

THE HOBBIT

OR THERE AND BACK

AGAIN

J.R.R. TOLKIEN

The Hobbit is a tale of high adventure, undertaken by a company of dwarves, in search of dragon-guarded gold. A reluctant partner in this perilous quest is Bilbo Baggins, a comfort-loving, unambitious hobbit, who surprises even himself by his resourcefulness and his skill as a burglar.

Encounters with trolls, goblins, dwarves, elves and giant spiders, conversations with the dragon, Smaug the Magnificent, and a rather unwilling presence at the Battle of the Five Armies are some of the adventures that befall Bilbo. But there are lighter moments as well: good fellowship, welcome meals, laughter and song.

Bilbo Baggins has taken his place among the ranks of the immortals of children's fiction. Written for Professor Tolkien's own children, *The Hobbit* met with instant acclaim when published. It is a complete and marvellous tale in itself, but it also forms a prelude to *The Lord of the Rings*.

'One of the most influential books of our

generation'

The Times

CONTENTS

COVER PAGE

TITLE PAGE

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

NOTE ON THE TEXT

AUTHOR'S NOTE

CHAPTER I: AN UNEXPECTED PARTY

CHAPTER II: ROAST MUTTON

CHAPTER III: A SHORT REST

CHAPTER IV: OVER HILL AND UNDER HILL

CHAPTER V: RIDDLES IN THE DARK

CHAPTER VI: OUT OF THE FRYING-PAN INTO THE FIRE

CHAPTER VII: QUEER LODGINGS
CHAPTER VIII: FLIES AND SPIDERS
CHAPTER IX: BARRELS OUT OF BOND
CHAPTER X: A WARM WELCOME
CHAPTER XI: ON THE DOORSTEP
CHAPTER XII: INSIDE INFORMATION
CHAPTER XIII: NOT AT HOME
CHAPTER XIV: FIRE AND WATER
CHAPTER XV: THE GATHERING OF THE CLOUDS
CHAPTER XVI: A THIEF IN THE NIGHT
CHAPTER XVII: THE CLOUDS BURST
CHAPTER XVIII: THE RETURN JOURNEY
CHAPTER XIX: THE LAST STAGE
WORKS BY J.R.R. TOLKIEN
COPYRIGHT

ABOUT THE PUBLISHER

ILLUSTRATIONS

Thror's Map

The Trolls

The Mountain-path

The Misty Mountains looking West

Beorn's Hall

The Elvenking's Gate

Lake Town

The Front Gate

The Hall at Bag-End

Map of Wilderland

NOTE ON THE TEXT

The Hobbit was first published in September 1937. Its 1951 second edition (fifth impression) contains a significantly revised portion of Chapter V, "Riddles in the Dark," which brings the story of *The Hobbit* more in line with its sequel, *The Lord of the Rings*, then in progress. Tolkien made some further revisions to the American edition published by Ballantine Books in February 1966, and to the British third edition (sixteenth impression) published by George Allen & Unwin later that same year.

For the 1995 British hardcover edition, published by HarperCollins, the text of *The Hobbit* was entered into word-processing files, and a number of further corrections of misprints and errors were made. Since then, various

editions of *The Hobbit* have been generated from that computerized text file. For the present text, that file has been compared again, line by line, with the earlier editions, and a number of further corrections have been made to present a text that, as closely as possible, represents Tolkien's final intended form.

Readers interested in details of the changes made at various times to the text of *The Hobbit* are referred to Appendix A, "Textual and Revisional Notes," of *The Annotated Hobbit* (1988), and *J. R. R. Tolkien: A Descriptive Bibliography* by Wayne G. Hammond, with the assistance of Douglas A. Anderson (1993).

Douglas A. Anderson May 2001

Author's Note