's pack pony runs off while crossing the stream, taking all of their food with it.

Faced with his first task as the group's burglar, Bilbo is frightened and reluctant to approach the trolls. Eventually the prospective shame of failure overcomes his fear, and the courage of his Tookish side begins to surface. He soon decides that picking one of the trolls' pockets should be the easiest challenge, and, darting forward, he plunges his hand into the pocket of one of the trolls. Unfortunately, while he manages to steal the troll's purse, the purse yells an alarm and gives Bilbo away. Bilbo is unable to warn the others, and they all end up in bags as troll food.

The dwarves' sense of loyalty is on display as they come to Bilbo's aid even though they didn't get a warning from him. When they are finally safe and sound, Bilbo has clearly made some progress from a frightened and boring hobbit, but he hasn't earned any respect from his fellow adventurers.

Tolkien uses situational irony in this chapter, as the dwarves show no respect for Bilbo although they themselves display neither bravery nor wit when faced with the danger of the trolls. In another instance of situational irony, the dwarves, who are known as great blacksmiths, do not bring any weapons on a dangerous journey.

It becomes apparent that both dwarves and hobbits are quite unprepared for adventure. Tolkien doesn't rose-tint the trolls' dark side, but he does paint a very normal, comfortable scene with the comical trolls mingling around a warm fire.

Only after the trolls are turned to stone does Tolkien masterfully show what trolls are truly capable of. For Tolkien it was important that evil destroys evil. In this chapter we see evidence of this. It isn't Gandalf who turns the trolls into stone, nor is he the reason for them staying out in the daylight too long. They lose track of time because they are fighting with one another over how to cook the dwarves. It is their own greed that causes them to forget one essential fact: they can't survive in sunlight. Equally important to this chapter are the swords that the dwarves find in the trolls' abode. Historically and fictionally, swords have played a big part in the hero's quest, and they will help propel this story.

***Brief Analysis:***

Bilbo wakes up rather late the morning after Gandalf’s visit. He is surprised—and a little relieved—to see that the dwarves have left without him. He is just sitting down to a quiet breakfast when Gandalf enters and rushes him off to the Green Dragon Inn, in Bywater, where Thorin and the rest of the dwarves have been waiting to begin their journey. As they head east on the main road, Bilbo sulks at having to leave without finishing his second breakfast or making proper preparations. It begins to rain. By the time dusk approaches, the whole company is tired, hungry, ready to camp, and annoyed at Gandalf’s mysterious disappearance earlier in the day.

Suddenly they see what looks like the light of a fire in the distance. They move closer to investigate it, and Bilbo is sent ahead in his first official task as burglar. As he approaches a clearing in the woods, Bilbo sees three huge trolls sitting around a fire, eating mutton. Bilbo tries to make off with one of the trolls’ money purses, but they hear the noise and grab him. Trolls will eat just about anything, but they are also short-tempered and dull-witted. They proceed to fight about how to interrogate Bilbo.

The commotion attracts the dwarves, who come to the clearing one at a time. The trolls stop fighting just long enough to hide in the trees and throw a sack over each approaching dwarf. Soon, they have everyone tied up except Bilbo, whom they’ve forgotten. The trolls decide to cook the dwarves immediately, but then a voice, which sounds like one of the trolls, starts an argument, and the three trolls start fighting again. This fighting goes on for quite some time until the trolls notice that it is almost dawn. The sun peeks over the horizon and the trolls all freeze—sunlight turns trolls to stone.

Gandalf then steps triumphantly into the clearing. He had been throwing his voice to mislead the dwarves and to keep the trolls arguing until morning. He and Bilbo release the dwarves, who are shaken but otherwise unharmed. Searching nearby, they find the trolls’ cave and a number of well-wrought weapons, which they take as payment for their pains.

***Critical Study:***

Bilbo Baggins awakes late the next morning to find that the dwarves are gone. Gandalf appears and shows him a note the dwarves left, agreeing to give him one-fourteenth of the profits if he accompanies them to reclaim their treasure. Bilbo runs to meet the dwarves, forgetting his handkerchief.

Bilbo and the dwarves set off on ponies loaded with provisions; Gandalf soon joins them. They ride first through friendly hobbit-lands, but the journey becomes unpleasant by the end of May, as they ride far into the uninhabited Lone-lands. Riding in the rain, Bilbo wishes he were back at home. Gandalf disappears, and one of their loaded ponies runs away, leaving them with little food.

The hungry group is trying to make camp in the wet forest when they see a light and send Bilbo to investigate. He finds three trolls — Bert, Tom, and William — around a fire, roasting mutton and complaining of having no men to eat. Bilbo, trying to act like a burglar, is caught trying to pick William's pocket. The trolls disagree about what to do with Bilbo and are fighting among themselves when Balin enters their camp. They capture him and put him into a sack, and then do the same to the rest of the dwarves who come looking for Bilbo. Bilbo hides in the top of a bush.

Gandalf returns and tricks the trolls into staying out past dawn and they turn to stone, because trolls must be underground during the day. Gandalf and Bilbo free the dwarves. They find the trolls' secret cave and help themselves to food, clothes, swords, and gold coins, and then they go to sleep.

The next morning, they load their ponies. They bury the gold for safekeeping and continue to travel east. Gandalf tells Thorin that he had been scouting ahead when he heard in Rivendell that trolls were in the area and he knew he was wanted back. He warns Thorin to take care.

Bilbo begins this important journey without the sense of purpose that the dwarves have. He awakens late and the fact that the dwarves have already left allows him to second guess the commitment he made the night before and revert to his comfort-loving hobbit ways. Bilbo's worry that he has forgotten his handkerchief is a last remnant of his hobbit life; after he begins his journey with the dwarves, such concerns seem irrelevant. It is significant that the dwarves agree to give Bilbo a share of the treasure they will reclaim, because greed is a dwarvish trait and they have difficulty sharing.

Gandalf continues as a tutelary figure in this chapter. His role is to impart wisdom, directing Bilbo to realize his potential on this journey. He drives Bilbo into honoring his agreement with the dwarves despite his misgivings. Gandalf shows up unexpectedly at Bilbo's house and disappears later in the chapter. He continues throughout the journey to appear and disappear almost without warning, an indication of his powers.

You begin to get some sense of the geography of the journey to the Lonely Mountain as the group passes through hobbit-lands and Lone-lands. As they travel east and approach the Lonely Mountain, the way becomes increasingly difficult and the landscape becomes bleaker and less familiar.

The group begins, in this chapter, to experience the discomforts that will grow into real perils and trials by which they are tested. Rain, cold, and hunger are typical of these discomforts. Bilbo is sent into the group of trolls to investigate, foreshadowing the many times he will investigate — and be pushed beyond his customary limits — on the journey, and his attempt to steal from William's pocket is an effort to justify his role of burglar. Likewise, the trolls' capture of the dwarves foreshadows several instances of the dwarves victimization at the hands of their enemies; in future instances, Bilbo or Gandalf continue to rescue them. Gandalf's trickery of the trolls is typical of his dealing with enemies: Gandalf does not use violence nearly as often as he outwits his opponents.

The trolls are another group of fantastical creatures, like the hobbits or dwarves, but far more threatening. The fact that they turn into stone in the daylight adds to the fantasy quality of the story. Bilbo and the dwarves' discovery of food, clothing, weapons, and gold in their cave is fortuitous, and the weapons soon assume greater meaning.

***Summary and analysis Part by Part:***

***Summary Part 1:***

[Bilbo](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-hobbit/characters/bilbo-baggins) jumps out of bed in the morning and goes into his kitchen, where he sees the huge number of plates and glasses the dwarves used last night. This sight depresses him, since he can’t easily forget that the dwarves were in his home. [Gandalf](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-hobbit/characters/gandalf) greets him, and points to a note the dwarves have left him. The note says that Bilbo will act as a burglar for the dwarves, that in return he will receive one-fourteenth of the treasure, and that he must meet them at the Green Dragon Tavern at eleven o’clock sharp, which Bilbo realizes is in only ten minutes. Bilbo protests, but Gandalf urges him to hurry there, and he leaves his home without a hat, coat, or walking stick.

***Analysis Part 1:***

Bilbo’s dual nature – his love of comfort alongside his yearning for adventure – are again on display here. It is interesting that what he initially wishes is not dislike of the dwarves or adventure but a wish to forget all about it. It is as if his “domestic side” is seeking to repress his “adventurous side. Yet all it takes is a little push from Gandalf and he is off and running. The fact that he forgets his hat and cloak symbolizes the other, less tangible baggage he’s leaving behind—his comfort, his peacefulness, his safety, etc.

***Summary Part 2:***

At the Green Dragon, the dwarves greet [Bilbo](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-hobbit/characters/bilbo-baggins), and tell him that they must be going and that he can borrow a hat and coat. The group, which includes [Gandalf](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-hobbit/characters/gandalf) riding on a white horse, leaves the hobbit-lands in which Bilbo lives, and soon ventures into areas where the people speak strange languages, and the buildings look sinister. Bilbo wishes, for not the last time, that he were at home.

***Analysis Part 2:***

The physical changes in the landscape that accompany the group’s traveling reflect Bilbo’s state of mind: a gloomy landscape signals a gloomy mind. This establishes a pattern that will continue throughout The Hobbit, whereby the external environment matches the characters’ internal thoughts and feelings.

***Summary Part 3:***

While the group is traveling through the wilderness, it begins to rain, and the group notices that [Gandalf](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-hobbit/characters/gandalf) is missing. The dwarves are unable to make fire, and a horse runs away, leaving them with little food for the evening. They see a faint light in the distance, and decide to send [Bilbo](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-hobbit/characters/bilbo-baggins) to investigate what it is, giving him a complicated signaling system if he’s in danger. Bilbo finds that the source of the light is a campfire, around which sit three huge [trolls](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-hobbit/characters), Tom, Bert, and William, complaining about eating the same meal, mutton, night after night. Bilbo, who knows from reading various books that the trolls are probably carrying valuable things in their pockets, picks Williams’s pocket, thinking excitedly that this is the beginning of his career as a burglar. Unfortunately, William’s enchanted purse lets out a yell when Bilbo holds it, and William captures Bilbo.

***Analysis Part 3:***

Gandalf disappears for the first, but not the last time in the novel. It’s never explicitly clear if Gandalf vanishes accidentally, or deliberately. In either event, the encounter with the trolls is important because during it, Bilbo shows his first signs of enjoying burglary, and enjoying his adventures. He depends upon knowledge he’s learned in books—trolls have lots of treasure. This suggests that Bilbo is better prepared for his journey than he lets on, though it also signals that his knowledge is entirely of the book-learning kind and not at all from experience. And, indeed, inexperienced as he is, Bilbo makes a mistake and gets captured.

***Summary Part 4:***

The [trolls](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-hobbit/characters) ask [Bilbo](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-hobbit/characters/bilbo-baggins) if there are others near their fire; Bilbo says yes at first, then no. William, who’s already eaten supper, wants to let Bilbo go, but the other two trolls want to eat him. The trolls begin to fight, and Bilbo is able to slip away in the confusion. Meanwhile, the dwarves have begun to approach the fire. When the trolls see the dwarves, they capture all of them and put them in sacks, while Bilbo hides nearby, afraid to move.

***Analysis Part 4:***

Bilbo continues to stumble over his words, changing his statement about whether he is alone in a painfully obvious way. For now, the dangers of the quest are relatively small—one of the trolls even wants to let Bilbo go. Even at this early point, though, Bilbo shows signs of being an adept burglar and adventurer: his small size allows him to escape from the trolls in their confusion. Yet Bilbo then does nothing to help the captured dwarves, instead he is so scared that he just hides.

***Summary part 5:***

While the three [trolls](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-hobbit/characters) are deciding how to kill and eat the dwarves, a mysterious stranger’s voice is heard. The stranger mimics the voices of the three trolls, causing an argument that goes on for so long that the sun rises, turning the trolls to stone instantly. The stranger, who turns out to be [Gandalf,](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-hobbit/characters/gandalf) frees the dwarves from their sacks, and [Bilbo](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-hobbit/characters/bilbo-baggins) comes out of his hiding place. Gandalf suggests that they explore the trolls’ underground treasure room, and Bilbo produces a key he’s found on the ground while he was hiding. Gandalf uses the key to open the treasure room, where Gandalf and [Thorin](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-hobbit/characters/thorin-oakenshield) find two excellent swords, and Bilbo finds a knife that, while small for a troll, is large enough to serve as his sword.

***Analysis Part 5:***

No small part of Gandalf’s power is verbal —- without using any force, he defeats the trolls, simply by saying the right things at the right time in the right way. Bilbo proves himself to be a decent burglar and a lucky finder-of-things, finding the key to the trolls’ treasure, which proves to be very valuable. Bilbo also takes an important step in establishing his identity when he chooses a weapon for himself: this symbolizes the physical might he’ll have to learn later on, and the increased freedom and maturity he’s enjoying.

***Summary Part 6:***[Thorin](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-hobbit/characters/thorin-oakenshield) asks [Gandalf](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-hobbit/characters/gandalf) how he became separated from the rest of the group. Gandalf says that he had ridden ahead to Rivendell to inquire about provisions and lodgings for the dwarves, but when he looked behind him he noticed that the dwarves weren’t there. He tells Thorin that he must be more careful in the future.

***Analysis Part 6:***Gandalf’s explanation isn’t entirely convincing—though he claims he lost sight of the dwarves, it’s entirely possible that he deliberately left them and Bilbo. If this is the case, it’s likely that Gandalf left Bilbo on his own to encourage him to develop skills as a burglar—it’s as if he threw Bilbo in the deep end of the pool to teach him to swim.