

The Old Tavern,
Flooded Avenue,
Laketown,
Esgaroth
E4 7HJ

17th June 2013

Dear Frodo,

I am sorry that it has been a long time since I have written but there has been a lot going on and as a result, I have much to tell you. Firstly, let me make clear: I am in good health and although I have lost quite a bit of weight with the walking, I feel strong and in good spirits. Generally, our journey has been a hard one so far but at present we are staying a rather nice tavern in Esgaroth. We have managed to fight our way through Mirkwood, which I hated, but it looks like our quest will be drawing to a close soon. This is the first break where we have been able to rest without worrying about being eaten or skewered by all manner of horrific creatures while we sleep and so I will bring you up to date with my adventures so far.

You will remember that we left Bag End at the beginning of the spring. At that time, I didn't know what to make of the dwarves as they were strangers to me and I found their ways a little... how can I say... rude. However, I have found them to be strong and brave companions as we have grown to know each other more and more. Take for example the goblins. We were all captured by the ugliest and meanest creature you have ever laid eyes upon: the Goblin King. He and his kind took us prisoner when we were asleep in a cave and dragged us into a massive, underground cavern. Gandalf came and rescued us. He used his magical powers to frighten the goblins but as I stood there, also frightened, Thorin Oakenshield was freeing us. The goblins stole our horses and (as far as we know) ate them!

Somehow, in the furore, I was separated from the rest of our group but they waited for me until I managed to get back to them. While I was lost in the cavern, I met the strangest creature. He was almost like a man but very pale. I think this was because of the sunlight or rather, lack of sunlight that he had endured while living in the cavern for all that time. He was strange in that he liked riddles. Luckily, I was able to outwit him and forced him to show me how to get out of the cavern.

Once we were out of the cavern, I imagined for a brief moment that we were safe but were we? Were we heck! Wolves and goblins teamed up together and came chasing us and if we hadn't managed to climb some trees, we would have been eaten there and then. That was probably my lowest ebb as I felt that I was no use to my companions and no use to myself either. How did we get out of that fix? Well, some eagles spotted us and came down and rescued us and flew us far from that particular danger dropping us on a rock at the end of the misty mountains. At that point, Gandalf (you remember, the wizard) sprung a surprise upon us which none had wanted to hear. "I always meant to see you over the misty mountains," he said. "But now I must leave you for I have business in the north."

"Please don't go," we begged but it was no use and so within a few miles, Gandalf was no longer with us and we were alone.

The most frightened I have been on my trip so far was in Mirkwood, however, this was the point at which I think I gained some respect from the dwarves. Up until our entry into Mirkwood, some of the dwarves had been doubting my usefulness on the adventure. Gandalf had kept defending me, saying, "You will see his usefulness when Smaug needs defeating," but, between you and me, I don't think they had believed him. However, in Mirkwood, something happened which allowed me to become a bit of a hero. To understand the situation, I need to describe what it was like there. We had been in the wood for what seemed like months and there was no sign that we would ever get out. One night, or day - I am not sure which as you found it difficult to tell the difference- the dwarves were taken prisoner by some giant spiders! I had a sword - well, I say had, but actually I still have it - it is called Sting. I managed to kill some of the spiders with Sting and cut the dwarves (who had been fastened up in some large spiders webs) down. After that, the dwarves have shown me a little more respect and I genuinely think they are glad that I am here with them on this journey now.

We were briefly taken prisoner by the Elves, but I actually think that they are alright. They were just defending their borders. I managed to help the dwarves escape by riding in some empty barrels and that is how we ended up here in Esgaroth. As I have said, I think we are coming to the end of our adventure, but we need to defeat the dragon, Smaug, who inhabits the dwarves' former home under the mountain. I don't know how the next few weeks are going to go but if I survive to see the end of the adventure, I should be seeing you in a couple of months time. If I do not manage to survive, then all my worldly possessions are yours to do with as you please.

So, I have briefly described my adventure thus far. There will be tales to tell of bravery and courage, daring and luck when I return and I look forward to seeing you on that day. Please take care and I will see you soon, God willing.

Yours sincerely,

Bilbo Baggins Esq.