***The Hobbit***

***Chapter 4- Overhill And Underhill***

***Summary***

* They climb up and up and up, and the weather gets colder and more uncertain.
* One night, a truly terrific storm breaks out and they try to find shelter crouched against a sheer cliff.
* The dwarves send the two youngest, Fili and Kili, to scout for shelter.
* Quick as anything, Fili and Kili return with good news: there's a cave nearby!
* They promise they've explored the cave thoroughly, even though they haven't been gone nearly long enough for that to be true.
* Everyone is relieved to be in out of the rain and falling rocks and thunder, though.
* That night, Bilbo has strange dreams that prevent him from sleeping.
* This turns out to be lucky, because Bilbo is awake when a crack opens at the back of the cave.
* Bilbo yells and wakes Gandalf, who disappears in a flash of light.
* Suddenly, a bunch of goblins jump out of the crack.
* They grab Bilbo and all the dwarves and carry them into their mountain passages.
* The goblins shake their prisoners and laugh and sing threatening songs: "*Crash, crash! Crush, smash! / Hammer and tongs! Knocker and gongs! / Pound, pound, far underground! / Ho, ho! my lad*!" (4.18)
* The goblins arrive with their prisoners in a big chamber lit with fires.
* The Great Goblin sees that Thorin is carrying an elvish sword – Orcrist, the Goblin-cleaver – and *freaks out*.
* The goblins call this sword Biter, and they hate it in memory of the Goblin-wars back in the day.
* The Great Goblin calls them "Murderers and elf-friends!" (4.31) and rushes at Thorin to kill him.
* Just then, the lights go out and another sword starts to flash: it's Glamdring, the Foehammer, which the goblins call Beater. In other words, it's Gandalf's sword. Gandalf's back!
* With Gandalf's help, Bilbo, Thorin, and the other dwarves escape.
* They rush along the dark mountain halls as quickly as they can.
* But goblins are fast, quiet, and they know the way better than the dwarves do, so eventually they manage to ambush the dwarves.
* In the confusion, Bilbo knocks his head on a rock and loses consciousness.

***Brief Summary:***

The journey becomes quite difficult as the group gets caught in a mighty storm—a "thunder-battle" filled will rain, lightning, hail, and giants who are throwing boulders that destroy the forests. The two young dwarves, Fili and Kili, are sent to search for a safe place to lie down, and they quickly return. The cave Fili and Kili select appears to be perfect; in the middle of the night, however, the back wall opens, and out pour goblins who take all the ponies and capture the dwarves and [Bilbo Baggins](https://www.coursehero.com/lit/The-Hobbit/character-analysis/#Bilbo_Baggins).

Fortunately Bilbo awakes from a nightmare in time to see the ponies being led away; he yells, which gives [Gandalf](https://www.coursehero.com/lit/The-Hobbit/character-analysis/#Gandalf) enough time to escape. The Great Goblin plans to enslave or kill them, but then he comes across Thorin's sword, called Orcrist the Goblin-cleaver (which the goblins called Biter), and he becomes enraged. "Murderers!" he shouts, and at that moment, Gandalf reappears in a tower of smoke and sparks. In the chaos, Gandalf grabs the sword and kills the Great Goblin, allowing the dwarves to make off in a hurry. Dori, one of the dwarves, carries Bilbo on his back but falls. Bilbo hits his head and is knocked out.

In this chapter things get intense for [Bilbo Baggins](https://www.coursehero.com/lit/The-Hobbit/character-analysis/#Bilbo_Baggins). He sleeps fitfully, and whether he is attuned to the supernatural or it is merely a coincidence, he awakens just in time to warn [Gandalf](https://www.coursehero.com/lit/The-Hobbit/character-analysis/#Gandalf) of the goblins. The goblins represent all that is evil: they murder, enslave, and pillage. They specialize in making cruel weapons and torture devices. The road of trials continues as the group meets a major enemy in the goblins.

[Tolkien](https://www.coursehero.com/lit/The-Hobbit/author/) was very much opposed to the industrialization of rural England in his day and was very changed by World War I. Almost all of the men in his village died during the war—so one can imagine that the goblins' thirst for war and weaponry represent his dislikes.

Weapons in the world of *The Hobbit* have power beyond the strength of their blade; they are almost personified. The swords even have names and can evoke powerful emotions, as is evident when the Great Goblin becomes enraged at the sight of Orcrist, the Goblin-cleaver (also called Biter).

Shortly thereafter, Gandalf creates a chaotic diversion, and the sword continues its destiny by killing the Great Goblin. It is not certain whether the sword swung magically, but it may be that Thorin takes the opportunity to rid the world of this evil creature. This chapter again questions what force is truly behind this adventure. Who is watching from behind the scenes? What do they know? Gandalf seems to give just enough information to keep the adventure moving forward, but he also grants Bilbo enough freedom to see what the hobbit can do on his own.

***Brief Analysis:***

Bilbo and company advance upon the Misty Mountains. Thanks to Elrond’s and Gandalf’s advice, they are able to find a good pass over the mountain range among the many dead-end trails and drop-offs. Still, the climb is long and treacherous. A violent thunderstorm breaks suddenly, forcing them to find shelter. Luckily, two of the dwarves (Fili and Kili) find a cave in a side of the mountain. They bring in the ponies and make camp for the night.

In the middle of the night, Bilbo wakes with a start, just in time to see the ponies get dragged into an enormous crack that has opened in the cave wall. He yells, and out of the crack jump dozens of goblins, who tie up and carry off each member of the company except Gandalf, who was forewarned by Bilbo’s yell.

The goblins carry the dwarves and the hobbit down into the mountain to a huge chamber where the Great Goblin sits. He demands to know what the travelers are doing in his mountain. Thorin tries to explain about the storm, but one of the goblins brings forth the sword that Thorin took from the trolls, which he was carrying when captured. This sword, Orcrist, the goblin-cleaver, is well-known among the goblins.

The goblins go into a rage and the Great Goblin lunges at Thorin to eat him. Suddenly, the torches lighting the cavern go out and the great fire in the middle of the chamber throws its sparks onto the goblins. In the darkness and confusion, a great sword flashes and strikes down the Great Goblin. Then a voice guides the captives out of the cavern. It is Gandalf, who leads the dwarves through the passages and deeper into the mountain. The goblins follow quickly after them, and one of the goblins catches up to the dwarf Dori, who has been carrying Bilbo on his back. Bilbo falls off, strikes his head on the ground, and loses consciousness.

***Critical Study:***

With the advice of Elrond and under the direction of Gandalf, Bilbo and the dwarves take the right path that leads into the mountains. As they climb up out of the valley and the weather gets colder and the terrain more dangerous, Bilbo thinks of the joys of summer back at home. The dwarves are hopeful of reaching the Lonely Mountain by Durin's Day, but Gandalf is skeptical because he knows that the land they are traveling has become evil and dangerous.

The travelers are caught in a violent thunderstorm that is the work of stone-giants. With their ponies, the expedition seeks shelter and sleep in a cave. Bilbo dreams that a crack opens in the back of the cave; he wakes to find that the crack is real and that the ponies have disappeared through it and Goblins have entered. When the Goblins try to grab Gandalf, he creates a great lightning-like flash in the cave and several Goblins fall dead. The crack closes, and Gandalf disappears.

With whips, the Goblins drive Bilbo and the dwarves to the cavern of the Great Goblin. On the way, they see their ponies, who will be eaten by the Goblins. The Great Goblin interrogates Thorin and accuses the dwarves of being spies, thieves, and murderers. The Goblins discover Thorin's sword, Orcrist or Goblin-cleaver, which they recognize as an elvish sword that killed many Goblins; they know it as Biter. The Great Goblin is enraged and orders the dwarves sent off to their deaths. Suddenly, the lights go off and the sword Glamdring (also called Foe-hammer or Beater), appears by itself, and runs through the Great Goblin, killing him.

Gandalf's voice leads the dwarves and Bilbo out of the cavern. The Goblins chase after them until, finally, Thorin and Gandalf turn and, with their swords, kill several of the Goblins. Bilbo, the dwarves, and Gandalf then descend deeper into the Goblin tunnels. Goblins sneak up behind Dori, who is carrying Bilbo; Dori falls and Bilbo hits his head on a rock and loses consciousness.

In this chapter, Bilbo and the dwarves engage in their first real battle. They first choose the right path to get through the Misty Mountains, paying attention to Elrond and Gandalf. The journey, at the very least, represents the experience of learning to make one's way through life. Many times along this journey the travelers do not know what to do without following the advice or direction of others, thus emphasizing both the unfamiliar situations in which they find themselves in and the amount they still need to learn.

As Bilbo and the dwarves seek shelter from the storm, elements of fantasy enter the story again. First, the storm is the work of stone-giants and secondly, Goblins invade the cave. Additionally, you see Gandalf engaged in a bit of magic, killing some of the Goblins. The taking of the ponies with all the supplies strips the travelers of the last comforts of home and leaves them to rely almost entirely on their own resources.

The swords that Elrond identified for them are crucial to the expedition's survival in this chapter. Gandalf's sword Glamdring reclaims its historical role by killing the Great Goblin.

The travelers' attempt to escape the Goblins leads them farther along their journey as they descend into the Goblin tunnels. In addition, Dori's attempt to help Bilbo represents the dwarves' gradual softening toward the hobbit, which develops into real respect later in the story. But Bilbo here shows himself to have one foot still in his previous life, missing the hobbit joys of summer and, at the end of the chapter, unhelpfully losing consciousness in a fall.

***Analysis(Ch3-4):***

Chapter 3. The travelers need to replenish their supplies and to rest for a time in a place of safety before they travel on to the Misty Mountains. Gandalf takes them to Rivendell, home of the elves and where his friend Elrond lives in the Last Homely House. Bilbo loves the elves, but dwarves have never gotten on well with them and think them rather foolish. As they enter the valley where the elves live, the travelers are greeted with singing from the trees. They spend at least fourteen days with the elves.

The elves provide the travelers with provisions to help them to traverse the mountain passes awaiting them in the Misty Mountains. Elrond looks at the swords Thorin and Gandalf took from the troll’s cave; they were made by the High Elves of the West for the Goblin-wars. Thorin’s is named Orcrist, the Goblin-cleaver and Gandalf’s is named Glamdring, Foe-hammer. Elrond also deciphers the runes on their map: they are moon-letters that can only be read when the moonlight shines upon them. The letters are instructions for finding the secret door located in the Lonely Mountain. The next morning the fifteen travelers continue on their journey.

Chapter 4. The dwarves, hobbit and wizard make their way to the Misty Mountains. It is important that they follow the right path since many dangers await them within these mountains. One night, two terrible thunderstorms meet in a thunder battle. The travelers shelter under a hanging rock as the storm rages around them. They not only have the storm to contend with, but there are also stone giants hurling rocks at one another, catching them, and then tossing them into the darkness. The travelers are in danger of being hit by one of these stray rocks and they are being soaked by rain, so they must find alternate accommodations for the night. Fili and Kili are sent out and find a cave nearby. Unfortunately, during the night goblins jump out of a secret opening and grab the dwarves and hobbit, though Gandalf escapes.

Bilbo and the dwarves are brought before the Great Goblin who accuses them of being thieves. The goblins do not believe that the dwarves are on their way to visit family and they take Thorin’s sword, which they recognize as a fearful goblin killer. This sends the Great Goblin into a rage and he rushes toward Thorin. The lights go out and a flash of fire appears. The Great Goblin is killed, and Gandalf’s voice urges the dwarves and hobbit to follow him. They are pursued through the passages by goblins and are eventually overtaken. Bilbo, who is riding on Dori’s back, falls to the ground, bumps his head and is unconscious.

The reader is introduced to the elves in Chapter 3. They are frivolous and fond of silly songs, but they are also wise and know much of the world. The dwarves are much more serious than the elves and do not like their teasing ways; the elves find the dwarves more amusing than anything else. Bilbo, on the other hand, has always found the elves fascinating and would stay with them longer if he could. He has a more open mind with regard to other races than the dwarves do. Elrond, the chief elf, provides them with important information about the runes on their map that will be useful to them later when they get to the Lonely Mountain.

The travelers are introduced to yet another danger on their journey in Chapter 4. Goblins attack them on their way through the Misty Mountains, and the reader learns just how mean and treacherous these creatures are. The travelers make an enemy of the goblins when Gandalf kills the Chief Goblin. This is not something they will soon forget. They also carry swords that the goblins hate for they have killed many of their kind during the Goblin wars. It is Gandalf, once again, who has to save the dwarves and hobbit from immediate peril and the reader is left to wonder once again if they would have made it out of their predicament without him. They seem to rely heavily upon his assistance.

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

***Summary Part 1:***

The group walks through the [Misty Mountains](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-hobbit/symbols/the-misty-mountains), and their path is difficult and dangerous. As they climb high up, they can see back to the West, back in the direction of [Bilbo’s](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-hobbit/characters/bilbo-baggins) home, the Shire. Bilbo thinks longingly of the harvests taking place in the hobbit-lands.

***Analysis Part 1:***

Bilbo continues to think of his home. He’s connected to the land itself—to the rituals of harvesting—as much as he’s connected to specific people and places. But he has also traveled far, and can see his former home in a new way.

***Summary Part 2:***

[Gandalf](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-hobbit/characters/gandalf) knows that the [Misty Mountains](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-hobbit/symbols/the-misty-mountains) have become full of danger in recent times, and that underneath them, in the Mines of Moria, there are goblins. One night, a thunderstorm breaks out, and the Mountain Giants throw rocks to each other for fun. [Fili](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-hobbit/characters) and [Kili](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-hobbit/characters), the two youngest dwarves, find a cave that can provide shelter from the storm—Gandalf asks them if they’re sure the cave is empty, and though [Fili](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-hobbit/characters) and [Kili](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-hobbit/characters) have come back too quickly to be at all sure of this, they insist that it is. The group goes into the cave; Gandalf forbids them from lighting a fire. They rest.

***Analysis Part 2:***

Gandalf’s questions about the emptiness of the cave foreshadow danger to come. That Fili and Kili insist the cave is empty attests to their own inexperience as adventurers but also for the urgent need of finding shelter—a temporary home—from the brutal force of nature embodied in the storm. Also, as readers, the story gives us enough detail to know that going into the cave is a bad decision and will lead to danger, but at the same time, we want them to get into trouble—we don’t want another series of uneventful weeks, as the dwarves just experiences in Rivendell. As readers, we have some of the same “dual nature” as Bilbo: longing for the characters safety, while also longing for them to have adventures.

***Summary Part 3:***

In the middle of the night, [Bilbo](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-hobbit/characters/bilbo-baggins) wakes up to a creaking sound, and sees a crack growing in the side of the cave, from which goblins emerge. Bilbo gives a cry, waking up [Gandalf](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-hobbit/characters/gandalf) and allowing him to vanish in a flash of light that kills several goblins. The goblins seize the group’s ponies, which they will later eat, and take everyone but Gandalf prisoner. Goblins, the narrator notes, are clever, evil creatures who bear [Thorin](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-hobbit/characters/thorin-oakenshield)’s people a special grudge because of the wars they’ve fought with each other.

***Analysis Part 3:***

Bilbo isn’t powerful or resourceful enough to fight the goblins, but he does demonstrate his value to the group by noticing them—Bilbo may not be a warrior, but he is alert and clever. The narrator establishes a long-running conflict between dwarves and goblins—a history or “birthright” of war—which will continue to be important in the rest of the book.

***Summary Part 4:***

The goblins lead [Bilbo](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-hobbit/characters/bilbo-baggins) and the dwarves to their leader, the [Great Goblin](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-hobbit/characters). The Great Goblin asks [Thorin](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-hobbit/characters/thorin-oakenshield) to identify himself and explain why he’s here; Thorin identifies himself, but lies and says that he and his group are visiting his relatives on the other side of the mountain. The goblins howl that Thorin is lying, and that he hasn’t explained the bright flash of light that killed some of them. They also produce the sword Thorin found in the [troll’s](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-hobbit/characters) treasure hole, which the Great Goblin immediately recognizes as Orcrist, or Biter, a famous sword that has killed hundreds of goblins.

***Analysis Part 4:***

Thorin doesn’t lie and give a false name to the Goblin King—it’s as if he’s too proud to conceal his identity, even as he refuses to reveal the purpose of his travels. Thorin is a warrior, and he acts according to a warrior’s code of honor, but without all that much cleverness. In this section, Bilbo begins to get a sense for battle and violence—not only the people who participate in them, but the trophies and relics of battle, such as Orcrist.

***Summary Part 5:***

The [Great Goblin](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-hobbit/characters) gives a howl of rage at the sight of Orcrist, but at this exact moment, the lights go out. A bright sword appears to float through the room, and kills the Great Goblin. A voice tells the dwarves to quickly follow it away from the goblins. As the dwarves run away, [Gandalf](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-hobbit/characters/gandalf) lights his wand, revealing himself to be the bearer of the sword, which is called Glamdring the Foe-Hammer.

***Analysis Part 5:***

At this point, Gandalf’s powers are more obviously magical—he can extinguish light, see in the dark, etc. He also excels at old-fashioned sword-fighting, and kills the Great Goblin with apparent ease. In this way, we begin to see the full extent of Gandalf’s abilities: he uses words, weapons, and magic with equal skill.

***Summary Part 6:***

The dwarves run, but the goblins are faster, and [Gandalf](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-hobbit/characters/gandalf) tells [Thorin](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-hobbit/characters/thorin-oakenshield) to turn and fight. Using Glamdring and Orcrist, Gandalf and Thorin kill many goblins, then turn back and continue running away. [Bilbo](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-hobbit/characters/bilbo-baggins) thinks to himself that he was wrong to ever leave his hobbit-hole. [Dori](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-hobbit/characters) is carrying Bilbo on his back as they run from the goblins, but when a goblin tries to grab Dori, Bilbo rolls off his back and falls deep into a cavern, hits his head on a rock, and loses consciousness.

***Analysis Part 6:***

In the midst of the first big danger the group faces, Bilbo is too inexperienced to be of much use—in fact, he’s so useless that Dori carries him on his back like a child. In moments such as this, Bilbo wishes he were back at home, demonstrating how unprepared he is for the challenges of adventure.