

THORIN 1

THORIN (at head of table; standing and clearing his throat importantly). Gandalf, dwarves, and Mr. Baggins!

(BILBO, BIFUR and NORI bustle on L, laden with huge platters of food and drink.)

BILBO. Why so dark?

FILI. We like the dark. (FILI notices BILBO is not serving himself and begins to fill a plate for him.)

DWARVES. Shh----

THORIN. We are met together in the house of our friend and fellow conspirator----

BILBO (protesting). No, no!

THORIN. --this wise and brave hobbit----

BILBO (flattered). Dear me!

THORIN. May the hair on his toes never fall out! All praise to his food. (The DWARVES raise their mugs.)

DWARVES (toasting). Hear, hear! (BILBO has slunk over to his stool in front of the fire where he sits clutching his toes protectively. FILI brings him a plate of food, but BILBO shakes his head. His appetite is completely gone. FILI returns to his own place.)

THORIN. We are met to discuss our plans. We shall start before dawn on a long, hard journey, so dangerous that some may not live through it or they may reach the misty mountain only to be eaten by the dragon ---- (BILBO lets out a piercing shriek, falling off the stool to the floor, where he lies shaking and twitching wildly. The DWARVES spring up and stare at him in dismay.)

