Sleeping Shields

by evilNira, Sakaji

Summary

Bilbo Baggins isn't used to sleeping on hard, dirty floors and Thorin Oakenshield isn't used to sleeping with prejudice.
The night was cold. The ground as hard as ever, but quite possibly harder than usual that night if only because he had been laying upon it for so long. That blanket he had brought along for the journey just wasn’t cutting it any more for more oft than not, Bilbo found himself staring blankly at the glisten of stone beside his head as he fought insomnia.

It wasn’t that he wasn’t tired. Wasn’t that he wasn’t used to the hum of the outdoors. The rustle of trees was no longer so loud to him. The snoring of his companions trivial, the chill of the air... not all too bad; It was just this damned floor. This rocky ground he found himself having to lie on night after night was brutal. Sleeping upon his horse was almost more agreeable if only because the creature was soft in her own way.

These thoughts are probably what brought him to sneaking over to the horses one night. He just wanted to lie beside them, to try a nap whilst lying against Myrtle. It wasn’t that big of a request and he honestly expected he should be ignored... but just as he crept past the last sleeping dwarf in his way, A gruff call found him. Blue eyes caught him, a frown. Bilbo sighed and shoved his hands into his pockets. “Must you always be so alert?” He glanced over to the Bifur, the man charged with actually staying up and smiled sweetly, nodding and waving that all was well and that the Dwarf needn’t worry... not that he... seemed to really care what Bilbo was doing. His eyes were on Thorin and didn’t leave until the Dwarven prince waved him off in his own way.

“I would get more rest if those in my party weren’t so keen to seeking out trouble.” He eyed the hobbit steadily. “Where were your plans to take you?”

Bilbo’s nose twitched in annoyance, “I wasn’t planning to go anywhere.” His hands tapped upon his thighs, “Just... wanted to... rest with them is all. The horses. I figured they’d be a great deal softer than the floor.”

“You... wanted to sleep on a horse. Do you not do that enough during the day?”

Thorin was giving him this incredulous look. It... was really quite rude. Acting as though his plan were absurd! ‘I wasn’t going to sleep on them, just... against them.” He insisted. “It’s really not that odd. I know I can’t expect the comfort of a bed out here, but the floor isn’t a thing to be laid on night after night. Honestly, I’m surprised no one’s thought of it sooner. Laying with the ponies.”

“They provide us with transport and carry our baggage.” Thorin said dully. “They are not meant to be beds as well.” His eyes closed. “Leave them be Halfling.”

Bilbo stared at Thorin for a good while, stunned that the Dwarf should dismiss him so quickly. “W- that’s easy for you to say.” He waved his hand, “you’re used to sleeping out here. Out in the wilderness. I’m not though and I’m small and tiny and I could probably get close enough to not disturb them. I am a burglar after all remember?” An eye peeked open at that. Bilbo puffed his chest out a bit, “What sort of burglar would I be if I couldn’t sleep with a friendly beast?”

“You’re convoluting the issue.” Thorin said, closing his eyes again. “Sleep. Go back to where you were. You managed yesterday and the day before that. You can manage again tonight.”

Bilbo frowned. “I-’ His youth was brought out far too easily and far too often with this Dwarf. He wanted to fight the man. To argue more even though, he knew it would sound childish. He had to
literally bite his tongue to stop himself and of course... this made him very annoyed. He pouted and stood there for a while longer... before wandering back to his resting place.

Sometimes he hated being mature.

...Now... sleeping on the ground... isn’t a thing you can grow to enjoy. Not if you’re a hobbit made and bred within the confines of the Shire. Bilbo was quickly growing to learn this, quickly growing to distaste this fact because while his fellow companions seemed to be getting along just fine on the rocky and sometimes sandy floors below, he himself was just growing more and more tired as the days wore on.

He didn’t have to scout. He didn’t even have to take watch. But he was exhausted and he snapped at people far more often than could be considered decent. At least... outside of Dwarven company. No one save Gandalf seemed to notice that his manners were getting worse and when he confronted him about it... it only served to make Bilbo feel guilty. He apologized and made light of his own troubles and Gandalf seemed pleased enough... but it didn’t make sleeping any easier. It didn’t make his hips hurt any less.

“I need to sleep on something that isn’t a rock.” He explained to Thorin, having finally pulled the Dwarf aside one night whilst the others settled in for sleep. His eye lids felt heavy but his body ached in ways he knew wouldn’t allow sleep. “I just... “ He ran a hand through his hair whilst shaking his head, “One night? With the Ponies... just one.”

“We’ve discussed this.” Thorin said, crossing his arms, “You were told what to expect when you departed on this journey.” He began to turn, “If the rocks are too much for you then sleep on the sand.”

“That’s no!” Bilbo rushed forward and hastily grabbed at the Dwarf’s arm, “That’s not any different! Please! Thorin, I haven’t slept in ages. I am tired.”

Thorin glanced to the hand gripping his arm... actually he stared at it. And stared so long... Bilbo found himself having to remove it of his own volition. He grimaced and grasped at his own pant legs, “I know... it’s unreasonable... but I really... just need sleep.” He tried looking up again... but swayed on his feet from the action. Thorin watched the stumble with a frown... contemplated silently whilst Bilbo’s shoulders drooped more... and more. He wouldn’t win this round either. He could feel it.

“One night.” Thorin said finally, startling the hobbit.

“Y-yes!” Bilbo chirped quickly, “Just one. I just need to rest against something soft for just one night. Thorin, thank you. I will repay you, I swear it!” He was beaming now but the man he was thanking was as stoic as ever. He merely nodded his assent and... stopped him when he tried hurrying over to the ponies. “Wh-“

“You will sleep against my back.” Thorin said, meeting his eyes. There was a... weird quirk of a frown as he said this. And the words themselves were strange. So strange that Bilbo actually blinked when he heard them. His brows furrowed as he...

“Pardon? I... “ He watched as Thorin’s arms crossed, “You... are to lend me your back?”

“I will give you something to sleep against and you will not disturb the ponies. This is agreeable?”

“Y-well of course it is but...” Why he hadn’t thought to ask one of the younger brothers to sleep with
him as such suddenly eluded him. And now, Bilbo couldn’t help but feel brattish for asking the leader of the troupe to cater to his needs. “Are you sure? I...”

“Did you seek sleep or not Halfling?” Thorin turned and stalked back into camp, “come.” And then he sat and sat quite straight and Bilbo found himself nervously turning to sit down against him.

The Dwarven prince’s back was warm... solid... but softer than ground. And, though initially he was nervous about the situation, Bilbo was soon lost inside the realm of dreams. It had come swiftly. Easily.

Had left a smile upon a very contented hobbit’s face.

The next day, he awoke to Thorin thanking someone... and that’s when he smelled their breakfast. When he felt Thorin’s back shift slightly as he... began to eat. Bilbo tensed. He straightened and pulled quickly away from Thorin’s back, “F-forgive me!” He felt a bit of Thorin’s weight follow after but the man caught himself easily and was frowning when Bilbo turned to see him, “I didn’t mean to keep you from...” He nodded towards the man’s food.

“You kept me from nothing.” Thorin tapped the edge of his bowl with a thought, “You... slept well?”

“II!” He hadn’t even thought to register his body’s aches. But now that he was commanded to, he nodded... settling back to sit on his legs. “Y-yes. I feel a lot better.” He offered up a nervous smile, “Thank you...”

Thorin grunted whilst someone called out for him. Something was wrong with one of their ponies. Thorin left to attend to the matter and Bilbo just sat there for a while longer feeling awkward before shaking his head and laughing. He really did feel great, as if some invisible weight had been lifted from his shoulders. He ate with the rest of the company in merry spirits and watched the day just soar by.

When night came, he was all too happy to bring his blankets out to lay upon. In fact, he continued joking with Fili as he did so and wouldn’t have stopped save the raised eyebrow his companion dawned and... the throat that was cleared behind him. Bilbo looked over his shoulder and up at Thorin. Their leader. Before he could even ask what the Dwarf wanted, he spoke up. “Come with me.”

He was on his feet within moments. Following the man to... the other side of the camp... where... he sat down. Sat straight... then looked back and over his shoulder. “Come on now.” His eyes closed. “Whatever it was that prompted your desire for a change in sleeping arrangements could not have been solved in one night.” One of his shoulder blades flexed and Bilbo stared at it.

“‘I-‘ He had never expected more than what he had received the night before... and never would have thought Thorin should offer the opportunity again but... here he was... sputtering behind the mighty Dwarven prince’s back about how it wasn’t necessary and he felt just fine and-

Thorin let out a heavy and annoyed sigh. “I won’t have you falling behind as you were before.” He glared over his shoulder. “You’ve been more alert today than you have in the past fortnight. I’d rather travel with those that are aware of what they are doing than those that are barely trudging through each day.” He crossed his arms and lowered his head as he prepared to sleep himself. His argument was done... and Bilbo was at a loss. He could do nothing more than swallow and sit against him. He almost expected himself to be unable to sleep if only from intimidation alone but...
Sleep found him quite readily.

And it did for the next few nights as well. And as this sleeping routine claimed night after night, Bilbo could almost swear his leader to be in a better mood. He certainly saw the dwarf smile more. But then, that could have also been because he himself was in better spirits. Was more willing to speak and joke and laugh with the others than before. Time was passing... and he was feeling more and more like a part of the company. It was... amazing. And... strangely enough, most of that confidence probably came from the very thing that was allowing him energy. That back of Thorin’s.

Getting to rest against another person, to sleep so close to another living being was... assuring. Was... comforting in ways Bilbo hadn’t expected. He... felt more fond of the dwarf- if that made any sense. It was as though these nights were bringing them closer together. They weren’t saying anything to one another, weren’t doing more than lending their weight against the other. But... there was a sort of kinship Bilbo felt because of it. He’d never bothered being this close with another before... and... he was startled to find himself enjoying it quite a bit.

This is probably why he wasn’t upset that morning when he awoke to Kili’s voice... Thorin’s grunt. A weight was lifted off of him and it was then he realized, drowsily, that he was folded in half. His head was tucked in almost to his knees, his arms cradled against his chest he was... “A-oh...” sore. Thorin had rested on him all night. “Ah... that...” He tried moving his arms and hissed when they stung from sleep. “Oh... Just...” He forced them to straighten as his back smoothed out. Kili, a lot of men were chuckling as he groaned and gingerly stretched.

“He just about squashed you.” Teased Bofur from afar.

“Oh yes well.” Bilbo groaned, chuckling lightly amidst the other’s, “he just about managed it... Ah...” He rolled his shoulders, took a breath and sighed. The men had begun to turn back to their own business but Thorin had turned. Was staring at him. Sizing him up but not saying a word... Bilbo laughed. “Still felt better than resting on the floor.” He assured.

To this, Thorin grunted and stood.

They made a fair amount of progress that day and Bilbo found that stiffness induced by Thorin’s weight to have slid off quite easily. This is why he was... a bit confused when ready to sleep he found Thorin trying to get comfortable against a rock. “I guess... “ Those blue eyes fluttered up to him. Piercing really, they made him jittery and nervous and he probably squeaked but as a Baggins, he should know not to admit to such things. Bilbo cleared his throat. “It’s the floor for me tonight then? Ah well. I... “ He scratched quickly at his cheek then lowered that hand just as quickly, just as nervously, “thank you. For... letting me sleep against you.” He laughed, “I feel... loads better. Thanks to you.” He clapped his hands together and spun dopily, ready to go make his bed.

But... there was that part in him. That Tookish part in him most likely that froze his steps and... made him sigh. His face scrunched up in indecision before... he turned on his heel again and smiled awkwardly at Thorin. “Do... you?” That face lifted, Thorin’s voice responded easily.

“And I what?”

“Oh...” Bilbo shrugged. “Do you... feel any better? Yourself I mean? SI-sleeping against me. It... felt better for you too right?” He waved his hand. This sounded quite strange. “I mean- I’ve never slept against another before so it was nice for me. But I wasn’t bothering you all this time was I? Your nights were better off right?”

Thorin... laughed. And that laughter made Bilbo feel as though he should blush.
He probably was.

Who could tell out in the dark like this?

“ You are indeed soft.” Thorin relaxed against the wall. Bilbo hadn’t even realized the man had been tense before. “but your flirtations are unnecessary. If you need help with other matters, I believe I can assist you.”

“O-excuse me?” Bilbo blinked, utterly confused. “O-other matters? I was just asking about whether I was a burden to sleep against.”

“Why should that matter when we’ve been sleeping again one another for so long?”

Blunt as always.

“You returned when you could have left because you had other thoughts upon your mind. I... must say. It’s quite impressive to come to me with a problem such as yours. I didn’t think your silly little manners would allow you such a thing.”

“Silly li- you think my manners are silly?!” Bilbo resisted the urge to stomp his foot like a child- “there isn’t anything irking me! I’ve been trying to thank you!”

Thorin’s brow quirked. “As you say.” He leaned against an arm propped up upon a bent leg. “Our journey has been and will continue to be long my dear burglar... let it be known- if you off it in the woods, you will be protected. We have watch set up for just such matters.”

“Off it in the woods?”

Thorin frowned. “You can’t truly be so dense. Come now.” He met Bilbo’s eyes and Bilbo swallowed. “Surely Halflings are not so different from dwarves. You must feel desire.” Bilbo peeped. Thorin chuckled. Stood. “You must have want. You appreciated my back; my warmth... did you not?”

Bilbo nervously looked over his shoulder- he was worried others might have h-heard that and was wondering why Thorin didn’t seem so concerned but suddenly- that dwarf, Thorin... was closer. “I-I was... o-of course I enjoyed... I mean, not enjoyed.” He shook his head and stepped back but Thorin’s stride was longer. His hand was suddenly... his thumb was suddenly stroking Bilbo’s cheek! “Th-Thorin!” The rest of his breath was caught by l-lips.

Bilbo had never kissed a soul. Had never even dreamed of it. Such things just weren’t amongst his every day concern b-but... n-now that he was being kissed he... rather thought it odd he hadn’t considered the thing before.

A kiss.

How it felt.

And why he had never craved it.

He was... quite breathless... when Thorin’s lips retreated. Quite... light-headed... when those eyes met his own. He... probably would have passed out too- if... if Thorin wasn’t suddenly stepping backwards. He gave out a call to the other dwarves. Something... he said something, honestly, Bilbo wasn’t in the right frame of mind to think, but Thorin gave him this look and soon... he was following.
Blindly.

His heart was pounding and he-

He remembered to be outraged. “J-just what was that?” He called to that back as he followed it
through the nearby wood. “Thorin! I should like t-to know. What... why... I-it isn’t proper to go
about kissing people like that you know! And if you are thinking that I- a Baggins- had such
thoughts on my mind from the beginning then you are sorely mistaken because I never really planned
that ki-kiss and I enjoyed the warmth of your back because it is quite cold on a regular night. And
another thing! It’s not that we don’t feel desire but we most certainly don’t go about kissing in front of others and that’s just what’s proper and correct and... e...expected...” Thorin had come to a
stop. Had turned... his hands were crossed upon his chest but there was this... predatory gleam in his
eyes. The quirk on his lips... without saying a word, Bilbo could see he was waiting to see if he was
done rambling...

B-but what would it mean if he were?

That question didn’t really need to be answered.

Bilbo knew.

He knew just as well as Thorin.

And so... he wasn’t all that surprised to find himself... walking towards the Dwarf. Thorin met him
easily and this time it was he that tilted his own head up for that next kiss. And it was warm. And it
was hot and Bilbo’s hands fisted quite easily into the dwarf’s furry blue cape. “I’ve never... lain with
another man.” He breathed. He admitted.

Thorin snorted lightly and ran his knuckles against Bilbo’s cheek. “You will learn.” His hand
smoothed into his wavy hair and quickly found itself stuck. It was embarrassing really- to have his
head tugged lightly from Thorin’s unwitting fingers but the man let out this growl that made...

Thorin liked that his hair would provide resistance.

Another kiss found him and this time. This time, a hand was moving. Was deftly unbuttoning his
vest. To this, Bilbo gasped and broke the kiss, “Won’t- I’ll be cold.” He reasoned.

“You will not be cold.” Insisted the prince. That button undone, Thorin began moving into him.
Their kiss was reunited and Bilbo was directed backwards until he encountered a tree. He moaned
and Thorin stole from him his tie. Let it drop slowly to the floor. “You have as many layers as a
warrior.” He kissed now at the corner of Bilbo’s mouth. “Yet all of them are as soft and as light as a
woman’s.” he gave a gentle stroke to Bilbo’s neck.

“I-“ Bilbo bit his lip. “I’m not a woman though...nothing like one in fact.”

Thorin chuckled and his hand fell. To Bilbo’s hem. The weight of his fingers was enough to make
Bilbo gasp. N-no one had ever been so close to touching him. No one. Ever. “Th-Thorin.” He
breathed. His hands scrambled for something to grasp on the man’s chest.

Always they returned to that robe.

“Wh-what are we... going to do exactly?”

Thorin moved and... soon. Very soon, those teeth were nibbling upon his ear.

The feel of that was... oddly exquisite. So much so Bilbo found himself groaning. His eyes fluttering
shut.
Thorin’s fingers slid inwards... undid the fastening of his trousers with relative ease. Once his other had was down there that is. Bilbo gasped. His head thunked softly against the tree’s trunk. And soon... soon his pants had fallen. He was taken by the chill of the night and was burned by the feel of Thorin’s hand moving swiftly. Of it brushing against his erecti- “OH- th-that... that feels...” He swallowed thickly. “Oh... I’m pretty sure it’s not supposed to-” His voice broke and he struggled to clear his throat and regain feeling in his legs, “I feel like that!”

Thorin’s hand grasped more firmly at him. Not harsh or anything just... felt. Touched... no- stroked. He was stroking him through his smalls and... “Oh!” Soon abandoned that in favor of reaching straight in. When he felt his burning erection fit into the prince’s hand he yelped. Gasped. Bucked even- but that part he couldn’t really count. After all. Bucking against one’s partner was... wasn’t... OH. But who could care about proprieties anymore? Thorin was touching him and he was mewling like a cat in heat and... th-there was a climax upon the near horizon. W-which wasn’t fair really. Because he didn’t usually feel this dizzy nor lost nor completely delirious when he was close. In fact. All too soon he felt himself tensing. His breath was embarrassingly ragged and he was sure he whimpered something out to Thorin about his state but... it was probably lost by the way he buried his face into Thorin’s shoulder and... cried out.

In the dead of night... in the shallow end of the woods with his pants pooled about his feet and his partner fully clothed... Bilbo Baggins came.

His leader’s name spilled from his lips in a way that sounded as though the winds themselves had cried it. And he was so lost in his sensory organs that he couldn’t do much more than buck into that hand a few more times... before realizing he was doing it at all. When he did... of course he felt shame rise up. He whimpered into that fur lining of Thorin’s coat whilst seeking breath and sanity. “I just..” Thorin’s hand was continuing to stroke at him. His legs were... quite weak, his breath just as ragged but reality was finding him. His eyes could not lie. What they glanced upon as he rested his head against that chest was... something quite big. Something quite needy. Thorin Oakenshield was... hard. Under his slacks. He was hard just as he himself had been and... and... oh. OH. He let out a cry

And he had. He had all but cum with a touch. And he couldn’t be more embarrassed. He couldn’t be more shamed. “S-sorry!” He gasped. His eyes darted up and for the first time since he had came- he met Thorin’s eyes. Those.... deep blue, those expressive and powerful eyes. “So sorry! I didn’t mean to-“ He waved. Wildly, really. That’s how his wave ended up being. But he gestured towards that bulge and swallowed. “I!” And his nerve flew out the window. He didn’t say anything else. He stumbled. To the left. Then backwards. And he crashed against a tree before fighting to turn about. He felt like a new born calf. Why his feet weren’t working was a thing that was beyond him until he tripped over his pants during his next attempt to stray away from Thorin.

“He whimpered to this and ducked and was working to set them upon his waist again when he heard Thorin sigh and... He was leaning against the tree now. The look upon his face wasn’t any sort of... angry though. It was... well. Bilbo wasn’t quite sure what it was except that the man looked strangely attractive, one hand pushed against the tree as the other deftly undid an all too heavy belt buckle. Their eyes met
again. And Bilbo- he could feel the strength of that man through his gaze and his gaze alone. It made him flush. Allowed him to clumsily do up his slacks and trample his way out of there.

He didn’t bother realizing that he should have slowed his steps until he was back in camp and Kili called out to him, ginning and cat-calling. Fili rolled upon his back to look to him. His smile was just as wide. His eyes just as knowing. Which... is why he ignored them. Why he hurried over to his bed roll and messily began unraveling it for sleep.

“Your vest’s undone lad.” Bofur. Out of the four or five people that were up, they had to be the ones most interested in teasing him. Bilbo blushed and bumbled his way through thanking him. The vest was done up, shakily of course. With unneeded memories of Thorin’s fingers undoing them, of course. His bed was soon undone and he was lying in it by the time Thorin returned to camp several long minutes later. He feigned sleep... but he did pout a bit when the dwarrows didn’t tease or question him.

Honestly- he didn’t expect to sleep that night. His mind was a whirlwind of thoughts... But his body was this satiated thing. It had been touched. Cared for and... oh... how wonderful it had felt. Sleep... came onto him, and it wasn’t until morn that he awoke.
Now. There are many things Bilbo enjoyed partaking upon as a hobbit. He loved dinner... food, wine. He loved peace and camaraderie. He loved staying out of and avoiding trouble.

What he didn’t love though- was feeling as though he should say something to Thorin Oakenshield about... that night. Which he did.

Because it was proper.

Best to avoid complicating things because a conversation was left unsaid. And this.. this would be one of the moments to follow through with. One could not touch another without anything happening because of it. Or be touched by another- in this case. He... he waited until they were on horseback before nudging Myrtle to come up and alongside Thorin’s beautiful pony.

The dwarf looked to him, blatantly surprised by his presence. And though he had the advantage, knowing what he was there to talk about, Bilbo felt intimidated most immediately. His heart rate sped up several beats as he cleared his throat and caught those eyes. “I believe we should speak about...” He glanced back. Oin was straight behind them. Then Gloin. He’d make do. “Our... interaction. Now. Thorin, I do believe we misunderstood each other last night.” His back straightened proudly. This was actually coming out quite easily! “I will admit that I have...” He took a long, measured breath, “Needs. But those needs-” His finger was up and wagging, “they’re not so involved as what you witnessed. I apologize for submitting as quickly as I did. That was weakness on my own part, but-“

Thorin chuckled beside him. “I do not believe your acquiescence was due to weakness, Halfling. I would find it hard to believe at any time you’d like to take charge of such... ‘interactions’ as you say.”

Bilbo’s jaw dropped. “Th-no! No, that’s not what I! That’s not what I was trying to say! I meant...” His cheeks were flaming. How dare the dwarf imply he could not take action on his own?! He was trying to apologize for allowing himself to lead Thorin on and to have allowed the man to touch him and then he was planning on apologizing for leaving the dwarf ‘hanging’ as it were but this!

He let out a huff and frowned stubbornly at his leader. “I... made a mistake. I made a mistake and didn’t follow through with what had started. I was... a bit too quick-“ He swallowed. “And I left you alone. For that- I apologize.”

Thorin was silent for a moment... their horses trotting side by side quietly for a good few feet before... “You are forgiven.” Bilbo blinked and caught the way Thorin’s jaw clenched ever so slightly. They... Their horses walked side by side for a while longer and the air stung with a need for more words but... neither of them had any to lend. When Thorin’s horse strode away, Bilbo could only let him go.

The Dwarf was strong. Even in awkward times such as these, he retained his dignity. He was once again their leader of the pack... and all too suddenly... very far away from him. Bilbo hadn’t noticed it before. Perhaps he had just been too wrapped up in his own life and his own problems but... Thorin... was very much alone.
“Balin?” They were eating dinner a few days later. The brothers were practicing their swordsmanship, with Thorin looking on. Everyone else was chattering amongst each other loudly or smoking. It was a good, clear night and their campsite was perfect for spotting danger coming from any direction. This was probably their first night of true relaxation in a while. “Does Thorin have... a lady to go home to?”

The old warrior looked to him thoughtfully. “A lady, Mr. Baggins?” Balin gave a pat and a stroke to his beard. “What brings this question forth?”

Bilbo shrugged. “It’s a... I don’t know... something we hobbits like to know I suppose? Relations? Happenings? I... “ He straightened proudly and waved towards their red-haired companion- “I know Gloin has a wife. He has a child. And that that child wished very much to come along with us.” He pointed towards Oin- “I know that our dear healer has a dear one at home as well.” His confidence wavered and he frowned. “Everyone else talks merely of conquests though. Stories... and while I have heard a story from most everyone... I have never heard Thorin tell his own. Is it... that speaking of one’s queen is... forbidden?”

Balin chuckled lightly. “Well. If one were to speak scandalously of a queen- I shouldn’t think they’d be around to speak upon it long. We may not have rules against it- but our queens are strong enough to keep word of their mistakes hidden. In Thorin’s case however... there is no queen. There is naught a lass that he has his eyes upon.” Balin took a breath- “Laddie- you must understand. Thorin... is a king in exile, a king who seeks to reclaim his home. He has no time for romance. No time for love or anything as tender as that.”

Bilbo’s heart dropped at that. “But... we should... all have time for love. Love... comes at the most inopportune times, it is a beast that cannot be quartered off into one area nor stopped for even a moment. It is love. The strongest thing in all middle earth. I... can’t believe that Thorin has no time for it.”

The elderly dwarf had a small smile upon his face and this look in his eyes that sung with sorrow. “I regret that we have torn you from a land were that is true my dear burglar.” A heavy hand landed upon his shoulder and gave it a squeeze. “You couldn’t understand.”

“Well- of course I do!” Bilbo said voice thick with frustration- “Don’t you see? This is why Thorin is so tortured. Why he gallops before us, a million miles away. Why he presses himself forward with the fervor of a dead man- he doesn’t believe he has time for things like love. He’s lonely. He’s lonely and is seeking salvation from that without realizing that all he really needs is right here. Right around him.” He waved towards the dwarrows about them- “ You are all his family. His kin. His home.”

“Lad.” Balin’s gaze was stony now. “drop it.”

Bilbo let out a choked laugh. “But it’s- this is all... so... preposterous.”

“Let it be.” Balin caught his eyes. “Thorin knows what is best. You may not understand Dwarven concepts- but I can assure you, the same is true for us and hobbit ideals. We have our reasons for doing what we do. So let us continue. And we shall let you go off and do whatever Hobbits like doing most.”

Bilbo felt a draft as Balin spoke those words. And he... really couldn’t have felt more isolated and alone than at that very moment. He... was the one that left. That stood and... wandered over to his bedroll. This... all felt so wrong. He didn’t understand why Balin... and apparently the rest of the company felt the way they did.

His fingers didn’t want to work. His heart was heavy with the idea of what Balin had said being true.
No time for love... no time for family, for recognizing and appreciating the home that you already had... ridiculous. Tragic. Why- if Thorin’s family didn’t want to press the issue, didn’t realize Thorin needed more attention and more companionship then... then he’d just have to step up and provide it himself. It was the right thing to do after all. The proper thing. He just had to get over his own pride after all and that- was well within his capabilities.

As everyone began to settle into their beds... Bilbo... headed over to Thorin.

He was trembling something fierce. His nerves speeding his heartbeat beyond what it should have been but that was fine. He could do this.

Thorin’s eyes met his and he looked comfortable, resting against the baby oak he had claimed for a bed. “May I sleep against you again tonight?” Bilbo asked, trembling hands finding refuge within his vest’s pockets. The dwarf frowned to him and before he could speak, Bilbo pressed on. “I... nights... I find that nights pass far smoother against your back. Sleep... is a lot better against you. I feel... safer. And warmer.” He swallowed. “I’d... appreciate it if you’d allow me the honor... again.” He may not be much help in fights... nor scouting nor even planning... but. If he could help lessen the load of a weary prince... if he could provide an ear... if he could assist the man in finding a bit more life within this world then... he was willing to try.

Thorin eyed him somberly... Sighed through his nose... then closed his eyes and tugged himself away from that tree.

Bilbo... was in luck. Lucky, and happy for it. Bilbo found Thorin’s back to be as warm as he remembered. He hummed merrily. Let his eyes close... then slowly... let his body relax. Tomorrow would be the start of another adventure. A private escapade in obtaining Thorin’s friendship.

Whoever thought his Took side would be so insistent?
In the morn, he awoke to Thorin stretching. He was pushed forward a bit from the might of those back muscles but... “You didn’t squash me last night.” Thorin actually froze at his voice. And so Bilbo took that opportunity to grin over his shoulder, should the dwarf be looking. “Knew you wouldn’t.”

Polite. Casual. He yawned right after, but other than that he had been perfectly affable. Only... Thorin... frowned at him. Or glared. Bilbo wasn’t quite sure because that look was only *thrown* to him before the dwarf managed to push himself away and up onto his feet. Bilbo scrambled to follow. “I- I didn’t bother you last night did I? Did you sleep well as well?”

Thorin paused and looked to him seriously. “The night was passed.” And just as smoothly as that, he began issuing orders. Food was made... passed out. And as Bilbo pondered Thorin’s reaction, the brothers wandered up to him. Plopped themselves on either side.

“So you’ve decided you can’t get on without him have you?” Fili had a smirk on his face even as he bit off a piece of bread.

“I- I’m sorry... what?”

“Get on without uncle. You’re back together with him. Slept with him. That didn’t last very long at all, just a few days of resisting?”

“But then,” Fili chuckled, “Can’t say we’re surprised. I’m sure there aren’t many men like uncle back in the shire.”

“Can’t say there are many men like uncle at all.” Kili piped in.

“What- no. NO.” Bilbo’s furrowed, “We’re not *together.* ” His head was shaking, his heart fluttering. “We just slept back to back. I’m not trying for anything with your uncle. I- I just-”

“We’re not counting it against you!” Kili exclaimed. “Really we aren’t! We just came to tease you a bit. Say we’re happy for you!”

Fili plopped a hand upon his shoulder, nodding sagely, “We don’t judge Mr. Baggins. What you and uncle do is your own business.”

“We-“ Bilbo tried knocking that hand off, “we’re not going to *d-do* anything!” He was blushing. Probably. But then, it wasn’t everyday a hobbit was accused of liking another. At least... not whilst sober. “I just want to be his friend is all!”

“A horizontal friend.” Kili laughed.

“We have some oil for you if you wish it.” Fili.

“I don’t! I don’t need any-“ He stumbled to his feet, food clutched protectively against his chest. “I don’t *need* any of that. Thank you. I-“ He straightened. “I’ll be *quite* fine.”

“You won’t be when he tries putting it in.” The boys were really *enjoying* themselves.

“P-p-p-putting it *in*?” His cheeks enflamed. “P-p-p-putting what in?!?”
Fili shook his head, “Dwarves are wider than most other races you know. If you want to start anything, you’re going to need some oil.”

“W-wi-wider- I we’re not talking about this.” Bilbo declared taking a step back. “I’m not even going to ask what that o-o-o-oil. Oil?” His head tilted at the thought, but he quickly shook his head and took another step back, holding a finger up as if to warn the boys, “Nothing. I don’t need to know a thing. Just... no more of this talk. None. I.” He swallowed. “It’s too early. And... I will be his friend. His friend. Nothing more.” He nodded at this... and the two just looked on, their grins wider than ever. No one said a thing for a moment... and that was enough time for Bilbo.

With a deep breath, the hobbit turned on his heel and scrambled away.

“...You heard that?” Fili relaxed easily against the rock Bilbo had been resting against earlier. “Our burglar...”

“Is a virgin.” Kili laughed and relaxed just as easily. “No wonder he was so wound up when uncle kissed him.”

“I’d imagine he’s quite repressed.”

“Must be.” Kili agreed. “He’s going to drive uncle mad like that. Won’t be happy at all...”

“We should... remedy the situation.” Fili looked to his brother, mischief already brewing within his mind. “Make it easier for uncle to approach him?”

“Yes. Yes we should.” The nibbled upon their food from thence forth. Plotting, planning.

Now Bilbo, the poor soul was pushing forward. When they finally departed from camp upon horseback, he took it upon himself to urge Myrtle faster. Dwarf after dwarf he passed silently and nervously. He honestly expected to be stopped by someone. For what reason, he knew not. He simply expected it. After all, Thorin had headed their expedition alone this whole time. It felt as if the front of pack was this... sacred area that none but Thorin should trespass upon.

There was no actual barrier there though. And as he drew nearer and nearer... the world didn’t collapse. The suns didn’t start to fall. The wind blew no different.

Thorin looked to him as Myrtle settled alongside him... his eyes questioned... but he didn’t voice those questions. Just... allowed him. Allowed him to be present. Bilbo shifted nervously upon his pony... He probably should have come up with some words to say before this. Some. Sort of... conversation to lighten the mood with. All that came out though was- “When did you begin to learn to ride a horse?” Thorin’s gaze, which had turned rather blandly to the landscape before, turned quickly to him. A brow rose and the dwarf was soon frowning. “A-I just... you’re very comfortable on a pony. I... was just wondering how long it normally took for a man to look so comfortable upon one.”

Thorin stared at him. “It would appear that hobbits would take a longer time- what with your aversion to them.” He gave a pat to the neck of his pony and looked onwards again. “I was but thirty when I learned.”

“Thirty...” Bilbo gave a nod.

“It takes about two years.” Those eyes which had settled on him stayed for a while longer, A good while longer. Not that Bilbo minded. He was wondering exactly how... long this journey would take anyway. But then... Thorin seemed to grow tired of waiting. That horse of his was nudged to walk beyond he and Myrtle.
“W-“ Bilbo’s jaw dropped a bit. They had been having conversation. And now- Thorin was, “Wait! How- h-h-h-how long have you been riding a horse then?” He was calling it to the dwarf. Urging Myrtle to go faster at this point was just not working.

Thorin looked over his shoulder to him. “One hundred and sixty years.” He turned to look back to the road again but Bilbo was already sputtering.

“One hundred and sixty? You can’t be that old!” Myrtle wouldn’t go faster... so Bilbo leaned forward, brows knitted. “I-I mean, n-n-no offense! But... that...”

He saw Thorin shift upon his pony. “I am not old.”

“I!” Bilbo blushed. “I didn’t me-mean you were!” a hand fisted awkwardly in Myrtle’s mane, “just... uh...” Oh... why was Thorin slowing down? It was bad enough his manners had failed. But now to have to face the dwarf while attempting to remedy his mistake? He swallowed and cleared his throat and shook himself as if to get rid of his anxiousness- “Just... a hobbit is quite lucky to live as old as one hundred. I... rather thought none other than elves lived longer... b-but...”

“Dwarrows live long lives. Far longer than man... and apparently... hobbits.” Bilbo looked to Thorin now and nearly peeped at the intensity of those eyes. “I should be as old as you about now. Older. Perhaps.”

Bilbo’s cheeks were stained. “As old as me... I... yes, that’s what I... supposed...” He licked his lips and averted his eyes nervously. “So... you... you’re... one hundred and...ninety? Almost two hundred?” It seemed almost impossible. The dwarf before him looked- “You look so young! You look maybe a few years older than me- maybe five, maybe stretching eight... but two... two hundred... You are... you look really good.”

Should he treat Thorin any differently now? After all, the dwarf was more than twice his age, oughtn’t respect be doubled? Shouldn’t he try harder to look towards the dwarf as a role-model and not a friend?

“I look good.” Thorin repeated. An eyebrow rose slowly... and Thorin cleared his throat and adjusted himself upon his steed. “What age... are you master Baggsins?”

“60. Actually.” His brows furrowed in thought- “Nowhere... I haven’t had nearly as much... time... as you...” he winced and ran a hand though his hair, “Uh... I... I’m actually at the perfect marrying age right now. Not... that you really needed to know that. I was just... I mean... if we look to be about the same age, I’m sure that just means you must be in your prime as well? For a dwarf I mean? You must have...” He took a breath. He could save this. He could. “A lot of women following you. Interested in you. I- you... your line...” he swallowed and shot an awkward grin Thorin’s way, “It seems far more... appealing? Appealing. Uh... less... and more... I... mean... you and Kili and Fili all look very dashing. Handsome. For dwarves.”

“You approve of my family’s looks.” Thorin chuckled. He hadn’t expected for the dwarf to laugh. Bilbo had been quite sure he had just ruined their conversation with his babbling but that smile upon Thorin’s face- it... it spoke a different story altogether. “Of my looks.” Thorin stroked his beard thoughtfully and took a breath. “There are none to many women out for a disgraced heir in this time and age however. I have... none that follow me save my men.”

Bilbo flushed. “B-but you should!” There went his Tookish mouth once more. “With... your... looks and your determination. You really are quite the dwarf you know? You are the only one I met kind enough to not ruin a house. You are thoughtful. Resourceful. A great leader and you look out for those beneath you. There shouldn’t be a thing in this world that could act as a repellant.”
“I do not need compliments.” Thorin nodded slowly at Bilbo. “And I do not worry about the future of my love life. There are far more important things in the world for me to worry about.”

Bilbo frowned. “Yes well...” He sighed this time and fingered his reigns self-consciously. “I... I suppose you are right...” Oh... how he wanted to argue that point. To tell him that no- there shouldn’t have been more important things. That love and relations should have been able to factor in, that the dwarf’s sadness needn’t have been so great... but. His words were like nothing before the prince. His eyes remained downcast... and funnily enough?

Had he had eyes other than his own... had he been a butterfly in the forest, a falling leaf, a gust of wind- anything but the hobbit that he was, staring down at the rope in his hands, he would have seen it. A small and amused smile that crept onto Thorin’s face and the way those great- and reliable shoulders... relaxed.

He awoke to the loud, clipped sounds of a yell. A warning. Sound exploded all about him and in an instant- Bilbo’s heart was racing. He was sitting up before he knew it- wide eyes watching as Gloin was attacked by a wolf. As Ori pinged another with his slingshot. As Kili let out a whoop and charged a larger beast and as Fili stumbled out of bed after him, sword already in hand.

And then- and then there was a growl. A low menacing growl behind him and- “oh!” suddenly, he was reacquainted with the ground. The weight upon his was immense and now- now a pair of teeth were biting down upon his shoulder! Bilbo screamed. The weight was lifted. The back of his shirt was grabbed and he was tugged rather unceremoniously behind and beside the feet of Bofur. He gasped and grasped at his wound. The sound of the wolf perishing by the dwarf’s blade was offset by the blood Bilbo’s hand retrieved- by the way his hand was shaking- by his ragged breaths and oh~ why was the world spinning so?

It seemed like forever before the whimpers of those wolves to calmed down. And as soon as they had- Bofur was by his side again, crouching and giving him a confused and amused once over. “You ok Mr. Baggins?”

“It bit me!” Bilbo said, pushing himself up. “I’m bleeding! I am most decidedly not ok!”

Bofur laughed and brushed that protective hand away, tugging Bilbo’s shirt open a bit more to view the wound. “Ah~ you’ll live.” He whistled and looked to Oin- “This one will need a look over.” He stood and ruffled Bilbo’s hair before following Thorin’s gruff orders to gather the beasts for breakfast.

Breakfast. Bilbo blanched and covered his bite- properly scandalized. “Problem lad?” Oin hunkered down beside him and began uncapping the ointment he had brought along. Bilbo was quick to lower his shirt away from the wound.

“Just... it seems barbaric... doesn’t it?”

“Eating?” Oin laughed. “If you have a problem with eating- I’m sure there are those that would gladly take up your share.”

“Wh-“ Bilbo flushed and then gasped as the medicine was applied. It stung. “N-I’m not saying... just...” He hung his head and stared as best as he could at the medicine being applied. It was... odd. Being able to eat something that would have eaten you. When Oin finished, Bilbo opted to just take his shirt off. It was stained- unfortunately. Stained and clawed at and dirty. There was no way to wash it now either. There was just no water anywhere nearby and using his canteen water would just be wasteful. So. So he set it aside and pulled out a fresh shirt. Dressed. And soon, he was claiming his sleeping spot against Thorin’s back.
The company had begun to settle down again. Skinning would take place in the morning—when there was more light and less fatigue in their bones.

A new watch was placed. Snores began to sound one by one which really was impressive, to think that anyone could sleep so soon after an attack. Bilbo certainly was having a time of it.

Yes, he wiggled and shifted and shivered. Every sound in the forest had him twitching, every growl or chirp earned a soft gasp. A moan.

Finally—Thorin could stand no more. “You are frightened.”

Bilbo flushed. His eyes fluttered open. “I— not frightened... weary perhaps.”

Thorin let out a sufferable sigh and pushed against him. “Sleep on the floor. I will go no sleep against you.” Bilbo’s jaw dropped and he really, really wanted to argue but for the fact that the dwarf was probably very, very right.

With a sigh, he gathered his bedroll and not only laid it out, but curled up into it.

But once again... he didn’t sleep. He couldn’t. It was cold, getting colder and his blanket was of no more use than it had been when he had used it against Thorin. He was shivering within moments, his teeth chattering and his hands seeking whatever warmth would escape his lips. He lay there... for entirely too long. He knew the others had dozed off. He could tell by their snores. By the dipping out of conversation about them. The fire burned softly all too far away from him and he considered moving closer. Maybe even moving on top of the fire, if only to escape the cold... but then... the space about it had been taken up long ago. He’d have to sleep on another to get closer and that thought— well. Bilbo let out a tiny groan and Thorin— to his horror—sighed.

“Mr. Baggins.” Agitated. Is how he sounded. “What is it now?”

“N-nothing.” He whispered, ashamed to have not been able to keep himself quiet. “Just... a bit cold is all.” He wrapped his blanket about himself tighter. “I’ll be fine. Forgive me.”

“You’re chattering. Loudly.” Bilbo shook his head and tried burrowing his face into his bag.

“I’m sorry. I cannot help it.” He sighed with frustration, “It is... horridly cold.”

There was silence for a good long while... he... honestly thought Thorin to have just slipped into sleep. He expected no more recourse... and so he didn’t pay much attention to the sound of Thorin shifting.

Until that is... warmth was draped upon him.

He peeped and rolled- eyes wide as his fingers grasped at a very furry cape. His wide eyes... they looked towards Thorin. But his voice was lost.

Thorin’s eyes shut.

His arms were crossed. His body slowly relaxing and Bilbo- Bilbo just... watched. Stunned. Grateful. Still... he could not stem his words- “you... won’t you be cold?” Those eyes opened once more. Thorin frowned.

“I will not shudder as you would.” He licked the inside of his cheek. “Sleep... Mr. Baggins.” He tried closing his eyes once more- but that wasn’t enough for Bilbo. Bilbo sat up quite determinately and slung that cape back over Thorin.
“I may shiver more than you- but I cannot be the cause of our leader and king catching a cold.” He nodded succinctly, “I appreciate your thoughtfulness though.” He tried crawling back to his bed but- Thorin caught his arm. His grip was strong.

“You will catch a cold before I would.”

“Your needs are more important than mine.” Bilbo insisted and OH how quickly his confidence disappeared when those eyes narrowed. When that frown deepened.

“Take it.” He pushed the cloak back to Bilbo and Bilbo... bit his lip. Eyed it. “I... “ He huffed and... sat. Beside Thorin, tugging a bit of the cloak so that it could rest over both of them. It was awkward, trying to get comfortable beside the dwarf without actually touching him.... harder still when those eyes were upon him... but Bilbo managed. At least, this way Thorin and he would both be warm- “O-oh!”

He was very abruptly pulled against Thorin’s chest by a very strong arm. His heart sped up several notches. “Wh-what are you--”

“Keeping us both warm.” And though Bilbo looked up, Thorin already had his eyes closed. He looked absolutely solemn. Stone-faced. Like a leader. Their leader and yet with their proximity, Bilbo couldn’t help but feel as though a different look should be upon him. He swallowed. Took a shuddering breath and laughed- just as nervously. “I-well I won’t be able to sleep now!”

Thorin’s huff could have rivaled Smaug’s. “Why is that?” He demanded. His glare was all too vivid. The hobbit squeaked. He would have tried pulling away but... “W-I’m- “ He gestured between them with a hand that was hidden by Thorin’s cloak, “This! W-we’re- I’m not quite used to having another so close!” His cheeks flushed and he averted his gaze. “Th-that’s not even including the fact as to what we did a while ago.”

“You mean to say what I did to you?” Thorin rolled his eyes and relaxed. “I am offering you warmth tonight Hobbit, not sex.” He snorted lightly. “We already know where you stand on that topic.”

Bilbo blushed with shame. “I-L... am sorry. I didn’t mean for it to sound as though you... pushed... me. That... came out a bit wrong.” Thorin grunted... and... Bilbo... slowly... very slowly... began to get comfortable against Thorin. Leaning into the dwarf was... relaxing. He was so much more warm. He hummed softly for it. But his mind was nowhere near at ease. He was still thinking about that night. And about how rude he had just been to a dwarf that was trying his best to heed his wishes. “Perhaps...”

He swallowed. Closing his eyes gave him a bit more strength... “I... should return the favor?” His own heart sped at his words and he could hear Thorin’s heart give a solid thump. He felt those eyes piercing into his head, but he didn’t open his own. He couldn’t. After all, this couldn’t really be him speaking... now could it?

Not he- a proper Baggins.

He took a breath. Swallowed again... and slowly... one of his hands... fell. Down. Down a rough tunic that was not his own... down... down t...

His wrist was caught. Their eyes met.

Thorin’s jaw was set. His tone serious. Harsh. “What game are you playing at?”
"I'm not!" Bilbo blushed then. How to explain his decision? It barely made sense to himself!! “I...“ he frowned. “I wronged you. S-several times.”

“That is no reason.”

Bilbo’s mind went blank. How could he argue with a person like Thorin?!

Ah... but perhaps he didn’t need to argue. With a jerk of his wrist, he was free from that grasp and his fingers- they fell quite quickly to a clothed... dick. Thorin was not hard. Well- he was a bit hard but...

“You know not what you do.” Thorin growled, his other hand tugging Bilbo’s shoulder away now instead of pulling it closer.

“I know I owe you.” Bilbo breathed. He felt so exposed. A-and he wasn’t the one being touched! “I know... you are far too kind to me. I know I am grateful for this spot by your side and I know...” he tugged his way back against Thorin’s side. “I know... that life should be spontaneous.”

Those brows furrowed and Bilbo found his heart fluttering at the sight. Instead of looking outraged- Thorin looked adorably... confused. “I am a hobbit- Thorin. I may not be brave... I may not be consistent... I may not even have experience in matters such as these but I do know... that I...” He bit his lip. “that I... enjoyed what happened between us. And because I did... I do not think it fair... or right that you should have to view it as a moment in which you had pressed your... self. Upon me.” He shook his head. “I followed you into those woods. I allowed you to undress me.” Thorin’s eyes were searching his own. He looked to be disbelieving and... Bilbo couldn’t blame him.

Not one bit.

“You must be taken by sickness.” Thorin concluded.

“I’m not sick!” Bilbo hissed.

He moved. Moved and straddled Thorin. The prince’s hands moved quickly to keep that cloak upon them both. “I’m... not. If I were-“ His nervousness caused him to squeak and he shook his head sharply for that, grabbed onto Thorin’s tunic for strength, “If I were... I would not be nearly as nervous about this as I am.” He met Thorin’s eyes for a moment. He was quite sure his cheeks were aflame.

His body certainly was. He was inexplicitly aroused.

Bilbo cleared his throat. And he smoothed out where he had just grabbed. “Will you... allow this? Thorin?” He was holding his breath. He didn’t think he should be- didn’t want to be, but he was. And wow but that look upon Thorin’s face was... entirely new. Startled and suspicious yet... interested? Grateful? Could Thorin even possess such an emotion as-

Of course he could. He was a man- just like himself. The only difference between them right now was that Thorin was still quite good at hiding his emotions whilst Bilbo wore his quite openly upon his... well. His self.

Slowly- Thorin licked his lips. “Do as you will.” His eyes averted, maybe even averted haughtily but Bilbo liked to believe it was shyness. Or a chance for him to let his hands fall without being judged by those vivid eyes.

They found the buckle to Thorin’s belt. Large... cold. There were... a multitude of grooves and divots within... the thing was engraved and really, had he had light and more space, he should have
enjoyed looking upon it in its fullness.

As it were however, he could only concern himself at the moment with trying to get it off. His fingers sought for a clasp. And he fumbled. For a bit. Mumbled to himself in his annoyance- but when it popped open? “Oh thank the gods.” He let the heavy thing drop and grabbed for the hem of Thorin’s pants. He could feel the dwarf’s eyes on him. And he couldn’t help it- he looked up. Their eyes met. It was intimidating and oddly enough, Bilbo felt as though Thorin should kiss him. He probably would have enjoyed it. Quite a bit. But. There was no kiss. And his fingers... were undoing those trousers.

Their breath- was becoming ragged. Bilbo’s cheeks burned for this, they were still within earshot of the others. But. It was also comforting- hearing Thorin’s breath to be as harried as his own. That meant he wasn’t the only one affected by what was happening. By what he was doing. Of course- as soon as he began to tug Thorin’s breaches down- he had even more evidence before him. The thing was already straining to pop out at him. Bilbo swallowed. He could not see it- but he could feel its strength. And... he could see that bit of hair...

Bilbo spared a hand to touch at the hair just above Thorin’s pride. It was soft. Unreasonably soft.

“You’ve seen it before.” Thorin reminded, hands still holding that cloak upon them.

“I... never got to touch it before.” Bilbo’s eyes flickered up. “It’s soft.” He went back to pulling those britches down- “And this... is not.” He could feel Thorin freed. His hand shot to it like a magnet and it was hot and it was thick and Thorin let out a grunt that had him moaning softly. Heat like this... should have melted- if not burnt his hand. But it didn’t.

It merely made it hotter betwixt them.

Bilbo... pressed his gasping lips against Thorin’s. And the king- he accepted.

Thorin’s lips were slightly chapped but his beard- oh his beard did not get in the way as Bilbo had expected. He felt it, yes. Tickling at his skin lightly but that hair was so feathery light... it could have been nothing at all.

His breath hitched- when Thorin- when the Dwarven king’s mouth opened and a tongue slid forth. Thorin licked at his lips and Bilbo shivered. His hand tightened slightly upon Thorin’s dick and Thorin- he bucked. Moved. And guided Bilbo’s free hand to his cloak. “Hold this.” He was told. And he held it, the other end of that cloak, and Thorin- with one hand was reaching down and!

“H-ha~” Bilbo broke the kiss, his body shivering in pleasure. Thorin... had brushed against him and was... unfastening his trousers- “god... Th-thorin...” His mouth was claimed again and he pressed his gratefulness into those lips. Hid his moan within that mouth. “I-I was supposed to be the one to owe...” breathless. Light-headed.

Thorin snorted lightly, “And I am keeping us both warm.” He reclined against the rock he had settled against and let his head loll back as he snuck his hand into Bilbo’s small’s. “Well.” He chuckled lowly and Bilbo could feel that laughter resonate in his chest. “are all hobbits as well lubricated as you?” That hand slipping along his tip and Bilbo- after bucking realized with faint horror and acute embarrassment- that he was rubbing his own pre-cum down his shaft!

“Th-nnn~” He couldn’t even protest, couldn’t defend himself he was just- so, so embarrassed. He whined. Actually whined and hid his face in the crook of Thorin’s neck. Some Took he was. Ah- and the sound Thorin’s hand was making as it stroked him, wet and all- Bilbo... might have been resting against that neck but he couldn’t curb his breath. It was ragged. Aroused. And he was in the
perfect position to feel Thorin’s groan of a grunt-

“Aren’t you... going to...” Thorin thrust a bit into Bilbo’s hand and Bilbo squeaked. He had quite forgotten about what he had been doing.

“S-sorry!” He tried righting himself again- but- Thorin had never stopped and moving just made the pleasure that much more intense. His back straightened and arched. “O-oh~ g-“ He licked his lips. “I-I’m not quite sure I can-“ He was panting now and catching Thorin’s eyes was like catching on fire- “D-do this. I... oh...” He tried- tried stroking Thorin. His hand moved. A bit. A bit. The man’s cock could barely fit into his hand and his tip- “Y-you’re wet too.” He breathed.

“Not so much.” Thorin’s hand dropped and his fingers played with his balls and Bilbo gave out a cry. His grip must have tightened too much upon Thorin for the man growled and froze. Until Bilbo realized he might loosen his grip.

“S-sorry...”

There was judgment and a bit of amusement in those dark eyes. “Just hold on to the cloak.” He brought the other edge within groping distance and so that’s what Bilbo grabbed. He felt rather silly, holding both ends to a cloak that only now covered him but- but as soon as Thorin drew their dicks together- he didn’t so much mind. In fact, he slumped forward. His hands wrapping about the man’s neck as he kissed him. A tongue extended unto his lips and he welcomed them with a moan.

His body was thrumming with pleasure. Thorin’s dick was pulsing against his own and apparently, they were both providing enough ‘lubrication’ as Thorin had put it because that hand was speeding. That calloused, hard hand. It felt delicious upon his dick, firm. Knowledgeable. Not that he needed much experience in a situation like this. Bilbo was hot. Bilbo was needy. He was dizzy and lost and panting and desperate and he would be cumming soon. “Thorin-” He was going to warn him. Really he was. But his lips were claimed quite quickly.

Thorin knew how to pleasure a mouth. Almost as much as he knew how to stroke a dick. It was with a groan. A bucking of his hips and a curve of his back that he came. Hard. GOD- and that thick pulsing of his dick was complimented only by Thorin’s own pulsating cock. Against his own, beating just as fast, humming just as appreciatively. Thorin was. He was biting at Bilbo’s bottom lip. His other hand had at some point found its way to feel at the curve of Bilbo’s back and oh how the hobbit hoped he liked what he felt. It was strung like this for a reason. Bowed because of him. And Bilbo quite wished that he should know. This pleasure had all been wrought by Thorin and even though they had cum, Bilbo began to thrust in that hand, against Thorin’s dick.

While the prince had allowed their kiss to break, Bilbo now reinitiated it. Their breath strained through the smacking of their lips. And now- with each stoke of that hand and every wet sound that followed, satiated pleasure rung through them both. ‘Twas the aftermath of a fantastic coupling.

And it ran on. And on... until Bilbo no longer had within him strength. Until Thorin was prompting him to reach into his bag for a cloth to wipe themselves up with. He was tired though. And lazy. That’s probably why he laughed the way he did and reached and took Thorin’s wrist into his hand. Brought those caked fingers up and... just licked it all away.

Heat fluttered behind Thorin’s gaze. Had they not have rutted against each other for so long, there probably would have been another round. But as it were- their lips met again... they expressed their desire through that.

And Bilbo drew off his neck tie. Let that clean at their mess and then they slept. Like that- Bilbo against Thorin’s mighty chest, his head buried in that neck. Thorin with his arms about him, his head
resting upon Bilbo’s. The cape was draped about them both.

Warmth was their friend that night.

Dreams a place of sweet remembrance.
This time, when he awoke he was... laying. Down. Or mostly down. Curled and laying upon a body that was hardy and warm and that cape was now draped mostly upon just him. He had managed to stay atop Thorin all night. And the dwarf had become an impromptu bed. A bed that was now biting the inside of his cheek for the teasing words being thrown about by his nephew’s. Bilbo groaned, “Sod off.” He said irritably. “We say nothing of your nights together.” As he yawned, he also took a bit of pleasure at the way Kili sputtered and the laughter that sprung up from the other dwarrows. Kili tried another jibe- but Thorin put a stop to it.

They slunk away, tails between their legs and the dwarrows chuckling whilst Bilbo allowed his eyes to shut once more. As awkward as his sleeping position was, it was still quite comfortable. Thorin was a comfortable dwarf. And patient too for he let Bilbo lay upon him for several more long moments. Until Bilbo was the one to sigh and right himself. That cape dropped from his body but before it could land in a bunch on the floor, he gathered it. And brought it to Thorin’s lap. “Thank you.” He’d imagined that to have gone far more smoothly, and he’d have loved if his cheeks didn’t tint pink but so was life. Thorin nodded... and Bilbo was caught by a thought of kissing the dwarf... but he didn’t and he stood and... adjusted. He was a bit stiff from the night before but it was nothing he wouldn’t be able to handle.

He grabbed food. They ate. And as they began to pack up, what was passing as a respectable morning turned into an opportunity for attention to the brothers, Fili and Kili. One offered to help Bilbo upon his pony and he- thinking they were trying to make up for before, gladly agreed. He was helped up... and then soon, flanked by the two boys as their procession left camp.

“So... your night went well did it?” This was Fili. He looked as though he had just chowed down on something very delicious, that’s how wide his smile was. Kili laughed upon his other side and waved. Their uncle was mounting their horse before them. Or... at least- had just tried to. When Bilbo looked, the dwarf was giving his pony a death glare, his foot still upon the stirrup. One last grunt and attempt though, and he rose. He seemed quite upset and uncomfortable whilst settling upon his horse and Bilbo wouldn’t have had a thought as to why if not for the way Fili snorted and Kili’s horse bumped his own with her hip. “Not every morning Uncle has such a hard time getting about. I recon, he has you to thank for that.”

“Ai- you must have given him quite the round for him to be hoping for it the next day.” Kili wiggled a brow and Bilbo blushed bright red.

“N-Th-“ He huffed and tried spurring Myrtle to walk faster. Oh~ why didn’t ponies like him?? With a frustrated huff- Bilbo straightened his back and looked forth. “Well. Of course he should like it. I was the one to give it to him.” He could practically hear the boy’s jaws drop. But he kept that back of his straight. Even as they cooed and laughed.

"Quite an accomplishment there!"

“No reason to not be proud.” They exchanged looks over his head. He knew they did. He could see it out of the corner of his eye. Oh~ and if he didn’t stifle a groan for it. If he didn’t want to curl into his pony at the grins they were sporting.

“But you know. You’ll probably have another moment with him.” Bilbo’s head snapped to him-eyes wide, face aghast. They were not talking about this!
“Ai~ and when you do. You might need a few pointers.”

He looked to Fili now- heart stopping. “P-P-p-pointers?!”

“Like how to quite your voice down.”

“How to tone his up.”

“We could... help.”

“Assist. If you’d like.” He didn’t bother hiding his shame. He groaned and fell into Myrtle’s mane. They had heard. “You don’t have to answer now. You can think on it. In the meantime though, do tell us what happened betwixt you two.”

“Was it just a hand? Or maybe two? Did you need a bit of lube, because we can spare it if necessary.”

“Spare-“ He shook his head, “I don’t need you to spare...” He straightened and cleared his voice. “Gandolf!” Hopefully the wizard would ignore his blushing cheeks. “I believe I have a question for you.” The wizard was several ponies ahead of him but upon his request, allowed his nag to slow until Kili was pushed away and they could speak comfortably. Now, their conversation was awkward- His question was a little strained for quality but the wizard departed his knowledge upon the subject with ease and the boys... found themselves quite out of the conversation. They had hoped he would try to pull Gandalf in and they had been wrong. Thank the HEAVENS. That conversation had been entirely too personal. Too embarrassing.

He learned a lot about firework making. About explosives and the materials needed within. He found himself so entranced and so distracted in fact, that he was quite taken aback when not even two hours later- Thorin called the company to a halt. “We’ve-“ Bilbo looked back to whence they came, “We’ve barely gotten out of sight of our last campsite.” Gandalf hummed through an amused smile and before them, Fili said something to Kili that made him giggle. The rest of the dwarrows chattered amongst themselves but Thorin was already dismounting his pony. Leading him to a tree.

It was settled. They’d take a break.

Dwalin lead a hunting party. One that Fili and Kili decided to make into a game. Most other dwarrows joined in. Wages were bet upon who would come back with the most killed and Bilbo laughed. He put a bet towards Thorin. A wager that made the dwarf eye him in surprise and... something else- he wasn’t quite sure. The party left... and yet when they did... Thorin looked... hesitant. Even... set off in a different direction than the others. “Think he’ll garner better prey that way?” Bilbo asked, settling next to Gandalf.

“I think.” Gandalf was smoking leisurely by a tree. “The sort of prey he’s looking for shant be found that way at all.” He cleared his throat and sent a kindly eye Bilbo’s way. “Not without help that is.”

“Help?” Bilbo blinked. “I-is that way more dangerous? Will he be alright?”

Gandalf laughed and waved with his pipe towards forest. “Perhaps you should check upon him? Whatever troubles face him out there, I am certain they are nothing you cannot aid him with.”

Bilbo’s brow furrowed. “I... don’t understand why he’d venture off into a place he wouldn’t be able to handle. That’s reckless...” He sighed. But then- Thorin had been acting a bit off. At the very least, he could check up on him. It wasn’t like he had better plans anyway. And he could smoke once he was sure all was well.
With that, Bilbo headed off after Thorin.

His hand was on his blade always. His footsteps softer than soft. Until that is, he came upon the image of Thorin tossing his hair back, readying his blade... he was less than a foot from a beast that was both Boar and Dear. An odd combination that had interested Bilbo so much... that he missed a step and had his foot *crunch* into a downed twig.

The beast reared. Its eyes were wide and it let out a screech of a neigh before turning tail and *racing* away through the bushes.

Thorin cursed and spun on him. “What in Duran’s name do you- do...” His brows furrowed and the king *actually* looked at a loss. “What are you *doing* out here? You’re supposed to be in camp!”

Bilbo frowned. “I-“ He shrugged and waved towards where he had come from- “Gandalf made me believe you might have trouble! I only came to check upon... you.” He frowned. “Though I...” And winced. “Obviously wasn’t needed... f-forgive me. I... scared away your prey.”

Thorin took a breath... then let it out slowly as he put his ax upon his back once more. “I thought hobbits were trained to be quieter than that.”

Bilbo cleared his throat. “Yes well... it’s not every day you see a critter as big as that.”

“And how are you to handle sneaking about a *dragon* if you can’t mind your step around lesser beasts?” Bilbo’s mouth dropped a bit but Thorin’s features softened. “Come. It shouldn’t have been able to get far. We’ll track it down together.”

Bilbo... followed. He had no real reason to- that beast had been quite large and quite intimidating and Thorin looked as though he’d be able to handle it without a problem... but. There was something... *exciting*... about walking by Thorin’s side alone. Hunting, being taught what to look out for whilst they walked.

Bilbo learned what weak and brittle ground looked like, how to duck and move to avoid letting branches grab at you. He was shown what grazed leaves looked like. How to find if hoof-prints were recent or old. Their fingers touched a few times. Their shoulders bumped.

They had *all* of this forest to themselves and yet they walked side by side. God. And when that beast came into view, Thorin slowly drew his ax. Or- had begun to. “This one is yours.” He whispered, his ax was swung easily, spun so that the handle could be plucked from his grasp by Bilbo.

His hand shook as he reached for the thing. It was *heavy*. It was *hard* to keep up and Bilbo soon found his legs trembling for the weight. Thorin moved beside him. Helped to fix his posture. “You must hold it strong and fast.” He remarked, tapping an arm so that it was no longer locked and straight. The weight dropped a bit... but it was still quite heavy.

“T-Thorin...” Bilbo whispered. “ I-I’m not q-quite sure I can-“

“You *will* manage.” Conviction. Surety. These things Bilbo may not have possessed but in Thorin-they apparently came in *buckets*. “Concentrate.” The ax wavered in his weak grasp but he was holding it. It’s weight was no longer completely unbearable with the way Thorin now had him situated. He- The beast before them. Bilbo eyed it.

He would have to... kill it? His first kill then. In the middle of a forest they knew not of. Honestly, why hadn’t he foreseen his own reluctance *before* now? How had he come this far without thinking about what would happen when their excursion ended? When it looked ready to bear fruit? H-he owed this to Thorin now. The dwarf was trying to teach him. Bilbo- Bilbo swallowed. His hand
shook and he took a step forward. Towards the thing.

One... frightened step forward before Thorin’s hand found his arm again. Steadying it. “Hold it with both hands.” He told him. Keep your stance firm.” Bilbo swung the ax to be held properly. He stood... well. He wasn’t sure how to stand, but he bent his knees a bit. Wobbled. “You must have more confidence.” Thorin’s hand felt warm against his back. It helped it to straighten.

“I-“ He looked to Thorin, lost. “I-I’m no fighter.” He breathed. There was a look in Thorin’s eyes. His fingers twitched at Bilbo’s back... but before Bilbo knew it- the dwarf was closer. Enveloping him, guiding his body down, and guiding it into a position that felt far stronger than how he had allowed himself to stand before. There was a heavy breath let out beside his ear... but once he was set, Thorin moved off quickly.

“Keep this position.” He said, clearing his throat. “Attack with surety.”

Bilbo took a breath... eyed the beast... and charged.

That monster- it didn’t know he was coming until he was but a foot away. And then he swung. And that swing was sloppy and it was slow and with a cry- the beast reared up... batted its feet at him... then spun and trampled away and out of the clearing. Bilbo let out a shout and tried running after it. Th-that almost wasn’t fair! How could he have missed! He was so close and had been so clumsy and he was so lost in that thought as he followed that before he could make it out of the clearing- he tripped. Fell. His sword went careening into a tree root and he just barely missed its blade as he fell beside it.

He heard Thorin’s feet running towards him. That armor straining and then finally settling as he kneeled at his side. “You are well?”

“I was horrible. ” Bilbo groaned. “I know I said I wasn’t a fighter... but that-“ He pushed himself up, “that was... really bad.” He expected to see judgment upon Thorin’s face when he caught those eyes but instead... he saw a smile. Bilbo honestly blinked at that image. It was... truly, nothing he had expected to see.

“Next time you’ll fare better.” Thorin was pretty quick in remedying that expression. It slipped into stoniness soon enough and he gave him a clap upon the shoulder before standing and retrieving his axe. “We can still track the beast.”

Bilbo stared up at the dwarf... and given his view- decided then to just stay where he was. There, from by the dwarf’s feet, Bilbo was given a full view of all that was Thorin. “I’m... not quite sure that would be the wisest choice though.” Confusion and a bit of outrage stormed onto Thorin’s face- “I... just... “ He sighed and stood. “Doesn’t it...” How to word such a question? “Uh... hinder your movements? Chafe? Hurt? To uh... run... and track... when... you have... an issue such as yours?”

“What issue? ” Thorin bit. His Tookish side made him bristle even as he sat up. “I was just concerned for your private welfare. After all- it seems as though you’ve been having to deal with that for a while now.” He gestured towards Thorin. Towards those... that.... bulge that lay hidden.

“Unless I was mistaken when I saw you mounting the pony this morning. And unless I am mistaken now and you just naturally hang that thickly.”

Thorin’s jaw actually dropped. Bilbo hadn’t thought that could be possible. But those beautiful blue eyes had widened and a blush had raged across those cheeks . “N-now. I am sorry for being
inappropriate but... that... it. *It* looks rather painful.” He cleared his throat and crossed his arms. “I... “

His nose twitched. “I figured I could offer to help. Too. Since... I mean... You helped me... track that

beast.” His heart fluttered- “And since... it would appear that it is partially *my* fault to begin with...”

Thorin *glowered* and turned to stalk off. “C-come on now! I-“

“You are mocking me!” Growled the king, whipping around in a rage.

“I’m doing no such thing!” Bilbo cried back. “I just offered to *help!“

“What help do I need from a *hobbit?!“

"Plenty! If last night has anything to say about it!” The king stalked forward and now they were face
to face, glaring and glowering and Bilbo was *quite* affronted.

And also scared.

“A-a-are you telling me you did not wish for last night? Th-that *I* actually pushed *you* into doing

something untoward?” Thorin scowled and grabbed Bilbo’s shirt roughly, yanked him up and-

Their teeth clanked together. Their breath mixed, their tongues clashed. When he was let go-
Thorin’s breath was easily ragged. “Never.”

“Then...” Bilbo licked his bottom lip and reached out. Let his fingers rest on the top of Thorin’s belt

buckle. “let me *help.*” Thorin surged forward. Gripped at Bilbo’s head and pressed another kiss
against his bruising lips. Their legs intertwined. Bilbo began to lose his balance and that’s when he
was scooped. Up. Up into Thorin’s arms.

His legs instantly wrapped about the dwarf. Not that it was needed. Thorin walked them all of a few
steps before nipping his lip and bringing them *both* to the floor.

He had found soft ground. A nest of fallen leaves, soft dirt and flowers Bilbo hadn’t noticed before.

Thorin’s hair fell about his face. Upon his chest, his body... He was panting as he reached and tore
from Bilbo’s neck his handkerchief. The thing fell somewhere- Bilbo didn’t bother looking for it.
No- he had Thorin’s rumbling mouth upon his neck. His body was arching to try to meet Thorin’s.
His hands were scraping along that back- he wanted to get close. Closer. Closer to Thorin and he
whimpered for it.

“By the *gods. “* He let his hands fall haplessly by his sides, “Thorin.” His head lolled against the

earth as he let loose a *groan.* The king was quite *good* with his mouth- “I... “ A hand rose and

tangled in that hair- “Disrobe the *both* of us.” Thorin now gazed to him- interest piqued by the

request.

Bilbo’s cheeks were stained... but then. At that moment, so was his mind. Thoughts of he and Thorin
were running rampant and he really was in *no* position to put a stop to them. “Please.”

That strong hand was pulling his vest open. Apart. The buttons were snapping free and gods when
they were all undone, his undershirt was next. Torn open by skillful hands whilst Bilbo gasped and
writhed.

Life never seemed as vibrant as it did when Thorin was nearby. His body... was *thrumming* with

energy. With desire and want. And when he kissed Thorin again- it was whilst he sat up. Whilst he
shrugged off his jacket, his vest, his shirt. Those things Thorin had so kindly undid for him.
He licked the dwarf’s lips when he set them aside and then propped himself up. He should have expected the way those eyes darted down to see what he had exposed... but all the same he felt... small.

Insufficient. And he coughed to that effect as he tugged upon Thorin’s tunic. “Y-y-you next then.” He said, voice trembling. Really- he was surprised the Dwarf hadn’t expressed his disappointment in him yet. He was just that much scrawny. That much less attractive... OH so much less attractive. Thorin sat back- just for him and undid his hefty belt. Unhooked it and threw it aside. His tunic loosened and was shrugged off. His under armor undid, shed and that next layer of armor... had Bilbo gasping. Reaching and... sliding his hand upon it softly. “This...”

“It’s-“ Thorin’s voice was thick. “Made of mythril. “ Bilbo let his hand fall, but Thorin caught it. Allowed it to keep upon his chest: “It is a family heirloom. From the days before Smaug... when the mines of Moria were ours and mythril was aplenty.”

Bilbo bit his lip... and allowed his eyes to absorb the detail of it. “Yes... well it’s gorgeous.”

He gazed upon it...entranced by its beauty. It’s lightness. It’s sheen in the specked light from above. And then slowly- it began to move. A kiss was planted against his forehead and when that light touch of lips retreated... when Thorin drew back, that armor was risen halfway up his chest and now it was over his head. Bilbo’s mouth ran dry at the sight of pectorals. Of ribs. Of hair and bruises and of a surprisingly light amount of scars. One- Bilbo fingered... ran just under a rib.

The mythril shirt fell silently by their side but Thorin kept his hands away, letting Bilbo just... touch. “Where did you get this one?” He asked, letting his hand fall to the ground.

”Practice as a child.” Thorin looked down to it himself and fingered it. “You...” His gaze flitted to the hobbit “Have no such memories.” Bilbo wasn’t quite sure as to whether or not he should take that as an insult... but then that next moment, Thorin was kissing him and his hand was roaming quite liberally over his chest.

He decided he didn’t much care. In fact- he forgot about all else as soon as his nipple was flicked. He yelped and writhed and he could feel Thorin’s smirk against his lips. “You do not care for that?” That same nub was now being rubbed. Gently- with but a thumb and Bilbo shivered. Kissed Thorin once more.

“One more.” But his hand was already feeling. Already running upon that furry chest. Feeling at the muscle there. The definition. This hair- like the hair just above his great treasure- was soft. Not at all as coarse as Bilbo would have thought it’d be and he hummed. Curled his hands on either one of Thorin’s sides. “More.”

A chuckle came down unto him. The gaze of Thorin’s was soft, happy. “You are not nearly as proper as I would have imagined.” He gave Bilbo a bit of space and just hovered there. Over him. “What sort of more did you have in mind?”

That question made Bilbo’s nerves stand on end. Eager- willing. It was... “I-I-I don’t know!” He whined against his own desire and his hands fell to Thorin’s thighs. “Y-you always seem to be qu-quiet good at coming up with th-the next... the next...” He swallowed and looked away- “t-thing to do...”

Thorin ran a hand through Bilbo’s hair. And it was tender and sweet and... had that little hobbit heart skip a beat. Wh-what was this? The thing that they had right now? Bilbo was certain he had no clue. It wasn’t quite friendship... and wasn’t quite love... It wasn’t even really lust either... just... something. Something strange. Something Bilbo couldn’t get enough of. “I want t-to feel all of you.”
He admitted softly, his eyes fluttering shut in embarrassment. “Ca-can we manage that much? To
be... nude..”

“To be simply nude?” Thorin kissed him and sat back, “Of course that can be done.” He reached
and begun to unlace his boots. “What I should like to know is how you wish to come undone.”

“C-c-come u-un what now?!” His wide eyes betrayed him. He watched as Thorin stood and kicked
off his shoes. His pants were unlaced next- stripped off with ease and then those smalls. They fell as
though it were no big deal. All of that clothing dropped and knocked aside. Thorin was... naked.
NAKED. Right above him. Completely and utterly naked and it- it was a sight to see. Sculpted and
defined. Hairy but not overly so- Thorin was a true representation of a dwarf. Just seeing him move-
just seeing him bend to settle above him again was- was too much! Bilbo let out a yelp. An
undignified cry at the fact Thorin was so close once more... and then Thorin’s hands gripped at his
pants and- oh- OH he was dizzy!

“You’re naked!” He cried, fighting the urge to keep scooting until he was well away from the dwarf.

Thorin frowned to this. His knee lit upon the ground. “You asked this of me.”

“W-w-w-y-yes I did!” Bilbo swallowed thickly and his head shook in disbelief- “But- b-but you’re
naked!” Thorin’s eyes rolled and he let go of that hem he had been holding onto. Bilbo could have
scrambled backwards at that moment bu-but. But he stayed. He stayed and let his cheeks ring red
with blood. “W-what are we going to do? E-exactly I mean?” he wiped at his mouth and bit at his
lip- really, he was trying to cover the fact that his breath was getting heavy.

Heavy from just looking at Thorin- from being in his proximity! THIS! This was not appropriate in
any way. He didn’t need the dwarf to tell him what could happen and what they could do- he had
plenty of images running through his mind... but the Baggins’ inside him screamed for propriety. For
a sense of feigned modesty at the least! At the very least. GOD-

His wrist was grabbed! His wrist taken by Thorin’s hand and tugged away from his mouth. Thorin
was perching over him again- his face... oh so close. “What do you want?” Thorin’s voice was
gruff... yet oddly soft as Bilbo fell against the ground. His... his hand was softly pinned beside his
head. His breath hitched at the feel of that unruly hair sliding unwittingly against his chest as Thorin
loomed over him... waiting. Just... waiting.

“I...” He swallowed... and his fingers twitched.

“You wish to be nude with me.” Thorin breathed, his brows... oh... they were furrowed in confusion
and agitation. “But you are offended by my lack of clothing. You wish to feel all of me and yet you
have not undressed. Bilbo Baggins-“

Bilbo’s free fingers flew to Thorin’s cheek. His eyes were quite wide- that... that had to be one of the
rare times he had ever heard his name slip from his king’s mouth. Honestly- he was beginning to
wonder if the dwarf remembered his name at all.

That he had...

“What do you wish to do with me?” Thorin pressed. “How should you like to come undone? How
should I pleasure you?”

Bilbo was speechless. And Thorin... Thorin gazed into his eyes for several more moments... Before
he growled and righted himself. “Then you want nothing of me.”

“N-no! no I do!” He reached desperately for something to grab a hold of and what he did grab was
hair. A big handful too and when he tugged- Thorin’s head was forced closer. The dwarf hissed from the pain of it and shook his head mightily. It may not have wrestled Bilbo’s fingers free- but it did serve to remind him he had just pulled someone’s hair. “S-sorry!” Bilbo squeaked. “I just... I-“ He let go of the hair and shrunk as much as he could beneath the dwarf. “I-I’m ne-erous is all...” He cleared his throat and touched... tentatively at Thorin’s collarbone. “I am sorry... I... do want... s-"something.” He winced. “I’m just not s-sure... what... that something is.”

Thorin stared down at him blandly before he took a breath and sent his hands to Bilbo’s breeches. He undid them with grace. With fluidity. With expertise Bilbo was quite sure he would never possess. They said nothing. Those pants were tugged down, his smalls left untouched and Bilbo still shivered for it. He was exposed. “You- “ Thorin was tossing aside Bilbo’s pants. “Must remove those.” He gestured to the last remaining piece of clothing between them. “You take that off... we can continue.”

“M-me?”

Thorin sat upon his legs, his hands fisting over those... naked thighs. There were a lot of things going on in front of him. A lot of dwarf to see and Bilbo was quite flustered. Flustered that Thorin could make it seem as if nothing at all were happening. As if this was normal.

But it wasn’t. Proof of that was in the way Thorin’s eyes gazed upon him. The way that dick pumped with blood, the way that chest rose and fell with arousal... They were both... heated. Thorin just happened to be the only one willing to do something about it.

And that... well. That wasn’t fair. Not at all.

Bilbo gathered up as much pride and courage as he could muster and sat up. Stood up. “V-very well.” His fingers hooked onto his underwear and... o-oh. OH he peeped and closed his eyes and cleared his throat to gather more strength and- they came down. They were drawn down. Bilbo was shedding the last barrier between them himself. He wanted this.

Perhaps he always had.

Now- Bilbo Baggins fully expected to stand alone, knickers about his ankles waiting for Thorin to say something. He thought he’d have time to feel regret. Thought he’d have to prompt the dwarf at some point bu-but! But all too soon, Thorin was there. Thorin- Thorin had stood, had gathered him in his arms and was now kissing him. Deeply.

Their dicks brushed and Bilbo gasped. His legs gave way and Thorin caught him. Carried him. Yes-the dwarf stooped ever so slightly and gathered him up into his arms. Bilbo’s legs wrapped haplessly about that waist and HEAVENS- but the feel of... his dick against Thorin’s belly... the thought of the king’s own pride hanging within reaching distance of his ass... “T-Thorin-“

His lips were claimed once more. “Forgive me.” Another kiss and this time it was Bilbo that nipped at Thorin’s bottom lip.

It made the dwarf groan low in his throat. Made him adjust Bilbo... and! “O-oh~” He was breathless. His head buried into the dwarf’s neck. Thorin’s finger was- w-was pushing against his- “I-I don’t think... I don’t think you should...” But that finger pushed in. Just a bit. Just the tiniest of bits and the feel had Bilbo moan. Shiver. His legs tapped against Thorin’s ass. “It’s- n-nn... n-no... b-bath... sh-shouldn’t...”

Thorin growled and his finger retreated. “I need you.”
“I want you.” Bilbo returned, their eyes met— “But...” He yelped. Thorin had suddenly dipped to his knees— he was on his back now, being kissed ferociously and it was all he could do to sneak some breath in whilst the dwarf ravished him with his mouth. Kiss after kiss, Thorin untangled them until he was settled within Bilbo’s legs. Between them. And when he was, he descended. He kissed. He bit at Bilbo’s nipples, flicked them and... GOD- grabbed his legs and placed them on his shoulders! “Wh-what... what are you going to...”

But Thorin’s mind was set. He had Bilbo’s cock within his grasp. His free hand stroked at his thigh and just like that- Thorin... licked the head of his dick... then took it inside. “OH!” Bilbo bucked. Was about to twist- but the sound of Thorin gagging had him freeze instantly. His cheeks lit— “S- sorry!” He cried! He wiggled himself, tried getting away. He needed to disappear! He hadn’t just—

But those heavy hands settled on his hips. Stilling them. Keeping them ever so close- “Stop moving!” He was glared at for a while... before Thorin took a breath and peered down at Bilbo’s dick again. He- he was really going to take him in again! He was in fact. Fingers led his dick to that mouth again a-and!

Bilbo’s head thumped against the ground. He shuddered. He and Thorin were naked in the middle of a forest. Naked in the middle of a forest and the dwarf had his lips pursed tightly around his cock. Was... t-tasting him. He could feel that tongue feel along the underside of his dick! “Mmm~ I-doesn’t it t-taste... taste b... haaa~” He clawed at the ground. Moaned. He had never felt anything as erotic as this in his life.

“But it—” Bilbo managed to look to him then... and he was greeted by the sight of his dick being licked slowly whilst those piercing eyes stared up at him— “feel good?” He could only peep. Gasp. And Thorin tilted his head. Kissed at the base of his cock— “I thought as much.” His tongue flattened itself against him. Against that sensitive spot and... and fingers moved in to help. His balls were fondled. That mouth was upon him once more and this time— This time, Thorin sucked. Sucked upon him. Took a breath, then lowered himself. More and more of Bilbo was disappearing into that mouth! It was dizzying. It was breathtaking. It was... more pleasurable than anything else Bilbo had ever felt in his life.

“I-I believe! Th-Thorin- Th-Thorin! I’m!” Bilbo moaned and arched needily— “I’m go-going to... I-O-oh~” He tried pulling away half-heartedly. “S-stop~ st-mmm... I- I’m going to cum~” He groaned at the very word— “Going to!” And just as he gathered the strength to pull his hips away, Thorin solidified his own.

In keeping him there. One more thick suck- Thorin took him in, his tip lit upon the back of that throat and he!

“Oh!” he was cumming. Down Thorin’s throat. His body was twitching, he was gasping and groaning and Thorin’s name- it wouldn’t stop streaming from his mouth. His body felt alive! So alive- it made no sense when Thorin coughed and drew himself off. When he continued to cough into Bilbo’s hip and Bilbo could do nothing more than watch. He body felt deceptively sluggish. He felt shame and worry of course- for making Thorin cough as such... but he couldn’t do much of anything... he couldn’t move...

He managed to move a hand. It laced into Thorin’s hair... combing through it softly as he whispered— “Sorry... s-so sorry...”

Thorin shook his head and... and those locks brushed against his apparently very sensitive shaft. Bilbo let out a keen. Bucked lightly. Then reached to brush that hair away. Only... it had... “Dear sweet-” It had his cum treaded in it now. Not just on one strand- no, he tried picking it out- but it had already lapsed onto several bits of hair! “Sorry! Oh- I... oh~”
At last—Thorin seemed able to breathe. It was ragged, yes, but at least within a more normal range. He cleared his throat now and looked towards Bilbo’s plight. “You fret too often.” He knocked Bilbo’s hand away and moved. Bent the hobbit in half... and kissed him. Once... Twice...

Bilbo could taste a flavor unlike a kiss within Thorin’s saliva. It was musky and deep and it took him a while to realize that it was his own cum. Still tinting the mouth of his king. “Y-you... You... swallowed... I-I tried to warn you...”

“There was nothing to warn me of.” Thorin corrected, biting upon Bilbo’s bottom lip. “Except perhaps how quickly you would cum.”

Bilbo blushed- “I! I-it’s not like I could very well help it!” He squirmed. Squirmed and gripped at Thorin’s shoulders. “I’ve never had anyone down there before!”

Thorin scoffed. “You’ve been fast all other times as well.”

“N-that’s not fair at all!” Bilbo cried, “It’s not my fault I’ve never lain with another! Of course I’m going to be sensitive!”

Thorin’s eyes... got so huge that for a second- Bilbo had thought he’d insulted the dwarf.

Until- “You have...” Those brows drew together and Thorin... straightened. “Never been with another? Never bedded a woman?” There was something in Thorin’s eyes that Bilbo didn’t recognize. Not that he cared to decipher anything at that moment anyway. This conversation was horrendously invasive. “I thought you were a bachelor!”

“I am a bachelor!” Bilbo snapped. “Just not a whore. I haven’t slept with another because I didn’t think anyone...” He grimaced and did fold his arms across his chest now. Thorin was allowing him that much space at least. “I’ve never been interested. Is all.”

Thorin stared at him- jaw... setting ever so slowly before... disgust perked upon his face. Thorin let out a curse beneath his breath and bowed. Untangled Bilbo’s legs from his shoulder. “W-where are you going?” Thorin was standing up now and as tired as Bilbo felt- his body twitched in response. He sat up quickly, “You’re! We haven’t been able to fix that!” he waved towards Thorin’s still engorged dick and they both gazed upon it for a bit before Thorin should turn.

“Don’t concern yourself with it. I’m fine.”

“You’re not fine.” Bilbo said, standing. Ah~ and the blood fell from his head too quickly. He swayed a bit before he was able to truly stand upon his feet. “You’ve helped me out, but you started off with this to begin with! Let me help.” Thorin was picking up his clothes though. Stepping into his smalls. His pants- “Wh-” Bilbo’s heart thumped painfully. “Is it that bad that I haven’t lain with another? Am I really that much more undesirable now? Just because I have no experience?” He shook his head in disbelief- “That’s unfair! You had no problem finding comfort with me before. Why now, because you learn I’m a virgin to these matters, you leave? I’m no changed person.” He was glaring. His heart was pumping heavily, “Don’t ignore me!”

“You said you had never lain with a man.” Thorin barked. “I had no idea-“ He stopped. Composed himself enough to stop looking over his shoulder at him, “No clue you had not... “

“Wh-why would it matter?” Bilbo asked, cheeks flushed.

“Because virgins do not understand what it means to just lay with another.” Thorin’s eyes were fierce, his hand flailed. “Because I don’t have time to coddle you upon this trip. What we had- what we were doing must stop.” Thorin let out a frustrated growl and carded his hand through his hair
roughly. “Just... leave me be. I’ll handle this matter on my own.”

“You helped me.” Bilbo bit out. “And by the heavens if I’m not going to return the favor.” He strode up to Thorin. “I’m no different than I was moments ago. I can be as useful as anyone else.” Thorin turned to him- that frown upon his lips made Bilbo even angrier and he- He grabbed. At the dwarf’s britches without breaking that gaze. “I’m no different.” He insisted, unlacing the things. “I can help.” A heavy hand shot to his wrist and stalled his moments but Bilbo huffed and kissed him. Hard, bruising- their teeth clacked together. It seemed to take a moment for Thorin to realize he had to pull back but that was fine.

Bilbo was already dropping to his knees anyway. Was already undoing the last of those pants and pulling them down. “I’ll prove it to you.” Bilbo said. Oh... but what was being restrained before him was so... so big. And... it smelled. Not horrid, but it smelt like dwarf and it was ripe and... a-and Bilbo swallowed. He was about to reach to move aside that covering cloth from it- but Thorin’s hand landed upon his head.

Those intense blue eyes... stared down at him. Sadness laced their edges but there was also something else. Something firm, composed... “You needn’t prove anything.”

“You’re treating me as if I have the plague!” Bilbo retorted. He shouldn’t have been frowning like this- but it was hard to not be upset. Not be mad. Thorin ran his hand through Bilbo’s hair, shaking his head.

“I’m trying to give you space because I have done things to you I should not have done.” His hand fell reluctantly from Bilbo. “I pressed myself upon an innocent virgin. I touched you heedlessly, It is unbecoming of a king- of a dwarf for that matter and you warned me. You were hesitant and I ignored it. I thought you were being coy-“

“I’m not a child.” Bilbo said, though really... he was a bit touched by those words. “If I truly didn’t want what we’ve had, I would have made you stop. I wouldn’t have sought you out. I wouldn’t want to touch you the way I do. Wouldn’t want to return the favor as badly as I do now.”

Thorin frowned- “That favor was earned in the wrong sort of way.”

“That favor.” Bilbo’s fingers were trembling... but they tugged that dick free... “Is no longer a favor. It’s a desire. I don’t blame you for anything Thorin. I don’t dislike you, I don’t respect you any less. Your touches... have been unlike any other I’ve ever felt. They make me burn to be honest and I quite enjoy it. I like being with you. I like this.” He waved towards the both of them. “I want more too. You make me curious Thorin. You’ve made me into quite the adventurer and I don’t want to stop.” He cleared his throat. “So. That’s how it is. I like you. I want to do things with you. “ he licked his lips thoughtfully. “Now. Will you let me?” He shook Thorin’s dick a bit. “I think I want to try this one next.”

He was sure Thorin could see how his blush intensified after saying that but he didn’t much care. Thorin... looked at a loss. An adorable loss and he loved that.

He nodded and took a breath and... leaned in.

His nose twitched a bit from the smell. He cleared his throat and then... sent his tongue out. It lapped at Thorin’s head and the dwarf bucked for it. His breath hitched too and Bilbo took encouragement from it. He closed his mouth about that head, trapping it nicely between his lips but-
Not that he couldn’t still taste the dwarf. A bit of pre-cum had been left behind and Bilbo rolled the
taste about in his mouth. It was strong. A bit acidic tasting... “You can’t make this harder for me.”
Bilbo said, frowning playfully. “It’s my first time doing this too.” He grabbed that cock up again.
“I’ll need you to hold still.” He licked at that head again and Thorin grunted.

“Hold still whilst a man such as yourself...” Thorin ran out of breath and Bilbo’s tongue flicked
along that tip. Flattened and he sucked.

Then coughed. Thorin had bucked a bit- yes, but not enough to choke him. It was the flavor and the
smell that had thrown Bilbo through a loop. Still- his hand went to stroking the dwarf. “Have to get
used to that.” He muttered.

“Don’t-“ Thorin cleared his throat and his hand was coursing through Bilbo’s hair again. “You could
help me out just fine with that hand of yours.”

“But my mouth feels good right?” Bilbo ran his tongue down that dick, eyes locked onto Thorin’s
and how prideful he felt when he saw those eyes roll skywards. The taste could be ignored if only
for that.

His tongue continued to drive its way along Thorin’s dick. He could try sucking here, licking there.
He even managed to bring himself to fondle Thorin’s balls. To kiss them. Suck a bit of them in- And
Thorin- Thorin was soon very close. He could tell by that ragged breath. By the way his hand
struggled to keep itself from gripping his hair too firmly. The moans he released were... addicting.
And even was Bilbo’s hand sped, he didn’t want it all to end. He liked this. He wanted more of this.

That didn’t mean he’d deprive a dwarf of orgasm though.

He tried licking faster. And when his tongue failed to live up to his expectations, he let his lips purse
about that tip again. He sucked. Tried taking more in and it was strange and nice- feeling the weight
of the thing upon his tongue. He was about to take more in- when Thorin suddenly hissed. He
gripped Bilbo’s hair and the hobbit came free with a peep. “Be-“ The dwarf breathed. “Be very...”
His cheeks were red! Bilbo had never seen Thorin look so out of sorts. “Be weary of... of your
teeth.”

Bilbo nodded and slowly took Thorin in again. His hand sped up to its proper speed. He shed his
teeth as best as he could behind his lips. The noises that were emerging were disgusting and erotic
and had Bilbo’s own faded cock thrumming with desire. Maybe he could try swallowing a bit of
Thorin? To taste how cum felt sliding down one’s throat? Thorin would probably enjoy it too.
Emptying himself into his mouth. Yes- yes, that would be a good way of paying back that favor. Of
showing Thorin how much he wanted him. How much he liked him.

Bilbo hummed happily at that thought and doubled his efforts.

Thorin groaned. His body was shaking. “Baggins!” His voice ground out. “By Duran- g-get away!
I’m!”

Bilbo could feel the dwarf’s dick pulse and- he slid his tongue along the bottom of it. He’d take it.
He’d try! Bilbo sucked. HARD. One last time and all of a sudden, Thorin was bellowing. His hips
thrust- but for some reason- Bilbo’s mouth was no longer about that erupting dick.

And his head hurt. His hair had been tugged harshly. His head had pulled away and- and Thorin was
cumming all over his neck and chest and... And... and Bilbo stroked at the poor thing. Drew that cum
back onto that cock and watched as it spread. “I would have swallowed.”
"You..." Thorin was panting. "are a lot more daring than I would have...expected" He groaned and fell to his knees. His head was bowed, but Bilbo took it into his hands. He would have cradled the dwarf against him- but Thorin looked up then. Grunted and... sat back. "Curious or not... you didn’t have to do that."

Bilbo frowned. His hands fist ed upon his legs. "Th-why are you still so mad? I’ve done what any other non-virgin man would do! We’re both satiated and the world hasn’t ended."

"Virgins cannot let sex be just sex." Thorin mumbled. He probably would have left him there, Bilbo could tell that by his posture... but his was tired. Recovering. "You’ll cling. Cling or regret things that have been done. I... will hear about it eventually. It is exactly what royalty seeks to avoid and yet here I’ve stumbled directly into it."

“You- you ass! You haven’t stumbled into anything of the sort! I never said I would be clingy!"

Thorin’s eyes rolled and he stood. Apparently he wasn’t that winded.

"Wh-where are you going?"

Thorin was stepping into his clothes. Dressing himself quickly whilst Bilbo watched. Naked. Shamed. “I trust you know the way back?”

“Of- well yes. I-“

“Don’t take too long.” That belt was clapped on and Thorin gazed back at Bilbo with hard eyes. “We’ll need to leave shortly.”

And just like that. Thorin... left. He left him all alone. And it wasn’t even that he wanted to be clingy- one didn’t just abandon someone like he had! Didn’t walk away from a person they had just had it off with. It was rude! It was improper!

And... it was a dwarf he was thinking about.

A dwarf. A king... really. He shouldn’t have been surprised.

Muttering darkly to himself and hating that he felt as though he should cry, Bilbo dressed. Dragged himself back through the forest. The dwarrows were hooting and hollering. All having fun, most comparing their catches. Not that there were big, but Ori was proud of the beast he had caught.

When Bilbo saw it- he was rather impressed as well. It was bigger than Kili’s for sure. More teeth too.

That was what he focused on when he was greeted by the others. He didn’t bother looking Thorin’s way. Glazed off questions and jokes about where he had been. He wouldn’t be clingy. They had nothing between them after all. Apparently liking Thorin had just been a mistake. He had been young and brash with his emotions, had played his hand like a Took and was simply paying for it.

That was all.

He didn’t sniffle nor shed a tear at all. Not whilst they skinned their catches, not whilst they roasted them and most certainly not when they munched on some and wrapped away the rest for later. He was a strong hobbit. Smiled- albeit weakly- and joked with the others. And when they left, he allowed himself to be helped onto his pony and rode several miles... before he even allowed that heavy crushed feeling to swirl within his belly.

He kept his back straight though, still didn’t shed a tear. And when a hand began petting Myrtle’s
mane, the beast didn’t buck, didn’t fuss...

Bilbo was grateful for it. He hadn’t the heart to deal with anymore complications. Not that day.

And not for several days after that.
And How To Let Go.

Chapter by Sakaji

Chapter Notes

Thanks for all the support! I'm glad you guys are enjoying this~ ^w^ It's really been a while since I've had a fandom I could write to, so making this story is really just a breath of fresh air. I love writing it and... hope you all stay with me to see it to the end.

It'll be interesting, that's for sure. ^_^

Their path began growing steeper in the weeks to come. Bilbo... didn't bother trying to speak to Thorin anymore. He- he didn’t outright ignore him. That would have been rude. He still served him dinner when asked, still answered whatever questions were lobbied to him about supplies. But he didn’t... well. He had pretty much given up on hopes of being the dwarf’s friend. It... had been a silly notion really. The thought of a dwarven prince being cordial with a gentle-hobbit. Their ideals were different. Their experiences were different. Their lives were too dissimilar. The rest of the company had a better chance at it than he.

And Dwalin and Thorin seemed to get along just fine anyhow. The two were as brothers and really, Thorin seemed to enjoy the grunts worth of conversation that passed between them far more than any of the sad attempts he had put forth. Yes. For all of these reasons, Bilbo had given up.

Which was fine. Bofur was far more affable anyway and Balin knew about some fantastically interesting bits of history. And well- if those two were occupied, Bombur was always there for a quiet, yet snarky joke. He found his own company amongst the dwarves and he honestly had begun to get comfortable. Sleeping on the floor again, dealing with the fact that he was in fact on a journey through the wilderness.

That is... until they came to rest upon a hill- against a hill. Oh- and he had woken that time from just an inability to sleep. Bombur’s snoring- bless the dwarf’s soul was too much to bear and the boys were loud. Chattering amongst themselves by the fire they used to keep watch.

He had gotten up to stretch his legs. To perhaps gain some tranquility before attempting to submit himself to sleep again. He slid an apple to Myrtle- a beast he was quickly growing fond of and... well. That’s when it happened. A howl. A howl that sent fear striking through his heart.

He was scuttling back to the boys before the sound had even halted. “W-what was that?” He asked- heart pounding fiercely.

“Orcs.” Came the reply. Sullen. Serious.

“Orcs?!” Bilbo scurried back. He saw Thorin startle himself awake Bilbo but didn’t bother concerning himself with the dwarf. Fili was describing how numerous they could be. Kili their attack patterns. His heart was racing. He- he was scared. For perhaps the first time since setting off on this trip, he was terrified. If the orcs were coming- shouldn’t they have more people awake? Would he be able to see their shadows somewhere? Where they down on a lower level of the mountain? Or perhaps they had already begun to surround them-
“You think that’s funny?” Thorin’s voice. Strong. Angered. Bilbo hadn’t even noticed that the Dwarf had stood. But now, in the light of the fire, he could see the disgust and rage upon the dwarf’s face.” You think a night raid by Orc’s is a joke?”

He saw Kili deflate. Saw his youth painted upon his features and Bilbo’s jaw dropped. The dwarf had been joking with him! The nerve! Here he had been worried for everyone’s safety and the boys had just been playing a prank.

He couldn’t agree more with Thorin’s disgust. Thorin was right to scold his nephews the way he had. Balin really shouldn’t have needed to say a thing. But. He did. Oh~ but he did and Bilbo... suddenly found himself hearing of a battle. A battle most foul, involving the line of Duran. Involving homesick dwarves fighting for a home long lost. He spoke of death and warriors felled and the way in which Thorin’s grandfather was killed...

And then... he learned of Thorin. Of his bravery in that war and his strength in the most dire of circumstances. Tragedy- it seemed- followed the dwarf wherever he went. And still he stood strong. Still he stood bravely, eager, to reclaim a home with even less resources and dwarrows than before. Thorin- was a dwarf that had lived. A dwarf that had suffered.

And here he was... passing Thorin by with the barest of courtesies. Upset that the dwarf sought to avoid further complications to an already complicated way of life.

He felt a fool.

He felt... so very young. Honestly. To be upset at such a silly thing as... as being called on his inexperience. He’d... he’d talk to Thorin. He’d do it right then. When the dwarf eyed them all solidly, when Balin finished his speech, he... he tried gathering up his courage. He wanted to follow the dwarf. Regal as he looked. Saddened as those eyes were, he wanted to follow and apologize...

Pretend that his words would have some meaning to a prince.

Hello- Thorin. So I realize now how foolish I had been for being upset at you scoffing at my inexperience. Please, let me continue trying to become someone you might trust because obviously- I have something to offer a war ravaged man such as yourself. I- with my experience as a gentle-hobbit, know the pain of losing your grandfather to a savage and your father to madness. So- please do find it in yourself to forgive me as you obviously have no other concerns upon your mind at the moment.

He sighed and collapsed back into his bedroll. He was truly hopeless. Not only was he now too chicken to go and apologize to the dwarf- he was too strung up now to sleep it all away. He sighed dallied within his sleeping area. The rest of the dwarrows began settling for sleep. Kili and Fili were relived from guard duty, Dwalin taking over... it didn’t take long for the dwarrows to begin slipping into sleep again.

Thorin- Thorin was no longer sleeping against a rock as he had been before that story. No- the dwarf was gone. Wandering out somewhere... taking a leek... Bilbo did not know.

What he did know was that his mind had wandered far too long. Because. Well, without realizing it-Kili and Fili had surrounded him.

“Impressive- isn’t it?” That was Kili.

“Aye-“ Fili was far better at at least pretending it was a somber topic they were speaking of, “Slaying the defiling Azog.”
“Rallying broken soldiers.”

“Combating a being twice your size with naught but an oak branch for a shield.”

“I can imagine uncle’s quite difficult to approach.” Bilbo frowned as he watched Kili stroke at his non-existent beard. As if he had sense. As if he understood the way things were and as if he wasn’t mocking his uncle’s story.

“You’ve... been several days apart.” Fili. And his eyes felt as though they were piecing straight through Bilbo’s heart. Damn that there was a smart one amongst them. “We... didn’t mean to scare you earlier.”

“Or put you off.”

“Just meant a little fun is all. To get you laughing.”

“Didn’t work out so well.”

“But!” Fili glared at his brother for admitting the failure of their previous plan, “we’d still like our hand at it.”

“Aye.” Kili dropped his bedding beside Bilbo’s. Tossed his brother’s over Bilbo’s head.

“You-“ Bilbo resisted the urge to groan and settled for rubbing his eyes in frustration. “You don’t have to do that. I’m quite fine. We’re quite fine. Everything is... fine.” Suddenly- he felt tired. Well. At least the boys were good for something. “Really- I don’t need you two to babysit me. Or make me feel any better.” He straightened his back and leveled an impressively stern glare, “I can sleep alright on my own. “

“Come now Mr. Baggins.” Fili was laying out his bed but Kili- Kili’s was already down. And with it set up, he was more than primed to grab Bilbo by the shoulders and tug him into laying down with him. Cuddle with him. L-like he was some child’s toy!

“Let us listen. Let us help?” Kili pleaded. His brother lay as well and threw not only an arm, but a leg over him and his brother. H-he was squashed between two dwarves. Two princely, two handsome dwarves.

“I-I!” Kili began playfully nuzzling his head and Fili his neck and he was sure he was six shades of red by now. “Th-there’s nothing to listen to.” Bilbo sighed and succumbed to the boys attentions for a bit. “Besides... you... two must remember you’re royalty. You mustn’t-” He wiggled and tried pushing himself up- “sh-shouldn’t- blast it! Let me up!” He couldn’t move. Couldn’t budge. And for his troubles, Fili chuckled.

“So it’s a status thing?”

“No it’s...” Something like a whine escaped him. He felt so helpless like this. “It’s- just...” He groaned. “It doesn’t matter. My problems are nothing compared to his own. So I’m a virgin. I know I wouldn’t have gotten myself attached to him and that’s all that matters. I shouldn’t feel as though I ought to prove it to him- that kind of thinking is selfish and self-a-abs-sor-.“ His breath hitched.

Fili had just run a hand up his side.

“You’ve done nothing wrong.” Came the soft assurance.

And even Kili looked worried. His head came and that forehead touched his own, “There’s nothing
wrong with being a virgin Bilbo. Nothing. That’s the truth.”

He felt a tear prick at his eyes and so Bilbo forced a laugh. “Th-there’s everything wrong with it! I-if I wasn’t. If I wasn’t a virgin? Well. Throin and I would still be... and we’d be talking and behaving like civil adults and... and I probably wouldn’t be feeling this way. There’d be no problem, everything... everything would be just fine. It’s my fault. I- I was foolish to act as though I knew what I was doing.”

“How do you think anyone learns anything?” Fili squeezed his side and then.. quietly, slid his hands beneath Bilbo’s jacket. Beneath his vest. His belly was being stroked and while he should have said something... he wanted. Wanted very much to just listen. “We experience things Bilbo... Those that go forth with pride are the stout ones. The brave ones. You laid with uncle. You’ve experienced things with him. You. You were strong. You were brave. You have done no wrong.”

“Besides.” Kili ran a hand though Bilbo’s hair whilst playing with the buttons to his vest. “laying with a virgin is a pleasure. A gift.” He grinned and pecked Bilbo upon the lips. “They get to see your first reaction to another’s touch.”

He felt his cheeks light and he stumbled for words. He- Kili had just ki- “H-ha~” A shudder now. Fili’s fingers had just discovered one of his nipples. And it wasn’t like they were tugging at the nub or pinching it particularly hard. They were just... touching. Rubbing. Playing with it, them ...lightly. He squirmed and the action brought his bum closer to the elder’s front side.

He ended up grinding down and against that dwarf and earned himself quite the groan. He wanted to ask if Fili knew what he was doing- if either of them did. The-they were touching him and groping him and... oh. Oh but they knew. And Bilbo knew they knew too. Besides, Kili was horrid at feigning coyness. There was this bright beaming smile on his face as he watched Bilbo’s reactions to unbuttoning his vest.

“W-wa- now see here.” Bilbo licked his lips and pressed a hand to Kili’s chest, “Y-you two were supposed to be listening to me, n-not... “ He swallowed hard- “I- I don’t think-“

“Then don’t think Mr. Baggins.” Fili’s deep voice massaged his ear and then- oh. Said ear was now being nibbled. “Just...” He covered Bilbo’s nipples, the both of them as Kili unraveled his undershirt. As he exposed his hairless chest to the boys. “feel.”

Kili frowned but didn’t stop working on those last buttons, “Why’re you hiding them from me brother?” Last button undid and now Kili was free to reach up and tug at his brother’s wrists. “Let me see.”

“Oh no~ I know what you’d do to them.” Fili chuckled and nuzzled at Bilbo’s nape. “You’re a right demon. Can’t let you go spoiling him too soon.” Bilbo shivered at the implication, then at the upset look in Kili’s eyes.

“Brother~” A whine. Kili’s hand tangled in Fili’s hair, but it was Bilbo he kissed. Firmly too-frustration eminent as those teeth forced Bilbo’s mouth to open. Ah~ and then his lip was being sucked upon. A whimper was being unleashed from him and by Eru was he glad they were set up near Bombar.

“Such a babe.” Fili rubbed his palms over Bilbo’s nipples before letting his hands fall down his front side, “Here. Have at them then.”

Kili stopped kissing him. Pulled away with this lusty look in his eyes and Bilbo’s heart skipped a beat. That ferocity found its way to Fili and oh but he could hear it. The sounds of the boys’ lips
pressing against one another, the suction sought out, the lapping, the nibbling, the *moaning* sounded off by his ear. “H-ha~” He buried his head in the crook of Kili’s neck and tried his best to stifle a whimper as Kili pinched at one of his all too hard nipples. Thorin had reasoned that a noble, that *royalty*, sought to avoid complications. What he, what Fili and Kili were doing, now *this* would certainly be considered... *complicated*. But. But it was also natural. Also instinct. What they were doing was enjoying each other. Comforting each other. *Thorin*... was just being a right prat.

This. This was just a part of *living*. Maybe- not a part many people saw. After all, it wasn’t *every* gentle hobbit that had a prince undoing their britches. Wasn’t every Baggins’ that tried to free yet *another* prince from that lower cage. BUT. Nothing about his life since meeting these dwarrows had been normal *anyhow*. Fili was right. He oughtn’t think so much. Oughtn’t worry so much.

His pants were tugged down. A kiss lighted upon his cheek before Fili wiggled down further to coax his pants down even more. Kili nuzzled his face and flicked one of his nipples. That stubble of the younger’s against the smooth skin of his own felt... odd. But not unwelcoming. And now, Kili’s pants were undone. His hands- they were oddly steady as they drew inwards. But then- he wasn’t paying much attention to that. Not with Kili ravaging his mouth the way he was. Not with Fili- *Fili!* By Eru! The dwarf’s dick was sliding between his thighs and! He shivered and let his head fall against Kili’s arm. Fili chuckled and grabbed his hips and pulled him closer. *Closer*. His legs trembled. His dick twitched and Kili took it up. Took it with a nip to his lip. His hand was calloused. Clumsy. He began to jerk him off quickly and roughly and Bilbo gasped for it. “W-wait!” He caught Kili’s wrist. Fili was thrusting between his legs now. Kneading his stomach softly with his fingertips. It was distracting... “You... I’m not a dwarf. “

Fili’s breathy laugh sounded off by his ear whilst he took Kili up in his free hand and slowly began to tease it. To work that wetness from the tip down that rather hefty shaft. “Just... like this.”

“Yes~ do as our burglar asks.” Fili teased.

*Brother~*” Kili’s hand swept roughly between Bilbo’s leg’s, those fingertips reaching and grazing against that trapped cock.

Bilbo’s hand tightened about the younger dwarf’s dick. Kili bucked into him and then moved. Closer. Swung a leg over both he and his brother and- “Ha!” Bilbo let out a low groan. Fili reached about and pulled Kili and Bilbo’s dicks together. 

“With me boys.” Fili sounded as playful as he sounded breathless. He was stroking them, his hand guiding Bilbo’s hand as he himself *thrust* between his legs.

“F-fuck~” Bilbo felt lost. Consumed by this desire to cum. To- to have more. “I-“ His voice was broken. Whiney. Desperate. Fili was growling behind him. Kili gasping. Grunting. His hand sliding in and out from between Bilbo’s legs as he teased his brother- ERU!

“That’s it~” Kili breathed. His body was getting tighter. His heart speeding rapidly. He was close. So close. His free hand reached and grabbed and tugged harshly at Kili’s shirt and- “OH!” He stifled his cry as best as he could against Kili’s chest.

And he came. His head fell into Kili’s arm and shivered. His body releasing, his body glowing and he felt Fili still rutting against him. Felt Kili take up his slacking grip and now the brothers were working Kili’s dick together. They were moving and grinding and hot and still alive about him and he was slipping. Slipping into sleep, slipping into a bout of loneliness he didn’t expect to experience with two dwarrows surrounding him as close as physically possible.
But he was.

Then Fili was cumming. A sticky, hot mess between his legs. Kili let out a whoop of success, raspy as it was and came himself. Proud, it seemed, to have lasted longer than the others. They just laid there like that afterwards. Panting... regaining a somewhat normal heart beat... oh... Kili and Fili kissed over his shoulder. It was lazy and it was slow... it was also loud and Bilbo wondered for a second if he’d have to listen to them pleasure each other all over again before... Kili kissed him. Playfully.

Next thing he knew, his legs were being tugged open and Fili’s hand was running along and in his own cum. Bilbo shuddered. “Made a bit of a mess here. Sorry ‘bout that.”

“Ah~” Kili brought a glistening hand up and showed it to the others with a laugh. “Made a mess everywhere I think.”

Bilbo gave a moan of embarrassment and buried his head into Kili’s side. “Must you two bring up every nasty bit of what we’ve just done?”

“It’s not nasty~” Kili cried.

Fili chuckled. “We could make it nasty if you’d like.”

“Oh!” Excitement was oozing from Kili’s voice, “Another round?”

“N-no!” He smacked Kili’s chest. “That was excitement enough- thank you.”

Fili nudged his brother’s shoulder. “Grab a rag, will you?” The youngest huffed but rolled away and did himself up whilst searching for it. Bilbo was hugged closer to Fili. “That was a fine run my dear burglar.”

Bilbo groaned. “Don’t~ I don’t need to be coddled.” Fili hummed and Kili returned, kneeling and reaching to clean Bilbo off before the hobbit was able to snatch the thing away and wipe at himself. Embarrassing. But Kili settled down again beside him. Fili tucked him back in. Did him back up. And when the rag was taken to wipe at himself Fili rolled away and Kili tugged him close. “I daresay you taught us a thing or two Bilbo.”

Bilbo flushed. “I–“

“Hush now brother. I want to get some sleep in.”

Kili glared over Bilbo’s shoulder and whispered something in their native tongue. Bilbo didn’t even bother to try and understand it. Nor Fili’s response. No... he was slipping off to sleep and was quite happy for it too. It was comfortable between the boys and his body and troubles were spent.

He would apologize to Thorin in the marrow. Officially move on from all that mess.

After all.

Life was too short... to be caught up in a silly one-sided romance.
Interacting with the boys the next morning wasn't as awkward as Bilbo could have imagined. They hadn't stayed curled about him and they didn't boast nor brag about their time with him... But Bilbo couldn't meet their eyes without blushing. He felt as though everyone about them just knew that they had got on.

He was glad to see grass and lush greenery a few days later. The new scenery allowed him to turn his thoughts away from the boys. He could bury his thoughts of them and of Thorin, with ponderings over the harvest that must have been going on back home. The parties being thrown would be organized by someone else this year. And whoever it was would have an awful time pinning someone down to *cook* for everyone. Last year's feast had been a right debacle...

Balin acquiesced to his need to speak of such things and they enjoyed talking all the way until they found their place of shelter for the night- an old farmhouse. Or at least, that's what Gandalf was calling it.

All Bilbo could see was ruined wood and broken plots of land. It was very likely, in his opinion and Balin's alike, that man hadn't dwelt here recently. Bilbo secretly wondered exactly how *old* Gandalf was. And with a great deal of age in mind, why shouldn’t the wizard expect the passage of time to have ruined what must have been a happy memory?

Thorin must have stepped on his toes- for after holding council with Thorin for naught but a few minutes, the wizard *stormed* past them all. He said he needed time alone. He even began to mount his horse- how could things have possibly escalated? This quickly?

"I-is he coming back?" He asked Balin, trying his best to contain his worry. Thorin was the one to answer though, and he was not pleased. With hasty words and a loud voice, he barked out orders to set up camp and start dinner. There were none that dared question him. But Bilbo fretted. Especially after several hours had passed. There was no sign of Gandalf anywhere and the sky was getting darker. Seeing the stars had Bilbo remembering just how annoyed Gandalf had been back when Bilbo had expressed surprise over him still at work. Perhaps Gandalf really was just this sensitive. He still asked another though. Bofur, after he'd gotten through his share of food.

"Wouldn't worry about it much," Smiled Bofur, ladling soup, "He's a wizard, they're an odd bunch." He handed off the food and ushered Bilbo off to feed the boys. The two had been tasked with watching the company’s ponies… only… when Bilbo caught them-

“G- put those *back* where they were!” Kili has his back pressed against a tree. Fili was situated between his brother’s legs. A hand was stroking through Kili’s dark locks while another leisurely massaged the two of them together. The sight had Bilbo shaking, but he kept his back straight and let his indignation overpower whatever embarrassment he would have felt. The brothers jumped at the sound of his voice and obediently- Fili began tucking them away. Kili though, looked over his shoulder, eyes still somewhat clouded with desire, “*Bilbo~* where’s your sense of *adventure~*”

“Weren’t you two supposed to be keeping watch?” Bilbo snapped, striding in and handing off their food. “Honestly. Are all dwarves this bad when they’re as young as you?”
Fili snorted. "Bad? It was just a bit of touching. Really- this one was impatient, couldn’t help what happened afterwards.” He ignored the way Kili glared at him and hummed over the taste of the food Bombar had prepared. “I am glad you’ve decided to talk to us once more though.”

Kili started- as if just realizing this for himself- “That- that’s right. More than a ‘Good Morning’ or ‘how do you do’... “ He was smiling now. “Thank you Bilbo. For our food. For your company~”

To this, the hobbit sniffed. “You two.” He sighed and followed as Fili ushered them towards the ponies. Apparently, they were going to check over them as they ate.

“So then,” Fili cut in, “I suppose I ought to apologize? Did we push you as well Master Baggins?”

Bilbo scowled, “Push…” He crossed his arms. “You didn’t push. I jus-” Kili whistled low and cursed beneath his breath. His bowl was shoved into Bilbo’s chest and the dwarf was suddenly rushing towards…

An upturned tree.

A large upturned tree. Two of them actually. Side by side- Kili had only just gotten within range before he was turning and gazing about. His eyes were wide and now he was darting towards… oh. Bilbo felt this cold rush hurry up his spine- “The ponies…”

Sure enough, a bit of inspection found them shy. two ponies. They’d lost ponies.

“Uncle is going to kill us…”

“Yes-” Bilbo clutched Kili’s bowl to his chest- “It- only something very big could have upended those trees… something… possibly… very dangerous…” He took a breath and stepped backwards- “We ought to tell Thori-”

“Oh-” Fili’s hand landed on the small of his back and he ushered him forward, towards his brother, “I don’t think we need to bother uncle about this.”

Kili looked white, it was as though he’d seen a ghost. The idea of not telling Thorin seemed to inspire him a bit though, and he spoke up greedily, “That’s right! We… we have our burglar here! And you- you can figure this out! It’ll be a snap. We just…” He spun and began looking about eagerly, “we just need to find where they’ve snuck off to. Then, all you have to do is…” His gaze snapped to the side. Then he moved- as if entranced, deeper into the wood. “There’s a light!” He breathed. And they moved. Together, Closer.

Indeed- there was a light. And voices. And right then- MORE noise. All three of them hunched lower and closer to the fallen tree before them and, just as if it were called, this massive thing moved by them, there was a pony under each arm.

“A troll.” Illuminated Fili darkly.

Bilbo had to let go of the bowl he was holding, he hands, they were trembling too hard. Gods, and it seemed as though a glimpse of these things had only served to arouse the boy’s curiosities. They both slithered forward, closer to what was now clearly, a camp. All of their missing ponies were here. corralled off in a corner.

Apparently, the beasts hadn’t had time to cook them yet. Imagine that.
Beasts that preferred to cook rather than to just- "We've got to save them." Bilbo breathed. He didn't want to imagine any of their ponies dying at the hands of trolls. He may not have been very good upon them, but the mounts had served them well and had seen them through a lot.

He wanted them safe... and...

That's probably how he was tricked into going after them. Into sneaking into that camp.

He was foolish to believe that he might have developed the skills of a burglar during their stint on the road… And he had been arrogant to think that after being saved by his companions- he could have freed their ponies without any sort of retribution.

Being stung up in the air by a bunch of trolls straightened him out right quick though.

Gods- and it was embarrassing to be offered up to the dwarves as a hostage. The company had been fighting so well. They had actually looked as though they were going to win against these big lugs, but he had had to step in and make himself noticeable. He’d had to have gotten himself caught. Kili looked ready to charge. And he probably would have, if Thorin hadn't held him back...

Their weapons were thrown to the floor though. All of this hassle. All of this worry, this danger. Everyone was now being tied up... Because of him. Roasted. Because of him.

That they survived was more due to luck rather than anything else.

Bilbo had overheard the ‘turning into stone’ bit and had realized the importance of stalling for time.

It was a slim chance... but it was better than just lying about in sacks, waiting to be eaten.

So. Bilbo twisted words, and made up lies and riddled here and there. He did this all throughout the night for as long as the three dolts would listen and at last, when morning began to fall upon them... Gandalf just happened to reappear at a safe distance. With bold, certain words, he conveniently found a way to split a rock and amongst cries of terror, the rays of morning fell upon them.

The trolls turned to stone.

They were all saved… by bloody good luck.

Thorin would not look at him after that.. But he got many thanks from the others, lots of words of praise, many approving looks. He didn't feel as though he deserved any of them though. He felt miserable.

And low.

And of course, foolish.

He wasn’t feeling himself at all. That’s probably the only reason he would have entered that Troll horde. Because if he had been in his proper state of mind, the smell would have kept him from even looking it’s way.

His feet padded upon grimy floors though. Right behind Thorin and Gloin and Oin and Bofur.
There was gold and salvaged artifacts within that horde. What he found was a sword. A rather nice one at that and he'd shown it with pride to Gandalf... who looked at it with a light smile and squeezed his shoulder.

He told him that he hoped he'd never have to use it...

Those woods pushed all of the energy Bilbo had built up, right back out of him. His trembling fingers rummaged about for something to fasten the sword to his belt with... and then to his dismay, he found the next few hours in the presence of a brown wizard... And a pack of blood-thirsty orcs.

Finding Rivendell was easy after that. It's secret entrance played as a means of escape for them, from both the orc pack and their troubles of the road.

Its architecture inspired. Its scenery left him breathless. Its people made him swoon. Wow. And when they were showed to a feast straight after that... Well. It was rather difficult to process the quality of their luck. So much had been going wrong, just the night before. And now. Now all was...

Wondrous.

He let himself get swept up by the beauty that was Rivendell... He wandered around. Took in the sights. Enjoyed the serenity, and the peacefulness, and gods- the baths. For there were baths. The dwarves had yet to discover them, but that was fine, Bilbo was able to strip and sink in with an appreciative groan, into water that should not have been so warm.

This. This was... This was what his life was supposed to be about. Warm baths. Happy scenery. Buds in bloom, trees, and grass, and water and people singing...

“Rivendell...” He whispered happily, submerging himself deeper. He’d wanted a place like this to exist ever since he’d been a child. This had always been his idea of an adventure... he’d even stumbled upon it in the way he’d always wanted to. In a hole in- Bilbo laughed. Well- not in the woods perhaps... but in a hole none-the-less. He’d found this place... and yet while he was happy and relieved to finally be here he knew he could not stay.

And it was... funny. To think. That the adventure he was on now could be so very different from the one he’d dreamed of as a kid. The one he and Thorin and the company were on was dangerous. Took them across many lands and would span for many more days to come. Not to mention that this quest was with a bunch of dwarves. And a wizard. His younger self had never thought on dwarves for very long, and he had never thought a wizard would have found reason to travel with him, but here he was. And here was Gandalf and bother, but he’d even managed to find a way to tangle himself into the affairs of these dwarves.

And there was yet another adventure he’d wrapped himself up in. Love- no. not love. But... exploration? Was that the proper word for this? Awakening... the adventure of his awakening desires... oh.... No. no, no!

Bilbo let out a miserable groan and sunk deeper into his bath. Perhaps it was best not to put a name to this after all.

Ignoring Thorin seemed to be working, as was his avoidance of the brothers. Indeed- If he kept letting things slip by him, the issue would surely go away. Time was a terrific medic after all, he just needed to stand his ground. Resolutely turn his mind away from the Durin family and...

“Elrond said I might find you here.” This was said by a voice, and it was sad, and it was strong, and
it belonged... to Thorin Oakenshield.

Bilbo sunk into the water just a bit deeper at the sight of him. "Thorin!" He breathed- "Shouldn't you- why are you-" His heart clenched. Of course. He must have been here to yell at him for endangering the company! For being such a blatant fool. Perhaps he'd even kick him out of the party-

"We need to talk, and it seems as though you will find a way to avoid me if you are not properly cornered."

Bilbo's jaw dropped- "excuse- excuse me? A-Avoi- I... I have... I have not- You could have talked to me whenever you wished!" But his pounding heart was begging him to take his leave. Nude or not. He pressed his back against the stone lining the bath, “What. What ha-have you to… to say?”

Thorin leveled a stoic gaze at him, "I've spoken to Kili and Fili. They have been punished for goading you into action. “

Bilbo’s jaw dropped. The water lapping about him seemed all too loud now- in the silence that followed. “Punish? You’ve punished... them? Thorin- I was the one to step into that camp-“

“You can be persuaded to do a great many things. I believe we’ve both proven that point by now.”

The words stung deep- but they also inspired a great deal of injustice within Bilbo.

He tilted his head up and glared at the would-be-king. “Beg your pardon?”

Thorin’s hands clutched at his crossed arms all the more, but his gaze remained steady. “You’re subject to influence. That is why you allowed the boys to touch you, is it not?”

Bilbo stood quickly, “That is not why I allowed them to touch me!” He cried. “Thorin! How dare you insinuate that I am so weak in mind? That-“ his fists clenched. “that- is.. the most insulting thing I have ever heard. You take that back. You take it all back- I let the boys touch me that night because I was bloody lonely-“ His breath hitched, “and because I...” He struggled to keep his eyes locked with Thorin’s and.. found himself looking away now. “Bother- it doesn’t matter.” He laughed to himself- “It doesn’t.”

Quietly, he gathered up his bath things. He was well aware of Thorin's gaze. He just didn’t want to acknowledge it. Didn’t want to talk. Not anymore. It was pointless. Talking to Thorin about things like this was a test in futility.

When he’d gathered up all he could- he took a breath and glared over at Thorin. “I’m going to get out now. Best look away or I’m sure you’ll find some way to taint my virgin flesh.” He rolled his eyes and didn’t bother waiting for Thorin to respond.

Bilbo pulled himself up, and out, and stubbornly ignored the towel he would have used to cover his lower half. No- he just dried himself off, as quickly and mechanically as he could. There were no sounds from Thorin.

He hadn’t left…

But he also wasn’t looking.

Bilbo stopped drying himself off to frown at him, to eye the fists that Thorin held so tightly by his
sides… “You may have claims to royalty? But you are no king.” Those words forced Thorin’s eyes
up and Bilbo’s heart panged guiltily at the hurt that permeated those eyes. “You protect… while
refusing to see how much it hurts. And even though you have at your side, people willing to soothe
the pain you’ve caused? You’d cast them in the wrong. Just because you refuse to admit that you
desire me with the same fervor that I desire you. Being unable to look beyond a lack of experience,
being unable to rely on those who’d support you… being unreasonable and unjust—Thorin
Oakenshield, if you continue being this way you will never be king.”

He dropped his towel and began to dress. He half expected Thorin to object, To yell, to curse or to
banish him from the company… that is why he tried dressing quickly. But he was able to make it all
the way to buttoning up his shirt…so… Bilbo continued. Quietly. Truthfully, and with a light sigh.
“It’s a shame… because there are a lot of people… that would die just to see you become king.”

Thorin had this look in his eyes… this sad… lovely look that made it quite obvious that he not only
understood what Bilbo had said… but that he believed a good bit of it as well.

In his heart.

In his soul.

Thorin took a breath… and let his arms fall to his sides. “That mountain will be mine. Erabor will be
home to the line of Durin’s folk and I will not fail. I trust in my men. They have given me all that I
could have ever asked for. They are by my side. And I am by theirs. I am not unreasonable, nor
unjust; I look out for those in my charge. I make decisions that the others do not want to make
because I will be king. You don’t understand. You cannot understand and because of this, you. You
will stay away from my nephews.”

“What?” Bilbo’s hands fumbled upon his last button, “I- I was not the one to seek them out! By the
gods—why are you so keen on running this conversation in circles? You are hopeless!” With a huff,
Bilbo stormed past Thorin…

But the Dwarf’s heavy footsteps behind him had him growling. “What?!” He spat, turning. “What
could you possibly have to say to me now? Do you really need my word that I won’t go looking for
comfort in your nephews? Is that really any of your business? This is my body Thorin- and if I want
it touched, I will have it touched!”

“Will you?” Thorin hadn’t stopped walking and now he stood chest to chest with Bilbo. Their height
difference forced Bilbo to crane his neck to meet those eyes and he felt ridiculous doing it, but he
wouldn’t budge.

“I will. After all, hobbits have needs. “ Bilbo sneered, this was how Thorin had first captured his
attention. Months ago now, in that forest just within hearing range of the rest of the party… “We
have desires.”

The look in Thorin’s eyes told him that the dwarf remembered this well. He frowned…and Bilbo
moved his hands, tangled his fingers within the fabric upon Thorin’s chest. It was boldly that he
brought his lips up just inches from Thorin’s…

“My choice.” He breathed. And like that, he released Thorin. He didn’t even bother sparing him
another glance. He just turned and…

Walked away.
He was still trembling and stewing a good while later. Thorin’s words just kept repeating over and over again. It was maddening, irritating. He shoved a pair of doors open in a rather hasty way because of it… and was *blindsided* by what he saw moments later.

In his anger and grief he’d managed to find a *library*. An *elven* library.

His heart filled with gladness and he *wafted* inside as if carried by the wind itself. There were books lining not only the walls, but spiraling up pillars. There were also rows and rows of gigantic bookshelves. There was a huge drafting table with maps lain upon it, big wooden chairs to sit upon, water trickling serenely just outside a balcony along the east wing… “heavens… now I remember why I’d wanted to find this place so *badly.*” He was before a row of books, his fingers grazing the spines of well-weathered tomes, “such knowledge…” he held his breath as he tilted a book out towards him. Tugging it out of it’s recessed area, he carefully worked the beast of a book into his arms… and ran his hand along its cover… “it’s in Tengwar…” He breathed, “*Real* Tengwar…”

“You know of our alphabet?”

Bilbo jumped. He hadn’t heard anyone approaching. Add to that that the one to interrupt him should be the *king* of elves- he let out this odd noise in the back of his throat and clutched the book to his chest fretfully- “oh- I! I am sorry- I did not mean to intrude,” He cleared his throat and seemed right then to process the Elf’s words, “B-but yes I… “ he swallowed, “I know… a bit.”

A slim eyebrow rose and Bilbo could have sworn he saw a smile flit across the king’s face. “Self-taught then? That is most impressive. I did not think the crew of Oakenshield would have thought to bring along a scholar…”

Bilbo could feel his cheeks burn, “I… doubt they would know I held such interests…” he said wryly. He brought the book from his chest and eyed the words upon it once more, “And they have got a scribe with them-“ he shook his head, “with us.” He corrected. “Ori, the one that wears the mittens. He’s a fantastic author. And artist. He’s really talented at anything that could be considered an art really.”

He’d looked up to meet Elrond’s eyes again and was started to find a smile upon the elf’s face that was obvious and bold. Beautiful too- It was so perfect, Bilbo caught himself wondering if he were actually dreaming this encounter up. “Intriguing. And impressive that you should be so qualified to join, that you needn’t ever bring up your mental pursuits… you are a curious one, Master Baggin’s.”

Bilbo felt a bit of air get sucked from his lungs. He remembered quite *forcefully* that the king didn’t really know *why* they were here. Nor what sort of journey they were on. Worried that he may have let something slip without realizing it, Bilbo tried to turn the conversation. “Yes but I… I do know a bit. I…” He puffed his chest out a bit. “*I can speak a bit of Sindarin*…”

“Surprises upon surprises. I do not remember your kind being so unpredictable…”
Bilbo laughed- “Dw-“ his brow furrowed. He didn’t know the word for dwarrows… “I… believe they have rubbed off on me.”

More laughter followed and Bilbo was encouraged to sit with the king. To drink tea with him and talk. He seized upon the time happily and revealed in the ways Elrond would correct him and then break off into stories of the history of his own people- it was more than Bilbo could have ever asked for. In fact, he’d just about forgotten about dwarrows altogether until he and Elrond had wandered over to a balcony… a balcony that apparently overlooked his companions. He could hear their chortle’s below.

The sound made him think of Kili… then Fili and of course Thorin came right after and just like that, his mood faltered. His hands grasped onto the railing before him and he willed his eyes onto the horizon.

The sun was setting… and the way that the light played against the luminescent structures of Rivendell was… breathtaking.

“I suspect they will be missing you…” Elrond said softly.

“They?” Bilbo snorted. “I doubt they’ve even noticed I was gone.”

Elrond took hold of the rail as well. But his own grasp was light and delicate. Bilbo found himself distracted by the way they gripped at the stone, for it seemed as though the elf wasn’t touching it at all… “You do not have to continue traveling with them.” Came a quiet and gentle offer. Bilbo’s heart skipped a beat and he gazed up in wonder- “if you desired… you could find a place here.” Elrond gazed at Bilbo with a look that had him shivering, “You are welcome.. in Rivendell, Bilbo Baggins.”

“I… am honored.” Bilbo breathed, ducking his head. He couldn’t hide the smile on his face though and Elrond didn’t seem to want him to try. His hand moved- those long, lithe fingers… they hovered inches from his face. He didn’t touch Bilbo, but the gesture made him gaze upward. He was well aware of the height difference between he and Elrond, there was no way around it. But… even as he was staring up at the king, he did not feel as impaired as he had when Thorin had forced him to gaze up at him. In fact… Elrond seemed to be a very acceptable distance away. Even when that distance seemed to shorten. Even when Elrond’s face became closer… when those hands set lightly upon his shoulders and…

A kiss.

Upon his forehead. He could feel the soft, silky threads of Elrond’s hair graze against his cheeks. His breath hitched and his fingers twitched self-consciously. His heart was pounding loud enough for him to hear and he was sure he must have looked rather alarmed.

He didn’t get a chance to question Elrond though, because the boys happened upon them just then. They greeted them both cordially before Kili jumped up to sit upon the railing. “Missed you in the showers.” He stated merrily. “Found a three story fountain we did. You missed out on a fine game of chicken.”

“Ohh come off it. The only reason you say it was ‘fine’ was because you had Dwalin on your side. How is anyone supposed to win against an oaf like that?” He rolled his eyes at his brother and beamed up at Elrond, “Thanks for the food. It’s been good. The stuff poached from an animal at least.” He winked at Bilbo before leaning in and whispering- “Bifer’s trying to burn a head of greens
downstairs. Going to see if that makes it any better.” He grinned, “Want to join?”

Bilbo’s brows furrowed, “Sorry- what?”

Kili jumped from the railing and ducked under Elrond’s arm. His heat replaced Elron’s hand as the Durin threw an arm over Bilbo’s shoulders, “We’ve missed you. The lot of us. Come join us for a bit of a snack.”

“You-“

“It appears your lack of presence was not unnoticed.” Elrond was smiling down at a very flustered hobbit.

The two dwarves within the company gazed up wearily, but before they could utter a word, Bilbo huffed, “Oh-“ he slapped Kili’s chest, “Calm down. I thought we’d already established that he means you no ill will.” He took a breath and ducked from Kili’s grasp to straighten his clothing. “Elrond…” Bilbo said cordially, “Thank you. This day had been one to remember. ”I will treasure it… and appreciate the graciousness you have shared with me.” He said, bowing lightly.

Kili’s intake of breath was sharp. Fili was looking at him as though he’d sprouted another head, but Elrond remained pleased. “Of course. And I should only hope that I have more days, in which to appreciate you and your remarkable ways…”

Bilbo’s heart pattered, but he smiled and nodded and shuffled quickly out of the veranda. Kili and Fili were hot on his tail.

“What did you say to him?” Kili asked urgently-

“Never mind that- what did he say to you?” Fili interjected, pushing his brother over so that he could walk alongside Bilbo.

“It’s nothing! Don’t worry about it- I am going to sleep, thank you, good night!”

“What? No- You said you would snack with us!”

“We wanted to talk!”

“I wanted to tell you about the fountain-“

“I-“ Bilbo stopped dead in his tracks and the boys curled around him. They had these eager looks in their eyes.

“Please Bilbo. At least tell us how you came to speak that language!” Kili’s eyes were big and pleading. “At least that much? We shan’t bother you again tonight!”

Bilbo made a face and crossed his arms, “You didn’t seem very interested before… to know what I knew and didn’t know.”

“Well that was all about farming and gardening and cooking now wasn’t it?” Fili was rolling his eyes, as if he didn’t understand why Bilbo had brought such a thing up at all. “No one apart from Bombar cares about things like that. But Sindarin- now that-“
“Oh!” Bilbo huffed and pushed past the two, “But knowing the elfish language is different.” Blast these dwarves, for being so single-minded! “Well, if you must know, I grew up with a fascination for elves. I was interested in their magic and their knowledge and their beautiful ways of speech.”

Kili snorted- “Beautiful? It sounds as though they’re on shrooms. All the time.”

A frustrated noise gurgled in the back of Bilbo’s throat, “So you think I’ve been on shrooms then?” He’d reached his room. His stomach was rumbling for a snack, but his hand went to his door handle and pushed it open. “Honestly. As princes, you would think the pair of you would have a greater appreciation for different cultures.” He sniffed and stepped into his room, “Good day boys.”

“But-“

Bilbo held a hand up…

He listened with his head bowed and tilted to the side… until silence befell them and then, looked up again and nodded. “Good night.” With a light smile, he shut the door.

Rivendell was free to explore… There was breakfast in the morning to attend to of course, and the meal was always fantastic. Bilbo made sure to sit between Ori and Dwalin, just to avoid being spoken to by the boys but that didn’t stop them. Not a bit. Kili asked loudly over from across the table, just how he’d come to learn the language of the elves. There wasn’t an eye that didn’t flutter to him.

It was embarrassing- but he cleared his throat and straightened his back… and explained; for he really had no reason to be ashamed. Not of his knowledge. There were plenty of dwarves in the company that were impressed too. More questions were asked, Bilbo found himself the center of attention.

How he was able to squeeze away to explore Rivendell on his own was a mystery- but he managed it. At least, he had for a few hours before stumbling upon Elrond. The elf smiled gladly at the intrusion and they took to walking with one another.

The day after that was much the same, and the one after that as well until walks with Elrond became expected. It was wonderful, getting to practice a language he had spent so many years alone with.. It was great too- to have someone with which to converse about nature and seasons. About blooming flowers or the beauty of a crashing waterfall… He and Elrond composed poems without trying and laughed without urgency.

It was as though he had been painted into a dream… He wondered distantly if Ori would be willing to compose a picture of him in Rivendell. He’d like a physical record of his time here… in fact, he one afternoon looking for just the right spot… when Thorin wandered before him, brows furrowed.

“Is something the matter?” He asked, hands unfolding from behind his back. Without trying at all, Thorin’s presence had managed to bring tenseness back into Bilbo’s shoulder’s. “Are we leaving?”

Thorin glaring before he’d realized it… because Bilbo had the pleasure of seeing him wince and cover his own face, “No. We are not… leaving. So much as I’d like to.” He took a breath and met Bilbo with a more stoic face than before. “Elrond had finally decided to give us council. I… would appreciate it if you would join us.”
Bilbo’s jaw dropped. Just a bit. His fingers wiggled before settling before his chest—“P-pardon?” Flattered was too light a word for what he was at that moment! And then—of course, Thorin continued.

“I only ask because you know a bit of Sindarin. It would be prudent to have more than one translator at the meeting.”

Bilbo’s hand dropped and he frowned. “You want me to tell you if Elrond is disrespecting you.” He said dully—“Thorin…”

“Are you coming or not?” Bit the prince. Bilbo could only sigh and nod and it was quietly that he followed Thorin into the meeting chamber. He hadn’t known what Thorin had expected to occur during the meeting, but when Gandalf had told Thorin to show the king his map, Thorin had instantly bristled.

“This map is not for his kind.”

Gandalf growled and waved a hand, “We need someone to read that map. I thought we both agreed that lord Elrond could help us in this—”

Thorin grumbled but began to root about his robes for it.

“Thorin, no.” Balin was there as well, and he apparently hadn’t anticipated this either. Bilbo resisted the urge to roll his eyes. The map was handed over and Elrond exhibited an extraordinary amount of patience for them all.

It was quite clear that Gandalf was lying about their trip being an academic matter and the harshness with which Thorin treated Elrond when the elf had simply been commenting upon the map’s design…

Heavens. How they made it to the end of the night with that map translated was beyond him.

Should have remained beyond him…

But it didn’t. No, for after the meeting, Elrond requested that Bilbo stay for a bit longer… Buy Thorin stopped too—arms crossed as he eyed them.

“Did you have another question dear Oakenshield?” Asked Elrond. “Perhaps you have another passage in your grandfather’s tongue you’d like me to reveal for you?”

Throin growled and waved at Bilbo—“What use have you for him?”

Elrond’s brow rose, but he did not move away from Bilbo. “I simply wished to speak with him. I did not realize that his freedom to converse had been restricted by you.”

“Oh enough of this.” Bilbo said irritably. “Bother the relations between elves and dwarves, Elrond…” He sighed and looked up to his friend, “You had a question for me?”

The elf smiled delicately and turned his gaze from Thorin. “I did. Bilbo, you are aware that the moon holds a great significance to those of the elven kingdom. Nearly as much as the sun and the stars put together…”
“Well… of course. It’s one of the divine bodies…”

“Yes. And the presence of a full moon can mark the start of many things. It can also call forth all matter of celebration.” Bilbo nodded slowly. He wondered furiously if there was a feast or something of the like that had been planned, but Elrond’s hands were extending towards him. “May I?”

“What?” he blinked and peered up at him, “sorry- I don’t understand…”

“A night such as this is a wonderful time to set a memory. I am aware that your time here is limited and I…” His eyes gained a bit of a sad tint to them. One that had Bilbo turning towards him a bit more, “I wish to remember you Bilbo Baggins. Would you grant me the honor of placing a kiss upon you?”

Silence enveloped them. Elrond’s hands remained extended. Bilbo’s eyes were wide. His cheeks were flaring. He became all too aware of the fact that Thorin could still be in the room-

His eyes flickered over to where Thorin would have been…

And indeed- he was. His jaw was set and his eyes were hard but he wasn’t saying anything.

Bilbo shut his eyes… and took several deep breaths. “Thorin…” He said at last. “Would you please take your leave?”

He caught the dwarf’s eyes and watched as that face became progressively sharper. It was with a flourish that Thorin turned and stalked away. Bilbo waited until the hem of his robe had disappeared around a very far, far corner before he allowed his eyes to shut and a light curse to be uttered beneath his breath. “Elrond…” When he looked up to the elf this time, tears were threatening his eyes. It was delicately that Elrond placed his hands upon Bilbo’s shoulders.

“Worry not.” Said the king softly.

“No I-“ Bilbo shook his head and mumbled to himself. Reached up and wiped at his eyes. “It’s… silly. This is so ridiculous I-“ He sighed and righted himself. Then he gazed up into Elrond’s eyes and realized he’d forgotten what he was going to say. His mind fluttered about for a bit before finally he let out- “please.” It took a moment for him to realize what he had meant, but Elrond smiled. He understood.

And in the instant it took Bilbo to remember he’d asked for it- a pair of lips were pressing lightly upon his own. He let out a breath. A whimper. His hands caught onto Elrond’s forearms and he just… held on. The kiss was so light, it may not have been there at all… But his lips were tingling and his heart was hammering and Elrond had a very pleased look in his eyes.

Bilbo licked his lips self-consciously and when the king began to come in again for another- his heart squirmed with… fear.

But. He’d done this before. Had been afraid then too. This fear was nothing… his breath hitched before their lips touched and Elrond’s voice soothed over him sensually- “Is this much permissible?”

Bilbo held back a whine and nodded his head instead. He was rewarded with that impossible kiss… and now- Bilbo’s shoulders were being soothed. A hand was running through his hair as if it were as silky and as untangled as the elven king’s.
Their next kiss parted with another question. “Is this… also…” He paused and Bilbo gasped when that voice reappeared beside his ear- “permissible?”

“Yes~” Bilbo squeaked. A chuckle issued from the king and he nuzzled their heads together. Bilbo was pulled closer to Elrond. A hug was initiated that really… shouldn’t have been possible given their height… but it was warm and comfortable and led to another kiss… another amazingly light kiss…

He felt as though more should have come right after that… that the next one… or the next one would be deeper… but all were airy and all were teasing and the hands were nothing but soft and gentle…

Exactly the opposite of how he and Thorin had kissed… had touched… had lain together… Estë-why was he thinking of that dwarf now? Of all times.

The touch of Elrond was sweet. These kisses were kind. There would be no sneering after this. There would be no accusations. Elrond was treating him kindly, had been treating him kindly. He’d spent time with him, learned about him, asked for everything that he had been given by Bilbo…

And yet… Bilbo was missing Thorin’s kiss. He wanted to look into those eyes again- he wanted things between them to work out. To be… to mean something to a dwarf that really didn’t want to give him so much as the time of day…

Bilbo groaned and stopped the next kiss by tilting his head away- “Elrond…” He shut his eyes tightly- “I… “ And bit his lip- “Gods but I am sorry- I-“

But those hands returned to his shoulders and Elrond did not prompt an explanation. He merely let a bit of time pass before speaking up in Bilbo’s stead, “My friend… you have given me all I could have ever asked for. Do not be sorry for that.”

Bilbo was shaking. He couldn’t meet the elven king’s eyes… this made no sense. None what-so-ever. Why in all the heavens above, was his heart protesting like this? He couldn’t even swallow properly. There was this giant… lump in his throat. He was feeling foolish again, and miserable and he wanted to stay. He wanted to correct it all by letting Elrond continue. By pushing his heart to change its mind but… in the end he probably nodded to Elrond… or maybe he said something… he hurried out of there pretty quickly after that so he really couldn’t say. Couldn’t recall. Perhaps he didn’t want to recall.

What he did remember though, was making it to his room and taking several deep breaths. He thought about slumping into his bed but ended up trudging over to his own… private… window. Heavens… but he was still worked up. He wanted… He needed… and he’d just walked away from something that could have been very…

Very nice.

He shut his eyes and leaned against the window frame… he wanted to tell himself not to do it. To just… ignore it. But he couldn’t. It burned and disappointment was already nipping at him… To do this much… would be at least somewhat fair to himself.

Bilbo sighed and undid his overalls. He let them slide to his feet and kicked them away. He barely bothered with his underthings. Just let them fall as he took his cock within his hand and began to
pump.

He tried his best not to think about anyone. Not to think about Elrond and his silky locks. Not to think about those lithe fingers nor the fleeting way he felt against Bilbo. He didn’t make his gasp weaker because of it… he had… he had been planning to… tease his head softly. To trail his fingers upon his tip as though he’d never felt it before… Elrond’s touch would surly have been as light. He wouldn’t have grabbed it as Kili had. And his fingers would be soft. Like his own. Just longer. He would probably be able to…

Bilbo sped his hand and opened his eyes. He was not going to think about anyone! This was going to be quick. He was just getting himself off because needed to. But… his dick was starting to chafe. Bilbo groaned and let go of himself and searched about the dresser for something. For lotion or oil…

There was nothing, of course. Nothing to help ease his time with his hand. He’d need water… but there were no private baths here- Bilbo growled as best he could and threw himself upon his bed in frustration. He was hard… but he wasn’t producing enough to properly lubricate himself. He just wanted something quick, something to just…” he took a large breath and…

Then sat up. He spread his legs and took up his dick again. This time though, he set his hand down low and gripped tightly. If he was careful, he could work himself without forcing his skin to move too much. He just needed to keep his strokes small… “Oh…” His eyes shut and he smiled, “there… gods. Just like when Thorin-“ He moaned- a spike of pleasure had passed through him at the thought of the dwarf and he fought any thoughts him for a few seconds… before sighing and letting them through.

Thorin wouldn’t know. And it’s not as if something were going to magically happen between them anytime soon. He sped his hand and gripped the way he thought Thorin would and Bilbo twitched and whimpered and brought himself to the edge with relative ease after finally having given in.

The afterglow was shortly lived though, because though his body was sated, his thoughts kept returning to Thorin and then again to Elrond…

He was a bloody mess… and no amount of orgasms could have fixed that.

Chapter End Notes

Gotta give a shout out to my Beta- ^_^ Never had one before and now that I have evilNira going over my work and tossing about ideas with me, I'm finding it far easier to churn these things out. So- hope you enjoy.

Ah- and if you're interested in a hobbit AU? Got look up her work. I'm testing out my own editing abilities with her. ^o~
Continuing On...

Chapter by Sakaji

There was a knock on his door early the next morning. It was heavy, loud. Demanding. He rolled out of bed quickly and scurried over, worried that something may have been wrong...

But it was Thorin… And he looked more annoyed than concerned or harried…

“Y-“ Bilbo crossed his arms across his chest, well aware that his sleepwear was thin and rather see-through, “Yes? Is something… the matter?”

Thorin stared at him… then let his eyes dip to look at the rest of Bilbo… the hobbit could only shift under such a gaze- could only wait for him to get his fill before he would hear- “I wish to speak to you. Outside of the housing district. Get dressed.”

Bilbo frowned, “E- Thorin…” he honestly didn’t know what to say. The directness of dwarrows… of Thorin was really too much at times… “Why… “ He sighed and shifted his weight, “Why don’t you just… come in?” He stepped aside and motioned for the dwarf to enter.

There wasn’t a moment of hesitation. Thorin strode in and Bilbo rolled his eyes before shutting the door.

“You said no. You rejected the Elrond, king of Rivendell.” Again- straight to the point.

Bilbo’s jaw dropped- he wondered frantically if Elrond had said something… then realized that there had been a fair chance Thorin had stayed behind to wait for him… perhaps he had been about the corner? Maybe he had seen him leave, had watched him tuck himself into his room…

But why? Why would he care to do such a thing? It made no sense. Not unless… “I…” He found himself- to his own incredulity, laughing- “I cannot believe what I’m hearing. But I am, aren’t I?” He caught Thorin’s gaze and held it. It was furtive at first, cautious… then-

Then Thorin growled. “What do you think you’re hearing?”

Bilbo tutted, looking off. “That you,” He cleared his voice and shook his head, “That you heard us last night and you’re… well… jealous.” Bilbo could not hold back his laugh, despite how much it stung inside. He must have sounded manic- but he couldn’t bring himself to care. Especially not when Thorin rounded on him, eyes flaring-

“I am not jealous.” He said quickly. “He has been everything you’ve ever fantasized over, has he not?” Bilbo’s glare was just as fierce. “You speak Elvish, you have a fascination with their culture and you have been spending a lot of time with him. I wish to know why you have rejected him.”

“I don’t think that’s any of your business.” Bilbo said, though really, he felt frozen. His stomach was sinking and he had to grasp at his own arms to stop the feeling from overwhelming him. “What does it matter? You don’t know if I rejected L-Lord Elrond. I could have--”

“Do not lie to me Halfling, I know what was passed between you two.” The way Thorin spat out his words, it almost seemed personal. Had Elrond said something to Thorin about Bilbo and his time…
“You’re unbelievable,” Said Bilbo, feeling quite faint. “What would you have me say to this? That I’ve come to care for you? That I could love you?” He shook his head and took a light step back, “No… you…” he shook his head lightly- “You rejected me… so that isn’t what you want to hear.” He stared at Thorin for a bit before rocking on his heels and gazing to the ceiling- it was gorgeous and decorated, and seemed to live above all of this… drama. He wished that he could be of such a mind at the moment… but his heart was hammering and he felt quite sick. “Your nephews came to me, wanting to comfort me and I allowed it. It was sweet and kind- but you saw it as me stepping beyond my bounds. You reminded me that I am but a commoner- that I don’t even exist within the structure recognized within your race so. It can’t be that you’re imposing a dwarven law on me… why. Why then are you so curious as to what I’ve decided to do with Elrond if you are not jealous?”

Thorin strode forward, tilting his head dangerously, as if ready to strike. That’s when Bilbo saw his eyes, the bags beneath them. Hadn’t he slept?

“You are predictable. You wear your heart upon your sleeve, just like a fool, and yet while it seemed clear that you cared for this elf, you ultimately denied him. I don’t understand why you would do such a thing unless you intended at some point in time to have me or my nephews change our minds. Elrond said to me himself that you cared for me. Deeply. Perhaps more than I could have realized and that. That cannot happen.”

His heart felt tender- as if a sheet had been lifted off of it, As if it were about to be pierced. He hugged himself tightly- “Oh…” he laughed. “Oh… I am well aware of that. And so let me remind you.” Bilbo snarled- “That I… am not your concern…Stop looking into my decisions. Stop judging where my heart lies. I will not interfere with you or your quest. So stop leading me on to believe you feel a damn thing about me or my choices. I know you don’t care about me. I know you don’t care about my safety. All you care about is your bloody quest. Is about your damned gold-“

“What I care about is my people!” Thorin bellowed. “Regaining the honor long lost to us. Rallying what is left of my race against a world that doesn’t give a damn about us! You are just like all the others, you cannot understand our turmoil. Our angst. You care for yourself. You cannot understand what working for this group means and that is why you say the things you do. Why you push to be above what you are. Your blind desires will bring us all down.” He spat. “Your dreams of romance and soft beds and warm hearths- they should mean nothing when compared to regaining Erebor.”

Bilbo was shaking… “Leave.”

His voice was so soft, he couldn’t hear himself the first time. The second time though- was far more forceful- uttered through gritted teeth. “Leave Thorin.” He was angry when he met Thorin’s eyes… but Thorin caught his gaze… held it… and seemed to have found what he had wanted from his look; For his lips turned upwards into a smile and he nodded before taking his leave.

As if that was what he had wanted all along.

To shove duty and righteousness into Bilbo’s face and to have him accept it as truth. Really though, the hobbit could only feel sickness.

Because he couldn’t understand.

He didn’t even know where to begin...
He… ended up staring out from his balcony for… well. He wasn’t sure how long. It was his stomach
that eventually pulled him away… that led him to the kitchens where he munched on something…
though he couldn’t remember what.

Bilbo wandered throughout the day to various places and didn’t interact with anyone. Just let his
thoughts wander as best they could… because… well. Thorin may not have understood why he held
love and appreciation for nature or comfort… but it wasn’t as though he himself could forget… And
in fact, why couldn’t these things be important anyhow? Wasn’t being able to relax and to enjoy life
a basic need?

Of all people? Wasn’t that why everyone sought peace?

So that they could enjoy their time with loved ones? So that they could find a calm, alone or with
another, in their own beds… before their own fires… watching leaves fall… or maybe in a dwarf’s
case, diamonds chink into shape? It… didn’t make sense. Not really- that Thorin should berate him
for enjoying life when he sought the same destiny for everyone beneath him.

These were the things Bilbo was pondering when he heard Elrond’s voice, coupled with Gandalf’s.
It was evening now… and both were walking side by side seemingly unconcerned with the level of
their voices. Their topic of choice was the company’s trip to Erebor. Elrond… apparently saw it as
unwise… Gandalf saw it as a strategic move.

Bilbo really couldn’t care less. He turned to leave but-

Thorin… Thorin was standing behind him. Arms crossed, ears keen upon the conversation even as
their eyes met.

Elrond continued… and it was then that Bilbo learned of gold lust… and the way that it plagued
Thorin’s family. He felt glued- right in his spot. Felt as though he’d heard what he shouldn’t have…

Bilbo watched Gandalf and Elrond disappear up a length of stairs, speaking to one another, refuting
one another’s claims but… he wasn’t listening. Not any more… his mind was reeling…

“He will not allow us to continue.” Thorin muttered. His voice made Bilbo jump. And… it was
gingerly that he turned to look at him.

Though he could not meet his eyes.

“We’ll be taking our leave presently. Gather your things. Meet us before Bofur’s room.” Thorin
stalked off… and Bilbo swayed a bit… before hurrying off. The journey was to continue…

He’d hoped a rest in Rivendell would have allowed him to sort out his emotions. Would have left
him stable and ready to complete the rest of their journey… but now he felt as off-footed as he had
before. Worse still because there was still so much he wanted to talk to Thorin about. So much he
wanted to ask and discuss…

But instead, he gathered what he could, met at the required place… followed his companions and a
little past high noon… found himself looking back upon Rivendell with a heart that was full of
longing and thoroughly, emptied of tranquility.

Traveling without Gandalf proved to be a miserable business. The only one that seemed to know the
way forward was Balin…and he was relying on a memory that was at least a hundred years old.

Bilbo really shouldn’t have been surprised to have found himself upon the knees of a giant…

But he did.

And he nearly died.

Once- by being hurtled towards a rock face…

Then again shortly after, when he’d been dragged backwards by rock snagged on his pack. It was a miracle that he’d managed to gain a hold of the cliff and sheer luck that that rock had dislodged before the stone giant tumbled away into the gorge below.

Thorin hopped down after him. Heaved him up by his pack and shoved him towards the others.

It had been a terrifying moment to see his grip fail. His heart was still thudding, even when Thorin was up and safe and amongst them again. He had never been so happy…never been so grateful to be upon this journey with a dwarf so great…

Before words fell from Thorin’s mouth. And they were harsh and they were bitter.

Thorin claimed that Bilbo had no place amongst them. Said that he’d been lost since they’d left his house…

That was all it took for Bilbo to lose every bit of resolve he’d gathered.

They found a cave and praised it to be empty. Everyone rolled their beds out for sleep but Bilbo…

Bilbo was resolved to leave. He’d been offered a gift from Elrond, the gift of choice. What’s more-the elf would most likely understand Bilbo’s position and appreciate just how difficult Thorin was making things upon him. He’d explain everything to Gandalf later. In time….

It felt cowardly, sure. But the lack of belonging had sunken in deep. Thorin had been forced to accept him ever since they’d set out. Bilbo just hadn’t been able to accept how little the dwarf cared for or even wanted him upon this trip.

He’d underestimated the stubbornness of dwarves. They would not change. Thorin- would not change. He would never find a place for Bilbo amongst them… and Bilbo was too ill advised within their customs to help himself fit in.

So.

It was time to give up. Bilbo was a lot of things, but he wasn’t unreasonable. He wasn’t going to keep irritating Thorin.

He strapped his pack on, then his sword. He picked up his walking stick.

Rivendell was not far away, he could find the way back without harm, he was sure. But Bofur caught him- questioned him gently. He was a friend, the first beyond Balin to warm up to him, and had always seemed happy to be in his company.
“You’re homesick.” Came Bofur’s excuse when Bilbo said he needed to leave.

To that, Bilbo could only smile wanly. Shake his head- “I’m not just homesick. I don’t belong here. Everyone has made that thoroughly apparent, Thorin included.”

“I understand, Bilbo, I do--”

“No you don’t.”

“We all don’t fit in--”

“No you don’t understand Bofur. You and the others are used to this, to indifference and wandering. Never staying in one place, never belonging anywhere.” Bofur’s eyes widened and to his horror-Bilbo realized that he had taken things too far. He tried to apologize, really, he did. He hadn’t meant that to come out the way it had… but the toymaker was smiling before he could try to make a sound.

He was agreeing with him…

And wishing him the best of luck.

Bilbo wanted the ground to swallow him up. He felt… like a horrid sort of person. To say such things- and to have actually meant it…

He didn’t notice that his sword had begun to glow until Bofur’s head tilted to the side and he asked Bilbo himself.

A light growing from his sword could only mean one thing though.

And he didn’t have time to say anything about it either. No- he and Bofur could hear sand shifting about them.

He heard Thorin’s roar. He’d been awake?

The floor was suddenly swept out from under him. He and the company slid down steep and twisting tunnels… landed in a heap within some sort of trap turned upside down.

There was chaos as goblins swarmed about them. Bilbo’s panicked mind spun with Gandalf’s words- the scent of a hobbit was all but unknown-

He ducked. He tucked himself away… and that’s how he escaped the notice of all but one.

One that was fierce. One that jumped on him and bit at him and caused him to slip. To fall.

Bilbo was parted from the group. Lost and injured and scared. He’d wanted to leave. He had fancied himself to be strong enough to venture back to Rivendell… and then back home all alone… but as he watched a wretched creature scream and bash at the goblin that had fallen down the gorge with him, he knew he could not.

He wanted to be with the others again. He wanted to know they were nearby. He wanted to feel safe…

But he was not. Would not be unless he faced this danger alone. So… he forced his trembling body to move out of the safety of the mushrooms he had been buried in and followed that horridly mad
creature.

He found a ring… along the way.

Thought it may have made a good bartering chip…But a game of riddles latter had him deciding that he liked the ring too much to chance having to give it back.

It was the reason he’d lived after all. The reason he’d won the game with Golum…

And there was also the curious fact that it could be used to help make him disappear.

A truly… odd ability. One he never knew could exist.

Time seemed to slow, just a fraction when he wore it. And darkness… no longer felt like true darkness. In fact, it seemed almost comforting, while he wore it… Could have even be harkened to a companion, Bilbo thought, as he followed silently after Golum. He was lead to a passage that lit dimly with light. There was an exit!

He’d be able to escape and survive… He could even kill the beast that had threatened his own life, he’d thought about it too. It was quite clear by now that Golum would not have hesitated if he were in Bilbo’s position…

But.

Bilbo was no murderer… And he could only see wretched sadness within this being… it was not his place… and he had gotten what he’d wanted anyhow.

He jumped past Golum and hurried after the dwarves that had just rushed past. He hadn’t planned or even thought that he’d be lucky enough to see them again… but there they were. His heart bade him to follow.

It’d be rather funny to see their faces after all of this. To see their reactions when they’d learned that Bilbo had been able to survive all on his own. And besides that- he wanted to make sure they were all alright. A trip back to Rivendell would be pointless if his mind was clouded with questions about how they had fared after an event such as this.

The closer he drew though- the more worry filled the voices of his friends. His heart leapt to his throat- he’d known he was appreciated… but never so much as before they began to accuse one another of losing track of him. They sounded seriously disappointed. Frightened. For his safety. These dwarrows cared for him- no matter what Thorin said, and he cared for them as well. He ached to reveal himself but stopped cold when Thorin cut in.

“He has gone.” Said the king bitterly, sheathing his sword and turning to glare at them all in turn. “He has thought of nothing but home since he’s set off on this journey with us. Has wanted nothing more than that soft bed of his…. That larder full of food or that hearth all ablaze. He will not be joining us again- “ He rolled his eyes, “I doubt he even fell into the pit in the first place.” He waved a hand. “He is probably back in Rivendell.”

“I am not.” Bilbo slid the ring from his finger and stepped forward, out from behind a tree. There were many grateful cries of his name, as well as happy, relieved questions as to why he’d come back…For anyone could see that Bilbo was shaking and hurt and bruised everywhere. His knuckles were still bleeding, his clothes were a torn mess. He was tired and sore… Gandalf tried to calm
everyone down.

“Why does it matter? He’s back!” Claimed the wizard merrily.

“It matters.” Thorin bit, eyes unwavering from Bilbo’s figure. “I want to know- “ He looked positively confused. Angry even, that his words about the hobbit should have been proven wrong, “why did you come back?”

“Look, I know you doubt me, I know you always have,” Bilbo said sternly, voice thick with many emotions. “And what of it? So I think of my books? My armchair and my garden? See, that’s where I belong, that’s home for me.” He took a swift breath. “And that’s… why I came back ‘cause you don’t have one, a home. A place of rest, of comfort. A place to relax with family and friends. It was taken from you.” His insides churned and silence grew louder in his ears. He was no longer speaking to just Thorin, but the company. “But I will help you take it back if I can.” There wasn’t a murmur amongst them- but Bilbo could sense the way his words had touched everyone. He hadn’t truly thought about what he was going to say until he said it- and still didn’t really believe he had said it.

But he knew he’d meant every word. He wanted these dwarves to find out what was so great about having a home, what was so grand about belonging amongst your kin and friends…

Most of all, he wanted to know what that meant for the Dwarves, what a home was to them… He wished dearly to see that place with his own eyes. To see these friends of his happy and well sheltered.

And to see their leader understand that hobbit sensibilities… could mean just as much as a dwarf’s honor and purpose. He wanted to find a way to make Thorin enjoy the finer things in life.

And he wanted to know, if someday… he could show the King under the Mountain just what a good home felt like.

Maybe, he could even be a part of that home.
Their relief at finding one another and the rest they had earned for having cleared the rockiest parts of the mountain was short lived. Wargs found them. Chased them down. They were forced up trees and for the first time- Bilbo got to see a true icon of Thorin’s past.

Azog. The defiler.

The orc was larger than life. He had what seemed like an army of like-minded... things following him. And the Wargs he had in his command- they were all too happy to nip and bite at the trees that Bilbo’s company had found refuge in.

A language was being spoken by the pale orc. Bilbo could not recognize it- but Thorin seemed to know it well.

So did a great many others within the group, for there were snarls all about him. Growls of outrage.

Not that they could do anything.

Not that they could have escaped.

One by one- their trees fell to the heavy bodies of the Wargs. Tree by tree, hobbit and dwarf alike hopped… until they were pushed to the last one… at the very edge of a cliff that overlooked a fabulous gorge below.

Bilbo would not survive a fall of this magnitude.

None of them would.

The skirmish that followed was both brilliant and terrifying. Thorin had been a right fool to go charging in alone to attack Azog.

Perhaps he had been just as crazy.

Or maybe his time in the mountain had just strengthened his reserve more than he thought, for though Azog defeated Thorin easily, though there were orders being barked for the head of the dwarf to be taken, Bilbo felt determined to not let things end here. He found a way to clamber up their dangling tree.

Bilbo could do something. He could save him. Sword drawn, he charged towards the orc readying the blade at Thorin's neck.

He tackled it, stabbed at it. And when he was sure it was dead, he stumbled back and and brandished his sword in defense of Thorin.

He’d killed.

He’d murdered.
He had no time for such thoughts. His friends were dangling off of a cliff, fire was raging all around them and Thorin seemed unable to stir.

It was unfair. That he should be reminded so forcefully of his own weakness in a dire moment such as this. He needed more. They all needed more and he just wasn’t enough- they would have died if eagles hadn’t shot in out of nowhere. The aerial calvary worked as if they were a gift from the gods. They turned the tide... retrieved the lot of them.

Upon the backs of such grand eagles, Bilbo and the company found themselves whisked away… But not without the dread that their leader, clutched so delicately within enormous talons was in fact dead instead of unconscious. Bilbo clutched at massive feathers, scooting as close as he could to the edge of his mount in an effort to see Thorin.

For all his heroics, he had not been able help. He had tried, and the others would know… but Bilbo was just hoping that those attempts hadn’t been in vain.

Their time in the air was long. Several hours really, and the scenery was breath-taking. Bilbo wanted to enjoy it… but he spent most of that time getting stock of who was with them and how well they seemed to be. He couldn’t discern much. Not in the air at least, so he was lost in his own thoughts for most of the time.

The setting in of dusk was what finally shook him out of it. Colors began to retire overhead, the currents they were all traveling upon began to cool- the day was finally coming to an end... And they had managed to leave their enemy far behind. They would be safe now.

No- they were safe now.

All they had to do was land and revive Thorin and continue on this quest. Which is what they did. And what Bilbo had planned on doing…

Only that when Thorin was resuscitated- he did not press them all forward, not immediately anyway. No, he hugged Bilbo. Thorin hugged him as if he were kin… hugged him after having spouted words of praise and gratefulness upon him- it was too much. So much.

He had Bilbo’s insides feeling lighter than air.

He’d barely realized that Thorin had let him go at all… but there was a silence flitting about the group. Eyes were turning behind him and they- gods. They could see- “The lonely mountain…” Bilbo breathed. Thorin squeezed his shoulder and moved past him-as if to see it better.

They all followed… and it was a sight. Its tip was veiled in cloud… it sat far away, nestled between the valleys about them…

There was a lake and forest within their path… but it was there… and it was beautiful and it was set within the rays of a setting sun...

This journey now seemed so much more viable. They could do this. They would make it. After everything they’d been through- they had to make it. Bilbo found laughter bubbling from his lips. That laughter was soon joined by the rest of the company and they collapsed, one by one upon the carrock- chuckling and groaning and praising everything they could think of for their luck and their health.
They had lost most of their supplies within the mountain. They would be hungry in a few short hours, thirsty in even quicker time but they… had survived.

Bilbo sprawling upon the rock was a welcome relief to his feet. To his aching muscles.

He barely took stock of himself. Of his injuries. They hurt, of course. But they were nothing he couldn’t press on with. Nothing he needed to bother Oin about either.

He could hear the healer fussing over Thorin and chuckled to himself. He covered his eyes and took a deep, fruitful breath before gazing up at the sky and sighing merrily.

“Bilbo…” Bofur grunted as he came to sit beside him. His hair was a mess, his beard was tangled with pine needles and dirt. It was singed too- in several places… but the dwarf was gazing at him happily and gratefully…

Bilbo sat up quickly and looked to him- “A-about before-“ He breathed. He wanted to apologize- he did.

Really.

But Bofur laughed and reached forward and squeezed his shoulder as Thorin had. “Lad- after a stint like that you don’t have to say a thing. Thank you. For returning to us. For believing in us. “ Bofur was searching his eyes and Bilbo was trying his best not to cry. “You’re an amazing hobbit, Bilbo Baggins.” Another pat to his arm came and Bilbo was wincing. He’d apparently hurt his shoulder a bit more than he had imagined…

But Balin’s voice flooded over them, and Bilbo was eager to not gain attention. He altered that cringe to a grin and peered up to the elderly dwarf.

“Now wait a moment Mr. Baggins.” Bofur moved to his knees and tugged Bilbo’s collar to the side. Bilbo hadn’t been quick enough to hide his pain and now Bofur was hissing at what he could see.

Soon, Balin was as well. “It-“ he tried batting Bofur’s hand away, “It’s nothing.”

“That’s not nothing lad.” Said Balin. The dwarf sighed and looked about the camp. “We ought to get off this rock.” He called. “Find us some better shelter. We have wounded to tend to. Exhaustion to remedy.”

Oin muttered words of agreement and Thorin pressed a rag against the bridge of his nose. “Agreed.” He staggered to his feet, but Fili was there to help him. To straighten him. To give him something to lean against. “Someone find a way down.”

Dwalin was already standing to look but Nori spoke up from a while away. He’d found a steep set of stairs.

Climbing down them with a diminishing light and injuries all abound was difficult. Arduous… but no worse than their journey before had been. Their feet touched the ground around midnight. Everyone was exhausted but pleasantly surprised. The land about them was alight with life and food. The dwarves helped themselves to several low hanging fruits and had started a fire before Gandalf stood to address them.
“My friends, this night shall be the last night I will spend by your side.”

Bilbo straightened-eyes wide, he didn’t know where this was coming from. He’d always thought the wizard would have seen them through to the end. To hear that he’d never intended to... “Gandalf- but you can’t!”

Indeed- all dwarves stood to protest this, to offer him gold or jewels because no one wanted to face the rest of this journey without the wizard. Especially not after what they’d experienced had just days before.

But... Gandalf would not budge. This was not his journey- that was what he told them. He could do as much as secure them lodgings within the next day or so,, but that was all he would be able to do. There were matters he’d have to attend to.

The news was disheartening... But there was nothing else for it.

Spirits about camp dampened. Most of the dwarves shot off straight to bed, fastening rocks or leaves as makeshift pillows. The injured though, were called toward Oin. A check of their wounds was done quickly and wearily. The healer had no ointment upon him so there wasn't much he could do beside gauge how serious their wounds were. Once it was determined that they would not die overnight, Oin ordered them to a nearby river to wash up.

The demand was met with grumbles, sleep was upon everyone's mind... but a quick wash was necessary to limit excessive infection. Fili and Ori and Dwalin volunteered to help keep watch and assist the wounded as needed.

It should have been a somber affair, they were all quite tired... but when Bilbo saw that water he laughed. “Can’t believe it.” He breathed, his eyes shut and he took a nice big breath of that crisp river air. If there would ever be something to lift his spirits out in the middle of nowhere then this, this would certainly be it.

“Might be some fish here.” Dwalin grunted, removing his knuckle dusters.

“Oh.” Balin huffed, “Leave the hunting to the others for once. How’s your arm doing? I know there wasn’t just a few splinters that lodged into it-“

Bilbo jumped as he felt a presence slide up beside him. “You were injured?” The prince was slowly folding his fur lined cloak.

Bilbo eyed the fabric with a twinge of sadness. It was now splattered quite heavily in blood. It was also torn. And singed- Bilbo was beginning to think not a soul had escaped those trees without having been burnt in one way or another. “Mostly from the caves.” He said, shrugging. “Nothing broken though.” His eyes flicked to Thorin’s nose and the dwarf grunted.

He made an inclination with his head and Bilbo followed after him. He got to watch as Thorin set down the cloak and gingerly began to work at his vest.

It was then that Bilbo realized he was staring and... so he cleared his throat and undid the silk tie from about his neck. “What about.. you? Aside from the... nose?” He paused and peeked at Thorin, “You do know that looks ready to fall off?” Thorin snorted and instantly seemed to regret the action. His paw of a hand came to cover his nose. “S-sorry.” Bilbo cleared his throat and ducked his head sheepishly before he tried shucking his own jacket- “Not the best of times to joke I suppose.” His
coat was filthy. But he knew they wouldn’t have time for him to clean at it. He’d have to wait until they got to wherever Gandalf was going to lead them to.

“It will heal.” Said Thorin at last. And he was now carefully stretching to remove his mythril armor. Bilbo watched the sight as slyly as he could. A few feet away, he could hear Kili splashing into the water. Bofur was letting out an appreciative groan and when Bilbo looked over- he could see the toy maker’s satisfied grin as his body sunk deeper and deeper into that beautiful clear water.

Bilbo’s shirt was gone now. He was folding it when he felt the ghost of Thorin’s fingers trace along his spine. “You’re riddled with bruises and cuts. Surely something must be broken.”

The hobbit squeaked and wiggled away. His cheeks must have been alight- “Nothing I can feel. And I’m pretty sure a broken bone would hurt something fierce.” He smiled at Thorin and wandered towards the water.

Thankfully, there was a bolder within range that he was able to sit upon. From this perch, he merely had to scoop to gather water to smudge and rinse his shoulder and arm with.

“You look ridiculous.”

Bilbo’s jaw dropped and he looked to Thorin to hiss out an annoyed reply… but he could see the dwarf smiling at him, brow raised as he himself walked past Bilbo and into the water.

Naked.

As nude as he had been as a babe-

Bilbo’s next breath was so sharp, he nearly choked upon it.

“T- wh-“ But he could see it. Almost as soon as he’d thought to ask it, the sight of deep purple welts assaulted him. The entirety of Thorin’s chest and back were bruised. Specifically, in areas that Azog’s warg had grabbed him. The mythril had saved him from being pieced but not from being squeezed. There was also a nice long gash along Thorin’s arm… along a part that hadn’t been protected. “Gods- Thorin…” he gaped openly at the dwarf now- watching as he turned and submerged himself into the water backwards- “Are you sure you’re not… I don’t know, bleeding internally? Those bruises look bad-“

Thorin shrugged. “I may have bruised a few ribs...” He brought a hand up and gingerly felt at the skin- “Oin reports that nothing has been broken.” He turned those stormy blue eyes unto his arm and began to clean it carefully.

Bilbo was frowning… but really. There was nothing he could do for him. With a bit of hesitation, Bilbo returned to cleaning his own arm. Once that was done, he cleaned his feet- just to be able to stay with Thorin a bit longer.

“Thorin…” he said, after the dwarrows had dressed and they were heading back. He felt several eyes go to him… but he kept looking forward. “W-would you care to use my back tonight?” He rubbed his fingers together anxiously- before plowing on and looking to the startled prince- “I figured… I mean… I’m a bit softer than the floor… and since you’re injured…”

Balin chuckled ahead of them. He could hear Fili and Kili chattering amongst themselves- it was embarrassing. But. Completely worth the small smile that bloomed across Thorin’s face. “Your back
would be much appreciated."

The company left early the next morning. Everyone was still tired- but all were looking forward to the patronage of Gandalf’s friend.

Even more so when they discovered their landscape brightening as they approached this house. When they saw the roof- when they saw this oasis situated within a booming garden- Bilbo outright stumbled. “It- that-” he looked with disbelief to Gandalf- ‘That’s a house?’

“It is.” Gandalf eyed the home wearily… and called everyone to stop. “Now… This… acquaintance of mine. He isn’t one for strangers…”

Thorin made a noise and leaned against a tree. “Why suggest visiting him then? Gandalf- we have no time for…” He seemed to stop himself. Thorin took a breath and rubbed at his face with a heavy sigh- “what-“ he said finally. “What would you have us do?”

Gandalf had the decency to look a bit sheepish. “Well, there’s not much we’d have to do. Just… give him a bit of time to get acquainted. He- he isn’t fond of strangers because there are many that have taken advantage of his kind, and none that would have come to his aid. You see, he is a skin-changer-“

“Skin changer?” Bilbo looked about to see if anyone else understood. “S-sorry… are you saying he… what?” Bilbo crossed his arms, “is he a hunter then?”

“Heavens no! And you all-“ The wizards eyes were wide- “You all mustn’t hunt after you’re in his domain. He can be a very kind man, but he will not see reason if you kill unnecessarily.”

There were rumbles all around. Notes of worry and suspicion and a bit of confusion as well. Gandalf let them have their fill of it and patiently waited for their rabble to calm before he cleared his throat.

“Right then. You all may come… two by two. A group every thirty minutes or so. You must give him time. Bombar-“ He waved his staff lightly, “You shall have to come last. I am most sorry.”

This was how Bilbo and the company were thus introduced; Bit by bit as Gandalf weaved them into the tale of their trip thus far. It was actually quite amusing, Bilbo hadn’t realized just how clever Gandalf could be. By that afternoon, they were all inside and sitting before a gracious table of food. There was fresh honey and a variety of cheese. There were acorns and walnuts and milk and bread- and most of what they were eating was of a large sort of nature. Which meant there was so much that even a starved hobbit couldn’t make a dent.

It was wondrous. This whole place was. Cows and goats wandered about- bees the size of a first were seen buzzing about and dogs wanderer to and fro, helping to serve Bilbo and the company. No matter how great the place was though, Beorn himself was of a very slow nature. His eyes spoke of sadness. His movements seemed laced with pain and surety alike.

When he left after lunch to check the lands, Bilbo watched him go- wondering how horrid it must be like… to live in a place so big, amongst creatures and a land so rich… only to feel as Beorn looked.

Wretched and alone.

Broken.
The skin-changer had no more family. No cousins, no relatives. He doubted himself that there was a single skin-changer left in the world beside himself. And Bilbo realized he could never know how that felt. Sure- he’d lived alone for a great many years in his own home… but he’d always been surrounded. He’d never truly been alone. How… how very pampered his life had been. He’d never had to worry for swords or combat. Had never risked slavery or torture. Magical beasts hadn’t bothered to invade, other races didn’t give a second of thought towards hobbits… indeed- the Shire… almost seemed to be removed from middle earth. Even the elves, who sought to keep themselves distanced were more closely attuned with the ways of the world. With its turning tides…

“Is something on your mind?”

Thorin’s rumble of a voice sent shivers up Bilbo’s spine. Indeed- he jumped after he’d heard it and gazed back to see Thorin still sitting within Beorn’s hut, his arm being treated by Oin. “Oh I…” Bilbo shifted his weight and glanced back to the forest he’d seen Beorn disappear into. “Just… contemplating my ignorance.”

“What’d he say?” Thorin chuckled and shook his head at the dwarf- muttering something in their native tongue that had them laughing soon after.

“My boy-“ Oin called mirthfully, “That you can admit to an ounce of ignorance at your age proves just how wise you are!”

Bilbo flushed- “N-I’m serious!” He tried, “I knew nothing of the troubles of the outside world until I left my home! I’ve read-“ he waved an arm, “countless books. Learned a language I never thought I’d even need just because I had the time and never, have I heard, of the extinction of skin-changers, the abandonment of elves nor the destruction of Erabor!”

Thorin’s brows were set high upon his forehead. And what’s worse, with every event Bilbo admitted to not knowing of, his smile dropped. More. And more- until it was an outright frown.

Then a grimace.

Oin had just gave a sturdy pat to his sore shoulder…. He was done- it appeared. “Dun worry your head about things like that.” Oin said, standing with a grunt. “Things are the way they are. Fate has its role in everything and if your kind is naïve and happy well.” He fixed Bilbo with a steady eye- “You should be just as such.” The older dwarf cleared his throat then waved at Bilbo, “Come. Get that shirt off of ye. I want to see how bad that bruise of yours is. Feel any worse?”

Bilbo swallowed his protests and moved. He allowed Oin to check his injuries while Thorin hovered about to watch. When they were done with this- Oin wondered off to find the members of the party that were wounded… but too dense to have stuck around to be treated. Bilbo watched him go whilst biting at his lip.

“Men don’t often write of dwarves.”

Bilbo’s eyes darted to Thorin and his hands fisted in the shirt still sitting in his own lap.

“Dwarves don’t often write of men,” Continued Thorin, “Neither of us know much about elves and
elves record all that they see—“he rolled his eyes, “yet never share that information. The world- Mr. Baggins, is very insulated. You lot are not alone in reveling in your culture. We all enjoy our privacy.”

Bilbo snorted. “Well it doesn’t make for a very good history book.”

Thorin’s lips quirked ever so slightly. “No. I don’t suppose it does.”

With a sigh, Bilbo stood and began to don his shirt again… only Thorin was striding toward him and his hand had slipped in and onto Bilbo’s waist before the thing could be closed.

The hobbit blushed-

“You- I do not mind, Bilbo Baggins. “

Thorin was close. Very close- and Bilbo’s heart was pattering quickly. “W-well I should hope not!” Bilbo squeaked- “S-since I’ve been traveling with you and-” He swallowed and tilted his head up so that he didn’t seem quite so small.

Though he felt it. Especially with those dark, sexy eyes upon him- DEAR. But how quickly a situation could turn- “Are all hobbits as you are?”

“W- no…” Bilbo laughed. He took a step back as he coaxed his shirt up over his shoulders, “I don’t suspect I’ll be fitting again in polite hobbit culture for a good few decades now that I’ve met you lot.”

Thorin was plainly grinning now, “Is that so?”

“Yes it is. Do you have any idea how many un-hobbit like things I’ve done since we’ve started this journey? “

“I have a fair idea.”

The smirk upon Thorin’s face was making Bilbo blush. “Thorin- you’ve just gotten fixed up, surely you can’t want-“

But the dwarf was taking steps towards him and Bilbo found a gasp slipping from his lips- “Relax with me dear hobbit. You have proven yourself hearty and strong in many ways…” His fingers rose, but those gorgeous eyes remained trained on bit of shirt he’d taken between his fingers… “Wouldn’t you agree with me that you deserve a moment of respite?”

“Um…” his hand came up and over Thorin’s… “well.. yes…” His brows scrunched together. “I… had planned to…” He caught Thorin’s eyes and he could see desire there. But his hands… they slipped instead to the lowest rung and lowest button upon his shirt. His trembling fingers began to button the thing closed. “I… I think I’m going to examine the garden. It looks rather impressive, I want to see what he does to encourage his plants to grow so large.”

Thorin was frowning. His hand had fallen- but he looked confused as to why he had had to let it happen. “Gardening techniques. That is how you wish to spend your day?”

“Thorin-“ An unexpected anger had risen in his belly. He met those eyes steadily now, “What exactly did you expect me to say I wanted? You made it clear that we can’t be together, did you
It made Bilbo sour and sad—because he couldn’t just… accept those warm hands. He couldn’t pretend that it wouldn’t mean anything either. Because… they’d drawn that line. Because they had both agreed that nothing between them could end the right way.

“What would you have me say in return?” Thorin asked, arms folding as gingerly as possible. “What would change your mind?”

“Nothing.” But a peep. “You cannot—” Bilbo’s shoulders sunk. “You’re still a king, Thorin. We can’t just lie with one another like before, remember? Especially not since you know I’m a…” His eyes fluttered shut—“That part hasn’t changed.” He turned to face Thorin who was about as angry as he was saddened. “If you need to ask what I need to be able to change my mind then you really haven’t changed your mind at all.” He kept that gaze for a bit longer… before sighing and shutting his eyes.

“…I’m going now.” He muttered. And he did. He turned and walked away.

With a nice heady tent within his pants.
Thorin found his eyes during dinner that night. He kept glancing over to where Bilbo sat… but he did not say a thing. It was as if he expected Bilbo to repeal what he had said earlier that day. As if Bilbo would grin and wink and somehow appear in his bedroll that night…

A ridiculous notion that was.

And a tempting one.

But, the next morning, Bilbo awoke in his own bed. Thorin called him to breakfast- a thing he had never done before… and. Well, he had Bilbo blushing when he’d snuck a few extra slices of fruit onto his plate at the breakfast table…

He eyed the kiwi and the cantaloupe with a frown… bit his lip… then studiously worked to ignore that which was placed onto his plate.

He claimed himself full before those pieces could be touched, and it was with Bombar that they found residence. After that, Thorin seemed to stalk off in a huff. Bilbo didn’t see him until the day waned. He came in from the garden to find Thorin sitting with Balin, smoking thoughtfully.

It was a peaceful sight, Bilbo truly believed they may have been talking about their journey. Their next destination… but when he walked by, he could see no map.

And when Balin caught his eye- he could have sworn he saw a wink.

Was… no. Thorin had no reason to consult another about his relationship with Bilbo. They had nothing after all.

Such a thought seemed right crazy… but Thorin sat by him at dinner again. This time, he sat close enough for their thighs to brush. He also offered his pipe after all had finished… then he asked Bilbo to join him for a drink.

Bilbo… agreed. His goal wasn’t to disconnect from Thorin completely after all. He still wanted to be friends with Thorin. All he really had to do in a case like this was to ignore the king’s come-ons.

Just…

Alcohol went bad with Bilbo’s inhibitions. He was a giggling mess amongst the group that had formed about them. They were all telling stories now. Bofur was boasting about this girl back home. Kili was laughing hard about the way her jewelry had gotten stuck in the toymaker’s beard- “why would she have any jewelry close enough to get tangled into that?” Bilbo waved towards Bofur’s beard as he leaned and rested against Thorin’s side.

Thorin chuckled and wrapped an arm about his shoulders. It was warm and comfortable and Bilbo hummed appreciatively. Apparently.. dwarf women had beards?

“Mmm… so you all like hair… lots and lots of hair~” He grinned up at Thorin before tapping his
own cheek. “I’m pretty hairless you know~ you-“ He hiccupped and straightened. Or tried to.

He ended up falling across Thorin’s lap. His head thumped against Kili’s arm, but the archer didn’t seem to notice or care. He was too busy trying to wheedle out more details from Bofur. So Bilbo moaned and used the younger dwarf to right himself.

He let his back rest against Thorin’s chest and sleepily grabbed a paw to just… grab it. It was a Thorin paw. Comfortable. Heavy. “You shouldn’t like me if I have no hair… why are you even trying to like me?” He peered up at Thorin’s eyes … before falling into another giggling fit.

He didn’t remember how he made it to his cot that night.

But he did.

And fully clothed. Unmolested.

Gods… but he was hung-over and hard though. With a muffled groan, he rolled onto his stomach and slid a lazy hand underneath himself. Why was he so hard? He hadn’t done anything… his dreams hadn’t been anything special…

He began to kneed at himself. His face nuzzled against his pillow. This… this was nice. Slowly, he began to thrust against the bed. Yes… he could get off like this. Just… just…

There was a knock at his door and that was all Bilbo needed to lose his edge. His hand shot out from beneath himself and his pounding heart demanded that he grab for his pillow and hold it tight. “yes?!” He squeaked. The door slid open and he could hear footsteps.

“Thought you might need something.” Bofur was smiling even after Bilbo took him time turning his head to look at him. “For the headache. Not all can hold their own after rounds like you took last night.” He wiggled a large mug and set it upon Bilbo’s night table- “Family recipe. And by family, I mostly mean Bombar came up with it. And by came up with it,” He grinned and sat on the edge of Bilbo’s bed, “I mean he came up with the medicine part and I came up with the ‘taste’ alright part.”

Bilbo laughed and sat up. He was careful to keep his lower bit hidden beneath blankets, “You know, I actually feel alright?” He watched with muted pleasure as those dwarven brows lifted, “Well, I may not be able to hold my liquor, but I can certainly sleep it’s effects off.” He reached for the mug anyway, “I appreciate the thought though. And a bit of help is always welcome…”

Bofur made a noise… before he just plowed in. “So anything happened between you two last night? Finally made up?”

“What?!” Bilbo clutched at the mug dearly, “Excuse me?”

“With Thorin. The way you were hanging off him, I figured whatever row you two had had had managed to pass.” He paused. “Unless… it hasn’t. In which case, I am sorry. Didn’t mean to pry. Just asking out of curiosity.”

Bilbo smiled despite himself, “In which case, you’d most certainly be prying.” The dwarf gave an innocent shrug and Bilbo laughed. “No… I…” He gazed down at the mixture Bofur had made, “I wasn’t really hanging off of him, was I? I know I get bad when tipsy but…” He wasn’t sure why he chose that moment to look up, or even at his door…
But he had. And he found Thorin there, eyes looking upon him with intensity. His breath hitched. It took another beat for Bofur to look over and when he did he jumped from the bed and gave Thorin a quick nod. “For the head-ache.” He thrust a thumb toward Bilbo and smiled at the hobbit again. His farewell was quick and so were his feet. Now, Bilbo and Thorin were alone.

Bilbo drew his legs up and sipped from that mug before humming a “morning.”

Thorin stared for a bit longer… before tipping his head and stepping inside. “You felt unwell?”

A blush bloomed across his cheeks. “No- Bofur just thought to make some in case.” He gazed to his drink before offering it, “It’s not too bad actually. Would you like some?” Thorin shook his head and then eyed the bed he had just approached.

“May I?”

Bilbo blinked. “What? Sit? Yes…” He waved a hand and Thorin did so. Just where Bofur had been sitting. With him this close though, a thrill raced through Bilbo.

And he suddenly remembered how… hard he was.

“Is… something the matter?”

“Should there be?” Thorin looked to him, concerned and Bilbo wiggled.

“Well… you’re here. And… talking to me. That usually means… that…” Thorin’s look remained the same and so Bilbo… huffed and set the drink aside. “that I must have done something wrong. What? What is it that I managed to do last night?”

A frown came to Thorin’s face, he’d apparently been expected to remember. Which made Bilbo mad. Before the dwarf could even try speaking, he pressed on, “Dash it all- Thorin. I would not think you of all people would be one to get caught up in little mistakes. Whatever I did last night, couldn’t it behoove you to simply forget?”

The look on his face convinced him that he had been right. Thorin had been about to read into something very small, very insignificant, “I was drunk. But that hardly means that things between us could have changed. I told you before what is the matter with us. And it is certainly not that I hold no affection for you. Now.” He straightened, “Now that that’s clear, would you kindly leave? I have matters to attend to.”

“And what matters could possibly need your attention?” Groused Thorin.

“Matters of the private sort, thank you.” Sniffed Bilbo. He regretted speaking of it instantly simply because he really hadn’t meant to. He’d never told another that he was hard or that he needed time to fix it. What’s worse, Thorin wouldn’t move after that. He kept his eyes trained on Bilbo, intent on seeing what he meant.

So it was with frustration towards himself and that stubborn dwarf that Bilbo lowered his legs and waved at himself.

He saw that adam’s apple bob. Saw Thorin’s hand clench upon his own thigh.

“Well it’s not like I could very well help it.” Bilbo babbled, “I just woke up.” He twitched his nose
and motioned towards the door. “You can leave now.”

There was… this very desperately hopeful look upon Thorin’s eyes. The dwarf opened his mouth… but if he had planned to say something, he changed his mind right quick. He stood… and licked his lips. “I will guard your door.”

No more looks followed that. Thorin just… up and left.

And Bilbo felt foolish for it. He could hear Thorin settle outside. The door was closed and he was alone but… he felt even more aware than before.

Sitting on this bed and having Thorin outside waiting for him to finish… It didn’t discourage his erection- not at all… In fact… it was almost as if Thorin was inside… watching…

He wasn’t sure what he was thinking- But Bilbo found himself on his feet the next moment, wrenching open the door, grabbing a fistful of Thorin’s shirt and tugging him in. He shut the door right after and glared up at the dwarf. He.. didn’t really know what to say, because he hadn’t planned on doing this in the first place… so he just wandered back to his bed and sat.

For a while, they existed just like that. With Thorin watching Bilbo and Bilbo wondering what he should do. “If it is a personal watch you desire… I have no qualms to providing you with that.”

His voice and his words had Bilbo blushing all over again- “It’s not!” He sighed and gripped at his knees, “I just figured that this was the same as you standing outside…” Thorin said nothing to that. And Bilbo shifted under the pressure of an erection that would not wane. A bit of the fabric about him squeezed from his movement and he hissed and cursed beneath his breath and grabbed at himself. The grab evolved into him undoing the buttons keeping him in. Moving his smalls aside to allow his cock to pop out was inevitable.

Feeling his own hot erection had him hissing.

He wasn’t a young lass- he wasn’t embarrassed about what he had. But his other hand came over anyway and hid his leaking head from view. Was he really going to do this? Thorin just had to move a bit for Bilbo’s gaze to flick to him.

His mouth felt dry. The dwarf wasn’t doing anything. He was standing by the door as if Bilbo had just walked away. He wasn’t touching himself or moving any closer… he was just staring. Gods- and the feel of those eyes upon him made him harder than before. It was… this was…

Bilbo certainly hadn’t been planning to move, but his hand shifted. It stroked downwards and his whole body erupted in goosebumps.

He could feel wetness bead at the palm still covering his head.

The air grew heavy really quickly after that.

Bilbo’s hand gave a stroke upwards next. Then down. Thorin was watching in rapt attention… while Bilbo watched him through hooded eyes.

Again and again, he streaked. Pleasure was blooming now. His other hand moved away. It was so wet now, he was able to smear what had gathered along his length.
They both groaned at the sight. Gods- and was it erotic. To hear their voices chime as one. Bilbo’s hand was moving methodically. He felt like doing any more would break the spell they were both under. And he… didn’t want to do that. This felt good. This situation felt so tentative and so fresh-

His cock was leaking. Tiny moans were escaping his mouth-

There was a sound. BIlbo looked up to see that Thorin had bumped into the door. The dwarf’s hand searched behind him for a bit, almost frantic… before he located the handle- twisted- and began to slip out the door. A glance back was all he seemed capable of. Then he was gone.

Thorin could not stand to watch.

The door shut- but Bilbo was still staring at it, panting and speeding his hand. Now he could run his thumb along his tip. Now he could send his other hand in to brush against his balls. He fell back into the bed and moaned. His hips bucked. His eyes shut and he remembered how smoky those eyes had been. How lust filled they had seemed.

And also how depraved and sad they had been...

Bilbo came with a grunt. Laid there panting, feeling the relief of an afterglow fill every inch of his body…

But. When his heart started to slow, his mind was allowed to catch up with him. The situation… and the reality of what he had just done struck at Bilbo.

He groaned and covered his eyes. He’d just masturbated in front of Thorin.

Thorin Oakenshield, King under the Mountain, did not have the heart nor the volition to witness the sight!

Bilbo had… frightened him.
He found Thorin absently petting a cow when he came out. His brow was furrowed. His free hand was balled at his side… “Hey…” Bilbo scuffed his foot distractedly… “Hey- Thorin… I am sorry. I… that was inappropriate of me.” Thorin looked to him- “No Master Baggins.” Thorin took a breath and tangled his hair within the cow’s thick mane- “That was my fault. You are entirely right.”

Guilt leapt at Bilbo, “Well… yes but… I still didn’t need to… I don’t know why I-“

“Bilbo.”

And his voice was solemn enough to make the hobbit stop.

“Do not fret. It is my fault. I have given too little and asked for too much. I oughtn’t be having this dilemma at all.” He smiled wryly, “But it seems I have a measure of madness within me after all…” The prince took a breath and released Beorn’s cow from his attentions.

“Bilbo Baggins… you have impressed me. Time and time again. You have proven yourself a worthy part of this company. You are wise beyond your years, brave beyond known capacities… and you are kind. “

“Not so kind if I-“

“I only-“ Thorin cut in, “Regret that I have not thought to woo you before this. I…” He shook his head, “I even thought to attempt something lesser with you just off the Carrok… but your words… and your actions have made me realize that that cannot be all that I offer to you.”

Bilbo’s mouth shut- his eyes widened. His heart sped all over again and he stared at the dwarf- “T-Wh” he swallowed- “W-woo?” the hobbit grabbed at his tie fretfully, “Thorin-“

“I resolve to not break the expectations of my post… yet I cannot find it in myself to simply ignore you.” Thorin stepped closer- “Would you allow me… to seek a closer relation with you? To tap into the fire that dwells within your heart and to share your cunning, your spirit, your determination and your resolve?”

“Wh-“ Bilbo’s mind was spinning. “I… su-suppose that wouldn’t be bad- You.” His brows furrowed. “We’re not talking about… marriage at the end of this though, are we?” He looked away, “B-b-because if we are I… Thorin I don’t think-“

“I merely ask for a chance to be by your side. To claim you with honor ahead of the taint you of with lust. Would you… allow me this chance?”

Bilbo was nodding before he realized he’d wanted to start.

“…yes.” He breathed at last. The word made him jump a bit- and he wiggled in place, “I mean… if you… would really like to. Um… How…” His eyes shut and he sighed. “After what I just did- won’t it be a bit hard?”

He peeked at Thorin and saw a tiny smile grow upon those lips.
“It has just served as motivation, my dear hobbit.” His eyes were smiling now. Bilbo didn’t realize they could do that. But the dwarf was stepping forward and squeezing his shoulder. “There are things I must attend to then. I will take my leave now.” Thorin paused… then tilted his head and brought his lips inches from Bilbo’s forehead… “May I?”

The words were whispered… and Bilbo only gave a slight nod.

But that was enough.

Thorin pressed a kiss right over the spot Elrond had so many weeks ago… then indeed- took his leave.

Bilbo watched that back as it slipped out of Beorn’s house and he let out a noise- something faint and disbelieving before scurrying over to the kitchen. He’d make some tea. Tea would be perfect at a time like this. Tea. What sort of tea? Any sort. Why did it matter? It shouldn’t matter-

Bilbo tripped on the way up the stairs leading to the kitchen. He fell, face first and groaned as he skid just a bit. “Of all the silly…” His arms were scrapped now. Not by much- but he had splinters poking into his skin and dirt all over the front of his shirt… “Bother and blast my clumsy feet…”

“Bilbo!” Balin appeared to have hurried over at the sound. In his hand was a steaming teapot. On his face, a look of concern.

Moments later, Bilbo had spilled the entirety of his situation to Balin- excluding the time with his hand.

He needed advice and a sounding board, and Balin was the perfect choice. He’d been lucky to come upon the dwarf… for after he’d heard everything, Balin calmly refilled Bilbo’s cup and let the situation settle quietly over them. A silence like this inspired Bilbo to press on with- “I don’t know… I… am happy. That Thorin wants to…” He frowned down to his tea- “But I’m also not sure where he stands. Not really. The first time we had anything, I didn’t expect him to push me away the way that he had… this time… there isn’t much that’s different. He could do it again and…” Bilbo swallowed. “I’m not sure I could handle it if he decided that was how things would have to be.”

Balin hummed…

Bilbo’s tea swayed softly within his trembling hands. The tea leaves at the bottom were swirling about, dancing really… “I… I don’t…” His eyes shut and he sighed- “You know, I really don’t know what it takes to be courted as a dwarf?” He looked to Balin worriedly, “What if I mess this up? What- is there anything you can tell me? Is there anything I should know about?”

The elderly dwarf chuckled loudly and fondly, “Lad… our courting traditions have been passed down for ages. I am afraid though,” He inclined his head, “That they are not ones to be shared with outsiders. What Thorin does with you is private. To discuss it now would sacrifice your own privacy. We dwarrow do not revel in sharing of secrets. Should a revelation of what you two have become is spoken, then it is by your and his choice alone.” His gaze softened at the look upon Bilbo’s face. “I cannot answer those questions for you, because I am not the dwarrow in question. They lie with Thorin, my lad.” And Balin took another breath, he wanted to assist their hobbit as much as he could… but he could do no more than this. Balin sat back, “Please… understand.”

Bilbo winced. “N-’ His stomach was clenching something fierce, “No I… I understand. That… I
wouldn’t want you to go against tradition… Thorin will share those secrets with me?”

Balin nodded, “he is the only one here who can, but not out of rank rather-”

“Because he…” Wishes, in his own way, to make up for the lost time and apologize… Bilbo did not need Balin to explain. He understood and the thought had his heart fluttering. Bilbo took a breath- “But… have… has it been done? Relationships outside of the dwarven race? I am not a first in this am I? Because-“

Balin smiled. “Oh no lad. You are not the first… and I suspect you will not be the last…” A wink came after that and Bilbo flushed. Balin shared stories after that. Of loves falling in from other races. Tales both good and bad. Conversation flowed from then on and while they did get up to stretch their legs with a walk in the garden, they ended up again at the dining table for dinner. Stories were enhanced by the presence of other dwarves and the appearance of more alcohol.

Bilbo avoided drinking too much though. He was eager to listen to what the dwarves had to tell him and hoped they would let a bit of their traditional courtship habits slip in some way… or another.

They didn’t. Of course. They were far too comfortable with these stories and their details, they knew how to leave the important bits out. Rather, what surprised Bilbo that night was that Thorin sat at the table with Dwalin, Fili and Kili sitting soon after. The brothers were eyeing him curiously. Dwalin ignored him completely in favor of nudging his brother and muttering to him in low tones.

It was a bit intimidating. What had they been talking about? And so late into the night? Nearly everyone had finished eating supper already.

Thorin caught his eye and nodded to him before reaching for some food. Near Bilbo. “Has your day gone well?” He asked, beneath the din of voices about them.

“W-y-yes. It has.” Bilbo flushed bright red. Such an innocent question and yet- “Really. I… spoke quite a bit with Balin…” he paused- “A-and yours?”

“Good.” Thorin smiled. And it was such a relaxed smile, Bilbo had to return it. The dwarf nodded, as if satisfied and relaxed just a bit more in the chair beside him. He did not dig in immediately to the food before him though. No…

The dwarf hesitated… then drew from his belt a tiny yellow tulip. “For you.”

Bilbo blushed bright red. The table silenced. Eyes were upon them.

Bilbo’s fingers fumbled for that tiny stem- “Th-thank you!” He chirped. The tulip was held close and he swallowed rather thickly. “um…”

Thorin’s brow creased. “It is not too much? I am aware you are not a maiden- but because you have a garden back home I figured-“

Bilbo shook his head quickly, “N-its good.” He said. He was vaguely aware of Kili nudging Fili across the table. “Thank you…”

“It is a sign of friendship.” Thorin said, looking a bit out of his element. A few dwarves muttered to themselves and looked away but Bilbo was listening intently. “That you may invite me into the place you find comfort someday. And that we may enjoy a pipe together in peace.”
Bilbo blinked, “Why… I would invite you even without this.” But he smiled at the tulip. “Thank you… Thorin.”

He got a hum from the dwarf… and he began to eat.

Kili and Fili started scraping together plates for themselves and Dwalin resumed a conversation with his brother, stealing leftovers from his elder.

The rest of the night was uneventful… save that Bilbo borrowed a mug so that his tulip could drink while he slept.

It was a very sweet gift.

And even sweeter when he thought that Thorin had spent the day looking for it.

When he woke the next day, Bilbo spent a good long while just staring at that flower. He even touched the mug a bit, to turn it and admire it from another angle. It made his heart flutter, made him smile. He rose in significantly higher spirits that day. And greeted everyone mirthfully.

At breakfast, Thorin sat beside him, but he did not share extra food with him. Just nodded warmly to him. Bilbo almost expected him to ask for time together that day… but the boys requested it first from Bilbo and Thorin didn’t look in the least perturbed.

Bilbo refused to let a frown slip onto his face.

He told the boys ‘yes’.

They ended up showing him to a bit of garden Beorn had allowed them to harvest. It was their turn, apparently, to gather what they could and having Bilbo by their side- they now requested the proper way of doing it.

Bilbo scowled at the ripped roots and hastily tugged stems- “You lot have been doing this since we arrived? Eru- thank you.” He huffed, dropping to his knees and picking through the roots, “For actually calling me. Unlike the others, my Gods, this is such a mess!”

“Well… it’s not… too bad a thing is it?” Fili sounded confused, “Beorn said we were free to this area. And the rest of it isn’t damaged-“

“Oh yes. Not bad at all. Especially since he doesn’t need these plants to produce any more goods in the near future. It’s fine. Not like he’s a veggie eater or anything.” Bilbo tutted. There were seeds everywhere. Dead leaves and roots were covering perfectly good plants… “Well?” He said after a bit. “Get over here! Eru knows you’ll need someone with gardening expertise when you recover Erabor. May as well be you two. Come on. Kili, grab a basket. Fili, you see this-“

They worked tirelessly upon what the dwarves had ruined. There were several plants that had been too damaged to recover, but a good many were saved and from these, Bilbo gingerly lead the boys in the ways of recovering its fruit.

“So… ” Said Kili as Bilbo contemplated adding another radish to their stock. “Bilbo- is gardening
For hobbits?"

"Obviously it’s a thing." Said Fili.

"No I mean a-"

Fili snorted, “How could it not be?”

Bilbo looked up to see the brothers glaring at one another. “… is it a…” He rose a brow, “what
ting? Kili…”

The younger looked inspired, so he continued. “A thing you do with your beloved. Is this sort of
thing special?”

Bilbo flushed bright. “Wh- No- it’s gardening. ‘ He paused… then quickly looked from boy to boy-
“Why… did you two bring me out here?”

Eyes darted away from him quickly. “Fili-“

“We just wanted to know what is special to you.” Confessed Kili, giving a shrug and an apologetic
look to his brother. “We don’t know. You know. The customs of hobbits. We were curious.”

…Which really meant Thorin was curious.

Bilbo swallowed and felt at his face. It was warm. And he was… oh… my. He slumped back onto
the earth and stared at the radish he’d decided not to pluck… Thorin… was really going through
with this…

“Gardening can be special… to some people…” He said at last. “Honestly, every single Hobbit has a
garden! We’re drawn to good earth, even the Tooks!” He smiled and waved a hand, “I however,
have a gardener that tends to my own… I only deal with it when I feel like it.”

“A gardener?”

“Then you are wealthy?” Both dwarrows hurried to sit beside him.

“W-“ Bilbo made a face- and they heard a chuckle. Thorin’s shadow settled over them.

“I had wondered what was keeping all of you out so late. Now I find this area as pruned and clipped
as the gardens we walked by in the shire. You work too hard Master Baggins.”

Bilbo snorted lightly, “Or perhaps you lot don’t work enough?” He smiled and they both shared in a
laugh.

“Well. I came to tell you all that the baths have been warmed.”

Kili let out a loud and happy cry and sprung to his feet. Fili was up soon after. He was the first to
bow. Then he made Kili do it before they grabbed their gathered vegetables and fruits and hustled
away.

“The baths have been warmed.” Said Bilbo, taking the hand Thorin had offered, “I wonder why
such a thing has been done. We found it to be a great hassle but a few days ago…“
Thorin smiled broadly. “A hard day of labor deserves a kind reward.” He straightened his back a bit and looked to Bilbo carefully, “You do not have to join us if that is not your wish…”

“You mean join you.” Said Bilbo playfully. “Are you truthfully playing the innocent?”

“I will not hide the fact that I may have encouraged a few people along.” Admitted Thorin. Not an eyelash was fluttered. “Ahead of that… I believe…there are things that might be discussed?”

Bilbo bit his lip, “yes… perhaps more than a few…”

“Have you considered my proposal then?” His brows crinkled and his jaw seemed to tense. Just a bit. “In relation to… allowing me to…”

“Woo me?” Finished Bilbo. His hands sought his hips and he swallowed quite nervously. “yes. Yes I believe I have.”

“And your response?”

Bilbo hummed. Took a breath, “Well yes. Of course.” The way Thorin’s eyes lit with joy was… breath-taking to be sure. That smile upon his face, the way he surged forward and enveloped Bilbo into a hug-

It was more than Bilbo could have ever expected.

In fact- it took him quite a good while before he realized he could hug Thorin back. And when he did- he felt very small. His hands couldn’t quite make it all around Thorin’s back.

“Bilbo Baggins. This you will not regret. I promise you.”

His heart thudded. And when Thorin pulled back, that gleeful face was still there. Bilbo took a shuddering breath and gathered his courage and kissed those happy lips.

It was just a peck mind you. Not any tongue, his hands didn’t wander anywhere else. He had kissed Thorin quite chastely. The way those eyes widened though- you could pretend he had not.

“Will you have dinner with me?” Spoke Thorin breathlessly.

“Di-“ Bilbo frowned- “I thought….” He looked the king over, “Didn’t you want to bathe?”

“Oh. I do.” Thorin’s hands were regularly clenching and unclenching at his sides now, “But I thought dinner beforehand may play to your hobbit sensibilities?”

Hobbit sensibilities. Bilbo rose a brow. “Have you been speaking with Gandalf?”

Thorin laughed- as if he were letting out a breath he’d been holding- “I’ve simply been listening. “

Bilbo grinned and tried his best to squelch the signs that his insides were squirming about happily. “So you planned dinner?” He rocked on his feet. “Did you cook it as well?” He was beaming. He couldn’t help it.

“No.” Thorin sounded offended. “No. I cannot cook.”
“Doesn’t much matter.” Bilbo took Thorin’s hand into his own and tugged, “Come on then, I want to see what you’ve managed.”

But Thorin remained rooted in his spot- “It isn’t in there.”

“It… isn’t?” Bilbo looked towards the house- “But… that’s where the kitchen is…”

“The dinner isn’t in the kitchen. I planned it to be outside. You…” Thorin licked his lips testily, “You like nature and… a-and in there-“ He waved a hand, “We aren’t allowed meat.”

“M- You killed something for me?!”

Thorin growled and began striding in a different direction with Bilbo in tow, “Of course I killed for you. Skinned it and bled it as well- god knows Bombar would find any excuse under the sun to make his participation as simple as possible. As if cooking a meal is really so tiresome.”

Bilbo snickered, but he didn’t tease the dwarf. It was cute seeing him flustered like this and he wanted to continue witnessing it for as long as he could. So he sped his own steps to match Thorin’s strides and squeezed Thorin’s hand when Bombar met them a few yards away. He had been resting upon a tall bench, two picnic baskets beside him. He didn’t look at all surprised to see them. Just relieved. And he popped off with joy upon his features and presented the wicker containers to his king, “For you.” He said needlessly. There was mirth in his voice and Bilbo giggled. Thorin took them hastily. Both of them. There was no longer a hand Bilbo could hold onto, but that was fine. He rather enjoyed watching Thorin stalk away in the fashion he was. It was dramatic, over-the-top and proved exactly how far out of his way he was going for Bilbo.

They ended up walking a fair distance away from Beorn’s house. This spot was up a hill and littered with tulips and small, spritely bushes. Below- you could see the treetops of the greenwood… and beyond that? The horizon.

Bilbo didn’t expect Thorin to just drop their baskets upon the flowers before them- he’d thought he’d find a clearing. But he did- “Thorin!”

The king looked back to him, confused. “The flowers, Thorin- you just crushed them!” The dwarf grumbled something and made to pick them up- but Bilbo sighed and walked over. “Well they’re already crushed, aren’t they?” He knelt to help Thorin unload- but Thorin extended a protective arm over their goods.

“I have this.” It took him a while- but Bilbo watched Thorin set out a large cotton blanket. On both ends, he set a basket. Then from each basket emerged cheeses and fruit. Honey and bread. Meat. Of different preparations… Roasted, baked. Broiled… Bilbo’s mouth was watering in an instant.

“Thorin- it’s…” He shook his head and laughed incredulously. “Thank you. This…” He smiled and knelt beside the dwarf. His hand rested upon shoulder. “It looks amazing.”

Thorin cleared his throat- “Was that… is it too much?”

“Oh no.” Bilbo sat. “I like it. A lot.” He smiled fondly at Thorin, “Thank you.” He pecked the warrior upon the cheek and turned to the food. “Ohhh… but this looks delicious. “ He took up a bit of baked meat- the aroma was intoxicating. It had been seasoned before it was cooked. He hadn’t had food like this in a while.
Still. The first bite didn’t go to his mouth. He turned the piece of meat to Thorin and showed it off. “Open up.”

He’d never seen the King’s cheeks flush so quickly. “I wi-”

Bilbo snuck the bit in and laughed when his fingers slipped in a little as well. They were shining when he drew his fingers back, but he paid them no mind. “Good?”

A tiny- quick nod was all he received. Bilbo hummed and reached for another for himself. “Oh… I bet it is. Can’t believe he was able to find these herbs!”

He munched happily and had a few more things before realizing that Thorin wasn’t eating. “Come on now.” He waved a hand. “Eat. You didn’t bring me here to watch me gorge myself.” Thorin leaned towards some food and Bilbo filtered through the basket closest to him. It had water. This he brought out and divided between them both, filling these neat little cups Bofur had whittled for travel.

“Balin said courting amongst Dwarves isn’t really spoken of.” Said Bilbo after Thorin had finally managed to slip a few things into his mouth.

The king choked upon his food. He had to grab for water, his eyes were tearing up by the time the ordeal had passed. “You asked that of Balin?” He choked out.

“Well of course I asked.” Bilbo said, frowning. “I don’t know about dwarven customs. I don’t know much about dwarves for that matter.” The hobbit squirmed a bit, “it’s not that uncommon to look for answers when one lies in the dark.”

“Yes…” Thorin cleared his throat and eyed what was left of his water before he downed the cup and reached behind him to root about in the basket closest to him.

He had wine in there. He poured a bit in and offered it to Bilbo. “You may ask me if you have any questions. I would have gladly answered you had I known you were curious.”

“Yes well it seems as though you’re the only one I can ask anyhow.” Said Bilbo dejectedly, “Is there anything else I should know of that’s taboo to speak of with others?”

“It is not as if it is taboo… to speak of our relationship…” Thorin said with a frown. “It is asking what will grow between us that is inappropriate. Relationships vary upon the couple. So, for a dwarf to identify what is to be expected in a relationship…” His voice had risen as he spoke. The king was scowling, “It is tantamount to him claiming he knows the will of Mahal.”

“But it’s just a bit of gossip-“ Bilbo saw Thorin’s eyes widen- “Oh- I-“ he winced. “Sorry. I…” And he shook his head. “Not… ok. Not the same…” He ran a hand through his hair… “We hobbits wouldn’t know a thing about love if it wasn’t taught to us by our mothers… We also wouldn’t know how things were done at all if it wasn’t discussed between each other on warm summer nights.” He laughed skittishly, but he did not bring his eyes to meet Thorin’s, “Had you not called me aside that night.. so long ago- I would not have known men could be together at all…”

He could hear Thorin swallow thickly… “We are different. In races. In beliefs…”

Bilbo’s shoulders slumped- “We… are.”
“Normally- we would not lie with virgins at all…”


“It is not a thing only I feel strongly about. It is tradition within all dwarves.”

“Fili and Kili-“

“We also do not lie with young ones.”

Bilbo’s cheeks flushed- “I!” He wanted to cry- he looked up to try to defend himself, but Thorin was smiling lightly. He reached forward when he finally had the hobbit’s attention and poured him some more wine.

“What is between us, dear hobbit… is far from common. You are not of my people. You are not of my race. I cannot expect to hold you to my traditions.” His lips quirked. “At least not to all of them.”

Bilbo squirmed and downed the wine in his hand before shifting trembling fingers toward a bit of cheese. “Wh-what would you hold me to then?”

“To caring for me.” Said Thorin simply, “As I care for you. And to not speak of what we do very boldly.” He shifted, “Also, as consort-“

“Oh I-“ Bilbo laughed and waved a hand, “You don’t… I don’t think I need to know about that. I mean,” He grinned, “It’s not as if we’re going to get married-“

But Thorin winced and Bilbo’s stomach dropped all over again- “W-I said something. Oh…” He made a frustrated, annoyed noise- he hadn’t meant to- “I’m sorry I didn’t mean-“

“No.” Thorin drank his own wine and filled up Bilbo’s cup then his own. “I am aware things must move more cautiously with you. I… I shouldn’t expect… it is just… not usually done.”

“You don’t date… without expecting marriage to be the outcome?” Bilbo repeated.

“No… we do… court without marriage being an intention. I was willing to have us be that when this… all started.” Thorin ground his teeth together then. “Marriage is… expected when… when one is a virgin usually. You were not aware of the customs and… and I did not want to be tied down.” He exhaled shakily. “So of course, when I found out, things had to change. We court for love, for marriage when there are more than just mutual interests, when there are mutual feelings. And now…” Thorin shook his head softly, “Do you have any idea how…”

A long pause stirred Bilbo to speak- “How, what?”

“Jittery. I’ve never trembled, save for the moment Smaug destroyed Erebor.” Bilbo blinked. “My hands have not shook with a blade, for anger or upset. My body has never moved without precision, even with tragedy bearing down upon me.” Bilbo’s eyes fell to the trembling hand grasping Thorin’s wooden cup.. “You make me nervous. A feeling I had long thought ill-placed.” His eyes darted to Bilbo and the Hobbit’s eyes owled. “You make me like this.”

“I hardly ca… make you nervous? You make me nervous!” Bilbo retorted and Thorin chuckled, reaching for Bilbo’s hand.
“When I say you give me the feeling of nervousness, I mean it.”

Bilbo nodded, trying to draw his hand away, “Oh- I understand. I.” He laughed, “I’m nervous too-”

“No, no. I’m… “ Thorin’s brows furrowed, “now I curse our traditions because I should not the
dwarrow to tell you these confounded…” But Thorin took a breath- “I didn’t just stop sleeping with
you because of your virginity. Though… that was the main reason at the time.”

“At… at the time... then what is it now?”

“Whatever it is you feel, in part, I feel.”

“...Uh huh.”

“I mean, friends.” The dwarf floundered for words- “Good friends, among the Shire, are you not
able to read one another, speak a thought they had if you were friends since childhood?” Bilbo
blinked.

“Well… yes… I mean, I’ve heard of some hobbits getting along like that.” A sniff, “I’ve never been
so close to gather a friend as such…”

“Then you know of what I speak of at least. “ Thorin said eagerly, “That when they are sad, the
other feels their sadness. There is a close bond that ties the two of them.”

“Yes of course-”


“I never thought you didn’t feel-”

Thorin grunted- “No…” he rubbed at his beard and caught Bilbo’s eyes, “What do you feel? Right
now?”

“I feel confused.”

“Something stronger than that-” Thorin encouraged “Happiness, upset…” Bilbo glanced off, and
looked to the scenery.

He rooted about for what he was feeling and when all he could come up with was confused, he just
let it go. He worked to clear his mind. To take a breath. To calm the situation between them. If you
stripped everything away… then what he was feeling… right now. Was… serenity. This. This
evening was gorgeous and his company was more than a little agreeable. He was having a good
time. He was happy-

“You’re calm.” The words were spoken softly. Fondly.

“Of course I am.” Bilbo retorted with a laugh. “I’m!” But his words faded into nothingness when he
looked at Thorin. The dwarf’s hands had stopped shaking… his eyes were serene. There was no
longer turmoil bubbling behind that striking blue. Just...happiness….

“W-” Bilbo leaned closer to the dwarf, amazed. “So you’re saying you can empathize with me
better? That you can… latch onto what I’m feeling?"

Thorin’s brow furrowed. “Empathize… may be too shallow a definition. This… feeling. It goes beyond regular interactions. It makes those involved act in ways they would not otherwise. For example.” he licked his lips, “when you ran to save my life. When you knocked down that orc and killed it.”

Bilbo’s cheeks flushed- “I was acting out of- I-” He was shaking his head. “Thorin. I am not working to mislead you here. I did that because you were in danger. I did it to save you, but I did not do it because some… invisible bond urged me to leap out to save your neck-”

“But would you say that the hobbit that had left the Shire would have found the courage to do something so reckless?” Thorin was looking very fluffed. As if he knew what he was speaking of was true and right and that Bilbo only needed time to realize it for himself.

But he didn’t. Because- “Of course the Bilbo from the Shire wouldn’t have done such a thing- the Bilbo from the shire didn’t know a wit about you and certainly didn’t know a thing about danger or the horror of losing a life. I was not going to lose you. No matter how reckless or foolish that may have been. It is in you to reclaim that mountain and I intend to see that you do. You and the rest of your people. You all deserve it. And if I can help in the lea-”

A tender kiss was placed to his forehead.

Thorin was smiling. He could feel those lips against his heated skin.

But why was he smiling? He’d just disproved everything the dwarf had been saying about them being… something to one another…

H-hadn’t he?

His hair was being parted with very tender fingers. “You have not felt directly… But you have felt for me.”

“W-well I like you.” Petered out Bilbo rather pathetically…

“You…” Thorin rested his hand upon Bilbo’s shoulder. “Perhaps you will feel as I do in time. I…” He frowned. “I do not know how this sort of thing works between races… Dwarves feel it so naturally, it is just known to be a part of us. It comes as easily as Iglishmek.”

“…sorry-” Bilbo sunk- his stomach was curling rather uncomfortably, “What?”

“It.” Thorin sighed forcefully- “It’s another language we dwarves speak in. It’s non-verbal.”

“Non-verbal.” Bilbo nodded- but really, he was feeling so frustrated, it was unbearable. The more Thorin continued, the more lost he felt. The more distanced he realized he was from Thorin and who he was as a dwarf. “Thorin-”

“Th- I am sorry.” Thorin said. ‘Things… I have said that we must take this slow and yet I have pushed you past the point you could have been expected to be comfortable. I am sorry.”

He let his hand fall from Bilbo’s shoulder and settled his eyes upon the horizon.
He allowed Bilbo silence. A moment to think and process… *everything* that had been told to him… and though conversation was only tangling Bilbo up more- he *craved* it. He wanted to know. He wanted to understand.

And he didn’t want *Thorin* to get in over his head. Because… well. This ability to feel- it seemed as though it was a very precious thing to Thorin. To his culture. If he wanted *anything* with Thorin, he’d have to understand it. “So… how long… have you been… feeling. As I do? And must you automatically take on my emotions? Must you be as nervous or as confused- I-“ Bilbo moaned- “Oh *bother* this whole thing-“

“I have been feeling… you.” Thorin said uncertainly, “But I am not sure when it began. There… have been many moments of uncertainty. Many moments of confusion and… “ His head cocked, “…jealousy. I cannot say exactly when-“

“So you were jealous then?” Bilbo slipped in- suddenly very interested in all of this- “O-sorry.” He covered his mouth- “That’s a bit rude- um…”

But Thorin was smirking. “Yes, dear hobbit. You made me rather jealous. And I am ashamed to realize that it took me so long to realize what that emotion was.” The dwarf took a breath and continued on- “As for… experiencing what you feel… Well. It may be my people’s customs, but that does not mean I have shared in them often enough to be a master.” Bilbo let something out like a snort and Thorin eyed him with a smirk- but continued. “I wasn’t sure what it was, when I first chided my nephews… And I knew I felt anger when we… arrived in Rivendell by Gandalf’s meddling.”

Bilbo stifled an urge to giggle- for he knew Thorin was flummoxed by that visit and yet had gained a lot from it at the same time. He hadn’t noticed Thorin had stopped speaking until the king gave a pat to his chest.

It was almost as though he were trying to suppress a cough…

Or an urge to laugh? Could Thorin feel his inappropriate mirth?

The dwarf took another breath-“I understand that I was upset you found the Elves more interesting, and I was angry that you would just let your… body be touched.” Possessive? Thorin sounded truly upset at that. Bilbo couldn’t help but feel flattered- “At the time, I was very immature, *unthinking* in my rage. I took it out on the wrong person…” he seemed to want to reach for Bilbo’s hand- for his own left his thigh and headed in that direction… but it lost traction somewhere along the way and stopped at Thorin’s knee. “I pride myself on knowing my own nature, few things frighten me, or anger me.” Bilbo eyed him and Thorin looked off. “A *fair* few things… anger me. I did not know what had come over me. And I chose the wrong way to express that when I confronted you, cornered you.” He bowed his head, eyes flitting over his hands in thought. “I had hundreds of feelings, and I knew not which were mine, or even if they were mine, nor why I would be feeling any of them.” He rubbed his brows- at a loss then. “To be… perfectly honest, I knew they stemmed from you when we were upon the Carrock and I came to…” His jaw was tense, his eyes muddled in thought and worry…

And all Bilbo could do was stare. Because… what Thorin was describing had been fairly recent. And this whole situation was becoming so much more realistic than what he’d been thinking of before. His heart was clenching fitfully… “Sometimes, the feelings are received both ways.” Said Thorin- and Bilbo’s heart did a loop.
He himself couldn’t feel a thing, but maybe that wasn’t uncommon- he opened his mouth to express his relief… But Thorin continued with an, “If…”

“If the partner does not share those feelings of… l…” He looked pained again, was rooting for a word and Bilbo was clenching at his knees now.

“So…” He prompted breathlessly.

“Hmm, love for the other. They would not feel.” Bilbo’s face fell. He knew it must have, because his stomach felt as though it had settled somewhere near his gut.

Thankfully… Thorin’s hand settled over his own. His other touched at his heart- “Do not worry so.” Said Thorin. “If it is not being able to feel that has gotten you like this, then take comfort in the fact that I am as worried as you… and what you feel… is likely a combination of the both of us.”

Bilbo’s brows furrowed- “I would love to think this worry is from two rather than one…” he was shaking his head, “But Thorin-”

“I felt you.” Insisted the dwarf. “Right here. For just a moment.” He tapped at Bilbo’s heart.

“You needn’t believe me… if you cannot find it in yourself to trust me, I would understand.” His hand fell from Bilbo’s chest-

“I did not confront you earlier because I was… unsure where we would stand… even now, I do not know how badly my rudeness has affected our relationship.”

Bilbo gazed down at that fallen hand… his throat felt tight… so he swallowed. “You know then, about being rude?” Thorin’s brow skipped up high.

“It was with a courage Bilbo hadn’t known he had that he laughed then- “You’ll make a decent gentle-dwarf.” Thorin snorted, bowing his head once more.

“Truly?”

“You know that rudeness has lasting effects.” Bilbo nibbled upon his bottom lip and encased the hand Thorin had used to cover his own… with another. “I’ll admit, Hobbits do not have so many… rules about courting. Obviously marriage is another deal entirely but…” he waved a hand… but his attempt to be flippant, so soon after being riled was for naught. His fingers began to shake and then, to his amazement, he saw Thorin’s do the same.

He took a breath… and worked to calm himself.

He didn’t think anything would happen… But Thorin’s hands ceased his trembling just as his own did… He let out a marveling breath- “I don’t know if I will get used to this.”

“Imagine then-” Thorin sighed. “How I feel.” They laughed and Thorin stroked his hand. “I will not hold any of my people’s customs above your head.” Sincerity was lining every word… Bilbo felt… taken care of. Pampered even- “Should it come up, I will… do what I can to answer your questions.”

“Like the Prince-Consort thing?” Thorin’s cheeks enflamed.

“Y-Yes like that.” Bilbo was beaming, wiggling really. “That is what my people will see you as,
regardless if an announcement has been made.”

“I thought you were a private people?”

“That is just what they would assume. They would treat you as such…” Bilbo bit his tongue- he wanted to tease Thorin on that- but sensed the dwarf had more to say.

Indeed- after staring at their hands for a bit longer, Thorin looked off to the horizon. “I do not have control over this relationship, it must be made up by the both of us. And…” he chewed his lip. “I will wait for your answer, whatever it happens to be. I have… tried to make my intentions clear.” A swallow. “I will have you in whatever capacity you will offer me.”

“And is that a Dwarven custom, to wait?”

“No.” Thorin stated grimly. “I will, however wait. It is our choice, not one, or the other. It’s all overwhelming, I am sure, hearing this, then recalling what insensible things I’ve uttered and rehashing my unbecoming behavior…”

“You’re ranting.”

“You’re making me do it.” Thorin huffed, and Bilbo laughed, moving then to gather their things up, the food they hadn’t eaten.

“Then maybe a hot bath will settle everything else between us?”

Thorin chuckled. Soon, there were two hands working side by side to gather a feast they’d both enjoyed.
Getting Wet

They left their baskets by Beorn’s front door. Padded off to the bath. They had spoken lightly on the way home; of the thing between them, of links and relationships… There were many things to ask of. Bilbo had never noticed any of these things before. He didn’t want to seem suspicious, but he couldn’t right help it. What Thorin kept describing sounded so fantastical, Bilbo was sure he ought to have heard of it before. Sure he should have caught wind of it, or stumbled across it or… or something.

Then on the opposite spectrum, his questions flowed as he ran through what he and Thorin had done. What may have been stepping over the line, what hadn’t been stepping over the line. What could have meant more, what might not have mattered- it was like discovering that he’d lived his whole life not knowing you could eat. And everyone in the world had already eaten and knew what eating was about…. But you didn’t... And bother if he couldn’t make up a metaphor for it. There was just so much to learn of it. His head was properly spinning.

Which may have been making Thorin’s head spin.

He wasn’t sure of that either.

When they stepped into the bathhouse, Bilbo was stricken by how warm the air was. “Oughtn’t they all have finished already?” He asked, looking about the darkened room in surprise. “Why is it still so warm in here?”

Thorin cleared his throat and moved to light the candles within. “I may have given orders to keep the fire going.”

“For this long?” Bilbo peeped- “Thorin. We’ve been out for hours!”

Another light flickered on and…

Oh.

In the water- with hair slicked back and huge eyes peering up at them… the boys.

Fili.

Kili.

“W-water’s warm uncle!” Fili smacked his brother over the head for that and bowed his own to Thorin.

“We’ll be taking our leave now.” And they both sloshed on shore. Nude- h-ha-hard-

Bilbo averted his eyes with hitch of his breath. He even took several steps away from the door so that they could get through.

When he was sure they had left he- he ran a hand over his face and groaned lightly. “The things I have seen…”
“You are not as traumatized as you look.” Thorin set down the flint he’d been using and worked off his belt. “You are truly someone unique, Master Bilbo. To hold yourself so true to your proprieties in voice- while in mind…”

“Y-I can’t believe you!” Stammered Bilbo. “Saying such a thing to me when you yourself are disrobing before a virgin.”

Thorin froze. “You’ve gotten naked a dozen times in front of me in fact. Never caring for my eyes. If my mind has been soiled- then yours must be intolerable.”

“F-forgive-“ His other hand sped to grab at the heavy pewter clasp that had fallen near his hip. He seemed intent to clip it back on-

But Bilbo laughed merrily and waved a hand. “I am joking of course.” He bit his lip and smiled as Thorin’s annoyance bloomed upon his face. “Come now Thorin- let me have my fun. You’ve done much worse to me anyhow.” He wandered over to the pool, “It would be silly of me to get upset over you being naked in front of me when you’ve already…” He stopped then… and looked over his shoulder curiously at the king, “held me in your mouth… um… Thorin… how… is this going to work with us? I mean… we’ve already…”

He waved his hand, as if that would have inspired Thorin to talk… but the dwarf only made a noise in the back of his throat. “No- Now I’m serious.” Bilbo said, setting his hands upon his hips. “Since we’ve already seen each other and… t-touched…” His eyes darted away at that. And a blush he hadn’t thought would reappear… did. “H-how ought we carry on?”

“I suspect.” Thorin’s head tilted, “that would depend on you dear burglar.” The king took a breath and watched him for a bit longer before working off his shoes.

“On me.” Bilbo laughed- “And how am I supposed to know what comes next?”

“I will not be pushing you as I have in the past.” Said Thorin resolutely. “I intend to treat you with the respect you deserve.”

The hobbit stared at Thorin. His heart was thumping loudly in his chest- respect. “Th-then bathing is out of the question then? Since we’ll both be naked?”

Thorin stopped in removing his shoes and looked to Bilbo sincerely. “If that is what you wish.” But he did not make to put the shoe on.

It was as if he knew Bilbo was testing the waters.

And it made him antsy and huffy. “Oh- fine.” He strode a few feet away, “There will be no looking however. Not while I undress.”

“I would not dream of it.” He sounded amused. And indeed, when Bilbo looked over his shoulder, he could see the dwarf’s head tilted away, eyes shut and an obliging smile upon his face as he waited.

“Prat.”

Bilbo undid his clothes quickly before slipping into the water. The feel of its warmth against his exhausted skin felt- “Oh… oh this is… amazing…” He cooed, sinking in a little deeper.
“Have you finished?”

Bilbo swayed towards Thorin’s end of the pool and smiled at those obediently closed eyes. “With my bath?”

“Getting undressed!”

“Oh.” Bilbo played with the water a bit. “I think not.” It was funny. Bilbo wasn’t sure exactly where it was his confidence spouted from… only that it did not dissipate in the least when he found Thorin had kept his eyes closed even after it had become apparent the hobbit was teasing him.

His felt a sort of mischievousness light within him.

As quietly as he could- he pulled himself from the bath…

Crawled towards Thorin-

“I… would enjoy being able to bathe tonight.” Said the dwarf with a noted strain to his voice.

Bilbo grinned and reached out a wet hand to brush some of Thorin’s hair apart from his face-. Thorin’s eyes fluttered open, startled. But Bilbo had already moved in. He kissed Thorin’s cheek sweetly. “I’m sure you would. It’s rather warm in there. Very comfortable.”

Thorin’s eyes were wide. His whole body had tensed, he seemed to be fighting to not look down.

Bilbo grinned impishly. When he sat back, he made sure his hands shielded himself from Thorin’s view.

He felt… skittish. Of course. And bits of him may have been trembling, but somehow, it felt right to play with Thorin like this. “Yet no matter what words I have said and how eager you said you were for a bath, you do not seem to be moving.” Oh- he was aware the way those eyes were desperately trying to soak up every bit of Bilbo that they could. Here, they would dart. Then there. Always to his face- as if to ask permission- then quickly to his heat.

As if he’d see a thing.

Bilbo’s words only seemed to kick in after a few moments.

Then Thorin was set on undressing. He’d stood. Was undoing his belt buckle with shaking hands, shrugging off his overcoat, working his shirt off-

That’s when Bilbo slipped back into the pool.

He may have been daring enough to have come out when the dwarf’s eyes had been closed- but he knew for certain he’d not be able to return with a dwarf as nude and as attractive as Thorin without making a proper fool of himself.

He waited for Thorin from the safety of warmed waters.

And busied himself with eyeing the tree trying to burst its way in through the ceiling. Eventually, Thorin finished and splashed into the water himself. He did not draw close though. He remained such a distance away that Bilbo looked to see what was keeping him.
Thorin was undoing his braids. Setting the clasps upon the ledge behind him.

After that had been done, he unbraided his hair with deft fingers and plunged under water to wet the entirety of his head.

A wet Thorin- was a dwarf that had Bilbo’s mouth go dry. His cheeks were flushed in an instant and his eyes were fluttering upon every shining detail he could take in. He remembered those muscles. Of course he did. And now they were feet away from him. Relaxed… warm…. And when Thorin’s arms raised to run through his hair every now and again he could even see a bit of nipp-

Thorin grunted and peeked open an eye to gaze at him. “Perhaps we ought to continue our talks about what is between us?”

“Wh-“ Bilbo squirmed. “Oh I. I think I understand. A-at least enough to last me through the night.”

This earned him a smile from Thorin, “Dear hobbit, I do not believe you do… had you…” He licked his lips slowly, “Had you had a proper understanding, you would know just how tempting your lust is making you right now.”

“My l-lust?” Bilbo sputtered. “I have no- I’m not-“ Though the quirk of that brow insisted that he shut his mouth. He’d been found out.

And through his own fault- he- “W-wait. You can feel it when I get-“ He swallowed thickly and breathed a horrified, “No… You can’t. Th-that’s mortifying!” He slapped some water in the dwarf’s direction. “You’re lying. Trying to rile me up!”

Thorin’s smile had extended to a grin now. He was easing forward with this playful glint in his eyes that had all of Bilbo’s thoughts and feelings going haywire. “You are!” He accused again! “You terrible thing! You’re working to fluster me! Telling me you can feel when I- W-when I-“ He huffed and resolutely stood his ground, “You will not rile me Thorin.”

But the prince said nothing. Only stopped when he was a foot from Bilbo and… and then he begun to act coy. Into his massive hands, he gathered a bit of water… and carefully trickled it over Bilbo’s head and into his curly locks. “I did not intent to… rile you.” Said Thorin silkily. “Just to warn…”

His voice was rough. Had it been rough before? This deep and grating?

Bilbo set his hands up to ruffle his own hair- “To warn me. Ha! Better to warn me of you and your wily ways-“

“Says the hobbit that kissed me out of water.” Said Thorin easily. But he took a breath and shut his eyes. He appeared to be working to gather himself.

Bilbo watched the scene with wide eyes… “You aren’t. you can’t really… feel…” his eyes flickered to the water. As if it would reveal what he expected. Thorin only hummed and stepped back. Water crested along his back at the movement and slid lazily up… then down Thorin’s arms…

The sight was mesmerizing.

Bilbo licked at his lips and Thorin groaned- “Bilbo- perhaps it is you that should turn away?” His
eyes were smiling when he opened them though. It struck Bilbo that he hadn’t seen the dwarf this happy in…

Well.

Ever. Really.

Was he… was he flattered that Bilbo couldn’t tear his eyes away? That he was getting aroused over him?! “A-am I really making this difficult on you?”

“Most difficult.” Confirmed Thorin.

“A… mmm…” he played with his own fingers… then brought them above the water to swat at the water nervously… “Ok… um.. is there anything I can do to help you… not feel it?”

“If our minds were of the same thought- it would make this entirely easier on me.” Breathed Thorin.

“The… same thought. And that would be-”

“Something-“ Thorin cleared his throat and moved backwards again, “Something I do not wish to press at the moment.

Bilbo rose a brow… “Right. So… What I’m hearing… is that this bath was a really bad idea.” He was struck by a thought and perked- “How did you escape from this trouble yesterday? Better yet, how did you not feel that I was… erm…” He waved a hand… “a-aroused?”

Thorin looked uncomfortable. He tried to school his face… but it really didn’t work. “I… may have had an inkling…”

“W-that’s just silly.” Said Bilbo easily. “Why would you come into my room to visit me when you knew I was wound up and har-“ His breath hitched. He searched Thorin’s face and what he saw made him gasp. “You knew.” He accused breathlessly. “You knew I was hard!” He splashed water at the dwarf- “You’d hoped I would have invited you!”

Thorin winced. “A slim chance.” He agreed.

Bilbo huffed and strode forward and flung more water at the prince. “You nasty, you perverted King of a dwarf!” They stood less than a foot away from each other.

Yet again.

“Why did you leave if you knew what I felt?”

Thorin looked confused…. He. He actually hesitated in responding to Bilbo. As if he thought the question itself was a trap- “You did not want me there.” He said slowly… “And I hadn’t shown my resolve to you before that anyhow… Me arriving at your door was…” He shook his head, “Foolish of me. It was also instinctual… but I should have known to keep back. Mahal-“ He ran a hand through his hair, “When you started getting lost in it- I… it was completely… and utterly overwhelming… unlike anything I had ever experienced before. I felt as though I may have assaulted you then and there had I not taken my leave.”

“Assaulted me. As in…”
“Pressed your body to the bed with the weight of my own. I would have hiked those legs of yours to my waist, kissed you deeply and madly. So hard and so feverishly, you would feel what I felt. And then I would rut against you- fully clad so that you knew how much I needed you. I would have fondled you dearly. Felt that heat within my own palm and stroked at it.” Thorin licked his lips, “I would have had you keening before your pants had even been properly removed.”

Bilbo gawked. Oh. His body.. it had found a way to get hotter. “Y-you wouldn’t have…” But he had swum forward just a bit… and Thorin had just a bit… and their fingers brushed underwater. Laced together. Thorin brought a hand up to tease at Bilbo’s neck. To brush at it lightly and tenderly…

“I couldn’t have.” Corrected Thorin. His eyes were still boring into Bilbo’s. “You made me realize in that instant- that whatever I did… It could not be just a single round. Virgin or not.” He added quickly. “You deserve more than that…”

Bilbo bit at his lip… “How… how did you deal with…” His eyes flickered downwards. He knew Thorin’s had followed. “Yesterday…? You… couldn’t have had time.”

“I found time.” Thorin’s face was oh so much closer. His breath playing lightly against Bilbo’s lips. It was… actually making him feel a little bit dizzy… drunk. “Your name was the one I called.”

“Thorin!” He slapped at the dwarf’s chest, too embarrassed to accept the compliment.

But Thorin’s eyes shut and he grunted.

Almost appreciatively.

“Bilbo…” He sounded horny… yet strained- “We should… separate. Now.”

“Mmm…” A bit of Bilbo thought he should have agreed…

But Thorin was so close… Those hands were so soft… this was so nice…

“If given the chance…” He said, playing idly with Thorin’s ring finger. “What would you… have done to me?” His forehead bumped against Thorin’s. “Right now.”

Thorin’s breath hitched. He let out this moan of sorts and shook his head slowly- painfully almost. “Do not ask that of me Bilbo Baggins. You deserve-“

“Oh..” Bilbo pouted for but a second before bringing their lips crashing together. The kiss was awkward. But appreciated. Both of them moaned for it. Thorin pulled him closer and then another- higher pitched cry was heard.

They had matched up. Had rubbed- “Thorin-“ Whispered Bilbo.

“Bil…Bilbo.” His next breath was ragged. “I will work you to release if you do not step…”

“Away?” he licked at Thorin’s lips. “I don’t want to.”

A groan was issued from the dwarf, “Do not be stubborn.” And all Bilbo could do was roll his eyes and tug their hands between them. Up… and up. Till he was able to set Thorin’s hand upon his chest.
And he was able to free his own to touch at Thorin’s. “I appreciate it. That you are willing to work for me.” He said. “I appreciate that this has been on your mind for a while.” He kissed Thorin sweetly, “Now let us appreciate being able to be together once more.”

“Mahal…” Thorin’s lips not only pressed against Bilbo’s, they tugged. They sucked. They licked and nibbled and his hand explored. Over chest. Over belly. Up again- brushing ever so lightly against this nipple.

Then that one. Then it curled around to Bilbo’s back and gave that a stroke…

And Bilbo used his weightlessness to hike a leg up on Thorin’s side. His arms slid about the dwarf’s neck and he brought the other up soon after. The kiss ended with moans. Was reinitiated with ferocity. Even in warm water, the heat of Thorin himself proved to be intoxicating.

He was being held tenderly. Walked… Thorin was walking them. Even while being distracted by their kisses…

To an edge? To a wall…

“I will not have us drown.” Thorin said.

“Oh… I like that idea~” Gasped Bilbo. He kissed at Thorin’s lips once more then freed his legs. He leaned against the edge of the bath and smiled to Thorin. He looked as if he’d lost his favorite plaything.

An idea that had Bilbo feeling very naughty indeed. He spun and looked over his shoulder.

When Thorin froze to such a sight, Bilbo huffed. He pushed himself off of the wall and into the dwarf’s arms. Water sloshed about them. Bilbo secured Thorin’s hands about his waist. Hummed and shut his eyes. He could feel that cock floating against his tailbone… “I like this~” He purred.

“You’re driving me insane… dear… hobbit.” Thorin hugged him tighter and kissed at his cheek from over his shoulder. “Have you any idea what sort of position this can lead to?”

“Mmm… we fit better together like this…” Bilbo said dreamily. “Does it matter what it could lead to?” When Thorin nipped at his ear for that remark- he yelped and seemed to snap out of the daze. “Thorin!” he squirmed and frowned at the dwarf.

“Bilbo.” Rebutted Thorin. “Away.” He released Bilbo and used the water to turn the hobbit about. It was against the wall that he cornered him and against his forehead that he matched his own again. “Some other time. I promise.” He kissed Bilbo’s nose. “Not now… however. Not like that.”

“Why not?”

“I will not have sex with you just yet.”

“Se-“ He lit up brightly and reared back- “I wasn’t- “then his eyes widened. “Surely you weren’t thinking to put you- A-and in my…” He covered his mouth “In… i-is that how… Do men really… Oh. Oh by the gods, I just did something… a-awful, didn’t I?”

Thorin had the strength to chuckle- a smile. “You’ll have me soon, I assure you, but… for the love of
“Mahal please stop being…”

“Being what?”

“Deceptive.” He purred - that’s what it was, a purr. There was no other sound that could describe the roll of his tongue over the word. “Do you truly not know how sex is done between males?”

“I have… a fair idea.” Bilbo swallowed. “T-Though that was not my intention.” A gasp. “Oh definitely not, I think I’m-”

“Nervous?” Thorin caught a hand - pressed a kiss to it a chaste kiss. “Good thing dwarrows are stubborn.”

“Why?”

“I would have had you, had I been another race.”

Bilbo sighed… and Thorin quirked a brow, “You would have been kind, even if you were different.”

Thorin groaned - “Then you have an overactive imagination.” He covered Bilbo’s face with his hand Bilbo just kissed his palm happily, like a pup. “S-Stop that.”

“Why would you think I…” Bilbo huffed then, when his hand lowered. “Why would you think… that… Why would I ever assume you would want to… c-claim me in such a fashion? When you had rejected me? And not so long ago at that?”

And whatever stirring had ceased. There was a cold friction between them. Thorin had bowed his head in shame.

Growled out- “Of course I would wish to claim you in all fashions, had I the opportunity. I chose… many wrong ways to express my desire and my concern. I regret them all.” Thorin’s shoulder sagged. And even though he leaned back, his body, voice and mind seemed to be laced with frustration and attempted patience. “If you would allow me the chance, I would be amendable to whatever your whims are. And if they do not match my own, I would not press them. Bilbo… I would take you here, or before the company, or in the very Halls of Erebor, if it would give you a glimpse into all that I feel for you.” He squeezed Bilbo’s arms, “That it would reveal all that I am…” he said, “and how much I do feel for you. Care for you…” a hand stroked a stray curl from Bilbo’s cheek. His hand had begun to shake. And Bilbo wondered if that was his own volition… or Thorin’s himself.

Because he did not feel nervous. He did not feel exposed…

But Thorin certainly looked it.

He even looked as if there was more he’d wanted to say but… Bilbo shook his head, “It’s not that I don’t believe you. Rather- I don’t understand…” But finding words that could match his thoughts had become impossible. “No.” He said finally. “I did not mean to insinuate that we ought to have sex.” He rapped upon Thorin’s chest, “But… something else?” He asked, head tilting just the slightest. “If you are still amiable?”

Thorin grunted. He took Bilbo’s hips into his hands and rose the hobbit straight up out of the water
to deposit him on the edge of the pool. “Like this then.” He said, moving between those legs.

Legs that Bilbo promptly closed about Thorin’s head. “Wh-no!” He cried- trying to hide himself despite Thorin’s proximity. “My- I’m level to your face!” He whimpered.

“That…” A look of amused glee was upon Thorin’s face. “That was the point.”

“Y-you. You want to do as you did in the forest?” His hand was tangled in Thorin’s hair, gripping at thick locks to keep that head away- “W-w-what about you though?!”

“I will handle that at a separate time.” Thorin said, tilting his head and kissing at Bilbo’s forearm. The hobbit moaned low in his throat but shook his head- “That is what we did back then. I do not wish for a repeat of that time.”

“I won’t walk away.” Said Thorin seriously.

“And I don’t want to cum alone.” Inserted Bilbo. “So…” And he straightened for this, “We either do it together… or we don’t do it at all.” He huffed, “I won’t have another thing being felt between us that the other must only guess at.”

Thorin looked surprised at that.

As if he hadn’t considered that Bilbo may have felt left out for not being able to ‘feel’ as he could… but he shouldn’t have been surprised. Bilbo had told him. Implied as much-

The hobbit slid a leg before Thorin’s chest. He pushed at it until the dwarf had to back up and then slid into the water once more. “Together.” He insisted.

And if Thorin rolled his eyes, Bilbo would never know.

For his lips were conquered again. Their bodies found one another once more. Hands were flowing. The air thickened all over again. “This way.” Said Bilbo- smacking his lips against Thorin’s once more before leading the way to the steps guiding the way out of that bath.

It wasn’t a straight shot though. He had to turn several times to kiss Thorin. Or to grab his hand. Or splash him. By the time they’d gotten there, Thorin had hoisted him onto the second highest step. Was between his legs, caressing his back…. “Mmm… how should we do this?” Breathed Bilbo- kissing at Thorin’s jaw. “To cum together…” He moaned and tugged at the dwarf’s hair, “Bother but it’s cold outside the water. Get on top of me already Oakenshield~”

Thorin moaned and surged out of the water. Covered Bilbo’s body with his own and rutted roughly against the hobbit.

Bilbo’s body arched. As much as it could under Thorin at least.

His hands scrambled at the giant tile below- “OH- like this. Like this.” He grabbed ahold of Thorin’s hair all over again. “No hands.” Said he. “No hands. Just… aga-“

He cried out at pleasure struck at him again.

Their dicks slipped. Misaligned and Bilbo wiggled his hips to get his closer again.
They found one another- Thorin quickly thrust- Bilbo squeaked out his name. “Oh…. F-faster!”

His other hand came to curl in Throin’s hair as the dwarf situated himself. Lined himself up then… began to rub against him. Again. And again. “Oh…” Bilbo found that mouth. “Oh- Thorin~” He absolutely squeaked when he felt a large, warm hand encase them- “N- oohhhhh” And that hand was speeding and now he didn’t have the strength to object because it felt wonderful.

Because Thorin was propping himself up with one arm, stroking them with the other. Their breath was heavy. Their hearts beating loud enough for both of them to hear and the heat.

Of their groins-

It was nearly too much to bear- Bilbo’s toes were curling. He was whimpering. “Thorin. Oh- Oh Thorin- I-“ And his breath was stolen. His hips gave one last feeble buck and he-

He came.

The feeling of orgasm swept over him and he was gasping against Thorin’s panting lips.

His hand was still going. It was still ringing in pleasure for Bilbo, but also bringing Thorin closer for he hadn’t- “With me~” whined Bilbo.

That seemed to be all it took for Thorin moaned and came. His grip on them became so tight, Bilbo whimpered and tugged hard at Thorin’s hair- “T-too hard.” He said pathetically.

Apologies flowed from Throin’s lips. More strokes of a kinder nature followed…

Bilbo welcomed the way Thorin relaxed on top of him. He met lazy kisses with tender ones of his own… and he wondered idly... If they hadn’t stopped- oh so many months ago…

Would have ever reached a point like this?

Where leaving right after… Seemed like the silliest thing to do in the world? This body above him, below him, with him was warm. The dwarf cared for him… And what they had between them was special.

Would they have ever had that?

If Bilbo hadn’t been a virgin?

It took a while to untangle themselves. But when Thorin rolled off of him, Bilbo was able to see the aftermath of their coupling. He tsked and gathered a bit onto his fingers. “Getting this messy right after a bath…” He shook his head.

Thorin moved. “I forget how hairless you are.” A giant paw came in. Thorin’s fingers splayed out on Bilbo’s belly and the hobbit gasped for it. He quickly covered himself up with his hands.

Their eyes met. Bilbo bit his bottom lip. “Sorry…” He said, ducking his head a bit.

“For still being nervous?” Thorin quirked a brow but removed his hand.

“Well… yes…” He averted his eyes… then took a breath and maneuvered himself back into the
It was warmer than he remembered and he *moaned* for it. He didn’t expect Thorin to want anything else- but soon he felt Thorin come up behind him. He just *enveloped* Bilbo within his arms. An embrace.

And Bilbo was too tired to object. Rather- he let out a breath and leaned back against the dwarf…

“Is… this ok when we’re not… hard?”

Thorin chuckled. “It is *quite* alright.”

“Good.” Bilbo shut his eyes and sighed… “Say… did you…” He peered over his shoulder, “Did you *feel* it when I…” He bit his lip. “Did you feel my…” Bother. He was naked with a dwarf and they had just rutted and rubbed off together and he still couldn’t find it in himself to speak of the word ‘pleasure.’

It was lucky Thorin understood. Or seemed to, those hands about him tightened in any case. “Hobbit- I felt every *bit* of that.”

“Well shouldn’t your orgasm had been stronger? “ He ran a hand through his own hair, “You took longer than me.” He pulled from Thorin’s embrace and floated over to the soap. “If you could feel as I felt, how could you have *possibly* found it in yourself to hold off as the feeling of orgasm washed through you?”

Thorin made this noise in the back of his throat. His eyes shut- his jaw tightened just a fraction. “Where you find such words in times like this…” He shook that head of his and crossed his arms tight across his chest. “You still do not believe me?”

“It’s not that I don’t…” Bilbo worked the soap into his hair- “It’s just that… it is *hard.*” Thorin didn’t object to that… and he had nothing more to say so he was allowed to bath and rinse his body in glorious silence.

Thorin borrowed the soap for a little while after that and then they emerged. Thorin first- Bilbo second. Thorin didn’t even *try* to take a peek at his body. He dried off and dressed with his back to Bilbo… he’d accepted that Bilbo wasn’t completely comfortable with this…

Or at least seemed to. The prospect of that sort of understanding was *more* than enough for Bilbo… his spirits were *quite* high by the time they left the bathhouse.
“O-ho!” Bilbo bumped into Thorin at the happiness of Balin’s cry. They had been able to hear the
celebration of their company yards away. There were songs being sung, jibes being thrown about- it
didn’t seem as though the time had any bearing on those inside but he really hadn’t wanted any
attention.

Luckily, Bilbo found that attention hadn’t been switched to he and Thorin, merely directed to Ori-
who was holding a mug of mead up high while Kili groaned miserably a few chairs away.

Congratulations fell to the dwarf.

Thorin tapped at Bilbo’s shoulder and the hobbit allowed himself to be snuck past those many eyes.
Back to his room. “Bilbo.”

Thorin said, stepping back from the hobbit and holding his own arms, “I wish to thank you for
joining me this evening. For listening to me…” He took a breath, “And for allowin-“

“Oh-“ Bilbo swatted at Thorin’s chest and placed a kiss upon his cheek. “Bother all the formal
speech. I enjoyed tonight as much as you did.” He smiled until Thorin joined him in it then opened
his door and…

Looked back- “Thorin… “ He said suddenly- “You… are sure about this… right?”

The king unfurled his arms and stepped forward.

“We… we are on a quest.” Reminded Bilbo. “A-And… it’s not as though we stopped it for my sake
or y-yours when I was asking you for um…” he wasn’t sure what he was asking now either. “I
mean, I know I am a virgin, but that doesn’t mean that you have t--”

“You would rather I bed you now then, and be done with the moment.” Said Thorin flatly. It wasn’t
a question, but a statement.

“N! Well… not be done forever j-just--”

A growl settled in Thorin’s throat as he strode forward. He remained a polite distance from the
hobbit, but was no less menacing. “Then you have not truly understood all that I’ve tried to explain
today.” Bilbo’s eyes owled, as if he had been misunderstood… as if he wanted to explain. Thorin did
not allow him to interrupt. “You cannot feel it…” He said softly. As he moved closer, he unfurled his
arms and tapped at Bilbo’s chest. The way his eyes fluttered… and the way his fingers shook just a
bit, Bilbo could have sworn he’d felt the raging heart within. “But it will come in time. For now, I
have to ask simply, that you trust what I’m telling you.”
Bilbo swallowed- “An-and what are you telling me?”

A wry smile spread over Thorin’s lips. “That what we have is not a whimsical notion, nor a passing fancy.” His cheeks darkened just a bit, drawing his hand up Bilbo’s neck into that head of blonde curls. “I know trust may not be easily gained, especially considering my past actions, but I’ll leave that to you, to decide.” He was drawing away when Bilbo grabbed his hand in his hair, clutching it. He felt that warm face, felt a nose press against his palm and then a kiss to the center. Bilbo nuzzled Thorin’s hand, keeping it pinned to his cheek as he met Thorin’s intense gaze.

No words were said- perhaps, none needed to be. So Bilbo couldn’t feel… this. Thorin’s words were true enough. And it was quite plain that the dwarf’s intent concerning their relationship was truthful. There was too much desire, warmth care and need fluttering about for him not to taken honestly. “Sleep Master Hobbit. I have no doubts you’re exhausted, and your headache is making mine ache.”

Bilbo laughed, “I can’t help that.” His cheeks had colored and he forced his gaze away…

But Thorin grew closer.

Upon Bilbo’s forehead came a sweet and chaste kiss. “Sleep well.” Thorin breathed, parting from the hobbit to return downstairs with his company.

Trust.

Bilbo slept that night pondering the situation. When he woke… and went to the table, he half expected Thorin to greet him, but brush him off. To act as if nothing had happened the night before.

But Thorin called him to sit beside him. Even squeezed his arm when his nerves refused to calm down.

Conversation at the table was set upon gauging where they were at. With supplies- and with the company itself. Oin resolved to have another look at Bilbo, to make sure his ribs were healing right. “Oughtn’t you be looking at Thorin too?” He waved a hand to the king and frowned. “I don’t believe he was able to do up his bandaging from last night- he mustn’t let a wound like his fest… er…” He was getting smiles. “W-“

Thorin cleared his throat behind him. “Oin had a look at my wounds last night. And again, this morning.” A pat was given to his back. “Your concern is appreciated.” The dwarf straightened and looked about proudly, “No- today, I have plans outside. Dwalin. Fili. Nori, Gloin, Bombur.” He waved a hand towards the others at the table as he began to leave with the others, “Oin- send those that are well enough. We need to keep fit and have our eyes retain their sharpness. I won’t have us falling before the mountain is reached.” Thorin left quickly, he couldn’t have been able to hear Oin grumble- but Kili did And Bofur, and everyone else so there was a chorus of laughter that rung across the table.

“I have no doubt that training will be twice what it was before the mountain.” Balin said with a light chuckle.

“Ohhhh. Yes. No doubting that.” Bofur shook his head and grabbed for a carrot, “Oin- you send us in there, we’ll be coming back worse than what we started with. May as well save the salve and treat
us later.”

Bilbo rose a brow at their words and at the grudging agreement they were being met with. “I hardly think he’d push you so hard. This is the first time in a while since we’ve gotten a break.”

He got grins for this. Kili nudged him- “Suspect there are reasons for that.”

Dori cleared his throat- but Bofur waved his fingers at Bilbo merrily. “Distractions are nice, are they not?”

“Distractions?” Nori snickered- “It’s the rest I love.”

“Well I like the merriment.” Piped up Ori. “The drinks we’re allowed to have. And the stories.”

“Stories are right. Especially those concerning lov--” But Balin was the one to silence Kili first, who huffed at the older dwarf. Bilbo was bright red, having thought this entire time, that they all knew what was going on, but couldn’t speak of it. “Besides, Uncle will surely listen to you.”

“He’s been listening to you for a while, too.” Bofur chimed again and the flush festering upon Bilbo’s cheeks was enough to make him sigh exasperatedly.

“Private people’s!” He tutted. “You’re all but announcing you know what’s going on!” But the crowd silenced after that, eyes darting between one another a bit warily. “You really can’t speak of it… unless If I gave my permission?”

“We could, granted yours and Thorin’s permission.” Balin glanced around, as if afraid something might happen. “There is a great deal of… unspoken culture with dwarrows, lad, you must understand that it’s improper of us to speak of it publicly without consent.”

Bilbo chuckled- “Oh dear, I do not think any one of you would last a moment in the Shire. My business, is everyone’s business, as is everyone’s business is theirs too.” All their eyes owled to a variety of sizes. “But…” he scratched his cheek. “You all know, and if you have any customs on… giving… uh… I don’t know… congratulations o-or acceptances…I’d… well you can’t could you, er, sorry, never mind.”

“We’re happy.” Kili hummed. “And we all are I think, in our own ways.” The dwarfling nudged the hobbit gleefully at the shoulder. “Uncle’s a bit of a stick in the mud, so to see him… I don’t know, what would you call it again, Balin?”

“Young?”

“Yeah, young, it’s weird. But…” he nodded his head to the others. “We’re all happy about it. You know, that thing we can’t talk about.” Dori and Balin sighed to this, encouraging the young dwarf to silence his words, or he’d have more than just going against cultural ethics to deal with. “Honestly, Fili and I wanted to congratulate you quietly.” He whispered- “We sort of had our own ideas, ‘cause… well…” he giggled.

“Because…?”

“We know what… ahem, is… going on.” He waved a hand between them. “F-Feelings.” he said this muted so that only Bilbo heard him.
“Y-You two-”

“Yeah. That’s partially how we can move so easily as a team.” He was proud- “Part of its just from us being brothers. But…” He shrugged and grinned and let himself trail off.

Bilbo hummed to that… and started to say something… before catching himself and shaking his head.

Kili eyed him curiously, “Somethin’ on your mind?”

Bilbo flushed and wiggled in his seat a bit, “Uh… I’m not sure… I can… ask.” But Kili continued staring- so he pressed on quickly, “Did you two feel… it? I- immediately?”

Kili grinned but shook his head. “Well I did first, and I thought I was going crazy! I asked Uncle about it, I happened to be with him and Fili at the time, hunting practice, you know.” The others had busied themselves about the larger foyer and were taking their turns visiting Oin.

“Anyway. I felt crazy. And Uncle deduced what was going on, but Fili didn’t feel a thing for months.”

Bilbo gasped- “Isn’t that weird, even in…” Bilbo looked about- lowering his voice. “E-Even as a dwarf?”

Kili eyed him with a frown- agreeing. “It was, they thought it was just me… getting older.” He shrugged- “Then Fili woke me up feverish and he could hardly control himself.” Bilbo’s eyes owled. “I was dreaming, of course, but he was panicking, he didn’t understand what was happening. Lucky, I did.”

“He had a fever?”

“Oh, because I was dreaming of… less appropriate things.” Kili beamed, writhing in his seat. “Wonderful night that was. You should have seen the healer’s face!” He laughed in this open and boyish way that had Bilbo smiling soon enough. He relaxed… and so did Kili. The dwarf seemed content enough to watch Bilbo eat. But after a while, he started up a line of conversation again. His tone was less charged though, and far more cautious. “And… we hope you weren’t upset with that night we accosted yo--”

Bilbo’s cheeks glowed impossibly bright. “N… No! Is that… oh I have no idea how many rules I’m breaking right now!” Bilbo whined and Kili giggled.

“It was wrong of Fili and I to have accosted you so…” Kili shrugged, “I think we’re about even.”

“But you two are… um…”

“We agreed that night. Between one another.”

“You can just do that? Pick up a…” Bilbo leaned in. “Th-Third party member?”

“If it’s agreeable. You know, it’s rare, but sometimes three…” he eyed the others. “Three of us could all share that same…” he tapped Bilbo’s chest. “I am breaking a custom to tell you that.” He whispered and Bilbo pushed him away.
“You’re awful. You!” Bilbo huffed. “You shouldn’t. I don’t want you to break anything for me.”

Kili just shrugged—“Someone has to tell you all the things you’re getting into. I’m the youngest, so my punishment would be less severe, even… if I am a Prince.” the young dwarf wiggled. “Do you… you know…”

Bilbo blinked before Kili tapped his own chest—”N… I don’t. At least, I don’t think I do.”

“You’ll know immediately.” Kili chimed, reassuringly. “It’s unlike anything…” Kili paused then, and smiled, looking off, as if in another world. “anything you’ll ever feel.” He returned his eyes to Bilbo.

“You look far too old for your age reminiscing like that.” This, Bilbo said wryly. But Kili was grinning and shaking his head.

“Can’t help it. And besides, I just sent a nasty image to my brother. One I’m sure had him stumbling.”

“Y-you… what?” Bilbo caught Kili’s eyes—“Oh… come off it. Y-you’re pulling my leg, aren’t you?”

“Pull your—” Kili was frowning, “Why would I do that?”

“W- well it’s not possible, is it? Bilbo straightened. ‘Thorin told me all about the things between two lovers. And it’s basically… an advanced form of empathy. You’re not supposed to be psychic. The bond you guys have isn’t—’ He paused, “But… perhaps it’s that you’re brothers that you can do that. I’ve heard of twins—”

“It’s not!” Kili said with a huff. “It’s possible in other couples! Really! I’ve heard of it happening. It usually takes a lot longer, but it’s possible.” He growled under his voice and flagged Balin over—“Tell him this. He won’t believe me!”

“That would depend on what lad, I’m telling him.” Balin returned with a beam. “What is it?”

“Isn’t it… possible for dwarrows to hear one another’s thoughts as their own?” Balin looked shocked, and when he looked about, it was warily.

“We’re breaking the rules.” Bilbo murmured, slumping. But Balin chuckled, shaking his head.

“I don’t believe you’d be one to inform the world of our secrets master Bilbo.” The old dwarf gave Bilbo a pat on the back, “And you have fulfilled the requirement to become privy to our customs. No—” He cleared his throat. “I believe I can answer this for you.” He eyed Kili, “It is… true. What Kili has said. But it has not occurred in several decades. I believe Kili and Fili have been the first to experience this bond… But many… many others…” his voice was let out in this long, slow exhale… his hands clenched at his sides and Bilbo bit his lip for the sight of it—“Let us say.. that more than just a home was lost… when the Dragon took Erebor…”

Bilbo swallowed—“W… th- the tradition?”

“No lad.” Balin thumped Bilbo upon the back, “Feeling.” And like that… he walked away.

The hobbit and the dwarfling watched him go. Kept silent in respect… but once Balin had left the
house, Bilbo turned back to Kili, “May I ask you…”

“What he meant?” But Kili had already taken on the same forlorn look Balin had been wearing. He looked… desperate. To hold something, to fall against something- Bilbo took up his hand. Kili immediately squeezed it.

He didn’t have the heart to push Kili to answer, he had quite a firm idea what Balin had meant, especially after seeing Kili’s face morph with such sadness. It had to be some degree of shameful, for Kili to display such weakness… so Bilbo decided to turn his cheek. To leave the topic alone…

He decided to try feeling Thorin as the day ran on. For something. Anything. At a point in time, while he was helping Oin fix up remedies for the other dwarves, he fancied he could feel that Thorin was safe. Somewhere. Happy with the bits of the company he had about him, training with him.

This was probably just him imagining it.

But it made him happy pretending.

He also helped with a few chores about Beorn’s house. Nothing big. He couldn’t cut firewood and he couldn’t dust up high… but he was able to sweep out droppings and tidy up smaller areas.

Early nightfall had the rest of company rejoining the ones who had remained within the lodgings for dinner, Bilbo was more than eager to greet Thorin, who seemed to… welcome the gentle hug Bilbo had just thrown upon him. Dwalin had chuckled with Gloin about it. And Bilbo could hear them chatting about how easily gentle-folk could worm their way in.

He’d Thorin, and even tried brushing his coat off in an attempt to give Thorin back that sort of ‘strong leader’ quality but it only made them laugh harder. “It is fine.” Thorin rested his hand upon Bilbo’s back, guiding him to the table with the others. “You had a fine day?”

“You’d know.” He responded and Thorin offered a smile.

“I do, but I would much rather hear of it.” The hobbit tried his best not to writhe in his seat. Merriment it seemed, was contagious, and not just amongst a couple in dwarven cultures. Because, somehow, a few flutes and a fiddle had been spared in the fall through the Goblin Tunnels and music was now filling the great halls. Beorn gifted them some of his good mead for their festivities, and Gandalf was happily bobbing his head to their rambunctious and spontaneous celebration.

But, Bilbo was far more concerned with Thorin, they spoke after every dance. And when Bilbo was pulled out, he’d always find Thorin’s eyes. Those steely blue eyes would twinkle in delight and Bilbo would dance- just a little bit harder. He felt smitten. And warm honestly. He’d been having so much fun and was so comfortably drunk that when evening drew darker, and when others began to tuck themselves into bed, Bilbo sought Thorin out. Just to talk. Just to be nearer. But Thorin seemed…

Jumpy. He bid Bilbo a goodnight nearly as soon as Bilbo had seen him… kissed him on the cheek, slipped from his grasp… he did not see the tipsy hobbit off to bed. No- he slipped away… somewhere.

Bilbo honestly hadn’t a clue where he may have gone. He ended up talking with Balin and Dori for a bit longer. Danced a little bit more until he finally decided to wander off to bed. Because bed sounded delicious and divine.
But… the hallway back to his room was dark… and there were voices at the far end. Whispered, hushed. There was a groan- Bilbo froze. And tucked himself against the wall.

Now that his eyes were beginning to adjust to the darkness, he could see a pair of dwarves. Or at least… an outline of them. They were talking amongst themselves. Riled… about something. One… seemed to hand something to the other and the other let out a… **resigned** groan? Were they frustrated? Or was someone injured? Dwarves were very bad at admitting weaknesses after all. Bilbo bit his lip…

Before fumbling through his pocket for his ring.

He slipped it on and tip toed forward.

Dwalin had been the one to stay outside the room. His face was looking particularly surly and because he wondered why, Bilbo snuck past him into a room whose door had been left open by the injured party.

There was a fire in here. And a cot. And… Thorin. With a towel?

Now his curiosity was **blaring**. What was Thorin doing with a towel? It looked soft and… dampened by… something. Something that glistening in the firelight but *hadn’t* the color of blood. Somethin-

Thorin was stripping away his pants- Bilbo stifled a yelp and rushed to hide behind a pillar. Nevermind he couldn’t be seen- he needed something to hold onto!

Thorin was stepping out of his pants. Setting them aside. He was hard. Bilbo had caught sight of it as he turned back to the towel. Had he hurt himself somehow? And if so, why was he *rolling* the towel instead of just… rubbing whatever wound he had with whatever was on it? It made no sense. Especially not when… Th-Thorin began to stroke himself.

Bilbo stumbled a bit at the sight. And his breath hitched- when he saw a trail of saliva fall from Thorin’s mouth onto his palm… The dwarf had let it coat his hardened cock- Gods- Bilbo could feel a flush come over his body, his body lit up and sure, it was arousal… but somehow… it seemed stronger than it had ever been before.

His breath began to shorten. Thorin was shivering-

Fr-from just a hand!

Was he that sensitive? It had seemed to take so much more before…

Bilbo pressed a hand to the front of his pants. He could feel his dick swelling and he had to bite his lip hard to keep from whimpering. Watching this was wrong in so *many* ways. He didn’t even know if he was breaking some cultural thing for Thorin, but… it didn’t matter.

Need had taken over. And Thorin was doing something extremely **strange**.

He’d gathered that rolled up towel and had just pressed his *cock* into it! There was no moan- but Bilbo could see the way his teeth grit together. The way the muscles in his arms seemed to strain. Bilbo felt another wave of fire cover him, sweat was beading upon his brow and a squeak escaped his lips.
Thorin stiffened for but a second. His eyes darted about- but the suspicion was quickly doused. Soon enough, those eyes were fogged over again and he began to thrust into that rolled cloth.

Bilbo’s heart leapt. His hand flew to his mouth- Thorin was… H-he was je-jerking himself off!

Bilbo’s chest was right with arousal, with an unfiltered flame that burned hotter than he believed possible. What fire hung in the air seemed to fuel Thorin. The king was red in the face, his hands shaking with desperation. He was sweating, thrusting in such a ferocious way- that had Bilbo wondering if Thorin could feel hi- Oh Valar!

Thorin was hunching over now, his hands guiding that slick and tight passage against his shaft- faster… and faster- until he tumbled back onto his back. He seemed to need something stable to rest against. For with the floor pressing against his back, Thorin ended up bucking wildly into that wet cloth. His legs were flexing, his body glistening with sweat-

Bilbo couldn’t watch anymore- he was far too needy himself to just watch. Had he done that? Made Thorin seek solitude for his… arousal?

Not that the thought was upsetting… A-and seeing this was just proof that Thorin was trying his hardest to be kind, to be a gentle-dwarf… the thought had Bilbo keening. He scurried off, locking himself in his room. He slipped his ring off quickly. His dick was pulsing tenfold- his breath was shaky and loud. He pawed at his clothes- but only managed to free his dick properly. And his time stroking himself turned out to be short lived- he’d never cum so quickly or pathetically. Just a mere thought of Thorin had him spilling all over his hand.

He was shaking. He’d never- never done something like that before.

He quickly found a cloth and soaked it in the bowl of water by his bed. He was desperate to clean himself off and be to bed.

As soon as he could, he curled himself up, tightly, with a pillow to his chest. He was able to find sleep- but he would dream of the dwarf all night.

Thorin fared a bit better- though he’d been plagued most of the day. Bilbo had stared during dinner and had danced and teased and cuddled quite openly before the others. And what had begun as something light and airy had over the evening, transpired into something thick and heavy. The unfamiliar heat of Bilbo’s arousal had made Thorin harder than he’d ever been in his life. It had felt like a madness. A fever he could hardly escape.

He turned to Dwalin in his time of need… and the dwarf had chuckled. Had suggested a solution to his dilemma that had embarrassingly enough, involved a towel and a liberal amount of honey.

He’d given in, with his friend on watch, he had worked himself so hard he’d very nearly passed out upon the floor.

He certainly remained down there- catching his breath. It would be several long minutes before he had finally emerged from said room. For it- he’d gotten a snarky grin from his friend.

Thorin thought he’d find sleep easily after that. That he wouldn’t have to deal with anything else for the rest of the day- mahal knew he’d had enough emotions thrust upon him that day…
But here he was now- woken from a deep sleep, looking about for a hobbit he knew couldn’t have been in his room… but still hearing the murmur of his name… and still feeling the pull of a lover.

The king groaned and shoved his sleep heavy body from his bed.

Across the hallway, he forced his feet to take him… and into Bilbo’s room he quietly stole.

The hobbit was sleeping. Of course he hadn’t called for him consciously. Of course the one that could not feel would reach out in such a way… Thorin sighed and clambered onto the bed. Off of Bilbo, he drew the blankets. Off and onto him and the little thing as he tucked into bed.

That was when Bilbo woke, and his surprise was enough to have him all but falling off the bed. “Thorin!” He hissed and the dwarf king caught him. “W-What are you doing here?”

“You called.”

“I… I did not.”

“Maybe not traditionally.” Thorin snuggled against the bed and pillow, letting his eyes close. “But you did call.” Bilbo’s lips pursed and Thorin could feel his stare from the worry blossoming and curiosity in his chest. “In your dreams, dear Hobbit. Now, stop staring so pointedly. I am tired and wish to rest.”

To this- Bilbo squeaked and hunkered down, but he dared not to reach out to the dwarf.

So Thorin reached out and encased Bilbo in his warmth, wrapping an arm about his back. Bilbo writhed for a bit, not used to the sensation and still rather shocked at finding the king in his room…

He rolled. And shuffled. And tossed before finally settled with his back against Thorin’s chest. Comfortable yet?” Thorin asked softly.

Bilbo had expected irritation to lace those words… but Thorin was nuzzling his blonde curls. “Sleep now.” Thorin said, inhaling deeply. “I think you’ve done your fair share of exhausting me.”

The hobbit remembered quickly the sight of Thorin writhing.

It was a memory that had his cheeks tingeing pink. He would not let that upheaval of emotions effect Thorin though. Bilbo took a breath and willed himself to calm, if only for Thorin’s sake.

Bilbo would have been touched had he known the dwarf King was smiling into his hair.

It was strange- waking in the morning with another. He’d gasped when he felt a warm breath caress his neck. “Good morning.” It was soft enough that Bilbo could have doubted it was there at all… He felt a flush blossom in his chest.

“S-Sorry for… waking you last night.” Bilbo stammered but Thorin only seemed to snuggle in a bit closer.

“It was my fault.” Thorin mumbled. “I should have told you, that I may feel you dream.”

“Great, that will be awkward in the middle of Mirkwood.” Thorin chuckled and tightened his hold around the hobbit.
“Awkward that I would have to stumble over the others to reach you, perhaps.” Bilbo nuzzled his face into the arm he had slept upon, sighing. “You’re shaky.”

“I… I’m hungry.”

“It is late.” Thorin hummed with a teasing sound on his voice. “Come, dress. We will make sure you are not starved.” Bilbo let Thorin have his arm back and watched as he stood to stretch.

“Is there a way to… to calm what you feel from me? Like…” Thorin turned. “So you’re not as affected? I would hate for it me to interfere with something.”

“There are,… remedies, temporary albeit.” Thorin shrugged though, tossing his hair off of his shoulder. “Some practice the art of releasing emotions, not allowing them to fester or linger- I… suppose some would call it meditation…..”

“That’s not… oh.” Bilbo flushed, scratching at his cheek. “T-those aren’t very many options….”

“It comes easily enough.” Thorin exhaled. “The first few weeks are usually far more intense than… anything else. I’ve only just started a week ago- I’ll grow accustomed to you with time. And when you finally do reciprocate, I am sure it will be long after our journey’s success.”

“Think it will be that long?”

“Maybe.” Thorin folded his arms across his chest. “A few weeks to a few months is the normal expectancy for these things to show in dwarrows. For other races, it just varies, and we haven’t… had enough contact with others to determine time periods for them.” He eyed Bilbo. “You might never feel a thing.”

Bilbo felt disappointment and sadness sweep over him. He supposed Thorin felt and saw it for his eyes had owled and he’d stormed towards him at once- “That is also not a bad thing.” Bilbo reached for his hands- “Dear hobbit, I would spend a great many years happy without you feeling what I do.”

Bilbo growled- “What if I wanted to though? To feel?”

Thorin smiled despite Bilbo’s frustration. “Then perhaps you will.” He squeezed his hands. “My… er feelings are limited, I don’t indulge in many… and what I do allow myself to feel usually comes across quite strong.” He paused- “I would hate to see an angry hobbit.” Bilbo pouted, but Thorin could feel the smile behind those eyes. He’d made a part of Bilbo laugh. “Come along then, I don’t wish to anger your stomach any more.”

That day had Thorin taking out the parts of the company that hadn’t been out the day before. In other words, the injured and the resting. So, Bilbo found himself lounging about after breakfast with Fili. He was far too nervous to be in the company of Dwalin or Gloin.

In fact- he kept accidentally looking over to Dwalin. The sight of the dwarf kept reminding him of the day before and he wondered exactly how much of Thorin’s desire had been heard…

And where in middle earth he’d come up with the idea of rolling a towel up to… t-to…

“Much on your mind?” Fili teased.
Bilbo jumped as if the young heir had not been sitting next to him.

“I-I suppose.” Fili beamed. It was that smile that brought him confidence- Bilbo steamed on- he had to ask- because maybe there was something else. Another way for Thorin to… to…“Do you feel everything Kili does?” And then--”I’m sorry! We… he and I just… uh, talked and… is it right.. for me to talk to you? I mean you’re the heir, right oh- I don’t--”

“Ha ha, Mister Baggins, it’s quite fine!” Fili assured. “If he has given you permission, you have mine as well.” Bilbo realized permission was the way Dwarves talked more privately amongst one another. “I do, usually. We’ve learned to suppress one another well.”

“So you can… not… feel it?”

“We still feel it, but it’s like… a blip.” Fili hummed, and then hunched to grab for a blade hidden in his boot. “I always know it’s there, this blade.” Bilbo nodded, but watched Fili tuck it so that it was hidden. “Even when I can’t see it. That’s… similar to what we feel. It’s the bigger things that we notice immediately. Anger, fear, need...” Fili waved his hand. “Those sometimes can’t be suppressed. And- for the lesser things- well… we can choose to let ourselves feel them.” Fili paused-

And Bilbo was going to ask him what the matter was when he realized… th-that… “Are you… are you doing that weird… thing” He waved a hand and Fili’s eyes refocused upon him. He laughed.

“Weird? You wound me dear Bilbo.” But the prince continued to grin, “Yes. I was speaking with Kili- you are rather perceptive though… perhaps it is because your people are so open with their feelings?”

“I-I guess…” a bit of pride slipped into his chest. “I guess I am perceptive.” He nodded and sat up straighter. “I was always the first to know when something was going to go wrong, or when someone was lying. I could even tell when people were sneaking off- I managed to catch my cousins once… tumbling during a party.”

Laughter bubbled in Bilbo’s chest. He giggled- without really knowing why he was giggling. And when he’d stopped… Fili was staring at him with a brow raised. A… careful look upon his face, “How- why did I do that?” Bilbo felt at his cheek. “Why did I laugh? I was… yelled at for tattling... that wasn’t… that memory wasn’t funny at all.” His brow pinched with worry. “And why did I bother telling you that stuff at all? We weren’t… that conversation was… completely unnecessary…”

“Indeed… a very strange stream of thought…” Fili silenced himself for a bit… then- “Kili says you have not yet… felt? Is that true?”


“Hmm… only one way to find out,” Fili licked his lips mischievously. “Think of something quite dirty--”

“What? why--”

“Just do it!” Fili whispered, smirking.
“I can’t just…” The hobbit huffed and wiggled in his chair. The prince looked determined and Bilbo was desperate for an answer to this strange problem. H-he… tried. But to little avail, Fili watching made him nervous.

“Why am I doing this?”

“Do you need help, Mister Baggins?” Fili’s hand began to trace his thigh. Bilbo swallowed thickly- Thorin came to mind in an instant and he worried- “Let it consume you for a moment.”

Right. This… this might solve his question. H-he just needed to concentrate… pretend maybe that that hand w-was Thorin…

Thorin touching him… Thorin’s heavy palm on his leg… his hot breath br-breathing into his ear…

That sweaty brow. Those labored grunts-

Jealousy reared.

Bilbo slapped Fili’s hand away, “This is ridiculous!” He spat. “You’re not helping at all!” He slipped out of his chair and stomped from the house. He needed somewhere quiet. And peaceful.

No- he needed to see Thorin. It would be better to just ask the dwarf about this nonsense instead of trying to string it out of Fili. He rounded a few trees and was just coming up to the large stable housing Beorn’s ponies when he chanced out a call of, “Thorin, come here!”

The dwarf froze, having just rounded out of the barn and into Bilbo’s sight- “Bil…bo. What are you doing here?” He looked over Bilbo’s shoulder… then crossed his arms and frowned, “And how did you know I was here?”

“Well of course you’d be here, where else would you be?” Bilbo settled his hands on his hips. His cheeks were flushed and upset was brewing in his belly- “In any case- about your nephew-“

“I did not tell you where I would be.” Thorin interrupted, brow raised. “And yet you called me out as though you knew all along.” A tiny smile was fighting its way onto his face. It was as if he were proud…

Proud of what, Bilbo wasn’t sure.

He did like that Thorin was in a good mood though. His shoulders had relaxed before he’d realized it and now he was staring curiously at the dwarf. What had put him in such a good mood anyway?

“You just wandered from the house directly to me- didn’t you?”

Bilbo grinned.

“That… doesn’t strike you as odd?” Why was Thorin playing with him like this? He didn’t understand what he was on about but… somehow… this. This was fun.

Bilbo tucked his hands behind his back and rocked upon the balls of his feet. “Well… I can’t imagine you would have been anywhere else.”

“Oh- there are many places I could have been…” Thorin slowly walked towards Bilbo… and to his
surprise, Bilbo took a few steps forward as well. “But that I was here… and that you left the house, determined I was here… and walked…”

“Well what was I supposed to do? Run?” Thorin chuckled. “You may have… after… realizing it.”

“R-realizing what?” Bilbo stiffened all over again- “Wait- do you know what Kili was going on about?”

Thorin’s brows kit- “Wh-no. I… Bilbo-“ Their eyes met… a-and soon… Thorin began to deflate- “You don’t understand, do you?”

Bilbo’s insides squirmed with disappointment.

“What don’t I understand?” Thorin sighed, rubbing his eyes. “Really, Thorin, I think I am privy to know now, don’t you think?”

“My you’re testier than usual.” Thorin folded his arms, prickling at the Hobbit’s interpretations of his frustration.

“That isn’t my fault, is it? Why are you getting mad at me? I asked Fili to help me understand something strange that happened then came here hoping you’d help and now you are being as dense and rude as your nephew!” Thorin dropped his arms.

“You’re impossibly thick!”

“Well I got that from you, didn’t I!” And then…

Bilbo peeped. He took several steps back, eyeing Thorin’s entirely. “W-Wait, what?” Bilbo gasped out, feeling his chest.

“Get it now, dear burglar?” Thorin was still upset, but seeing Bilbo become worried and confused had Thorin turning towards him. “Bilbo, you feel it, don’t you?” There was a bit of glee that began to settle within Thorin.

Bilbo shook his head, but a smile was working its way onto his face- a smile. W-was this his or w-well Thorin was grinning. He unfurled his arms from his chest, opened them up as Bilbo flew into his chest, burying his head against Thorin’s tunic, clutching at it desperately.

Bilbo choked, felt something bubbling up like tears. He shook his head against Thorin’s chest and whimpered when strong arms encircled him. “Just let it come, Bilbo.”

“S-Stop smiling, you f-fool. Th-This isn’t funny!” Bilbo’s words were stressed… but there was a smile upon his own face.

“No it isn’t funny,” Thorin whispered, resting his head atop blonde curls. “It is wonderful.” Bilbo shoved Thorin away as he paced before him-

“Now y-you’re sounding like m-me! L-Letting… r-ro-romance fill your silly head!” He tutted, waving at Thorin.
The dwarf king let Bilbo work it out his own way before he finally stopped walking and turned away from Thorin. His next exhale was shakily. “That’s you isn’t it?” Bilbo felt a strange calm come over him, this chill... that felt remarkably like crisp water melting from mountaintops.

Bilbo didn’t have to turn to know that Thorin was calm... poised... he did have to face him though to see the soft smile upon his lips. To see those... eyes... lit in soft amusement. “I don’t know if I like it.”

“And I am fine with you not.” Thorin came, stepping forward, resting his hand upon Bilbo’s neck.

Bilbo shivered gratefully at the touch.

He felt like he could take on the world with his hand on him and wondered, idly, which was better; to be courageous on your own, or be fearful and have someone encourage you forward.

“I am surprised you’re taking this so well.”

“I think it’s mostly you.” Bilbo admitted then, both just staring out at the ponies trotting about in their herd. “I...” his voice grew thick again, half choking over words.

“I-is it bad I still doubt this though it’s happening?” He bit his lip and met Thorin’s eyes, “I feel a bit crazy...”

Thorin grinned. “Then we’ll be crazy together.” Bilbo slapped his chest... but he was smiling soon enough. Thorin squeezed Bilbo’s neck softly... tugged him against him. Bilbo rested his head... and shut his eyes as Thorin’s voice hummed to life- “Madness... insanity, doubt... We’ll tackle those together.” Thorin took a breath, “You needn’t worry if we’re together. I’ll see us through.”

“...spoken like a true king.”

Thorin chuckled.

“I don’t need that title just yet.” The dwarf king eyed Bilbo then for the first time since they’d come to stand beside one another.

Bilbo offered up a tiny smile. “Another then? Your majesty?” Thorin rose a brow... and it was gently that he ran a hand through Bilbo’s curls.

“Why so caught up on this now?” Came the soft question.

“J-Just thought I’d give it a try.” Bilbo admitted. “A-After all, it’d... be... strange for a foreigner to not call his king by a proper title.” Thorin had just opened his mouth- “E-Even for h-his...l...lover right?”

“I’d take you here.” Thorin breathed out sensually, “If I knew your heart could take it.” He laughed then, loudly. And Bilbo thought it was one of the most beautiful things he’d ever heard.

He’d never heard Thorin laugh quite as boisterously as this. It was dazzling. Gorgeous. Beautiful and entrancing.

All the hobbit could do was cling to that cloak, feeling tiny and desperate for grounding.

He had just discovered a whole world within himself.
And a larger one within Thorin himself.
Into the Forest

On a fine summer morning in the house of a very large shape shifter, one could find a staring contest in full swing. Thirteen dwarves knew of its existence as the contest had been going on for some time… but one of the participants hadn’t a clue it was going on at all.

No- the eyes of a plump, pleasant looking hobbit lay dead set on a plate of cheese.

Not that he had any plans on eating said cheese, but his thoughts were swirling around a very peculiar topic… one so strange and so intriguing he couldn’t bother to be picky about what he was gazing upon.

The dwarf beside him had an inkling as to his thoughts. He could feel the hobbit’s curiosity after all… but he could not bring himself to ask or disrupt the little thing… and he could not take his eyes off of him.

As for the rest of the company- well. The sight of all this happening was just amusing to them.

No one expected the way that that contest ended- not at all. For after all that time spent staring at that cheese- Bilbo ended it all with a simple- “Why could I feel you from so far away? I thought you said that couldn’t happen?”

His gorgeously sexy brown eyes looked to Thorin inquisitively- but there was a din about the table. Every dwarf had some version of a blush upon their face. Half of them excused themselves right then and there. Another two quarters walked off… and the last two departed with stern glares from their uncle.

Bilbo paid them no mind. He’d been able to feel Thorin and his emotions since the day before and though he hadn’t felt the dwarf while he’d slept, this one question had danced upon his mind for a while. It was very easily that he found the patience to wait till they were alone…

He spent that time relishing the way he could feel Thorin’s emotions switch from pride- to embarrassment to anxious and… then to nervousness. The last one, he hadn’t expected. He blinked as Thorin cleared his throat.

“It… isn’t common.” Said Thorin at last. “And I myself still cannot… “ he took a breath and waved his hand, “Feel. You. As you apparently do. It is strange that your first connection with me should come later than my own… and come on stronger…” He straightened. “But I do not believe that it is anything to worry about. As I have said, we have not had many examples in our history to guide our path by…”

“I wonder if it’s because of my mum?” Bilbo kicked his feet a bit. The thought of Belladonna always brought a surge of happiness to him. “She’s supposed to have been part fae-“ Thorin stiffened upon hearing this, “Could be my blood weaving it’s way in. In any case-“ He grinned, “That would be a grand gift, wouldn’t it? Like a wedding gift or… some….thing…” He frowned… and his brows furrowed and he tapped at the table. “You know- I think I’m starting to understand why you lot don’t just go about dating?” He shifted his gaze to Thorin- “I can’t imagine hopping from person to person, starting and ending…” a hand waved, “these feelings between one another. I could imagine that would be very taxing. Especially if a connection didn’t fade and then you had to start up another-“
“It does not occur with others.” Thorin said. His tone was distant, his heart was wrenching and Bilbo winced- for he could feel its pain before Thorin had even said a word.

“It…” Bilbo tried clearing his throat, hoping that the hurt in his breast would lessen.

It didn’t.

“It doesn’t? Ever? Well- what if the other person dies before you ever get to know them? How would you have known they’d di-“

“We simply would have no one. We would never find our other half.” Frustration. Anger.

Though why should Thorin be angry at him? It wasn’t as if he could know this stuff! “Well- blast you as well Master Oakenshield!” He slipped from his chair in a huff. “See if I ever ask you on such a subject again!” He spun and stalked off, “pouncy know-it all… how should I know…”

He walked till he was deep within Beorn’s garden… and only then did his anger begin to dissipate. Did he realize that it was probably not his own… but of dwarf origin. To this revelation- he had sighed and settled upon the ground.

Flat upon his back he lie… and through the thick stocks of crop about him… he gazed up at the sky….

He could feel what Thorin felt. Be it near. Be it far… he was probably…

Bilbo’s insides squirmed. He was probably Thorin’s de-destined… oh but that sounded so strange. He was a lover of poetry to be sure. But to think that true love could exist… well. Perhaps he was cynical, but Bilbo Baggins was finding this concept rather hard to believe.

He’d intended on dating Thorin…. And Thorin- Thorin had said that he’d wait. It was really his own fault. Thorin had told him about dwarven customs. About something as precious as feeling and he’d been so bloody curious he had had to have the thing for himself. And now Thorin was stuck with him….

He liked Thorin. He probably loved him…

Tha-that thought had his heart skip a beat. He rolled onto his side and groaned softly…

He loved Thorin…. 

…

They remained under Beorns hospitality for another week… they gathered a lot of honey, various sorts of fruits, vegetables. They kept up with their training, they determined their next step on the road and Beorn had even assured them use of his children to get them to Mirkwood…

But this thing between he and Thorin- it remained fresh, writhing about in Bilbo’s belly with an awful sort of vitality. He could feel Thorin… and when he did- he could rarely displace the feelings being shoved at him.

And as for Thorin- the dwarf was more tired now than ever before.
He brushed off many pleas that he sleep more… he was a stubborn dwarf and honestly, Bilbo hadn’t been able to think of why the man would be as tired as he played himself off to be.

Until that is- he overheard Dwalin teasing Thorin. He’d suggested that the cause of Thorin’s exhaustion was himself. That he… apparently felt too much.

Bilbo couldn’t help that of course- but he’d been mortified.

He’d asked Balin- then Gloin and Bombur about ways to calm himself down or… muffle his effects upon the other dwarf but…

He’d gotten some very queer looks for that. Gloin outright stopped looking or speaking with him, he’d been that offended. It was a mess that wouldn’t get better.

Bilbo dreaded the day they’d have to leave Beorn’s house… But it came all too quickly. He’d been helped up onto his pony… and led to follow the rest towards the forest. Their quest was continuing and he was less prepared for it now than he had been when he’d left the Shire.

It only seemed fitting that just before they would enter Mirkwood, Gandalf would remind them of his intent to leave. Bilbo was resigned to this… and honestly wasn’t sure if he was feeling it because of he- or Thorin… but he bid the wizard a respectable goodbye…

And was thus looked upon with a curious eye. “You have changed Bilbo Baggins… You are not the same hobbit you once were…”

Bilbo fought the urge to laugh and cry- “ Couldn’t possibly be… now could I?” He caught those eyes and stilled his heart.- “You must leave..?”

“I am afraid I must.” Gandalf gave a pat to his shoulder. “ I will seek to rejoin you on the eve before the mountain. Until then, there is something I must attend to.”

“Gandalf- “ Bilbo caught his breath. His insides were swirling with emotion now. “What am I to do with Thorin?” He said this knowing full well that none were about to listen. They were resituating their goods upon one another’s backs. He and Gandalf were the only free agents and he thanked the stars for that. “What if I distract him? Lead him to his death with all of my bungling? I feel.” He sighed waspishly, “I feel.” He forced a hand through his hair. “…helpless.”

Gandalf smiled softly. “You will find a way. I believe in you Mr. Baggins… and I believe that you are no longer alone in this journey. Do not be afraid to rely on others… for they will rely on you whether you like it or not.” He gave Bilbo a kindly tilt of his head before hopping aboard his pony again.

He gave them all one last farewell warning. Then, with a gallop of hooves, he rode away. All of the ponies did and they were all left by their lonesome.

Thirteen dwarves and a hobbit…

Who just that morning had been wrapped up in a staring contest.

Things got progressively worse from there. The forest was as gloomy as Beorn and Gandalf had foretold. And to stay on the path was a hard thing indeed.
Not that it was hard to follow mind you- but that the blasted path was in such disrepair, one could scarcely set foot on it without the stones shifting beneath your feet. They followed it… and followed it. And guessed. And found. And walked and wandered until Bilbo’s head was buzzing. Until he felt sure that his fears were finally overcoming Thorin’s bravery. That warm little feeling at the bottom of his gut was gone now. There was only fear and frustration. Annoyance and impatience. Perhaps it was worse when coupled with Bilbo’s feelings. Or with Thorin’s, Bilbo wasn’t quite sure anymore.

And quite frankly- he wasn’t sure he was Bilbo anyhow. If he could feel Thorin’s emotions, then why would that mean he was Bilbo? Shouldn’t it instead mean that he was in fact Thorin? Because he could feel him? And so then that made Thorin- who was not Bilbo Thorin. Which meant Bilbo didn’t exist at all…

Which was an idea made stranger still by the fact that he could have sworn to see the fellow walking behind him.

So strange.

Almost as strange as the webs that he was seeing around them. Big nasty things- you think the elves would keep their forest clean? He flicked one idly… and was startled to hear a solid twang come off of it. Last he’d heard that- it had been whilst breaking a black widow’s web back home. Tiny they were. Deadly too…

But this place wasn’t deadly. Just… horridly big. And confusing. They were wandering about finding their own tobacco pouches for heaven’s sake. There was no light down here. The tree cover was just too great. Now. If they could just get light. Some blasted- darned- good for nothing li-

Thorin’s shout of a voice rang over them. “What was that?”

Thorin asked. And suddenly- everyone quieted. Which was funny, because Bilbo hadn’t remembered them speaking. “Thorin-“ Bilbo waved his hand towards the trees, “I… I think I would like to find the light.”

How muddled his mind had been! Only when his head breached the canopy did he realize just that.

Ohhh…. And was the air sweet. And the sky above, the light of day. He hadn’t realized how much he’d missed it.

In fact- he hadn’t remembered being away from it at all. His time down below seemed like more of a dream really. This horrid, realistic dream that had finally ended… he took another few breaths and wondered if he could somehow convince the others to come up here. To join them. He wanted to tell Thorin. To show him. Because he knew the man still felt very miserable. And sc-

Bilbo’s breath hitched. He hadn’t been able to feel it in the forest but… he could feel it quite clearly now. With his own emotions settling comfortably within his breast, Thorin’s hopped all over the place. Worry, fear, misery, annoyance- Bilbo had just resolved to hop back down to force the king up this tree when he lost his grip. He caught himself- of course. But the movement had him pushing a part of a tree back that he hadn’t been pushing back before.

And beyond this area was… “T-the lonely m-mountain…” He gasped- “Thorin!” He let happiness flood him- surprised happiness- “I can see it! We’re nearly there!” He ducked below the canopy, “You hear that? We’re almost-“
That move had him slipping. Falling. He tumbled down from the tree and was barely able to catch himself on…

On the leg of a giant spider.

The hobbit squeaked. The thing hissed and lunged and he let go- fell.

He was caught in webs. Webs that sought to bind him up tight. He knew what would be coming. And he felt this urgent need to get his sword out.

So he did. He drew his blade with an arm that was too heavy for its weight and managed to set the thing upon his chest as he was sealed inside.

The pressure of that knit was so tight though that he passed out.

He did not awaken for a good long while. And he wasn’t quite sure why he had… but he’d used his sword in an instant. Killed the spider that had had the nerve to smell him and… watched. Watched as it hissed and reared and stumbled from the branch- and down a good sixty feet below.

Oh good gods they were in the trees.

His friends were wrapped up about him an- Thorin.

Bilbo looked about frantically but- they all looked the same. And they were all in danger. He’d be caught himself if he didn’t find a way to hide. Somewhere, anywhere.

It was the sound of a spider walking by just behind his own hiding spot that scared him enough to remember his ring. He slipped the thing on with trembling fingers and gasped when the hisses and clicking noises about him evolved into voices. Words. The spiders were speaking.

Bilbo listened to their horrid words. Knew that they were plotting nothing but the demise of his companions and… moved. He threw a bit of bark as far as he could… and when they all scattered away, he set to freeing up his friends.

One by one, they slipped to the ground until they were a mess of wriggling blobs of web. Bilbo couldn’t feel a thing from Thorin… and he had to count the dwarves several times to make sure the surly king was in fact down there.

But there were thirteen… thirteen…

And now that they were upon the floor… they weren’t getting out. Well- come were getting arms out… but they looked tired. Weak.

Bilbo hurriedly tried shimmying down his own tree. Down, down towards them. The first dwarf he reached was Ori. And this one- he hadn’t managed to get anything of his own out. When Bilbo cut him free- he was startled… but weak. His eyes didn’t seem to be able to focus- it was almost as if he’d been drugg-

A scream Pierced the air. Outraged- that’s what it was, and it was a giant spider. One had apparently been told to come back, to guard the prisoners. It was speeding down towards them- Bilbo let out a yelp, but his hands flew to unleash his sword again and he fumbled. Got it ready and just as it fell upon them, he pushed his blade up and there-right in the softest part of its belly, he stung it.
The thing hissed and writhed and screamed out profanities. It could not see anything of him… but it felt his bite and it died, cursing the sting.

Sting…

It was through this sort of subterfuge that Bilbo deceived the spiders. He made sure they were away from his friends and began hacking them apart, bit by bit until their numbers could be counted with his hands. The hobbit was exhausted, but he knew he’d have to get rid of them all before he returned to help Thorin and the others. They would be too weak to help him. Too weak to run. He still couldn’t feel Thorin. He had to have been poisoned just as badly as Ori had been…

He’d find the strength he needed. Just a few more spiders. Just a few mo-

The whip of an arrow whizzing by startled him. Bilbo fell back against a tree and with wide eyes, watched as several elves dropped from the trees above. They hacked and shot and sliced the rest of the spiders until they were dead.

He was sure they would be able to see him- that they would spot him and raise their long brows and smile and greet him. They- they would be able to save him. Them! Oh~ thank the gods-

It was belatedly that he realized he still had his ring on. He’d huffed and pushed himself up from his tree and worked to pull at his ring- he almost had it off when he heard someone march in beside him.

“We’ve captured some dwarves my prince.”

Bilbo froze- c-captured?

A long-haired blonde elf, dressed in unbelievably exquisite armor turned. His eyes had narrowed in an instant and he kicked aside the bit of spider he’d been examining. “Dwarves?” He looked sick. Curious too- and he strode towards his scout- “What are dwarves doing here?”

These elves were nothing like those in Rivendell. There was hatred within the words of these people. A viciousness in their movement that he’d never known Elrond or any of his company to hold.

So Bilbo followed them. As silently as he could, and to his horror- he found his friends in the custody of yet more elves. They were holding his friends by the scruffs of their necks- or by their arms.

Everyone in his party looked sick. Exhausted. But Bilbo was able to find Thorin among the din- he was well.

Sick, maybe. But well enough to stand on his own. He was glaring up at this prince as they exchanged words… Bilbo watched with bated breath… and found himself proud that Thorin would seek to spare these dwarves the shame of knowing their comrades had fallen to trolls….

They took the lie the wrong way though. Thorin and his company were marched away as criminals, thieves.

All Bilbo could do was follow.
The halls of the woodland elves were massive. The gate to their kingdom was huge and expertly crafted and their kingdom itself? Well. Bilbo was quite sure they were underground, but the amount of light in the place made it seem eternally dusk.

His dwarrow friends were marched across very thin passageways. Up… and up… till Bilbo was no longer sure he knew what the ground looked like anymore.

To cells, his friends were led. Healers called. Thorin got attention first and Bilbo watched as close as he dared… making sure that he would be well. When he felt worry overflow him- he knew that the king would be alright. He smiled lightly and hunkered against Bifur’s cell door. The rest of the healing rounds went without a hitch. His friend were brought food and blankets. Bilbo’s own stomach growled at the sight of these things but he held off. He would not seek some of his own until he knew that all would be safe.

This is what he’d resolved to… but several hours later- he could feel Thorin’s worry tearing at his heart nearly as acutely as his stomach ripping at its own lining. He was a hobbit- he needed to eat.

So he waited until their guard had drawn away from Thorin’s cell and crept up to it. To those bars, he set his hand. To Thorin, he tried focusing on how comforted he was that Thorin was safe. How happy he was that he was unhurt. His hunger probably passed through too- but the point was that Thorin’s head had snapped up. His eyes had darted towards the door…

And a smile had flickered onto his face.

Relieved flooded Bilbo. Affection. Amusement. Thorin seemed to riffle through his crumbs, looking for something larger than a pebble. He wanted to- oh Eru- he wanted to help feed Bilbo-

The hobbit grabbed onto Thorin’s bars and put his forehead against them. Really, he wanted to hug the dwarf. To have the king think of him in such a way. To care for him, to worry for him… He relished that. And he wasn’t sure how long he ended up staying there either- but Thorin shifted closer. His hand set on a bar near Bilbo’s face and Bilbo thought he may have seen him. His heart skipped a beat. He- he was probably grinning but…

Those eyes didn’t sharpen with recognition… no. Thorin peered at him… then around him. He pressed against the bars, looking for Bilbo and Bilbo-

He could have cried.

A guard had seen Thorin… was moving towards them now and Bilbo stifled a whimper. He couldn’t touch Thorin to tell him he was here… and he couldn’t kiss him through the bars….

No… all he could do was push himself away from Thorin’s cell. The guard came up and eyed Thorin suspiciously… Bilbo watched Thorin roll his eyes and retreat… but that was all he could stand for. He left to go find himself some food.

He had to feel alive again. He had to get that image of Thorin looking past him, for him… out. Just out of his mind because… it was too much.

He was probably being dramatic. And maybe that was his hunger taking hold of him… It took him several more hours of wandering about and narrowly avoiding elves on their tiny walkways before he was able to find himself some food.
It was meager. Just an apple and some bits of cheese. But he’d hunkered down and enjoyed it in a corner like a mouse.

He took a few more things from the kitchens and used that the next morning to feed his rumbling belly. Thorin ended up having council with the King of Mirkwood that morning. Bilbo was happy for this. He was certain that this elf would be as hospitable as Elrond had been… Maybe a bit more reluctant- but at least gracious enough to let them go.

But no- this king desired jewels. He wished to barter with Thorin for their release when they hadn’t truthfully done a thing against him.

He was greedy. And as Thorin said, he lacked any sort of honor.

Thorin scoffed. Rejected his offer for release and Bilbo quite honestly couldn’t blame him. Just how cruel the elves had been to Thorin’s people hadn’t been clear until now. Bilbo had never bothered wondering why Thorin had had to retreat to the Blue Mountains. It was… so far away. Staying in Mirkwood, finding salvation would have made everything so much easier. Especially if the elven king had cared for their plight…

But for those bitter claims that he had experienced dragon fire himself, there was no remorse or pity in Thranduil’s eyes. Just anger. Anger that his greed wasn’t being satiated…

Bilbo was as disgusted as Thorin felt… and as he followed Thorin back to his cell, he communicated his pride as best he could.

It was probably a very feeble effort. He still hadn’t gotten the hang of directing or managing these emotions of theirs- but he tried none-the-less.

Thorin returning had the rest of the dwarves questioning him. Balin sounded hopeful.

“How went the negotiations? What say he? Did he give us an offer?”

Bilbo could hear the elf locking Thorin up snort.

Thorin himself sneered. “He did.”

Bilbo perked. The elf was leaving.. he had to follow him. Bilbo knew he had to follow him. Those keys would be the only way he’d get his friends out.

So… so much as he wanted to listen to Thorin speak to his friend. To their friend, he scurried off.

He didn’t get to hear Thorin’s witty response. He didn’t get to see Balin sigh and chastise him…

And he most certainly didn’t hear Thorin put his faith in him.

It spurred his stealthy feet on. He successfully followed the key-bearer. Stole the keys. Devised a way out, and made his way back. His friends had seem to have given up hope by then though. Bofur had sounded so resigned… Ori… unbelievably disappointed. He sounded every bit his age. ”We’ll never reach the mountain…” He whimpered…

It was with great satisfaction that Bilbo drew his ring off. “Not in there you won’t.” His name was shouted happily through every cell in the prison. His heart had skipped. He’d rushed to shush them,
though he himself was grinning like a fool.

Bilbo hurried to fit the key into Thorin’s door. The dwarf was holding his bars as if grasping them harder would save his life- and oh. When that door was unlocked- Bilbo was instantly swept up in a hug that stole his breath away.

When his feet touched the ground again, his lips were claimed quite hungrily.

Desire and pride shot through them both like a fire. Danger laced their movements- Thorin’s hand slipped down and squeezed at his ass!

Bilbo squeaked-

Dwalin cleared his throat-

And the world suddenly became populated with people again.

“O-oh…” he touched at his lips- eyeing Thorin like a stranger. The dwarf grinned. He looked… roguish, standing there in nothing but his underthings, hair tousled, eyes needy… Bilbo swallowed hard and forced himself to scurry away.

There were more dwarves to let free.

And they still had to escape.

Luckily, the rest of his plan fell into place quite easily after that. By the next morning his company was zipping down a busy, raging river in a bunch of barrels. There were orcs after them and the elves were very angry…

But they would reach Erebor. One way or another.
Kili was hurt. There was an arrow-head lodged in his leg and a nasty gash that was gushing blood. It’s size detailed the grizzly way the orcish shaft had angled and torn at his flesh when knocked against the edge of a barrel. He was currently trying to stem the blood with a sopping wet strip of cloth… Oin was rummaging through his pockets, seeing which poultices he still had on him while Fili was holding his brother up. His brows were laced with worry, Bilbo was certain he could feel every bit of Kili’s pain… for he could certainly feel the guilt rolling inside Thorin. “He won’t be able to walk on that properly… not for a long while…” Bilbo said quietly. “Thorin-“ He looked up to the dwarf.

“We have to get moving.” Dwalin said, returning from his one man scouting mission a little ways up the river, “They’ll be upon us soon.”

“Well we got no way to cross the river.” Balin said sourly. “And with our injured, we can’t make it around the forested area. Especially not with Durin’s day approaching…”

Bilbo took a quick breath. “Durin’s day… that- How close is that?”

“Less than a month.” Thorin said roughly. “Oin- have you got anything?”

“Blast those damnable elves…” The healer mumbled. At last, he produced a tiny vial. This, he handed off to Fili who used his trembling fingers to unstop the thing for his brother- “That’ll dull the pain.” He said, watching Kili down it. “But to fight infection? To properly bandage the thing?” He shook his head and gazed at them, “We need a settlement. I can’t do this on the road. I have nothing.”

“Then we move. Now.” A war was raging within Thorin. It was as if he expected people to argue. Or… as though he himself wanted to argue. His eyes remained trained on his nephews, even as everyone picked themselves up from the rocks. The worry only seemed to lessen when Fili had forced his brother to climb onto his back.

“I’ve got you.” Fili had insisted.

And their miserable trek downstream began.

The rocks were slippery and everyone’s boots were still soaked.

More than once, a dwarf would slip. Trip. Stumble. Bilbo himself was having a hard time finding traction, so he jumped from rock to rock when he could. Luckily- they didn’t need to wander too far. A couple of miles later, they caught sight of a small dock.

And better yet- a dock with a boat tied to it!
“I-I can’t believe it!” Bilbo laughed and moved towards it—“A boat!”

Thorin’s hand clamped about his arm quickly and firmly. “Quiet.” He signaled for Dwalin. Gloin. Together, they advanced. There was no one on the boat—of course. They had seen so much from a distance… But Bilbo could see them moving off near the boat. To an area that was concealed—

He rubbed at his arms and cursed the chill of the water. He sincerely hoped he wouldn’t catch a cold… but he wasn’t dense. Being this wet and this cold and having been in that water for so long… Bilbo sighed and shifted on his feet. Hopefully, this boat would be their means of esca—

Something clattered to the ground.

“Try that again and the next will be through your eye.”

He spun. Ori had frozen—hand raised as if he’d tried throwing something. He stood before Fili and Kili, both of whom were eyeing something…

Someone…

A… Big folk. Pointing a bow at the—“Now see here!” Bilbo let his rage boil within, “We’ve done nothing to warrant your hostilities! So stop pointing that thing at my friends!”

He could hear Thorin’s angry shout behind him. Dwalin’s— but he paid them no mind. He marched right up to the human that was now pointing his bow at him. “Now, I’m not sure how you run things here the east, but in the west, it’s proper manners to introduce yourself before bothering to gain insult from a person.”

The man rose a brow… but his bow lowered a few inches… “Says a halfling… traveling with dwarves… what an odd company you keep.” Thorin finally made it to Bilbo’s side. He was huffing, fists balled, but Bilbo sent him a warning look—“who else would suspect something other than foul play when laying eyes on you?”

Bilbo made a face. “We can’t look that suspicious. And we’re not the ones pointing a weapon at you besides.” He glanced to his friends then straightened his back, and his coat. He caught the man’s eyes. “Bilbo Baggins, at your service.” He gave a short bow with his head, “And these are my companions.”

A smile seemed to work its way onto the man’s face despite himself. “Companions.”

“Aye—” Balin had spoken up. Even edged forward a bit. “We’re a traveling group of merchants from the Blue Mountain. We’ve come a long way and I’m afraid,” He gestured towards his friends, “We’ve run into a bit of problem with…” he took a breath and sighed heavily, “thieves.”

The man snorted. “Thieves.” But he put away his bow and eyed them all again with far much more amusement than before.

As if he was any better than them. These were pretty good excuses! Bilbo stamped his foot and puffed out his chest a bit more—“Is that boat over there yours?”

“If it is?” The man was looking at him as though he saw something special in hi-
Bilbo blinked and looked to Thorin. The dwarf was already gazing at him. His jaw was set, his shoulders tense. Was he jealous? Were these angry and short-tempered feelings coming from…

Balin’s voice drifted over them. Directed the conversation to the boat and to having it charter them across the water… Bilbo was in a staring contest with Thorin though.

The king under the mountain was searching his eyes. As if he was expecting Bilbo to suddenly tell him he’d fallen desperately in love with the bargeman in the short time they had interacted with one another.

It was a ridiculous thought that had Bilbo rolling his eyes.

Thorin growled low in his throat to this- and Bilbo sighed in exasperation. His hands found his hips. He gave Thorin a warning look because really. Really. After all that they’d gone through, after going through so much effort to show Thorin that he cared, that he liked him, the dwarf was going to play as though he had reason to be jealous.

He’d been defending the company. Had been standing guard of his people while Thorin had scouted ahead. Thorin had no reason to be jealous.

None at all. Bilbo loved him.

A-and maybe he hadn’t said it yet. Bu-but th-that didn’t make it any less true. His feelings were soaked in his affections for the man before him, even despite how aggravating he was being at the moment.

This is probably what got Thorin to calm at last.

His eyes softened at least. Then the king swallowed… let his shoulders relax…

Bilbo sighed and looked to the bargeman… only… he wasn’t standing where he’d been standing at before he and Thorin had begun to…

T-to look at one another- heavens. Had he just been standing, staring at the dwarf while others moved about?!?

By the position of the rest of the company- it certainly appeared that way.

He flushed. Looked at Thorin again and frowned. “Try to play nice?” He said. They hurried to join Balin and somehow- through a miracle of bartering and negotiating, they secured their place on that boat. It would cost them all their wealth though.

And everyone was grumbling as they turned out their pockets.

The steep price made everyone extremely picky about all things including the way their oarsman was steering the ship. As if any of them knew how to command the boat- it was so silly, Bilbo decided not to have a part in it. So he dawdled near the man. Asked of his name, inquired as to his children. Bard seemed as curious about Halflings as Bilbo was about big folk and soon, hours long conversations were flowing between them.

He could feel a prickle of jealousy light in his belly… but it was only just a prickle. Once and a while, when Bilbo would grace Thorin with a glance, he’d get steely blue eyes staring back at him...
He’d see a frown beneath that dark moustache and beard… he would even make out more than a tinge of annoyance.

Yet jealousy… appeared to be a thing Thorin was trying to hold back. It was this effort that made Bilbo smile gratefully. Each… and every time. It was sweet that Thorin would work so hard to allow him to communicate like a normal, sociable hobbit.

It made his stomach warm. Made him squirm just a little bit.

They were snuck into Laketown in barrels filled with fish. Made to swim in frigid waters and emerge up through the toilet of their host. They were penniless, relying upon a stranger and now…

Bilbo was sick. Sneezing and coughing. Bard’s little girls were all over him, getting him towels and ushering him off to the bath. He would not let them wash him- he wasn’t a child. But he accepted the clothes and melted in a warm bath.

When he emerged, he was still coughing… but his headache had lessened a bit and his body felt a little lighter. He was given a blanket to swing over his shoulders and a cup of tea to help soothe his throat.

Thorin found his eyes from across the room. He stood… and stalked over… and when Bilbo muttered a greeting… well…

A cautious hand came to his hip. Another to his forehead. He felt warmth roll over him. Worry. Thorin made a noise at what he felt and sighed. “How could you have gotten this sick? The rest of us…” He stopped himself and sighed- pulled the hobbit in closer. “You’re shivering.”

“I can’t help it.” Bilbo said a bit irritably. “S-s cold…” He was ushered to the fire, given a chair. And instead of leaving him to warm by the fire alone, Thorin pressed his front against Bilbo’s back and set his hands upon Bilbo’s shoulders and tugged him against him just a little bit. Warmth in the front. Warmth from the back… Bilbo let out a small sigh… and let himself sag against the feeling.

The tenderness…

He… felt at home like this… as if he’d been returned to Bag End.

Bilbo fell asleep.

And then somehow. At some time, his body found its way to bed. The only reason he realized this was because the next day, he woke up in a very soft bed covered in a great many blankets with a body… c-curled up beside hi- “Thorin!” He squeaked.

The man beside him grunted and hugged him closer. He nuzzled the top of Bilbo’s head and tossed a leg over Bilbo’s smaller frame- “O-oh… o-“ His heart leapt to his throat.

His hand flew to his face and he sneezed right into it.

A moan… and he relaxed back into the bed, glaring at his snotty hand with disgust… “Awake so soon…” Thorin said, taking a breath and lazily opening an eye. When he saw the look on Bilbo’s face, he snorted lightly, “Despite all that you’ve seen on this journey, it’s your own bodily fluids that
have you wincing like that…” A hand moved… and suddenly, Thorin was wiping up that snot with a hand towel…

Bilbo didn’t know where it came from… and he didn’t remember Thorin ever being this *domestic*… so… he was rather stunned… watching Thorin clean each and every one of his fingers with care…

When he had his hand back, he pressed it to his own forehead. Then another to Thorin’s. But… he wasn’t sick… just… smiling. “What…” Bilbo swallowed… and though his hand lowered from his own head… his other just moved to tangle in Thorin’s locks, “You’re… happy.” He said slowly… and oh, was he aware of how hard he was blushing.

Thorin shut his eyes… but his brows remained furrowed. “Should I not be? We’re nearing the mountain. We are no longer in direct danger of orcs and my nephew has a safe place to recover.” He took a breath- “We were spirited away from a supposedly impenetrable prison by a very unlikely hobbit… I…” Those eyes opened once more and Bilbo gasped for their brilliance. “I have not yet had the time to properly thank you for that.”

Bilbo’s blush flared- “O-oh… I think you did. I… that kiss wasn’t so-something I’ll forget anytime soon…”

Thorin hummed- but he was smiling again, “Ah yes… “ he was looking at Bilbo’s lips now. His leg tugged Bilbo a bit closer and the hobbit peeped for it- “Thorin! I-I’m sick!” He pressed a hand against the dwarf’s chest, “I’ll pass it on to you.”

A kiss came to his forehead. “I highly doubt that.” But he let the hobbit relax in his embrace…

When Bilbo had to rise to use the bathroom, Thorin resolved to get him food. And indeed, when he emerged back up from that frigid powder room, he found Thorin at the table talking with Bofur and Gloin, Balin and Dwalin. A seat lay empty beside him, a steaming bowl of soup and a hotter cup of tea inviting him and his rumbling belly.

“Master hobbit.” Their host greeted him from the kitchen. He’d apparently been keeping out of Thorin’s conversation before, for he got many annoyed looks when he approached the table now.

“Good to see you on your feet. How are you feeling?”

Bilbo moaned and shut his eyes at the sudden wave of feelings swirling within him. His hand caught his head- “Could be doing so much better.” He grunted out. Thorin’s hand flew to his back and those emotions that had been thrust at him curled as if sorry and ebbed away just a bit. “Mmm… I’m…” He shook his head and sighed. “I think I’m just really tired…”

“To be expected…” Bard eyed him carefully… "after having traveled as far as you lot have... still, I have to wonder how you've been allowed to become sick. Surely it was known how dangerous sickness can be on the road?”

"Circumstances led him to this. Not neglect." Thorin growled, "I'd ask that you keep your questions to yourself barge man."

Bilbo tsked, "Stop that, he's being hospitable. " he cleared his throat and leveled Bard with a look- "But I will have to ask you to not accuse my friends of not caring for me. It’s my own fault I’m like this.” He sniffled. He may have been able to have found a better way out of the woodland kingdom had he given himself more time. But the river had been his ultimate choice and he’d have to deal with the consequences now. If all that came out of that adventure was a bad cold, then really. This was no problem at all.
Bard frowned… but nodded tightly and set an extra sprig of peppermint into Bilbo’s tea. “Understood.” He squeezed one of Bilbo’s shoulders and called out for his son. “I’ve got to get some more food- You lot eat far much more than I ever could have expected.” He winked and gathered up a few baskets for produce, “Remember. Don’t take a step out of this house. Not a one of you. Until we can figure out a way to introduce you lot to the public at least. You’re illegals here with suspicious pasts. You’d be locked up in an instant and that’d make it rather hard for me to finish my end of this deal.”

Thorin was glaring up at him. “You’ve made that clear enough.”

Bilbo moaned at the jealousy biting at him. He shrugged off Bard’s hand and sank against the table- “I don’t have the energy for this~” He muttered. “… you’re making me sick…” Really- he felt like crying. His body was strained and this extra work of keeping Thorin’s emotions in beside his own was-

The dwarrow king shifted beside him. He heard him take a frustrated breath- felt annoyance work into him, and guilt and…

“Don’t get yourself too worked up over things like dwarven tempers.” Bard gave a pat to Bilbo’s back. “They’ve always been like this. Rude, reluctant to accept a helping hand. I’m sure you knew this already…” He sighed. “But it always helps knowing you’re not alone in a thought.”

Anger now- and Bilbo just let it take over, “Would you please just leave us be?” He was glaring at Bard now- holding his stomach, “It is rude to assume all dwarves are carved from the same stone. All men certainly are not birthed from benevolent kings and not all elves are born with sense so I will kindly ask you again, Master Bard to stop insulting my friends. All of this yelling-“ His hands curled, “I-is making me si-significantly sicker. I… I rather think I’m…” Bile rose to his throat and he gagged for it. Covered his mouth, blushed crimson then slipped from the table and hurried downstairs.

He emptied his stomach into the toilet whilst moaning pitifully. He’d wanted to feel Thorin so badly at Beorn’s house but now... Now he could only wish he was able to switch the whole thing off. After he was sure he could toss up no more- he rolled off of his knees and onto his ass. His back found comfort against a cold, wooden wall. His eyes shut…

He was shivering, but he didn’t feel like leaving. Not at all. He wanted to curl up into a ball and…

“Bilbo…?” A large hand settled on his knee. Thorin was kneeling before him… but Bilbo would not look at him. He couldn’t he- “He’s gone… he left to gather supplies and…” His voice sounded a bit strained- “He… apologized. He said he hadn’t meant to upset you… nor… insult me.” His hand clenched Bilbo’s knee a bit tighter.

Bilbo sighed and covered it with his own, “… he couldn’t find a word to say… and Thorin… seemed to understand for he… remained where he was…

“You’re cold.” He said at last, “You need to be kept warm while you recover. Please.” Thorin’s hand turned over and he stood, waiting, “Let me take you upstairs? I’ll have some more tea prepared… something to soothe your stomach.”

Bilbo groaned.. “Please… don’t mention my…” He snapped his mouth shut and leaned towards the toilet.
He had nothing more to throw up... but it was a comfort knowing there was a place he could just...
“Bilbo...” Thorin seemed to hesitate before him. “I need to get you upstairs. I’ll...” He grunted. “We
will find something for you to... relieve yourself in should the time arise for it... but...” a hand
finally settled upon his back. “I need to get you warm...”

Bilbo swallowed... and miserably noted that his throat was considerably more sore now than it ever
had been before... “Mnn... I... I don’t... “

“Here.” Thorin scooped him into his arms.

Bilbo’s stomach lurched- but so did his heart. His hands flew to tangle in Thorin’s shirt- his face
buried itself in that chest- “Thorin-” The dwarf said no more. Simply carried him up to his room...
and set him on the bed.

He took a washcloth and let Bilbo wipe his face as he himself got the hobbit more water. And when
Bilbo was all settled, he made sure there were plenty of blankets to cover him before he himself
began to climb onto the bed- “Th-what are you doing?” Bilbo whimpered, digging his face into a
pillow-

“Warming you up.” And his bound body was tugged backwards into Thorin’s body. A head rested
against the crook of his neck and Bilbo shivered for it.

“Don’t you have... other things to do?”

He was rewarded with a light snort. “More important than you?”

Bilbo didn’t try to answer that. He was blushing far too hard and his heart beating far too fast as it
was.

He spent that day, and the next day in bed, slipping in and out of sleep... Thorin was his constant.
There when he awoke, there when he needed to eat and there to warm him when he got too cold.
Bilbo fancied that Kili had come in a few times. He, his brother and a few other dwarves... he was
never awake long enough to hold a conversation.... But he saw their faces. Heard their wishes. And
occasionally, in the dark of night when he couldn’t fall back to sleep, Thorin would stir and pet his
hair. He’d rumble out in that deep voice of his the words of their compatriots. Their wishes for him to
get better...

Indeed, the third morning of his sickness found him with sniffles, but little else. He smiled when he
assessed this much and wiggled in Thorin’s arms, eager to pop out of bed to tell everyone...

But Thorin groaned and tugged him back against him- “Thorin-“ He sighed and tapped at the arm
about him, “Wake up- I’m feeling much better, I want to go an-“ His breath hitched as Thorin
nuzzled into his neck. “O-oh... I-“ He felt Thorin’s’ grogginess... Today... his senses seemed far
more sensitive. Fresh almost. As if he’d been clogged in the heart as well as in the mind. It was... nice. To feel Thorin again like this... but he was eager and bored of lying about in bed. He elbowed
Thorin- “Come on. You’re a dwarf aren’t you? Didn’t you say you lot rise before the sun?”

Thorin growled and slipped a hand beneath Bilbo’s shirt. “Hobbit-“ Warned he- before sighing and
slipping his hand back out. Fingers traced Bilbo’s hip and the hobbit gasped. Squirmed-

“I... have been lying in bed with you for three days now...” Mumbled Thorin sleepily. “Three days
to watch you heal... three days with you in my arms and... on this day, the very first that you are
able to climb out of this bed, you wish to do it as quickly as possible.” Thorin used his leg to pull
Bilbo back against him just a little more… he sighed softly beside Bilbo’s ear… and seemed to relax against him all over again.

Bilbo was blushing quite vibrantly now. Sure, he could stay where he was. Being in Thorin’s arms felt… amazing. B-but now these touches and that breath… h-had had him awakening in other ways.

He was sure Thorin would be able to feel just what sort of ways soon. If not already. They’d never advanced far in terms of hiding anything from one another… only drugs and sickness and adrenaline seemed to do much of anything to de-det... w-was that hand slipping to rest on his belly?!

Bilbo peeped.

T-then quickly covered his mouth.

Thorin was teasing a finger in and out and about his belly button- “T-Thorin!” His hips moved back against the dwarf and earned him a solid grunt.

Thorin was now holding him against him- “Sensitive?”

“Y-You’re enjoying this!” Bilbo accused. “D-don’t try acting coy or i-innocent! You. You’ve been plotting this!”

Thorin hummed and nibbled upon Bilbo’s ear, “Have I?”

More amusement. More arousal- “Y-yes! A-and t-that’s quite devious, t-t-t-to… to be l-lying in bed with a sick p-person and to-”

“You are no longer sick dear hobbit. You have not been for some hours…” He kissed at Bilbo’s neck and let his thumb massage Bilbo’s skin once more, “You can feel me… As well as I can feel you, of that I am sure.” He allowed his pride to wash over them and all of Bilbo’s jittery feelings smoothed- a gasp was wrenched from his lips- “I wish to celebrate this moment. I wish to treasure you and lavish you with my attention and my affection. Would you deny that from me?”

“W-”Bilbo turned his face into the pillow and touched Thorin’s hand with his own… “Affection… “ he snickered. “You hold affection for me?” Came the amused tease. Thorin rolled atop him, trapping the hobbit against the bed as he tried to meet that face,

“You disbelieve?”

“I-“ Bilbo curled cutely beneath him and smiled when he felt that affection broil within Thorin’s gut- “Actually… I’m touched. It’s quite nice to hear you are affectionate of me.”

Thorin carefully tipped Bilbo’s shoulder back so that the hobbit was now laying upon the bed gazing up at him, “Would I have stayed by your side during your sickness if I was not affectionate?”

“Mmm… “ Bilbo touched at Thorin’s beard thoughtfully, “No… I suppose not-” He watched as a blush heated its way onto Thorin’s face. Those eyelashes fluttered too. Just a bit. Just enough to have Bilbo’s mouth go dry. “Are beards an erogenous zone for dwarrows?” He asked innocently.

“There are few reasons to touch another’s beard. It is not taboo… but it is not done very often either.” He balanced his weight onto one arm while he allowed the other to rake through Bilbo’s hair quietly…
Bilbo couldn’t have been happier. Nor more comfortable. What’s more- he could feel the reasons why those lines were softening upon Thorin’s face. The way that desire was being reined back so that they could enjoy this moment…

Oh and how he could feel the affection Thorin had spoken of… and also… something more that he would not admit to. That fluttering, tender feeling that laced into those normally stormy blue eyes was… w-was…

Thorin…

_Loving_ him.

He didn’t expect the tears that beaded at his eyes. He tried to wipe them away, but realized his body had become heavier. His throat felt clogged with emotion- he moaned and tried to hide himself away but Thorin caught his wrists.

He had had to sit back to keep his balance, but he took Bilbo’s wrists into his hands and held them away from his flushed and distraught face- “Why are you crying?” He asked painfully.

Feelings of inadequacy piped through him, guilt- he was not sure if they were his own or Thorin’s, so he shook his head and shut his eyes. “I-” His heart was swirling with emotions… “I…” A breath.

“I…-” Bilbo made a noise and caught those eyes, “I love you too Thorin.”

Thorin dropped his hands. he collapsed onto his own right above Bilbo and stared at him. Bilbo bit at his lip and brushed a bit of Thorin’s hair from his face… he didn’t bother asking what was rifting through Thorin though. He could feel it. Every bit of surprise and confusion, disbelief and… l-love…

“We’re in this so deep…” Bilbo whispered…

Thorin was shaking his head… searching his eyes… but they both knew exactly what was going on within the other’s heart…

It was frightening… and yet glorious… and when Thorin began to move, Bilbo shut his eyes and tilted his head up… because he _wanted_ that kiss as much as Thorin.

A kiss that was tender. Soft. That allowed them to seek breath before pressing together for another. Bilbo was the first to push it up. He licked at Thorin’s lips. The dwarf _growled_ and crouched over him. He cradled his arms about Bilbo’s head, tilted his own and attacked Bilbo’s mouth with a vengeance. Their tastes mingled. Their tongues played. Bilbo’s hands dithered about his lover’s neck- “I… “ He licked his lips, his eyes flitted to the closed doorway and he hummed for the sight. “May I undress you?” delight curled within him at the _hunger_ he felt from Thorin. He wiggled further down the bed. Till he was face to face with the robe covering Thorin’s chest. His hands flew to that sash… untied it with trembling fingers… when the fabric came undone, it enveloped him on either side. He dropped the silk he’d been holding and folded his hands in to touch Thorin’s warm skin. “No Mythril…” He sung, kissing at a sternum.

Thorin grunted, “I’m in bed with you. What need have I of armor?”

But Bilbo wasn’t listening. He was fingering the soft hair upon the dwarf’s chest. “Mmm…” then touched at one of those nipples. Thorin twitched a bit for it but he did not _dare_ move. Bilbo gave it an experimental lick and _blushed_ when Thorin groaned. “that?” But it really wasn’t a question. His
hands came to rest upon that chest and he lifted his face again to lick. It was… not easy. To find something with your face, but once he had it in his range, he licked and sucked… then would rub at the nub with his thumb. The other called and he licked it- before falling back onto the bed and gazing up at Thorin.

Their eyes met.

Bilbo snickered. His hands caught hold of Thorin’s hem. And he pulled. Himself. So that he was tangled in blankets and in-between Thorin’s legs. He worked quickly to undo the ties holding those pants closed. Thorin’s hips were already twitching, as if he was getting ready to move… But Bilbo was fast. He was facing those smalls soon enough. He could smell him. Musk and precum- it was wet. There was a damp spot on the cloth before him and Bilbo touched at it. Moaned when his finger drew away with a bit of that substance attached…

It was gone in an instant. Thorin was sitting back. Grabbing him from beneath his armpits and heaving him up the bed. His lips were claimed before he could properly protest. His clothes were picked at. He didn’t have much on. A nightshirt. A light pair of sleeping pants. He was bared the moment Thorin finished with those buttons.

And he wiggled for it. Kissed at Thorin, hoping to distract him…

But a heavy hand fell to his chest anyway. Rubbing and touching and pinching and- “T-Thorin~”

“You have any idea what you do to me?”

Bilbo beamed up at him- taking a few strands of hair between his fingers and tugging ever so lightly. He could feel it. Every little bit of happiness that was swirling within Thorin. He could feel how heated he was getting, how breathless… and how very much he loved him.

His response was to raise up, wrap his arms around Thorin and kiss him as soundly as he could. “A bit of an idea.” He breathed. Thorin lowered, deepening their kiss and Bilbo moaned. Tried… directing Thorin to turn over… but…

Turning over one’s lover when they didn’t expect to be turned over was…

He huffed. And now Thorin was staring at him with a brow raised, “Just… turn… over.”

Thorin hummed. His lashes shadowed his eyes ever so slightly, “You want me on my back.”

“I want you on your back.” Bilbo gave a slap to his arm. “Please?” Thorin had the nerve to grin and chuckle… but he conceded, flopping onto his side and letting Bilbo turn him the rest of the way.

“You~” His brow furrowed, “You’re supposed to~” He slid out of his pants then situated himself on Thorin’s belly with a grunt, “You’re supposed to be aroused, not amused.”

Thorin set his hands to Bilbo’s thighs and Bilbo shivered, bit his lip. He didn’t stay like that though. Merely pressed forward, kissing Thorin, reveling in the way the dwarf touched at him freely. Fondling and caressing his exposed skin- He gave a kiss to Thorin’s clavicle before scooting back.

His smalls brushed against Thorin’s bulge and his breath hitched for it. He hunched down over Thorin and… rubbed himself back against it.
Then. *Then* of course he realized that that had been rather lewd of him. He stopped. And scooted down to sit on Thorin’s legs. His hands worked Thorin’s own smalls out of the way, exposing a hot, hard cock—

His fingers hesitated in touching it…

But when they had… it was gently. Tenderly… he stroked up from its base to its tip… then pressed it against Thorin’s belly. “Will you show me how to make love?” He asked quietly.

He could feel that dick twitch beneath him. Thorin’s fingers dug almost *painfully* into his legs. “I would show you…” Thorin shook his head slowly, “*Anything*… bu-but that…”

“Bu—”

“Bilbo…” Thorin caught one of his hands. “I want you.. I would take you.. make you mine… “

“But you won’t.” Bilbo finished hand seeking to remove itself from Thorin’s. “I don’t… Thorin—” He could feel it. Thorin’s desire. His love. And the way he was holding himself back, Bilbo didn’t understand a *lick* of it. All Thorin was spouting was rejection and the pain of that was making Bilbo… miserable.

“I want you to have so much more. More than *this.*” Thorin waved a hand about in frustration. “Your… your first time… should you give it to me should be in a soft, silken bed… surrounded by gold. In walls that are impenetrable. You should have been pampered, well fed. Looked up to by all—your first time… should be one to be remembered… it should not be… here… in this—” his eyes shut painfully, “In this— cold, forsaken town… in a bed that is not our own… in a time that—”

“Thorin.” Bilbo said testily, “My first time is going to be with *you.* I don’t *care* where it is. I don’t care how others will see me. I don’t care what sort of bed we’ll be on or how much money you’ll have, I just want you. And I want you now.” He straightened. “*Please.* Just… show me. If you cannot say that you l-love me…” He stilled, “t-then at the very least… show me how you love me.”

Thorin frowned… then reached back and cupped one of Bilbo’s cheeks. The hobbit squeaked for it but Thorin kept a level expression. “There is much. So much we have not done. What you ask of me… will bundle everything together- I don’t want to pu—”

“*Push* me Thorin.” Bilbo thumped his hands against Thorin’s chest. “Push me. Show me. Teach me. And if we can’t do everything tonight, then we’ll find a way tomorrow night. And if tomorrow night isn’t good… then the night after that— I *want* you.” Thorin made a noise in the back of his throat. “You’d ask me to…” He groaned and used his hand to squeeze that cheek, to pull it apart from its twin and allow his other hand to… his other fingers to… *graze* against Bilbo’s hole—

The hobbit gasped. His hands flew behind him- to where Thorin was touching.

"Dear, *sweet* hobbit... should we continue...I would be required… to make this area…” Thorin tilted his head, “Loose. I would have to stretch it out so that I may slide into you—” His finger pressed against that pucker and Bilbo whimpered—

“I-in there.” He breathed. “In… oh… I…” he tried looking behind him, “Th—I’m not sure that area s-stretches…”
"It-" A throaty chuckle, "It would stretch."

"E-enough for you to fit?" Worry- it was a cloud above them both now... Then Bilbo's hands reached for him, tried touching a him. Thorin's mouth went dry- he bucked at the feel and jostled Bilbo just a bit. "This feels... p-pretty bi-"

Thorin pressed his fingertip in and Bilbo gasped. His spine straightened. His hands flew to brace themselves on Thorin's arms. "O-oh." His eyes shut. "Mm... th-feels..." he took a breath and wiggled his hips, "Press in a bit more."

But Thorin took his finger out- "We will need... lubrication."

"Lubrication?" Bilbo's mind was abuzz with the memory of the fingertip. The way it had pressed in had spurred a line of curiosity he now desperately needed sated. "Ok. Where do we get it?"

Their eyes met. It became obvious that Thorin had, in some part, hoped the declaration would have squelched Bilbo's need for this. For only now, he seemed to rack his mind for the information... "The... kitchen. I suppose."

Bilbo's brows rose. "Excuse me?"

"Cooking oil would be the mos-"

"You want me to put cooking oil up my-" Bilbo made a face and thumped Thorin upon the chest again, "What else? What else could we use?"

Thorin groaned softly, "Aside from waiting until we may contact Oin again, there are no other options."

Bilbo frowned- "And where's Oin?"

"Perusing…"

"E-excuse-"

Thorin sighed and began to knead Bilbo's ass, "It was Bard’s idea. To introduce us slowly into the populous. Yesterday was Kili and Gloin’s turn. Today is Oin, Ori and Dori."

Bilbo made a face… "And… you think Oin would have something…"

"He would be able to formulate something, yes." Silence fell before them… and desire still snuck about them. Neither would be willing to wait for the healer to return… so Thorin let his hands fall, "Come, I'll retrieve the oil."

Bilbo huffed, "Oh." He slid from atop Thorin and gathered his pants. "And how should that look? No, I'll get the thing, Cooking oil." He dressed, "Ridiculous. But if it will work, then I suppose there's nothing for it." He shook his head and slipped from the room with barely a sound.

There were dwarrow all over the little hovel. Some reclining in chairs, others against banisters. Some were eating, some were smoking, one was reading. Amidst them were Bard’s children. Bofur was teaching the boy how to whittle and the girls were both talking to different dwarves. It was a more toned down version of what his house had looked like the night they’d all come barging into his life.
To sneak through it- aiming for the kitchen with a near-nude dwarf holed up in a room waiting for him was the strangest thing…

And he managed to find the kitchen unseen, which was most definitely, the most surprising part of his trip. Not a soul called out to him or mentioned him, or even turned their head his way. So Bilbo located the most likely area to hold oils and grinned when that's what he found. Bard’s wife had been very well organized… and her husband must have loved her very much… to have kept everything in the same place even after she’d departed…. He took the bottle… and jumped when he heard the front door open. He stared, wide-eyed at Bard. The barge-man stared right back at him…

Bilbo moved.

Bard… watched. Then Bard’s own son called out for him- “Da! look what I’ve learned!”

Bilbo took his chance while it was there. He spun, and hurried back to his room. Heedless of any others noticing him. When he shut the door- he was beaming red and shaking all over. He sunk to the floor clutching that tiny vial of oil to his chest-

Thorin was sitting on the edge of the bed, watching him with a brow raised… he… the blighter was amused! “How dare you!” He peeped, glaring up at Thorin through the curls that had fallen in his face, “D-don’t you dare laugh at me! I got this for you!”

But that smile wasn’t wiped off of Thorin’s face. Not in the least. In fact… he took his time responding. As if gathering the correct words… and when he spoke, it was with a smack of his lips, “My gratitude, Bilbo.”

Bilbo gaped at the dwarf… b-before he was able to get ahold of himself again. He forced himself to straighten, clear his throat and make his way towards Thorin Oakenshield.

Upon the bedside table, he placed the bottle of oil. Then- with eyes still locked on the nearly nude figure of his king, he began to undo his pajamas all over again. “Unbelievable. That’s what you are.” He said, huffing. “Well? Lie down.” He said, waving a hand as he shrugged off his shirt. “We have the oil now so… you can k-keep doing what you were doing.”

“Fingering… you?” Thorin’s eyes held a level of mischievousness that made Bilbo blush all over again. Now, he could see where is nephews got their spunk from.

“F-Finger- oh for- that is such a predictable and crass way of-“ He shook his head and pushed Thorin lightly. “W-well, Come on then.”

Thorin grinned and scooted back onto the bed. “Eager little hobbit?”

“Y-you’re incorrigible!” Bilbo said, hesitating with his knee on that bed. Thorin just chuckled and got more comfortable and he- Bilbo… swallowed and crawled a little closer… b-before he remembered the oil. He reached for it, grabbed it- a-and nearly dropped it, he was so nervous. He was now doubled over, holding it to his chest. He shut his eyes, trying to get a grasp of his beating heart- he’d been in bed with Thorin not ten minutes ago! How could he already be this wrecked?!

The hand that landed on his back was soft… e-encouraging…

Those confident and amused feelings that had been flooding Bilbo now toned themselves down…
Worry, sincerity. *Love* began to float back into him and Bilbo sunk against the bed… “Forgive me…” Thorin said lightly.

“…y-yes well…” Bilbo took a breath- “th-that wasn’t all you… I… guess I just remembered I haven’t done this… before…”

Thorin said nothing… but that hand remained on his back… and when Bilbo finally gathered the courage to turn his head to look at him… he… saw patience. Thorin wasn’t going to say a thing. Wasn’t going to do a thing.

His heart skipped a beat for that.

He bit his lip… And moved and sloppily kissed Thorin- “I- I may be bad at this.” He warned. Thorin smiled against his lips and curled a hand into his hair and kissed him carefully upon the lips.

Again- nothing.

Bilbo took a breath and carefully set the oil by Thorin’s neck.

He looked at all that was Thorin’s body and… bit his lip. It was hard to believe he had straddled something so gorgeous with so little thought before. But… Thorin wasn’t pushing him. And… he wanted this. So.. Bilbo slid a leg over. His balls rubbed against Thorin’s belly, his dick dragged along warm skin- Bilbo gasped. His hands caught him by settling on that chest of Thorin’s- “oh… alright…” He swallowed and…. Opened his eyes again. “Ok.” He took up the oil and found Thorin’s hand and pressed the vial into that palm, “Go ahead.”

Thorin grinned… and this time- Bilbo smiled right back at him. Anxious energy floated up. Thorin brought a hand up to call Bilbo forward to kiss him but… Bilbo was already leaning into it. Already pressing his lips against Thorin’s… and that fire…

It was lit once more.

Bilbo melted into Thorin, Thorin reveled in his hobbit. Their bodies heated one another, Thorin’s hands stroked at Bilbo’s thighs… when he moved them over Bilbo’s back to uncork the thing- Bilbo kissed him *harder*. And when he coated his fingers… a bit fell onto Bilbo’s back.

The hobbit gasped. His face rubbed against Thorin’s, that beard rubbing at his cheek- “U… mmmnn…”

His cheeks were fondled… pulled apart gently. That finger pressed to his hole and… the tip slipped in far easier than before- Bilbo gasped. Jumped. That finger popped out and he whined. “Mmm-“ His head buried into Thorin’s neck now. That finger returned. It pushed in and… this time? A little deeper.

“O-oh…” His back arched a bit. This intrusion- it… it was strange. Not painful, not yet, but…

Th-that finger was pressing in more. “Gnnnn- Thorin-“ He was panting in the prince’s ear now and… realized… that Thorin was breathing raggedly too. W-was he turning him on? D-did he like doing this too? Bilbo swallowed and suddenly- realized he could *clench* about that finger.

Thorin grunted for it. His finger twitched- “H-ha! Oh-“ Bilbo clenched again- “D-do that. Do-do that again… wi-wiggle… oh-“ He hurried to cover his mouth. The feel of that beat being stirred into him
was… *devilishly* good. A-and the finger was wiggling in even deeper.

“Th-Thorin… “ He propped himself up to see those eyes- “S-something… o-oh… I…” He absently stroked a bit of hair from Thorin’s brow- “S-couldn’t I do s-something for- o-nnnn~ fo-for you too?” The next bit of pressure had his eyes rolling- he was gasping now, panting- and Thorin-

Thorin *moaned* for it. His other hand moved closer to his working one. He pulled Bilbo’s cheeks apart a little more and his hole *stretched* all the more for it- “Do not ask such things of me…” Thorin managed- “The noises you make… that look on your face- I…” He *groaned*, “I would throw into you right *now* was I not certain it would hurt you…” He made a noise and nipped at Bilbo’s lip- “Just… relax for me… relax… mmmnnn… do not let me miss a moment of your pleasure. It… Bilbo…” he squeezed a cheek, “is the most gorgeous thing I have *ever* laid my eyes upon.”

All the way in now- And Bilbo *whimpered*. That finger wiggled hard and he gasped and collapsed against Thorin’s chest all over again- “O-oh E-eru… oh… Tho-Thorinn~” He whined and tried sneaking a hand beneath him to… t-touch at himself.

Thorin gave him a light slap on the ass- “Mmmnn.. you’ll cum like that.”

“*I*!”

Bilbo squirmed,

“Hold… a bit longer…” Thorin drew his finger out and… the next time he positioned it against Bilbo’s pucker it was with… *another* by its side- Bilbo moaned *loudly*. *Oh-oh go-*

He pressed. And a white sort of *pain* came with this- His body shuddered. Thorin stopped… And kissed Bilbo’s cheek. “Mmm… now…” He whispered. “S-stroke yourself for me… this… stretching will hurt…”

Bilbo keened- “I-oh… it’s o-only t-two fingers~” He took a shuddering breath but moved his fingers to circle about his waning dick, “You… are so much *bigger* than just… t-two…”

Thorin hummed… and waited a bit for Bilbo to tease a bit more pleasure out of himself. When the hobbit was moaning comfortably again- he… tried moving his hand once more. Those fingers sunk in and this time, with the strokes to his dick, Bilbo was gasping ahead of crying out.

His hand sped… then slowed… then stroked his cock down, against Thorin’s belly… He ground backwards… and he could feel Thorin’s dick beneath him. He… hadn’t realized it before but… his balls had settled right on Thorin’s dick- Bilbo lifted his hips a bit. Teaching between them to- to touch- “You’re wet.” Bilbo whispered, drawing his hand back. He couldn’t tell what was his and what was Thorin’s anymore- but he knew that he had gotten *something* from the dwarf.

He let out a moan and kissed Thorin’s chest. “You don’t mind… having to prepare me…?”

Thorin let out a breathless chuckle- “What, would you think I would find this dull?” He kissed Bilbo’s head, “You’d have felt it if I was.” Pride laced that statement. “Bilbo, the desire you feel is your desire combined with my own. I am desperate because you are desperate. I can feel the pain and pleasure you feel… *this* is why we only do this with one another. Because *no* other could possibly understand. We are of one mind right now.”

Bilbo took a soft breath- “One… mind…”
Thorin sighed- “Fo…forgive me. Our language does not always translate…” His fingers wiggled and Bilbo moaned. “Just… know. That this feeling is a rare thing. This connection we have…” His fingers slid out- then back in before Bilbo could eventhink of protesting. “Bilbo Baggins…”

Bilbo was panting, bouncing against those fingers. His body was heating, his heart thudding. His dick was hot and heavy but he no longer had the desire to stroke himself off. This felt good. “Another~” He breathed. “I-I could take another…”

Thorin didn’t question it. Simply lined up another and began to push- “Ooohh…” Bilbo reached back and helped Thorin spread his cheeks. It hurt more like that… but also helped those fingers slip in to their tips- “H-ha- oh Thorin!” He writhed against Thorin’s chest… “Mmm….” His fingers scrambled to keep his cheek in hand- Those fingers inching in were managing to take the edge off of his pleasure. Thorin was going slow enough not to hurt him… but his muscle was still unused to such an intrusion. He was fighting to keep himself relaxed.

“Bilbo...” Thorin let go of his cheek to reach below- to fondle Bilbo’s balls. He managed to brush his own dick along the way and moaned. Bucked. He was sensitive. He wouldn’t be able to last long if things continued the way that they were going- “Bilbo… please...” he stroked at Bilbo’s side and urged two fingers in deeper. The third curled its way out, “I... I need you to... stroke me off. Get me close to cumming...”

“Wh-why?!” Bilbo propped himself up- he looked properly debauched and Thorin could only groan for the sight- “We’re going to have sex!”

“You’re going to have me cum by continuing on the way you are, looking as good as you are. I need to o-offset. My desire. You need to get me close to release. I...” He grunted, “I’ll hold myself off when I’m almost there.”

“Excuse me? Hold... yourself off.” Bilbo was frowning now, but his hips were still rolling against those fingers. “What good will that do?”

“I won’t want to cum so soon.” Thorin managed. “I’ll last a bit longer when we-“

“Then do it to me too.” Bilbo said, sitting up. Those fingers sunk in deeper- he’d forgotten. And the pleasure that struck through his body had him tense. Had him gasp. Had him seeing stars, shivering, crying out and-

“Mahal-“ Thorin’s own back had arched for it. His head had been thrown back, his jaw clenched- “I don’t believe I have a-any choice in the matter...”

Bilbo was whining- shivering. “We’re going to cum at the same time...” He panted.

“We’ll need more than my hand.” Thorin looked about the room weakly. “We’ll need something to help tie us off.”

“Tie- well.” Bilbo tapped Thorin’s chest and wiggled so that he was slipping off of the dwarf, “We can use my tie.” He had gotten off of the bed and looked about once before realizing- “Wh-where are my-“ He spotted them. In a corner, neatly folded- “They’ve washed them.” he said with an impressed whisper.

“As best they could.”
Bilbo padded over and picked through it for his silken tie. It was stained and had holes all over it… but he presented it to Thorin and the dwarf smiled as though it were the key to Erebor. “So what’s the point of tying us off?” He asked as he clambered back onto the bed. Their fingers brushed as he handed it off, “How will this keep us from cumming sooner?”

Thorin waved to his lap and Bilbo blushed, but tried sitting on him whilst facing him.

Thorin helped. “If you put enough pressure to the base of your dick, no matter how pleasured you are,” He ran his fingers up Bilbo’s thigh. “You won’t…” a kiss, “Be able to release.” He nibbled on a lip and licked the tongue that had clicked whilst Bilbo moaned. They engaged in a deep and sultry kiss… Thorin leaning back ever so slightly to rest his back against the wall… “It’ll be tight… Are you ok with that?”

Bilbo snickered. “So long as it doesn’t do any lasting damage?”

Thorin kissed his cheek and guided the silken cloth between them. He took up his own dick first and allowed Bilbo to watch as he wound one end to his dick. Twice, he wrapped the cloth about himself… before he tightened its hold upon him and knotted it. The grunt he’d issued and the feeling of slight discomfort had Bilbo wiggling.

“How long has it been since you’ve done this?”

Thorin moaned softly. His hands caressed their ways up Bilbo’s sides. “It has been easily a hundred years since I have had the desire to draw out my pleasure for anyone.”

“Hundred?” Bilbo squeaked.

He was kissed. His lips smiled against.

“Your turn dear hobbit?”

Bilbo nodded quickly and Thorin took hold of his dick. He was… kissing him as he wound the other end of his scarf about the base of his cock. So he was mostly able to ignore how smooth it felt. How… arousing. When he began to synch it though- was when Bilbo groaned. His hands flew to Thorin’s wrists. “It hurts!” He squeaked.

Thorin loosened the hold in an instant. “Forgive me.” He kissed him and let the tie fall. His hands soothed at Bilbo’s thighs, he worked to help Bilbo forget the idea had been proposed at all and Bilbo melted for it.

“Nothing to forgive.” He took Thorin’s hands into his own and kissed the knuckles of one before guiding them back towards that cloth, “Please… try again?”

Thorin did. And when he seemed to hesitate in making the grip tighter… Bilbo reached down to tighten it himself. That uncomfortable feeling settled over him. It hurt but… he could deal with it. He was panting lightly as Thorin tied the knot. Kissed him as soon as he had the chance- and eventually…

Eventually, those hands found their way back to Bilbo’s ass. Bilbo moaned happily for it, and leaned against Thorin to grab for the bottle of oil that had been resting against his thigh since he’d climbed onto his lap. “More?” He asked, kissing his king and uncorking the thing. Onto his palm, he let a
little pool form. He offered it up to Thorin and Thorin ducked his fingers into it. Bilbo helped him
work it in… sucking at his lips, his tongue. The fingers found their way back and two of them
slipped in. “Mmmm… th-three Thorin~” His hand had already fallen to his own dick. He made to
stroke at it. But Thorin’s was down there too. He took it up alongside his own and whimpered for
the feel of it. The tie was on them both. And when he pumped his hand up… and down… “o-oh…”
He could forget there were three fingers working their way inside. Moving, tapping at him.
“Mnnn….”

“Thi-tie…” He panted. “How… how did you come up w-with such a thing?”

Thorin chuckled and nipped at his ear. “You didn’t know that you could hold yourself off in such a
manner?”

“You act as if I should have.”

To this, his lover hummed… “My discovery of it was more unfortunate on my end.” He kissed
Bilbo’s cheek. “A barely experienced… partner held me off without trying. She didn’t know how to
jerk a man off properly.”

Bilbo flushed. “H-how many people have you been with anywa-“

“None that were as responsive or precious as you.” Thorin moved a hand away from Bilbo’s ass to
tilt up the hobbit’s head and place a chaste kiss against those lips. “None that I shared my feelings
with. None that know me as well as you do.” He took a breath. “None… that I have loved.”

Bilbo’s heart skipped a beat. “Do I k-know you?”

“You do. In your heart- I can feel it Bilbo. I can feel it and it frightens me that another should know
me so well… does it not frighten you? That I can know you the way that I do?”

“Of course not.” Bilbo met Thorin’s eyes seriously. “That… is the most a person can ever hope for.
It is closer than anyone I know has ever been… to feel me… the way I feel you it…” He bit his lip…

Thorin smiled.

And soon? He was smiling too. Their lips met sweetly…

Thorin’s fingers slid quietly out of Bilbo’s ass…

His hands felt at Bilbo’s back. Bilbo raked his hands through Thorin’s hair. They revealed in the joy
floating between and about them…

“Untie me?”

Bilbo gave a light, drowsy nod and moved his fingers to the tie binding Thorin’s dick. It came apart
rather easily… his own, he hesitated with…

So Thorin moved in and undid it for him. Then? He lifted Bilbo’s hips up… Drew him closer still,
till he was more settled upon his stomach than his lap. He angled his dick under Bilbo once more.

Lined himself up.
Bilbo moaned—“Oh…” He tried looking over his shoulder, and took a breath “Now?”

“Mmmm…” He thrust against Bilbo’s cheeks… Fingers feeling for that stretched hole… he guided his head towards it… poked in—just a bit—

“Thorin~” Bilbo breathed. His body was tense, his heart running a mile a minute—

The king under the hobbit pressed his lips against an exposed neck. “Bilbo…” He slid in—his ears straining for that light keening sound Bilbo was letting out.

He couldn’t stroke at the hobbit’s back, he was holding him up, away from his dick. But he could nuzzle that neck. Nip at skin when it was close—“relax…”

“O-mmnn… it’s…” Bilbo shook his head. “It’s getting bigger~” He moaned, “It’s hot.”

“You are the hot one dear little one… Like a furnace…” with a grunt, he drew his dick out and let Bilbo fall to his lap again.

Bilbo whimpered for it—“Why—”

“I forgot I needed…” He took up the oil again and waved it tiredly towards Bilbo.

Bilbo flushed. “R-right…” He swallowed and took it up before scooting closer to Thorin again, “I’ll help?”

Thorin hummed and took his weight within his arms again. Like this, Bilbo reached back, hand primed and… gave a few strokes to Thorin’s dick. Soon, it was glistening. Slicking with wet sounds that had them both moaning… “I-inside Thorin…”

“Of course.” He lined up again and pushed. And the tip slid in easier. A good deal more drove in—Bilbo was shivering. “Oh- oh go—”

Thorin’s jaw clenched, “I’m sorry- it…” He rose Bilbo up and set him on the bed. Climbed over him, between his legs and kissed him, “It’ll be easier like this.” He breathed. He took one of Bilbo’s legs and lifted it gently before aligning again, pushing in again. And when the pain began to rear its head, Thorin took up Bilbo’s dick and began to stroke it tenderly.

The hobbit squirmed beneath him, torn between the two extremes. “O-ohhh…”

Thorin held still… and when Bilbo began getting lost in the pleasure his hand was creating, he pushed in, just a little bit more.

They formed a rhythm like this until Thorin was halfway in. “Y-you’re not stretching me anymore…” Bilbo moaned… “I-is that…”

“There’s no more stretching needed.” Thorin said, angling his hips away so that when he leaned over Bilbo, he wouldn’t push in more than necessary. “You have gotten the thickest part of me in you…”

“A-haa…” Bilbo swallowed… “So th-the rest…”

“I only need to push in and we will b-” Thorin lost his breath. With his legs hooked about Thorin, Bilbo had tugged himself down. Onto that dick. And it slammed in deep— and it rattled something
inside Bilbo that had him *mewl*. Gasp- Arch. He clawed at Thorin desperately. “Again. H-hit that spot again!”

“I- I don’t know where it was-“ Thorin was sweating, panting, but he quickly drew out to try to find that angle. He thrust back in and Bilbo gasped.

“O-ohhh… that- even wi-without that spot that feels-“ He moaned, “Thorinnn… d-don’t you dare stop. Fi-find that spot… d-don’t find it, I don’t care… just keep… keep going…”

Thorin grunted and did just that.

He couldn’t have stopped if he’d wanted to.

Bilbo was tightening. Clenching. The heat was dizzying, his cries arousing. The pleasure he was feeling was coupling with his own- he felt high. And drunk. And *incredibly* lucky.

“Thorin-“ Bilbo was grasping at the bed- “Thorin- “ He wanted to be more verbose. To tell the king how wonderful he felt, how *hard* he was, how hot and tingly and fantastic his body felt, but he could only chant out the king’s name.

And Thorin could only moan and pant and once in a while, Bilbo’s name would spill from his lips with this *nice* strain of *need* attached to it.

Bilbo kept those sounds close. His dick twitched. His body writhed- “Thorin- I-I’m goin-“

“With me.” Thorin grunted. He fell over Bilbo and began to *piston* his hips against Bilbo’s. In, out-the sound of their slapping skin was *loud* in a room already occupied with their gasps and moans.

Thorin’s hips rolled.

Bilbo tightened.

“**THORIN!**”

Bilbo came- Thorin *crashing* against him as his hips dug in-

Bilbo could feel a heat *rush* into his body. It was pressurized and fast and completely unexpected.

Thorin was cumming within him. He was whispering, breathing words of love to Bilbo and Bilbo was nothing but *mush* below him for it. “O-oh…” Bilbo hugged Thorin’s head against him… “mmm… “ His eyes shut… “Feels… s-so strange…”

His lover chuckled. “Strange.”

“Well- having something in me… I-like… you and… “ He licked his lips and Thorin chuckled. “It’s…” He shifted. “Mmm…”

“Bad?”

“Not… bad…” Bilbo sighed and toyed with Thorin’s hair… “different.” He paused, “Though that isn’t a very good explanation… is it?”
Thorin hummed… “As good a one as any.” He sat up and paused to eye the cum that had splattered on Bilbo’s belly. “I don’t know how it would feel myself.” He wiped a bit of cum off with his thumb. Then smiled and caught Bilbo’s tie to wipe at it.

The hobbit’s belly trembled under the attention. “No?”

“No.” He didn’t get much off. But it was enough to leave most of that skin bared.

Next, he moved to where they were joined.

Bilbo was hooked tight about him. Holding him with no problem at all. When he began to draw out, a bit of that skin followed. Thorin groaned for the sight and Bilbo whimpered, reached between them, “I-it’s not bad- is it?”

“Not bad little hobbit.” He stroked those fingers and drew out a bit more. A bit of cum leaked from his hole- and it was gaping open now, trying it’s best to close- Bilbo whimpered in discomfort.

Thorin stuck a few fingers inside and that unsettled feeling calmed within them both. Bilbo was still pulsing about Thorin’s digits… “I-” He sighed. “I can… yo-you just stuck those in there and it didn’t… hurt. How… how much did you stretch me?”

But his lover only chuckled. He kissed at Bilbo’s leg and lowered it gently to the bed. “Only as much as I needed.”

He was down to one finger now. He could feel his cum within the hobbit. It made him immensely proud. Warm. Bilbo knew because he could feel it and the idea of that… made him squirm. “And wh-why would you pull out so quickly?”

Thorin’s laugh was light and pure, “My dear beautiful burglar,” He wiggled his fingers, “You would have me again?”

“Of course I would! I-it can’t be over.” He peered up into those brilliant blue eyes, “You s-spent so long stretching me… a-and I got th-the oil. And… th-that was amazing- I…”

Thorin hummed and brought his fatigued dick to Bilbo’s hole- “You do not believe there will be other times?”

“I want this time to last longer!” Bilbo peeped. “One more. A-at least one more.”

Thorin grinned and kissed him. His fingers dove into Bilbo instead and the hobbit yelped- but he did not ask for them to be removed. If his lover wanted more, Thorin would give it to him. He just had to make sure Bilbo didn’t tighten before their next round could start.

His fingers wiggled. Bilbo moaned against Thorin’s lips- “H-mnnn… Y-you won-won’t need as much this time, will you?” His fingers played with Thorin’s shoulders. “Since you have some of that oil still i-in me?”

Thorin chuckled, Bilbo laughed. “… th-this feels… nice…” His head rolled back and Thorin nipped at his jaw, his neck, his shoulders. He moved down his body, tasting and feeling what Bilbo had exposed to him and Bilbo shivered for the attention. “I- I want to do tha-that too…” He pressed a hand to Thorin’s forehead. “Roll over.”
The dwarf sent his fingers in deep- “I’ll lose my spot.”

Bilbo absolutely curled about those fingers- “H-Ohhhhh blast it Thorin~ “ A whimper, “I just want to touch you~” His hips rolled. “G-get on your… sit like you were before.” He insisted. “I’ll climb on you and you can keep… f-fingering me. Gods, who ever came up with that title?”

Thorin smiled and kissed him. “Does it matter?”

Bilbo smacked him and he moved. He sat and waited for the hobbit to join him as he said he would but instead- he was greeted with the sight of the hobbit turning- twisting and smoothing his way along Thorin’s legs, head dipping towards his spent cock- “This needs…” Bilbo’s fingers played with it, “Some attention…” Thorin’s hands slid into his hair- “Thorin~” He kissed the head and hummed at how soft it was. How… musky it smelled… “mmmmmm… “ He licked it. And though it tasted odd, what with spunk and oil lacing it, he took it into his mouth and began to suck.

The king shuddered. His grip tightened in that hair, his hips fought against the urge to buck. “B-bilbo.”

That taste was being flooded with his own saliva. Thorin’s heat was distracting him- an-and now Thorin was doubling over him. Reaching down his back and- “O-oh!” That dick slipped from his lips as Thorin snuck a finger into him. “Mmm…~” He went back to Thorin. Arched his back a little though, in hopes it would help Thorin reach, This. This was… “H-ha… “ He set aside that dick and sucked a ball into his mouth. It… slipped in with little resistance and Thorin groaned. His legs tipped on either side of Bilbo- So Bilbo took to licking this area. To licking Thorin’s inner thighs. They were hairy- but not so much so that he felt distracted or deterred.

Besides. The sounds he was drawing from Thorin’s mouth were absolutely exquisite.

“Ha-“ Two fingers. Thorin had found a way to move two fingers into him. They were hooked, and barely in- Bilbo tipped to his side. He curled and hoped he’d helped and sure enough, this time, when Thorin found his pucker, those fingers slid in with no problem.

Bilbo moaned- “T-Thorin~” his head tipped against Thorin’s belly… his eyes shut and he brought Thorin’s dick to his lips… kissing it slowly as Thorin worked him slowly. It was amazing. To feel nothing but… desire. Love… to know they were on the same wavelength, feeling the same way…

It was comfortable. As if they’d done this many, many times before- but they hadn’t. They’d only done this once. This would only be their second time- He kissed at Thorin’s dick one more time before angling up and catching Thorin’s eyes…

Questioning…

His lips were claimed. He was brought against him. They relaxed against one another- just like that. Once and a while, Bilbo would gasp for breath when those fingers would twist and curl. His body felt electric and that only intensified when he sent a hand down between them to stroke of Thorin’s dick.

It was a strange, easy sort of fun- waiting for them to kick back up. Oversensitive skin was a wondrous place to tease his fingers, there were even areas he could find that weren’t intuitively sensitive, like the joint that connected Thorin’s waist with his thighs. His fingers pressed and rubbed and Thorin would grunt softly. Moan appreciatively.
He managed to handle the prince enough to have him *melt* into the bed again. Bilbo situated himself onto his lap. “Do you have *any* idea what you do to me, Halfling?” Bilbo quirked. “I *am* at your command.”

“A king in my pocket,” he gave a wiggle of playful hips and Thorin stilled them with a single hand, pressing his other between his cheeks again and adding a third finger. He hadn’t meant for the halfling to become tight all over, in fact, hoped he wouldn’t, but- alas he was. “O-Oh!” Bilbo squeaked as three squeezed in slowly and then- “W-Wait… Thorin! O-oh-I! It’s…!” And Thorin figured out Bilbo’s discomfort before he could voice it-

Their… *previous* session was… coming out of the hobbit.

“My, here I thought I was in deep enough for you to keep it.” Thorin teased and he sat up to kiss at Bilbo’s neck. He found Bilbo’s saturated tie and cleaned Bilbo up- “There, better? Will you let me continue, let me f--”

“D-Don’t!” Bilbo pouted a bit. “T-That’s… so. “ He covered his face- but he couldn’t press himself to finish his thought. Because… he could *feel* how un-disgusted Thorin was. How adorable he thought Bilbo looked hiding his face away and-

“Y-You kept me in for a good while.” Assured the prince. “It was actually, rather…” His voice tilted out impressively.

Bilbo *moaned*- “Oh my *gods* Thorin, you should not be this encouraging!” He let his head thump against Thorin’s chest...

And Thorin chuckled… his fingers traced Bilbo’s spine.

It was comforting.

Sweet.

Bilbo relaxed against the body of his lover, moaning only every now and again when Thorin would twist his fingers in just the right way…

“It…” Thorin took a deep, even breath. “It has been so long,” His voice broke a bit and Bilbo took to stroking his leg softly. “*so* long… since I have been able to relax like this. Since- Since I have been able to *enjoy* myself.”

Bilbo’s cheeks heated. The sincerity of that voice… was breathtaking. “Well… you deserve it. You *deserve* to be happy Thorin.” He had to wonder though- if he was really a good enough reason for Thorin to be this happy. Reclaiming Erabor- he’d understand. Seeing his sister’s son’s back home-yes. But… just… *being* with him?

“… You… possess a kind heart Bilbo Baggins.” His fingers stroked at the hobbit’s blushing cheeks. “I…” He took another breath, “For a dwarf to find one they can share themselves with is a rare gift…” Thorin mumbled lightly. “I did not believe I would ever be so lucky… to find someone with the ability to make me treasure *life*. Not family, not honor, not my kingdom… but the life in which I seek for my kin..” His fingers toyed with Bilbo’s curly hair, “You gave me your first time. You give me your heart, your dedication… and have trusted me enough to allow me into your mind itself-” He shook his head lightly and…
Bilbo actually saw him run out of words.

Which was fine.

It gave him time to kiss Thorin. To reach for the oil… to hum at the way their bodies were awakening…

“I have no intentions of ever squandering the gifts you have given me. Bilbo… please… try something with me.” He took what Bilbo offered to him as if he’d asked for it in the first place. Thorin lubed his half-hard cock and gently pressed the head of his cock to that hole.

“N-Now w-we are doing something new?” Bilbo perked nervously…

But Thorin didn’t look particularly devious. Nor mischievous. Rather, he felt nothing but sincere. Hopeful. This wouldn’t be something new then… or… at least it… wouldn’t be odd… or… too much to ask-

“I.” Thorin was beaming in a way that made him look a hundred years younger- “I do not want to speak. Make those noises, like you had when I first came within-” the hobbit arched his back, head bowing as Thorin began to slide within him. “No words, I want you to see how close to my soul you are, and I want you to feel my fear, my gladness, my pleasure and anger, everything.” He cooed and Thorin wanted him to see… how close they were? Aside from their body, aside from their thoughts- “Thorin..”

He could feel the king’s determination- Bilbo clenched about that cock once it was seated within.

His body thrummed with an unconscious command to burn, and his cock began to rise. It was fully hardened after a few ruts from Thorin’s hips, and then, Thorin’s large hands slid to his ass, cupped them and begun to raise him hobbit up and down, carefully, slowly. The rhythm between them built until soon, Thorin was adjusting his legs against the bed so that he could buck upwards.

Bilbo whimpered. His hands scrambled for purchase upon Thorin’s chest.

He bit at his lips to keep himself from moaning out. Instead, he settled with gasps. Pants. He could hear the slap of their skin, feel the sweat sliding down their bodies. He could feel Thorin’s need to please him. Could feel his love. His lust. His pleasure gained by having him. Being in him- i-in fact, he could feel this so acutely, he shivered for it. Buckled.

“O-“ He covered his mouth and shut his eyes.

He was bouncing now. Thorin thought that was cute. Even chanced remembering the way Beorn had called him a bunny back before Mirkwoo- “I am not…” He was panting…. “O-oh….” He groaned and wiped a bit of drool that had seeped out of the corner of his mouth. “Bu-bunny. Not a…” still, he continued to bounce. Thorin’s hands helped him. His own thrusts upwards helped him. And though he was very aware of the way he was being handled and driven into. The way he was being racked by pleasure, he had the idea of himself being… taken.

Now, he had a very strong feeling that the idea wasn’t one of his own creation… because he was in a hall he’d never seen before. And there were dwarves around that he didn’t know, had never seen… And yet he still felt as though they knew him well.
He was being slammed into, being claimed before some faceless yet important dwarves… He was Thorin’s. All would know this forever more. They would see him sweat, hear him cry out. The passion in which Thorin dedicated pounding into him would deter any from trying to steal him away-

This was not custom. But this is what Thorin yearned for. Absolute knowledge that Bilbo Baggins was his. His and no one else’s because he loved him, because he completed him, because- “OH-Maha-” Bilbo came hard and trembling upon Thorin’s chest- ju-just as he felt that heat erupt within him again.

His body lifted beyond its own weight. His heart became one loud sound. One giant, satisfactory thump. And that tha-thump went from high up, all the way below him. Where Thorin, where he knew Thorin lay. Because that made sense. They were connected. They were one of the same and yes. Of course they would feel as the other felt. Of course there was still pleasure erupting between them because they had reached a plateau together. They had cum together. And not just at the same time either.

No- with their minds, with their bodies, with their hearts and with their souls, they had reached the state of completion…

Together.

And Bilbo realized then…

That never in the history of hobbits…

Had a hobbit.

Ever given himself as completely to another… as he just had with Thorin Oakenshield.

Please drop by the archive and comment to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!