***The Hobbit***

***Chapter 3- A Short Rest***

***Summary***

* Things are starting to get more classically adventure-y: "They camped under the stars, and their horses had more to eat than they had, for there was plenty of grass, but there was not much in their bags" (3.1).
* At last, a large mountain comes into view.
* Bilbo has never seen anything so big before, but it's only the first of the Misty Mountains.
* They have to get over or under this mountain range before coming close to the Lonely Mountain where Smaug is waiting.
* Before they reach the Misty Mountains, they rest briefly in Rivendell.
* Rivendell is a secret valley lined with pine forest and filled with elves.
* The dwarves aren't totally happy to be hanging with elves because the two groups don't get along that well.
* But Bilbo and Gandalf have a grand old time.
* The head of the Last Homely House in Rivendell is Elrond, who is "as noble and as fair in face as an elf-lord, as strong as a warrior, as wise as a wizard, as venerable as a king of dwarves and as kind as summer" (3.28). So, he's pretty great, we guess.
* He's the one who tells Gandalf and Thorin that their swords are elvish ones dating back to the Goblin-wars.
* Thorin shows Elrond his map of the Lonely Mountain.
* The moon happens to be shining on the map in just the right way to expose moon-letters, special secret runes that say, "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" (3.39).
* Durin is Thorin's first ancestor, and his Day is the first day of the dwarves' new year.
* But there's a problem: no one can calculate exactly when Durin's Day falls anymore.
* Elrond gives Thorin his map back.
* The next morning, Bilbo, Gandalf, and the dwarves all set off for the Misty Mountains.

***Brief Summary:***

The dwarves, [Bilbo Baggins](https://www.coursehero.com/lit/The-Hobbit/character-analysis/#Bilbo_Baggins), and [Gandalf](https://www.coursehero.com/lit/The-Hobbit/character-analysis/#Gandalf) continue their journey to Lonely Mountain and come to the edge of the Wild. Gandalf suggests they try to get to the Last Homely House west of the mountains—a perilous journey through ravines on narrow, slippery paths.

Finally they make it into the secret valley of Rivendell. As they come down into the valley, their hearts are lightened, and soon they hear the singing of elves. The songs seem a bit nonsensical, but the narrator warns that it's wrong to think of the elves as foolish. The elves appear to know a lot about Bilbo, and he wants to accept their invitation for supper. The dwarves, however, want to get to their destination.

While the chapter title certainly implies only a brief stop, the group actually stays at the Last Homely House for two weeks. The master of the house, [Elrond](https://www.coursehero.com/lit/The-Hobbit/character-analysis/#Elrond), a noble, wise, and kind elf, welcomes them in and fills their bags with food and other provisions. He also is quite brilliant in reading runes; he discovers that the swords the dwarves took from the trolls are very old and made for the goblin wars. Elrond also discovers the moon letters that are on the back of the map. He tells the dwarves that there is an important clue in the New Year's Eve sunset: it will light the keyhole to the dragon's lair. Feeling rested after their two-week stay, they are off in search of their next adventure.

As the group enters Rivendell, the land of the elves, the elves start singing a song that appears quite frivolous; however, the odd thing is that some of the song lyrics mention Bilbo by name and describe the dwarves and their journey. It seems as though the elves have somehow been clued into the adventure and the group's goal or they have a gift of prophecy.

The elves seem to like to tease, especially the dwarves, but Bilbo isn't immune, as they tease him about his size and ability to fit in the keyhole at Lonely Mountain. A great deal is related about the elves indirectly. They are mystical and alluring. [Tolkien](https://www.coursehero.com/lit/The-Hobbit/author/) doesn't describe any of the elves except for [Elrond](https://www.coursehero.com/lit/The-Hobbit/character-analysis/#Elrond). He is presented as "noble" and "fair in face," and he is both a mighty warrior and as intelligent as a wizard. Most importantly the elves are kind. Within the hero's journey, the step of the road of trials often contains a meeting with the hero's allies or enemies. The High Elves of the Last Homely House are important allies for Bilbo and the rest of the group.

The adventurers are provided with everything they need, and they seem reluctant to leave the Last Homely House. It is clear to them that this might be the last pleasant experience they will have for the rest of the journey.

***Brief Analysis:***

As the company sets off the next morning, Gandalf explains that he has checked the road ahead up to the last safe stop along their way. This stop is Rivendell, a city of elves located just beyond the Edge of the Wild, near the foothills of the Misty Mountains, which the company will have to pass. As the company approaches Rivendell, a number of elves approach them and invite them back to eat and rest. During their stay, they meet Elrond, the great chief elf, who is “as strong as a warrior, as wise as a wizard, as venerable as a king of dwarves, and as kind as summer.”

Elrond can interpret the ancient runes, or markings, found on the company’s new weapons and on Thorin’s map of the mountain. The swords taken from the trolls, he tells them, are renowned goblin-killers from the great wars between the elves and the goblins. Gandalf’s sword is called Glamdring, and Thorin’s is named Orcrist. On Thorin’s map, Elrond is able to read moon-letters—writing visible only in the light of the moon in the proper phase—that describe how to find the secret entrance on the Lonely Mountain. Though they are puzzled by the message, the group is in high spirits when they depart from Rivendell. Everyone is well rested and prepared for the road ahead.

Bilbo’s impulsive bravery in the troll camp—including his burglarlike attempt to steal a money purse—begins his figurative transformation from an introvert to an adventurer. Though Bilbo is relieved when he thinks the dwarves have gone on without him, by the end of Chapter 2, he has already begun to prove Gandalf’s claim that there is more to Bilbo than meets the eye. Over the course of the novel, Bilbo gradually sheds his modern complacency and becomes more courageous and adventurous.

***Critical Study:***

Bilbo and the dwarves approach the Misty Mountains. The sense of danger increases and, once again, Bilbo thinks of home. Gandalf warns them that they are at the edge of the Wild and that they can stay with his friend Elrond in Rivendell. The way is difficult, but at last they come to the valley of Rivendell and are greeted by singing elves. Bilbo loves elves, but dwarves and elves are traditional enemies, and Bilbo's companions decline the elves' invitation to supper.

The group comes to the house of Elrond, a wise and hospitable elf. They stay for fourteen days, until midsummer, eating, singing, and telling tales. Elrond identifies their swords as having come from dragon plunder or the Goblin-wars and translates their runes: Thorin's sword is named Orcrist and Gandalf's is Glamdring.

Elrond also interprets the moon-letters on Thorin's map, letters like runes that can be seen only by the light of a moon that is the same as the one under which they were written. The letters tell the reader to stand by a stone near a thrush and the setting sun of Durin's Day will shine on a key-hole. Thorin, Durin's heir, explains that Durin's Day is the first day of the dwarves' New Year.

The next day, the dwarves leave to go over the Misty Mountains and beyond.

The first great obstacle Bilbo and the dwarves overcome is the Misty Mountains. As is the case throughout their journey, the farther from home they travel, the greater the danger. The very name of "the Wild" provides a symbolic contrast with what is familiar, tame, and domestic, and the deserted terrain represents the difficulties they begin to face so far from home. They have one last opportunity to enjoy themselves at the home of Gandalf's friend Elrond. The traditional enmity between elves and dwarves is depicted here in the dwarves' rejection of the elves' invitation and provides motivation for some of the events later in the novel.

Elrond assumes an important role in explaining to Thorin and Gandalf the significance of the swords they took from the trolls' cave. The swords have enormous power because they were used to kill Goblins, and they are associated with the dragon from whom the dwarves wish to reclaim their treasure. They are important enough to have names of their own, like the weapons belonging to legendary heroes Beowulf and Arthur. Elrond's ability to read runes also allows him to interpret the map that Thorin has inherited from his grandfather. Elrond's translation of the map provides an important foreshadowing of the dramatic discovery of the secret door in Smaug's mountain lair, much later in the novel.

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

***Summary Part 1:***

The weather improves, but the dwarves don’t sing or laugh; they’ve begun to feel the increasing danger and weight of their quest. [Bilbo](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-hobbit/characters/bilbo-baggins) sees a great mountain in the distance, which belongs to the chain called the [Misty Mountains](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-hobbit/symbols/the-misty-mountains). The group will have to cross the Misty Mountains before they arrive at their destination. He feels tired, and wishes, for not the last time, that he was back in his home.

***Analysis Part 1:***

Bilbo continues to long for home, even after he begins to improve as a burglar and an adventurer. Yet his melancholy has the unintended effect of uniting him with the rest of his group—the other dwarves are feeling sad and tired, too, and they are even further from having a home. Bilbo wants to leave the group, but ironically, this feeling makes him a part of the group.

***Summary Part 2:***

The group travels to Rivendell, a city of elves located near a river valley, where [Elrond](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-hobbit/characters) the elf-lord will give them food and lodgings. The way to Rivendell is difficult, but when the group arrives, they’re greeted by the sound of elves singing. [Gandalf](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-hobbit/characters/gandalf) eagerly greets the elves, with whom he’s friendly.

***Analysis Part 2:***

Rivendell represents the last safe place on the group’s journey for a long time. That Rivendell is a safe place is made obvious by the elves’ joyous singing. Note the elves hospitality toward their guests.

***Summary Part 3:***

The group stays in Rivendell for two largely uneventful weeks—[Bilbo](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-hobbit/characters/bilbo-baggins) would have stayed much longer. [Elrond](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-hobbit/characters), the elf-lord, examines the map that [Gandalf](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-hobbit/characters/gandalf) gave to [Thorin](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-hobbit/characters/thorin-oakenshield), and on it finds moon letters, which can only be read by the light of the moon: the message says that on Durin’s Day, the first day of the dwarves’ New Year, taking place between autumn and winter, the light of the setting sun will shine upon the keyhole to the secret passageway to [Smaug](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-hobbit/characters/smaug)’s lair. Elrond also reads the runes on the two swords Gandalf and Thorin found in the troll’s possession and reveals that they are famous goblin-killing weapons: Orcrist, the “goblin-cleaver” and Glamdring, the “Foe-hammer.”

***Analysis Part 3:***

While the dwarves stay in Rivendell for a long time, they accomplish relatively little, besides obtaining important information about how to enter the secret passageway. This suggests that peace, for all its intrinsic pleasures, isn’t terribly interesting, and suggests that adventures may be more fun, both for the people who participate in them and the readers who experience them indirectly. Meanwhile, Elrond’s mastery of language allows him to decipher the map. Also note how the fact that the swords have names give them a history and power they didn’t have as anonymous weapons. The swords, too, have a kind of birthright through their “heroic” actions. The history of the swords also establishes goblins as the “bad guys” of The Hobbit.

***Summary Part 4:***

In midsummer, the group leaves Rivendell and heads toward the [Misty Mountains](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-hobbit/symbols/the-misty-mountains). The elves sing them songs as they depart.

***Analysis Part 4:***

The elves sang their guests into Rivendell, and sing for their departure. The elves are good hosts, but their kindness again makes the comforts of the “home” of Rivendell stand in contrast to discomforts (even if exciting discomforts) of adventure, and also emphasizes how the elves have a home and the dwarves do not.