

ELVEN GUARDS

SECOND GUARD. Food for you, Thorin Oakenshield. Thanks to our gracious Queen. (BILBO, walking on tiptoe, begins to cross very cautiously toward the FIRST GUARD.)

THORIN (taking the tray). I thank the Elven-Queen and hope to return her hospitality when I have recaptured my castle. Its dungeons are deep.

FIRST GUARD. What's that he says?

SECOND GUARD. He threatens our Queen.

FIRST GUARD. That's treason! Write it down! Write down every word he says!

SECOND GUARD. I've nothing to write with.

FIRST GUARD (rushing forward and barely missing colliding with the tiptoeing BILBO, who leaps aside to avoid him). Here, take this. (Gives him a pencil.)

SECOND GUARD. Now, are you ready to answer the questions of our Elven-Queen?

THORIN. I refuse to answer questions under duress.

FIRST GUARD (leaning forward, excitedly). More treason. Write that down! (BILBO is now crouched by the side of the FIRST GUARD, ready to start removing keys from her keyring.)

SECOND GUARD (writing busily on pad). Prisoner defies our Elven-Queen.

THORIN. Now, Bilbo!

FIRST GUARD. What's that he's saying?

SECOND GUARD. Sounded like he said Bilbo. Dwarves are stupid., Let's get out of here.

FIRST GUARD. He hasn't eaten yet and the others haven't had their food.

SECOND GUARD. Let them do without. (To THORIN.) The tray. Let me have it.

THORIN (throwing it at her feet). Gladly.

DWARVES (roaring approval). Thorin!

SECOND GUARD. If it weren't forbidden, I'd make you suffer for that! But wait and see how you like your dinner--when it comes! It'll be well salted. I promise you that.