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A STAGE ADAPTATION OF J. R. R. TOLKIEN'S
THE HOBBIT: OR, THERE AND BACK AGAIN

by

Lizarose Twyla Tenneb-Hansen

A thesis

submitted in partial fulfillment

of the requirements for the degree of

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DEPICTIONS OF THE CHARACTER BILBO BAGGINS



These images show various illustrations of how Bilbo Baggins has been depicted since his creation.

Tenneb-Hansen, Lizarose Twyla
Master's Thesis

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APPENDIX: Committee Approval

To the Graduate Faculty:

The members of the committee appointed to examine the thesis of LIZAROSE TWYLA TENNEB-HANSEN find it satisfactory and recommend that it be accepted.

Name,
Major Advisor

Name,
Committee Member

Name,
Graduate Faculty Representative

I dedicate this thesis
To my Heavenly Father,
To my husband Eric Richard Hansen,
And to my advisor Norman Schroder
Who supported me every step of the way

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GLOSSARY

Arkenstone *A great white jewel found beneath Erebor by the Dwarves of that kingdom. It was left behind when Smaug drove the Dwarves from their kingdom. Bilbo finds it when he explores Smaug's hoard and uses it to attempt reconciliation between Thorin and the Elves and Men besieging him. It is later buried with Thorin (Foster, 29).*

Bag End *A dwelling in Hobbiton and Bilbo Baggin's home (Foster, 38).*

Baggins *(including Bungo, Bilbo's father) A well-to-do family of Hobbits, with members living all over the Shire. Considered aristocracy of the Hobbit race (Foster, 38-39).*

Bard *Man of Dale and noted archer. Organized defense against Smaug (Foster, 44).*

Bardings *The men of Dale (Foster, 44).*

Battle of the Five Armies *Battle fought in and around Erebor between the Men of Esgaroth and Dale, the Elves of Northern Mirkwood, the Dwarves of Erebor and the Iron Hills, Beorn and the Eagles of the Misty Mountains on one side and a huge army of the Orcs of the Misty Mountains and Wargs on the other (Foster, 48).*

Balin *A Dwarf and member of Thorin's Company (Foster, 40).*

Belladonna (Took) Baggins *Hobbit of the Shire. Married Bungo Baggins. Bilbo Baggins was their only child (Foster, 55).*

Beorn *Man who can morph into a berserker bear. Violently hates Orcs and is distrustful of strangers, but has a good heart. After Gandalf overcame his initial suspicions, Beorn fed and protected Thorin and company and later helps them win the Battle of the Five Armies (Foster, 56).*

Bifur *A Dwarf and member of Thorin's Company (Foster, 59).*

Bilbo *Hobbit of the Shire, adventurer, Elf-friend, Ring-bearer, author, and scholar. Bilbo's involvement in the affairs of Middle-earth began when Gandalf coerced him into being the burglar for Thorin and Company. In the course of this adventure he went to Rivendell and other faraway places, acquired the One Ring, and played an important part in the death of Smaug and the success of the expedition. He returned home to Bag End with his modest share of the dragon's hoard and the Ring, and lived comfortably in the Shire for sixty more years. Bilbo wrote the account of his expedition to Erebor with Thorin and Company. Because the Ring amplifies evil and the reluctant hero Bilbo was good and not evil, it was unable to corrupt him (Foster, 59).*

Bofur *A Dwarf and member of Thorin's Company (Foster, 64).*

Bombur *A Dwarf and member of Thorin's Company (Foster, 65).*

Confusticate *This word does not appear in dictionaries. Christopher Tolkien describes it as a comic invention by his father (who found that sort of invention naturally comic), and notes that his father "would certainly have been aware of Latin fustis 'a cudgel' (with a diminutive fusticulus), fustigo 'I cudgel to death'—not that Bilbo should be supposed to be saying 'May these dwarves by cudgeled to death' " (Anderson, 19).*

Dale *City-kingdom of Men, located on the southern slopes of Erebor (Foster, 103).*

Desolation of Smaug *Erebor and the surrounding area, devastated by Smaug's extravagant respiration and unsociability (Foster, 111).*

Dori *A Dwarf and member of Thorin's Company (Foster, 117).*

Dwalin *A Dwarf and member of Thorin's Company (Foster, 128).*

Dwarves *One of the speaking races of Middle-earth and one of the Free Peoples. Short (four and a half to five feet tall), stocky, strong, resistant to fire, and hardier than any other race. Unswerving and proud, Dwarves could not be dominated by evil and never forgot a wrong or a debt; they went to war frequently and wielded axes. They were great miners and craftsmen and worked wonders with stone, metal, and jewels. Never very friendly with other races (Foster, 129).*

Eagles *The greatest and noblest of birds, they frequently aid Men and Elves (Foster, 131).*

Elves *The eldest and noblest of the races of Middle-earth. Fairest of all earthly creatures, they were about six feet tall and somewhat slender, graceful but strong and resistant to the extremes of nature. Their senses, especially of hearing and sight, were much keener than those of Men. Elves apparently did not sleep, but rested their minds in waking dreams or by looking at beautiful things (Foster, 148-149).*

Elrond *Elf lord of Rivendell (Foster, 147).*

Erebor *Mountain east of Mirkwood and west of the Iron Hills. Erebor was first settled by Thorin's grandfather. The fame and riches of the Dwarves of Erebor grew for two hundred years. At that point Smaug came to plunder the Dwarf-kingdom for himself (Foster, 162-163).*

Fíli *A Dwarf and member of Thorin's Company (Foster, 180).*

Gandalf *Looked like a grey-cloaked, grey-haired bent old man and passed easily for a meddlesome old conjuror; at times, however, he revealed his true majesty and power. Gandalf traveled mostly in the West and had no permanent home. He was*

the only Wizard who truly cared about things of seemingly small value like Hobbits and trees. He was a great master of lore and of fire (Foster, 201-203).

Glamdring *“Foe-hammer,” the sword of Gandalf. It shone with a blue light in the presence of Orcs. It was the mate of Orcrist (Foster, 209-210).*

Glóin *A Dwarf and member of Thorin's Company (Foster, 211).*

Goblins *The orcs (Foster, 212).*

Gollum *Hobbit of the Stoor strain. The ring amplified his worst qualities and corrupted his appearance (Foster, 214-215).*

Halflings *The name given to Hobbits by the race of Men (Foster, 236).*

Hobbits *One of the speaking races of Middle-earth (Foster, 255). Little people, about half the height of a grown man, smaller than bearded dwarves, Hobbits have no beards. There is little or no magic about them except for the ability to hide quickly and go unnoticed. They are inclined to be fat, wear bright green and yellow, wear no shoes because they have natural leathery soles on their hairy feet, have long clever brown fingers, good-natured faces, and a deep fruity laugh. They will have dinner twice a day when they can get it (Tolkien, Hobbit 2).*

Kíli *A Dwarf and member of Thorin's Company (Foster, 282).*

Mirkwood *Corrupted forest in the northern land of the Elves of the Woodland Realm that is inhabited by evil spiders (Foster, 340).*

Misty Mountains *Great mountain chain of Middle-earth, running nine hundred miles from the Northern Waste to the Gap of Rohan (Foster, 341).*

Moon-letters *Runes that could only be seen when they were exposed to a moon of the same day of the year as when they were written. Moon-letters were invented by the Dwarves and were written with silver pens (Foster, 344).*

Nori *A Dwarf and member of Thorin's Company (Foster, 373).*

Óin *A Dwarf and member of Thorin's Company (Foster, 381).*

One Ring *The greatest of the Rings of Power. A magical ring that grants invisibility to the wearer and amplifies the evil within the wearer, only the pure in heart can resist its lure (Foster, 384-386).*

Orcrist *"Goblin Cleaver," the sword of Thorin Oakenshield, the mate of Glamdring. Although taken from Thorin, it was later placed on his tomb where it warned the Dwarves of Erebor of the approach of any enemy (Foster, 387).*

Orcs *Evil race of Middle-earth. Although Orcs varied from tribe to tribe, they tended to be short, squat, and bow-legged, with long arms, dark faces, squinty eyes, and long faces. Most Orcs are weakened by the sun and prefer the dark (Foster, 387-388).*

Ori *A Dwarf and member of Thorin's Company (Foster, 389-390).*

Rivendell *Elven-refuge in a steep and hidden valley. It was founded by Elrond (Foster, 420-421).*

Shire *Area of about 18,000 square miles. Most of the Hobbits of Middle-earth live in the Shire. The Hobbits live comfortably in this area and mostly face plagues and natural disasters. They ignored the outside world for so long that almost forgot it existed. Gandalf is one of those reminders most of the Hobbits prefer to ignore or pretend does not exist (Foster, 446-447).*

Smaug *Also known as Smaug the Golden, he was the greatest dragon of his time. Hearing of the wealth of Erebor, Smaug destroyed Dale and drove the Dwarves away from the Kingdom under the Mountain. For nearly two hundred years he gloried in his treasure until he was disturbed and angered by Thorin and Company. He then attacked Dale again and was slain by Bard the Bowman (Foster, 456-457).*

Stone-trolls *A kind of troll found in Middle-earth. Bert, Tom, and William Huggins were this type as they spoke Westron, which only Stone-trolls of their kind did (Foster, 463-464).*

Thorin *Thorin Oakenshield was the Dwarf King of Erebor and leader of the Company that returned to face Smaug and reclaim their homelands and treasure (Foster, 481).*

Thrushes *Birds of Middle-earth; the thrushes of Erebor and Dale could understand language and were used as messengers (Foster, 486).*

Wargs *Evil wolves and allies of the Orcs (Foster, 524).*

Wizards *They bore the forms of Men, although they were vigorous and aged very slowly. They possessed great skill of body and mind; their powers were focused through their staffs. Gandalf was the second eldest of the wizards (Foster, 276-277 and 542).*

APPENDIX: Abstract, Thesis

A STAGE ADAPTATION OF J. R. R. TOLKIEN'S THE HOBBIT, OR THERE AND
BACK AGAIN ABSTRACT

This thesis features a script adaptation of J. R. R. Tolkien's *The Hobbit: or, There and Back Again*. After reviewing numerous adaptations, a range of alterations were found that distorted the pivotal main character, Bilbo Baggins. Unlike the other scripts, this adaptation is true to the original novel. The methodology employed is based on Linda Hutcheon's and Linda Seger's film adaptation which include limited commentary on adapting for the stage. However, the main focus of this thesis is the script and the potential challenges of producing this work on a range of stages with a range of budgets and cast members. In addition to the script, a series of set illustrations and costume sketches, a detailed explication of the minimum number of actors required for each scene, and challenges that might be encountered while producing this show are provided.

—Idaho State University (2016).

A STAGE ADAPTATION OF J. R.
R. TOLKIEN'S

*THE HOBBIT: OR, THERE AND
BACK AGAIN*

by

Lizarose Twyla Tenneb-Hansen

CHAPTER I: *WHY THIS SCRIPT*

As a child, the first book on tape I remember listening to was the audio adaptation of *The Hobbit* produced by Mind's Eye. Within this same time frame, I was also introduced to the Rankin and Bass cartoon version of this same story. These two adaptations inspired me to finally read *The Hobbit* for myself as a young adult. Ever since I read the book, I have longed to see the full story acted out the way I pictured it while I read it. I have even spent many nights dreaming of how I would stage a production of this classic novel. Although I have been exposed to many other stories over the years, this coming of age adventure tale will always be my favorite.

And so I have created an adaptation of *The Hobbit* by J. R. R. Tolkien for the stage. But, with so many adaptations already out there, why create another one? This is what I will explore in detail throughout this chapter.

Although this project includes commentary concerning Tolkien's intentions, it is in no way intended to expand upon the plethora of pre-existing Tolkien scholarship. I am assuming that my audience will be at least somewhat conversant with the story and characters of *The Hobbit*, especially considering the popularity of the Peter Jackson film version of the story, and have tailored my commentary based on this assumption.

In my research for my project, I was pleasantly surprised to find some pre-existing stage adaptations of this play. However, I was greatly disappointed when I learned that each adaptation thus far has veered from the author's original intentions for his novel, which I discuss in detail throughout this chapter. In my research I discovered that not only was *The Hobbit* intended to be a coming of age story, but also an "anti-war"

story (Croft 33-56). Tolkien's experiences in World War I left him with an acute and personalized realization of the devastation and destruction that war leaves in its wake. I believe that Tolkien wanted to illustrate this when he allowed one of the main characters in his book to be mortally wounded during the battle and die shortly after the war concluded. This was not solely anti-war propaganda, however. He also wrote this for his children intending Bilbo to be a role-model for them (Nitzsche 31).

Although Tolkien had already developed a huge mythology for his Middle Earth he did not originally create the ring Bilbo found to be evil (Anderson 322). Tolkien actually changed the nature of the ring in this original story so that it would line up with the direction he takes the story in his sequel. Additionally, Bilbo's character was not damaged by having it in his possession. Instead, he amplifies Bilbo's good qualities with increased levels of responsibility, use of the ring for good, and growth in the planning for the welfare of the dwarves in his charge. Bilbo's character even grows and develops as Gandalf leaves Bilbo to strategize more and more on his own. Although Bilbo still experiences character growth in the revised version of the story, Bilbo's character development is weakened by Tolkien's efforts to make him less than honest. Initially, Gandalf appears just in time to save the adventurers himself. Bilbo soon learns from this role model and eventually takes over as the liberator of the group. Although Bilbo does kill some of the spiders in Mirkwood Forest, he otherwise does not engage in battle himself. He never uses invisibility or his ability to avoid detection to hurt or kill anyone. However, while "visiting" the Elves of Mirkwood, he does use it to put the guard's keys back in the hopes of keeping the guard out of trouble. Additionally, after he got his share of the treasure he repaid the elves for the food and supplies he used while he was with

them. Even in taking the Arkenstone as “his part” of the treasure and offering it to the elves in an effort to prevent a war, Bilbo always did the best he could in whatever circumstances he was in. It was Bilbo’s motivations that Gandalf praised: Bilbo’s selfless acts to assist his friends, then his great personal sacrifice of his fourteenth share of the treasure to prevent war. This is the point of *The Hobbit* and I have worked hard to faithfully capture Bilbo’s integrity, motivations, and character throughout my script adaptation. If Bilbo had not joined the adventure, things would have turned out vastly different. There would have been no hobbit there to show the other leaders a selfless example to resolving their differences. This is important because although the pre-existing adaptations are entertaining, they do not realize this crucial point.

It seems evident to me that most of the adaptations of *The Hobbit* that have been produced thus far were clearly slated for a child’s audience. Although I will go through these in some detail in a moment I would like to point out that in spite of the intended audience, Bilbo’s character was altered in each stage version in such a manner to render him an inappropriate role model for that audience. Although the Rankin and Bass film is also interesting for adults, it is still a cartoon focused on entertaining children. The only serious versions I have yet to find are the films directed by Peter Jackson. However, by adding the strong plot drivers required for film adaptations, these include so much side-story and other elements that are not in *The Hobbit* that they detract from where the focus *should* be—on the *hobbit*: Bilbo Baggins. I have located several scripts for stage adaptations and even found YouTube adaptations ranging from a single scene to an entire production of *The Hobbit*. From what I have seen of these stage adaptations, the theme has been extremely farcical. Elements have been played up for humor with a “Punch and

Judy” or slapstick (essentially physical comedy) style geared for young child entertainment. An aspect that I perceived as specifically being geared toward a young child audience was the inclusion of farcical music. In at least two of these productions, either I could not hear the lyrics clearly or, if I am not mistaken, the lyrics were not even from Tolkien’s book. I also did not care for the “booing” noises that were sounded during the “Trolls’ Campfire” scene that was posted on YouTube.com by “PlaysforAllAges.” Another script, *The Hobbit: “Old Took” Version*, incorporated a narrator (Selody). I have found a “Gollum scene” from a production with a cast of children that “CAST inGranite” posted on YouTube.com that was played straight. However, it was still a truncated version of the scene that left no sense of the danger Bilbo Baggins faced at that point in the story. I imagine that J. R. R. Tolkien originally may have incorporated some farcical elements when he first told this story to his children at bedtime. He may have even started out with a more concise version of his tale and added to it over the years until he finally finished committing it to paper. However, farcical is not the way he wrote the book the world has come to know and love.

Another device that has been used in pre-existing adaptations is the inclusion of a narrator. Although a brilliant style choice, I was puzzled by the choice for narrator in the “Old Took” adaptation of *The Hobbit*. “Old Took,” Bilbo’s predecessor, is supposed to be deceased before the story even takes place. As “Took” is his mother’s maiden name, even if Bilbo had married and had children, the last name would be “Baggins” and not “Took.” Therefore it is logical to conclude the “Old Took” cannot be one of Bilbo’s descendants recounting the tale of his progenitor. The deceased “Old Took” aside, this is supposed to be an autobiographical account of Bilbo’s adventure. If a narrator is going to

be used, it would make more sense for Bilbo to be the narrator of a memory play. Even in the sequel, *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy books and Peter Jackson's film version, Bilbo is the one who fascinates the village hobbit children with excerpts from his escapades and adventures. For these reasons, I think it would be ideal to have *Bilbo* narrate the story if a narrator is ever employed in a script of *The Hobbit*. However, because Bilbo never directly addresses the audience in the book, I chose to achieve my narration by incorporating any pertinent information into the dialogue instead of incorporating a narrator. Although description can be a timesaver, I did not want to end up relying on it too heavily. After all, this is not intended to be a "round-the-table-reading." This project was to create a workable script for a stage production and as such I thought it is best to show as much as was reasonably possible and incorporate the rest into the dialogue for this particular adaptation. In other words, to show not tell.

I searched long and hard for as many stage adaptations of *The Hobbit* as I could find. In addition to scripts, I found a list containing various additional types of adaptations, but felt it was not kept as up-to-date as it could be because of what was included and what was left out. An example of something that was included was the mention of the "Tauriel" character from the new Peter Jackson films as a "character that did not appear in the original book." However, in spite of "the narrative of the film is to be expanded..." it does not give much detail beyond elaborating on the role of the new character Tauriel. And it most certainly does not even begin to give a comprehensive list of the differences between the original publication and the subsequent adaptations that have been made from *The Hobbit*. On the other hand, it does have a fairly comprehensive list of the several forms of media *The Hobbit* has been adapted into.

These include film and television, radio and audio recordings, various puppet, musical, and other stage productions, board or war games and role-playing platforms, toys and collectibles, video games, graphic media, graphic novels, and abridged children's books. All are edited versions of the story adapted for the context of the media style and not every adaptation of the *The Hobbit* made it on this list, more specifically not every stage production. Of the four versions that did make it on this list, there is a musical version, Patricia Gray's 1968 authorized adaptation, Kim Selody's 1999 version for young people that is only licensed to be performed in Canada, and Christine Anketell's puppetry version that toured Australia in 1997 and again in 2000 (Wikipedia). I will go into greater detail in a moment, but I should point out that although Tolkien did write lyrics for songs in his book, the "musical" and "puppet" stage production I found was nothing like what Tolkien wrote. Additionally, it is noted in Wikipedia that the non-musical and non-puppet versions have been dramatically altered from the original story, as well. The one credited as the most common one to be performed makes many deviations from the original plot, including altering the dragon slayer. If changing this assignment to Thorin's charge were the only deviation, it would seem a minor point to quibble over. As I will demonstrate with my next source, this is far from minor when all of the deviations are assessed together.

I was pleased to find several actual scripts of the several versions of *The Hobbit*; however, I have not found them all. I was able to locate and obtain a copy of a doctoral dissertation entitled *Bilbo Baggins as a Role Model: Stage Adaptations of "The Hobbit" for Young Audiences*, by Eric G. Bullis. This was the only dissertation or thesis I was able to find that was directly related to my specific field of interest: stage adaptations of

The Hobbit. In it I found an in-depth analysis of *five* different adaptations of *The Hobbit*, including Patricia Gray's adaptation and the musical adaptation, but not the Canadian and Australian versions that were referred to on Wikipedia. The other three by Brainerd Duffield, Markland Taylor, and Edward Mast were analyzed along with the first two I listed and respectively in the order I listed them in. I found another section that I thought might be viable to my research entitled, *Techniques of Adapters*. However, upon closer inspection I found it was not a study of methodology so much as it was a report on the plot devices used while altering the plots in the scripts Bullis analyzed, one such example being "Bilbo's diary" being used to "bridge episodes and provide background information" (Bullis 78). Another example is the creation of a new character, "The Elf Queen," who "instigates a rapid ending" (79). Because I did not alter the story, I realized that these plot devices were not useful to me. However, I noted the dissertation is on role modeling and that the analysis and conclusions focus in that direction. The detailed analysis of the other adaptations is detailed enough that I will not need to find all of the other scripts in order to make an educated conclusion that they stray far from J. R. R. Tolkien's original intentions for his novel.

Again, the alterations in costume and appearance are the least of the deviations. The worst of the deviations is the alteration to Bilbo Baggin's motivations and character. Bilbo is made out to be weak, motivated by peer pressure, and badly in need of coddling in the Patricia Gray adaptation (48). He is greedy and violent with poor ethics and poor planning capabilities in the musical script (55). As Bullis notes, "Brainerd Duffield's script... maintains the least fidelity to Tolkien's original story... The only dispositional trait that is consistent with the original text is the hobbit's politeness." Even so, the

politeness is presented as haughtiness and his snobbishness is frequently displayed throughout the play (57). In this version, Bilbo is the dragon slayer and is motivated by power and whatever will get him home the quickest (58). In the Markland Taylor adaptation, Bilbo's appetite was amplified to the point of greed. Although this may seem harmless enough, it does make Bilbo appear gluttonous. Bilbo also seems to waver back and forth in ability to strategize, being brilliant in one side adventure then to lack common sense or wisdom in the next. This makes Bilbo's development lack the smooth development that Tolkien penned (63-65). Finally, Edward Mast's version made Bilbo "slightly more assertive than Tolkein's original" (73).

Additionally, abbreviating the side adventures would not necessarily be bad except that it curtails Bilbo's character development: "This adaptation portrays Bilbo's development as a strategist, although his acquisition of skills seems slightly rushed. Because this script eliminates or combines episodes, Bilbo possesses fewer opportunities to display his development" (73). Although there are so many more details I could note, the main point is that in each and every version Bilbo's character, which should be the role model focal point, has been altered in some way. The various styles aside, I mainly take issue with the alterations to Bilbo's character. These alterations from the original story are vital to note because the changes significantly alter the integrity of Bilbo's character. Instead of making a maturing hobbit, these adaptations create a more two-dimensional and weak character. Whether 'scared of his own shadow,' so to speak, or a 'lean, mean killing machine,' there is no character development. The strength and depth that Bilbo's character develops on his metaphorical and literal journey *is* the point of the story. The realization that Bilbo comes to—that war is a waste—and should only be

exercised against pests like spiders and other such pestilences—is pivotal to the development of the story and the overall plot. I agree with Bullis's analysis of the other scripts. Bilbo was not a coward. He was not arrogant. He was not avaricious. He was not weak or in need of coddling. Tolkien created a role model for his children, not an anti-role model. Bilbo used his wits. Bilbo had common sense. As previously discussed, Bilbo did not like stealing and did his best not to when he could avoid it. Bilbo also avoided violence and the only creatures he ever killed in the book were the giant spiders in Mirkwood forest. Bilbo's character develops through trial and error to some extent. At first he fails miserably and Gandalf comes to the rescue in the nick of time, but Bilbo gets better at thinking on his feet and is eventually mentally prepared to face Smaug alone—twice. Bilbo is a kind, generous person and a true friend. Tolkien intended this to be a coming of age story and a story that showed the devastations of war. Unfortunately with only a few details as exceptions, these other adaptations almost invariably miss the mark.

So again I answer the question, “why this script?” I chose to adapt this script because all other adaptations are insufficient to capture what I believe to be Tolkien's intent for this book and the beloved character Bilbo Baggins.

CHAPTER II: *LINDA HUTCHEON'S 6 W'S*

Finding a methodology for stage adaptation was very challenging for me. There are a few books on adapting for Readers' Theatre, which offer some applicable information, but that is not the type of play I intended to create. Most of the books I found on adaptation theory were either written or co-written by Linda Hutcheon. Surprisingly, I was able to find very little research specifically on stage adaptation—most of my resources focus on film and some on Readers' Theatre adaptations, but nothing solely on straight stage productions for the theatre. In *A Theory of Adaptation*, Hutcheon makes a few side remarks about the difference between film and stage adaptations, but her main focus is actually film adaptation. Her bottom line is to learn by practice and to practice by doing when it comes to adapting in general (153). It is either good or it is not, but a script can always be reworked until it is good. However, I realized after reading her book she does not spell out her methodology in simple terms. Hutcheon's book is not focused on the practice so much as the theory behind film adaptation. In other words, from a practitioner's standpoint, she did not write a "how-to" book, but rather a theory that has some adaptable principles imbedded within. Hutcheon asserts that the adapter's job is a surgical art of subtraction or contraction (19) into a showing form rather than a telling form. She elaborates that the telling form, especially in oral or written narrative literature, the text engages us in the realm of imagination, which is never the same as showing it "any of the many performance media available" (23). However, watching a stage performance with real live bodies speaking or singing engages the audience differently than when sitting in front of a screen while "technology mediates 'reality' for

us” (27). Hutcheon concludes that “although our imaginative visualizations of literary worlds are always highly individual, the variance among readers is likely even greater in fantasy fiction than in realist fiction” (29). In other words, oral or written narrative allows an individualized interpretation whereas a film adaptation is already visually interpreted for its intended audience. Because a stage adaptation is not as visual as a film adaptation yet not as descriptive as an oral or written narrative, it actually falls somewhere between the two depending on how much is shown versus how much is told. In other words, if elaborate sets are implemented more can be shown, but if a narrator is implemented or description is incorporated into the dialog more can be told.

Hutcheon’s methodology for film adaptation is imbedded throughout her discussion of the “6 W’s” (Hutcheon vii) or the *Who? What? Why? Where? When?* and *How?* of the adaptation. Although she discusses these “6 W’s” as they relate to film adaptation, this is the most versatile part of her theory that I can utilize in my stage adaptation methodology. Before I answer these questions as they relate to my stage adaptation, I will explain what Hutcheon means by each of these questions. Hutcheon groups the questions “Who?” and “Why?” together to refer to the adapters. Although playwrights tend to think of themselves as “the sole author of everything that happens on stage,” there are others who share the “driver’s compartment” with the playwright (79). These include the book-writer, the screenwriter of a film, the designers, the movement director, the composer, and any other members of the creative team (79). Hutcheon’s “What?” refers to the forms or the specificity of the medium. In other words, what is the form being adapted from (novel, etc.) and the form being adapted to (film, stage, etc.)? Hutcheon further elaborates, “when we work in the other direction—that is, from the

telling to the showing mode, especially from print to performance—a definitional problem potentially arises. In a very real sense, every live staging of a printed play could theoretically be considered an adaptation in its performance” (39). Naturally Hutcheon focuses on adapting into film, whereas I am focusing on adapting for the stage. With her film adaptations, the final rendition is a single recorded adaptation that can be watched over and over again. However, my stage adaptation can be reinterpreted by director, cast, and crew—in other words, readapted—every single time it is performed afresh. Again Hutcheon combines two of the “6 W’s,” which are the “Where?” and “When?” and these are in reference to the contexts of the adaptation. More specifically, these refer to the time and place or the setting of the adaptation, which does not necessarily have to match the original story. William Shakespeare’s works are excellent examples of contexts and settings that are vast and variegated, starting their theatrical lives on the unfurnished platform of the Globe, then going on to be “pictorially represented in the Victorian theatre, with further alterations in physical format when thrust on to the apron stages that developed after the 1950s,” and continuing to undergo changes “that are just as far reaching as the ones that result from reinterpretations of the spoken lines” (142). The final “W” is the “How?” of the adaptation, which refers to the audiences, or more specifically *how* it will be adapted for the individual or collective audience it is being adapted for. Another way to look at it is that a film is closer to “the simulated excitement of a soccer stadium” while books are “a meditative and private act” that are consumed at an individual level while “[ignoring] the rest of the world” (113).

For me, the *Who? What? Why? Where? When?* and *How?* questions have two sets of answers. One set is related to me as the adapter and hopeful director of the script. The

second set will answer how these questions relate directly to the script contents. The first set of answers will obviously be brief, but I will answer those first followed by the second answer as it relates to the script.

Who? What? Why? Where? When? How?

“Who?” I will be the adapter and designer of a stage adaptation of J. R. R. Tolkien’s novel, *The Hobbit; or There and Back Again*.

“Who” is the script going to be about? As the title clearly states, the play is about the hobbit named Bilbo Baggins. The opening paragraphs of Tolkien’s book introduce the race of hobbits and give a fairly detailed physical description of Bilbo Baggins himself. (As taken from “The Annotated Hobbit: The Hobbit, or There and Back Again,” annotated by Douglas A. Anderson):

In a hole in the ground there lived a hobbit. Not a nasty, dirty, wet hole, filled with the ends of worms and an oozy smell, not yet a dry, bare, sandy hole with nothing in it to sit down on or to eat: it was a hobbit-hole, and that means comfort... This hobbit was a very well-to-do hobbit, and his name was Baggins. [People] considered them very respectable, not only because most of them were rich, but also because they never had any adventures or did anything unexpected... They are (or were) a little people, about half our height and smaller than the bearded dwarves. Hobbits have no beards. There is little or no magic about them, except the ordinary everyday sort which helps them to disappear quietly and quickly when large stupid folk like you and me come blundering along, making a noise like elephants which they can hear a mile off. They are inclined to be fat in the stomach; they dress in bright colours (chiefly green and yellow); wear no shoes, because their feet grow natural leathery soles and thick warm brownhair like the stuff on their heads (which is curly); have long clever brown fingers, good-natured faces, and laugh deep fruity laughs (especially after dinner, which they have twice a day when they can get it). Now you know enough to go on with (Anderson 9-10).

Tolkien further clarified “in a 1938 letter to his American publisher: *I picture a fairly human figure, not a kind of “fairy” rabbit as some of my British reviewers seem to fancy: fattish in the stomach, shortish in the leg. A round, jovial face; ears only slightly pointed and ‘elvish’; hair short and curling (brown). The feet from the ankles down, covered with brown hairy fur*” (10). Although there are a lot of other supporting characters, especially Gandalf the Grey and Thorin Oakenshield, the “Who” of this script’s plot is Bilbo. The other characters can be a little better or even a little worse than they are in the book, but Bilbo is the one who must remain faithful to his character description. Even though Tolkien was quoted saying, “The Hobbits are just rustic English people, made small in size because it reflects the generally small reach of their imagination—not the small reach of their courage or latent power” (Pienciak 46), I still feel that as challenging as it will be to stage, even Bilbo’s size plays an important role in the plot development. This is why I feel it is very important to get Bilbo’s characterization right in not only the script, but in his costume, as well.

“What?” I have adapted *The Hobbit* by J. R. R. Tolkien into a serious straight adventure play geared for an older child and adult audience.

“What” is the plot surrounding this hobbit? This plot is Bilbo’s coming of age story. Every scene and every mini-adventure Bilbo goes through aids in his character development and growth. This is the main reason why I feel so strongly about keeping every scene in my script and not shortening it for time constraints (such as those scripts adapted for a children’s audience) if it can be at all helped. In Tolkien’s words, “this is a story of how a Baggins had an adventure, and found himself doing and saying things

altogether unexpected. He may well have lost the neighbours' respect, but he gained – well, you will see whether he gained anything in the end" (Anderson 10).

"Why?" I have done my best to preserve my understanding of authorial intent as I prepared an adaptation intended to reach a larger audience (who might not otherwise read the book) and to promote interest in the book.

"Why" this particular adventure? Gandalf, the wandering wizard had a reputation for instigating adventures and that is how he came to be commissioned to find an additional member for a party of adventuring dwarves. The reason they required at least one additional member for their party was because their group numbered thirteen, a number they considered to be unlucky. Since Gandalf had a history with Bilbo's mother's side of the family, the Took side, naturally the first person he thought to ask would be Belladonna Took's son Bilbo.

"Where? When?" is actually a two-part question. First off, "Where/When" is the type of adaptation I have created and when I created it. I have created a straight play geared for an adult audience which I have finished during the Spring 2016 semester.

In the other set I address the "Where" first, followed immediately by the "When." "Where" exactly is this adventure supposed to take place? The answer to this portion of the two-part question is two-fold. The first part has to do with the "Where" in history and the other has to do with the "Where" in physical location. The first of these two answers is that it takes place in Middle Earth, an age that is supposed to take place prior to our current world history. The second of these is discussed after the dwarves finish their "tea" at Bilbo's house (it was really an enormous dinner). Gandalf and the dwarves' leader Thorin explain they wish for Bilbo to accompany them from the Shire to the

Lonely Mountain where a fearsome dragon named Smaug is personally guarding the home and treasure he stole from these dwarves and their families many years prior. The “set” section of chapter three explains where each individual scene takes place within Middle Earth.

“When” or at what point in Bilbo’s life does this adventure take place? At the time Bilbo was hired to join the adventure, he was “about fifty years old or so” (Anderson 11) and the entire adventure comprised approximately one year’s time.

“How?” As Hutcheon explains, “The appeal of adaptations for audiences lies in their mixture of repetition and difference” (Hutcheon 114). While I have done my best to preserve authorial intent, I have created a fresh take on a classic tale that has been previously adapted for several types of media.

And finally “How?” does Bilbo’s “coming of age” come about? It begins with Bilbo giving into the “Tookish” part of his genetics by choosing to join the adventure. Bilbo grows with each and every encounter he faces throughout his adventure. At first, Gandalf is required to come to the rescue, but more and more Bilbo is the one who uses his keen observation skills and quick intellect to resolve the various challenges his group faces along the way until he “comes of age.” In the meantime, Gandalf steps back more and more to allow Bilbo’s character to grow until the final confrontation (a war) takes place at which point Gandalf’s assistance is required. Because Bilbo maintains his morals in spite of the role the dwarves *think* Bilbo is playing for them, Bilbo “comes of age” and becomes admired, respected, and blessed by the other races.

More on How

Since I have adapted a story for a stage production that has already been adapted previously, I find the question Hutcheon asks about another story that has been adapted multiple times for film very applicable: “Why would a whole series of very different twentieth-century European artists all choose to adapt one particular historical narrative” (Hutcheon 95)? The answer is given in the title of her subheading: they are “learning from practice” (95). In my case, I also endeavored to achieve original authorial intent, however, the answer is still basically the same whether it is a first adaptation or a hundredth: I have learned by doing. To this end, I did a series of close readings for character, for plot, for dialogue, and any other critical information I needed in order to prepare my script. Instead of giving those details here, I have incorporated them directly into the script and to a small extent into my next chapter on technical elements. I also reviewed the 1977 cartoon adaptation closely as it is the nearest to what I have in mind for my stage play of any of the adaptations I have found. I also examined the other scripts of both *The Hobbit* and the play adaptations of other classic novels I have located. In comparing what they did and did not do, these excellent resources aided me in writing my adaptation.

The Art of Adaptation: Turning Fact and Fiction into Film by Linda Seger is an excellent resource, however it is focused on the adaptation into *film* and not a *theatre* stage production. Still, she does include occasional side comments on how things *can* be handled on the stage that cannot be reconciled to the screen adaptation. However, she does give a formula for creating a film adaptation: “Therefore, the adaptor’s work is fourfold: to identify, to evaluate, and, if necessary, to add to or to create story lines”

(Seeger 78). Seeger's formula starts by identifying the "plot drivers," which she defines as plot elements that motivate the hero or heroine to see their mission through to the end of the film. She then encourages those adapting for film to evaluate those plot drivers to see if they are strong enough to carry the plot through to the climax and the accompanying dialogue to see if they support the plot. And finally, if the plot drivers are insufficient, to then add or create story lines that support the plot. A critical element for any film having a sense of mystery is to keep the audience wondering what is going to happen next. In some cases, this means to have as many little mysteries as possible. Although Seeger's formula for film adaptation can be applied to some stage plays, a need for strong plot drivers is not as crucial for the stage as it is in film adaptations (58). Seeger explains her colleague Nicholas Kazan's idea of adapting for film: "My analogy for the film was juggling. I had to throw balls up in the air, and then one would come down, and then I'd throw a couple more up, and try to keep as many balls up in the air as possible so that [the audience would] constantly [say], 'Oh yeah, what about that? And what about that?'" (59)? Seeger applauded Kazan's creative ability to solve script problems, noting he was able to create "a workable and intriguing script" (57). On the other hand, Seeger cautions about trying to tackle story lines that have material that is unable to be focused because that typically leads to its abandonment (51). Seeger's formula is based on altering the original text to accommodate a film script. In other words, if a text is short on plot drivers, she has no qualms about adding action or altering plot elements even if they are not in the original text. Because alteration is the basis for Seeger's formula, her methodology did not work for my script because the whole point of my project was to be true to the original work. This is also why I did not feel the need for additional plot

drivers. Contrary to what the previous “Hobbit” adapters have done in inventing farcical music or dialogue or even borrowing plot or dialogue from other sources whether they were from Tolkien or not, I did not add action or dialogue that was not in the original story. Also, since I wrote a stage adaptation and not a film adaptation, I did not need to worry about skipping over slower paced scenes or speeding through action. Seger summed up the differences between film and stage adaptations adeptly, noting that writers adapting a book for the stage “have to tell people a lot of things,” but that adaptations for film “can say much less and show much more” (Seger 44). Seger contrasts the film version of “Driving Miss Daisy,” observing that in the play Hoke, her driver, “sits on a stool and pretends to drive a car” (44). The play therefore implies the sets while a film is more “populated” with characters, sets, and vintage autos. “[I have found it better to] cut any dialogue that I could show rather than tell about,” Seger notes, adding that “a good actor in a movie has to say about a third of what a good actor has to say on the stage” (45) and, “adapting is a bit like redecorating. You have to rethink the script” (45). Although I did think and rethink my script and I still encountered a few spots where, just as Kazan did, I said “what about that?” I carefully thought through each problem and challenge and found solutions to each as it arose. These potential challenges I have addressed in detail in chapter four.

As I stated above, even though description can be a time saver, I did not intend to incorporate a narrator into my script. As Seger pointed out, a general rule of thumb, especially for a visual media form such as theatre and film, is that it is best to show as much as possible. Anything else I did my best to convey through dialogue. However, I was still willing to take Seger’s advice and rethink my dialogue and plot devices,

including the possibility of a narrator, insofar as they would not compromise the integrity of staying true to Tolkien's original novel.

When I prepared my script, as I have mentioned, I did not want to write a farcical or children's script. On the other hand, I did not want to write a dry, humorless script, either. I wanted to write a straight play that was geared more for the age range of a young teenage to an adult audience to more fully appreciate while maintaining the humor of the original story. To this end, I did not worry about the length of the play and wrote it however long it needed to be in order to accomplish my goals. However, in my chapter on potential challenges, I included notes on how to handle casting if there are a limited number of actors available for the production.

Although I had originally hoped to produce and direct my adaptation's debut performance, I will not be taking that part of the process on during this project. However, in my next chapter I addressed in more general terms the technical elements that I hoped to incorporate into my debut production. I also discussed the lighting and any sound effects I wished to achieve, though I did not plan out the entire light plot and sound design. I did plan a rough set design to give an idea of how I intended for the stage action to take place. I included a general costume sketch for each of the races to illustrate that this production can be performed without puppets, but I did not plan costumes for every single character. And finally, I included some notes on how to handle the technical elements if there are fewer resources available than is ideal. (One example of this is that I would love to utilize a fly system; however, I realize that not every theatre has one.)

Another item that was extremely important to consider was the lighting. Ideally, I would love to blend many shades to create a variety of nuance, but a theatre may not have

the amount of lighting instruments I would like or enough space to hang them even if they had them. And these are only two of the many elements that will go into this huge production. These examples illustrate that I had to do my best to anticipate not only for the ideal resources I would like, but also how to handle the resources available to me should they not be ideal.

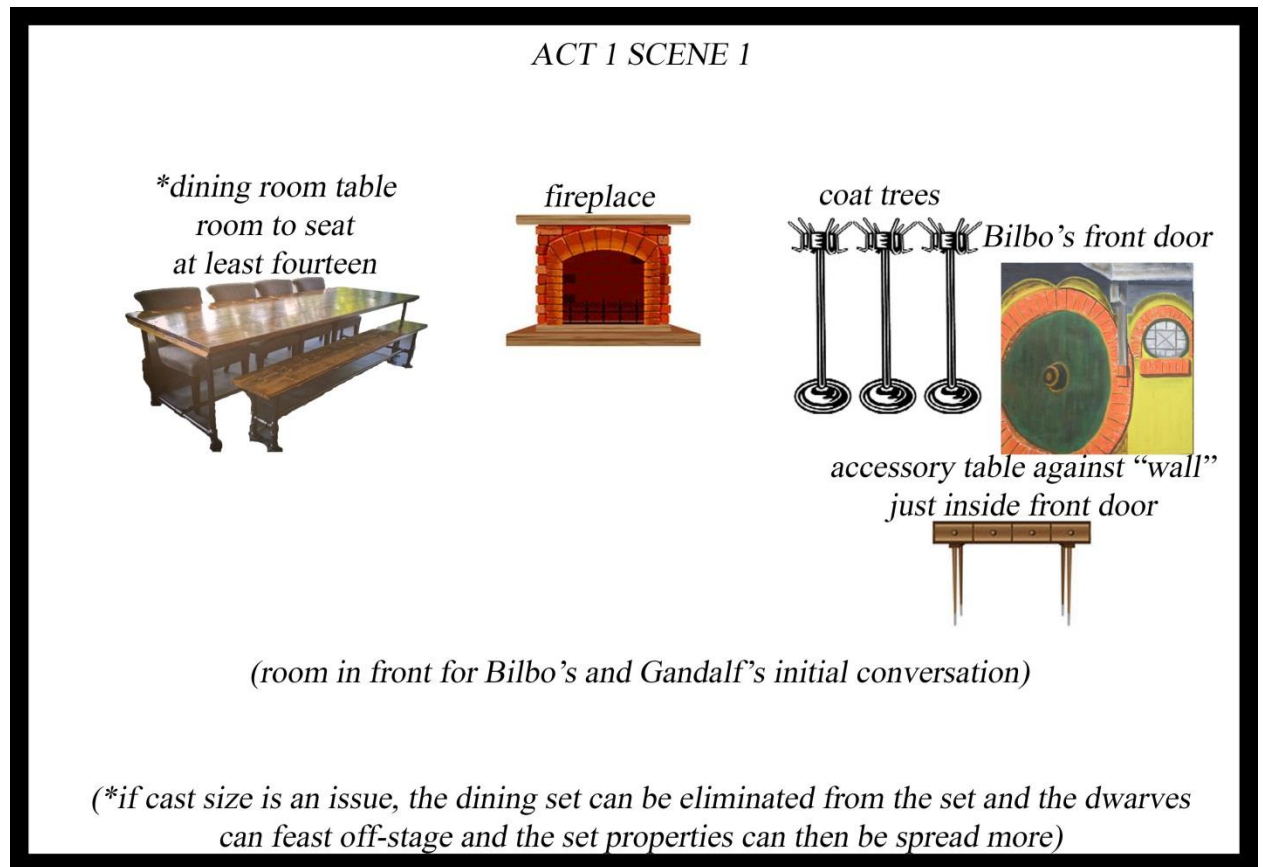
With careful planning, study, and preparation, I have anticipated and addressed as many of the challenges of producing my adaptation as possible. However, I realized that because I do not have unlimited resources or funding and there are still theatre buildings not yet built, I could not research every theatre's stage and the technical elements available to each. Therefore, it was impossible for me to foresee every challenge that could possibly be faced with putting on my production. Also, as is true of all plays and writers, since I cannot control other director's renditions of my play, I had to settle for doing my best to convey a sense of what I want so others can understand my vision and hopefully choose to be as faithful to my authorial intent as possible, just as I done for Tolkien. If it were possible, I would like to produce and direct my adaptation not only to illustrate that it can be done, but to face the challenges myself. That way I could have included notes on how my production went, how I addressed and resolved the challenges I had with my production, and what I learned from this whole process. Because I was unable to produce and direct my script, I had to settle for doing my best to anticipate any challenges without a production experience.

CHAPTER III: *Technical Elements—Sets & Costumes*

SETS

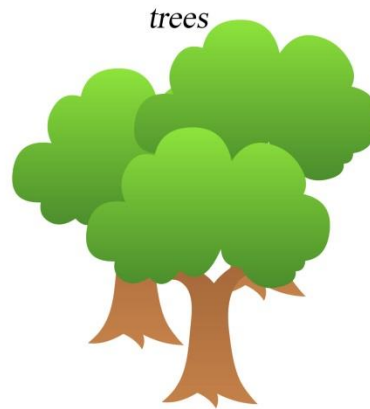
The sets are representative and are only intended to give a general idea of what I have in mind for the sets. As I have done my best to convey my desired lighting and sound effects within the scene descriptions in my play, I do not feel that those need to be addressed again here. All of the sets are represented with the “act and scene” upstage from the house.

If all of the dwarves are never on stage at the same time, I believe this play can be done comfortably with a cast of ten to fifteen. However, I would prefer to have a cast of at least nineteen so that all characters can be represented on stage as written.



This scene takes place at and in Bilbo Baggin's home, "Bag End," in the "Shire." Ideally I would like all thirteen dwarves on stage in the first scene at least. However, if casting is limited for some reason, the dining room can be represented with dwarf voices being projected from just off-stage. The fireplace is also optional, but would be nice if it can be represented. Because of the action within the scene, the coat trees or some other form of coat rack, the accessory table, and, of course, Bilbo's front door are all mandatory.

ACT 1 SCENE 2



*trolls' campfire
aglow by lighting
instrument*



This scene takes place in the “Lone-lands” that are between the “Shire” and “Rivendell.” I would like eighteen actors in this scene, but if not all of the dwarves are represented this scene can be readily done with ten to fifteen actors, but I do not recommend having fewer than eight (which I will discuss in more detail in the next chapter). The dwarves will enter from stage right. The trolls will be discovered on stage sitting around their campfire which will only be lit by lighting instrument. There should never be a fire on stage. There should be a minimum of one tree, although two to three staggered trees is ideal.

ACT 1 SCENE 3

open windows with “moonlight” coming in



dining table and chairs



This scene takes place in Elrond’s dining hall in the elven valley of “Rivendell.” Elrond’s dining hall should have moonlight and a few stars seen coming in through the window. The minimum characters required for this scene are four: Elrond, Gandalf the Grey, Bilbo Baggins, and Thorin Oakenshield. Moonlight is the key element on this set. The other set properties—the window and the dining set—can be eliminated if needed, however I would like the window and table set to be utilized if possible.

ACT 1 SCENE 4

(bare stage, except for dinghy later in scene)

*dinghy enters from off-stage
either in moat or
along edge of stage*



This scene takes place on and in the Goblin caves within the “Misty Mountains.”

This scene will require all nineteen actors with one cross-cast as Gollum, unless some of the dwarves are not represented on stage. It is possible to block the scene without the dinghy. If it is used, however, it can be utilized in the Mirkwood Forest scene, as well. For practical blocking purposes, it is better to have a dinghy if at all possible. Any other set denotations should be made with lighting instruments.

ACT 1 SCENE 5-a

2 boulders



The scene takes place on the descending side of the “Misty Mountains” opposite from “Rivendell.” The boulders are mandatory set properties because Balin keeps lookout from between them. It is possible, however, to only have one boulder instead of two if needed. Ideally, there will be fifteen actors for this part of the scene, however this number can be reduced if not every dwarf is represented on stage.

ACT 1 SCENE 5-b

*2 - 4 trees or tree fronts
with scaffolding
behind them*



This scene takes place near the base of the far side of the “Misty Mountains.” If there are only two trees and the warg is guarding both trees equally, it is possible to only have one warg represented on stage and any other wargs be represented by sound effects and possibly silhouette images projected onto the cyc. Ideally, I would like to have three wargs. If there is only one warg and all of the dwarves are represented on stage, this scene will require seventeen actors—the seventeenth being the actor playing the Lord of the Eagles—otherwise this number can be reduced. I would like to use a fly system on the Lord of the Eagles carrying Gandalf off-stage. If there is no fly system, there are a few possibilities on how to handle this part of the blocking. A silhouette can be projected onto the cyc, a shadowbox can be utilized, or the claws can be seen coming in to grab Gandalf with the lights fading to blackout more quickly.

ACT 1 SCENE 5-c

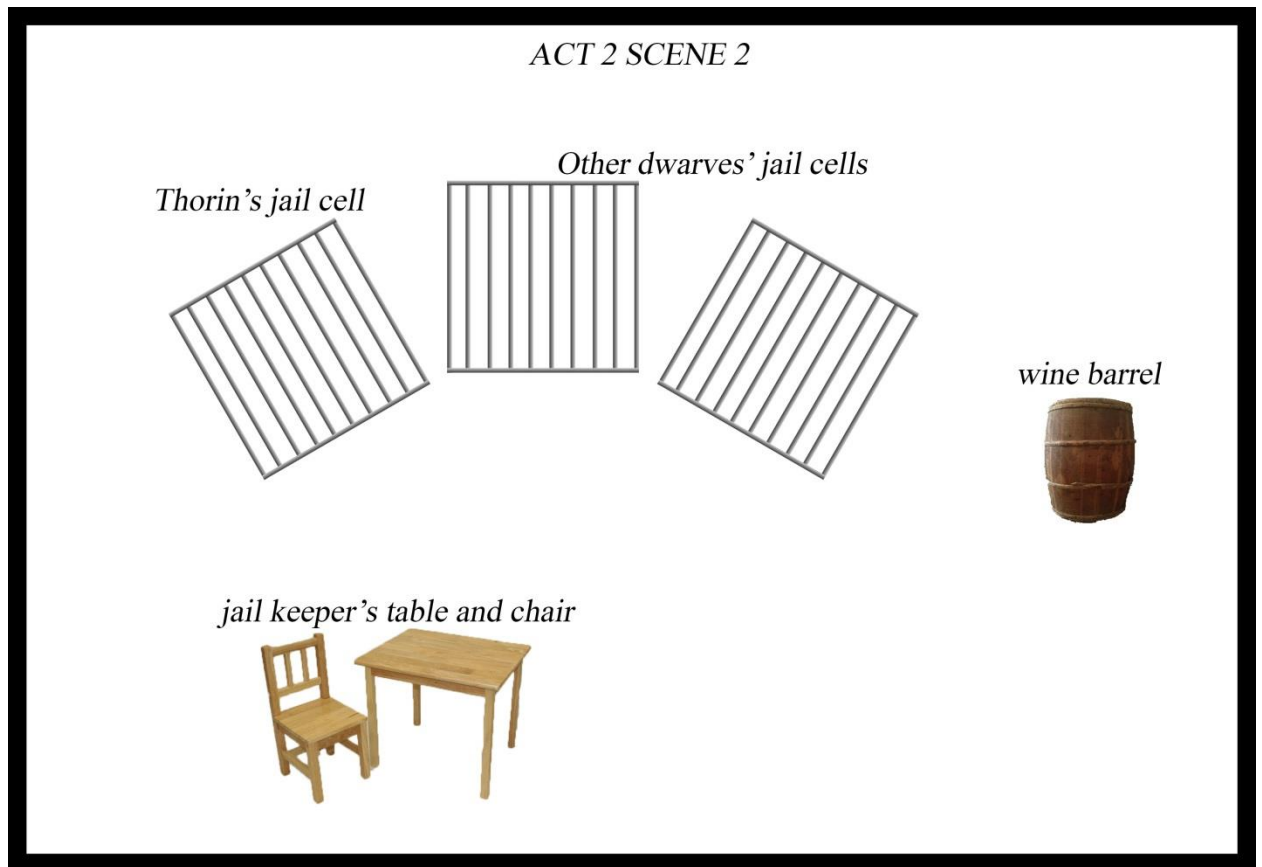
(bare stage)

The stage will need to be cleared quickly to represent Beorn's house near "Mirkwood Forest." As the Actors stand on the stage then exit shortly after concluding the dialog, there will be no special considerations for this scene. Although I would ideally like seventeen actors to be present on the stage, this scene could just as easily be done with anywhere from a minimum of three (Bilbo, Gandalf, and the Lord of the Eagles) up to the seventeen maximum needed depending on how many dwarves can be afforded on stage.

ACT 2 SCENE 1

(bare stage with path created by lighting instruments)

This scene takes place at, in, and through “Mirkwood Forest.” If fewer than eighteen actors are used for this scene, there should be as many dwarves represented as possible so there will be enough dwarf power to carry Bombur. If a gobo or special is available to project a path onto the stage, I envision this becoming unfocused, rotating, and refocusing so as to give the impression that Mirkwood Forest is a deceptive place to be traveling through.



This scene takes place in the Wood-Elf King's dungeon, just on the other side of "Mirkwood Forest." Ideally, this scene will utilize sixteen actors. The jail cells can be represented as simplistically as the three cell doors represented here, or more elaborately with a frame for the doors to be secured in. The table, chair, and wine barrel are nice to have, but are not mandatory.

ACT 2 SCENE 3-a

wooden barrel
open on both ends



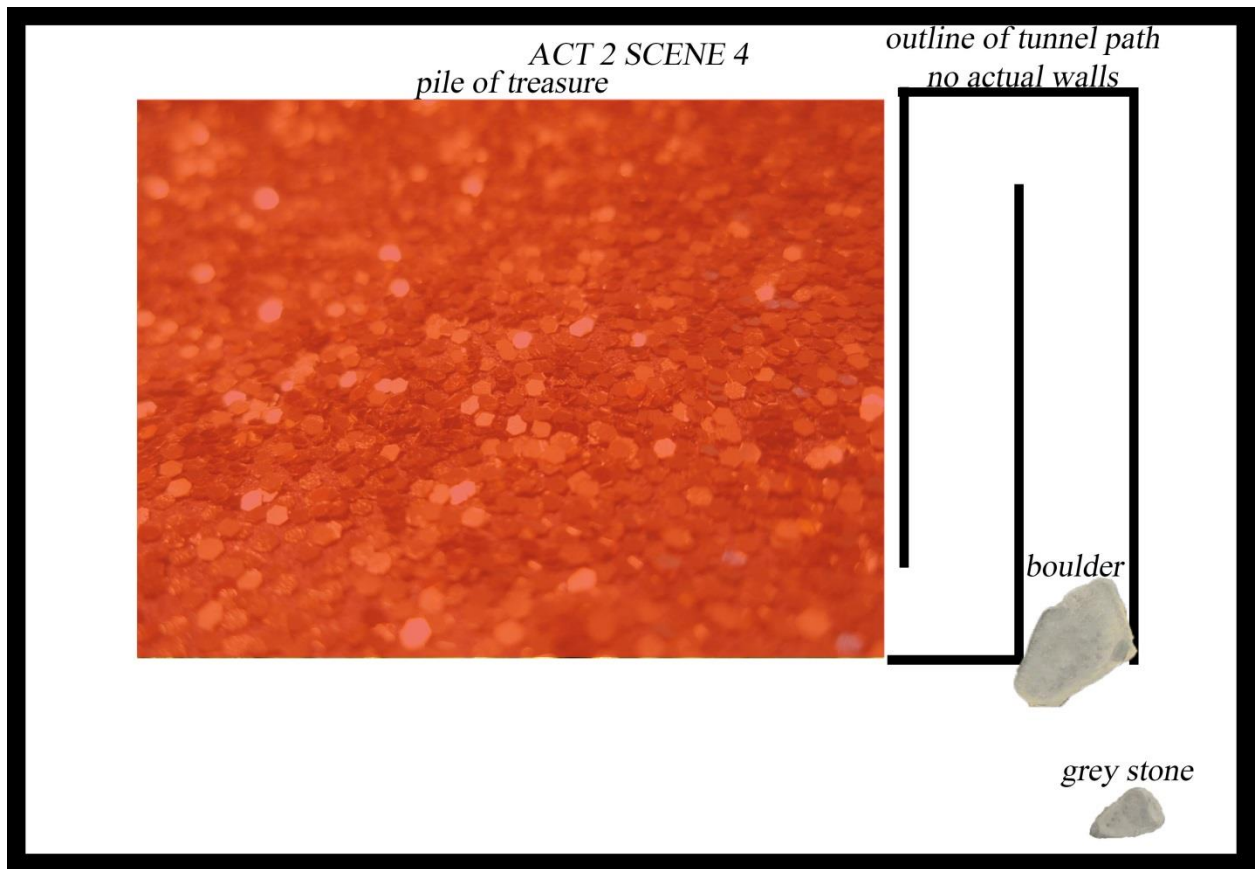
This scene takes place at the Lake town of “Esgaroth.” It is down the river from the Wood-Elf King’s lands and the Lonely Mountain is nearby. Ideally, this scene will have sixteen actors. The wooden barrel is optional, but nice to have if possible.

ACT 2 SCENE 3-b

dressing mirror



This scene takes place in the Master of “Esgaroth’s” place of business. Although I would like to have Thorin present, this scene can readily be done with only two actors. The dressing mirror is a mandatory set property.



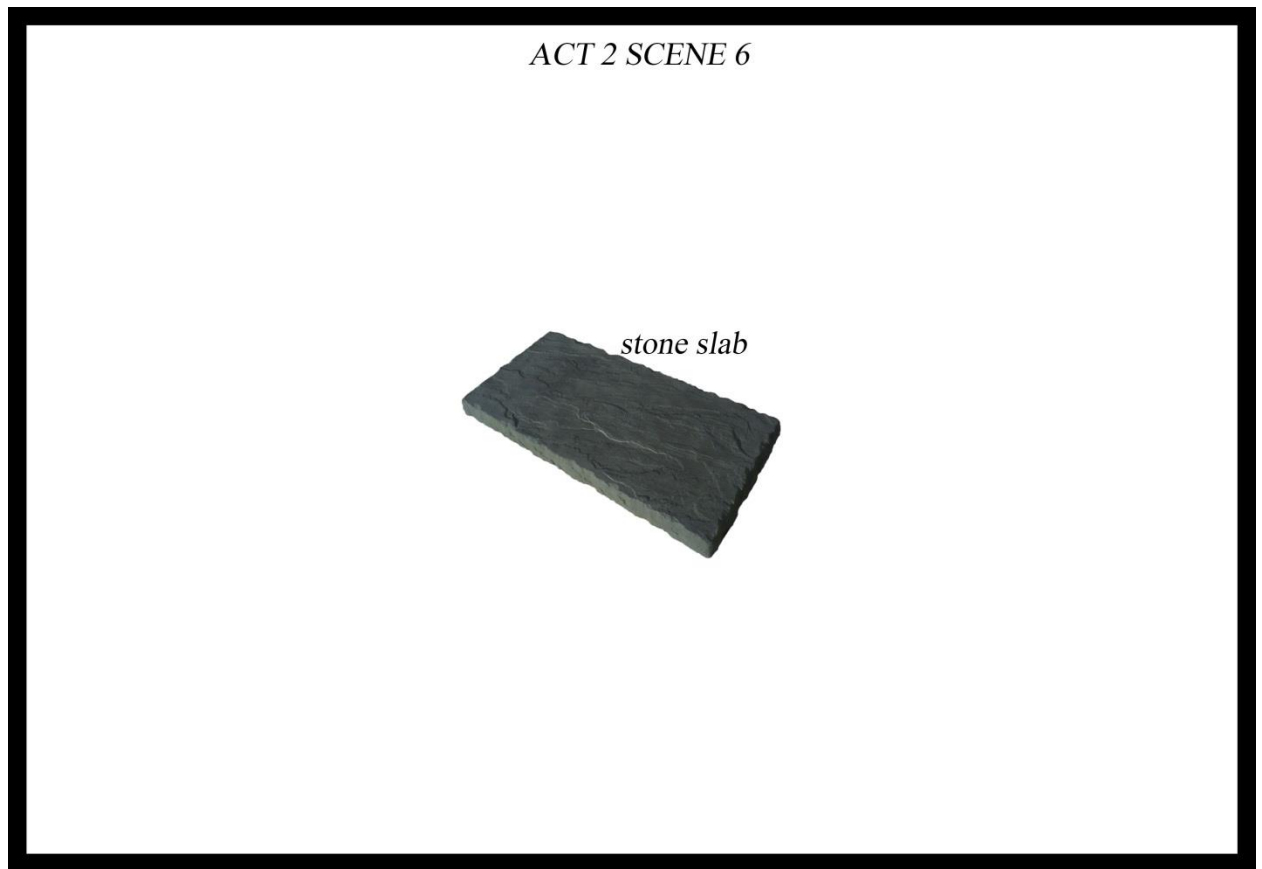
This scene takes place at and in the “Lonely Mountain”—the dwarves’ final destination. Ideally this scene will require sixteen actors. As I suggested in my script, the “pile of treasure” can be a floor mat with a few pieces of actual treasure, including the arkenstone, strewn over the top of it. I would like to have the thrush on a fly system, but if that is not available the actor will need to walk off-stage with wings flapping as though preparing for take-off. The script is written to accommodate Smaug flapping his wings in this manner, as well. The tunnel path should be lit to denote the width and shape. There should be no visible walls except for the boulder and the grey stone.

ACT 2 SCENE 5

*“front door”
can be cardboard with
scaffolding behind it*



This scene takes place at the front door of the “Lonely Mountain.” Ideally this scene will require eighteen actors, unless Beorn is not used and there are fewer than thirteen dwarves represented on stage. The “brick” portion of the wall represented here should be of a material that can tumble forward readily without injuring any of the actors or audience. Bilbo will be in front of it, so a large cardboard or other lightweight material that is painted on both sides should be ideal. The scaffolding should be readily movable so that it can be taken off-stage just before the “brick” portion of the wall falls forward.



This scene takes place near the base of the “Lonely Mountain.” Ideally this scene will require seventeen actors. For this scene especially I would like to have eleven dwarves (Fili and Kili were killed in the battle) represented on stage along with Bard, Beorn, the Wood-Elf King, Gandalf the Grey, and Bilbo Baggins. The stone slab is not mandatory, but is nice to have. If the stone slab is not used, Thorin can be laid on a sheet on the floor.

ACT 2 SCENE 7

(bare stage)

This scene takes place in an empty space located somewhere between the “Lonely Mountain” and the Lake town “Esgaroth.” Ideally this scene will require fourteen actors. Because this is the “good-bye” scene, it is best to have as many of the living dwarves represented on stage as possible.

ACT 2 SCENE 8

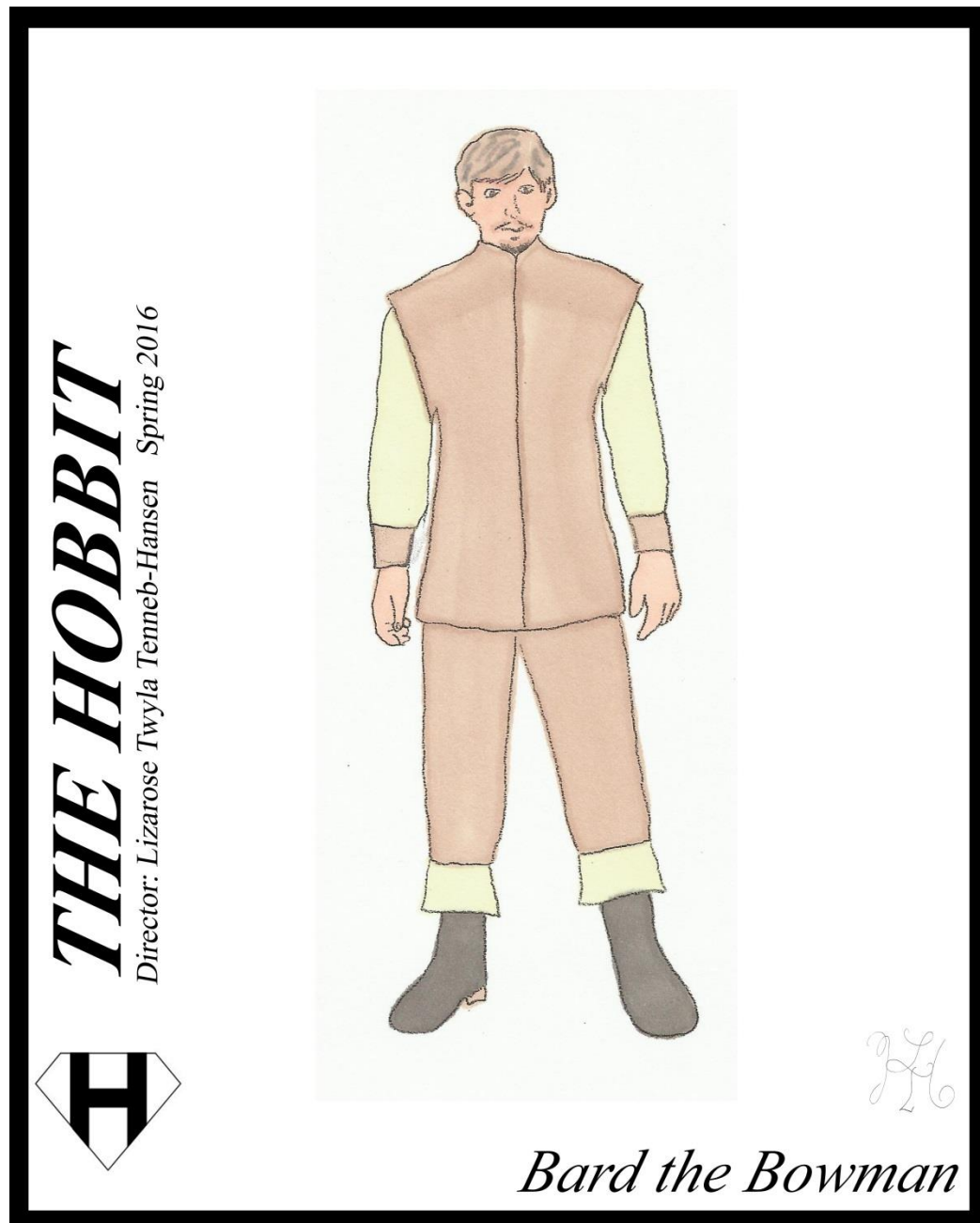
Bilbo's front door



This scene takes place just outside of “Bag End” in the “Shire.” This scene only has two actors and Bilbo’s front door. I feel like Bilbo’s door bookends the set and brings closure to the performance, so in this way the door is extremely mandatory.

COSTUMES

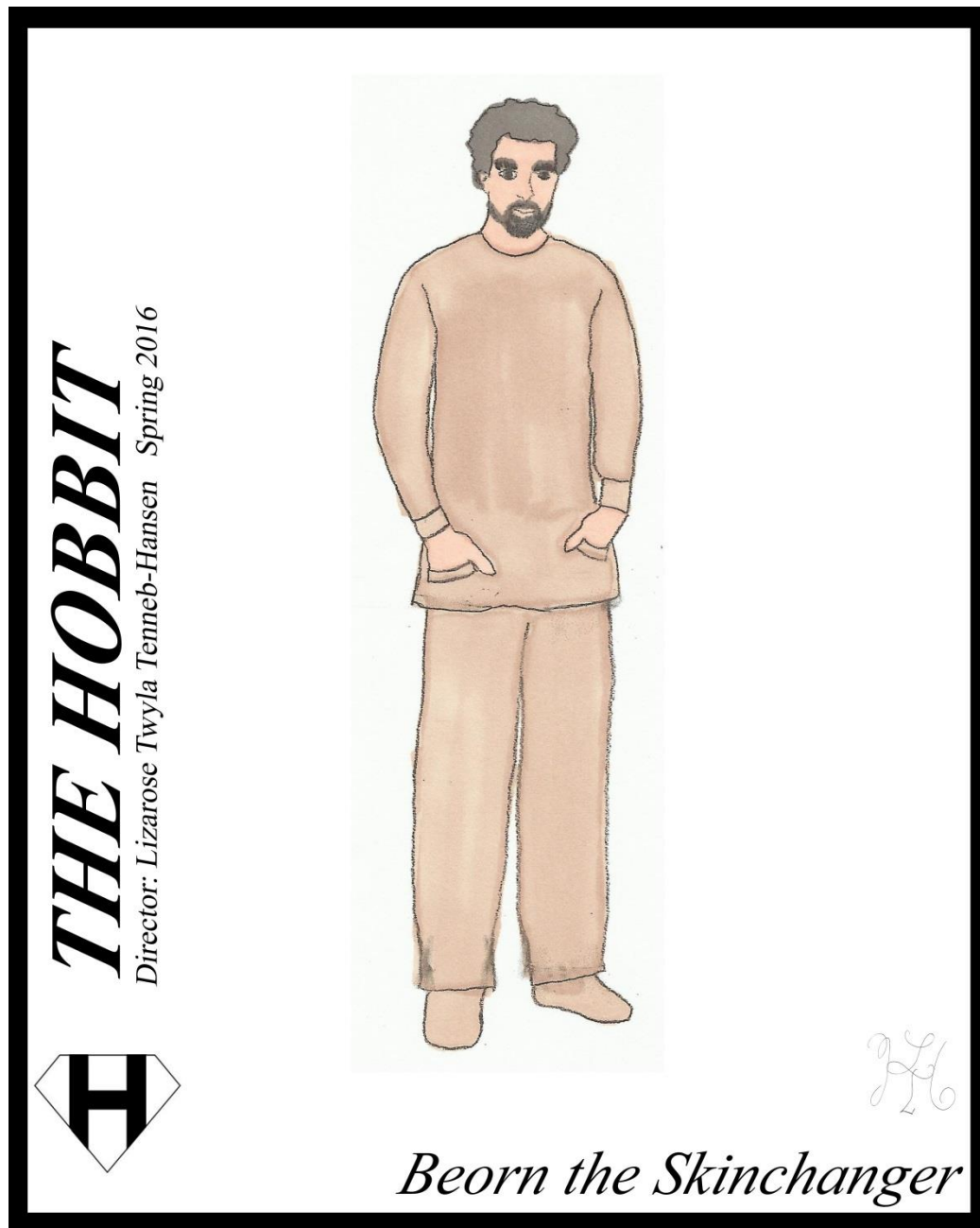
Now that I have addressed the sets, I will show some of the costumes I have in mind for my actors. Rather than draw every costume for every character, I will instead draw my design for one character to represent that group. I will discuss each costume in turn as I show them. The order I will show them in is as follows: Bard the Bowman, Beorn the Skinchanger, Bilbo Baggins, Bombur, Elrond, Gandalf the Grey, Goblin #1, Gollum, Jail Keeper, Lord of the Eagles, Master of Esgaroth, Smaug, Spider, Thorin Oakenshield, Warg, William the Stone Troll, and finally, the Wood-Elf King.



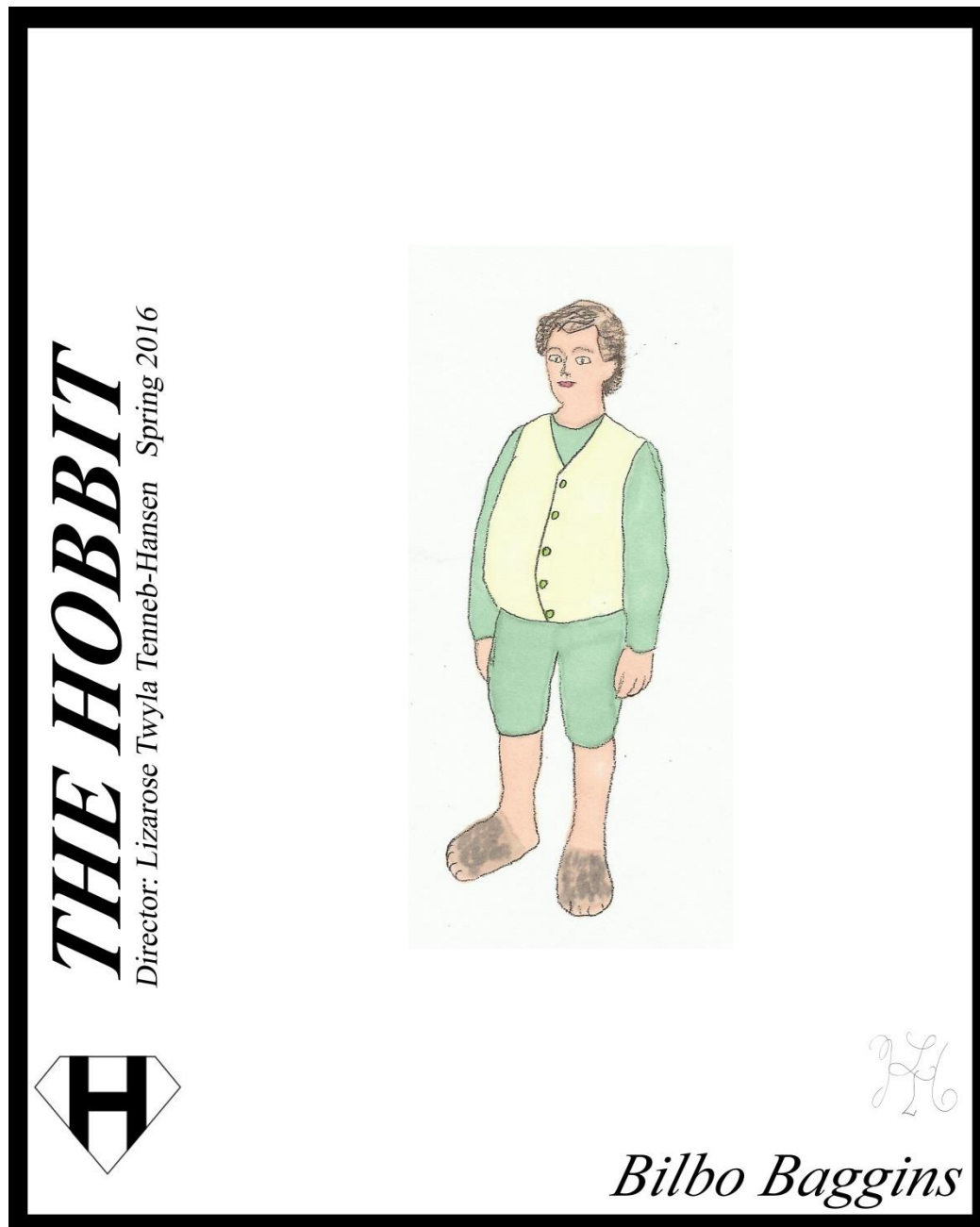
This costume consists of a leather surcoat over a linen shirt with leather cuffs.

The trousers can be corduroy or faux leather with the pant legs tucked into jockey boots.

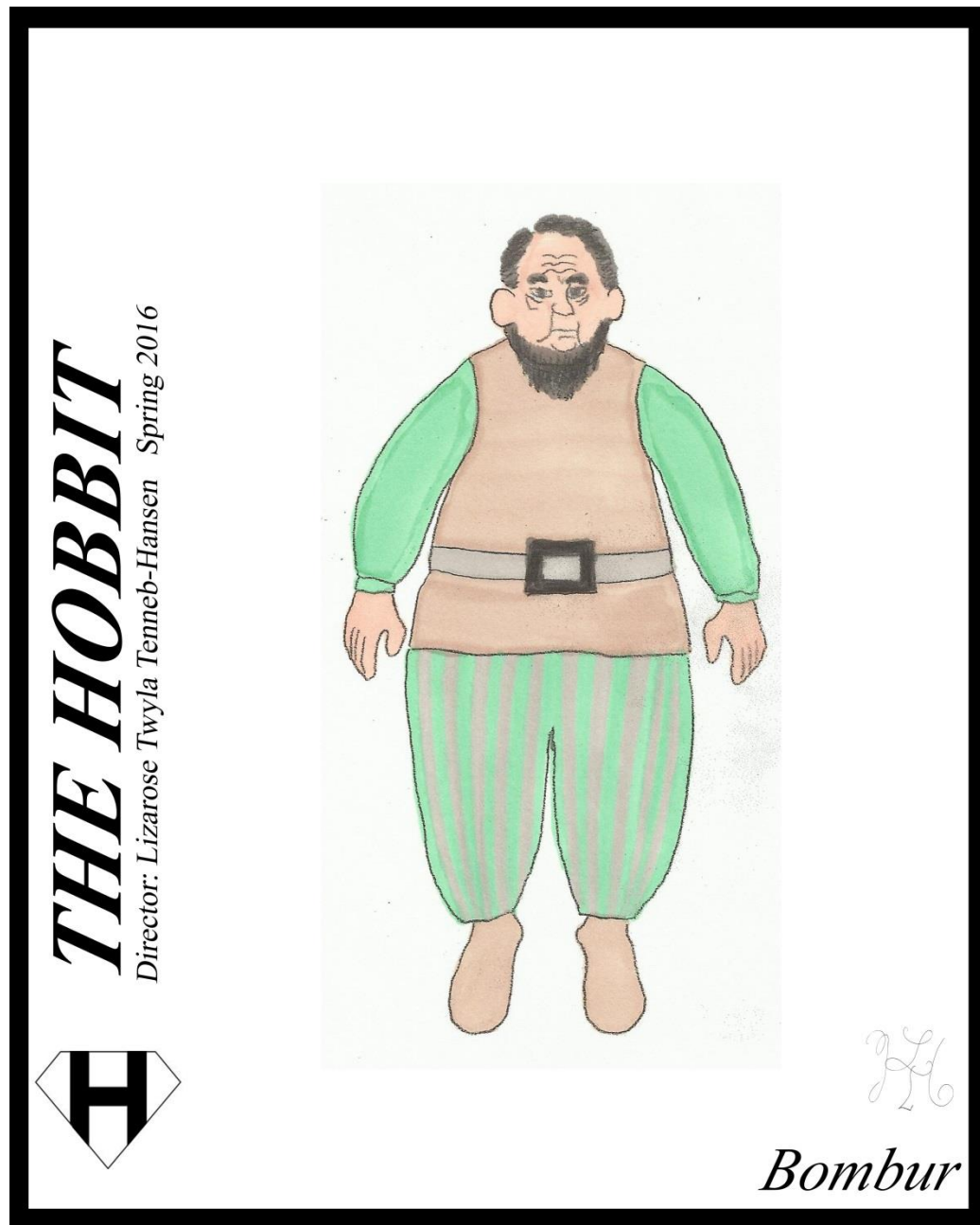
The Guard and the Guard Captain should have similar costumes to Bard's costume.



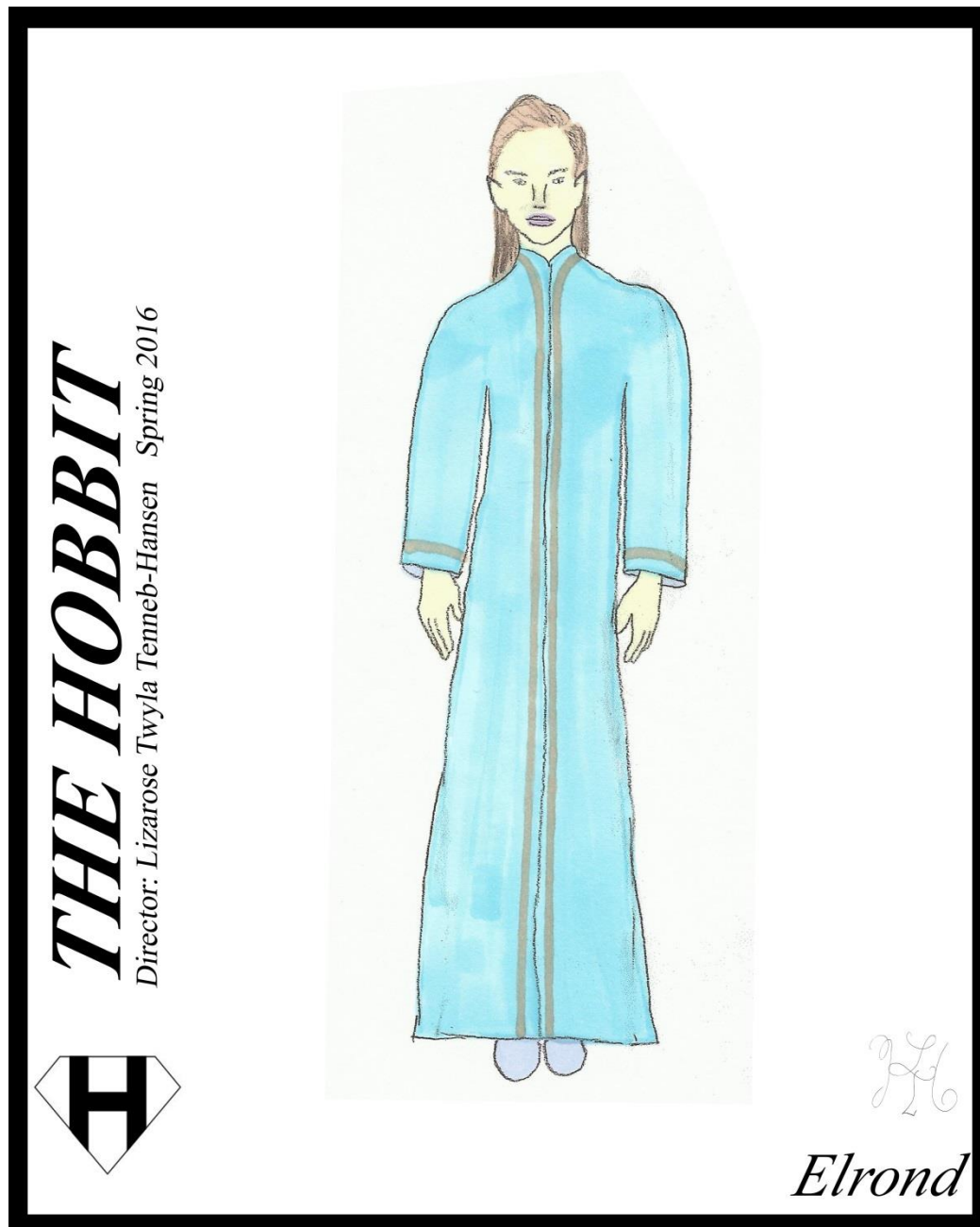
This costume consists of a faux leather tunic and trousers with leather foot coverings similar to the Roman calceus.



This costume consists of a green linen tunic and knickers with a yellow linen waistcoat. Bilbo has brown curly hair on his head and feet. The enlarged feet are the “shoes” for this character and should allow the actor to be as close to the ground as possible. If the actor is slender, the costume should be padded around the stomach, but not to the point of appearing obese.



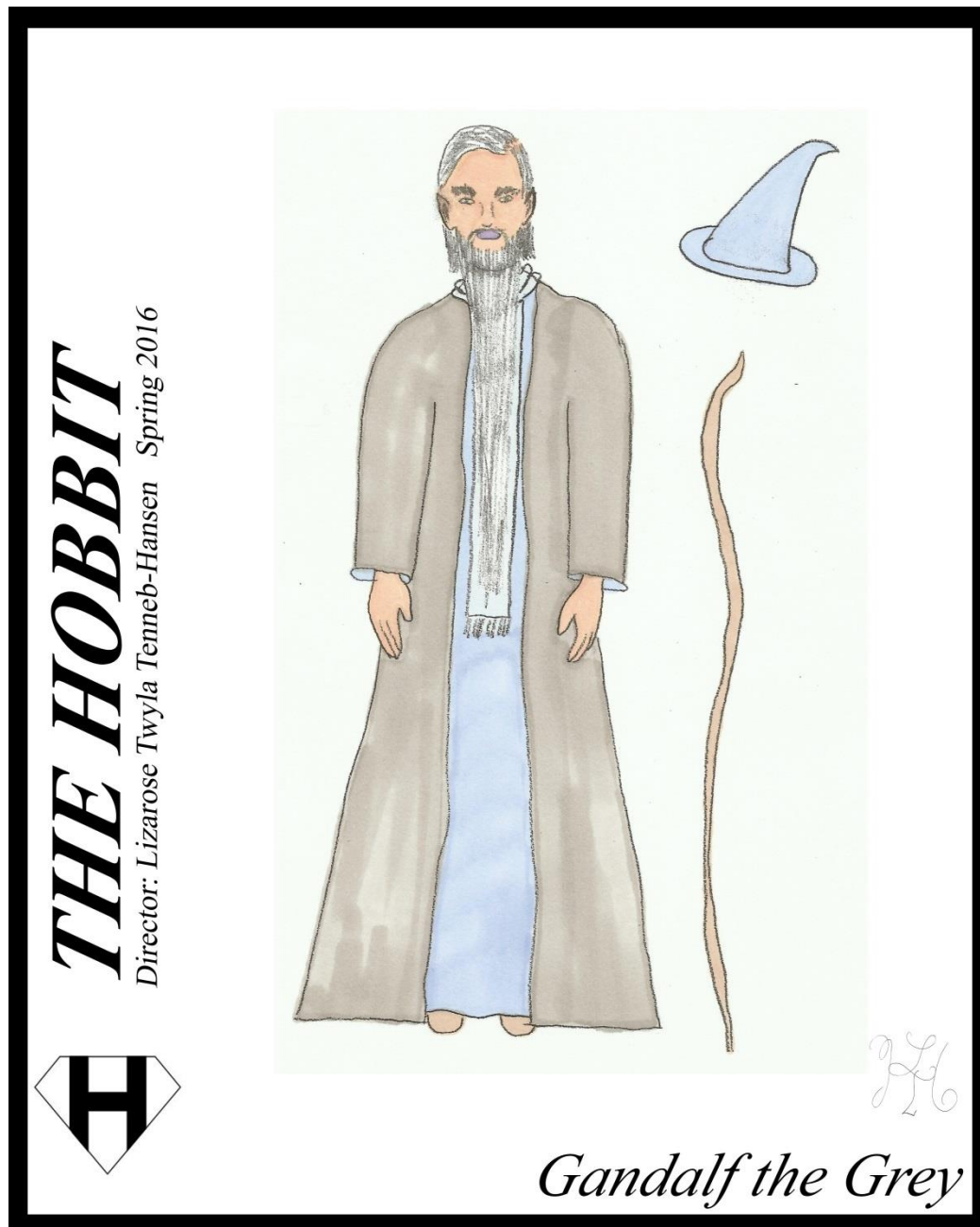
This costume consists of a heavy linen tunic, a sleeveless doublet with a belt, and ankle-length galligaskins. The foot coverings should be similar to the Roman calceus. Bombur's costume should be heavily padded. Each of the dwarves, with the exception of Thorin Oakenshield, should be similarly attired, except for their costume color matching the color of their cloak and hood in the script.



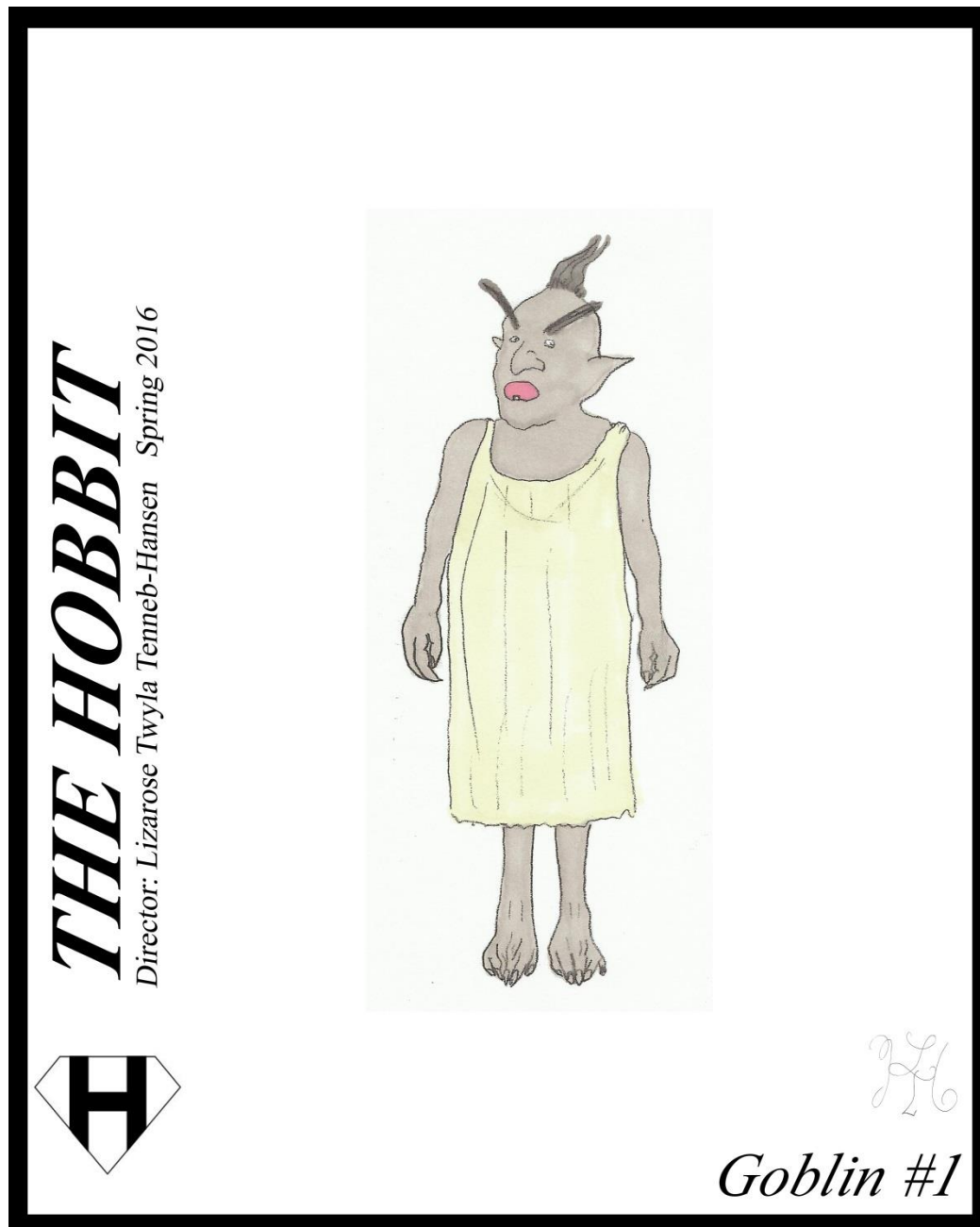
This costume consists of a blue satin robe lined in silver satin with silver trim.

The shoes should be satin blue slippers. Elrond is a brunette.

If attendants are used, they should be similarly attired, but without the silver trim and with regular silver or grey lining instead of satin lining.

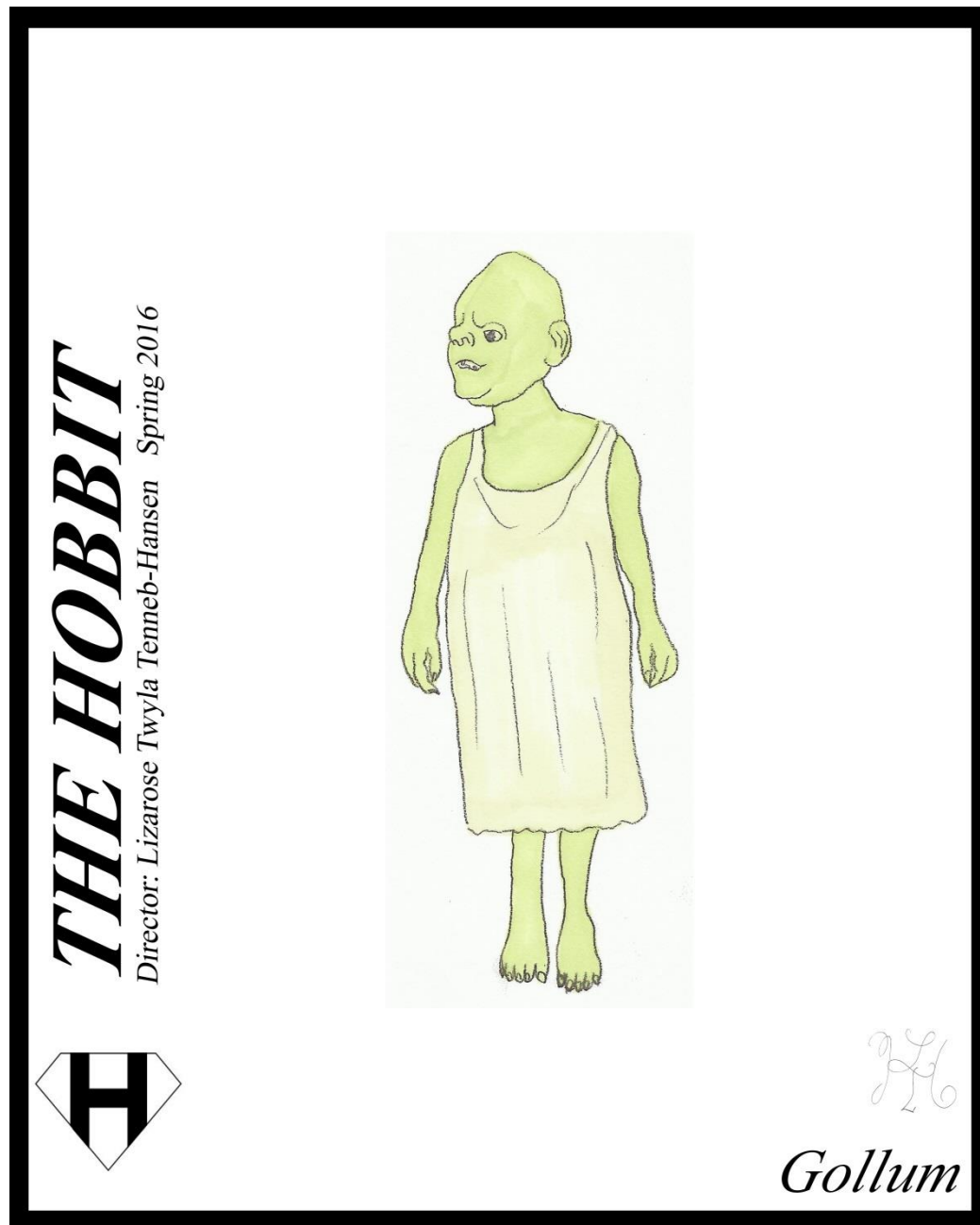


This costume consists of a heavy linen blue tunic with an open heavy linen grey robe. The silver scarf hanging behind the long white beard should be tasseled. The hat should be made from a heavy starched linen. Gandalf should have a tall wooden staff and tall leather boots. Gandalf should be one of the tallest characters, so tall, thick soles should be utilized on the boots if the actor is not tall enough without them.

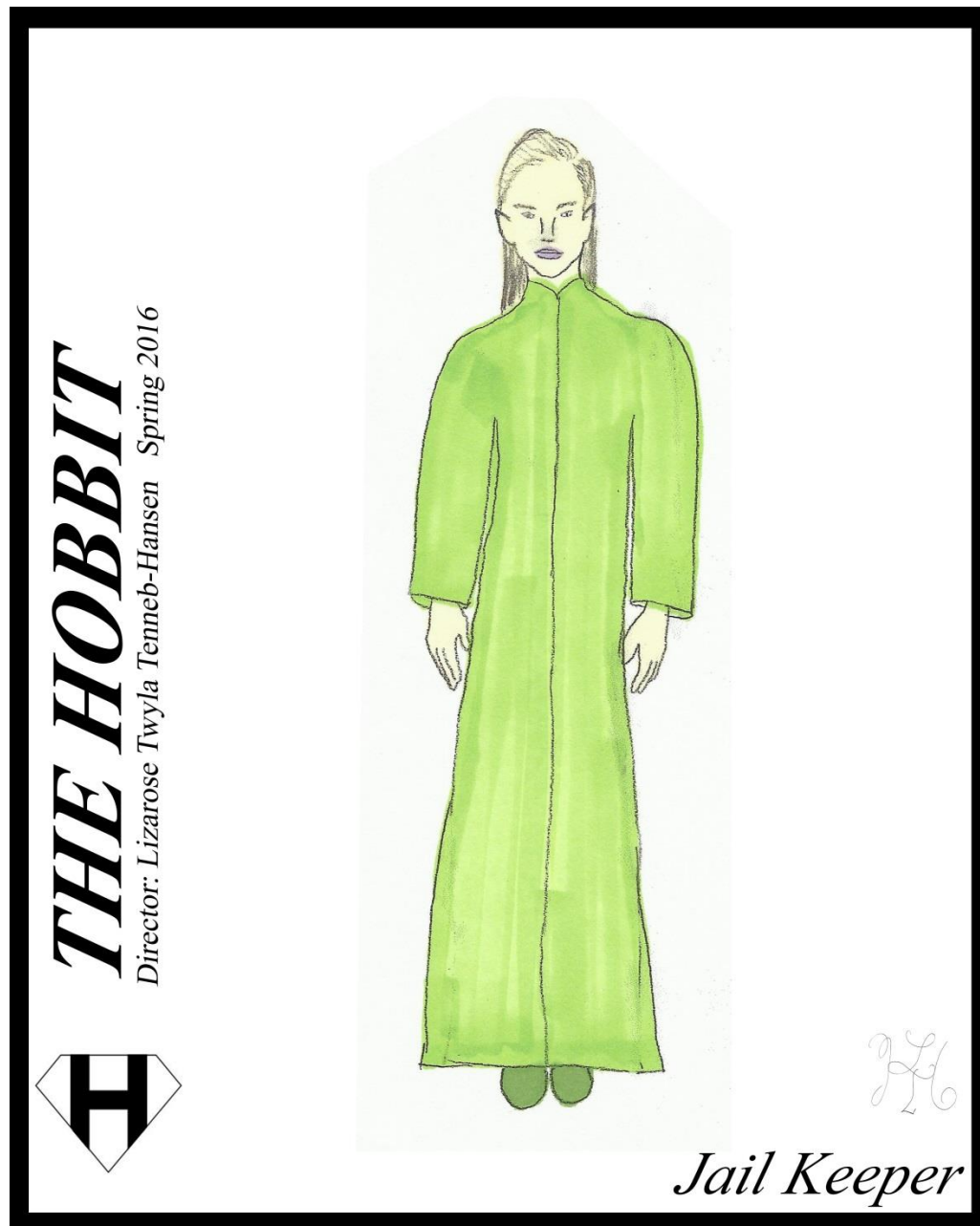


This costume consists of a latex head mask and latex hand and feet coverings with a distressed linen enclosed tunic similar in style to the Grecian doric peplos.

The other goblins should be similarly clad, but the Great Goblin should also be padded out to make him appear larger.



This costume consists of a latex head mask and latex hand and feet coverings with a distressed linen enclosed tunic similar in style to the Grecian doric peplos. Gollum most likely kept this costume from one of his goblin victims, so it should be more rag-like than the Goblin rags.



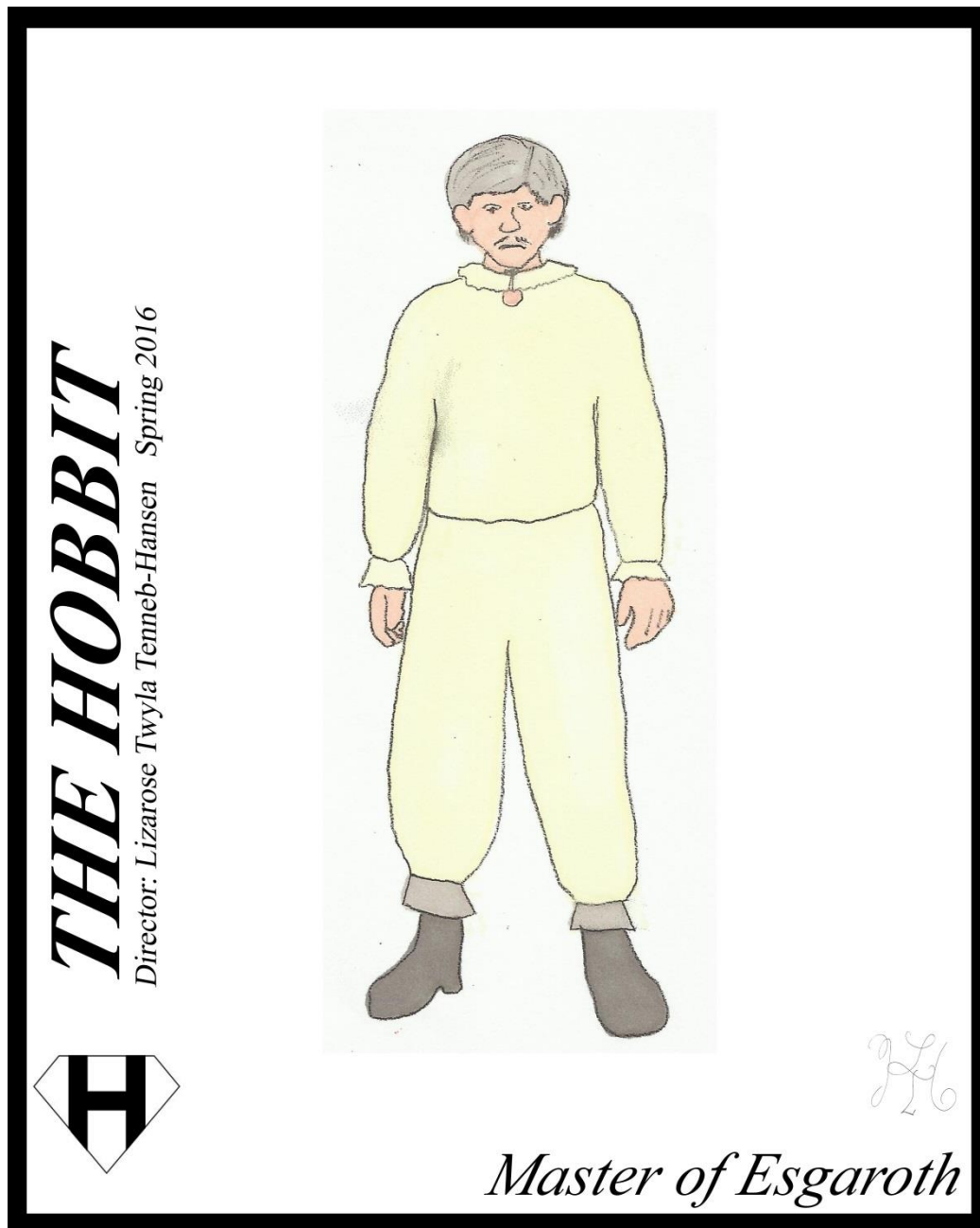
This costume consists of a green satin robe with yellow lining and satin green slippers.

Any wood elves, except for the Wood-Elf King, should be similarly attired and are all blonde. The Banner Bearer can be cross cast with the Jail Keeper, but should have a similar costume to the Wood Elves.



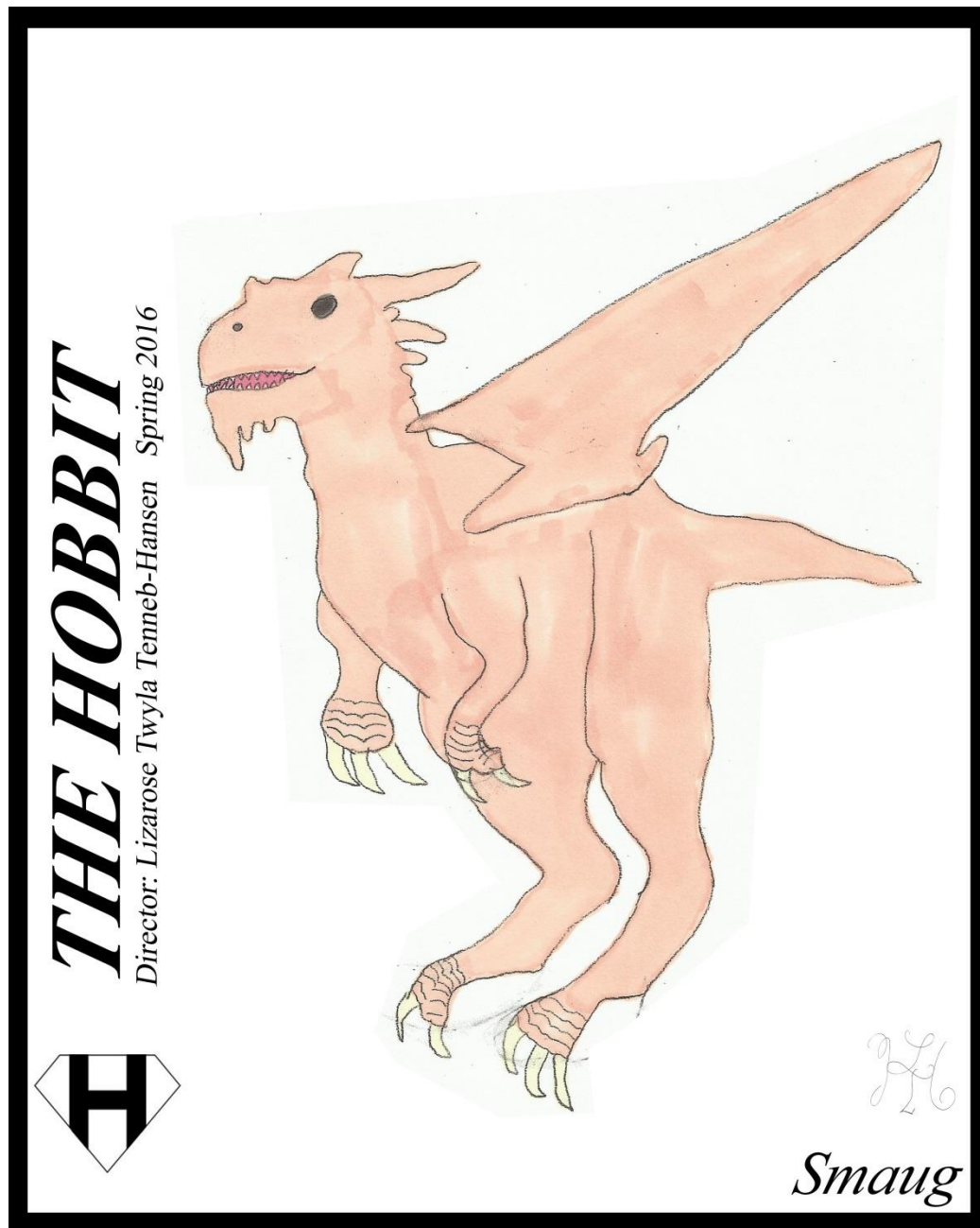
This costume should look as realistic as possible. The arms should go in the wings, the head into the eagle head, and the legs descend to just above the talons with the claws spreading like shoes.

The same for the Thrush, only the thrush should be as small as possible while the Lord of the Eagles should be much larger proportionally speaking. Both costumes should be wearable by a single actor.



This costume consists of a yellow blousy shirt and yellow blousy trousers tucked into jockey boots. There should be a luxury of engageantes on this costume, especially on the cuffs and collar. The fabric should be a printed fabric that will make it appear to be richly elaborate.

The Councilor should be similarly attired, but with fewer engageantes on it.

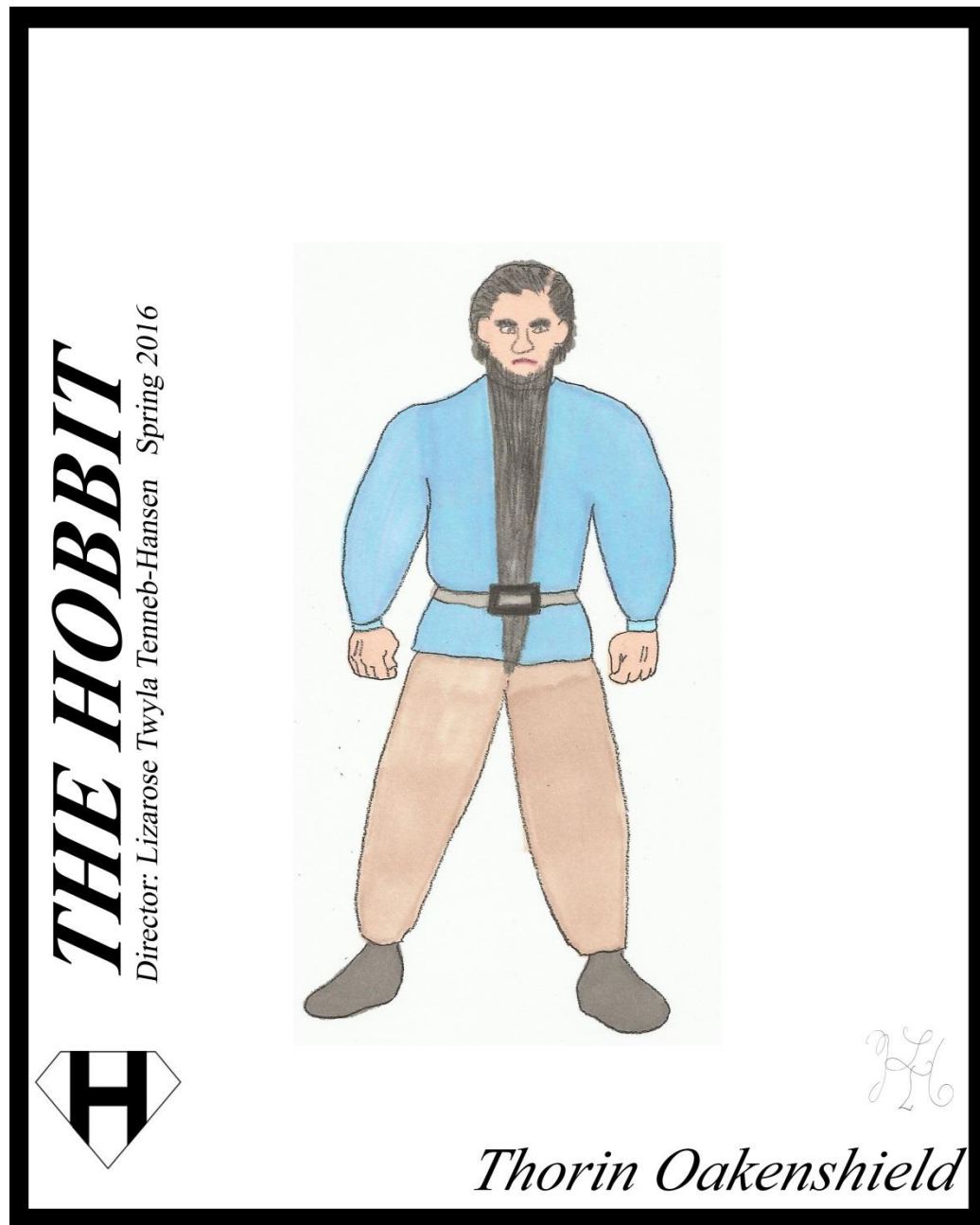


Even if size must be sacrificed, this costume should be able to be worn and operated by a single actor or no more than two actors. Smaug should appear to be extremely formidable regardless of his size requirements.

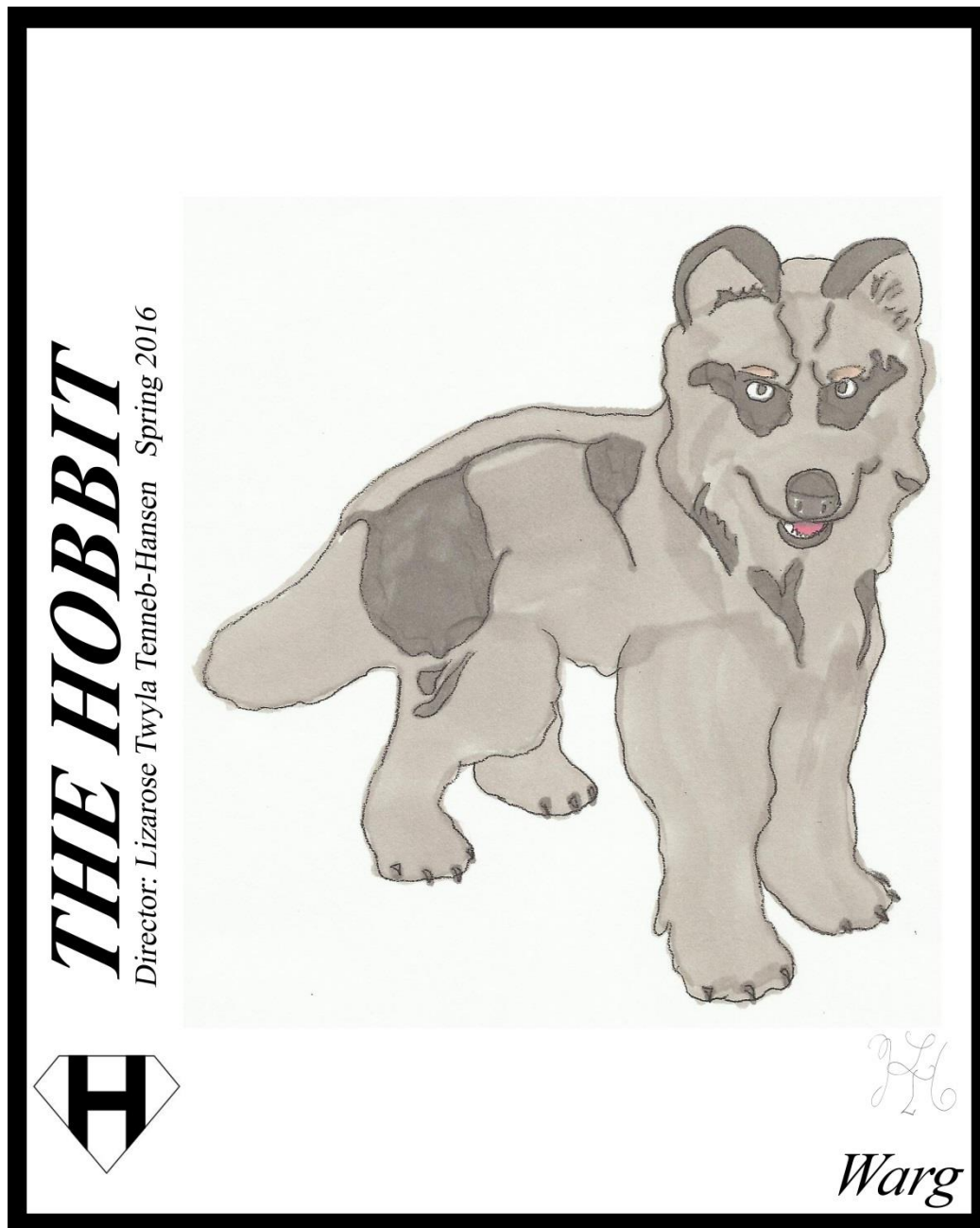


This costume should look as realistic as possible. The back end of the spider costume will be stabbed by Bilbo, so this portion of the costume at least should be a stuffed lycra or other knit fabric that will remain intact after being stabbed. The legs should have some type of wire support structure so the actor can move around without

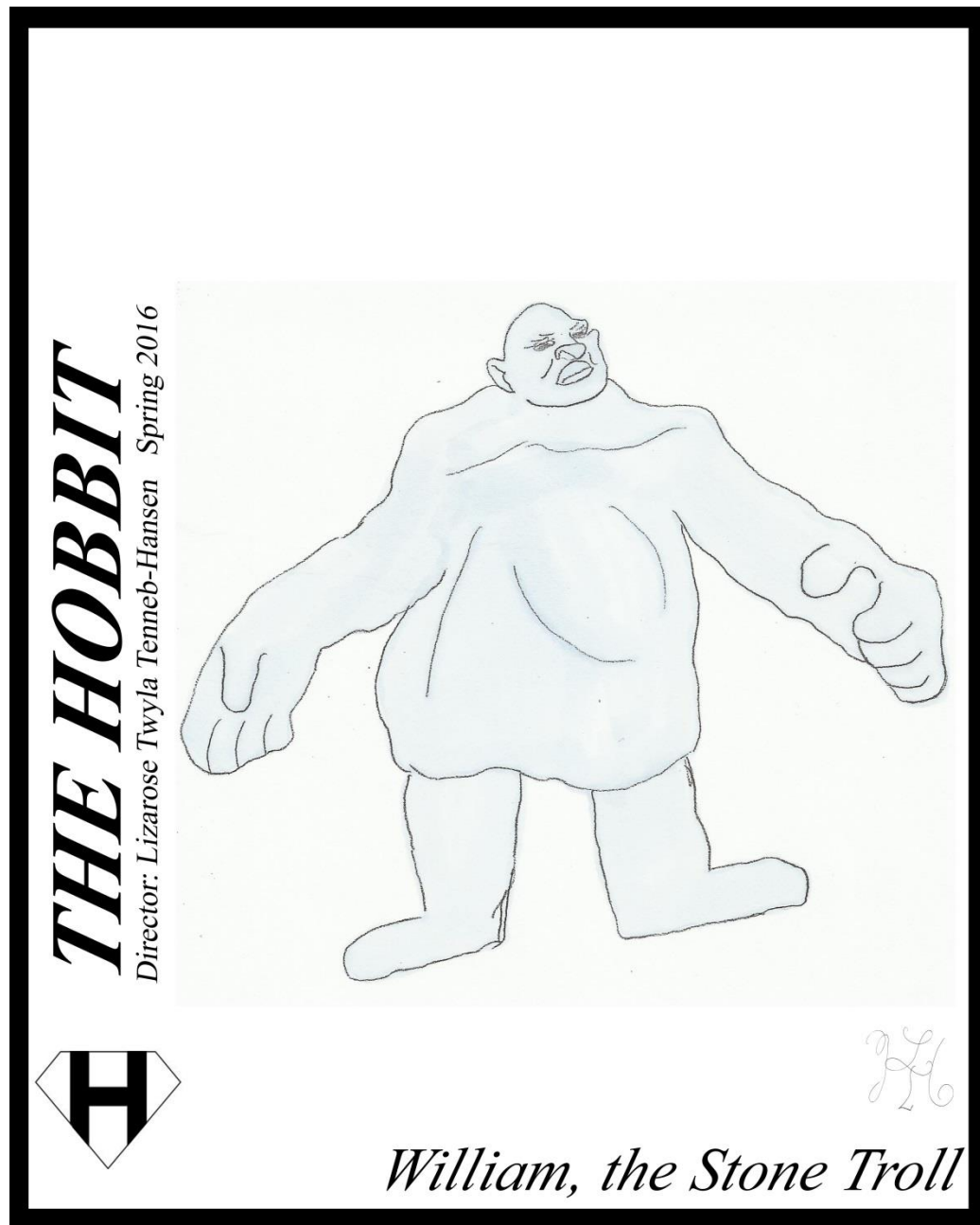
worrying about the legs drooping or dragging. This costume should be able to be manned by a single actor.



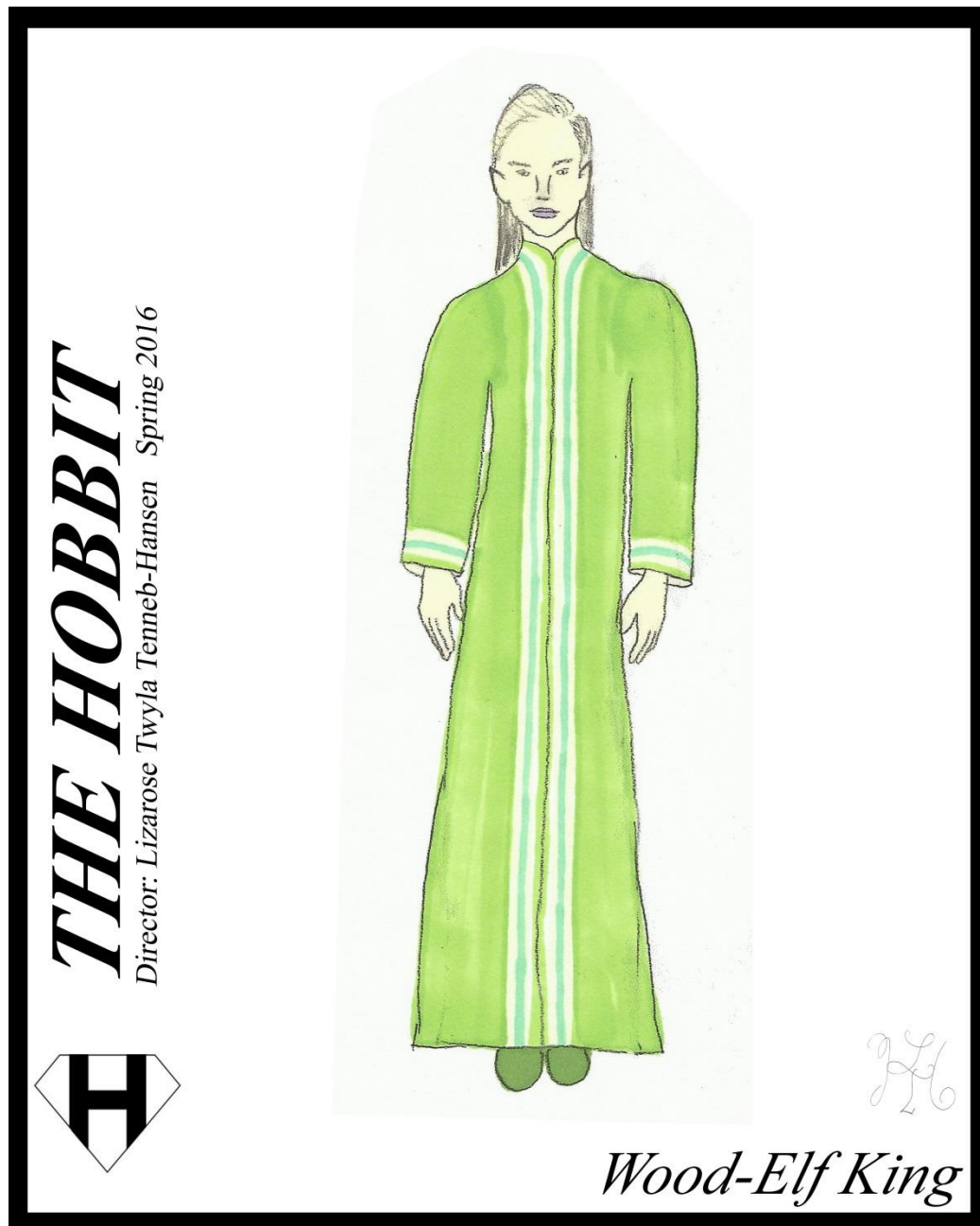
This costume consists of a heavy linen sky blue tunic with a silver belt and ankle-length trousers. The foot coverings should be similar to the Roman calceus. Thorin's cloak and hood are also sky blue, but his is the only one with a tassel on it. Thorin's tassel is silver.



This costume should look as realistic as possible and be worn and operated by a single actor. If, for example, should the legs and feet stick out from the back of the hind feet, the actor should have any protruding body parts covered in black opaque tights or something similar so as not to distract or detract from the costume and character.



This costume consists of a stuffed body suit that can stand on its own at the end of the scene. This costume should be the same for Bert and Tom, as well. However, they should have different hats on that were stolen from their past victims that are very small in proportion to their bodies. If the hats fall off or get crushed, this is not something they would notice or care about. The suits should be able to be manned by a single actor.



This costume consists of a green satin robe lined in yellow or cream satin with gold trim. The trim should be more elaborate than Elrond's décor. The shoes should be satin green slippers. The Wood-Elf King is blonde.

CHAPTER IV: *Potential Challenges*

There are many potential challenges with this particular production. Even though I have attempted to address many of them throughout my script and earlier chapters, I am certain that even the additional ones I cover in this chapter will not address everything. The reason for this is that unless I intimately work with this script in a production, it will be difficult to foresee every possible challenge that can arise. Another difficulty rests in the difference between stages. While one stage may readily accommodate most, if not all, of the staging requirements, that does not mean that another stage, even of similar type, will handle those challenges equally well. However, the challenges I will address are: what roles to cut if there are not enough actors available for at least nineteen roles, the basic types of stages and available property resources, and finally how to handle the potential challenges with some of the costumes. Once I am done addressing these, I will conclude with my afterthoughts in the next chapter.

The biggest challenge I foresee is how to handle having a cast of less than nineteen actors. The obvious answer to this is to never have every dwarf on stage at the same time. But if this is the case, which roles are to get cut or be creatively represented without an actor being present on stage?

In the very first scene, the dwarves can go to an off-stage dining area and have pre-recorded sounds of an ever-increasing din of dwarves dining. If the dwarves who already entered Bilbo's house can change their make-up and costumes quickly enough, this will reduce the required number for the first scene from fifteen to six.

The second scene requires Bilbo and Gandalf, at least a few of the dwarves, and three stone trolls. If the lights are temporarily blacked out, the pile of dwarf feet sticking out of the end of the sacks could be properties instead of actors. It would be difficult to change costumes in the midst of this, so Thorin, Fili, and Kili would be the most important dwarves to have represented on stage. Having only these three dwarves will reduce the casting requirements from eighteen to eight for this scene.

The third scene requires a minimum of four actors. Elrond's attendants are optional and the only dwarf that needs to be on stage for this scene is Thorin. That leaves Thorin, Elrond, Gandalf, and Bilbo.

The fourth and fifth scenes require the largest number of actors on stage simultaneously. The fourth scene is written for three goblin subjects, the Great Goblin, the Company of fifteen, and then Gollum, who makes his appearance in the last part of the scene. The goblin subjects can readily be reduced to two and Gollum can be cross-cast with almost anyone from the first part of the scene, but that still leaves eighteen roles to be filled. If there is only one goblin subject plus the Great Goblin, Gandalf, Bilbo, Thorin, and perhaps two other dwarves, this scene could be staged with six actors and even leave an actor free to change into the Gollum costume ahead of time. This would readily reduce nineteen actors to only seven.

The fifth scene is written for three wargs, thirteen dwarves, the Lord of the Eagles, Gandalf, and Bilbo, which will take the minimum nineteen roles I would ideally like to fill. If there are less than three wargs, I would like to still have at least two although it can be creatively pulled off with one. I do not want to resort to shadow puppets unless absolutely necessary, so this will require at least two wargs and the Lord

of the Eagles being able to either fly in or jump in to give the appearance of rescue via eagle. In the last part of this scene, Beorn's appearance is optional although he could readily be cross-cast with one of the actors playing a warg. If only three dwarves are represented on stage, along with two wargs, one eagle, Gandalf, and Bilbo, this will reduce the number of actors from nineteen to a minimum of eight even if Beorn is included in this scene.

In the first scene of the second act, the Company minus Gandalf is on stage almost the entire time. Gandalf is at the beginning of it, then two spiders appear, but not at once. I blocked it to have the same actor appear twice for that role; then two Wood Elves arrive at the end to take the rest of the dwarves prisoner. Gandalf can readily be cross-cast to be one of the Wood Elves and the other Wood Elf can readily be played by the Jail Keeper from the next scene. With the entire Company of dwarves and Bilbo, this requires a minimum of seventeen actors. This number can be reduced to eight if Thorin and only three other dwarves are represented on stage during this scene.

The second scene should have sixteen actors, but it can be done with only eight if there are two dwarves in each of the second and third jail cells.

The third scene can have eight instead of sixteen actors, as well. This would require five dwarves, including Thorin, Bilbo, a Guard, and the Guard Captain. The second part of this scene only requires three, but can be done with just the Master and the Councilor, as well.

The fourth scene should have sixteen actors, but if the dwarves are reduced to five, including Thorin, it can be done with eight instead.

The fifth scene is written for nineteen actors, but the Banner Bearer can readily be cross cast with any actor not in the Company. Only because Beorn is in the next scene along with Gandalf, Bard, and the Wood-Elf King, it will probably be wise to not cross cast Beorn with any of the other three unless Beorn is eliminated completely. If Beorn's role is eliminated, Bard's character can fill Beorn's part, but as Bard. If there are only three dwarves plus Thorin, that will reduce the cast for this scene from nineteen to eight.

The sixth scene is Thorin's death scene. I would like to have the full sixteen actors on stage that the scene is written for, however, with only two other dwarves besides Thorin, or three dwarves and no Beorn, this scene can be played with a cast of eight.

The seventh scene has no Beorn and no Thorin, but it does have Gandalf, Bilbo, Bard, the Wood-Elf King, and the remaining dwarves from the original Company. This requires a cast of fourteen, but if only four dwarves are represented on stage it can be done with eight.

And finally, the eighth and last scene only has two: Gandalf and Bilbo. These roles are both required, but there is no need to reduce this amount anyway.

Although I would very much like to see this done with a cast of at least nineteen, I believe I have explained how this show can be pulled off with as few as eight actors if necessary. If any more dwarf roles need to be eliminated, I strongly recommend not casting below seven roles total as I feel that eight is already a very tight cast.

The next set of challenges I will address are the types of stages and the available property resources. I did my best to plan my sets for three types of stages: thrust, black

box, and proscenium. I also made allowances for how to handle the characters that are supposed to fly just in case there is no fly system available.

Originally what I had in mind for the set at the top of the play was a row of coat hooks. However, unless these are somehow attached to the frame of Bilbo's front door, I realized this would be highly impractical, especially if it is set in a black box theatre. For this reason, I switched to coat trees instead. The fireplace is optional, although it would be nice to have, as is the dining room table. The fireplace has potential for causing sight line problems on a black box stage. However, if it is placed in front of a stage exit, I think it should not create too big of a challenge. Even if the cast is not reduced, the dining room can be removed from the stage and the dwarves can congregate just off-stage instead of around the dining room table. I realize that set pieces must be removed fairly quickly, but the front door and the dining room table are two items that I would like to have if at all possible.

Keeping quick set changes in mind, I tried to go with a bare stage wherever I felt I could justify it. Staging the troll fight should be a fun challenge, but it could be disastrous trying to remove the trees if they end up knocking any of them over.

Elrond's dining table and chairs will need to be quickly set up and removed, as well. This is one of the reasons why I thought to have a cast of four on stage for this scene so that a smaller table and fewer chairs can be used.

Gollum's dinghy should be on a wheeled platform and move as silently as possible. This will be nicer to use with a stage that has a moat, but can be wheeled along the outside edge of the stage if there is no moat.

Lightweight boulders should be easy enough to move around, but they would present a challenge for the actor keeping guard between them. It might be better to have them attached to the same base and to wheel them on and off. This is also why I thought to have scaffolding with tree fronts attached for the next part of this scene.

The second scene in act two will take a few moments to set up. There are three jail doors, plus a barrel and the Jail Keeper's small table and chair. The barrel, table, and chair can be left off if needed, but the jail cell doors are important set pieces. If they can be attached to a frame on a wheeled base, I believe this should not be as problematic as it seems.

In the next scene, the barrel is optional, although it would be nice to have. The dressing mirror is important because it illustrates the Master of Esgaroth's vanity and selfishness.

The fourth scene can be problematic. Having a large mound of treasure to put on stage and remove again, plus the boulder and grey stone, would take quite a bit of time, not to mention the number of stage hands needed in order to set the stage as quickly as possible. This is why I thought of using a rather large mat with the treasure painted on it and a few miscellaneous pieces of actual "treasure." The boulder and stone will either need to be of lightweight material or be mounted onto a wheeled structure.

The wall in scene five of the second act presents a challenge regardless. However, it will be even more challenging to set it up on a black box stage, unless it is set up across a stage exit. The part of the wall that will need to fall forward will also need to have scaffolding behind it. This scaffolding will need to be removed before the wall falls so that the actors can run through the doorway as soon as the way is clear. If

the wall is attached to the scaffolding, it should stay up while it needs to be up. Then, if stage hands or actors hold the wall up while the scaffolding is removed, they should be able to release the wall on cue. The biggest challenge I foresee here will be removing the wall once the scene is over. I wrote the scene change so that it should not feel awkward if the lights are in blackout for longer than during the other scene changes just in case extra time might be needed for this part of the set removal. The rest of the wall should be on a wheeled platform so it can readily be removed from stage at the end of the scene.

The next scene set would be nice to have a wheeled stone slab for, however if this is not practical, a flat white twin sheet will do just as well.

And finally, the last scene needs to have Bilbo's front door again, only this time facing the opposite direction from the top of the play. If it is straddling a stage exit in the first and last scenes, it should be short enough to not interfere with sight lines yet tall enough for Gandalf to go through it.

If this play is done on a thrust or proscenium stage, there should not be any sight line issues, except for perhaps the first scene at the top of the play. However, if Bilbo's door is angled appropriately, I believe this can readily be accommodated.

And finally, how to handle the potential challenges with some of the costumes.

One of the reasons why I prefer to have a larger cast over a smaller one is because I foresee a great many challenges with costume changes. I would prefer to give my cast as much time to change as possible, especially if they are Gollum or one of the Goblins. I would hope that the animal suits will be designed with Velcro closures and to be quickly slipped in and out of. However, I realize that not everyone has my sewing skills or vision for my costumes. One challenge will be handling the Stone Trolls. At the end of the

scene, they are supposed to be “turned to stone.” However, I realize it will be difficult for an actor to stay still that long. For this reason, it will be very nice if the actors can be in blacks and slip out of their costumes and through a trap door or find a way to exit the stage quickly without attracting attention to themselves. Another way to possibly handle the animal characters is to have very large puppets that are manned by actors dressed in stage hand blacks. If this route is taken, the biggest challenge to stage would be the troll fight. However, I have reservations about incorporating any puppets because this is not intended to be turned into a puppet show.

The Goblins and Gollum are the other characters that present a challenge. The challenge they present is more off-stage than on-stage, however. If there are latex pieces they have to attach to their heads, hands, and feet, plus matching makeup to apply to their bodies, it will take them a little time to get into and out of their costumes. This is one of the reasons why I prefer to go with as large of a cast as possible as opposed to scrimping on actors.

I realize that this show will take a large cast and possibly just as many stagehands. Any show has its potential challenges no matter how well the script is planned out. However, I believe this show is worth doing the full production the way I have written and planned it to be done if it is going to be done at all.

Afterthoughts

Although this script is fraught with staging and scenographic challenges, the process of writing and planning it had quite a few of its own challenges, as well. Some portions were fairly easy to plan out while others took me weeks to figure out how best to stage the blocking and other aspects of the scene. Even so, I thoroughly enjoyed the challenge of creating a script and of planning the scenographic elements for producing my script. It is my opinion that J. R. R. Tolkien wrote a masterpiece when he wrote *The Hobbit*. It is still my favorite book of all time. I believe it is impossible to improve on Tolkien's original work. With that belief at the core of my work, I have done my best to honor Tolkien's original authorial intent. Even if no one else appreciates what I have tried to accomplish here, I hope Tolkien is pleased with my work.

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**APPENDIX A: *THE HOBBIT: OR, THERE AND
BACK AGAIN, A SCRIPT BY LIZAROSE TWYLA
TENNEB-HANSEN***

CAST

(In Order of Appearance)

(This play is designed—with cross-casting—for a cast of nineteen to forty-four actors)

Bilbo Baggins	Goblin #2
Gandalf the Grey	Goblin #3
Dwalin	Great Goblin
Balin	Gollum
Kili	1 – 3 Wargs
Fili	Lord of the Eagles
Dori	Beorn (<i>optional; if not used</i>
Nori	<i>BARD can take his place in</i>
	<i>BEORN's second scene)</i>
Ori	Spider
Oin	2 Wood Elves
Gloin	Wood-Elf King
Bifur	Jail Keeper
Bofur	Guard
Bombur	Captain
Thorin Oakenshield	Master
Bert	Councilor
Tom	Thrush
William	Smaug
Elrond	Bard
2 Attendants (<i>optional</i>)	Banner Bearer
Goblin #1	

FOREWARD WITH NOTES FROM TOLKIEN

The book “The Hobbit; or, There and Back Again” by J. R. R. Tolkien and this play of the same name which adapted for the stage by Lizarose Twyla Tenneb-Hansen is the coming of age story about a Hobbit who was asked to join a party of dwarves on a quest to help them reclaim their ancestral home and about the adventures he had along the way.

This script is based on the original publication of “The Hobbit” by J. R. R. Tolkien which I pieced back together with the appendix from Douglas A. Anderson’s “The Annotated Hobbit.” Primarily for the basis of my thesis project, but also for copyright reasons, it is my intention to have this play portray J. R. R. Tolkien’s original text of “The Hobbit” as faithfully as possible. To that end I feel that it is vitally important to get the ambiance as well as the characterization of Bilbo Baggins and Gandalf the Grey portrayed correctly. The other characters can have a little more liberty in the way they are interpreted and portrayed by the actors as long as this does not become farcical or completely contradict Tolkien’s characters. I cannot replicate Tolkien’s scene descriptions because the staging will not allow for that. Rather than create a need for the cast and crew to read the original text for “The Hobbit” in order to produce this play, I have included a somewhat detailed introduction in this forward with the intention that it help establish the correct ambiance and characterizations for this adaptation of Tolkien’s beloved book.

ACT I, SCENE 1

In a hole in the ground, there lived a hobbit named Bilbo Baggins. Even though this residence is built into the side of a hill, it is not a “dug out,” but a very comfortable home—it was a hobbit-hole, and that means comfort. How much is seen will depend on the extravagance of the set, but it is possible to build a set or have an image projected onto the cyc or even have an implied set. If visuals are used, Bilbo’s front entryway, the inside of his front door, and his dining room should be visible. There should be more than ample pegs available to hang coats and cloaks on the upstage wall of the entryway or on coat trees. There should be a small table or stand of some kind that Bilbo keeps his walking stick propped against and an emergency pocket handkerchief, a pocket-sized pipe, and extra tobacco pouch on, as well as any other essentials he might need should he need to run an errand in a hurry. Although lower to the ground than a human table (the rest of the set might be larger to make the cast seem smaller at their normal size), there should be ample seating and the seats should be just large enough for the company of dwarves to comfortably sit at. As most hobbits are, Bilbo is very fond of visitors and keeps his inherited home in company-ready condition—at least the front rooms anyway. He has a pristine chimney, so it never smokes. Only because it is better not to have

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smoking on stage, I will not have Bilbo actually light his pipe, but instead get distracted from doing so.

Hobbits are small people, smaller than dwarves—and they have no beards—but they are very much larger than lilliputians. There is little to no magic about them, except for the ordinary every day sort that helps them to disappear quietly and quickly when humans come blundering along. They have exceptional hearing and sharp eye sight. They are inclined to be fat—but by no means obese—in the stomach; dress in bright colors—chiefly green and yellow; wear no shoes because their feet grow natural leathery soles and have thick, warm brown hair on the tops of their feet much like the stuff on their heads—which are both curly; have long, clever brown fingers, good-natured faces, and laugh deep fruity laughs—especially after dinner, which they have twice a day when they can get it. They are also quite hardy and they can survive on meager rations or even miss meals should the need arise without affecting their mood.

The wizard Gandalf was originally described as “a little old man with a tall pointed blue hat,” with “all that the unsuspecting Bilbo saw that morning was an old man with a staff” (Anderson 322). He is a slender yet tall old man with white hair, long bushy eyebrows that stick out from under the brim of his hat, and a long white beard that hangs down below his waist. The tall leather boots can have heel inserts if needed to accentuate the height difference. He wears a long grey cloak over a blue robe, both of which reach the ground. The blue hat should be tall and pointed. He also wears a long silver scarf that hangs behind his beard.

And thus we find Bilbo stepping out into his garden after a very hearty breakfast, preparing to smoke an enormous long wooden pipe that reaches nearly down to his woolly toes—neatly brushed—just as Gandalf comes by!

ACT I, SCENE 2

It is May and lighting should reflect a stormy May night. BILBO has borrowed a spare cloak and hood from one of the DWARVES and he has his pipe and spare pocket handkerchiefs that GANDALF brought along for him, but he is otherwise making do without any comforts from home.

ACT I, SCENE 3

In this scene we will meet ELROND. He is as noble and fair in the 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. He comes into many tales, but his part in the story of BILBO's great

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adventure is only a small one, though important, as will be seen. His house is perfect, whether you liked food, or sleep, or work, or story-telling, or singing, or just sitting and thinking best, or a pleasant mixture of them all. Evil things do not come into that valley. The COMPANY stays there for two weeks to get refreshed and strengthened to continue their journey. Their clothes, bruises, tempers, and hope are all mended within the first few days of their arrival, in spite of the DWARVES not caring for ELVES' playful teasing. Their bags are filled with food and provisions light to carry but strong to bring them over the mountain passes. The scene opens on the COMPANY dining with ELROND the night before they are to resume their journey.

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ACT I

SCENE 1

Scene description: (*BILBO BAGGINS is discovered on stage and steps outside his front door and is preparing to smoke a rather long pipe. GANDALF THE GREY enters and approaches BILBO. Please refer to the forward for the set, ambiance, and characterization in this scene.*)

Bilbo: Good morning!

Gandalf: What do you mean? Do you wish me a good morning, or mean that it is a good morning whether I want it or not; or that you feel good this morning; or that it is a morning to be good on?

Bilbo: All of them at once. And a very fine morning for a pipe of tobacco out of doors, into the bargain. If you have a pipe about you, sit down and have a fill of mine! There's no hurry, we have all day before us!

Gandalf: I have no time to blow smoke-rings this morning. I am looking for someone to share in an adventure that I am arranging, and it's very difficult to find anyone.

Bilbo: I should think so—in these parts! We are plain quiet folk and have no use for adventures. Nasty disturbing uncomfortable things! Make you late for dinner! I can't think what anybody sees in them.

(*GANDALF stands leaning on his stick, gazing at BILBO. BILBO becomes uncomfortable and a little cross.*)

Bilbo: (*after several beats, finally*) Good morning! We don't want any adventures here, thank you! You might try over The Hill or across The Water.

Gandalf: What a lot of things you do use *Good morning* for! Now you mean that you want to get rid of me, and that it won't be good till I move off.

Bilbo: Not at all, not at all, my dear sir! Let me see, I don't think I know your name?

Gandalf: Yes, yes, my dear sir—and I do know your name, Mr. Bilbo Baggins. And you do know my name, though you don't remember that I belong to it. I am Gandalf, and Gandalf means me! To think that I should have lived to be good-morninged by Belladonna Took's son, as if I was selling buttons at the door!

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Bilbo: Gandalf, Gandalf! Good gracious me! Not the wandering wizard that gave Old Took a pair of magic diamond studs that fastened themselves and never came undone till ordered? Not the fellow who used to tell such wonderful tales at parties, about dragons and goblins and giants and the rescue of princesses and the unexpected luck of widows' sons? Not the man that used to make such particularly excellent fireworks! I remember those! Old Took used to have them on Midsummer's Eve. Splendid! They used to go up like great lilies and snapdragons and laburnums of fire and hang in the twilight all evening! Dear me! Not the Gandalf who was responsible for so many quiet lads and lasses going off into the Blue for mad adventures? Anything from climbing trees to stowing away aboard the ships that sail to the Other Side? Bless me, life used to be quite inter—I mean, you used to upset things badly in these parts once upon a time. I beg your pardon, but I had no idea you were still in business.

Gandalf: Where else should I be? All the same I am pleased to find you remember something about me. You seem to remember my fireworks kindly, at any rate, and that is not without hope. Indeed for your old grandfather Took's sake, and for the sake of poor Belladonna, I will give you what you asked for.

Bilbo: I beg your pardon, I haven't asked for anything!

Gandalf: Yes, you have! Twice now. My pardon. I give it you. In fact I will go so far as to send you on this adventure. Very amusing for me, very good for you—and profitable too, very likely, if you ever get over it.

Bilbo: Sorry! I don't want any adventures, thank you. Not today. Good morning! But please come to tea—any time you like! Why not tomorrow? Come tomorrow! Good bye!

(BILBO scuttles inside his round green door and shuts it as quickly as he dares, not to seem rude, while GANDALF stands there laughing softly.)

Bilbo: *(to the portrait of his parents on display in his front entryway)* What on earth did I ask him to tea for!

(BILBO crosses to exit toward "pantry" and reenters with a generous slice of seed cake and a large mug of cider while GANDALF, still laughing softly, is marking the door with his staff as the lights—blackout. Lights up on same scene, but lit for early evening. BILBO is very relaxed while preparing for tea—for one. A FIGURE in a hooded cloak approaches the door and rings the front-door bell, then BILBO remembers and rushes to put the kettle on and a second cup and saucer on the table, then goes to answer the door.)

Bilbo: *(while opening the door)* I am so sorry to keep you wai—

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Dwalin: *(moment door is open pushes way inside as if he was expected; hangs dark-green cloak on peg by the hood then bows to Bilbo)* Dwalin at your service!

Bilbo: *(surprised)* Bilbo Baggins at yours!

(BOTH stand in silence for approximately two beats.)

Bilbo: *(a little stiff, but kindly)* I am just about to take tea; pray come and have some with me.

(BILBO crosses to table as another FIGURE in a hooded cloak approaches the door and a louder ring sounds.)

Bilbo: Excuse me! *(crosses to door; while opening door)* So you have got here at la—!

Balin: *(hops inside as if invited)* I see they have begun to arrive already. *(hangs his red cloak by hood on peg next to Dwalin's; puts hand over chest while saying)* Balin at your service!

Bilbo: *(with a gasp)* Thank you! *(after a beat, takes a deep breath)* Come along in and have some tea!

Balin: A little beer would suit me better, if it is all the same to you, my good sir. But I don't mind some cake—seed-cake if you have any."

Bilbo: *(finds himself answering)* Lots!

(Balin crosses to join Dwalin at the table; beat; Bilbo scuttles after Balin to fetch food and drink for his unexpected guests. Throughout remainder of guest arrivals, Bilbo will enter with varying food and/or drink when the bell rings, appear increasingly flustered, cross to table, drop off accoutrements, cross to door empty-handed, answer door, cross toward "pantry" and exit after guests. Bilbo can even start for the door with his arms full and get more flustered as he must turn around to empty his arms before he can answer the door. Bilbo plumping beer and cakes onto table and ad-lib conversation between dwarves can heard from off-stage, with volume of din increasing as number of dwarves increase. After the arrival of the next two, occasional phrases can be audible, such as 'mines,' 'gold,' 'troubles with goblins,' and 'depredations of dragons.' After the next batch arrives, however, it will just sound like a louder din. Immediately following Bilbo's first 'plump' of food onto the table a loud ring sounds at the door, followed by a second louder ring.)

Bilbo: *(while crossing to door)* Gandalf for certain this time. *(opens door)* What can I do for you my... dwarves?

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Kili: Kili at your service!

Fili: And Fili!

(Kili and Fili sweep off hoods and bow.)

Bilbo: *(finally remembering his manners)* At yours and your family's!

(Kili and Fili hang their blue cloaks on the pegs by the hoods.)

Kili: Dwalin and Balin here already, I see. Let us join the throng!

(Kili and Fili cross to table.)

Bilbo: *(gaping after them)* Throng!? I don't like the sound of that. I really must sit down for a minute and collect my wits, and have a drink.

(BILBO barely takes a sip when the bell rings again as if some naughty little hobbit-boy was trying to pull the handle off.)

Bilbo: *(dazed and blinking)* Someone at the door!

Fili: *(matter-of-factly)* Some four, I should say by the sound. Besides, we saw them coming along behind us in the distance.

(BILBO starts to cross to door, but stops in the front entryway, sits down on the floor, and drops his face into his hands. Then the bell rings louder than ever and Bilbo jumps up and runs to the door. It was not four after, but five. Another dwarf had come along while he was wondering on the floor. He barely turned the knob before they all hurry inside, bowing and saying...)

Dori: At your service.

Nori: At your service.

Ori: At your service.

Oin: At your service.

Gloin: At your service.

(Quickly two purple hoods, a grey hood, a brown hood, and a white hood are covering pegs and off they go with their hands in their gold and silver belts to join the others. Almost a throng, some dwarves call for ale, some for porter, one for coffee, and all of them for cakes. BILBO madly dashes around to and from the pantry, table, and hearth. When the cakes are gone, the dwarves start on a round of buttered scones. Then just as BILBO puts a big jug of coffee on the hearth, a loud "rat-tat" is heard on the beautiful

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green door: GANDALF “knocked” off the secret mark he made the previous day from the door and replaced it with quite a dent. Bewildered and bewuthered, BILBO rushes to cross to door and pulls it open with a jerk. The last four dwarves all fall in with Thorin Oakenshield at the bottom of the pile. GANDALF remains standing behind, leaning on his staff and laughing.)

Gandalf: *(As Bifur, Bofur, and Bombur help Thorin up)* Carefully! Carefully! It is not like you, Bilbo, to keep friends waiting on the mat, and then open the door like a pop-gun! Let me introduce Bifur, Bofur, Bombur, and especially Thorin!

Bifur, Bofur, & Bombur: At your service!

(Bifur, Bofur, and Bombur quickly hang up two yellow hooded cloaks, a pale green one, and also a sky-blue one with a long silver tassel belonging to Thorin. Thorin is not at all pleased at falling flat on Bilbo's mat with Bifur, Bofur, and Bombur on top of him. For one thing, Bombur is immensely fat and heavy. Thorin is very haughty and says nothing about “service.”)

Bilbo: Sorry, sorry, sorry; I am sorry. I am so sorry. I am so very sorry. I...

Thorin: *(finally stops frowning and grunts out his line)* Pray don't mention it.

Gandalf: *(looking at the row of thirteen hoods and his own hat hanging on the pegs)*
Now we are all here! Quite a merry gathering! I hope there is something left for the latecomers to eat and drink! What's that? Tea! No thank you! A little red wine, I think for me.

Thorin: And for me.

Bifur: And raspberry jam and apple-tart.

Bofur: And mince pies and cheese.

Bombur: And pork-pie and salad.

Seated Dwarves: *(from the table)* And more cakes – and ale – and coffee, if you don't mind.

Gandalf: *(calling after BILBO who is now stumping off to the pantries)* Put on a few eggs, there's a good fellow! And just bring out the cold chicken and tomatoes!

(BILBO turns to gape back at Gandalf before he exits to pantry with an expression of “He seems to know as much about the inside of my larders as I do myself!” on his face. By the time he gets back with everything, he is very hot, and red in the face, and annoyed.)

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Bilbo: (aloud on entrance) Confusticate and bebother these dwarves! Why don't they come and lend a hand?

(BALIN and DWALIN, with KILI and FILI behind them, appear before Bilbo and whisk everything away and set out everything afresh. GANDALF sits at the head of the table with the thirteen dwarves seated all around. BILBO sits on a stool, nibbles a biscuit as his appetite is quite taken away, and tries to look as if this was all perfectly ordinary and not in the least an adventure. When the dwarves finish eating, BILBO stands to collect the glasses and plates.)

Bilbo: (in politest unpressing tone) I suppose you will all stay to supper?

Thorin: Of course! And after. We shan't get through business till late, and we must have some music first. Now to clear up!

(While Thorin stays talking to Gandalf, the OTHER TWELVE DWARVES jump to their feet and make tall piles of things and take them off-stage to "kitchen" and start to speaking acapella while...)

Bilbo: (running around after the dwarves, almost squeaking with fright) Please be careful! – Please don't trouble! – I can manage.

Dwarves: (all DWARVES except THORIN) Chip the glasses and crack the plates! Blunt the knives and bend the forks! That's what Bilbo Baggins hates— Smash the bottles and burn the corks! Cut the cloth and tread on the fat! Pour the milk on the pantry floor! Leave the bones on the bedroom mat! Splash the wine on every door! Dump the crocks in a boiling bowl; Pound them up with a thumping pole; And when you've finished, if any are whole, Send them down the hall to roll! That's what Bilbo Baggins hates! So, carefully!, carefully with the plates!

(Of course they do none of these dreadful things and everything is cleaned and put away safe as quick as lightning. As they return on stage, the lights dim because the sun is setting. There is a soft glow from the fireplace. The dwarves maintain a deep-throated, soft hum while each in turn recites a verse while something "Tookish" slowly wakes up in BILBO. There is a blue light washing over the stage until the song ends.)

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

Balin: 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.

Kili: For ancient king and elvish lord There many a gleaming golden hoard...

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Fili: They shaped and wrought, and light they caught To hide in gems on hilt of sword.

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

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

Ori: 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.

Oin: 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.

Gloin: The bells were ringing in the dale And men looked up with faces pale;...

Bifur: Then dragon's ire more fierce than fire Laid low their towers and houses frail.

Bofur: 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.

Bombur: 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!

(When the music stops, BILBO gets up trembling. He starts to go to grab a lamp so he can go hide behind the beer-barrels in his cellar until the dwarves are gone, until he realizes all of the dwarves are looking at him.)

Thorin: *(In a tone that seems to show he's guessed both halves of Bilbo's mind)*
Where are you going?

Bilbo: *(apologetically)* What about a little light?

All Dwarves: We like the dark. Dark for dark business! There are many hours before dawn.

Bilbo: *(sitting down in a hurry)* Of course! *(He misses the stool and sits in the fender, knocking over the poker and shovel with a crash.)*

Gandalf: Hush! Let Thorin speak!

Thorin: Gandalf, dwarves and Mr. Baggins! We are met together in the house of our friend and fellow conspirator, this most excellent and audacious hobbit—may the hair on his toes never fall out! All praise to his wine and ale! *(He pauses for a breath and a*

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polite remark from Bilbo, but the compliments are lost on Bilbo who is so flummoxed that no words come out, so Thorin continues) We are met to discuss our plans, our ways, means, policy and devices. We shall soon start on our long journey, a journey from which some of us, or perhaps all of us—except our friend and counselor, the ingenious wizard Gandalf—may never return. It is a solemn moment. Our object is, I take it, well known to us all. To the estimable Mr. Baggins, and perhaps to one or two of the younger dwarves—I think I should be right in naming Kili and Fili, for instance—the exact situation at the moment may require a little brief explanation...

(At “may never return” BILBO tries to stifle a shriek, but it finally lets out like the whistle of an engine coming out of a tunnel. ALL of the DWARVES spring up and knock over the table in the process. GANDALF strikes a blue light on the end of his magic staff and in the firework glare BILBO is found kneeling on the hearthrug shaking like a jelly that is melting.)

Bilbo: *(practically out of it)* Struck by lightning, struck by lightning! *(BILBO repeats this as some of the dwarves carry him off-stage. The lights—blackout. When they come up again, it is late at night and the DWARVES and GANDALF are just wrapping up their business. They have already helped themselves to supper and the dirty dishes are still at their places scattered across the table. BILBO enters on this scene and hears GANDALF speaking.)*

Gandalf: He may be an excitable little man, but he is one of the best, one of the best—as fierce as a dragon in a pinch.

Gloin: Humph! Will he do, do you think? It is all very well for Gandalf to talk about this hobbit being fierce, but one shriek like that in a moment of excitement would be enough to wake the dragon and all of his relatives and kill the lot of us. I think it sounded more like fright than excitement! In fact, if it had not been for the sign on the door, I should have been sure we had come to the wrong house. As soon as I clapped eyes on the little fellow bobbing and puffing on the mat, I had my doubts. He looks more like a grocer than a burglar!

Bilbo: *(standing out of sight during the last two lines, battling with himself, he now steps forward as the Took-side has just won)* Pardon me if I have overheard words that you were saying. I don't pretend to understand what you are talking about, or your reference to burglars, but I think you are right in believing that you think I am no good. I will show you. I have no signs on my door—it was painted a week ago—and I am sure you have come to the wrong house. As soon as I saw your funny faces on the door-step, I had my doubts. But treat it as the right one. 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. I had a great-great-great-grand-uncle once, Bullroarer Took, and...

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Gloin: Yes, yes, but that was long ago. I was talking about *you*. And I assure you there is a mark on this door—the usual one in the trade, or used to be. “Burglar wants a good job, plenty of excitement and reasonable reward,” that’s how it is usually read. You can say “expert treasure-hunter” instead of “burglar” if you like. Some of them do. It’s all the same to us. Gandalf told us that there was a man of the sort in these parts looking for a job at once, and that he had arranged for a meeting here this Wednesday tea-time.

Gandalf: Of course there is a mark. I put it there myself. For very good reasons. You asked me to find the fourteenth man for your expedition, and I chose Mr. Baggins. Just let any one say I chose the wrong man or the wrong house, and you can stop at thirteen and have all the bad luck you like, or go back to digging coal. (*He scowls so angrily at GLOIN that the dwarf huddles back in his chair. BILBO starts to open his mouth to ask a question, but GANDALF turns frowning to him and sticking out his bushy eyebrows so BILBO quickly shuts his mouth tight with a snap.*) That’s right. Let’s have no more argument. I have chosen Mr. Baggins and that ought to be enough for all of you. If I say he is a burglar, a burglar he is, or will be when the time comes. There is a lot more in him than you guess, and deal more than he has any idea himself. You may—possibly—all live to thank me yet. Now Bilbo, my boy, fetch the lamp, and let’s have a light on this! (*BILBO fetches a lamp and GANDALF pulls out a map on a sheet of parchment.*) Thorin, this was made by your grandfather. It is a plan of the Mountain.

(*BILBO is fascinated by the map and gets as close to it as he can the moment he sees it.*)

Thorin: I don’t see that this will help us much. I remember the Mountain well enough and the lands about it. And I know where Mirkwood is, and the Withered Heath where the great dragons bred.

Balin: There is a dragon marked in red on the Mountain, but it will be easy enough to find him without that, if we ever arrive there.

Gandalf: There is one point that you haven’t noticed, and that is the secret entrance. You see that rune on the West side, and the hand pointing to it from the other runes? That marks a hidden passage to the Lower Halls.

Thorin: It may have been secret once, but how do we know that it is secret any longer? Old Smaug has lived there long enough now to find out anything there is to know about those caves.

Gandalf: He may—but he can’t have used it for years and years.

Thorin: Why?

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Gandalf: Because it is too small. "Five feet high is the door and three abreast may enter it" says the runes, but Smaug could not creep into a hole that size, not even when he was a young dragon, certainly not after devouring so many of the dwarves and men of Dale.

Bilbo: (squeaks) It seems a great big hole to me. How could such a large door be kept secret from everybody outside, apart from the dragon?

Gandalf: In lots of ways. But in what ways this one has been hidden we don't know without going to see. From what it says on the map I should guess there is a closed door which has been made to look exactly like the side of the Mountain. That is the usual dwarves' method—I think that is right, isn't it?

Thorin: Quite right.

Gandalf: Also, I forgot to mention that with the map went a key, a small and curious key. Here it is! (*handing the key to Thorin*) Keep it safe!

Thorin: Indeed I will. (*he fastens it upon a fine chain that hung about his neck and under his jacket*) Now things begin to look more hopeful. This news alters them much for the better. Still, I should like to know how you got hold of it, and why it did not come down to me, the rightful heir.

Gandalf: I did not "get hold of it," I was given it. Your grandfather was killed, you remember, in the mines of Moria by a goblin...

Thorin: Curse his name, yes.

Gandalf: And your father went away on the third of March, a hundred years ago last Thursday, and has never been seen by you since...

Thorin: True, true.

Gandalf: Well, your father gave me this to give to you; and if I have chosen my own time and way for handing it over, you can hardly blame me, considering the trouble I had to find you. Your father could not remember his own name when he gave me the paper, and he never told me yours; so on the whole I think I ought to be praised and thanked! Here it is. (*hands the map to Thorin.*) The one thing your father wished was for you to read the map and use the key. The dragon and the Mountain are more than big enough tasks for you!

Bilbo: Hear, hear!

Dwarves: (*suddenly turning to Bilbo*) Hear what?

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Bilbo: *(flustered)* Hear what I have got to say!

Dwarves: What's that?

Bilbo: Well, I should say that you ought to go and have a look around. After all there is the Side-door, and dragons must sleep sometimes, I suppose. If you sit on the doorstep long enough, I daresay you will think of something. And well, don't you know, I think we have talked long enough for one night, if you see what I mean. What about bed, and an early start, and all that? I will give you a good breakfast before you go.

Thorin: Before "we" go, I suppose you mean. Aren't you the burglar? And isn't sitting on the door-step your job, not to speak of getting inside the door? But I agree about bed and breakfast. I like six eggs with my ham, when starting on a journey: fried not poached, and mind you don't break 'em.

Dwarves: *(give orders for breakfasts without so much as a please, much to Bilbo's annoyance)* Yes... sounds good... I want mine fried... *(BOMBUR)* I want extra ham... *(improvise additional lines if needed)*

(ALL clear out to find a guest room to sleep in, leaving BILBO on stage last. BILBO is astonished at the mess and stays behind to clean up. As he picks up the first dishes, the lights—blackout. Lights up—lit for next morning; BILBO slept in. He enters the dining room looking around. No one is to be seen, but there is a huge mess from breakfast, which BILBO quickly clears away. BILBO is getting about to put a kettle on and see to his breakfast when GANDALF walks in.)

Gandalf: My dear fellow, whenever are you going to come? What about an "early start?"—and here you are having breakfast, or whatever you call it, at half past ten! They left you a message because they could not wait.

Bilbo: *(flustered)* What message?

Gandalf: If you had dusted the mantelpiece, you would have found this just under the clock. *(hands note to Bilbo)*

Bilbo: What's that got to do with it? I have had enough to do with washing up for fourteen! *(opens note written on his own notepaper and reads it aloud)* "Thorin and Company to Buglar Bilbo greeting! For your hospitality our sincerest thanks, and for your offer of professional assistance our grateful acceptance. Terms: cash on delivery, up to and not exceeding one fourteenth of total profits—if any; all travelling expenses guaranteed in any event; funeral expenses to be defrayed by us or our representatives, if occasion arises and the matter is not otherwise arranged for. Thinking it unnecessary to disturb your esteemed repose, we have proceeded in advance to make requisite preparations, and shall await your respected person at the Green Dragon Inn, Bywater, at

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11 a.m. sharp. Trusting that you will be punctual, We have the honour to remain, Yours deeply, Thorin & Co.”

Gandalf: That leaves you just ten minutes. You will have to run.

Bilbo: But...

Gandalf: No time for it.

Bilbo: But...

Gandalf: No time for that either! Off you go!

(BILBO hands his keys to GANDALF and takes off at a run leaving his hat, walking stick, coin purse, pocket pipe and tobacco pouch, and some of his pocket handkerchiefs on the table by the door. Lights narrow to table by door; GANDALF grabs the pipe, tobacco pouch, and the small stack of pocket handkerchiefs, and then goes out the door. The lights quickly fade to—blackout.)

SCENE 2

Scene description: *(The sound of heavy rain and horses riding through puddles comes up first. As sound of wind breaks up grey clouds, the rain and horses fade out and the lights come up for moonlit scene. A waning moon appears above some hills and between the “flying rags” of dissipating clouds. The COMPANY of fourteen—only the DWARVES and BILBO because GANDALF is not there – except KILI and FILI who are a little behind but will rejoin the group in a moment—have stopped under some trees. A quiet, but incessant “drip, drip” is heard as though the water on the trees begins to run off. On the other side of the stage there are three STONE TROLLS seated around a campfire of sorts. It is not a “normal” human fire, but a strange dark red fire they are roasting mutton over. They are surrounded by trees and their area is not lit yet. The COMPANY and the three TROLLS do not see each other yet. Please refer to the forward for additional notes on scene.)*

Thorin: *(muttering)* I suppose we should get supper. *(beat while looking at the ground)* And where shall we get a dry patch to sleep on? Maybe Gandalf can... *(looking up as the moonlight brings the group more into focus)* Where is Gandalf?

Dori: *(looking around, puzzled)* He's come all the way with us so far, but now he simply is not here at all!

Nori: *(groaning)* Just when a wizard would have been most useful, too!

(Kili and Fili rejoin the group; they are slightly breathless.)

Kili: We lost one of the ponies back at the rushing red river we just crossed. Before we could get him out again, all of the baggage he carried was washed away off of him. We were lucky to escape with our lives.

Fili: *(hanging his head)* Almost all of our food supplies are gone.

Thorin: *(putting a hand on each of KILI's and FILI's shoulders, kindly)* At least we got you two back. *(turning to the group)* We shall just have to make the best of it and camp here for the night and look for food in the morning. Oin and Gloin, start a fire for us. Balin, you're lookout, of course. The rest of you, see what food you can scrounge from our baggage.

(After a few moments, there is no food to be found and still no fire. Even BILBO who has been ignored so far pulls out his pipe, but cannot even get a match to light. The COMPANY, except BALIN, glumly gathers around the fire pit. GLOIN and OIN begin to quarrel and the contentious mood spreads quickly.)

Gloin: Oin, don't bother trying to help. I will do better without your assistance.

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Oin: I would like to see you do better when you keep putting out my sparks.

(GLOIN and OIN continue in this way and begin to fight while the other DWARVES complain.)

Dwarves: *(except for GLOIN and OIN)* This is the first time we have had to camp on this journey... We knew we would soon have to camp regularly... But it seems a bad, wet evening to begin on!... Policemen never come so far... There is no food... The mapmakers have not reached this country yet... They have seldom heard of a king around here... The less inquisitive you are, the less trouble you are likely to find... Where has Gandalf got to?

Balin: *(all other action stops, including GLOIN and OIN mid-swing as BALIN rejoins group and says)* There's a light over there!

(The sound of rain picks up again and the clouds quickly cover the moonlight again. A strange light comes up over the TROLLS' camp.)

Thorin: That settles it. After all we have got a burglar with us. *(finally turning to BILBO)* You must go on and find out all about that light, and what it is for, and if all is perfectly safe and canny. Now scuttle off, and come back quick, if all is well. If not, come back if you can! If you can't, hoot twice like a barn-owl and once like a screech-owl, and we will do what we can.

(THORIN pushes BILBO off before BILBO can explain that he cannot hoot like anything, let alone fly like a bat. But at least hobbits can move quietly through the woods, absolutely quietly—they take pride in it. For this reason BILBO is glad to not be accompanied by any of the DWARVES who even one makes quite a racket in comparison. As BILBO approaches the TROLLS' clearing, the DWARVES inch their way along behind as the current mission is the perfect distraction from their current predicament. When BILBO reaches the clearing, he sees three very large persons sitting round a very large fire of beech-logs. They are toasting mutton on long spits of wood and licking gravy off their fingers. There is a fine toothsome smell. There is a barrel of good drink at hand and they are drinking out of jugs. From their great heavy faces, their size, the shape of their legs, and their language which is not drawing-room fashion at all, even BILBO, in spite of his sheltered life can see they are obviously trolls. When BILBO reaches the clearing, the conversation can now be heard.)

Bert: Mutton yesterday, mutton today, and blimey, if it don't look like mutton again tomorrer.

Tom: Never a blinking bit of manflesh have we had for long enough. What William was a-thinkin' of to bring us into these parts at all, beats me—and the drink

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runnin' short, what's more. (*concludes while jogging the elbow of WILLIAM, who is taking a pull at his jug.*)

William: (*chokes, but as soon as he can speak*) Shut yer mouth! Yer can't expect folk to stop here for ever just to be et by you and Bert. You've et a village and a half between yer, since we come down from the mountains. How much more d'yer want? And time's been up our way, when yer'd have said 'thank yer Bill' for a nice bit o' fat valley mutton like what this is. (*WILLIAM takes a big bite off a sheep's leg he was roasting and wipes his lips on his sleeve.*)

(*BILBO is alarmed, but cannot return empty-handed, so when BERT and TOM go off to the barrel and WILLIAM is having another drink, BILBO takes the opportunity to put his hand in WILLIAM's pocket, but is unable to take anything before he is caught.*)

William: 'Ere, 'oo are you? (*BILBO quickly withdraws his hand, but WILLIAM grabs him by the neck before BILBO can duck behind a tree.*) Blimey, Bert, look what I've copped!

Bert & Tom: (*returning quickly*) What is it?

William: Lumme, if I knows! What are yer?

Bilbo: (*trembling*) Bilbo Baggins, a bur—a hobbit.

Bert & Tom: (*startled and slow in the uptake*) A burrahobbit?

William: (*suspiciously*) What's a burrahobbit got to do with my pocket, anyways?

Tom: And can yer cook 'em?

Bert: (*picking up a skewer*) Yer can try.

William: (*who already had a fine supper*) He wouldn't make a mouthful, not when he was skinned and boned.

Bert: P'raps there are more like him round about, and we might make a pie. Here you, are there any more of your sort a-sneakin' in these here woods, yer nassty little rabbit? (*shakes Bilbo and pinches Bilbo's feet*)

Bilbo: Yes, lots. (*immediately remembers not to give his friends away*) No none at all, not one.

Bert: (*stops shaking BILBO and gets off of or lets go of BILBO's feet*) What d'yer mean?

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Bilbo: What I say. And please don't cook me, kind sirs! I am a good cook myself, and cook better than I cook, if you see what I mean. I'll cook beautifully for you, a perfectly beautiful breakfast for you, if only you won't have me for supper.

William: *(has already had as much supper as he can hold; also lots of beer)* Poor little blighter; poor little blighter! Let him go!

Bert: Not till he says what he means by "lots" and "none at all." I don't want to have me throat cut in me sleep! Hold his toes in the fire, till he talks!

William: I won't have it. I caught him anyway.

Bert: You're a fat fool, William, as I've said afore this evening.

William: And you're a lout!

Bert: And I won't take that from you, Bill Huggins. *(puts his fist in WILLIAM's eye)*

(As the TROLLS begin to row, a key falls out of WILLIAM's pocket. BILBO has just enough wits left to scramble out of the way and duck behind a tree—on the way picking up the key that WILLIAM dropped, but his feet are hurting so badly that he can't go farther and he is out of breath. So BILBO lays just out of the TROLLS' sight panting while WILLIAM and BERT are fighting like dogs and in very loud voices calling each other all sorts of names—)

William & Bert: Lout – Fool – Blighter – Back stabber – Throat cutter!

(—soon they are locked in each other's arms and rolling nearly into the fire, kicking and thumping. During the commotion, TOM whacks them with a tree branch to bring them to their senses. But that of course only makes them madder than ever. Right in the middle of the fight, BALIN finally approaches the clearing. The moment TOM sees Balin, TOM gives an awful howl—TROLLS simply detest the sight of uncooked dwarves—and WILLIAM and BERT immediately stop fighting!)

William: A sack, Tom, quick!

(Before BALIN knows what is happening or where BILBO is, a sack is over his head and he is down.)

Tom: There's more to come yet, or I'm mighty mistook. Lots and none at all, it is. No burrahobbits, but lots of these here dwarves. That's about the shape of it!

Bert: I reckon you're right, and we'd best get out of the light.

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(The DWARVES enter the clearing three at a time, unknowingly stand in front of the TROLLS, take a look at the mess, and get bagged. BIFUR and BOMBUR enter second to last and fight like mad, but still get sacked. THORIN is the last one to approach the clearing and sees the injured BILBO with his clothes and skin torn, daring not to move for fear the TROLLS will hear him.)

Thorin: *(to the injured BILBO)* What's all this trouble? Who has been knocking my people about?

Bilbo: *(from behind his tree)* It's trolls! They're hiding in the bushes with sacks.

Thorin: O! Are they? *(jumps into clearing and gets BERT in the eye and TOM in the teeth with a branch, but finally gets sacked from behind by WILLIAM)*

Tom: *(looking at the pile of sacks with legs sticking out)* That'll teach 'em.

Bert: Let's roast 'em slowly.

William: Let's mince 'em fine and boil 'em!

Tom: No, let's sit on 'em one by one and squash 'em into jelly!

William: I say we roast 'em slowly and eat 'em later.

Bert & Tom: Let's do it!

(The TROLLS step toward the sacks just as GANDALF, undetected, enters the edge of the clearing.)

Voice: *(like WILLIAM's)* No good roasting 'em now, it'd take all night.

Bert: Don't start the argument all over again, Bill, or it will take all night.

William: *(the voice sounded like BERT's to him)* Who's a-arguing?

Bert: You are.

William: You're a liar!

Bert: Let's just mince 'em fine and boil 'em.

Voice: *(like TOM's)* No good boiling 'em! We ain't got no water, and it's a long way to the well and all.

Bert: *(to TOM)* Shut up, or we'll never have done!

William: *(to TOM)* And yer can fetch the water yerself, if yer say any more.

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Tom: Shut up yerself! Who's arguing but you, I'd like to know.

William: You're a booby.

Tom: Booby yerself!

Bert: Shut up! Let's sit on 'em one by one and squash 'em, then.

Voice: *(like TOM's)* Who shall we sit on first?

Bert: Better sit on the last fellow first.

Tom: Don't talk to yerself! But if you wants to sit on the last one, sit on him.
Which is he?

Bert: The one with the yellow stockings.

Voice: *(like WILLIAM's)* Nonsense, the one with the grey stockings.

Bert: I made sure it was yellow.

William: Yellow it was.

Bert: Then what did yer say it was grey for?

William: I never did. Tom said it.

Tom: That I never did! It was you!

Bert: Two to one, so shut yer mouth!

William: Who are you a-talkin' to?

Tom & Bert: Now stop it!

Tom: The night's gettin' on, and dawn comes early.

Bert: Let's get on with it!

Voice: *(like WILLIAM's)* Dawn take you all, and be stone to you!

(At this moment the light comes over the hill and there is a mighty twitter in the branches. The three TROLLS are turned to stone.)

Gandalf: *(stepping into clearing)* Excellent! *(Goes over to BILBO and helps him up, then BOTH cross to the pile of DWARVES to start cutting the sack cords loose. ALL, except GANDALF, start talking at once:)*

Thorin: What did you think you were doing?

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Bilbo: I went like you told me and I tried to pick Bill's pocket, but my feet got smashed and I barely got away.

Dwarves: We were nearly suffocated!... I'm very annoyed!... That was not enjoyable whatsoever!... (*improvise additional lines if needed*)

Bombur: Silly time to go practicing burglary and pocket-picking when what we wanted was fire and food!

Gandalf: (*silencing the din*) And that's just what you wouldn't have got of those fellows without a struggle, in any case. Anyhow, you are wasting time now. Don't you realize that the trolls must have a cave or a hole dug somewhere near to hide from the sun in? We must look into it!

(*The DWARVES, except THORIN, follow the footprints to the cave off-stage.*)

Nori: (*DWARVES reenter stage with NORI*) Thorin, we found it, but we cannot get it open.

Gandalf: (*starting in the direction of the cave door*) I suppose I should try some incantations.

Bilbo: (*remembering the key he picked up, holds it out to Gandalf*) Gandalf, would this be any good? I found it on the ground where the trolls had their fight.

Dwarves: Why on earth didn't you mention it before?

(*GANDALF accepts it and goes to open the cave door. THORIN goes with him. There is a sound of the cave door opening with one big push. THORIN returns to the sunlight with one sword. GANDALF returns with two blades and gives the smaller one to Bilbo. BILBO takes it appreciatively and tries it on. While examining his new weapon, THORIN issues instructions to the other DWARVES.*)

Thorin: There is a good deal of food, plunder, and even clothes—presumably from the trolls' victims—in there. Take what we need and we shall hide the rest and put spells over them so they will be safe for our return.

Gandalf: (*examining his own blade and half-drawing it out*) These look like good blades. They were not made by any troll, nor by any smith among men in these parts and days; but when we can read the runes on them, we shall know more about them.

Thorin: (*to GANDALF*) Where did you go to, if I may ask?

Gandalf: To look ahead.

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Thorin: And what brought you back in the nick of time?

Gandalf: Looking behind.

Thorin: Exactly! But could you be more plain?

Gandalf: I went on to spy out our road. It will soon become more dangerous and difficult. Also I was anxious about replenishing our small stock of provisions. I had not gone very far, however, when I met a couple of friends of mine from Rivendell.

Bilbo: *(sheathing his new hobbit-sized "sword" and turning his full attention to GANDALF)* Where's that?

Gandalf: Don't interrupt! You will get there in a few days now, if we're lucky, and find out all about it. As I was saying I met two of Elrond's people. They were hurrying along for fear of the trolls. It was they who told me that three of them had come down from the mountains and settled in the woods not far from the road: they had frightened everyone away from the district, and they waylaid strangers. I immediately had a feeling that I was wanted back. Looking behind I saw a fire in the distance and made for it. So now you know. Please be more careful, next time, or we shall never get anywhere!

Thorin: *(perhaps a bit gruffly, but with all sincerity)* Thank you!

(Lights fade to—blackout.)

SCENE 3

Scene description: *(The DWARVES are dining in good humor. Even THORIN does not look cross. There is restful Elvish harp and perhaps flute music playing softly throughout the scene. Please refer to the forward for the set, ambiance, and characterization in this scene.)*

Gandalf: We appreciate your hospitality these past two weeks, but my friends must resume their journey in the morning. Before we leave, would you interpret some runes for us?

Elrond: Certainly. I can look at them now, if you wish. *(puts utensil down and takes THORIN's and GANDALF's swords each in turn; he speaks again after a beat)* These are not troll-make. They are old swords, very old swords of the elves that are now called Gnomes. They were made in Gondolin for the Goblin-wars. They must have come from a dragon's hoard or goblin plunder, for dragons and goblins destroyed that city many ages ago. This, Thorin, the runes name Orcrist, the Goblin-cleaver in the ancient tongue of Gondolin; it was a famous blade. This, Gandalf, was Glamdring, Foe-hammer that the king of Gondolin once wore. Keep them well!

Thorin: *(looks at sword with new interest)* Whence did the trolls get them, I wonder?

Elrond: I could not say, but one may guess that your trolls had plundered other plunderers, or come on the remnants of old robberies in some hold in the mountains of the North. I have heard that there are still forgotten treasures to be found in the deserted caverns of the mines of Moria, since the dwarf and goblin war.

Thorin: *(pondering ELROND's words)* I will keep this sword in honor. May it soon cleave goblins once again!

Elrond: A wish that is likely to be granted soon enough in the mountains! But show me your map! *(THORIN hands it to him respectfully; ELROND gazes at it for a few beats, then stands and holds it up to the window so the crescent moon shines through the back of it)* What is this? There are moon-letters here, beside the plain runes which say "five feet high is the door and three abreast may enter it."

Bilbo: *(excitedly gets up and hurriedly crosses over to stand beside ELROND)*
What are moon-letters?

Elrond: *(tipping the map so BILBO can see)* Moon-letters are rune-letters, but you cannot see them, not when you look straight at them. They can only be seen when the moon shines behind them, and what is more, with the more cunning sort it must be a moon of the same shape and season as the day when they were written. The dwarves

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invented them and wrote them with silver pens, as your friends could tell you. These must have been written on a midsummer's eve in a crescent moon, a long while ago.

Gandalf & Thorin: *(together and slightly vexed)* What do they say?

Elrond: *(smiles kindly and reads aloud)* Stand by the grey stone where the thrush knocks and the setting sun with the last light of Durin's Day will shine upon the key-hole.

Thorin: *(remembering)* Durin, Durin! He was the father of the fathers of one of the two races of dwarves, the Longbeards, and my grandfather's ancestor.

Elrond: Then what is Durin's Day?

Thorin: The first day of the dwarves' New Year is as everyone knows is the first day of the last moon of Autumn on the threshold of Winter. We still call it Durin's Day when the last moon of Autumn and the sun are in the sky together. But this will not help us much, I fear, for it passes our skill in these days to guess when such a time will come again.

Gandalf: That remains to be seen. Is there any more writing?

Elrond: *(returns map to THORIN who puts it away)* None to be seen by this moon.

(ELROND returns to his dinner as the lights fade to—blackout.)

SCENE 4

Scene description: *(The stage is bare and only a small area of the stage is lighted. The lights are barely up—just enough for the actors to see where they are going, but to give the feel of it being pitch dark otherwise. When the lights do come up during “lightning bursts” and later on in the scene, the “cave area” will be dimly lit and have a sickly green hue. There is thunder and occasional lightning off to one side of the stage, as though coming from the outside of a cave along the mountain pass they have been climbing. The scene opens with a lightning flash followed by a loud thunder crack. This will continue throughout the first part of this scene, but the thunder will be of varying intensity—softer during lines and louder between lines—so the actors can be heard by the audience. There are also sounds of wind and of giants throwing boulders. KILI and FILI are at the front of the group as though looking for a dry cave.)*

Thorin: This won't do at all! If we don't get blown off, or drowned, or struck by lightning, we shall be picked up by some giant and kicked sky-high for a football.

Gandalf: *(very grumpy)* Well, if you know of anywhere better, take us there!

Kili: *(both KILI and FILI are relieved and excited)* We have found a dry cave...

Fili: ...not far around the next corner; and ponies and all could get inside.

Gandalf: *(wary)* Have you *thoroughly* explored it?

Kili: Yes!

Fili: Yes!

Dwalin: You could not have been long about it.

Bombur: You came back too quick...

Kili: *(cutting off BOMBUR)* It isn't all that big, and it does not go far back.

Thorin: *(resigned)* If we can wait out the storm there, I suppose the news seems good enough.

(They all get up and move “inside” the “cave area.” There are some pony whinnies heard as though they are being led into the cave. The lightning and thunder are now a little quieter, as though “outside” the cave.)

Thorin: *(enters last and is exhausted)* Let us rest while we can.

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(There is a general murmur of agreement as they settle in. Lightning and thunder continue for several beats. BILBO rests fitfully for several beats then finally wakes up.)

Bilbo: *(as if half-asleep)* The ponies... *(now wide awake realizing he isn't dreaming—as though sounding an alarm)* The ponies! The ponies!

(Hysterical pony sounds are heard as though being dragged away into the back of the cave. A blue light flashes by GANDALF and he disappears. If the stage has a trap door in the floor, it will be opened to reveal an evil red light and BILBO and the DWARVES will all "fall" through it. If there is no trap door and no platform built, they can "fall" through the crack between a black curtain. The lightning and thunder quickly fade out. While the DWARVES and BILBO are getting ready to re-enter the stage for the next part of the scene, three GOBLINS will croak/sing-speak the next lines, keeping time with the flap of their flat feet on stone and throw in some ugly laughs between the lines. The sound effects should echo a bit and sound as terrifying as possible. During their lines, the dark, evil red light slowly comes up on the center of the stage and reveals the GREAT GOBLIN sitting on his throne. Additional GOBLINS can be gathered around the outside edge of the red circle of light, or silhouettes of GOBLINS can be projected onto the cyc.)

Goblin #1: Clap! Snap! The black crack! Grip, grab! Pinch, nab! And down, down to Goblin-town you go, my lad!

Goblin #2: Clash, crash! Crush, smash! Hammer and tongs! Knocker and gongs! Pound, pound, far underground! Ho, ho! My lad!

Goblin #3: Swish, smack! Whip crack! Batter and beat! Yammer and bleat! Work, work! Nor dare to shirk, while Goblins quaff, and Goblins laugh, round and round far underground below, my lad!

(The GOBLINS now crack whips as the DWARVES and BILBO run onto the stage—some of the DWARVES are yammering and bleating like anything—and stop in front of the GOBLIN KING. The DWARVES and BILBO are all chained together with their hands behind their backs. BILBO is the last one on the chain. Anytime the GREAT GOBLIN says anything, the other GOBLINS will cheer as appropriate. The GOBLINS are carrying axes and bent swords.)

Great Goblin: *(evilily delighted at the sight of new slaves)* Who are these miserable persons?

Goblin #1: *(matching the GREAT GOBLIN's tone)* Dwarves, and this! *(pulls BILBO's chain so he falls forward onto his knees)* We found them sheltering in our Front Porch.

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Great Goblin: (*turns to THORIN*) What do you mean by it? Up to no good, I'll warrant! Spying on the private business of my people, I guess! Thieves, I shouldn't be surprised to learn! Murders and friends of Elves, not unlikely! Come! What have you got to say?

Thorin: (*merely a polite nothing*) Thorin the dwarf at your service! (*honestly*) Of the things which you suspect and imagine we had no idea at all. We sheltered from a storm in what seemed a convenient cave and unused; nothing was further from our thoughts than inconveniencing goblins in any way whatever.

Great Goblin: Um! So you say! Might I ask what you were doing up in the mountains at all, and where you were coming from, and where you were going to? In fact I should like to know all about you. Not that it will do you much good, Thorin Oakenshield, I know too much about your folk already; but let's have the truth, or I will prepare something particularly uncomfortable for you!

Thorin: We were on a journey to visit our relatives, our nephews and nieces, and first, second, and third cousins, and the other descendants of our grandfathers, who live on the East side of these truly hospitable mountains.

Goblin #3: He is a liar, O truly tremendous one! Several of our people were struck by lightning in the cave, when we invited these creatures to come below; and they are as dead as stones. Also he has not explained this! (*holds out sword THORIN got from the TROLLS' lair*)

(*The GREAT GOBLIN gives a truly awful howl of rage. Sound of GOBLIN soldiers gnashing their teeth, clashing their shields, and stamping. They hate "Orcrist," which they call "Biter," and hate worse anyone who carries it.*)

Great Goblin: (*shouting*) Murderers and elf-friends! Slash them! Beat them! Bite them! Gnash them! Take them away to dark holes full of snakes, and never let them see the light again! (*he is in such a rage that he jumps off his seat and rushes at THORIN with his mouth open*)

(*Just before the GREAT GOBLIN reaches THORIN, all of the lights go out and, simultaneous with a "poof" sound, the great fire goes out and changes to blue glowing smoke, right up to the roof, that scatters piercing white sparks among the goblins. There are sounds of GOBLINS yelling, yammering, croaking, jibbering, jabbering, howling, growling, cursing, shrieking, and skriking that are beyond description. As the sparks start burning holes in the GOBLINS, the stage fills with smoke or a hazy light—it is so thick that the GOBLINS cannot see through it—and they are rolling, biting, kicking, and fighting in heaps on the floor as if they had all gone mad. Suddenly GANDALF's sword flashes as it goes through the GREAT GOBLIN who is dumbfounded in the middle of his*)

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rage. The sword is quickly resheathed as the GREAT GOBLIN falls dead. Quickly, GANDALF also picks up Orcrist.)

Gandalf: *(fierce and quiet)* Follow me quick! *(As they start off stage)* Quicker, quicker! The torches will soon be relit.

Dori: *(decently)* Half a minute!

(DORI helps BILBO onto his back—they are at the back of the line. The sound of chains quickly clanking is heard as the stage is being cleared of everything except the smoky haze.)

Gandalf: *(from just off-stage)* Draw your sword Thorin!

Goblins: *(shrieking)* Biter and Beater!

(There are sounds of the GOBLINS quickly running away. GANDALF and the DWARVES quickly follow. Just before DORI exits, BILBO has slipped out of the chain and the sound of BILBO falling off of DORI's back onto the floor is heard. DORI is dragged away quickly by his chain. As the haze clears, we see BILBO lying alone on the bare stage with the exception of a plain gold ring. It is very quiet. An eerie yellow-green light slowly comes up. After several beats, BILBO's eyes open and he slowly picks himself up to a crawl position.)

Bilbo: *(groping around on all fours; fearfully)* Why, O why did I ever leave my hobbit-hole?

(BILBO continues to crawl until he comes upon the ring, which he automatically puts in his pocket without thinking, then continues to crawl onward for a few more feet before sitting down to regain his bearings. He is hungry, but realizing that only makes him more miserable. He finds his pipe intact and starts to cheer up, but is miserable again when he cannot find any matches. He puts his pipe away and bumps the hilt of his dagger which he is wearing inside his breeches. He decides to pull it out in case any more goblins are lurking about. It shines a pale and dim blue.)

Bilbo: *(in wonderment)* So you are an elvish blade, too... and goblins are not very near, and yet not far enough. *(comforted sigh; keeps blade out for light to see by)* Go back? *(beat as turns to check the direction)* No good at all! Go sideways? *(beat as turns to check the direction)* Impossible! Go forward? *(beat as turns to check the direction)* Only thing to do! On we go! *(begins to quietly trot forward with his dagger before him in one hand and the other hand as though feeling along a wall and winds around the stage for a few beats until a "splash" sound is heard. BILBO reacts to the "cold water" and jumps back. A distant "drip-drip-dripping" sound is heard now. BILBO is studies the small lake unsure what to do as GOLLUM silently approaches in a*

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small boat. GOLLUM is approaching BILBO out of curiosity—he is not hungry as he just had his fill of fish. BILBO hears him and turns toward him; GOLLUM notices the dagger and hesitates.)

Gollum: Bless us and splash us, my precioussss! I guess it's a choice feast; at least a tasty morsel it'd make us, gollum! *(makes a horrible swallowing noise in his throat every time he says 'gollum,' which is how he got his name)*

Bilbo: *(jumps back and thrusts dagger toward GOLLUM)* Who are you?

Gollum: *(whispering to himself)* What iss he, my precious?

Bilbo: I am Mr. Bilbo Baggins. I have lost the dwarves and I have lost the wizard, and I don't know where I am; and I don't want to know, if only I can get away.

Gollum: *(looking at BILBO's dagger, which he does not like)* What's he got in his handses?

Bilbo: A sword, a blade which came out of Gondolin!

Gollum: Sssss. *(becomes quite polite)* Praps ye sits here and chats with it a bitsy, my precioussss. It likes riddles, praps it does, does it?

(They are both anxious to find out more about each other.)

Bilbo: *(amiably)* Very well. *(because he had not had time to think of a riddle)* You ask first.

Gollum: *(hissing)* What has got roots as nobody sees, Is taller than trees, Up, up it goes, And yet never grows?

Bilbo: Easy! Mountain, I suppose.

Gollum: Does it guess easy? It must have a competition with us, my precious! If precious asks, and it doesn't answer, we eats it, my precioussss. If it asks us, and we doesn't answer, we gives it a present!

Bilbo: *(not daring to disagree and nearly bursting his brain to think of riddles that can save him from being eaten)* All right! *(beat)* Thirty white horses on a red hill, First they champ, Then they stamp, Then they stand still.

Gollum: *(hissing)* Chestnuts, chestnuts: Teeth! Teeth, my precioussss; but we has only six! *(beat)* Voiceless it cries, Wingless flutters, Toothless bites, Mouthless mutters.

Bilbo: *(trying not to think about food—and being eaten)* Half a moment! *(beat as he regains his wits)* Wind, wind of course. *(is so pleased with himself that he makes*

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up one on the spot) An eye in a blue face saw an eye in a green face. "That eye is like to this eye," said the first eye, "but in low place, not in high."

Gollum: Ss, ss, ss. (*starts recalling memories, but takes so long that BILBO hopes he may have stumped him*) Sss, sss, my preciouss. Sun on the daisies it means, it does. (*being reminded of when he was less lonely, sneaky, and nasty starts to put him out of temper and is making him hungry, so he vindictively tries to trip up BILBO with a more difficult and unpleasant one*) It cannot be seen, cannot be felt, Cannot be heard, cannot be smelt. It lies behind stars and under hills, And empty holes it fills. It comes first and follows after, Ends life, kills laughter.

Bilbo: (*had heard that sort of thing before and the answer is all around him anyway; answers without even scratching his head or putting on his thinking cap*) Dark! (*beat*) A box without hinges, key, or lid, Yet golden treasure inside is hid.

(*BILBO is surprised at GOLLUM's whispering, hissing, and spluttering because BILBO had offered a dreadfully easy chestnut to buy himself time until he could think of a difficult one.*)

Bilbo: (*becoming impatient as it has been several beats*) Well, what is it? The answer's not a kettle boiling over, as you seem to think from the noise you are making.

Gollum: Give us a chance; let it give us a chance, my preciouss—ss—ss.

Bilbo: (*finally, after giving him a long chance*) Well, what about your present?

Gollum: (*suddenly remembering, hisses*) Eggses! Eggses it is! (*so flustered by the 'egg' one that he gives a dreadfully easy one, too*) Alive without breath, As cold as death; Never thirsty, ever drinking, All in mail never clinking.

(*BILBO sits and clears his throat a couple of times.*)

Gollum: (*begins to hiss with pleasure to himself*) Is it nice, my preciousss? Is it juicy? Is it scrumptiously crunchable?

Bilbo: Half a moment. I gave you a good long chance just now.

Gollum: It must make haste, haste! (*begins to climb out of his boat and accidentally frightens a fish, which jumps out of the water and lands on BILBO's toes*)

Bilbo: (*disgusted*) Ugh! It is cold and clammy! (*realizes the answer*) Fish! Fish! It is fish! (*asks another as quickly as he can so GOLLUM has to get back in his boat and think*) No-legs lay on one-leg, two-legs sat near on three-legs, four legs got some.

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Gollum: *(easy only because of the previous chestnut)* Fish on a little table, man at table sitting on a stool, the cat has the bones. *(going for something hard and horrible)* This thing all things devours: Birds, beasts, trees, flowers; Gnaws iron, bites steel; Grinds hard stones to meal; Slays king, ruins town, And beats high mountains down.

Bilbo: *(taking so long that GOLLUM is climbing out of his boat; BILBO wants to say "Give me more time! Give me time!", but all he manages to squeal out is...)* Time! Time!

(GOLLUM is disappointed, but now getting angry, hungry, and tired of the game. GOLLUM does not go back to his boat, but instead sits down by BILBO, making BILBO dreadfully uncomfortable and lose his concentration.)

Gollum: It's got to ask us a question, my precious, yes, yess, yesss. Jusst one more question to guess, yes, yess. *(starts pawing and poking BILBO; BILBO scratches and pinches himself, but does not think of anything)* Ask us! Ask us!

Bilbo: *(gripping dagger while pinching and slapping himself, then starting to check his pockets for ideas—feels ring and says aloud to himself)* What have I got in my pocket?

Gollum: *(thinks it is a riddle; hisses)* Not fair! Not fair! It isn't fair, my precious, is it, to ask us what it's got in its nasty little pocketsets?

Bilbo: *(seeing what happened and having nothing better to ask, sticks to his question and asks louder)* What have I got in my pocket?

Gollum: S-s-s-s-s. It must give us three guessseses, my precious, three guessseses.

Bilbo: Very well! *(takes hand back out of his pocket)* Guess away!

Gollum: Handses!

Bilbo: Wrong. Guess again!

Gollum: *(more upset than ever and thinking of all the nasty things he keeps in his own pockets; finally says...)* Knife!

Bilbo: Wrong! Last guess!

(GOLLUM is in a much worse state than when he was asked the egg question. He hisses and splutters and rocks back and forth, slaps his feet on the floor, and wriggles and squirms, but he does not dare to waste his last guess.)

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Bilbo: (finally) Come on! I am waiting! (attempting to be bold and cheerful even though he is not sure how the game will end whether GOLLUM guesses right or not) Time's up!

Gollum: (shrieks causing BILBO to be afraid to chastise him for cheating by working in two guesses at once) String, or nothing!

Bilbo: (very much relieved) Both wrong. (gets up at once, puts his back to the nearest wall and holds out his dagger; GOLLUM sees the dagger and simply sits and whispers to himself; not really caring about the present, but BILBO feels he won it fairly and in difficult circumstances) What about the present?

Gollum: Must we give it the thing, precious? Yess, we must! We must fetch it, precious, and give it the present we promised. (gets in boat and exits)

(BILBO waits for several beats. When GOLLUM does not return, BILBO starts looking for the passage he came down so he can go back the way he came, but then he hears GOLLUM wailing and squeaking from his island off-stage. Some distant sounds of scrabbling, searching, and turning things inside out are heard.)

Gollum: (squeaking from off-stage) Where iss it? Where iss it? Lost, lost, my precious, lost, lost! Bless us and splash us! We haven't got the present we promised, and we haven't even got it for ourselves. (BILBO stops and turns to listen to the fuss) My ring, my wonderful, beautiful ring, my birthday present! It wasss in my pocketses... it wasss in the hole on our issland, but we wass hungry and tired of fisssh, sso we crept along looking for juicy goblinses... then we would be safe. O yess! For when we slipss that ring on our finger, we were invisible! (a little more rattling around, then quiet as GOLLUM returns in his boat) We are ssorry; we didn't mean to cheat, we meant to give it our only pressent, if it won the competition. We are ssorry; sso ssorry. We can catch the Bagginss ssome nice juicy fissh to eat instead.

Bilbo: (shuddering at the thought, but as politely as he can) No thank you! (beat) Never mind! The ring would have been mine now, if you had found it; so you would have lost it anyway. And I will let you off on one condition.

Gollum: (anxious to agree so he would not be guilty of cheating against the sacred riddle game even though he still wants to try what the stranger tasted like; still there was the dagger and BILBO is wide awake and on guard, so perhaps it is best after all...) Yes, what iss it? What does it wish us to do, my precious?

Bilbo: Help me to get out of these places.

Gollum: (relieved that the request is easy to fulfill) Follow uss. (goes back a short way along the path BILBO came by and takes a side path; whispers...) Here'ss the

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passage. It musst squeeze in and sneak down. We durstn't go with it, my preciouss, no we durstn't, gollum! (*makes same noise as before*)

Bilbo: (*politely*) Thank you and goodbye. (*exits*)

(*GOLLUM softly flip-flaps back to his boat and exits, paddling back to his island as the lights fade to—blackout.*)

SCENE 5

Scene description: *(The stage is bare except for a two large boulders that divide the stage. BALIN's nose and red hood are barely visible between the boulders. The stage is lit for early evening. GANDALF and the rest of the dwarves are discovered on stage and are discussing whether they should go back to look for Bilbo or continue on without him. The murmur of their voices is just barely audible so BILBO will not hear them until he is relatively close to them. BILBO is wearing the ring; if desired, there can be a follow spot of a different light color whenever he is wearing the ring, but the dialog should be sufficient for the audience to keep track without this special. BILBO enters exhausted.)*

Bilbo: *(looking "uphill," the way he came, and turning around to examine his whereabouts while wandering on his entrance side of the stage)* Good heavens! I seem to have got right to the other side of the Misty Mountains, right to the edge of the Land Beyond! Where and O where can Gandalf and the dwarves have got to? I only hope to goodness they are not still back there in the power of the goblins!

(On this unpleasant thought, BILBO stops, determines to go back for his companions, and takes a step or two back the way he came when the murmur of non-goblin voices stops him again. He turns, listening, and creeps nearer. BILBO soon spots BALIN at his post. BILBO almost shouts for joy, but does not because he realizes that BALIN is looking straight at him yet cannot see him. BILBO decides to give them all a surprise and quietly goes around behind the boulder and eavesdrops for a few moments. The DWARVES are grumbling while GANDALF is speaking.)

Gandalf: We cannot possibly go on with our journey while leaving Mr. Baggins in the hands of the goblins, without trying to find out if he is alive or dead, and without trying to rescue him. After all he is my friend, and not a bad little chap. I feel responsible for him. I wish to goodness you had not lost him.

Dwarves: Why was he ever brought along at all?... Why could he not stick to his friends and come along with us?... And Gandalf, why could you not have chosen someone with more sense?... If we have got to go back now into those abominable tunnels to look for him, then drat him, I say...

Gandalf: *(angrily)* I brought him, and I don't bring things that are of no use. Either you help me to look for him, or I go and leave you here to get out of the mess as best you can yourselves. If we can only find him again, you will thank me before all is over. Whatever did you want to go and drop him for, Dori?

Dori: You would have dropped him if a goblin had suddenly grabbed your legs from behind in the dark, tripped your feet, and kicked you in the back!

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Gandalf: *(same)* The why didn't you pick him up again?

Dori: Good heavens! Can you ask? Goblins fighting and biting in the dark, everybody falling over bodies and hitting one another! You nearly chopped off my head with Glamdring, and Thorin was stabbing here there and everywhere with Orcrist. All of a sudden you gave one of your blinding flashes, and we saw the goblins running back yelping. You shouted 'follow me everybody!' and everybody ought to have followed. We thought everybody had. There was no time to count, as you know quite well, till we had dashed through the gate-guards, out of the lower door, and helter-skelter down here. And here we are—without the burglar, confusticate him!

Bilbo: *(slipping off the ring and then stepping forward)* And here's the burglar!

(GANDALF and every last DWARF jump in astonishment! They ALL shout with surprise and delight, but GANDALF is the most pleased.)

Gandalf: *(good-naturedly)* Balin, I don't know if I think much of a lookout man who lets people walk right into them like that without warning.

(BALIN comes over; everyone is puzzled, but BALIN is the most puzzled of all.)

Balin: I don't understand it; I didn't let anything distract me for a moment!

Dwarves: Well, it was a clever bit of work... yes, very clever... how did you do it Bilbo?... yes, however did you manage it?...

Bilbo: *(modestly)* Oh, just crept along, you know—very carefully and quietly.

Balin: *(while returning to his post)* Well, it is the first time that even a mouse has crept along carefully and quietly under my very nose and not been spotted; and I take off my hood to you. *(sweeps hood off and bows)* Balin at your service.

Bilbo: *(returning the bow)* Your servant, Mr. Baggins.

Dwarves: *(all at once)* Well, what happened, Bilbo?... Tell us your adventures, Bilbo!... Sit down... Tell us what happened after we lost you...

Bilbo: *(sitting down; DWARVES shudder during description of GOLLUM)* I fell quite a ways down and hit my head. When I came to, I said there's nothing for it but to press on, so I did, but I missed the passage out in the dark and came to a small lake. I met a small, slimy gollum-creature there. He was as dark as darkness, except for two big, round pale eyes in his thin face. He moved across the deathly cold water in his little boat without making a ripple. If my elvish blade hadn't frightened him, he would have killed me for his dinner then and there. He asked me if I liked riddles, so we played—if I should lose, he would eat me, but if I should win, he offered me a present. It was quite

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intense and I gave him good, long chances on most of them, but I only needed a little extra time on one or two of them. Even so, he came over to see how tender I'd be for his dinner. And then I couldn't think of any other question with him sitting beside me, so I said, "what's in my pocket?" And he couldn't guess in three goes. So I asked for my present, and he went to look for it, and couldn't find it. So I said, "very well, help me to get out of this nasty place!" and he showed me the passage to the door. "Good-bye," I said, and I went on down.

Dwarves: What about the guards?... Weren't there any?...

Bilbo: *(as if it was not very difficult or alarming)* O yes! Lots of them; but I dodged 'em. I got stuck in the door, which was only open a crack, and I lost lots of buttons. *(sadly looks at torn clothes)* But I squeezed through all right—and here I am.

(The DWARVES look at BILBO with a new respect.)

Gandalf: *(laughing)* What did I tell you? Mr. Baggins has more about him than you guess. *(GANDALF and BILBO exchange a look of acknowledgement and understanding so BILBO knows that GANDALF guessed at the part of his tale that he left out, but also understands that GANDALF approves of the dwarves not knowing about it.)*

Bilbo: *(opens mouth to ask GANDALF about the ring, but is quickly silenced by a stern look from GANDALF so, after a beat, he queries the DWARVES instead)* How did you all escape? Where have we gotten to now? And Gandalf, how did you turn up again?

Gandalf: *(never minds explaining his cleverness more than once)* Both Elrond and I have been well aware of the presence of evil goblins in this part of the mountains. But their main gate used to come out on a different pass, one more easy to travel by, so that they often caught people benighted near their gates. Evidently people had given up going that way, and the goblins must have quite recently opened their new entrance at the top of the pass we took because it had been found quite safe up to now. I must see if I can't find a more or less decent giant to block it up again, or soon there will be no getting over the mountains at all. As soon as I heard your yell, Bilbo, I realized what had happened. The flash I created killed the goblins that were grabbing me and I nipped inside the crack just as it snapped to. I followed after, then worked up the best magic I could in the shadows. A very ticklish business, it was. Touch and go! *(of course this is GANDALF's specialty, but he says this to impress the COMPANY)* I knew all about the back-gate where you lost your buttons, Bilbo, as well as anybody who is acquainted with this part of the mountains, but it takes a wizard to keep his head in the tunnels and guide others in the right direction. They made that gate ages ago, partly for a way of escape, if they needed one, and partly as a way out into the lands beyond where they still come in the dark and

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do great damage. They guard it always and no one has ever managed to block it up. They will guard it doubly after this. *(he laughs)*

(The rest of the COMPANY laugh, too, until GANDALF calls them to their senses.)

Gandalf: We must be getting on at once, now we are a little rested. They will be out after us in hundreds when night comes on and already shadows are lengthening. They can smell our footsteps for hours and hours after we have passed. We must be miles on before dusk. There will be a bit of moon, if it keeps fine, and that is lucky. Not that they mind the moon much, but it will give us a little light to steer by.

Bilbo: But where are we now? And surely it took more than a day for us to get here, for it appears that we are now starting down the other side of the mountain!

Gandalf: *(while DWARVES do a head count and prepare to follow GANDALF)* O yes! You lose track of time inside the goblin-tunnels. Today's Thursday, and it was Monday night or Tuesday morning that we were captured. We have gone miles and miles, and come right down through the heart of the mountains, and are now on the other side—quite a short cut. But we are not at the point to which our pass would have brought us. We are too far to the North and have some awkward country ahead. And we are still pretty high up. *(sees everyone ready)* Let's get on! *(starts to lead procession off-stage)*

Bilbo: *(suddenly aware he has not eaten since the night before last and feeling wobbly now that the excitement is all over—groans)* I am so dreadfully hungry.

Gandalf: Can't help it, unless you'd like to go back and ask the goblins nicely to let you have your pony back and your luggage.

Bilbo: No thank you!

Gandalf: Very well then, we must just tighten our belts and trudge on—or we shall be made into supper, and that will be much worse than having none ourselves.

(The COMPANY trudges off-stage while BILBO looks side to side for something to eat, but there is nothing before they ALL exit and the lights—black out. The lights dimly come up—like faint moonlight—on a stage that is bare except for some trees that GANDALF, the DWARVES, and eventually BILBO will all climb. It should be dark enough to intimate that BILBO can just see THORIN's beard wagging beside him and so quiet that the DWARVES breathing is a loud noise. This noise can be amplified with sound effects. The howling of the wolves can also be a sound effect.)

BILBO: *(as lights are coming up and from off-stage)* Must we go any further? My toes are all bruised and bent, and my legs ache, and my stomach is wagging like an empty sack.

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Gandalf: A bit further.

(After a few beats, GANDALF, the DWARVES, and BILBO enter, but do not notice the trees immediately because it is 'too dark' for them to see that far. ALL react to scene as if not being a nice place. After a beat, a howl is suddenly heard away down the hill—a long shuddering howl. It is answered by another away to the right and a good deal nearer to them; then by another not far away to the left.)

Bilbo: *(aware of wolves or wild wargs only from stories—BILBO is quite panicked)* What shall we do, what shall we do! Escaping goblins to be caught by wolves!

Gandalf: *(looks around and sees the trees now)* Up the trees quick!

(ALL run for the trees and ALL, except BILBO who is running from tree trunk to tree trunk, climb trees.)

Nori: *(to DORI while looking down at BILBO)* You've left the burglar behind again!

Dori: I can't be always carrying burglars on my back—down tunnels and up trees! What do you think I am? A porter?

(A series of howls is heard quite close now.)

Thorin: He'll be eaten if we don't do something. *(to DORI who is the lowest or closest to the ground)* Dori! Be quick, and give Mr. Baggins a hand up!

(DORI reaches for BILBO's hand, but BILBO cannot reach, so DORI climbs down from the tree and lets BILBO scramble up and stand on his back and—even though there are suddenly "hundreds of eyes looking at them" by way of an image projected onto the cyc—DORI waits until BILBO is completely clear before he jumps for a branch himself—and just in time, too, as a wild WARG has entered the stage and snaps at his retreating cloak. A few WARGS enter the stage and surround the trees, yelping and leaping at the trunks. This can also be conveyed by an image on the cyc and/or by sound effects. If any actors represent a warg, the costume should look as much like a dark, hungry wolf with blazing eyes and tongue hanging out as possible. The number of wargs or pairs of warg eyes on the cyc should be incrementally increasing. If possible, there should be one WARG on stage per tree so they can leave one to guard BILBO's and DORI's tree, then sniff over to each of the other trees and keep a guard at each tree that contains a person. Even though it is warm and not windy, ALL in the trees should look uncomfortable. GANDALF listens to their growlings for a few beats, appears worried, then notices some pine cones in his tree and throws some at the WARGS. The cyc fills with red light as

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though the WARGS are catching on fire and it is spreading to the other WARGS. The sound of WARGS yelping in searing pain and running off in search of water is heard. The commotion has alerted the LORD OF THE EAGLES, who swoops in, catches GANDALF in his talons, and flies him off-stage as the lights quickly fade to—blackout. [If there is no fly system, this can be portrayed in blackout with a shadow puppet box or on the cyc.] The stage is quickly cleared of the trees and WARGS. The lights come up on a bare stage, except for GANDALF, the DWARVES, and BILBO standing near the stage exit. Also, the LORD OF THE EAGLES is standing there facing the group, but only engaged in conversation with GANDALF. BEORN is standing by the stage exit, which represents the gate to his yard. BEORN is a skin changer: sometimes he is a huge black bear and sometimes he is a great strong black-haired man with huge arms and a great beard. BEORN will be a hairy man for both scenes he is in. This scene is lit for midday.)

Bilbo: *(brushing himself off after his flight)* Now I know what a piece of bacon feels like when it is suddenly picked out of the pan on a fork and put back on the shelf!

Dori: No you don't! Because the bacon knows that it will get back in the pan sooner or later; and it is to be hoped we shan't. Also eagles are not forks!

Bilbo: *(still a little dazed)* O no! Not a bit like storks—forks, I mean. *(gives an embarrassed look to the LORD OF THE EAGLES)*

Gandalf: *(to the LORD OF THE EAGLES)* We are deeply obliged to you.

Lord of the Eagles: It is I who is obliged to you. Rescuing you and your fellow prisoners from the wargs and the nearby goblins is hardly repayment for the service you once rendered to me in healing me from an arrow-wound. Farewell! Wherever you fare, till your eyries receive you at the journey's end!

Gandalf: May the wind under your wings bear you where the sun sails and the moon walks.

(The LORD OF THE EAGLES turns around and flies off-stage. If there is no fly system, the LORD OF THE EAGLES can walk off while flapping his wings. GANDALF turns around to face the DWARVES and approach BEORN who is still waiting by different stage exit than the one the LORD OF THE EAGLES used.)

Gandalf: *(to the DWARVES and BILBO while crossing through them towards BEORN)* I always meant to see you all safe—if possible—over the mountains and now by good management *and* good luck I have done it. Indeed we are now a good deal further east than I ever meant to come with you, for after all this is not my adventure. I may look in on it again before it is all over, but in the meanwhile I have some other

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pressing business to attend to. (*The DWARVES groan and look most distressed and BILBO weeps*) I am not going to disappear this very instant. I can give you a day or two more.

Dwarves and Bilbo: (*all beg GANDALF not to leave*) Please stay with us... We'll share the dragon-gold... Don't go... We'll give you silver... And jewels...

Gandalf: (*to all this GANDALF shakes his head*) We shall see, we shall see! And I think I have earned already some of your dragon-gold—when you have got it. (*DWARVES and BILBO stop pleading*) Now come and meet my friend Beorn.

(*ALL DWARVES and BILBO follow and cross with GANDALF to BEORN as the lights fade to—blackout. ALL exit.*)

{INTERMISSION}

ACT II

SCENE 1

Scene description: *(The stage should be bare. A winding path should be lit onto the stage so that it can rotate and change as the DWARVES and BILBO attempt to find their way through Mirkwood Forest. The "Mirkwood Forest" portion of the stage should be "darkly" lit so that the area appears foreboding. The area where GANDALF leaves the COMPANY—the DWARVES and BILBO—should be just on the edge of the stage and be lit for early morning, but once the COMPANY enters the forest the "forest" lighting should take over the remainder of the stage. Even though it is extremely still and silent in the Mirkwood Forest, the COMPANY should react to imagined sounds and low hanging limbs as though they are real—but not everyone will see and hear the same things in the same spots. For example, just because one or two dwarves duck for a "low hanging branch" does not mean the rest of the DWARVES will do so in that spot. BILBO has the sharpest eyes and hearing among them, so he sees and hears things the most clearly and sooner and farther away than the rest of the company. This is the scene where the DWARVES really learn to trust BILBO's sharp senses and to truly appreciate that GANDALF insisted on bringing him along. At first THORIN has BILBO at the front of the line just to keep BILBO from accidentally getting left behind again, but eventually becomes aware that BILBO is noticing things and not as affected by the forest atmosphere as the rest of the COMPANY and starts to have him jointly lead their passage. The path should seem clear, then blur and change frequently throughout the COMPANY's passage through Mirkwood Forest. The "Elf fires" should be red glowing lights across the stage from wherever the company—they can be a spot on the stage itself or on the cyc. SPIDERS can either be portrayed by an actor in a costume, with a shadow box, or a moving silhouette or still image on the cyc. Even if an actor is used, the SPIDERS' lines can be recorded in a raspy, evil spider-type sound and played as a sound effect to help portray the true number of SPIDERS that BILBO is fighting off.)*

Thorin: Don't you worry! It will get lighter all too soon. Before long I expect we shall all wish our packs heavier, when the food begins to run short.

Gandalf: Cheer up Bilbo and don't look so glum. Cheer up Thorin and Company! This is your expedition after all. Think of the treasure at the end. *(to THORIN)* Good-bye! *(to ALL)* And good-bye to you all, goo-bye! Straight through the forest is your way now. Don't stray off the track!—if you do, it is one thousand to one you will never find it again and never get out of Mirkwood; and then I don't suppose I, or anyone else, will ever see you again.

Bilbo: *(groans)* Do we really have to go through?

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Gandalf: Yes, you do! If you want to get to the other side. You must either go through or give up your quest. And I am not going to allow you to back out now, Mr. Baggins. I am ashamed of you for thinking of it. You have got to look after all these dwarves for me.

Bilbo: No! No! I didn't mean that. I meant, is there no way round?

Gandalf: There is, if you care to go two hundred miles or so out of your way north, and twice that south. But you wouldn't get a safe path even then. There are no safe paths in this part of the world. Remember you are over the Edge of the Wild now, and in for all sorts of fun wherever you go. Stick to the forest-track, keep your spirits up, hope for the best, and with a tremendous slice of luck you *may* come out one day and see the Long Marshes lying below you, and beyond them, high in the East, the Lonely Mountain where dear old Smaug lives, though I hope he is not expecting you.

Thorin: (*growls*) Very comforting you are to be sure. (*more or less resigned to it*) Good-bye! If you won't come with us, you had better get off without any more talk!

Gandalf: Good-bye then, and really good-bye! (*crosses to exit, turns back and calls to DWARVES and BILBO*) Good-bye! Be good, take care of yourselves—and DON'T LEAVE THE PATH! (*exits*)

Dwarves: (*grumpily*) O good-bye and go away!

(*Walking in single file, the DWARVES and BILBO enter "the forest path"—THORIN and BILBO should be in the lead; the COMPANY should act as though trudging through Mirkwood Forest is slowly suffocating them. As they trudge along, pairs of yellow, red, or green eyes, and pale bulbous spider eyes should suddenly appear on the cyc at various distances so that BILBO will notice all of them and the others will mostly notice the ones that appear the largest and closest to them until BILBO points out what he is looking at. BILBO will shudder at the sight of any of the pale bulbous spider eyes as he likes these least. They will trudge on in this manner and in relative silence for a minute or two. Even though the DWARVES look the most depressed, they will also start to look hopeful about making it through the forest as they realize just how sharp BILBO's senses are. Finally, the COMPANY comes near the edge and to one end of the stage and BILBO kneels on the edge, peering across some water, which is in front of the other end of the stage—GOLLUM's dinghy can be reused for this scene.*)

Bilbo: There is a boat against the far bank! Now why couldn't it have been on this side!

Thorin: How far away do you think it is?

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Bilbo: Not at all far. I shouldn't think above twelve yards.

Thorin: Twelve yards! I should have thought it was thirty at least, but my eyes don't see as well as they used—a hundred years ago. Still twelve yards is as good as a mile. We can't jump it, and we daren't try to wade or swim.

Bilbo: Can any of you throw a rope?

Thorin: What's the good of that? The boat is sure to be tied up, even if we could hook it, which I doubt.

Bilbo: I don't believe it is tied, though of course I can't be sure in this light; but it looks to me as if it was just drawn up on the bank, which is low just there where the path goes down to the water.

Thorin: Dori is the strongest, but Fili is the youngest and still has the best sight. Come here Fili, and see if you can see the boat Mr. Baggins is talking about.

Fili: I think I can. Who has the rope? *(one of the DWARVES bring FILI a rope and attach an anchor on the end. The first try splashes in the water, which is heard by sound effect)*

Bilbo: Not far enough! A couple of feet and you would have dropped it on to the boat. Try again. I don't suppose the magic is strong enough to hurt you, if you just touch a bit of wet rope.

(FILI retracts the rope and hook rather doubtfully all the same, but throws it into the far end of the boat this time.)

Bilbo: Steady! You have thrown it right into the wood on the other side now. Draw it back gently. *(FILI pulls gently)* Carefully! Let's hope the hook will catch. *(beat)* It did!

(FILI pulls in vain, so KILI helps, then OIN and GLOIN. They tug and finally fall over on their backs. As the boat approaches the stage, BILBO catches the rope.)

Bilbo: *(shouts)* Help!

(BALIN jumps forward and catches the boat.)

Bilbo: It was tied after all. *(looks at a snapped piece of rope dangling from the far end of the boat)* That was a good pull, my lads; and a good job that our rope was the stronger. Who'll cross first?

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(During the next three lines, FILI quickly ties a fresh rope to one end of the boat and throws the other to the other side of the bank, catching the original rope in a tree branch. Alternately, a stage hand can be waiting just off stage to catch and hold the rope.)

Thorin: I shall and you will come with me, and Fili and Balin. That's as many as the boat will hold at a time. After that Kili and Oin and Gloin and Dori; next Ori and Nori, Bifur and Bofur; and last Dwalin and Bombur.

Bombur: I'm always last and I don't like it. It's somebody else's turn today.

Thorin: You should not be so fat. As you are, you must be with the last and lightest boatload. Don't start grumbling against orders, or something bad will happen to you.

Fili: It's ready. One of you haul on the rope that is stuck in a tree on the other side and when we are safe on the other side Dwalin and Bombur can use the other rope to draw the boat back.

(The COMPANY quickly crosses. DWALIN steps out of the boat safely and repacks the rope, but BOMBUR loses his balance and, accompanied by a "splash" sound effect, he gets partially immersed in the enchanted stream. The now empty boat takes off downstream/off stage while the COMPANY barely gets BOMBUR to shore in time before he falls asleep.)

Dwarves: *(standing over BOMBUR)* Curses... What ill luck... Curse Bombur's clumsiness... We've lost the boat... If we made a wrong turn we can't go back now...

Thorin: There's nothing else for it; we shall have to take turns carrying him.

(Four of the DWARVES pick up the happily sleeping BOMBUR and follow the rest of the COMPANY off-stage as the lights—blackout. The lights come back up, still dimly, on the same scene, only it is now many days later. The COMPANY is waking up and looking through depleted food rations. They are gloomy, but momentarily cheer up when BOMBUR finally wakes up. They quickly resume their gloomy mood when BOMBUR will not stop talking about food.)

Thorin: *(tossing an empty food pack down)* Is there no end to this accursed forest?

Bombur: *(suddenly waking up, but still sleepy)* I cannot make out where I am at all, nor why I am so hungry. Where am I? Is this what that hobbit's house looks like at night? It's not very hospitable, is it?

Thorin: *(factually)* We are in Mirkwood Forest...

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Bombur: *(interrupting, which of course annoys THORIN who never likes being interrupted)* How can that be? We only just finished our dinner at that hobbit's house... what was his name again? And why am I so hungry when I just ate dinner?

Dwalin: His name is Bilbo and we have been journeying for months. You have been asleep ever since you fell in the enchanted stream over a week ago. If we can't make you believe all the many adventures we have had, maybe you will believe your growling stomach. Surely that is proof enough that you haven't eaten in a week.

Thorin: *(annoyed)* And if what little Bilbo saw when he climbed that tree yesterday is any indication, it appears that the rest of us won't be eating anything for at least a week, either. Our food supply is completely depleted.

Bombur: *(sits down and weeps)* Why did I ever wake up! I was having such beautiful dreams. I dreamed I was walking in a forest rather like this one, only lit with torches on the trees and lamps swinging from the branches and fires burning on the ground; and there was a great feast going on, going on forever. A woodland king was there with a crown of leaves, and there was a merry singing, and I could not count or describe the things there were to eat and drink.

Thorin: *(firmly)* You need not try. In fact, if you can't talk about something else, you had better be silent. We are quite annoyed with you as it is. If you hadn't waked up, we should have left you to your idiotic dreams in the forest; you are no joke to carry even after weeks of short commons.

(The COMPANY tightens their belts round their empty stomachs and hoists their supply packs and empty food sacks over their shoulders and begin to trudge along again, this time with BALIN in the lead.)

Bombur: *(reluctantly getting up to follow, wails)* My legs will not carry me. I want to lie down and sleep.

Dwarves: No you don't!... Let your legs take their share... We have carried you far enough.

Bombur: *(suddenly flings himself on the ground and refuses to go a step further)* Go on, if you must. I'm just going to lie here and sleep and dream of food, if I can't get it any other way. I hope I never wake up again.

Balin: *(calls back)* What was that? I thought I saw a twinkle of light in the forest.

(The COMPANY, including BOMBUR, gather around BALIN to look at the "red twinkle in the dark" representing an elven firelight that is twinkling across the stage from them.)

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Bombur: *(puffing up behind, gasps)* It looks as if my dreams were coming true!

(BOMBUR starts to rush after the lights, but the rest of the COMPANY stops him.)

Dwarves: *(not in unison, several frantically speak overlapping each other)* Gandalf and Beorn both warned us not to leave the path!

Thorin: *(decidedly)* A feast would be no good, if we never got back alive from it.

Bombur: *(whines)* But without a feast we shan't remain alive much longer anyway.

(BILBO nods in agreement with BOMBUR while the COMPANY argues back and forth for a couple of beats—repeating their last line simultaneously, but not in unison, on top of each other. Finally, THORIN holds up his hand for silence.)

Thorin: Very well, we shall send out a couple of spies to creep near the lights and find out more about them. *(ALL nod in agreement)* Does anyone wish to volunteer?
(ALL take a step back)

Kili: I don't want to run the chance of being lost and never finding our company again.

Bombur: What shall we do then? If I really haven't eaten in a week, then I'm in worse shape than the rest of you. There were so many good things being eaten in the woodland feast in my dream and I can almost smell it from here... *(turns longingly toward the firelight, but does not step toward it this time)*

Thorin: *(resigned and to everyone's delight)* Let us plunge into the forest together then.

(After a good deal of creeping and crawling, the COMPANY peers around trunks and finally reaches the edge of the ring of light. As if by magic, the light immediately goes out. The COMPANY is lost in the darkness and blindly grope around for each other. Finally they find each other and verify everyone is there by touching and counting noses.)

Thorin: There is nothing for it but to settle down for the night where we are.

Dori: *(after a beat notices lights on another area of the stage)* The lights are coming out again over there, and there are more than ever of them.

(The COMPANY moves in unison toward the lights, but stop when they get near.)

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Thorin: No rushing forward this time! No one is to stir from hiding till I say. I shall send Mr. Baggins alone first to talk to them. They won't be frightened of him—and anyway I hope they won't do anything nasty to him.

(BILBO looks a little worried at this, but when the COMPANY gets to the edge of the circle the DWARVES suddenly push BILBO from behind and he stumbles forward into the full blaze of the light. Immediately, all of the lights go out again and complete darkness falls. It is worse collecting themselves this time and the DWARVES cannot find BILBO for a moment.)

Dwarves: *(shouting and calling)* Bilbo Baggins!... Hobbit!... You dratted hobbit!... Hi!... Hobbit, confusticate you!... Where are you?...

(There is no answer, but DORI stumbles across BILBO by sheer luck—in the dark he falls over what he thought was a log and finds BILBO curled up fast asleep. It takes a good deal of shaking to wake him.)

Bilbo: *(not pleased at all about being awakened, grumbles)* I was having such a lovely dream, all about having a most gorgeous dinner.

Dwarves: Good heavens!... He has gone like Bombur... Don't tell us about dreams... Dream-dinners aren't any good and we can't share them...

Bilbo: *(mutters)* They are the best I am likely to get in this beastly place.

(BILBO starts to lay down beside the DWARVES to find his dream again, but gets interrupted by KILI who has spotted another, even larger firelight across the stage from their COMPANY.)

Kili: *(rousing the rest of the COMPANY)* There's a regular blaze of light begun not far away—hundreds of torches and many fires must have been lit suddenly and by magic. And hark to the singing and the harps!

(The COMPANY listens to the music, which is not audible to the audience, and—after a beat—cannot resist the desire to go nearer and try once more to get help. So, up they get again.)

Bombur: *(as the COMPANY is almost to the light)* The feast is greater and more magnificent than before. And there is the woodland king with a crown of leaves upon his golden hair. It is just as I saw in my dream!

(BOMBUR starts to move forward, but THORIN puts up his hand to stop BOMBUR and warn the rest of the COMPANY to stay put. This time THORIN boldly steps into the

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light, but the light goes out again. THORIN drops in place just as BILBO had on the last round and will exit the stage when the lights blackout. In the near blackness, the rest of the DWARVES exit the stage by various exits while calling out the names of the other thirteen members of the COMPANY. This is not simultaneous and no one in the COMPANY can hear each other. In the meantime, BILBO remains on stage and runs round and round while calling out the names of the rest of the COMPANY.)

Bilbo: Dori, Nori, Ori, Oin, Gloin, Fili, Kili, Bombur, Bifur, Bofur, Dwalin, Balin, Thorin Oakenshield!

(When BILBO is finally alone on stage, he finally sits down and soon falls asleep. The lights fade to—blackout. The scene is the same, with the addition of a cocoon wrapped around BILBO's legs, a great SPIDER standing over BILBO while trying to cocoon him without disturbing him, and all of the DWARVES being completely cocooned and stacked more or less in a pile near a stage exit appropriately distanced from BILBO's location. The lights should only be down for a beat or two—however long it takes for DWARVES and great SPIDER to get in position and to put BILBO's cocoon on him. If the cocoons can glow, this would give a very appropriate effect. If they can glow, the SPIDER carrying BILBO's partial cocoon should carry it on stage in a coil and slip it on over BILBO's feet as though quickly cocooning him from the feet upward and the lights fade up during the action. If they do not glow, the actors should get in position as quickly as possible so the lights can come up as quickly as possible. BILBO wakes up and punches the great SPIDER in the face, to which the great SPIDER tries to poison him to keep him quiet. Just as the great SPIDER is coming, BILBO regains his wits and remembers his "sword." When BILBO draws it, the great SPIDER jumps back—obviously it is not used to having its victims carry such stings at their sides, otherwise it would have run away quicker. But this gives BILBO enough time to cut his legs loose and quickly stab the great SPIDER, which falls dead. BILBO passes out for a moment while the lights—blackout, but just long enough for the great SPIDER to get off-stage. The lights fade up slowly as BILBO arouses himself now that the poison has somewhat worn off and, after wiping off his "sword" and resheathing it, he starts searching for his DWARF companions.)

Bilbo: *(after wiping off his "sword," holds it up and looks at it)* I will give you a name and I shall call you *Sting*. *(resheathes Sting and, after slipping on his ring, begins search for companions while lamenting)* O! Why did we not remember Beorn's advice, and Gandalf's! What a mess we are in now! We! I only wish it was *we*—it is horrible being all alone.

(BILBO makes as good a guess as he can at the direction from which cries for help had come in the night and by luck—he was born with a good share of it—he guesses more or

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less right. Being clever at quietness, he soon reaches the rest of the COMPANY, with the exception of THORIN who has already been captured by the WOOD-ELVES. He recognizes them because some of their feet are sticking out of their cocoons. Just then another great SPIDER—this can be the same actor—enters the stage to check on its dinner. It pokes at the fattest of the bundles and nips hard at the nose sticking out. BOMBUR gives a muffled yelp and kicks his toe up at the spider, successfully knocking it back.)

Spider: *(hisses)* The meat's alive and kicking! I'll soon put an end to that! *(It is about to kill BOMBUR, but BILBO stealthily rushes forward and kills it in the nick of time)*

Bilbo: *(removes the ring, cuts his companions loose, and directs them to cross to an opposite stage exit)* I am going to disappear. I shall draw the spiders off, if I can; and you must keep together and make in the opposite direction. To the left there, that is more or less the way towards the place where we last saw the elf fires. *(BILBO puts on his ring and disappears)* Go on! Go on! I will do the stinging!

(The DWARVES are groggy from the spider poison and cannot do much better than a hobble and a wobble, but are able to stumble and cross to the opposite stage exit as quickly as they can under the circumstances. BILBO remains behind to keep the other SPIDERS from following the DWARVES. Just as the DWARVES are about to exit, they are surrounded by armed ELVES and removed from the off-stage. The DWARVES are too weak to put up a fight.)

Bilbo: *(standing there with Sting drawn, begins taunting the SPIDERS in sing-song rhythm)* Old fat spider spinning in a tree! Old fat spider can't see me! Attercop! Attercop! Won't you stop, stop your spinning and look for me? Old Tomnoddy, all big body, Old Tomnoddy can't spy me! Attercop! Attercop! Down you drop! You'll never catch me up your tree!

(As the lights fade to—blackout, there is a sound effect of SPIDERS surrounding BILBO and Sting rapidly going to work, which also fades out after a beat or two.)

SCENE 2

Scene description: *(The lights come up on the bars of three jail cells in a row, but not a straight line. The Dwarves should be able to see a little into the other cells. All of the DWARVES are in elven jail cells—THORIN in the first one, not center, and the others evenly split between the other two visible cell doors. There are some large empty barrels off to one side. Later on when the DWARVES and BILBO escape, the barrels will be rolled off-stage and a drop followed by a splash sound effect will be heard. There is also a small wood table and wood chair for the JAIL KEEPER's use. There is an empty flagon and a plate with a few food crumbs still on it. These elves should look much like the elves of Rivendell, but more suspicious and less trusting of strangers. They also have fair skin and are blonde instead of having fair skin and dark brown hair like their Rivendell "cousins." The JAIL KEEPER should have a large metal key ring with a few large skeleton-type keys on it that will hang from a leather belt or girdle and that can be easily slipped off of the belt later on in the scene.)*

Balin: I hope Bilbo has not been caught by those dratted spiders. *(there is admiration for BILBO in his voice)* I for one should like to have this whole vanishing business carefully explained.

Bilbo: *(still wearing the ring, enters the stage on the second half of BALIN's line and once he determines no one else is about, removes the ring and answers BALIN much to their surprise and delight)* I found the ring on the ground before I met Gollum. Apparently it's the present he was going to give to me anyway, but I didn't figure that out until after I got him to agree to show me the way out. Since I gave him three chances on his last guess, I don't believe it was unfair in any case. And the rest of it happened just as I told you.

Dwarves: *(almost in unison)* BILBO!!!

Thorin: *(worried, looking behind BILBO)* Keep it down, or you'll wake the guards and then they will lock up Mr. Baggins, too. Bilbo, we need you to think of a wonderful plan to help us. We would soon all have been dead, if it had not been for you. Thank you, Mr. Baggins. *(THORIN bows)*

Dwarves: *(also bow and all thank BILBO)* Thank you... Thank you, Bilbo... Thank you, Mr. Baggins...

(BILBO looks bashful, yet bolder.)

Balin: *(quite pleased)* Gollum! Well I'm blest! So that's how you sneaked past me, is it? Now I know! Just crept quietly along did you, Mr. Baggins? Buttons all over

the doorstep! Good old Bilbo! This time I want to hear the Gollum story, riddles and all, told again several times with the ring in its proper place.

Bilbo: *(borrows the JAIL KEEPER's chair to sit on while the DWARVES gather by their respective cell doors and listen intently and respectfully)* Well, when I woke up after my fall...

(On BILBO's last line, the lights fade to—blackout. The lights come up on the same scene as the last, except that BILBO has his ring on and is sitting off to one side on one of the empty wine barrels and the chair has been returned to its original location. The WOOD-ELF KING enters where BILBO entered on the previous scene and confronts THORIN in his cell. He is accompanied by the JAIL KEEPER who stands guard. THORIN signals the COMPANY to let him handle this one and BILBO and the other DWARVES observe in silence and keep as still as possible. Partway through the following conversation, BILBO borrows the JAIL KEEPER's keys, silently unlocks the cells of the other DWARVES, then unlocks THORIN's cell while BALIN is speaking and distracting the WOOD-ELF KING. Once BILBO unlocks each cell door he leaves the door slightly ajar so the WOOD-ELF KING will not notice the latch is no longer secured. BILBO then relocks the latch so once it is secured again the cell doors will not open without the key. BILBO finally returns the keys to the JAIL KEEPER's belt before the WOOD-ELF KING finishes his last line and leaves.)

Elf King: *(looks sternly at THORIN)* Why did you and your folk three times try to attack my people at their merrymaking?

Thorin: *(factually)* We did not attack them. We came to beg because we were starving.

Elf King: Where are your friends who robbed me? What are they doing? Have they sent you to repay their debts to me?

Thorin: I don't know—my family never had any quarrels with you—but I expect whoever you're referring to is starving in the forest.

Elf King: What were you doing in the forest?

Thorin: Looking for food and drink, because we were starving.

Elf King: *(angrily)* But what brought you into the forest at all? *(THORIN shuts his mouth and will not say another word)* Very well! Keep him locked up until he feels inclined to tell the truth, even if he waits a hundred years.

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Balin: *(not even pretending to be polite)* What have we done, O king? Is it a crime to be lost in the forest, to be hungry and thirsty, to be trapped by spiders? Are the spiders your tame beasts or your pets, if killing them makes you angry?

Elf King: *(the question makes him angrier than ever)* It is a crime to wander in my realm without leave. Do you forget that you were in my kingdom, using the road that my people made? Did you not three times pursue and trouble my people in the forest and rouse the spiders with your riot and clamour? After all the disturbance you have made I have a right to know what brings you here, and if you will not tell me now, I will keep you all in prison until you have learned sense and manners! *(turning to the JAIL KEEPER)* After tonight's great autumn feast, put the dwarves each in a separate cell. They are to be given food and drink, but do not allow them to pass the doors of their little prisons until one at least of them is willing to tell me what I want to know. *(WOOD-ELF KING and JAIL KEEPER exit)*

(BILBO watches for a beat to make sure the WOOD-ELF KING and the JAIL KEEPER are gone, then slips off the ring.)

Bilbo: You just follow me! We must all keep together and not risk getting separated. All of us must escape or none, and this is our last chance. If this is found out, goodness knows where the king will put you next, with chains on your hands and feet too, I expect. Don't argue, there's a good fellow! *(Once the DWARVES are out, BILBO closes the cell doors behind them)*

Thorin: Upon my word! Gandalf spoke true, as usual! A pretty fine burglar you make, it seems, when the time comes. I am sure we are all forever at your service whatever happens after this. But what comes next?

Bilbo: *(fearful the DWARVES will not like the idea)* I need you to roll the rest of these barrels over to the trapdoors and climb in. I will put the lids on and drop you through the trap door, then when the water-gate is opened, we will float down stream. I won't be seen with my ring on and someone will need to secure the lids and operate the levers anyway, so I will have to grab hold of one of your barrels and get cold and wet while the rest of you get to ride inside the barrels.

Dwarves: *(grumbling loudly in spite of their danger)* We shall be bruised and battered to pieces... And drowned too... For certain... We thought you had got some sensible notion when you managed to get hold of the keys... This is a mad idea!

Bilbo: *(looking downcast and also rather annoyed)* Very well! Come along back to your nice cells and I will lock you all in again and you can sit there comfortably

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and think of a better plan—but I don't suppose I shall ever get hold of the keys again, even if I feel inclined to try.

Dwarves: *(more calmly)* We can't fight our way out... Even if we could find the upper halls... And the front gate is sealed by magic... No point in wasting time wandering through passages and getting lost... Just to get caught again...

Thorin: *(resigned to the plan)* I suppose we'll just have to do what Bilbo suggested. Get the barrels.

Bilbo: *(aloud to himself while cringing at the noise)* Drat this dwarvish racket! *(checks the cell doors and makes sure they are all securely locked)* That and returning his keys will save him some of the trouble he is in for. He wasn't a bad fellow... and quite decent to the prisoners. It will puzzle them all too. They will think we had a very strong magic to pass through all those locked doors and disappear. *(starts at the thought)* Disappear! We have got to get busy very quick, if that is to happen! *(quickly follows the rest of the COMPANY off-stage and exits)*

(After a beat, the lights—blackout.)

SCENE 3

Scene description: *(The lights come up for a bright, sunny late morning. The DWARVES crawl through the opening of a barrel BILBO has just opened. The opening is just on-stage and the rest of the barrel is off-stage. There are two MEN on the opposite side of the stage from the COMPANY, but otherwise the stage is bare. The MEN are drinking and their weapons are casually set aside. THORIN crawls out of the barrel first, but this is only known by his golden chain and the color of his now dirty and tattered sky-blue hood with its tarnished silver tassel. It is some time before he will be even polite to the hobbit.)*

Bilbo: *(quite crossly)* Well, are you alive or are you dead? *(no answer from THORIN)* Are you still in prison, or are you free? If you want food and if you want to go on with this silly adventure—it's yours after all and not mine—you had better slap your arms and rub your legs and try to help me get the others out while there is a chance!

(THORIN sees the sense in this, so after a few more groans he gets up and helps the hobbit as well as he can. The DWARVES are soaked and bruised and cramped so they hardly comprehend their release or can be properly thankful for it—they will do nothing but lay down. FILI and KILI are the youngest of the COMPANY and weathered the trip better than the others, so they come out smiling with only a bruise or two and a stiffness that soon wears off. FILI and KILI willingly help BILBO and THORIN get the rest of the COMPANY out of the barrels. BOMBUR is asleep or senseless and DORI, NORI, ORI, OIN, and GLOIN are waterlogged and seem only half alive—they all have to be carried one by one and be laid helpless on the shore.)

Fili: *(while helping unload)* I hope I never smell the smell of apples again! My tub was full of it. To smell apples everlastingly when you can scarcely move and are cold and sick with hunger is maddening. I could eat anything in the wide world now, for hours on end—but not an apple!

Thorin: *(now that everyone is unloaded and accounted for)* Well! Here we are! And I suppose we ought to thank our stars and Mr. Baggins. I am sure he has a right to expect it, though I wish he could have arranged a more comfortable journey. Still—all very much at your service once more, Mr. Baggins. No doubt we shall feel properly grateful, when we are fed and recovered. In the meanwhile what next?

Bilbo: I suggest Lake-town. What else is there?

(THORIN, BILBO, FILI, and KILI go ahead to scout out the town and leave the rest of the COMPANY on the shore. They take the two MEN off-guard when THORIN plants himself before them, looking very much the King Under the Mountain in spite of his torn

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clothes and bedraggled hood. The MEN quickly put their drinks down, leap to their feet, and grab for their weapons.)

Guard: *(shouting)* Who are you and what do you want?

Thorin: *(boldly)* Thorin son of Thrain son of Thrór King under the Mountain!
(the gold gleams on his neck and waist and his eyes are dark and deep) I have come
back. I wish to see the Master of your town!

*(GUARD gets excited and rushes forward as though the mountain and river must have
turned to gold.)*

Captain: And who are these?

Thorin: The sons of my father's daughter—Fili and Kili of the race of Durin, and
Mr. Baggins who has travelled with us out of the West.

Captain: *(Guard returns and points weapon at BILBO and the three DWARVES)* If
you have come in peace lay down your arms!

Thorin: We have none. *(BILBO says nothing about Sting, which is tucked inside
his trousers—otherwise it is quite true)* We have no need of weapons, who return at last
to our own as spoken of old. Nor could we fight against so many. Take us to your
master!

Captain: He is at feast.

Fili: *(impatient with the solemnities, bursts in)* Then all the more reason for
taking us to him. We are worn and famished after our long road and we have sick
comrades. Now make haste and let us have no more words, or your master may have
something to say to you.

Captain: Follow me then.

*(CAPTAIN leads them off-stage and the GUARD brings up the rear. A sound effect is
heard of general uproar of excitement from the township then fades out as the lights fade
to—blackout. The lights come up for morning and the MASTER, a COUNCILOR, and
THORIN are discovered on stage. The stage is bare except for the MASTER's mirror—
the MASTER is primping and preening before it—and the Master's COUNCILOR who is
standing behind him. The MASTER thinks THORIN is a fraud and is pleased because the
COMPANY has only been recuperating so far and he is preparing to confront them.
THORIN is near the opposite end of the stage. Because two weeks have elapsed,
THORIN is recovered and his clothes are clean and look almost new.)*

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Councilor: Master, Thorin just told the council that his company is leaving for the mountain this morning and he is requesting some supplies. (*holds up a short list*)

Master: (*surprised and a little frightened*) Is Thorin after all really a descendant of the old kings? I never thought that the dwarves would actually dare to approach Smaug. I was about to discover their fraud and turn them out! (*beat*) But I am not sorry at all to let them go. They have been expensive to keep and their arrival has kept business at a standstill. (*turns around to address the COUNCILOR directly*) Let them go and bother Smaug, and see how *he* welcomes them! (*Crosses to THORIN; quite jovial again*) Certainly, O Thorin Thrain's son Thror's son! You must claim your own. The hour is at hand, spoken of old. What help can we offer shall be yours, and we trust to your gratitude when your kingdom is regained.

Councilor: But none of the men of our town will stay with you for even one night under the shadow of the mountain, not at any rate until the songs have come true.

Master & Councilor: Farewell!

(*THORIN exits and the lights fade to—blackout.*)

SCENE 4

Scene description: *(The lights come up on only the immediate area the COMPANY is in. Everything in this scene will be discovered on stage, however, the three sections of the stage will only be lit as BILBO enters them. The first section is on the outside edge of the stage. There is a smooth "boulder" they are waiting outside of at the top of the scene. BILBO is sitting beside a grey stone that has an enormous nearly coal black thrush on it; its pale yellow breast is freckled with dark spots. The lighting will be sunset to moonlight on the "outside" shining down only on the "doorstep" that the DWARVES and BILBO are waiting on. There will be an additional instrument specifically to light a spot on the "boulder." By the time BILBO enters the tunnel there will be nearly a blackout over the DWARVES. The second section is the tunnel and the light will come up on it and remain dimly lit as BILBO passes through it. The last section is SMAUG's lair. The light in this last area will fade in slowly as though the light is coming in through the smoky haze the dragon is creating with his breath. There should be a huge pile of treasure that SMAUG is sitting on. This can also be represented by an image on the cyc or a painted canvas spread out on the stage, but there should be at least a few actual golden objects on the stage regardless. The COMPANY remains down stage, extreme stage right or left, then BILBO and BALIN will cross straight back up stage where BILBO will leave BALIN, then make a u-turn and cross straight down stage just short of the "tunnel door" and turn toward center stage and cross in front of SMAUG.)*

Bilbo: *(thoughtfully)* The dragon is still alive and in the halls under the mountain—or I imagine so from the smoke we saw coming from the front gate.

Balin: *(factually, but not unkindly)* That does not prove it, though I don't doubt you are right. But he might be gone away some time, or he might be lying out on the mountain-side keeping watch, and still I expect smokes and steams would come out of the gates—all the halls within must be filled with his foul reek.

(The COMPANY falls into silence for several beats. They are all bored, but one of them breaks the silence. The sun is setting.)

A Dwarf: *(noticing faraway look on BILBO's face)* What are you doing, Bilbo?

Bilbo: *(slightly annoyed at being disturbed from his thoughts of his hobbit-hole)* You said sitting on the doorstep and thinking would be my job, not to mention getting inside, so I am sitting and thinking.

(The COMPANY again falls into silence for several beats. This time THORIN breaks the silence. The sun is nearly set.)

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Thorin: Today begins the last day of autumn.

Bifur: And winter comes after autumn.

Dwalin: And next year after that. And our beards will grow till they hang down the cliff to the valley before anything happens here. What is our burglar doing for us? Since he has got an invisible ring, and ought to be a specially excellent performer not, I am beginning to think he might go through the Front Gate and spy things out a bit!

Bilbo: *(mutters to himself)* Good gracious! So that is what they are beginning to think, is it? It is always poor me that has to get them out of their difficulties, at least since the wizard left. Whatever am I going to do? I might have known that something dreadful would happen to me in the end. I don't think I could bear to see the unhappy valley of Dale again, and as for that steaming gate!!!...

(At that very moment BILBO hears a sharp crack behind him. On the grey stone the thrush has caught a snail and is trying to crack it on the stone. Crack! Crack! Suddenly BILBO understands and jumps to attention. Some of the DWARVES have started to wander around. In the moment, BILBO forgets the danger and hails the DWARVES.)

Bilbo: Come back here, quickly! It's time! Get ready! It's the directions from the runes Elrond read to us on the map. "Stand by the grey stone where the thrush knocks and the setting sun with the last light of Durin's Day will shine upon the key-hole."

(The COMPANY all stands still and waits in breathless anticipation. THORIN is behind the other DWARVES. The sun sets and their hopes fall. The DWARVES groan, but BILBO stands almost without moving. Lighting starts changing to evening, then suddenly when their hope is lowest, a red ray of the sun escapes like a finger through a rent in a cloud. A gleam of light comes straight through the opening and falls on the smooth rock-face. The old thrush gives a trill—this can be a sound effect—and a hole suddenly appears on the rock-face about three feet up from the ground. Some of the DWARVES rush to push the door, but the effort is in vain.)

Bilbo: The key! The key! Where is Thorin? *(The DWARVES step back as THORIN hurries forward)* The key! The key that went with the map! Try it now while there is still time!

(THORIN steps up and draws the key on its chain from round his neck. He puts it to the hole. It fits, turns, and a "snap" sound effect is heard. The gleam goes out, the sun sinks, the moon is gone, and evening springs into the sky. The COMPANY all pushes

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together and the rock-wall slowly swings inward. They stand back and stare down the long, dark tunnel. Finally, THORIN speaks.)

Thorin: *(finally)* Now is the time for our esteemed Mr. Baggins, who has proved himself a good companion on our long road, and a hobbit full of courage and resource far exceeding his size, and if I may say so possessed of good luck far exceeding the usual allowance—now is the time for him to perform the service for which he was included in our Company; now is the time for him to earn his Reward...

(BILBO interrupts THORIN who would have otherwise continued on and on in his usual manner for solemn occasions, but BILBO is impatient after the weeks of boredom.)

Bilbo: *(crossly)* If you mean you think it is my job to go into the secret passage first, O Thorin Thrain's son Oakenshield, may your beard grow ever longer. So say at once and have done! I might refuse. I have got you out of two messes already, which were hardly in the original bargain, so that I am, I think, already owed some reward. But 'third time pays for all' as my father used to say, and somehow I don't think I shall refuse. Perhaps I have begun to trust my luck more that I used to in the old days, but anyway I think I will go and have a peep at once and get it over. Now who is coming with me?

(BILBO did not expect a chorus of volunteers, so he isn't disappointed. FILI and KILI look uncomfortable and stand on one leg. The other DWARVES make no pretense of offering—except old BALIN.)

Balin: I will come inside at least and perhaps a bit of the way, too, and be ready to call for help if necessary.

(BILBO and BALIN cross up stage together. When BILBO continues around a u-turn bend and starts crossing back down stage, BALIN stays behind at the bend. The tunnel is lit and remains lit as they cross. Outside the tunnel is now almost faded to blackout.)

Balin: *(when BILBO continues on without him)* Good luck!

(BILBO slips on his ring and bravely continues forward. BALIN and BILBO are wiping sweat from their brows as the tunnel is heated by SMAUG's breath. When BILBO reaches the down stage end of the "tunnel," a gurgling noise of a vast animal snoring in its sleep is heard. BILBO stops for a moment debating with himself, then very bravely chooses to step around the corner and into SMAUG's lair. There SMAUG lays—a vast red-golden dragon—fast asleep. Low in slumber, wisps of smoke are coming from SMAUG's nostrils. Beneath him, under all his limbs and his huge coiled tail, and about him on all sides stretching across the stage as though stretching across unseen floors lay

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countless piles of precious things—wrought and unwrought, gems and jewels, and silver—red stained in the ruddy light. SMAUG lays with his wings folded like an immeasurable bat, turned partly on his side so that BILBO can see his long pale belly crusted with gems and fragments of gold from his long lay on his costly bed. Behind him where the walls are nearest, BILBO can just make out a few coats of mail, helms and axes, swords and spears, and great jars and vessels filled a wealth that cannot be guessed. BILBO's breath is literally taken away as he is staggered by the splendor, lust, and glory of such treasure. BILBO's heart is filled and pierced with enchantment and with the desire of dwarves as he gazes motionless, almost forgetting the frightful SMAUG laying before him, at the gold beyond price and count. BILBO gazes for what seems an age before drawn almost against his will across the floor to the nearest edge of the mounds of treasure. BILBO grasps a great two-handled cup—as heavy as he can carry—and casts a fearful glance upwards. SMAUG stirs and his snoring changes its note, but he does not wake up yet. BILBO flees back to the tunnel, then his legs begin to shake like anything.)

Bilbo: *(while clutching the cup and toiling to cross to BALIN)* I've done it! This will show them. 'More like a grocer than a burglar' indeed! Well, we'll hear no more of that.

(BALIN is overjoyed to see BILBO again and carries BILBO back out to the moonlit stoop where the rest of the COMPANY is waiting for them. BILBO lays with his eyes shut, gasping and taking pleasure in the feel of the fresh air, hardly noticing the excitement of the DWARVES, or how they praise him and pat him on the back and put themselves and all their families for generations to come at his service.)

Dwarves: *(all DWARVES speaking over each other)* Bilbo, you've done it!... We and all our families for generations to come will ever be at your service... First-rate burglar!...

(While the DWARVES are passing the cup around and praising BILBO, SMAUG is seen staring at his end of the tunnel. SMAUG then looks around and sees a cup is missing and suddenly a vast rumbling wakes in the mountain as if an old volcano has made up its mind to erupt again. The sound effect should almost fill the theatre and the DWARVES will instantly forget their joy and cower in fright as smoke fills the stage, including the tunnel. If the smoke or a fog machine are not possible to utilize, then a gel for a lighting instrument that indicates a smoky light or even dimming the lights to show the thickness of the smoke makes it difficult to see should be sufficient.)

Smaug: *(enraged—the sort that is only seen when rich folk have more than they can enjoy and suddenly lose something they have long had but have never before used or wanted)* Thieves! Fire! Murder!

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(SMAUG thrusts his head at little hole, but he cannot damage it, as though the tunnel is guarded by stronger magic than he can counter—he angrily holds his head then quickly exits the stage. The sound of beating wings is heard. The DWARVES are so busy cowering that they are paralyzed with fear. BILBO comes to the rescue once again.)

Bilbo: *(jumping up, gasps)* Quick! Quick! The door! The tunnel! It's no good here!

(The DWARVES are roused by BILBO's words and run just inside and close the door behind them just as the sound of a dragon breathing out fire is heard and the mountain side fills with flame-colored light.)

Thorin: That'll be the end our poor ponies! Nothing can escape Smaug once he sees it. Here we are and here we shall have to stay, unless anyone fancies tramping the long open miles back to the river with Smaug on the watch!

(The COMPANY spreads out down the first half of the tunnel and, even though it's hot and stuffy, sits down shivering. Sounds of a dragon flying overhead grow, then fade and pass. SMAUG's hunting continues for several beats.)

Thorin: *(while SMAUG is hunting)* Dangers of this kind are inevitable in dealing with such a guardian. It is no good giving up our quest yet. Nor can we get away just now since our ponies are lost or killed. Luckily we have our food packs with us and they will last us some time—hopefully long enough for Smaug to relax his watch sufficiently for us to dare the long way on foot.

Dwarves: But what is to be done?... How can we get rid of Smaug?...

(The DWARVES all shake their heads.)

Bilbo: *(feels inclined to point out)* That always was a weak point in your plans.

Dwarves: *(perplexed, grumble at BILBO)* You just had to bring a cup away... And stir up Smaug's wrath so soon...

Bilbo: *(angrily)* What else do you suppose a burglar is to do? I was not engaged to kill dragons, that is warrior's work, but to steal treasure. I made the best beginning I could. Did you expect me to trot back with the whole hoard of Thror on my back? If there is any grumbling to be done, I think I might have a say. You ought to have brought five hundred burglars not one. I am sure it reflects great credit on your grandfather, but you cannot pretend that you ever made the vast extent of his wealth clear to me. I should want hundreds of years to bring it all up, if I was fifty times as big, and Smaug as tame as a rabbit.

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Dwarves: *(shamed, all speak over each other)* I beg your pardon.

Thorin: *(sincerely and very politely)* What then do you propose we should do, Mr. Baggins?

Bilbo: I have no idea at the moment—if you mean about removing the treasure. That obviously depends entirely on some new turn of luck and the getting rid of Smaug. Getting rid of dragons is not at all in my line, but I will do my best to think about it. Personally I have no hopes at all and wish I was safe back at home.

Thorin: *(still politely, but dismissive of BILBO's last remark)* Never mind that for the moment! What are we to do now, to-day?

(The sounds of flying overhead have stopped... BILBO notices.)

Bilbo: Well, if you really want my advice, I should say we can do nothing but stay where we are. By day we can no doubt creep out safely enough to take air, but in the meanwhile everyone ought to be well inside the tunnel by night. *(beat)* Now I will make you an offer. I have got my ring and will creep down today and see what Smaug is up to. Perhaps something will turn up. 'Every worm has his weak spot,' as my father used to say, though I am sure it was not from personal experience.

(The DWARVES eagerly accept the offer—they truly respect BILBO who has become the real leader of their adventure—and let him go on his own time. As they fall into silence, SMAUG slowly and silently creeps back to his lair, but only half closes his eyes. Thinking SMAUG is exhausted and not wanting to wake the dragon, BILBO slips the ring on and just as stealthily creeps back down to SMAUG's lair. When he peeks around the corner and sees SAMUG's eye half open, he jumps back inside the tunnel.)

Smaug: Well, thief! I smell you and I feel your air. I hear your breath. Come along! Help yourself again, there is plenty and to spare!

(SMAUG is disappointed that BILBO is not so easily fooled.)

Bilbo: *(from just inside the tunnel)* No thank you, O Smaug the Tremendous! I did not come for presents. I only wished to have a look at you and see if you were truly as great as tales say. I did not believe them.

Smaug: *(somewhat flattered, but does not believe a word of it)* Do you now?

Bilbo: Truly songs and tales fall utterly short of the reality, O Smaug the Chiefest and Greatest of Calamities.

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Smaug: You have nice manners for a thief and a liar. You seem familiar with my name, but I don't seem to remember smelling you before. Who are you and where do you come from, may I ask?

Bilbo: You may indeed! I come from under the hill; and under the hills and over the hills my paths have led—and through the air. I am he that walks unseen.

Smaug: That I can well believe, but that is hardly your usual name.

Bilbo: I am the clue-finder, the web-cutter, the stinging fly. I was chosen for the lucky number.

Smaug: Lovely titles! But lucky numbers don't always come off.

Bilbo: I am he that buries his friends alive and drowns them and draws them alive again from the water. I came from the end of a bag, but no bag went over me.

Smaug: (*scoffs*) These don't sound so creditable.

Bilbo: (*beginning to be pleased with his riddling*) I am the friend of bears and the guest of eagles. I am Ringwinner and Luckwearer; and I am Barrel-rider.

Smaug: (*unable to resist the fascination of riddling talk and of wasting time trying to understand it*) That's better! But don't let your imagination run away with you! (*thinks he understands and now chuckles evilly to himself*) I thought so last night. (*smiles to himself*) Lake-men, some nasty scheme of those terrible tub-trading Lake-men, or I'm a lizard. I haven't been down that way for an age and an age; but I will soon alter that! (*to BILBO*) Very well, O Barrel-rider! Maybe Barrel was your pony's name; and maybe not, though it was fat enough. You may walk unseen, but you did not walk all the way. Let me tell you I ate six ponies last night and I shall catch and eat all the others before long. In return for the excellent meal I will give you one piece of advice for your good: don't have more to do with dwarves than you can help!

Bilbo: (*pretending surprise*) Dwarves!

Smaug: Don't talk to me! I know the smell and taste of dwarf—no one better. Don't tell me that I can eat a dwarf-ridden pony and not know it! You'll come to a bad end, if you go with such friends, Thief Barrel-rider. I don't mind if you go back and tell them so from me. (*continues because the smell of hobbit is outside his experience and puzzles him mightily*) I suppose you got a fair price for that cup last night? Come now, did you? Nothing at all! Well, that's just like them. And I suppose they are skulking outside and your job is to do all the dangerous work and get what you can when I'm not

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looking—for them? And you will get a fair share? Don't you believe it! If you get off alive, you will be lucky.

(BILBO is trying to resist the spell of the dragon's roving eye that is like a search light scanning back and forth over and around the tunnel entrance. BILBO is fighting an unaccountable desire to rush out, reveal himself, and tell all the truth to SMAUG.)

Bilbo: *(plucks up courage and speaks again)* You don't know everything, O Smaug the Mighty. Not gold alone brought us hither.

Smaug: *(laughing)* Ha! Ha! You admit the 'us.' Why not say 'us fourteen' and be done with it, Mr. Lucky Number? I am pleased to hear that you had other business in these parts besides my gold. In that case you may, perhaps, not altogether waste your time. I don't know if it has occurred to you that, even if you could steal the gold bit by bit—a matter of a hundred years or so—you could not get very far? Not much use on the mountain side? Not much use in the forest? Bless me! Had you never thought of the catch? A fourteenth share, I suppose, or something like it, those were the terms, eh? But what about delivery? What about cartage? What about armed guards and tolls? *(laughs aloud wickedly)*

Bilbo: *(taken aback, but fights doubts about his companions off)* I tell you that gold was only an afterthought with us. We came over hill and under hill, by wave and wind, for *Revenge*. Surely, O Smaug the unassessably wealthy, you must realize that your success has made you some bitter enemies?

(SMAUG's laughter is devastating this time.)

Smaug: *(snorts)* Revenge! Revenge! The King under the Mountain is dead and where are his kin that dare seek revenge? Girion Lord of Dale is dead, and I have eaten his people like a wolf among sheep. And where are his sons' sons that dare approach me? I kill where I wish and none dare resist. I laid low the warriors of old and their like is not in the world today. Then I was but young and tender. Now I am old and strong, strong, strong, Thief in the Shadows! *(gloats)* My armor is like tenfold shields, my teeth are swords, my claws spears, the shock of my tail a thunderbolt, my wings a hurricane, and my breath death!

Bilbo: *(in a frightened squeak)* I have always understood that dragons were softer underneath, especially in the region of the—er—chest; but doubtless one so fortified has thought of that.

Smaug: *(stops short in boasting and snaps)* Your information is antiquated. I am armored above and below with iron scales and hard gems. No blade can pierce me.

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Bilbo: *(still does not dare to peek out of the tunnel)* I might have guessed it. Truly there can nowhere be found the equal of Lord Smaug the Impenetrable. What magnificence to possess a waistcoat of fine diamonds!

Smaug: *(absurdly pleased)* Yes, it is rare and wonderful, indeed. *(rolls over)* Look! What do you say to that?

Bilbo: *(finally dares to peek his head out, but ducks back in the tunnel as soon as he answers)* Dazzlingly marvelous! Perfect! Flawless! Staggering! *(having seen SMAUG's weak spot, now only wants to get away)* Well, I really must not detain Your Magnificence any longer, or keep you from much needed rest. Ponies take some catching, I believe, after a long start. *(adds as a parting shot)* And so do burglars.

(BILBO darts back up the tunnel, but as he is fleeing SMAUG roars as the tunnel lights flash behind BILBO and SMAUG again tries to smash the opening, but only hurts his head again, which enrages him further. SMAUG then exits to take off outside. BILBO runs out the cave door to roll on the ground outside to extinguish himself, leaving the DWARVES speechless for the moment.)

Bilbo: *(while rolling)* Never laugh at live dragons, Bilbo you fool! You aren't nearly through this adventure yet.

(BILBO sees SMAUG coming to smash the exterior cave door to keep the COMPANY prisoners and quickly flees back inside the cave. The THRUSH follows BILBO inside just as SMAUG enters the stage nearest the stoop and smashes the cave door in.)

Smaug: *(spoken during entrance, while smashing the cave door, and while exiting again)* Barrel-rider! *(snorts)* Your feet came from the waterside and up the water you came without a doubt. I don't know your smell, but if you are not one of those men of the Lake, you had their help. They shall see me and remember who is the real King under the Mountain!

(SMAUG takes off to desolate Lake-town. He leaves a gap just large enough for the THRUSH to get back out, but not any members of the COMPANY. The door caving in knocks BILBO down and the moment SMAUG is gone the DWARVES rush forward to help BILBO up whose backside has been somewhat blackened by the now extinguished fire. The DWARVES try to cheer him up and are eager for his story.)

Dwarves: *(genuinely concerned)* Are you all right?... Well, what happened?... Tell us your story... Did you confront Smaug?... Why did the dragon make such an awful noise?... How did you escape?...

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(BILBO is worried, uncomfortable, and does not want to repeat some of the things he said to the dragon, so the DWARVES do not get any information out of him. BILBO is angry with himself, but takes temper out on the THRUSH. BILBO picks up a stone from the rubble and throws it at the THRUSH. The THRUSH merely flutters out of the way and comes back.)

Bilbo: *(crossly)* Drat the bird! I believe he is listening and I don't like the look of him. He reminds me of the ominous crows that were lurking around the front gate!

Thorin: Leave him alone! The thrushes are good and friendly—this is a very old bird indeed and is maybe the last left of the ancient breed that used to live about here, tame to the hands of my father and grandfather. They were a long-lived and magical race and this might even be one of those that were alive then—a couple of hundreds or years or more ago. The Men of Dale used to have the trick of understanding their language and used them for messengers to fly to the Men of the Lake and elsewhere.

Bilbo: *(regaining hope)* Well, he'll have news to take to Lake-town all right, if that is what he is after, though I don't suppose there are any people left there that trouble with thrush-language.

Dwarves: Why what has happened?... Do get on with your tale!...

Bilbo: *(to himself)* Smaug is an old fool! *(to the THRUSH)* Try to find someone in Lake-town who understands you and tell him there is a large patch in the hollow of Smaug's left breast as bare as a snail out of its shell! *(the THRUSH immediately takes off using the same stage exit that SMAUG just used and BILBO turns back to the DWARVES to tell them all he can remember)* I am sure he knows we came from Lake-town and had help from there. I have a horrible feeling that his next move may be in that direction. I wish to goodness I had never said that about Barrel-rider—it would make even a blind rabbit in these parts think of the Lake-men.

Balin: *(anxious to comfort BILBO)* Well, well! It cannot be helped, and it is difficult not to slip in talking to a dragon, or so I have always heard. I think you did very well, if you ask me—you found out one very useful thing at any rate, and got out alive, and that is more than most can say who have had words with the likes of Smaug. It may yet be a mercy and a blessing to know of the bare patch in the old Worm's diamond waistcoat. Now get on with your tale.

Bilbo: *(decides BALIN is making sense and looks comforted a little)* Well, when I got to the end of the tunnel...

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(On BILBO's line, the lights fade to—blackout. The lights come up on the same scene, only the COMPANY is spread down the first leg of the tunnel again. THORIN is winding up one of his long speeches.)

Thorin: *(lights are coming up during his speech)* ...We knew it would be a desperate venture and we know that still; and I still think that when we have won it will be time enough to think what to do about it. As for your share, Mr. Baggins, I assure you we are more than grateful and you shall choose your own fourteenth, as soon as we have anything to divide. I am sorry if you are worried about transport, and I admit the difficulties are great—but we will do whatever we can for you and take our share of the cost when the time comes. Believe me or not as you like! *(crosses to the cave door, trying to catch a breeze)* I think I would rather be smashed by Smaug in the open than suffocate in here! *(looks at the cave door)* Neither key nor the magic it once obeyed will ever open this door again.

Dwarves: *(groan)* We are trapped... This is the end... We shall die here...

Bilbo: *(somehow feels a strange lightening of the heart)* Come, come! 'While there's life there's hope,' as my father used to say, and 'third time pays for all.' I am going down the tunnel once again. I have been that way twice when I knew there was a dragon at the other end, so I will risk a third visit when I am no longer sure. Anyway, the only way out is down. And I think this time you had better all come with me.

(As the COMPANY crosses through the tunnel the lights blackout behind them as though the magic over that tunnel is going out now that the door is smashed. As usual, the DWARVES are noisier than BILBO, which makes BILBO cringe when stealth is called for. When they reach the other end of the tunnel, the DWARVES wait while BILBO goes to investigate. Smaug's lair seems less smoky.)

Bilbo: *(puts ring on and enters lair; walks around for a beat—at length can bear it no longer and squeaks aloud)* Confound you, Smaug, you worm! Stop playing hide and seek! Give me a light and then eat me, if you can catch me! *(his voice faintly echoes)* Now I wonder what on earth Smaug is playing at. He is not home today, or tonight, or whatever it is, I do believe. If Oin and Gloin have not lost their tinder boxes, perhaps we can make a little light and have a look around before the luck turns. *(notices something glimmering white even in the smoky light, so he halts and stoops for a moment to pick up the beautiful gem and put it in his deepest pocket before starting back to get the rest of the COMPANY; to himself)* Now I am a burglar indeed! But I suppose I must tell the dwarves about it sometime. They did say I could pick and choose my own share; and I think I would choose this, if they took all the rest! *(Starts back now; partway back calls out)* Can anybody make a light?

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Thorin: Now what on earth or under it has happened? Certainly not the dragon, or he would not go on squeaking.

(The DWARVES wait a moment or two, but there are no dragon noises, so they finally come out and see for themselves that BILBO is not in danger. Once they determine it is relatively safe, the DWARVES take in the splendor of the wealth in the room. The COMPANY is in a very merry mood and begin to play with their newly acquired treasures—stuffing their pockets and letting what won't fit fall longingly back through their fingers. THORIN is looking for something, but cannot find it.)

Bilbo: *(thinking of more practical matters)* I wonder how many meals we have missed inside that nasty clockless, timeless hole?

Thorin: *(in high spirits, laughs)* Come, come! It has only been two days. And don't call my palace a nasty hole! You wait till it has been cleaned and redecorated!

Bilbo: *(glumly)* That won't be till Smaug's dead. In the meanwhile, where is he? I would give a good breakfast to know. I hope he is not up on the Mountain looking down at us!

Balin: Bilbo has a point! We ought to make for the old look-out post at the South-West corner of the Mountain.

(The DWARVES are mightily disturbed at this and quickly decide that BILBO and BALIN are right.)

Dori: We must move away from here. I feel as if his eyes were on the back of my head.

Bombur: It's a cold lonesome place. There may be drink, but I see no sign of food. A dragon would always be hungry in such parts.

Dwarves: *(the other DWARVES who haven't spoken yet)* Come on! Come on!... Let us follow Balin's path!...

(After the rest of the DWARVES nod in agreement, the COMPANY noisily exits the stage as the lights fade to—blackout.)

SCENE 5

Scene description: *(The lights come up on an empty stage, except for a tall wall that the BALIN is at the top of, keeping look out. The COMPANY should all be dressed in armor.)*

Balin: *(Calls back)* They have come! *(The COMPANY scrambles to join BALIN at the top of the wall blocking their front door)* And their camp is very great. They must have come into the valley under the cover of dusk along both banks of the river. There are men and elves and they appear to be armed for war.

(BARD from the Lake-town and the WOOD-ELF KING enter unaccompanied and unarmed. They are surprised to see the front door blocked with a wall of new-hewn stone. As they stand pointing and speaking to one another, THORIN hails them. BILBO, BOMBUR, FILI, and KILI wish to welcome their guests as friends and are shocked and disappointed by THORIN's attitude.)

Thorin: *(in a very loud voice)* Who are you that come as if in war to the gates of Thorin son of Thrain, King under the Mountain, and what do you desire?

Bard: Hail Thorin! Why do you fence yourself like a robber in his hold? We are not yet foes, and we rejoice that you are alive beyond our hope. We came expecting to find none living here; yet now that we are met there is matter for a parley and a council.

Thorin: Who are you, and of what would you parley?

Bard: *(proudly and grimly)* I am Bard, and by my hand was the dragon slain and your treasure delivered. Is that not a matter that concerns you? Moreover I am by right descent the heir of Girion of Dale, and in your hoard is mingled much of the wealth of his halls and towns, which of old Smaug stole. Is not that a matter of which we may speak? Further in his last battle Smaug destroyed the dwellings of the Lake-town Esgaroth and I am yet the servant of their Master. I would speak for him and ask whether you have no thought for the sorrow and misery of his people. They aided you in your distress, and in recompense you have thus far brought ruin only, though doubtless undesigned.

Thorin: *(treasure lust is heavy on him)* You put your worst cause last and in the chief place. To the treasure of my people no man has a claim, because Smaug who stole it from us also robbed him of life or home. The treasure was not his that his evil deeds should be amended with a share of it. The price of the goods and the assistance that we received of the Lake-men we will fairly pay—in due time. But *nothing* will we give, not even a loaf's worth, under threat of force. While an armed host lies before our doors, we

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look on you as foes and thieves. It is in my mind to ask what share of their inheritance you would have paid to our kindred, had you found the hoard unguarded and us slain.

Bard: A just question, but you are not dead and we are not robbers. Moreover the wealthy may have pity beyond right on the needy that befriended them when they were in want. And still my other claims remain unanswered.

Thorin: I will not parley, as I have said, with armed men at my gate. Nor at all with the people of Elvenking, whom I remember with small kindness. In this debate they have no place. Begone now ere our arrows fly! And if you would speak with me again, first dismiss the elvish host to the woods where it belongs, and then return, laying down your arms before you approach the threshold.

Bard: The Elvenking is my friend, and he has succoured the people of Esgaroth in their need, though they had no claim but friendship on him. We will give you time to repent your words. Gather your wisdom ere we return!

(BARD and the WOOD-ELF KING exit as the lights fade to—blackout. After a few beats, the lights come back up on the same scene and an unarmed BANNER-BEARER enters and approaches the front door.)

Banner-Bearer: *(calls out)* In the name of Esgaroth and the Forest, I speak unto Thorin Thrain's son Oakenshield, calling himself the King under the Mountain, and I bid him consider well the claims that have been urged, or be declared our foe. At the least he shall deliver one twelfth portion of the treasure unto Bard, as the dragon-slayer, and as the heir of Girion. From that portion Bard will himself contribute to the aid of Esgaroth; but if Thorin would have the friendship and honor of the lands about, as his sires of old, then he will give also somewhat of his own for the comfort of the men of the Lake.

(THORIN shoots an arrow at the messenger, which hits the BANNER-BEARER's shield.)

Banner-Bearer: *(calls out)* Since such is your answer, I declare the Mountain besieged. You shall not depart from it, until you call on your side for a truce and a parley. We will bear no weapons against you, but we leave you to your gold. You may eat that, if you will! *(exits)*

Thorin: Do not fear; I have received word from our feathered friend that my cousin Dain and more than five hundred of our kin will be here tomorrow. Come! I wish to find the Arkenstone of Thrain before they arrive. That stone of all treasure I name unto myself and I will be avenged on anyone who finds it and withholds it.

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(The rest of the COMPANY dare not cross THORIN and leave the wall with him, but BILBO, BOMBUR, FILI, and KILI are still of the same mind as before and remain there as lookouts.)

Bilbo: *(disgusted)* The whole place still stinks of dragon and it makes me sick. And *cram* is beginning simply to stick in my throat. *(beat; to the other three with him)* Would you lower me down and help me back up again when I get back?

(BOMBUR, FILI, and KILI quickly lower BILBO down as the lights fade to—blackout. After a few beats, the lights come up on the same scene with BILBO back on top of the wall with the rest of the COMPANY. It is lit for morning. BARD and the WOOD-ELF KING approach the front gate. An unidentified cloaked figure is carrying a casket.)

Thorin: *(to the COMPANY when he sees BARD enter the stage and cross to the front gate)* That will be Dain! They will have got wind of his coming. I thought that would alter their mood! *(to BARD)* Come weaponless and I will hear.

Bard: *(puts his bow and sword down on the ground)* Hail Thorin! Are you still of the same mind?

Thorin: My mind does not change with the rising and setting of a few suns. Did you come to ask me idle questions? Still the elf-host has not departed as I bade! Till then you come in vain to bargain with me.

Bard: Is there then nothing for which you would yield any of your gold?

Thorin: Nothing that you or your friends have to offer.

Bard: What of the Arkenstone of Thrain?

(As BARD speaks the unidentified cloaked figure steps forward, opens the casket he is carrying, and holds up the Arkenstone, which gleams bright and white in the morning sun. THORIN is stricken dumb with amazement and confusion. No one speaks for several beats.)

Thorin: *(finally, voice thick with wrath)* That stone was my father's, and is mine. Why should I purchase my own? *(wonder starts to take over)* But how came you by the heirloom of my house—if there is need to ask such a question of thieves?

Bard: We are not thieves. Your own we will give back in return for our own.

Thorin: *(voice gathering rage again, shouts)* How came you by it?

Bilbo: *(peeping over the wall in dreadful fright, squeaks)* I gave it to them!

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Thorin: *(turns on BILBO and grasps him with both hands)* You! You! You miserable hobbit! You undersized—*(at a loss for words)*—burglar! *(he shakes BILBO)* By the beard of Durin! I wish I had Gandalf here! Curse him for his choice of you! May his beard wither! As for you I will throw you to the rocks! *(picks up BILBO and prepares to throw him over the wall)*

Gandalf: *(quickly throws aside his hood and cloak)* Stay! Your wish is granted! Here is Gandalf! And none too soon it seems. If you don't like my Burglar, please don't damage him. Put him down and listen first to what he has to say!

Thorin: *(drops BILBO on top of the wall)* You all seem in league! Never again will I have dealings with any wizards or his friends. *(to BILBO)* What have you to say, you descendant of rats?

Bilbo: Dear me! Dear me! I am sure this is all very uncomfortable. You may remember saying that I might choose my own fourteenth share? Perhaps I took it too literally—I have been told that dwarves are sometimes politer in word than in deed. The time way, all the same, when you seemed to think that I had been of some service. Descendent of rats, indeed! Is this all the service of you and your family that I was promised, Thorin? Take it that I have disposed of my share as I wished, and let it go at that!

Thorin: *(grimly)* I will. And I will let you go at that—and may we never meet again! *(to BARD and GANDALF)* I am betrayed. It was rightly guessed that I could not forbear to redeem the Arkenstone, the treasure of my house. For it I will give one fourteenth share of the hoard in silver and gold, setting aside the gems; but that shall be accounted the promised share of this traitor, and with that reward he shall depart, and you can divide it as you will. He will get little enough, I doubt not. Take him, if you wish him to live; and no friendship of mine goes with him. *(to BILBO)* Get down now to your friends, or I will throw you down!

Bilbo: What about the gold and silver?

Thorin: That shall follow after, as can be arranged. Get down!

Bard: *(while BOMBUR, FILI, and KILI help BILBO down the rope)* Until then we keep the stone.

Gandalf: You are not making a very splendid figure as King under the Mountain. But things may change yet.

Thorin: They may indeed.

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Bilbo: *(to the rest of the DWARVES who are crestfallen by the turn of events, especially BILBO's departure)* Farewell! We may meet again as friends.

Thorin: Be off! You have mail upon you, which was made by my folk and is too good for you. It cannot be pierced by arrows, but if you do not hasten, I will sting your miserable feet. So be swift!

Bard: Not so hasty! We will give you until tomorrow. At noon we will return and see if you have brought from the hoard the portion that is to be set against the stone. If that is done without deceit, then we will depart and the elf-host will go back to the Forest. In the meanwhile farewell!

(As BARD, GANDALF, BILBO, and the WOOD-ELF KING turn to exit, the WOOD-ELF KING speaks to BILBO.)

Elf King: Bilbo Baggins, you are more worthy to wear the armor of elf-princes than many that have looked more comely in it. But I wonder if Thorin Oakenshield will ever see it so. I have more knowledge of dwarves in general than you have perhaps. I advise you to remain with us, and here you shall be honored and thrice welcome.

(The lights fade to—blackout. The lights come up on the same scene, but lit for midday. The DWARVES are at the top of the wall blocking their front gate. They have not set out any treasure. BARD and the WOOD-ELF KING approach the front gate.)

Bard: *(to the WOOD-ELF KING before they reach the front gate)* Thorin's relatives are fools to come thus beneath the Mountain's arm! They do not understand war above ground, whatever they may know of battle in the mines. There are many of our archers and spearmen now hidden in the rocks upon their right flank. Dwarf-mail may be good, but they will soon be hard put to it. Let us set on them now from both sides, before they are fully rested!

Elf King: Long will I tarry, ere I begin this war for gold. The dwarves cannot pass us, unless we will, or do anything that we cannot mark. Let us hope still for something that will bring reconciliation. Our advantage in numbers will be enough, if in the end it must come to unhappy blows.

(There is a sound of DWARVES giving a battle cry and of ELVEN bows twanging and arrows whistling. The light is darkening quickly. GANDALF and BILBO enter the stage and rush forward.)

Gandalf: *(lifts arms and calls out in a voice like thunder)* Halt! Halt! *(as he puts down his staff with a solid stamp, it blazes with a flash like lighting)* Dread has come upon you all! Alas! It has come more swiftly than I guessed. The Goblins are upon you!

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Bolg of the North is coming, whose father Dain slew in Moria. Behold! The bats are above his army like a sea of locusts. They ride upon wolves and Wargs are in their train!

(The light has been dimming throughout GANDALF's speech and it is now quite grey. Amazement and confusion falls upon them ALL. The battle sounds that ceased with GANDALF's cry are now replaced with murmuring voices crying out.)

Gandalf: Come! Let Dain son of Nain come swiftly to us! There is yet time for council.

(The murmurs fade out simultaneously as the lights fade to—blackout. The greyed lights come back up. BILBO is approaching the front gate. The DWARVES, except THORIN can be seen at the top of the wall.)

Bilbo: *(to the DWARVES)* Where is Thorin? The men, elves, and dwarves are fighting fiercely. They almost had the goblins on the run, but they were joined by another group, and now the men, elves, and dwarves are fleeing before them. It will not be long now before the goblins win the gate and we are all slaughtered or driven down and captured. Really it is enough to make one weep, after all one has gone through. I would rather old Smaug had been left with all the wretched treasure, than that these vile creatures should get it, and poor old Bombur, and Balin and Fili and Kili and all the rest come to a bad end; and Bard too, and the Lake-men and the merry elves. Misery me! I have heard songs of many battles and I have always understood that defeat may be glorious. It seems very uncomfortable, not to say distressing. I wish I was well out of it.

(Discouraged, BILBO turns, slips on his ring, and starts to cross toward the exit. The DWARVES look behind them and then climb down from the wall to the inside. Suddenly, the wall shoots outward as it collapses and THORIN leads the rest of the COMPANY forward in a bold charge. THORIN calls out as the DWARVES cross to the exit BILBO entered from.)

Thorin: *(with his voice shaking like a horn in the valley)* To me! To me! Elves and Men! To me! O my kinsfolk!

(BILBO watches the charge with joy! His heart leaps even more as he looks up and notices gleam start to grow in the grey light.)

Bilbo: *(forgetting that he is wearing his ring, he points and shouts)* The Eagles! The Eagles! The Eagles are coming! *(BILBO starts to dance and wave his arms)* The Eagles! The Eagles! The Eagles!

(At that moment a stone hurtles from above and crashes into his helm. This can be accomplished by a stagehand from above and off the stage with a lightly weighted foam

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baseball sized object painted to look like a stone. BILBO falls with a crash and the lights quickly—blackout. The lights come up on a cloudless, but cold day. BILBO is discovered on stage completely alone. The scene is otherwise the same. BILBO is freezing, but his head is on fire.)

Bilbo: *(looking around)* Now I wonder what has happened? *(sits up painfully)* I see no living goblins. *(head clears a little)* Victory after all, I suppose! *(feels aching head)* Well, it seems a very gloomy business. *(BEORN enters the stage and is crossing towards him; he calls out in a shaky voice)* Hullo there! Hullo there! What news?

Beorn: *(peering about)* What voice is it that speaks among the stones?

Bilbo: *(to himself)* Well I'm blessed! This invisibility has its drawbacks after all. Otherwise I suppose I might have spent a warm and comfortable night in bed! *(slips off ring and calls out again)* It's me, Bilbo Baggins, companion of Thorin!

Beorn: *(strides forward)* It is well that I have found you! You are needed and we have looked for you long. You would have been numbered among the dead, who are many, if Gandalf the wizard had not said that your voice was last heard in this place. I have been sent to look here for the last time. Are you hurt much?

Bilbo: A nasty knock on the head, I think. But I have a helm and a hard skull. All the same I feel sick and my legs are like straws.

Beorn: I will carry you down to the camp in the valley. *(picks BILBO up lightly and swift and sure-footed carries him off-stage. The lights quickly—blackout.)*

SCENE 6

Scene description: *(The lights come up on THORIN is lying upon a slab. It is early evening. THORIN's armor is destroyed from the battle and standing upright beside him with his axe beside it. GANDALF is standing with his arm in a sling. FILI and KILI are dead. The other ten DWARVES, BARD, and the WOOD-ELF KING are gathered around the bed and are mourning while kneeling around THORIN. All of this is discovered on stage. As the lights come up, BEORN enters and sets BILBO down beside GANDALF, then crosses over to stand by BARD and the WOOD-ELF KING.)*

Gandalf: *(delighted, exclaims)* Baggins! Well I never! Alive after all—I *am* glad! I began to wonder if even your luck would see you through! A terrible business and it nearly was disastrous. But other news can wait. *(more gravely)* Come! You are called for. *(GANDALF leads BILBO to THORIN's side)* Hail Thorin! I have brought him.

Thorin: *(looks up at BILBO)* Farewell, good thief. I go now to the halls of waiting to sit beside my fathers until the world is renewed. Since I leave now all gold and silver and go where it is of little worth, I wish to part in friendship from you. And I would take back my words and deeds at the gate.

Bilbo: *(kneels on one knee and is filled with sorrow)* Farewell, King under the Mountain! This is a bitter adventure, if it must end so; and not a mountain of gold can amend it. Yet I am glad that I have shared in your perils—that has been more than any Baggins deserves.

Thorin: No! There is more in you of good than you know, child of the kindly West. Some courage and some wisdom, blended in measure. If more of us valued food and cheer and song above hoarded gold, it would be a merrier world. But sad or merry, I must leave it now. Farewell!

(The WOOD-ELF KING places Orcrist reverently on top of THORIN and BARD places the Arkenstone on THORIN's breast.)

Bard: There let it lie until the mountain falls! May it bring good fortune to all his folk that dwell here after!

Bilbo: *(turns and crosses to a corner of the stage and weeps—through his tears)*
A mercy it is that I woke up when I did.

(The lights fade to—blackout.)

SCENE 7

Scene description: *(The lights come up on a bare stage, except for BALIN, GANDALF, BARD, the WOOD-ELF KING, and BILBO. It is lit for late morning.)*

Balin: *(to BARD)* A fourteenth share of all the silver and gold, wrought and unwrought, is being delivered to you Bard. Dain son of Nain King under the Mountain vowed he will honor the agreement of the dead, and he has not the Arkenstone in his keeping. *(BARD nods graciously and exits; to the WOOD-ELF KING)* To the Elven-king he gives the emeralds of Girion— *(indicates the large chest by his side)* —such jewels as you most love, Dain son of Nain King under the Mountain restores to you. *(to BILBO)* Bilbo, this treasure is as much yours as it is ours; though old agreements cannot stand, since so many have a claim in its winning and defense. Yet even though you are willing to lay aside all your claim, we should wish that the words of Thorin, of which he repented, should not prove true: that we should give you little. We would reward you most richly of all.

Bilbo: Very kind of you, but really it is a relief to me. How on earth should I have gotten all that treasure home without war and murder all along the way, I don't know. And I don't know what I should have done with it when I got home. I am sure it is better in your hands.

Balin: *(the other nine DWARVES enter the stage)* We insist that you keep something.

Bilbo: Very well. I will only take two small chests, one filled with silver and one filled with gold, such as one strong pony can carry. That will be quite as much as I can manage.

Balin: Very well. But Dain wishes for you to accept this from him personally. *(hands BILBO a silver and pearl necklace)*

Bilbo: Farewell, Balin! And farewell, Dwalin; and farewell Dori, Nori, Ori, Oin, Gloin, Bifur, Bofur, and Bombur! May your beards never grow thin! *(looking upward past the DWARVES, as though at the Mountain)* Farewell Thorin Oakenshield! And Fili and Kili! May your memory never fade!

(The DWARVES bow low to BILBO, but the words stick in their throats.)

Balin: *(finally)* Good-bye and good luck, wherever you fare! If ever you visit us again, when our halls are made fair once more, then the feast shall indeed be splendid!

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Bilbo: If ever you are passing my way, don't wait to knock! Tea is at four; but any of you are welcome at any time!

(The DWARVES are teary-eyed and exit embarrassed.)

Gandalf: *(to the WOOD-ELF KING)* Farewell! O Elven-king! Merry be the greenwood, while the world is yet young! And merry be all your folk!

Elf King: Farewell! O Gandalf! May you ever appear where you are most needed and least expected! The oftener you appear in my halls the better shall I be pleased!

Bilbo: *(stammering and standing on one foot)* I beg of you to accept this gift! *(offers the necklace he just received to the WOOD-ELF KING)*

Elf King: *(very much surprised and taken aback)* In what way have I earned such a gift, O hobbit?

Bilbo: *(rather confused)* Well, er, I thought, don't you know that, er, some little return should be made for your, er, hospitality. I mean even a burglar has his feelings. I have drunk much of your wine and eaten much of your bread.

Elf King: *(gravely)* I will take your gift, O Bilbo the Magnificent! And I name you elf-friend and blessed. May your shadow never grow less—or stealing would be too easy! Farewell! *(exits)*

(GANDALF and BILBO finally exit as well as the lights fade to—blackout.)

SCENE 8

Scene Description: *(The lights come up on the exterior of BILBO's hobbit hole door. GANDALF and BILBO enter from the opposite side of the stage. It is a late June morning.)*

Bilbo: *(stopping suddenly)* Roads go ever ever on, Over rock and under tree, By caves where never sun has shone, By streams that never find the sea; Over snow by winter sown, And through the merry flowers of June, Over grass and over stone, And under mountains in the moon. Roads go ever ever on Under cloud and under star, Yet feet that wandering have gone Turn at last to home afar. Eyes that fire and sword have seen And horror in the halls of stone Look as last on meadows green And trees and hills they long have known.

Gandalf: *(looking at BILBO)* My dear Bilbo! Something is the matter with you! You are not the hobbit that you were.

(GANDALF and BILBO cross to BILBO's front door.)

Gandalf: What shall you do now?

Bilbo: *(thoughtfully)* I shall write my memoirs. I am thinking of calling them "There and Back Again, a Hobbit's Holiday." I now know about everything else, but what happened to the Master of the Lake-town Esgaroth?

Gandalf: The old Master came to a bad end. Bard gave him much gold for the help of the Lake-people, but being of the kind that easily catches such diseases, he fell under the dragon sickness, fled with most of the gold, and died of starvation in the Waste. The new Master is of wiser kind and very popular. He gets most of the credit for the present prosperity. They are making songs which say that in his day the rivers run with gold.

Bilbo: Then the prophecies of the old songs have turned out to be true, after a fashion!

Gandalf: Of course! And why should not they prove true? Surely you don't disbelieve the prophecies because you had a hand in bringing them about yourself? You don't really suppose, do you, that all your adventures and escapes were managed by mere luck, just for your sole benefit? You are a very fine person, Mr. Baggins— *(hands BILBO his house key)* —and I am very fond of you; but you are only quite a little fellow in a wide world after all!

Bilbo: *(laughs)* Thank goodness! *(turns to open his door)*

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(BILBO and GANDALF exit the stage through BILBO's front door and close it behind them. After a beat, the lights slowly fade to—blackout.)

{CURTAIN}