

***The Hobbit* by John Ronald Reuel Tolkien, extract from chapter VII**

And why is it called the Carrock?" asked Bilbo as he went along at the wizard's side.

5 "He called it the Carrock, because carrock is his word for it. He calls things like that carrocks, and this one is the Carrock because it is the only one near his home and he knows it well."

"Who calls it? Who knows it?"

10 "The Somebody I spoke of-a very great person. You must all be very polite when I introduce you. I shall introduce you slowly, two by two, I think; and you must be careful not to annoy him, or heaven knows what will happen. He can be appalling when he is angry, though he is kind enough if humoured. Still I warn you he gets angry easily."

15 The dwarves all gathered round when they heard the wizard talking like this to Bilbo. "Is that the person you are taking us to now?" they asked. "Couldn't you find someone more easy-tempered? Hadn't you better explain it all a bit clearer?"-and so on.

20 "Yes it certainly is! No I could not! And I was explaining very carefully," answered the wizard crossly. "If you must know more, his name is Beorn. He is very strong, and he is a skin-changer."

25 "What! a furrier, a man that calls rabbits conies, when he doesn't turn their skins into squirrels?" asked Bilbo.

"Good gracious heavens, no, no, NO, NO!" said Gandalf. "Don't be a fool Mr. Baggins if you can help it; and in the name of all wonder don't mention the word furrier again as long as you are within a hundred miles of his house, nor, rug, cape, tippet, muff, nor any other such unfortunate word! He is a skin-changer. He changes his skin; sometimes he is a huge black bear, sometimes he is a great strong black-haired man with huge arms and a great beard. I cannot tell you much more, though that ought to be enough. Some say that he is a bear descended from the great and ancient bears of the mountains that lived there before the giants came. Others say that he is a man descended from the first men who lived before Smaug or the other dragons came into this part of the world, and before the goblins came into the hills out of the North. I cannot say, though I fancy the last is the true tale. He is not the sort of person to ask questions of.

40 "At any rate he is under no enchantment but his own. He lives in an oak-wood and has a great wooden house; and as a man he keeps cattle and horses which are nearly as marvellous as himself. They work for him and talk to him. He does not eat them; neither does he hunt or eat wild animals. He keeps hives and hives of great fierce bees, and lives most on cream and honey. As a bear he ranges far and wide. I once saw him sitting all alone on the top of the Carrock at night watching the moon sinking towards the Misty

45 Mountains, and I heard him growl in the tongue of bears; 'The day will come when they will perish and I shall go back!' That is why I believe he once came from the mountains himself."

50 Bilbo and the dwarves had now plenty to think about, and they asked no more questions. They still had a long way to walk before them. Up slope and down dale they plodded. It grew very hot. Sometimes they rested under the trees, and then Bilbo felt so hungry that he would have eaten acorns, if any had been ripe enough yet to have fallen to the ground.

55 It was the middle of the afternoon before they noticed that great patches of flowers had begun to spring up, all the same kinds growing together as if they had been planted. Especially there was clover, waving patches of cockscomb clover, and purple clover, and wide stretches of short white sweet honey-smelling clover. There was a buzzing and a whirring and a droning in the air. Bees were busy everywhere. And such bees! Bilbo had never seen anything like them.

60 "If one was to sting me," he thought, "I should swell up as big again as I am!"

They were bigger than hornets. The drones were bigger than your thumb, a good deal, and the bands of yellow on their deep black bodies shone like fiery gold.

65 "We are getting near," said Gandalf. "We are on the edge of his bee-pastures."

After a while they came to a belt of tall and very ancient oaks, and beyond these to a high thorn-hedge through which you could neither see nor scramble.

70 "You had better wait here," said the wizard to the dwarves; "and when I call or whistle begin to come after me - you will see the way I go-but only in pairs, mind, about five minutes between each pair of you. Bombur is fattest and will do for two, he had better come alone and last. Come on Mr. Baggins! There is a gate somewhere round this way." And with that he went off along the hedge taking the frightened hobbit with him.

They soon came to a wooden gate, high and broad, beyond which they could see gardens and a cluster of low wooden buildings, some thatched and made of unshaped logs; barns, stables, sheds, and a long low wooden house.

80 Inside on the southward side of the great hedge were rows and rows of hives with bell-shaped tops made of straw. The noise of the giant bees flying to and fro and crawling in and out filled all the air.

85 The wizard and the hobbit pushed open the heavy creaking gate and went down a wide track towards the house. Some horses, very sleek and well-groomed, trotted up across the grass and looked at them intently with very intelligent faces; then off they galloped to the buildings.

90 "They have gone to tell him of the arrival of strangers," said Gandalf.

Soon they reached a courtyard, three walls of which were formed by the wooden house and its two long wings. In the middle there was lying a great oak-trunk with many lopped branches beside it. Standing near was a huge man with a thick black beard and hair, and great bare arms and legs with knotted muscles. He was clothed in a tunic of wool down to his knees, and was leaning on a large axe.

The horses were standing by him with their noses at his shoulder.

100 "Ugh! here they are!" he said to the horses. "They don't look dangerous. You can be off!" He laughed a great rolling laugh, put down his axe and came forward.

"Who are you and what do you want?" he asked gruffly, standing in front of them and towering tall above Gandalf.

105 As for Bilbo he could easily have trotted through his legs without ducking his head to miss the fringe of the man's brown tunic.

"I am Gandalf," said the wizard.

110 "Never heard of him," growled the man, "And what's this little fellow?" he said, stooping down to frown at the hobbit with his bushy eyebrows.

115 "That is Mr. Baggins, a hobbit of good family and unimpeachable reputation," said Gandalf. Bilbo bowed. He had no hat to take off, and was painfully conscious of his many missing buttons. "I am a wizard," continued Gandalf. "I have heard of you, if you have not heard of me; but perhaps you have heard of my good cousin Radagast who lives near the Southern borders of Mirkwood?"

120 "Yes; not a bad fellow as wizards go, I believe. I used to see him now and again," said Beorn. "Well, now I know who you are, or who you say you are. What do you want?"

125 "To tell you the truth, we have lost our luggage and nearly lost our way, and are rather in need of help, or at least advice. I may say we have had rather a bad time with goblins in the mountains."

"Goblins?" said the big man less gruffly. "O ho, so you've been having trouble with them have you? What did you go near them for?"

130 "We did not mean to. They surprised us at night in a pass which we had to cross, we were coming out of the Lands over West into these countries-it is a long tale."

"Then you had better come inside and tell me some of it, if it won't take all day," said the man leading the way through a dark door that opened out of the courtyard into the house.

135 Following him they found themselves in a wide hall with a fire-place in the middle. Though it was summer there was a wood-fire burning and the smoke was rising to the blackened rafters in search of the way out through an opening in the roof. They passed through this dim hall, lit only by the fire and the hole above it, and came through another smaller door into a sort of veranda propped on wooden posts made of single tree-trunks. It faced south and was still warm and filled with the light of the westering sun which slanted into it, and fell golden on the garden full of flowers that came right up to the steps.

145 Here they sat on wooden benches while Gandalf began his tale, and Bilbo swung his dangling legs and looked at the flowers in the garden, wondering what their names could be, as he had never seen half of them before.

"I was coming over the mountains with a friend or two..." said the wizard.

150 "Or two? I can only see one, and a little one at that," said Beorn.

"Well to tell you the truth, I did not like to bother you with a lot of us, until I found out if you were busy. I will give a call, if I may."

155 "Go on, call away!"

So Gandalf gave a long shrill whistle, and presently Thorin and Dori came round the house by the garden path and stood bowing low before them.

160 "One or three you meant, I see!" said Beorn. "But these aren't hobbits, they are dwarves!"

"Thorin Oakenshield, at your service! Dori at your service!" said the two dwarves bowing again.

165 "I don't need your service, thank you," said Beorn, "but I expect you need mine. I am not over fond of dwarves; but if it is true you are Thorin (son of Thrain, son of Thrór, I believe), and that your companion is respectable, and that you are enemies of goblins and are not up to any mischief in my lands-what are you up to, by the way?"

170 "They are on their way to visit the land of their fathers, away east beyond Mirkwood," put in Gandalf, "and it is entirely an accident that we are in your lands at all. We were crossing by the High Pass that should have brought us to the road that lies to the south of your country, when we were attacked by the evil goblins-as I was about to tell you."

175 "Go on telling, then!" said Beorn, who was never very polite.

"There was a terrible storm; the stone-giants were out hurling rocks, and at the head of the pass we took refuge in a cave, the hob bit and I and several of our companions..." 220

180 "Do you call two several?"

"Well, no. As a matter of fact there were more than two." 225

"Where are they? Killed, eaten, gone home?"

185 "Well, no. They don't seem all to have come when I whistled. Shy, I expect. You see, we are very much afraid that we are rather a lot for you to entertain." 230

190 "Go on, whistle again! I am in for a party, it seems, and one or two more won't make much difference," growled Beorn.

Gandalf whistled again; but Nori and Ori were there almost before he had stopped, for, if you remember, Gandalf had told them to come in pairs every five minutes. 235

195 "Hullo!" said Beorn. "You came pretty quick-where were you hiding? Come on my jack-in-the-boxes!"

"Nori at your service, Ori at . . ." they began; but Beorn interrupted them.

200 "Thank you! When I want your help I will ask for it. Sit down, and let's get on with this tale, or it will be supper-time before it is ended."

"As soon as we were asleep," went on Gandalf, "a crack at the back of the cave opened; goblins came out and grabbed the hobbit and the dwarves and our troop of ponies-" 245

205 "Troop of ponies? What were you-a travelling circus? Or were you carrying lots of goods? Or do you always call six a troop?" 250

"O no! As a matter of fact there were more than six ponies, for there were more than six of us-and well, here are two more!" Just at that moment Balin and Dwalin appeared and bowed so low that their beards swept the stone floor. The big man was frowning at first, but they did their very best to be frightfully polite, and kept on nodding and bending and bowing and waving their hoods before their knees (in proper dwarf-fashion), till he stopped frowning and burst into a chuckling laugh; they looked so comical. 255

215 "Troop, was right," he said. "A fine comic one. Come in my merry men, and what are your names? I don't want your service just now, only your names; and then sit down and stop wagging!" 260

"Balin and Dwalin," they said not daring to be offended, and sat flop on the floor looking rather surprised.

"Now go on again!" said Beorn to the wizard.

"Where was 1? O yes- I was not grabbed. I killed a goblin or two with a flash-"

"Good!" growled Beorn. "It is some good being a wizard, then."

"-and slipped inside the crack before it closed. I followed down into the main hall, which was crowded with goblins. The Great Goblin was there with thirty or forty armed guards. I thought to myself 'even if they were not all chained together, what can a dozen do against so many?' "

"A dozen! That's the first time I've heard eight called a dozen. Or have you still got some more jacks that haven't yet come out of their boxes?"

"Well, yes, there seem to be a couple more here now - Fili and Kili, I believe," said Gandalf, as these two now appeared and stood smiling and bowing.

240 "That's enough!" said Beorn. "Sit down and be quiet! Now go on, Gandalf!"

So Gandalf went on with the tale, until he came to the fight in the dark, the discovery of the lower gate, and their horror when they found that Mr. Baggins had been misled.

245 "We counted ourselves and found that there was no hobbit. There were only fourteen of us left!"

"Fourteen! That's the first time I've heard one from ten leave fourteen. You mean nine, or else you haven't told me yet all the names of your party."

250 "Well, of course you haven't seen Oin and Gloin yet. And, bless me! here they are. I hope you will forgive them for bothering you."

"O let 'em all come! Hurry up! Come along, you two, and sit down! But look here, Gandalf, even now we have only got yourself and ten dwarves and the hobbit that was lost. That only makes eleven (plus one misled) and not fourteen, unless wizards count differently to other people. But now please get on with the tale." Beorn did not show it more than he could help, but really he had begun to get very interested. You see, in the old days he had known the very part of the mountains that Gandalf was describing. He nodded and he growled, when he heard of the hobbit's reappearance and of their scramble down the stone-slide and of the wolf-ring in the woods. When Gandalf came to their climbing into trees with the wolves all underneath, he got up and strode about and muttered:

265 "I wish I had been there! I would have given them more than fireworks!"

270 "Well," said Gandalf very glad to see that his tale was making a good impression, "I did the best I could. There we were with the wolves going mad underneath us and the forest beginning to blaze in places, when the goblins came down from the hills and discovered us. They yelled with delight and sang songs making fun of us. Fifteen birds in five fir-trees..."

275 "Good heavens!" growled Beorn. "Don't pretend that goblins can't count. They can. Twelve isn't fifteen and they know it."

280 "And so do I. There were Bifur and Bofur as well. I haven't ventured to introduce them before, but here they are."

In came Bifur and Bofur. "And me!" gasped Bombur pulling up behind. He was fat, and also angry at being left till last. He refused to wait five minutes, and followed immediately after the other two.

285 "Well, now there are fifteen of you; and since goblins can count, I suppose that is all that there were up the trees. Now perhaps we can finish this story without any more interruptions." Mr. Baggins saw then how clever Gandalf had been. The interruptions had really made Beorn more interested in the story, and the story had kept him from sending the dwarves off at once like suspicious beggars. He never invited people into his house, if he could help it. He had very few friends and they lived a good way away; and he never invited more than a couple of these to his house at a time. Now he had got fifteen strangers sitting in his porch!

290 By the time the wizard had finished his tale and had told of the eagles' rescue and of how they had all been brought to the Carrock, the sun had fallen behind the peaks of the Misty Mountains and the shadows were long in Beorn's garden.

295 "A very good tale!" said he. "The best I have heard for a long while. If all beggars could tell such a good one, they might find me kinder. You may be making it all up, of course, but you deserve a supper for the story all the same. Let's have something to eat!"

300 "Yes, please!" they all said together. "Thank you very much!"

305 Inside the hall it was now quite dark. Beorn clapped his hands, and in trotted four beautiful white ponies and several large long-bodied grey dogs. Beorn said something to them in a queer language like animal noises turned into talk. They went out again and soon came back carrying torches in their mouths, which they lit at the fire and stuck in low brackets on the pillars of the hall about the central hearth.

The dogs could stand on their hind-legs when they wished, and carry things with their fore-feet. Quickly they got out boards and trestles from the side walls and set them up near the fire.

310 Then baa-baa-baa! was heard, and in came some snow-white sheep led by a large coal-black ram. One bore a white cloth embroidered at the edges with figures of animals; others bore on their broad backs trays with bowls and platters and knives and wooden spoons, which the dogs took and quickly laid on the trestle tables. These were very low, low enough even for Bilbo to sit at comfortably. Beside them a pony pushed two low-seated benches with wide rush-bottoms and little short thick legs for Gandalf and Thorin, while at the far end he put Beorn's big black chair of the same sort (in which he sat with his great legs stuck far out under the table). These were all the chairs he had in his hall, and he probably had them low like the tables for the convenience of the wonderful animals that waited on him. What did the rest sit on? They were not forgotten. The other ponies came in rolling round drum-shaped sections of logs, smoothed and polished, and low enough even for Bilbo; so soon they were all seated at Beorn's table, and the hall had not seen such a gathering for many a year.

325 There they had a supper, or a dinner, such as they had not had since they left the Last Homely House in the West and said good-bye to Elrond. The light of the torches and the fire flickered about them, and on the table were two tall red beeswax candles. All the time they ate, Beorn in his deep rolling voice told tales of the wild lands on this side of the mountains, and especially of the dark and dangerous wood, that lay outstretched far to North and South a day's ride before them, barring their way to the East, the terrible forest of Mirkwood.

335 The dwarves listened and shook their beards, for they knew that they must soon venture into that forest and that after the mountains it was the worst of the perils they had to pass before they came to the dragon's stronghold. When dinner was over they began to tell tales of their own, but Beorn seemed to be growing drowsy and paid little heed to them. They spoke most of gold and silver and jewels and the making of things by smith-craft, and Beorn did not appear to care for such things: there were no things of gold or silver in his hall, and few save the knives were made of metal at all.

340 They sat long at the table with their wooden drinking-bowls filled with mead. The dark night came on outside. The fires in the middle of the hall were built with fresh logs and the torches were put out, and still they sat in the light of the dancing flames with the pillars of the house standing tall behind them, arid dark at the top like trees of the forest. Whether it was magic or not, it seemed to Bilbo that he heard a sound like wind in the branches stirring in the rafters, and the hoot of owls. Soon he began to nod with sleep and the voices seemed to grow far away, until he woke with a start.

350 The great door had creaked and slammed. Beorn was gone. The dwarves were sitting cross-legged on the floor round the fire, and presently they began to sing. Some of the

verses were like this, but there were many more, and their singing went on for a long while:

355 The wind was on the withered heath,  
but in the forest stirred no leaf:

there shadows lay by night and day,  
360 and dark things silent crept beneath.

The wind came down from mountains cold,  
and like a tide it roared and rolled;  
365 the branches groaned, the forest moaned,  
and leaves were laid upon the mould.

370 The wind went on from West to East ;  
all movement in the forest ceased,  
but shrill and harsh across the marsh  
375 its whistling voices were released.

The grasses hissed, their tassels bent,  
380 the reeds were rattling-on it went  
o' er shaken pool under heavens cool  
where racing clouds were torn and rent.

385 It passed the lonely Mountain bare  
and swept above the dragon's lair :

390 there black and dark lay boulders stark  
and flying smoke was in the air.

It left the world and took its flight

395 over the wide seas of the night.

The moon set sail upon the gale,  
400 and stars were fanned to leaping light.

Bilbo began to nod again. Suddenly up stood Gandalf. "It is time for us to sleep," he said, "-for us, but not I think for Beorn. In this hall we can rest sound and safe, but I warn you all not to forget what Beorn said before he left us: you must not stray outside until the sun is up, on your peril."  
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Bilbo found that beds had already been laid at the side of the hall, on a sort of raised platform between the pillars and the outer wall. For him there was a little mattress of straw and woollen blankets. He snuggled into them very gladly, summertime though it was. The fire burned low and he fell asleep. Yet in the night he woke: the fire had now sunk to a few embers; the dwarves and Gandalf were all asleep, to judge by their breathing; a splash of white on the floor came from the high moon, which was peering down through the smoke-hole in the roof.  
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415 There was a growling sound outside, and a noise as of some great animal scuffling at the door. Bilbo wondered what it was, and whether it could be Beorn in enchanted shape, and if he would come in as a bear and kill them.

420 He dived under the blankets and hid his head, and fell asleep again at last in spite of his fears.