Posted originally on the Archive of Our Own at http://download.archiveofourown.org/works/2548256.

Rating: General Audiences
Archive Warning: No Archive Warnings Apply
Category: Gen, M/M, F/M
Fandom: The Hobbit - All Media Types, The Hobbit (Jackson Movies), North and South - Elizabeth Gaskell | UK TV
Relationship: Bungo Baggins/Belladonna Baggins, Thorin/Bilbo Baggins, Bilbo Baggins/Thranduil (one sided), Bofur & Bilbo (friendship)
Character: Thorin Oakenshield, Bilbo Baggins, Fili, Kili, Balin, Dwalin, Ori - Character, Nori, Dori, Bofur, Bombur, Bifur, Óin, Glóin, Dís, Gimli, Gandalf, Thranduil, Legolas, Aragorn, Bungo Baggins, Belladonna Baggins, Bard, Frodo Baggins, Elrond, Elladan, Elrohir, Arwen, Adalgrim Took
Additional Tags: AU, Drama, Romance, Angst, sassy!bilbo, angsty/angry!Thorin, two idiots in love, Jealousy, Possessiveness, Gandalf is still a meddler, Character Death, Happy Ending

When the East Met the West

by Silvaimagery

Summary

Bilbo was a Baggins from The Shire. All he had known was the West, but it seemed that the East wasn’t as bad as he originally thought.

Notes

I saw North & South and I just completely loved it. I kept picturing Thorin, especially since the characters kept referring to John Thornton as Thornton and they do share an attitude problem. Obviously, Smaug’s attack on Erebor and Dale never happened.
“Bilbo! Come inside dear.” Mother calls.

“Coming!”

I put the tomatoes I had picked in the basket before picking it up and going inside.

I set the basket on the table and go looking for my parents.

They were sitting in the sitting room.

I sit on the chair and look at them.

“Bilbo.” Father says. “We have decided to go on an adventure of sorts.”

“An adventure?” I frown.

Mother smiles.

“Yes. I’ve always wanted to see the East.” She says.

“It will a long journey but it will be something to write about once we get home.”

“But we don’t go on adventures.” I say.

“No. That is true, it is not proper. But your Mother wants to see the East and I don’t want her to go alone.”

“You will come with us.” Mother says.

“But Bag Eng. We can’t leave our home unattended. And you know Lobelia—”

“Yes, yes.” Mother interrupts. “I am sure Hamfast Gamgee will look after it. I know you are of age now Bilbo but I would like for you to experience this adventure with us. I am not young anymore and I know this journey will be my last.”

“Don’t speak that way Mother.” I tell her.

“It is true. That is why I want you to come with us.”

“Alright.” I say. “I will go on your adventure.”

“Oh Bilbo!” She says hugging me.

I pat her back.

“I will help you pack if you need help.” Mother says with a wide smile.

“Yes Mother.”

She leave the room in a flurry of excitement.

I look at my Father.
“Your Mother, she is and will always be a Took no matter how much I try to make a Baggins out of her.”

I smile.

He stands and places a hand on my shoulder.

“I know it will be strange and everything we Baggins recoil from, but it will make your Mother happy.”

I nod.

“Good lad. And who know? You might even like it.”

“I doubt that.”

“The Baggins’ are going on an adventure.” He says shaking his head.

At least I wouldn’t be alone in my misery.

I smile at my father.

“Best get a good night’s rest then.” I say.

“Right. Good night my boy.”

“Good night Father.”

I retire to my room.

That night I slept fitfully.

Just thinking of leaving home, of leaving the Shire made my stomach turn.

I lie on my side and stare out my round bedroom window.

It seems that I was going on an adventure whether I wanted to or not.

I sigh and close my eyes.

Morning came too soon for me.

I put on my robe and walk down to the bathroom where I wash up before exiting and going down to the kitchen.

Mother was already at the stove preparing some hot cakes.

I help prepare the tea.

She smiles at me and continues humming.

Father comes back just in time for breakfast.

“I have spoken with the Thain and told him we would be gone for a while and that we were putting Hamfast in charge of Bag End.”

Mother nods.
“Good. Now sit and have some breakfast.”

“We will need to procure some ponies but I am sure that can wait until we arrive at Bree.”

“Ponies?” I ask alarmed.

Hobbits did not ride ponies.

We walked. We always walked it’s why we had such hard feet.

“Sorry lad but the journey is far and we need to move at a steady pace. I am sure we will get used to it.” Father says.

I knew he was trying to be reassuring but the look on his face was anything but.

I sigh and eat my breakfast.

“We will leave at first light tomorrow.” Mother says joining us at the table.

This was going to be the worst thing ever.

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I walk down by the party tree and look down at the Shire wanting to memorize it.

I close my eyes and take a deep breath of the clean fresh air.

“Bilbo.”

I open my eyes and stare at the tall figure walking towards me.

“Thranduil! What are you doing in the Shire?”

He puts an arm around me and I put my arms around his midsection.

He releases me and smiles down at me.

“Well, when last we shared correspondence I do believe that you invited me to visit.”

“I did. It is good to see you. Mother will be so happy to see you here.”

“I have missed my friend dearly.”

“And she you. Is Legolas with you?”

“He and his faithful companion decided to have an outing.”

“And how is the lovely Tauriel?”

“As fierce as ever.”

I chuckle.

“Will you be staying long?”

“Not too long. I wouldn’t want you to become bored of my presence.” He says settling a hand on my shoulder.
I smile at him.

“I do not believe that is possible. Come, let us have some tea.”

He nods and follows me towards Bag End.

I lead him inside our home.

He inclines his head and follows me inside.

“Bilbo? You’re home early.” Mother says standing from her chair.

“Mother, Father. Look who has come to visit.”

Thranduil enters the sitting room.

“Master Thranduil. How lovely to see you.” My mother says standing.

“And you Mrs. Baggins. Mr. Baggins.” Thranduil says with a bow.

My father inclines his head in greeting.

“It is nice to see you. How are things?”

“As good as ever. Greenwood thrives.”

“That is good to hear.” Father says.

Thranduil nods.

I serve Thranduil and my parent’s tea before taking my own cup.

“I have heard from Gandalf that you will be leaving the Shire. May I inquire as to where you will be going?” Thranduil asks.

My father clears his throat.

“Yes, we have decided to venture east towards Erebor.”

“Erebor? Whatever for? The Dwarves only care about their gems and gold. There is nothing for you there.”

“Mother has always wanted to visit the East.” I say.

We sit in silence for a moment.

“Bilbo, would you mind coming for a walk with me through the Shire?” Thranduil smiles.

“Of course.” I say standing.

“Have fun.” Mother says.

Thranduil inclines his head and holds out his arm.

I rest my hand against the crook of his arm and lead him out of Bag End down the pathway.

We walk in silence for a few minutes.
He pats my hand and smiles down at me.

As we pass by some rose bushes, he plucks one and hands it to me.

I take it with a smile.

I hold it up to my nose and breathe its perfume into my lungs.

“I believe I am going to greatly miss this place.” I say quietly. “This is where I grew up, it is my home.”

“Then don’t go Bilbo.”

I look up at him.

“It is my duty Thranduil. They are my parent’s and I will follow where they lead. I cannot abandon them, if something should happen to them in my absence I would never forgive myself.”

“You should not have to suffer so my dear.”

I smile.

“Maybe it will be a good thing. My mother has travelled a lot in her youth and Gandalf always has the best stories to tell when he visits. I think this might be my adventure.”

“You could have an entirely different type of adventure with me at Greenwood.”

I frown up at him.

He stands directly in front of me.

“What do you mean?”

He crouches down so that we are eye to eye.

“Bilbo.” He says taking my hand.

The tone of his voice makes my belly clench with nerves and I swallow thickly.

“Please don’t.” I say.

“No, listen please. Bilbo, I wanted to know if you would perhaps consider marrying me.”

I lower my gaze and slowly remove my hand from his.

“I am sorry Thranduil.” I whisper.

“I see.”

“I didn’t mean to make you believe that my friendship for you was more than what it is.”

“Is there someone else who has captured your heart my dear Bilbo?”

“No.” I say looking at him. “No Thranduil, there is no one else. I swear. I suppose I have resigned myself to being a bachelor for the rest of my days.”

“It does not have to be so. I could make you happy.”
“You could but I would never love you back, not the way you wanted or deserved.”

He looks away.

I raise a hand and lay it against his arm.

“Please say you will still be my friend.”

He pats my hand.

“Of course Bilbo, I could never walk away from you.”

“Are sure about that?”

“I am sure. But you were wrong about the Shire.”

“Oh?”

“I do believe that the only thing that makes this place so wonderful and breathtaking is you.”

I chuckle and he smiles down at me.

“Do not let anyone else hear you say that or you will be shunned forever from the Shire.”

“Without you here what does it matter?”

“Promise you will come and visit once we are settled in Erebor.”

“Nothing could keep me away. Not even the wretched Dwarves.”
I resist the urge to cover my ears from the loud noise at the inn.
There were a lot of tall folk around and I had to watch where I stepped.
I did not want to get trampled on.
Mother seems happy.
Father looks around him with a resigned look on his face.
I sigh.
We make our way up the stairs and to the rooms we had rented for the night.
I lie down in bed with a sigh.
I was tired.
I had never walked so much in my life.
I’d have to agree with Father.
Ponies were starting to sound good right now.
I roll onto my side and close my eyes.
I was too tired to even think about supper.
When I next open my eyes, the sun is streaming through the window.
I sit up with a groan.
I might only be fifty but I felt a hundred and fifty.
I stretch my arms over my head and get up.
I change my clothes and go in search of my parents.
They are downstairs enjoying breakfast.
I sit at the table with a groan.
“Good morning Bilbo!” Mother says cheerily.
“Good morning.” I say covering my yawn.
“You look tired.” Father tells me.
“I’ve never experienced this before.” I say.
“That’s right, he just needs getting used to travelling.” Mother says.
I don’t think I ever could.

A man comes and deposits a plate in front of me.

“Thank you.” I tell him.

He nods and moves away.

“How did you sleep?” Mother asks.

I sigh.

“Very good. Thank you. You?”

“Like a fauntling.” She smiles.

Father chuckles.

I smile back at her before digging into my breakfast.

After we finish our meal, Father goes out to procure us some ponies for the rest of our journey.

I go upstairs to grab my belongings before meeting my parents outside of the inn.

Father comes back with three ponies.

I wince at the sight of them.

“Well. Come on. Our journey is long and we must not waste any time.” Father says.

Mother and he strap their packs to the ponies.

I move towards mine.

I eye the pony warily.

It stares back at me.

I place my pack on it and tie it securely before stepping back to look at it.

The big black eye follows me.

I look at the saddle.

How was I supposed to get up there?

“Let me help you young sir.” A man says walking up to me.

“No. No. I’m fine.”

He lifts me and places me on the pony.

I shout and grab on to the saddle with both my hands.

Mother chuckles.

“There you go.” The man says with a smile.
“T-thank you.” I say.

He moves away to help Mother.

I take a deep breath before sneezing.

“Ugh. Horse hair.”

I take my handkerchief from my coat pocket.

“You’ll get used to it.” Mother says.

Father sneezes beside her.

“I have to agree with Bilbo.” He says sniffing, “This is going to be more of a nuisance really.”

Mother laughs and pats her pony’s head.

“Enjoy the journey.” The man says tipping his hat.

“Thank you.” Father says nodding at the man.

Father and Mother get their ponies moving.

I stare at them before looking down at the back of my pony’s head.

I kick my heels against its flank lightly.

It snorts and start walking after the other two ponies.

I smile to myself.

“Ah. Good girl.” I say.

The pony nods its head.

I did rather enjoy being so high up.

Not sure how I was going to get down or up again but it was nice being higher up.

I look around my surroundings and smile as the warm sunshine hits my face.

I close my eyes and take a deep breath.

My parents chat for a while and I enjoy the scenery.

I sigh.

This wasn’t so bad.

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I groan.

“Bilbo dear, are you alright?” Mother asks turning to look at me.

I press a hand to my stomach.
All the swaying had made me dizzy and queasy.

And as if that wasn’t enough, my inner thighs hurt and I knew I was going to be bruised and chaffed.

“I’ll be fine.” I tell her.

“I think we should stop for the day. The lad is obviously feeling discomfort and I wouldn’t mind walking around a bit.” Father says.

Mother nods.

“Agreed. I brought some herbs. I’ll make you some tea to help calm your stomach.” Mother tells me.

I nod.

If I talked right now I might just be sick all over the head of my pony.

I doubt it would be pleased by that.

Father stops his pony as we arrive to what once used to be a home but now was burned down.

“Might not be safe to linger here but it will have to do for tonight.” Father says getting down from his pony.

He groans and rubs his thighs before tying his pony up.

I wince as I slip down my pony.

I grab on to the animal as my legs refuse to hold me up.

I watch in astonishment as Mother swings off her pony with grace.

She lands on her feet and sets to work at once.

I look at my Father.

He’s gaping at Mother.

I lead my pony to the burned down home and tie her up next to the other ponies.

I walk around a bit getting feeling back into my legs and working out the kinks.

I stare up at the burned house.

“What do you suppose happened?” I ask Father.

He looks at the house and shrugs.

“Who knows? The animals seem restless, probably not the best place to stop for the night but if we stay together and not make a lot of noise then I am sure we will be alright.”

I nod hoping that he is right.

Mother makes me some tea to help soothe my stomach before starting supper.
Father helps her and once I feel better, I go to gather some wood for a small fire.

I wander around gathering pieces of dry wood until I feel I have enough.

When I look up I find myself standing in front of the opening of a cave.

I look around but the place is deserted.

I place the wood near the entrance before entering the cave.

I walk in slowly and carefully.

Could never be too cautious.

“Hello?” I call out.

It is silent.

I take a look around at the gold littering the floor.

There was a lot of it and I couldn’t believe no one had stumbled upon it before.

Whoever collected it must have left in a hurry and not bothered taking their treasure.

I step on something hard.

I bend to pick it up.

It was a sword.

Probably not for the taller folk but it was to me.

I pull it out of its sheath and hold it up.

I stare at it before looking around.

There were a lot of other things in the cave.

Not just gold but jewels, cups and more weapons.

I put the sword back into its protective cover before I accidently poke myself with it and leave the cave.

I take the sword and the wood back to our makeshift camp.

“You have to come and look at what I found.” I tell my parents.

They look at me.

“What is it Bilbo? What did you find?” Father asks.

I hand over the sword.

“This looks Elvish.” Mother says inspecting the blade.

“There are other things in a cave just a bit down that way.” I say pointing.

They follow me back to the cave.
“Who could have accumulated such vast amounts of gold?” Father asks.

“Trolls probably.” Mother says picking up a longer sword.

“Troll!” Father and I say alarmed.

“Don’t worry. If they were still around then they would never leave their treasure unprotected.”

“What should we do?” I ask.

“I say we leave everything as it is.” Father says.

Mother picks up two long swords.

“Bella.” Father says.

She looks at us.

“We should take these.”

“Why?” I ask.

“Gandalf will need a present, he is going to help us find a place to stay once we reach Dale.”

I frown and look at Father.

He sighs.

“Your mother is right. The wizard will need to be thanked. I am sure he can make use of one of the swords.”

“And the other one?” I ask.

“Who knows? But we should take it just in case.”

“Alright.”

“Help me gather some of these things.” Father says.

Chapter End Notes

Debated whether the Trolls should be features in the story but I am trying to stay away from wargs, orcs and goblins so I left the Trolls out too. But I did want Bilbo to find Sting and Orcrist so I wrote that in there.
Chapter 3

Chapter Notes

Was originally going to incorporate their stay in Rivendell but I think I’ll save that for the return trip.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

We spent a great deal sleeping under the stars and I have to say, it wasn’t as horrible as I thought. It brought memories of my childhood back. Could have done with a soft bed but it wasn’t all that bad. I prepare breakfast while Mother and Father pick up our camp.

“I reckon we should be arriving to Greenwood in a weeks’ time.” Father says.

“We could go around it but it will take us longer.”

“And we wouldn’t want to offend Thranduil. He has asked us to visit his home in more than one occasion.” I say.

“I think he was asking you to visit.” Mother says.

Father clears his throat.

“Right. Well, Thranduil has been a good friend to our family and there is no reason why we should not stop and see him.” Father says.

“You just want to get your hands on those Elvish texts he’s always charming you with.” Mother says poking Father’s side.

I smile and serve out breakfast.

We sit down and enjoy the peace of the clearing before cleaning up and continuing on our way.

“I am surprised Gandalf has not appeared.” Mother says.

I swat a bee away from my face.

“He does have a way of showing up unexpectedly.” Father says with disapproval.

“I thought you enjoyed when he came to visit?” I ask.

“Oh I do. I just wish he’d let me know in advance. And he’s never around when you do need him.”

I smile and shake my head.

“It’s the way of the Wizards, dear.” Mother tells him.
I got used to riding a pony and of sleeping on the ground but I can’t say I wasn’t relieved once we arrived to the borders of Greenwood.

We enter, our ponies following the path.

I stare up at the tall green trees.

Butterflies of different brilliant colors swirl around my head before flying off.

I can’t help the laugh that escapes me.

“Bilbo!”

I look back at the path.

I wave and smile at Legolas.

Tauriel follows behind him at a more sedate pace.

Legolas practically drags me off my pony and into his arms.

I pat his back.

“Good to see you too dear boy. Could you put me down?”

He places me back on my feet.

“So good to see you friend.”

Tauriel helps my parent’s off their ponies.

“And you.”

“Father will be delighted that you have finally come to Greenwood.”

“It is very lovely.”

He smiles and nods.

“Come. We are not far from the palace.”

I follow him making small talk on the way.

My parents walk ahead with Tauriel.

“Father told me he asked you to come and live here with us.”

I glance at Legolas before looking back at my parents.

“He did.”

“You said no.”

“Yes. Yes I did.”

He glances at me.

“My Father hasn’t taken a fancy to anyone since Mother. Not that he ever goes looking.”
“I-”

“His heart and his soul will always belong to her. I suppose he thought that having a friend around would ease that sorrow.”

I bite my lip.

“Do not worry yourself over this Bilbo. You and your family will always be a friend to ours.”

I smile at him and nod. Thranduil is waiting for us in his great hall.
He smiles at us and comes down from his throne to greet us.
He kneels on one knee in front of me and he hugs me.
I hug him back with the same amount of fierceness. I might not be in love with him but there is a beauty in him that not even I was blind to.
He kisses the back of my hand.
I can feel myself blushing.

“Welcome to Greenwood dear friend.”

“Thank you.”

“Stay for as long as you wish, rest and replenish yourselves. Tonight we will feast to your honor.”

“You need not go to too much trouble for us.” Father tells him.

“It is no trouble.” Thranduil smiles at him.

Thranduil stands and smiles down at me.

“Thank you.” I tell him.

He cards a hand through my hair.

“It is my pleasure.”

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That evening we feasted with the Elves who sang and played beautiful music.
The meal was fantastic and I admit that I might have overindulged in the wine.
It was not my fault, Thranduil does have excellent taste in wine.

Afterwards, Thranduil invited me on a tour of his home.

I take his arm as he leads me through winding walkways and stairways.

“Your home truly is remarkable.” I tell him.
“You did not happen to stop at Rivendell did you?”

“No.”

“Good. Wouldn’t want you to have negative preconceptions of Greenwood.”

“You are not feuding with Lord Elrond are you?”

“It is not a feud. Merely a disagreement.”

“About what?”

“Irrelevant. The important thing to understand here my dear Bilbo is that I am right and Elrond is wrong.”

I chuckle.

He places his hand over mine on the railing.

“I wish you would reconsider my offer. I know you would be very happy here.”

“I would. Your home is very beautiful and peaceful.”

“But?”

“But if I were to stay it would only be as your friend. I am sorry Thranduil but my affection for you is only that of a very good and dear friend. And I know it is all it could ever be.”

He smiles softly at me.

“I would rather have you as my friend than as nothing at all.”

I rest my head against his arm.

“You are a very good friend to me.”

“I am merely trying to give you what you deserve. You are very kind and gentle soul, you deserve the very best this world can offer.”

I can feel myself blushing.

“Thank you.” I say quietly.

“Come. I have kept you from your rest for far too long.” He says taking my arms.

I let him guide me back to my quarters.

I enter my room and turn to look at him.

I sigh.

“Greenwood is fantastic. I am glad I came on this journey.”

“It gladdens my heart as well to finally have you here.”

“Good night.”

“Good night Bilbo.” He kisses the back of my hand before releasing it.
He inclines his head before moving away.

I watch him walk away before closing the door and crawling into bed.

We stayed in Greenwood far longer than we had intended.

I was glad for it.

I got to spend a lot of time with my Elf friends and I got to read and explore their vast library to my heart’s content.

When we finally did leave, I was saddened by it but looking forward to continuing our journey.

Mother smiles at me.

“You seem happy.”

“I am. I think I’m getting the hang of this journey.”

She chuckles.

“Good. That is what a journey is all about, seeing new things and making new friends along the way.”

I nod.

“Hopefully the Dwarves think like you.” Father says.

Mother laughs.

“We are Baggins’! Of course they will like us. And if they don’t, well then. Just let a Took take care of it.”

I chuckle.

We arrived in Lake Town three days later and we only stayed the night before moving on towards Dale.

It took us four days to reach Dale and once we did, we were assaulted by the vibrancy and diversity of the town.

We got rooms at the local inn and spent the rest of the day walking around the market, meeting people and taking in all the stalls.

The next day a letter arrived from Gandalf.

I had spent the majority of the morning at the market again.

When I got back, I make sure to indulge in an extra-long hot bath to cleanse away the dirt and smoke of the place.

Afterwards I join my parents for tea.

“Gandalf says that Thorin Oakenshield, King under the Mountain, was willing to help us look for a house.” Mother says.
“Well. That is very kind of him.” Father says.

“Why would the King of Erebor care if we have a home or not?” I ask sipping my tea.

“Gandalf and he have known each other for a long time. And he is a wizard, I suppose not even the King would wish to offend a wizard.” Father says.

“I still don’t understand why we need a home. We are just stopping here for few weeks.” I say.

Mother and Father look at each other.

“Bilbo.” Mother begins.

I get a sinking feeling in my stomach.

“Your Father and I decided that we are going to stay here for a while.”

“How long is a while?”

“A few years at least.” Father tells me.

“Years!”

“Now Bilbo-” Mother begins.

“Why didn’t you tell me?”

“You would have chosen to stay behind. I wanted you to explore and see the world beyond the Shire. I am not asking you to stay for as long as we wish to. Just stay a bit.” Mother tells me.

I sigh.

“Alright. I will stay for a while.”

“Thank you.” She says grasping my hand.

“You are a good son Bilbo my boy.” Father tells me.

I sure hoped this place was well worth my stay.

Chapter End Notes

I made Thranduil take Henry’s place since Elves and Dwarves don’t really like each other anyways and since Bilbo seems to be so enraptured by Elves. Nothing would make Thorin as jealous as seeing Bilbo and Thranduil being BFF’s.
Chapter 4

Chapter Notes

The following chapters will follow more along the lines of ‘North & South’.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

The following day we receive a list of addresses of possible homes in the area.

“Father, perhaps if we split the list then we might find a suitable home quicker.”

“Are you sure my boy? I would not want you to go wandering by yourself.”

“I will be fine.”

“If you are sure.”

“I am.”

He writes down a couple of addresses down on a separate piece of paper and hands it to me.

“Be careful Bilbo.”

“I will Father.”

I leave the inn and set out on my own.

I make sure to walk through the market without getting sidetracked by the vendors.

The first few days in Dale were great.

But now all I can see are the areas that are far from spectacular.

The heavens are grey and the crowds make it impossible to move at a steady pace.

Not to mention the heaviness to the air that made it hard to breathe properly.

I constantly felt short of breath.

I stop in front of the first home and I turn away as quickly as I can.

The King under the Mountain was insane if he thought that a Baggins would be willing to live in a dark dirty hole.

We might be Hobbits who lived in the ground but that…no.

The second home is much better to look at although the location leaves a lot to be desired.

I carefully walk up the front steps and into the house.

The winding staircase is nice and the floors are not too worn.
I slowly climb the stairs.

At the second floor I can hear two men talking and I walk closer.

My Father would be appalled at my eavesdropping but I cannot help myself.

“West, eh?”

“Mm-hm.”

“They’ll find that things are quite different in the East.”

“Oh, aye.”

“I’ll make some repairs but the decoration is good enough. What kind of a man uproots his wife and child for an adventure?”

I feel anger swell in my chest and I enter the room.

“Excuse me, can I help you young man?” A man with white hair and a forked white beard asks me.

“My name is Bilbo Baggins. Who are you?”

“Balin, at your service.” He bows. “I am Thorin’s overseer. He asked me to look at properties for your father.”

I look at the other man.

“How much is the rent for this place?”

“Excuse me?”

“The rent for a year? How much?”

“No need for you to concern yourself with such matters lad.” Balin tells me. “Thorin will discuss it with your father. Let your betters deal with the business side of things, aye?” He says with a smile.

I feel myself bristle.

“I do not know at when Dwarves are considered to be of age but where I come from, I am of majority and I demand to be treated as such.”

“Of course. My pardons Mr. Baggins.” Balin nods.

I take a deep breath.

“Forgive me, I have been walking around all day and I suppose I am just tired. I am helping my father with the task of securing a property.”

“I understand lad. Thorin thinks this place will be good for your parent’s and yourself.”

“I suppose I should be thankful to the King for his help.”

“Thorin likes to help when he can.”
I nod.

“I believe I would like to meet this man and thank him for his concern.”

“Of course. If you would follow me.”

“Really?” I ask surprised.

“Yes. You will be living in Dale now and it being so close to Erebor. Our King will surely like to meet you.”

“Oh. Good, yes.”

I nod at the other man as I follow Balin out of the house and onto the street.

I look around as I am led into Erebor.

I gape at the two huge stone statues guarding the entrance.

“Do all the Dwarves live here?” I ask as we enter through huge gates.

I stare at the people coming in and out of Erebor.

Some of them stare back with curiosity.

I nod at them in greeting.

“Most of them, yes.”

He leads me into a room decorated with very fancy and expensive drapes.

There was a table with maps to one side of the room and a large table with massive chairs at the other side.

I turn to look at Balin.

“Thorin is down checking the mines so it would be best if you wait here. It would do no good for you to fall down a mine shaft.”

“Mine shaft?”

“The finest in the world.” He winks. “I will let him know you wish to speak with him. Excuse me.”

I nod.

I walk to the glass doors.

There was a balcony and from it I could see Dale.

I watch people go on about their business for a while before sitting down.

I check my pocket watch.

I sigh before standing and pacing.

I check my watch again.
“Right.”

I walk out of the study and walk around at bit.

“Excuse me.”

A Dwarf stops and looks at me.

“Hello. I am looking for the mines.”

“Mines eh? What business does a Hobbit have in our mines?”

“I am here for Thorin.”

He looks surprised at that.

“I always did wonder why our King had not wed.” He looks me up and down. “I suppose you’re not all that bad.”

“What? No. I am just here to meet him.”

“Sure. Whatever you say lad.” He winks.

“Do you know the way to mines or not?”

“Of course I do.”

“Will you show me the way?”

“Alright.”

“I am Bilbo Baggins by the way.”

“Bifur at your service.”

“Nice to meet you.”

“I thought Hobbits never left their homes?”

“We don’t but Mother is sort of the adventuring type.”

“Ahh.”

We walk the rest of the way in silence.

“Well. Here we are. Word to the wise, be careful. Always watch where you step.”

“Th-thank you.”

He bows before walking away.

I stumble into the mines.

I walk slowly and carefully as I try to take in my surroundings.

Dust seems to make up the air in here.

I cough and cover my nose and mouth with my handkerchief.
I watch as Dwarrows carry out jewels of all colors and sizes in carts.
I walk further into the mine.
The darkness suddenly opens up and a great white light surrounds everything.
I gasp as I look around.
Everywhere the walls glint like stars.
I make my way towards the great scaffolding.
“Thief!”
I jump at the sound of the shout.
A Dwarf with long dark hair and an angry gaze frowns down at the man on the railing below him.
“You thief, I saw you!”
The accused man takes off in a run.
“Come back here!”
I look around but no one seems to be paying much attention to the commotion so I follow the two Dwarves out of the lit cavern.
I catch up to them in time to see the accused man get captured by a large man with a bald head and huge arms.
“Thief.” The man with the angry gaze sneers.
“I didn’t steal nothin!” The accused man says. “I swear.”
His pockets are checked and jewels are held up as proof.
“I warned you last time what would happen.” The man with the angry gaze growls. “Dwalin.”
Dwalin starts to beat the accused thief.
I gasp.
“Stop it! Stop!” I yell walking forward.
The angry gaze is turned on me.
“Who are you? What are you doing in here?” He demands.
“My name is Bilbo Baggins.”
“You don’t belong here Mr. Baggins.”
“Mr. Baggins!” Balin hurries up to me. “Sorry Thorin, I told the lad to stay in the war room.”
“This is Thorin?” I say pointing at the man with the angry gaze.
“Get him out of here!” Thorin says angrily. “Dwalin, take this miserable bastard. I think it’s time
he learned a lesson.” Thorin says looking down at the accused man.

“With pleasure.” Dwalin smirks.

“Wait. What is going to happen to that man?” I ask as Dwalin takes him away.

“That is none of your concern Mr. Baggins. Balin, get him out of here.”

“Yes Thorin. Come lad, come on.” Balin takes my arm and leads me out.

“That is Thorin Oakenshield? The man so concerned for my family? I highly doubt that beast can be concerned about anything.”

“Now look here Mr. Baggins, you really shouldn’t go judging a man when you don’t know the ways-”

“Ways? It is not still wrong to beat a man? And just because Thorin considers himself master of this place does not give him the right to beat a helpless man.” I interrupt.

“Yes but lad-”

“It was a mistake coming here.”

Once we are outside, I shake off Balin’s hand off my arm and walk away.

I can feel eyes following me and I turn.

In the balcony where I had stood a while ago are two Dwarves staring at me.

One raises a hand to wave in greeting.

I turn and walk away.

Chapter End Notes

Don’t know exactly how far from Erebor Dale is but for this story let’s pretend that Dale is right at the foot of the mountain.
“Bilbo! You’re home late. How did it go?” Father asks.

I try to smile even though my whole body was still shaking with rage.

“The less said about it the better. Now if you will excuse me, I need a bath.”

“Yes of course. Don’t forget that we will have a guest later this evening.”

I sigh.

“Alright.”

“Good lad.”

I indulge in a hot bath.

I take my time washing and I just submerge myself and let the water and the bath oils soothe me.

King under the Mountain indeed.

It seems that being locked inside his mountain has made Thorin forget that there is something called civility and that beating one’s subjects does not make for a happy people.

I submerge myself deeper in the hot water.

I put Thorin out of my mind and allow myself to relax.

I wake with a start as I hear someone knocking on the front door.

Father’s guest.

I drain the water and fill the tub up again so that I can rinse.

I dry and redress myself before making my way to the sitting room.

I walk up to the door slowly in case Father is busy.

The floor creaks as I lean in closer to the partially opened door.

“Bilbo? Is that you?” Father calls.

I slowly open the door.

“Bilbo my dear boy, come in. I want you to meet our friend Thorin Oakenshield, King of Erebor. Thorin, this is my son Bilbo.”

I stare at Thorin.

How dare he have the nerve to come here?

He stares back at me.

“Bilbo, introduce yourself properly.” Father says.
Thorin glances at him before looking back at me.

“Your son and I have already met.” Thorin says.

I can see no ounce of remorse for what he did and I bristle.

“Yes, we have.” I say with a glare.

“I do say that I am honored you came in person. I did not think a King would have the time. We are just Hobbits from the Shire.” My father asks with a smile.

Thorin and I seem to be locked in a staring contest and I would not give in. Just because he wore a crown and had a fancy title did not mean he was exempt from having good manners.

“I’m afraid that we met under unpleasant circumstances.” Thorin tells me.

“Unpleasant indeed. You ordered a man to be beaten by that burly bodyguard of yours to ‘teach him a lesson’. I can only imagine what kind of lesson Dwalin will impart on that poor Dwarf.”

“Bilbo.” My father admonishes.

“No, he is right. I was angry, I have a temper. That does not mean that what I did was wrong. I have a right and a duty to discipline my subjects.”

“Had it been you in his place—”

“I have been in his place. But what I earned, I earned by the sweat of my brow.”

I close my mouth.

“I cannot let any of the miner’s pocket all the jewels they please. What he did was wrong and as King I have a duty to my people and my kingdom. I have to be strict.”

“A gentleman would not use his fists to impart rules over his workers.”

“No gentleman could ever survive the misdeeds that have afflicted my family. I daresay that a gentleman has not had to see his grandfather fall to the dragon sickness or have his father and brother killed by thieves. I rule with an iron fist and it might not be seen as good leadership by outsiders but it has kept my family and my people alive and well off.” He looks away. “I should go.”

“Oh. Yes, I did not mean to keep you.” Father says.

Thorin stops at the doorway.

“You will join us for supper next week?” He asks my Father.

My father inclines his head in agreement.

“Of course, thank you. I would be delighted to visit with you again. I know there is a wealth of information that we can share about our peoples.”

Thorin nods.

“I will ask my sister to call when you’ve settled into your new home.”
“By all means. We are always available aren’t we Bilbo?”

I glance at Thorin and find his hard gaze directed towards me.

I look away.

“Good day.” Thorin says.

“Good day to you.” My father says.

He closes the door after his guest before looking at me.

“Bilbo Baggins.”

“Is he gone?” Mother asks bringing in a pot of tea.

“Yes. But he has invited us over for supper next week.”

“Really? How nice of him.”

“Bilbo. I don’t know what happened between you and Mister Thorin but I do believe you owe him an apology.”

“Me? I don’t owe him anything! He was having a man beaten and I intervened.”

“He seemed like such a reasonable man. I can’t believe he would do such a thing.” Mother says.

“Well he did.” I say crossing my arms.

“We are in a strange land, we do not know their ways. We cannot offend only friend here, a king no less. Perhaps if you spoke with him.” Father says.

“I doubt talking will resolve anything. You heard him, he says he has a temper. One I have seen firsthand.”

“Then try not to have any more contact with him.”

“Fine with me.”

The less contact with that brute of a king the better.

******************************

I take my daily walk through the market of Dale.

Today there was a stall I had not seen on my previous trips.

It looked like it was a toy maker’s stall.

I walk over.

The craftsmanship was outstanding.

“Can I help you Sir?”

I look at the Dwarf with a funny hat.
He smiles at me.

“Hello.” I say cheerfully.

“He Hello.” He smiles. “Bofur at your service.” He says inclining his head.

“Bilbo Baggins at yours. Did you make these?” I ask picking up a whittled dragon.

“Aye.”

“These are just amazing.”

“Thank you. I’ve never seen you around here before.”

“Yes. My parents and I just arrived.”

“Really? From where if I may ask?”

“From Hobbington. The Shire to be exact.”

“I though Hobbits didn’t like to travel?”

I chuckle.

“It’s true but some of us do.”

He nods.

“And are you staying long?”

“Probably.”

“Sorry if I am being too intrusive but it’s not every day that I meet a Hobbit.”

“No, it’s alright. I am still getting used to seeing so many Dwarves.”

He chuckles.

“Yes. We take some time getting used to.”

“Do you live in Dale?”

“No. I have a home in Erebor.”

“Oh. Balin mentioned that most of the Dwarves lived there.”

“You met Balin?”

“Yes. When I went to meet Thorin.”

“You met the king?” He asks shocked.

“Yes. Left a lot to be desired if you ask me.”

The Dwarf from the neighboring stalls look at me.

Bofur laughs and pats my back heartily.
I wince.

“I like you.” He says.

“Thank you?”

“You shouldn’t speak that way about our King.” The neighboring Dwarf says.

“That’s Dori.” Bofur says.

“Oh. Nice to meet you, Bilbo Baggins at your service.” I say.

He nods back.

“Sorry, I didn’t mean to offend.” I say.

“I don’t say it for my benefit but for yours. There are a lot of Dwarves who might take offence hearing you speak that way about Thorin. And you especially don’t want it getting back to Lady Dis that you’re speaking ill of the King.”

“Lady Dis?” I ask.

“The Kings sister.” Bofur says.

“That woman will put the fear of Mahal in you.” Dori says.

“I thought that was you?” Bofur asks.

Dori swats Bofur’s head.

“If I could do you think Nori would be a thief?”

“Your brother is a thief?” I think back at the Dwarf I saw Dwalin beating and I try to see if there is any resemblance between him and Dori.

“He’s not a thief. He is a spy master, appointed so by the King.”

Dori rolls his eyes clearly unimpressed by the title.

“He’s still a thief.”

“Ignore him.” Bofur tells me.

“Afternoon cousin. Mister Dori.” A Dwarf says reclining against Bofur’s stall.

“Cousin.” Bofur says.

“And who’s your little friend?” The Dwarf asks looking at me.

I’d met this Dwarf before.

“Bifur?” I ask.

He stares back at me.

“Aye. Your Thorin’s fellow.” He says pointing at me.

I blush.
Dori looks at me.

“Not quite.”

“This is the little fellow that gave Thorin as good as he got.” He tells Bofur before looking back at me. “You don’t see that every day.”

“A misunderstanding.” I say.

“Didn’t look that way to me. Thorin ordered Tali beaten for pocketing some jewels. Mr. Baggins here intervened.”

“He deserved it.” Dori says.

“I couldn’t in good conscious stand by while a helpless man was beaten.”

“That’s because you’re not from this part of the world.” Bifur tells me.

“That might be true, I am not used to seeing such violence.”

“That was nothing. You should see the kind of brawls we get into once we’ve had a few drinks in us.” Bofur tells me.

I smile.

“You’re a brave little fellow aren’t you?” Bifur asks me.

“Me? No. No.” I say shaking my head.

“Don’t sell yourself short Mr. Baggins. I’ve never seen anyone speak that way to Thorin and leave with their bodies intact.”

I shrug.

“He’s never met a Baggins before.”

The Dwarves laugh.

“I bet he’ll never forget you.” Bofur tells me.

“Well. Hopefully he’ll remember his manners next time then.”

“I doubt it.” Bifur tells me.

“Come. Take which ever toy catches your eye, on the house for being such a brave Hobbit.” Bofur tells me.

“No. I couldn’t.”

“You can’t refuse, you wouldn’t want to offend me now would you?”

“Of course not.”

“Then you have no choice. Go on, pick one.”

“Well. Alright. I’ll take this one.” I say picking up the dragon.
“Nice choice.” Bofur smiles.

“Thank you.”

He nods.

“I best be going now.”

“Don’t be a stranger.” He tells me.

I wave at them before turning and walking home.
“Good afternoon Mister Bofur.”

He turns to smile at me.

“It’s just Bofur, Mr. Baggins.”

“Then it’s just Bilbo.”

“Alright. Bilbo.”

“You heading somewhere? I wouldn’t want to keep you.”

“Don’t worry lad, I don’t have anywhere else to be. I’m just enjoying this free time, scarce as it is.”

“Oh, good.”

“I’m going to go see my brother. We don’t see much of each other you see.”

“Would you mind terribly if I joined you? I don’t know anyone else.”

“Come along then lad, my brother Bombur works in the kitchens of Erebor so we don’t get much time with him but today he is free and we are meeting back at his house. Now I say that you haven’t lived until you have tried my brother’s stew.”

“I wouldn’t want to impose.”

“Nonsense! The more the merrier and it’s not like we have anyone coming to visit us. I am sure that my brother would be happy to have a visitor.”

“Well, if you are sure.”

“Aye, Bombur would be pleased to have someone else taste his food. He doesn’t much believe us when we tell him that his food is good.”

I chuckle.

“Well, alright.”

I follow him into Erebor and he leads me down a path that takes us deeper into the mountain until we come out into the residential area.

I look at all the houses that had been constructed into the mountain itself.

I stare at them with awe.

“Impressive ain’t it?”

“It is. I’ve never seen anything like it.”

“I will show you around but first we must eat.”

*********************
As I walk back to our home, I run into a man.

“Excuse me.” I say.

“No worries. I am Bard, Lord of Dale.”

“Bilbo Baggins at your service. Thank you for your hospitality.”

“You are very welcome Mister Baggins. I hope your family has found your stay in our city pleasing.”

“It has been. I have never seen a place such as this before in my life.”

He inclines his head.

“I am glad. I hear that Thorin was helping your family secure a home in our city.”

“Yes. That’s true. Gandalf asked him on our behalf.”

He nods.

“I would like you and your family to come to dinner with my family.”

“Oh. That is very gracious of you.”

“That is, if you wish to.”

“Of course.”

“Then come around next week.”

I incline my head.

“Here. Let me walk you back to your home.”

“Thank you.”

“Have you had any problems?”

“No. Mostly everyone I have met has been very kind.”

“Mostly?”

“Well. Yes.”

He smiles down at me.

“I heard you went into Erebor and had a run in with a certain King.”

I blush.

“A misunderstanding I am sure.”

He laughs.

“Thorin’s temper is well known. It is why King Thranduil avoids coming unless necessary.”
“You know Thranduil? He’s my friend.”

“Really?”

I nod.

“He’s known my mother since she was a fauntling. I hope there won’t be any problems, he said he’d come to visit.”

“No problems if he only stays in Dale. The Elf King and I have a good working relationship.”

“Good. I see no reason why he would go to Erebor.”

“He might, just to spite Thorin.”

“Yes, that does sound like Thranduil. He does like to make mischief. Did you know he was feuding with Lord Elrond as well?”

Bard chuckles.

He leads me up to the door of our new home.

“I suppose that when one’s lived long enough there is nothing else to do but bother your neighbors.”

“That’s true.”

“Well. Take care Mister Baggins. Should you ever need anything do not hesitate to come and see me.”

“Thank you.”

He pats my shoulder before walking away.

************************

“Bilbo, hurry!”

“Mother?” I hurry up the stairs. “Mother, what’s the matter? Are you alright?”

I enter the sitting to find my mother staring out the window.

I walk over and peer over her shoulder.

We watch as a female Dwarf and two other young Dwarves walk up to our door.

“It must be Thorin’s sister.” My mother says.

(Of course, there is no mistaking that stern brow. But who are the young lads with her?)

“I suppose that we will find out soon enough.”

I hurry down the stairs as the first few knocks sound on the door.

“Hello.”

“Good afternoon.” The female says.
“Please do come in.” I say opening the door wider.

I try not to stare at her beard.

They enter into the foyer.

“You must be Mister Boggins!” The dark haired male says.

“Uhh…”

“I’m Fili.” The blond one says.

“And Kili.”

“At your service.” They say in unison with a bow.

“Yes, hello. You were the on the balcony the day I visited Erebor.”

“Yes! You didn’t wave back.” Kili tells me.

“There are my sons. I am Dis, Thorin’s sister.”

“Bilbo Baggins. Please do come up, Mother is waiting in the sitting room.”

I lead them up the stairs all the while feeling the glare on my back.

“Mother, this is Dis and her sons Fili and Kili.”

“Belladonna Baggins at your service. So nice to meet you.” My mother says.

“And you.” Dis says.

I excuse myself to fetch some tea and a plate of pastries.

I hurry back up the stairs careful not to make a mess.

Once the tea is served and the pastries doled out between the two young men, we sit in awkward silence.

“Your brooch is quite lovely.” My mother says.

Dis smiles and touches the brooch carefully.

“Yes, this fine craftsmanship is only found here in Erebor.”

“Where are you from Mister Boggins?” Kili asks.

“From the West, the Shire. And it’s Baggins.”

“The Shire? We have always wanted to see the Shire haven’t we Fili?”

“It is true.” The blond says. “And Ered Luin.”

“Have you been to the Blue Mountains, Mister Boggins?”

“I have. Only once when I was a fauntling.”

“Did you hear that Fili?”
“I did Kili.”

“We always talk of going to the Blue Mountains.” Kili says excitedly.

“It is a very easy journey.” Mother says.

“Mother thinks it to be best if we stayed here and learned to follow in Uncle’s footsteps.” Fili says.

“She is very proud of Erebor.” Kili adds.

Dis sends her sons a disapproving stare.

“As all children of Durin should be.” Kili quickly adds.

The two boys take sips from their cups.

“May I ask why you chose to come and live in Erebor?” Dis asks.

“Actually, we live in Dale.” I say.

Dis glances at me before looking back at my Mother.

“I have always wanted to see the East.” Mother says with a smile.

“And how have you found it so far?” She asks.

“Well, I haven’t had much time to walk about but my husband seems content enough and Bilbo has already made friends.” Mother says.

“Is that so? How nice.” Dis says before taking a sip of her tea.

“Yes. It is.” I tell her.

Her eyes are very much like her brothers and they send shivers down my spine.

“My husband enjoys his talks with your brother.” Mother says.

Dis looks at her.

“My brother seems to enjoy them himself. Although I do not understand the point of such frivolous things. Their time would be better spent on other more productive things.”

“Surely you do not believe that is all there is to life.” I say.

Her cold blue gaze regards me.

“I do not expect you to understand Mister Baggins. After all, things are very different in the West but here in Erebor being well known and respected is so much better than counting the year’s one has spent being tutored. My brother is respected among all Kingdoms. Not to mention, sought after many Dwarves, not only those here but from the other Dwarf kingdoms as well. And he has been known to charm females everywhere.” She says smiling proudly.

I snort into my cup of tea.

“Bilbo.” My mother whispers appalled.

“Sorry. But I do not think that everyone would want Thorin.”
The brothers look at each other before looking at their mother and then back at me.

“My brother has worked hard to earn the position he is in and he is a handsome Dwarf. He has much to offer and only a fool would turn him away.”

“He also leaves much to be desired from what I have seen.” I mutter.

The brothers whisper to each other.

Dis stands, her face pinched in anger.

“If you can bear to visit our home, we shall receive you next week.” She tells my mother.

“Yes, of course.” My mother says.

Dis sends me one final glare before herding her children out of the house.

“What has happened to you Bilbo? You are acting more like a Took every day. Your father will not be pleased.”

“I do not know mother. It is these royal Dwarves. It’s so hard to be respectable when presented with such nasty folk.”

“Well, you have better get used to them.”

“I was afraid you were going to say that.”

***************

The following day I go and visit with Bofur and his brothers.

“Bilbo, you came back!” Bombur says opening the door and inviting me in.

“I did. I brought some groceries, I hope that is alright.”

“I am glad we didn’t scare you off.” Bofur says patting my back.

“You forget that I’ve met Thorin and now I’ve also met Dis.”

“Well, you’ve got balls surviving those two.” Bifur says.

I laugh.

“Well, they didn’t come by together or I would have surely fallen dead on the spot.”

The Dwarves laugh.

Bifur pats my back before going to see what I had brought.

“I do not know how you can bear to live here year after year.” I say with a sigh as I sit.

“That one’s easy; it’s all we’ve ever known.” Bofur tells me as he whittles a piece of wood.

“But don’t you have the urge to go out and see more of this world?”

“And do what? Our time is better spent working and surviving. Mining is all I know how to do; it’s what I’m good at.” Bifur tells me.
“I do not believe it is all you are good at.”

“We are all blessed with gifts. Best to use them.” Bombur says.

I pick up a warrior that Bofur has whittled.

“They are fantastic. Surely you can find people to purchase them?” I ask.

“Perhaps. But I do not have the time nor the finances to make such a venture.”

“It is too bad. I know a lot of children in the Shire who would fight over your toys.”

Bofur laughs.

“Thank you Bilbo, you’re too kind.”

“I am just saying the truth.”

“Well, here we are. This evening I have prepared some bangers and mash.” Bombur says setting the plates down.

“Bombur, I daresay that you have outdone yourself. It all smells so delicious.” I say.

Bombur blushes under my praise.

“Well, dig in boys!” Bofur says throwing a plate at Bifur.

I watch open mouthed as they begin to throw the cutlery and the food all the while singing a cheery tune.

I can’t help but laugh and take joy in their company.
Thorin POV

I look at my sister as we eat lunch together.

“How was your visit with the Baggins’?”

Fili and Kili giggle.

I glance at them before looking at my sister.

“The mother is a good woman, a bit of a refined lady. The father was not there when I arrived so I did not have a chance to form an impression of him. But that son of theirs—”

“Bilbo.” I say.

I smile at the sound of his name on my lips.

Fili and Kili nudge each other.

Dis looks at me.

“Yes. Bilbo.” She curls her lip in distaste.

“What?” I ask.

“He gives himself air as if he’s done anything productive with his life.”

I raise my eyebrow at her.

“They are not like us. Their ways are very different. Hobbits do not care to accumulate riches.”

“What a strange people they are then.”

“We like Mister Boggins.” Kili says.

“We were thinking of visiting him again.” Fili says.

“It’s Baggins, Kili.” I say. “And I’m sure he would appreciate it if you two tried to be his friends.”

“I do not know why Gandalf wanted you to care for them.” Dis says.

“He has known them for a long time.”

She takes a sip of her wine.

“Apparently he’s not the only friend of that family.” She says.

“What do you mean?”

“It seems that be Baggins’ are also very well acquainted with the King of Greenwood.”
I sit up straight.

“And they’ve been dinning in the home of the Lord of Dale.”

“They are a friendly people.” I say eating my meal.

She snorts.

“It does not matter who they are friends with. It does not affect us in any way.” I tell her.

I wipe my mouth with my napkin and I stand.

“Remember I go the Baggins’ this evening. I’ll be back later to dress but I will probably won’t be back until late so don’t wait up.”

“Dress? Why are you going to dress up when you’re just going to go have tea with some Hobbits? You are the King of Erebor!”

“Bungo Baggins is a gentle hobbit. We should respect that.”

“You don’t have to impress them or that boy of theirs.”

“Don’t worry Dis, I’m in no danger from Bilbo. He’s very unlikely to consider me a catch.”

My chest feels tight and I rub it with my hand.

Fili and Kili look at me.

“Who does he think he is to turn his nose up at you?” Dis asks angrily.

“It is of no consequence.”

She looks me over.

“Do you want him to like you?” She asks.

I kiss her brow.

“I will be back late. Don’t wait up.”

“Give our best to Mister Boggins.” Kili tells me.

I nod before walking out of the dining hall.

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Bilbo POV

I wake with a start at the sound of chatting and chuckling.

“It seems that we have bored young Mister Baggins with our discussions.” Thorin says sending me a small smile.

I look away.

“No. It’s fine. I was just a bit tired.”

“Yes. My dear Bilbo has been visiting with his friends and helping out. The children love him.”
“Friends?” Thorin asks.

“Yes. The Ur brothers.” I say.

I serve him tea before serving myself.

It was the proper thing to do.

“Do you know them?” Father asks.

“I do.”

I hand him his cup, his fingers grazing mine as he takes it.

I look at him and he stares back.

I look away quickly and grab my cup of tea before sitting down.

“I hope you have not been burdening yourself.” Thorin tells me.

“I assure you that it is no burden. It broke my heart to see so many children going hungry so I’ve been baking and taking food to them.”

“People go hungry because they wish to.” He says.

I open my mouth to respond but Mother comes into the room.

I stand to serve her some tea.

“Bella. Mister Thorin has been admiring our newly decorated rooms.” Father says.

“Yes. I tried to make it more like our Hobbit hole. Not much we can do though, all the furniture here seems to have been made for taller folk but Mister Bofur made us some chairs.” Mother says sitting.

“I am glad we’ve almost passed muster.” Thorin says.

I hand my mother her tea.

“And of course Lord Bard has been most helpful in helping us make this more like home.” Mother adds.

Thorin’s face seems to close off.

“I am sure.” He says glancing at me.

I sip my tea.

“I am glad we came here. Everyone has been most helpful.” Father says.

“Clearly you have made Erebor very successful. My husband admires its people and the energy. It is not like this at all in the Shire.” Mother says.

“I won’t deny that I’ve done all I can to make this Kingdom better than it was. And I have to say that I’d rather be toiling here, success or failure, than leading a dull prosperous life in the West, with their slow, careless days of ease.”
“You don’t know anything of the West.” I say.

“Bilbo.” My Father admonishes.

I set down my cup of tea.

“You, Sir, are mistaken.”

He looks at me.

“We may be a little less energetic in our pursuit of competitive trade but there is less suffering than I have seen in your Kingdom.”

“And I will say that you don’t know the East. Not all the Dwarves are the same, nor are all the Dwarf kingdoms the same no matter what prejudice you have of Erebor.”

“I have no prejudice against Erebor. I have made very good friends here.”

“So it’s just against me then.”

“I have seen the way you treat your workers. You treat them any way you like because they are beneath you.”

“No. I do not. You witnessed one incident. That is all. It does not give you the right to judge me.”

“You’ve been blessed with good luck and fortune but they have not. They work to feed their families while you sit up there in your fancy throne.”

“I do know something of hardship. My Father and my brother died terribly, they were murdered in our Kingdom where they should have been safe. I became the head of the family very quickly. I was not ready to bear the burden of such a rich kingdom, I did not know the first thing about being a leader. I think that my only good luck was having a sister of such strong will and integrity. So, Mister Baggins, don’t think that I was especially blessed with good luck or fortune.”

He stands.

My heart beats rapidly in my chest.

“I have outstayed my welcome.” He says.

It was painful to meet his gaze after what he just said.

“Oh, no Thorin. I am terribly sorry.” Father says.

“Come Mister Baggins, let us part as friends despite our differences.” Thorin tells me. “If we become more familiar with each other’s traditions, we may learn to be more tolerant of each other.”

He holds out his hand.

I look at him before looking at his hand.

I shake his hand.

“Forgive me if I have offended you in any way.” I say.

Father smiles at me approvingly.
Thorin gives me a small smile, his larger hand enveloping mine.

“Only if you forgive me my actions.”

I nod.

“Good. I will see myself out.”

“Please come again.” Mother tells him.

Thorin inclines his head before leaving.

“I am glad you settled things with Mister Thorin.” Father tells me.

“Poor young fellow. To have known such hardship.” Mother says.

“Yes. Well. It is a good think that he turned out the way he did.” Father says.

I sip my tea and refrain from commenting.

Chapter End Notes

I know Margaret doesn’t shake Thornton’s hand but Bilbo is a Baggins and he really can’t keep a grudge.
Thorin POV

I watch Bilbo come towards Erebor, his arm in the crook of Bofur’s elbow. The weak sun was glinting off his curls making it shine like gold. His sun kissed face and his thin pink lips seemed to glow in the low light.

I lean against the balcony.

He laughs at something the toy maker says.

I clench my hands into fists.

Bofur lays his hand over Bilbo’s and leans in closer to the Hobbit. Bilbo does not seem uncomfortable by the closeness.

I curl my hands against the stone of the balcony.

Bilbo, as if sensing my gaze, looks up at me.

I incline my head in greeting.

He returns the gesture before disappearing into the mountain.

“Thorin. Are you listening?”

I turn back to look at Balin.

“Sorry. I was distracted.”

Dwalin snorts and I glare at him.

“Would it have anything to do with that Hobbit that’s been running around Erebor?” He asks.

I refrain from answering.

No need to give them fuel for the fire.

“He’s made quite an impression on the miners.” Balin says. “I hear he brought them all some scones and tea.”

“Ay. They were good.” Dwalin says.

“He should not be in the mines.” I tell them.

Anything could happen to him down there.

My stomach clenches with worry.

“Don’t worry. The lad can take care of himself and he’s got most of the miners on his side.”

I look at Dwalin.
“Most?”

“There are some Dwarves from the Iron Hills who have complained about a Hobbit being allowed freedom into Erebor.” Balin tells me.

“Is it something we should concern ourselves with?” I ask.

“Bifur and Gloin have been sticking close to the Hobbit.” Dwalin tells me.

“We have to wait and see if he can charm them. If not, we might have to ask young Mister Baggin’s to stay out of the mines.” Balin tells me.

I nod.

“Now back to business.” Balin says.

I resist the urge to sigh.

“Soon it will once more be time for the meeting with our allies in Lake Town.”

I pinch the bridge of my nose.

“I have confirmed our presence there.” Balin adds.

I nod.

“We cannot afford to neglect our allies. No matter how much I loathe the presence of a certain Elf King.” I say.

“I am sure Bilbo would be glad to speak to Thranduil on your behalf.” Dwalin tells me with a smirk.

I ignore him.

“And he seems to be cozying up to Bard as well.”

I sigh angrily.

“Ignore him.” Balin tells me.

“Trust me. I am trying.”

After my meeting with Balin, I go to the throne room where I hold public audiences for the rest of the afternoon.

“Are you coming to dinner?” Dwalin asks me once I leave the throne room.

“I need some air.”

“I will come with you.”

“No. No. I’ll be fine.” I say clasping his arm.

“If you are sure.”

“I am. Go on, get some food and rest.”
He nods and moves away.

I remove my coat, leaving only my blue tunic on.

I make sure to strap my sword to my hip before leaving Erebor.

I walk down to the market to stretch my legs and just breathe some air.

Dwarves stop to speak and praise me.

I walk over to Dori’s stall.

“Your majesty.” He says with a bow.

“Dori. How fares the tea business?”

“Very good now that the Baggins’ have moved to Dale. No one loves their tea as much as Hobbits do.”

I smile.

“I am glad to hear that business has picked up.”

“Aye. They have even commissioned a large order to be shipped to the Shire for relatives and such. Misses Baggins, she is a very knowledgeable and refined lady.” He says with a smile.

I nod.

“My King.”

I turn.

Tali grabs my arm.

I try to shake him off.

“Please, I beg you. I need to work.”

“You should have thought of that before you took what did not belong to you.”

“My little ones will starve.”

“You have no one else to blame but yourself.”

I push him off of me.

“Please. Mining is all I know how to do. I promise I won’t steal.”

“You can’t be trusted.”

He grabs me again.

I draw my sword.

“Get out of here before I put you out of your misery!”

He turns and runs away, bumping into Mister Baggins and Bilbo.
I close my eyes for a second before sheathing my sword.

They look at me.

“Couldn’t you show some mercy? He knows he’s done wrong and wishes only to provide for his family.” Mister Baggins says.

“Mister Baggins. Please. Don’t try to tell me my business.”

Bilbo glares at me.

He takes his father’s arm.

“Remember, they do things differently here. Come Father.”

They turn away.

I watch them walk away.

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Bilbo POV

Father had gone on his morning walk but Mother had yet to get up out of bed.

I go and check in on her.

She was awake but still in bed.

“Mother?”

“Bilbo my dear.”

“Are you alright?”

“I am feeling a bit tired. Nothing to worry about.”

I sit next to her on the bed and take her hand.

“I suppose I am used to Shire winters but here everything is so dark and bleak.”

I nod.

“I am sure you will feel better in no time.”

She smiles and pats my back.

“I am sure too.”

“But it couldn’t hurt if you were to be checked out.”

“I doubt the men or the Dwarves know how to care for a Hobbit.”

“Mister Gloin has spoken very highly of his brother. He is the King’s physician. I will ask him to come by.”

She nods.
I leave her room with a heavy heart.

I have never seem my mother like this and it was very concerning.

I put my coat on and leave at once for Erebor.
I try to go looking for Gloin but I am met at the entrance by Kili and Fili.

“Mister Boggins!” Kili yells.

“Fili. Kili.”

Kili gives me a hug that robs me of my breath.

I pat his back.

He releases me.

Fili puts an arm around my shoulders.

“So. What brings you to Erebor? You never come to visit us.” Fili tells me.

“Sorry. I did not know if I was allowed. You are princes after all and your mother doesn’t seem to like me very much.”

“Mother doesn’t like a lot of people.” Fili assures me.

“That doesn’t bring me any comfort.” I say.

“There is something we wanted to show you! I know you will like it.” Kili says.

“What is it?”

They lead me down the hall.

“It’s a surprise.”

“That’s nice but I came looking for Mister Oin.”

“Are you unwell Mister Baggins?” Fili asks me, concern in his voice.

“No. No. I’m fine.”

“Good.”

“We will take you to Oin.” Fili says.

“I would be very grateful.”

“Mister Baggins.” A female voice says.

I shiver.

I turn to face her.

“Lady Dis.” I say inclining my head.

She comes closer.

“What bring you by?”
“Mister Baggins needs to see Oin.” Fili tells her.

She raises an eyebrow.

“You’ve been in this dreary environment for some time. I’m surprised you haven’t needed a doctor.”

“It’s just a precaution. My Mother has low spirits.”

“Really? We don’t have much of that here. But I’m sure Oin will try to help if he can.”

“Thank you.”

“You did not have to come here personally. You could have sent a message.”

“I did not want to alarm my father.”

“Hmm. Take him to see Oin.”

“Yes Mother.” Fili and Kili say at the same time.

“Come Mister Boggins.”

“I am sorry to disturb you.” I tell her.

“You do not disturb me.” She says before walking away.

The boys lead me to the physician’s rooms.

“This is Oin. You will need to speak up, he is deaf.”

“What?” Oin says putting a horn in his ear.

“Hello! I am Bilbo Baggins.”

“No need to shout lad. What can I do for you?” Oin asks.

“It’s my mother. She is not feeling well.”

“Well then. Let us go and see what is wrong with her.”

He grabs his medical bag and comes around the table.

“Well. Come on, come on. No better time like the present.” He tells me.

I follow him out of the room.

The boys follow.

Once we are out of Erebor I turn to look at them.

“Thank you for your help. I will be back another day to see that surprise you had for me.”

They nod.

“We hope your mother feels better soon.” Kili tells me.
“Thank you.”
I lead Gloin back home.

***********************

Mother kept to her bed for a few more days.
Oin came to see her every afternoon as did Dori and Bombur.
They brought tea and food and stayed to chat.
It raised my mother’s spirits greatly.
Once she was out of bed and out and about, I ventured into Erebor once more.
Fili and Kili were easy to find as they always seemed to know when I was coming to the Kingdom.

“Mister Boggins!”
I shake my head.
That boy would never call me ‘Baggins’.

“Please, call me Bilbo.”

“Well then Bilbo. How is your mother?” Fili asks me.

“She seems to be better now.”

“Good. We are so glad Oin could help her.” Kili tells me.

“I am too.” I say.

“It is very hard to see your parent sick.” Fili says.

“Oh?”

“Yes. Our Father was injured in a mining accident. His injuries were too severe. There was nothing Oin could do for him. He suffered for two days before finally passing to the Great Halls.”

I pat his hand.

“I am sorry.”

“I was very young. I don’t remember much of him. And Kili wasn’t even born yet.”

“Sometimes I think it was best I didn’t. It would have been harder to lose him if I had.” Kili says.
I take their hands in mine.

“I know he would be proud of you lads.”
They smile at me.

“Of course, we have Uncle Thorin. He has been like a father to us.” Fili says.
“Really?” I giggle.

“What?” Kili asks.

“He doesn’t really seem like the nurturing type now does he? I am sure he could do a good job in teaching you how to scowl or growl angrily at folks. Now that he is very good at.”

They direct their gazes behind me before looking away.

Dread fills my heart.

I turn to look.

Thorin crosses his arms over his chest.

“Mister Baggins.” He says.

I swallow.

“I was just thanking the lads for getting me to Oin.”

“You’re ill?” He asks.

He uncrosses his arms and comes closer.

“No. No. It was just a precaution. My Mother hasn’t been fairing very well.”

“But she is better now?”

“She is though I fear she will become ill.”

“Oin will make sure she doesn’t.”

I nod.

“We Hobbits always do better in warm weather surrounded by our gardens.”

He gives me a small smile.

“You do look more like a grocer.”

“I am not a grocer.” I say.

He chuckles.

I look over his shoulder to see his sister standing down the hall staring at us.

Thorin follows my gaze before looking back at me.

“I will be by to visit soon. Now if you will excuse me, I’ve urgent business.”

I nod.

He walks away.

I look back at Dis.

She narrows her eyes at me.
“Come on Bilbo! Otherwise you’ll never see the surprise we have for you.” Kili says tugging on my arm.

I let them lead me.

The surprise as it turned out was the library.

I gasp to see so many tomes.

They lead me further into the room.

“This is Ori. He is the head scribe here.” Kili says putting his arm around the young Dwarf’s shoulder.

Ori shrugs the arm off.

“Ori, at your service.”

“Bilbo Baggins at yours. This library is truly remarkable.”

“Thank you.” He says blushing.

“Can I look around?”

“Of course Mister Baggins!”

He leads me around the rows of books.

Most of them were in the Dwarf language but Ori was more than happy to translate.

“I do not have any books on Hobbits, there are only a few mentions here and there. Perhaps you will be willing to tell me about your people?” He asks shyly.

“I would love to. The only other thing we love more than our gardens is telling stories.”

“Really? Thank you Mister Baggins.”

“Please. Call me Bilbo.”
Chapter 10

Thorin POV

“Are the preparations ready?” I ask my sister.

She looks down at the list she’s made.

“If we are to entertain, we must do it properly. You’re not regretting the invitations, are you?”

“No. Spend what you will.”

She nods.

“Who’s on the list?” I ask sitting.

“The council, of course. We cannot have a dinner party and not invite the council members of Erebor.”

I nod.

“Dain has sent word he will be arriving in a few days.”

“Really? Why was I not informed of this?”

“I was unaware until the raven arrived with the message. I do not know why he is coming except that he is.”

I sigh.

“So he will be here in time for the dinner, I’ve added him to my list. I have invited the Lord of Dale. He might decline but we must invite him all the same. The Baggins’ will come, I am sure since they are the guests of honor. They must realize how good it will be for them to be introduced as friends of the King of Erebor.”

“I am sure that will not sway them in the slightest.”

“How you seem to understand these Baggins’ Thorin. Do you really think they are so different that they would not be grateful to have a King as their friend?”

“I am sure they are grateful for my friendship, King or not. I am not, after all, the only King they know.”

“They are fools then. They should be glad you even bother to speak to them. And that boy of theirs parades around our kingdom as if it were the marketplace. He should show some respect. And the way he speaks to you as if you were some commoner.”

“What else does he lack to bring him up to your standards?” I snap.

She looks at me.

I rub my forehead.

“I wish you would try to like Bilbo.”
“Why? You’ve not formed an attachment to him, have you?”

“No.”

“Good. Thank Mahal he did not curse you with that Hobbit as your One. Why, he once laughed in my face at the thought of you being courted by so many others! I’m sure he did.”

I turn my face away.

“He will never have me.”

“He has too good of an opinion of himself to take you. I should like to know where he thinks he can find anyone better than you.”

“I think you have too good an opinion of me.”

She smiles and touches my face.

“You are my brother and I love you. I will do my best to protect you from any harm, even if it is from a simple Hobbit.”

I take her hand in mine.

“You can believe me then when I say this out of complete indifference to Bilbo. Bungo Baggins is my friend, he’s his only son. I wish you’d make an effort to befriend Bilbo or at least tolerate his presence.”

She sighs.

“You are sure you do not have any kind of romantic feelings for him?”

“I am sure.” I lie.

“Very well then. I will try.”

“Good.”

“I only wish I knew why you talked about him so much if you don’t like him.”

“I’ve never met anyone else like him.”

He made me feel things I had never felt before.

He made me want to be better.

“Thank Mahal for that.” She says.

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Bilbo POV

“Mother, I am sure any one of these dresses will do for the dinner party.” I say carrying her dresses into the sitting room.

A man with a white beard and a gray cloak smiles at me.

“Bilbo Baggins, what a fine young Hobbit you’ve turned out to be.” He says.
“Do I know you?” I ask.

“You know of me. I am Gandalf.”

“Gandalf, of course.”

I set my mother’s dresses down.

“The wandering wizard.” I say.

He chuckles.

I shake his hand.

“It is good to see you my boy. The last time I saw you, you were running around waving a wooden sword. And now look at you.”

“I am glad you’ve come to visit at last.”

“Bilbo, why don’t you go and get Gandalf’s present.” Father says.

“Present?” Gandalf asks.

I leave the sitting room and go up to my closet where we were keeping the swords we found.

I pick one of the swords and take it back down with me.

I hand it to Gandalf.

He looks at it.

“This was not made by Dwarves nor any race of man.” He says inspecting the blade.

“For you as thanks for all your help.” Mother tells him.

“My dear Belladonna. There was no need for a present. But I appreciate it none the less.”

I chuckle.

“So. I hear that you had a run in with Thorin Oakenshield.” Gandalf tells me.

I sigh.

“We did. Who told you?”

“My boy. No one ever dares to speak out when Thorin Oakenshield is on a rampage.”

“He needs to learn manners.”

“And I bet you gave him a piece of your mind.”

“Why do you say that?”

“You are a Baggins.”

I smile.

“That I am.”
“And a Took.” Mother adds.

“Double the trouble.” Gandalf tells me with a wink.

“I am sure that Thorin would defend his side very eloquently. He has actually.”

“Well. He is king. He must save face in front of his subjects.”

“We have received an invitation to dinner from Thorin.” Father says.

“Yes. They tend to have a dinner on exactly the same date every year. Time nor tide stops for Dis’ dinners. She does not turn back for anyone.”

“Now that is very true!” I say.

“Why do they hold a dinner on the same day every year?” Father asks.

“Thrain started them in order to find a suitable mate for Thorin.”

I serve myself some tea.

I know Mother was looking at me and I try to appear nonchalant.

“Since his death, Dis has kept the dinners going. Though I doubt Thorin will ever marry and he does not have the pressure to produce an heir since his sister has already provided them.” Gandalf says.

“So the young lads?” Mother asks.

“Fili as the eldest is the crowned prince and of course, should he not marry or produce a suitable heir, Kili will inherit the throne.”

We sit in silence for a moment.

“Bilbo. How are you finding Dale?” Gandalf asks.

“I really like it.”

He nods.

“You know, Bilbo has made friends amongst the Dwarves.” Father says.

“Really? I shouldn’t be surprised. Hobbits are after all extraordinary creatures.”

**********************

“Ah, Lady Dis. A pleasure to finally meet you.” Father says with a bow.

Dis smiles at him.

“I’m sorry that your mother did not feel well enough to join us.” Dis tells me.

I nod.

“It’s nothing serious, I’m sure. She is just a little tired.” I tell her.

“Bilbo!” Fili and Kili cry.
Their embrace lifts me off my feet.

I pat their backs.

“We are so glad you came.” Fili tells me.

“We thought Mother would have scared you away.” Kili whispers to me.

I chuckle.

“No worries. I am made of stronger stuff than that.”

“We are glad for that. We like you and we would hate for you to stop visiting Erebor. You have yet to make us some pies.” Fili tells me.

I chuckle.

“Gandalf.” Thorin says coming over.

I stare at him.

I had never before seen him dressed so impeccably.

His hair was combed and braided, his crown shining brightly upon his head.

I was starting to think that Dis was right, at the moment he was a very handsome Dwarf.

I look away from him.

Gandalf chuckles.

“Ah Thorin. I took the liberty of inviting myself knowing the hospitality of the Dwarves.”

Thorin smiles and nods.

“I hope you were not worried that we would turn you away. We are not the Elves of Greenwood.”

I narrow my eyes at Thorin but he is not looking at me.

“Uncle Bilbo.” Kili says.

I look at him.

“What?” I ask confused.

“We would love it if you were our Uncle, wouldn’t we Fili?”

“Indeed we would. That way we could visit the Shire anytime we wanted.” Fili says.

I smile at them.

“I would be honored to be your Uncle, in sentiment only though. I don’t see how I could really be your Uncle.”

“You could always marry Thorin.” Fili says.
I snort.

“Mister Baggins.” Thorin says standing in front of me.

I bow.

He looks surprised.

“See. I am learning your ways.”

He smiles and inclines his head.

“I am sorry to hear that your mother is feeling under the weather.”

“She will be back on her feet in no time.” I say.

“I really do hope so.”

“Thank you for your concern.”

“Thorin.” A Dwarf says coming over.

“Bilbo.” Thorin says putting a hand on my back. “This is my cousin Dain. He is the Lord of the Iron Hills.”

“Bilbo Baggins at your service.” I say with a bow.

He returns the gesture.

“Dain at yours. I daresay that I have never seen a Hobbit so far east.”

“No. We are a rarity.”

He chuckles.

I look at the female Dwarf with him.

“This is Noani. She has always wanted to see Erebor and I promised her father I would look after her.”

I nod at the Noani.

She curtsies.

“Thorin. Isn’t Noani looking lovely?” Dain asks.

Thorin pulls me closer.

It made my heart race and I could feel myself starting to sweat.

“Indeed she does.” Thorin says.

I can see out of the corner of my eye that Dis and my Father were looking at us.

“Uncle Bilbo! You must try some of this.” Kili says waving a piece of pastry under my nose.

Thorin frowns in confusion.
Kili tugs on my arm.

“Excuse me.” I say.

I let Kili lead me away.

I can feel Thorin’s gaze on my back.

And it makes my heart beat even faster.
“How is she?”

Oin sighs and accepts the cup of tea I hold out to him.

He takes a seat.

“How is she?”

I take a seat.

“But she was better.”

“Aye. But the longer she stays, the weaker she becomes. I am sorry to say that Dale is not the place for Hobbits.”

“No. We do like our rolling green hills.”

He nods.

“I can tell your Father is you like.”

I sigh.

“No. I will do it.”

“If you are sure.”

“Yes. I think that would be best.”

“I will come tomorrow.”

He finishes his tea and stands.

I follow him to the door.

“Thank you. For everything.”

“No worries. It is my duty to look after the ill.”

I nod and give him a small smile.

He pats my shoulder before walking out.

I find Father in his study.

“Bilbo.” He says.

I walk in.

“Father.” I begin.
He puts down his quill.

“I’ve known for some time now.”

I look at him.

“How ill she is, I mean.”

“You did?”

He nods.

“I suppose I did not want you to worry.”

“I didn’t want you to worry either.”

He smiles.

“You are a good son Bilbo.”

I get choked up.

“None of that now.” He says standing and embracing me.

“I wish there was something we could do.”

“She is too fragile now, a trip back would certainly kill her.”

I look at him.

“Maybe a visit to Greenwood could cheer her up.”

“It might but that too is a risk.”

He smiles sadly.

“You know. The first time I saw your mother, I knew I was going to marry her. She was the most beautiful thing I’d ever seen.”

A shadow comes over his gaze.

“I am afraid Bilbo. I do not know if I could bear her passing. She is my heart. What will I do without her?”

I wipe my eyes.

“Yavanna will look after us. She will help Mother get better and soon she will be demanding that we go on another adventure.”

He pats my hand.

“Yes. You are probably right.”

“I better go up and see her.” I say.

He nods.

I wash my face before going to see my Mother.
I stand in the doorway to her bedroom and look at her peaceful face.

Her eyes flutter open and she looks at me.

“Bilbo. Why are you hiding over there?”

I walk in and take a seat next to her.

I take her hand in mine.

“Look. Look at what Thorin sent over.”

I look at the nightstand.

Roses sat in a crystal vase.

I lean in and smell their perfume.

Images of the Shire flood my mind.

“Aren’t they the most beautiful flowers you have ever seen?”

“They are.”

“It was so thoughtful of him. You must go to Erebor and thank him.”

I nod.

She smiles and places her hand over mine.

“I keep thinking of Bag End, of the Shire.” She says quietly.

I look at her.

“I used to complain about its slow existence and how I wanted to leave and see the world again. And now I’ll never see it again. That’s my punishment.” She weeps silently.

My eyes prickle with tears.

“No Mother. I am sure you will see Bag End once more. I know you will.”

“I wish I felt the same way you do. But I know it’s not true. I can feel my end near.”

“Do not say such things.”

“Promise me you will look after your Father.”

“I promise.”

“I have brought this pain upon you.”

I kiss her hand.

I send a prayer to Yavanna.

My mother had to get better or I knew for sure that I would end up losing both of my parents and I did not know if I was strong enough to face this world on my own.
The next morning I keep my word and walk to Erebor.

“Uncle Bilbo!” Kili says.

Like always, Kili and Fili were waiting for me at the entrance.

“You should not be here.” Fili tells me.

“Why? What is the matter?” I frown.

“It is the Dwarves of the Iron Hills.” Kili says.

“They are in a rioting mood today.” Fili says.

“Riot? Why?”

“There are rumors of Thorin falling to the gold sickness.” Fili says.

“The way his grandfather did.” I say. “Is it true?”

“No. That is what they will say to justify their reason for marching here against Uncle.” Kili says.

“Why would they care?”

“They want Dain to rule Erebor. They think he is a better fit.” Fili says angrily.

“Surely Dain can put a stop to this.”

“He is too far away to be of any help.” Kili says.

“And Thorin?”

“The guards are on alert.” Fili says.

“Have they tried anything?”

“Aye. Several times.” Kili says.

“Is anyone injured?”

“Nothing major.” Fili says looking around us.

“We should get inside.” Kili tells me.

I nod.

“Mister Baggins.” Thorin says walking over.

Dwalin as always was at his back.

“I have heard of what is happening.”

“I am sorry you have come to visit us at such an unfortunate time.” He tells me.

He orders the front doors to be closed.
As the guards are obeying his orders, arrows are fired and the guards go down.

“Fili! Kili! Take Mister Baggins to the war room and make sure he is safe.” Thorin orders as he draws his sword.

Dwalin barks orders to the other guards.

About thirty Dwarves charge into Erebor.

There are arrows flying and the clashing of weapons and the cries of the Dwarves is deafening.

I stare in horror.

“Come Uncle Bilbo!” Fili says tugging my arm.

Kili takes his bow and fires arrows at the Dwarves of the Iron Hills.

One of them comes up behind us.

Fili shoves me aside.

“Kili!” Fili shouts.

Kili manages to move out of the way of the deadly blow just in time.

The two boys are soon lost in the fray.

I stand against the wall shivering in fear.

Dwalin shouts for Thorin and I watch as the King of Erebor’s shoulder is pierced by a sword.

Thorin cries out in anger and pain.

My heart races in my chest.

The others would not get to him in time.

Thorin takes another hit, this time to his leg.

He falls to his knees.

The other Dwarf raises his sword to deal a deadly blow.

I run without thinking.

I throw myself at the Dwarf.

We fall to the floor and somehow I manage to get the upper hand.

I take Thorin’s fallen sword and lifting it with all my might, I stab the Dwarf lying beneath me.

Fili and Kili shout for Thorin.

I look at him.

He falls onto his back, his eyes slipping shut.

There is blood pooling under him and my heart seizes with terror.
The Dwarves of Erebor manage to drive out the remaining Dwarves of the Iron Hills.

The boys fall to their knees beside their Uncle.

Dwalin is shouting for Oin.

“Thorin!” Dis shouts running over.

Oin arrives and checks Thorin over.

He orders Thorin to be lifted and taken away.

A hand falls on my shoulder and I jump.

“You were impressive today Hobbit.” Dwalin says.

He has blood on him and there are scratches on his face.

“Th-thank you.”

He nods.

“I think we might be able to make a warrior out of you.”

“I doubt it.”

“You saved the Kings life.”

“He doesn’t look too alive to me.” I say string down at a pool of Thorin’s blood.

“Nah. Thorin is strong, he will pull through.”

I wanted to believe that with all my heart.

“Come. You should be looked at.”

“I’m fine.”

“Yer trembling like a leaf. You are not fine.”

“Of course not, I just took someone’s life.”

“Gets easier.”

“Keep talking and I might throw up on your boots.”

He throws his head back and laughs.

“Come on.”

“No. I have to get back home. Mother will worry.”

“Alright. I will have one of the guard’s escort you home.”

I nod.

I place my trembling hands under my armpits and I follow the guard out of Erebor.
Chapter End Notes

Was not sure what to do with the scene with the rioters and Margaret throwing herself in front of Thornton. But then I remembered that Bilbo saved Thorin from the Orc and Azog so I wrote down a version of that here.
Thorin POV

I groan.

My body ached and I felt weak.

“Thorin.” Dis says.

I open my eyes.

“Thank Mahal you are alright.” She says taking my hand in hers.

The last thing I remembered was…

“Where is Bilbo? Where is the Hobbit?”

I try sitting up but my shoulder protests.

“Lie down you fool.” Dis say pushing me back against the pillow.

“Dis.” I say.

“Mister Baggins has gone home.”

“Gone home? That’s not possible.”

“Really Thorin, he was quite well.”

“He could have taken a blow, he might be hurt. What were you thinking letting him go home?”

“He was fine! A guard escorted him home. I’m sure it’s not possible to keep such a headstrong Hobbit anywhere he doesn’t care to be. He’s such a reckless young fellow.”

“I have to see him. Make sure for myself that he is alright.”

“You are in no condition to leave bed much less go traipsing around Dale!”

“Then you must ask him to come here.”

“Thorin.”

“He saved my life.”

She sighs and averts her gaze.

“Yes. My sons told me of his bravery.”

“Fili? Kili?”

“They are well.”

“Good.”

I close my eyes.
“You said you did not have feelings for him.”

“I did not.”

“But?”

“But I cannot deny that my gaze drifts towards him every time he is near. I long for his presence and I wish to make him happy. I want to be the reason he smiles or laughs.”

“Oh Thorin.”

“You know that I have to see him and you know what I will have to say.”

“Yes. You could hardly do otherwise.”

“What do you mean?”

“I mean that you are bound in honor as he has shown his feeling for all of Erebor to see.”

“His feelings?” I frown.

My heart quickens and I do not dare to hope.

“He rushed out in front of that Dwarf and saved your life. Or are you telling me it did not happen that way? Do you think that it’s not the tittle-tattle of Erebor?”

“He did save me. But I daren’t believe such a good gentle soul could care for me.”

“Don’t be so foolish. What more proof do you need, that he should act in such a reckless manner?” She pats my face. “I will have to change the initials on your linen. They will bear his name now, his and yours.”

“I know he does not care for me the way I care for him. But I cannot remain silent. I must ask him.”

“Don’t be afraid Thorin. He has admitted it to the world. I may yet even learn to like him for it. It must have taken a great deal to overcome his pride.”

I smile at her.

*******************

Bilbo comes the following day.

Oin had allowed me to sit while Bilbo was present but it could not be for more than twenty minutes.

There is knock on my chamber door.

“Enter.” I call.

Bilbo comes in.

I smile at him.

“Please. Come in.”
He closes the door behind himself and comes closer.

I gestures to the chair in front of mine.

He sits.

My heart beats rapidly in my chest and I felt a fear that I had never felt before.

“Mister Baggins, I’m afraid I was very ungrateful yesterday.”

“You were in no position to be grateful, not that you have to thank me for anything.”

“I think that I do.”

“I did what anyone else would have done.”

“I doubt that is true.”

“You were in danger. I would have done the same for any other in your position.”

“Any other?”

“Of course.”

I clench my fists.

“Even for the Dwarves of the Iron Hills?”

“They have been lead to believe something that is not true. I am sure that if they were to be spoken to and brought to reason-”

“I forgot. You imagine everyone to be your friend.”

“Everyone deserves a chance.”

“Everyone but me. Do you think I got what I deserved?”

“What? No! Of course not. I am just saying that you should talk to them. If you were to be reasonable-”

“Me? I’m being unreasonable? They attacked my people and my Kingdom without provocation!”

“Look, I do not know much of Dwarf politics but if you could speak with them then I know-”

“They will get what they deserve.”

He stares back at me with large wide eyes.

I take a deep breath.

“Look. Mister Baggins. I did not ask you here for an argument.”

“I should think not!” He says crossing his arms.

“I asked you to come so that I may thank you for your bravery. And I asked you to come because…I think it’s very likely that I…” I shake my head. “I know I’ve never been in this position before. It’s difficult to find the words.” I look at him. “Mister Baggins, my feelings for
you are very strong.”

“Please, stop. Please don’t go any further.”

“Excuse me?”

“Please do not continue in this way, it is not proper.” He says looking away.

“I’m well aware that in your eyes at least I’m not a gentleman. But I think I deserve to know why I am offensive.”

He glares at me.

“It offends me that you should speak to me as if it were your duty to repair my reputation. I am well aware of what folks are saying about me.”

“I speak to you about my feelings because they are true. I have no thought for your reputation.”

“You think that because you are a King and I am lesser than you, that you can have me for your possession? Well you sir are not my King! And you do not have to feel obliged to say things because I saved your life. I did it because it was the right thing to do, not because I wanted you to offer me anything.”

“I don’t want to possess you. I wish to marry you because I love you!”

He stares at me in surprise and I know my expression is as surprised as his.

I close my mouth.

“Well you shouldn’t because I do not feel the same way for you.” He says.

I close my eyes.

“I’m sorry.” He says after a moment.

I glare at him.

“For what? That you find my feelings for you offensive? Or that you assume I’m only capable of thinking in terms of possession?”

My shoulder aches and I can feel it starting to bleed.

“No! No, of course not. I did not mean… I am sorry to be so blunt. I have not learned how to refuse. How to respond when someone talks to me as you just have.”

“Oh? There are others? This happens to you every day? Of course. You must have to disappoint so many other fools who offer you their heart.”

“Please understand.”

“I do understand. I understand you completely.”

He opens his mouth as if to speak but thinks better of it.

He stands and walks to the door.

I turn my face away.
“My mother thanks you for the flowers.” He says quietly.

Moments later I hear the door open and close.

I close my eyes.

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“You look better.”

I nod.

She sits down next to me on the bed.

“By the way, I was right.”

She looks at me.

“Mister Baggins will not have me. No one loves me but you.”

She cups my face.

“Thorin.”

“I knew I was not good enough for him. Yet I think of him more than ever.”

“I hate him. I tried not to when I thought he would make you happy. I’d give my life’s blood for that. Who is he that he dares reject you?”

“Dis, please.”

“It’s no good Thorin. Your sorrow is mine. And if you won’t hate him, then I must.”

“He does not care for me. That is enough. The only thing you can do for me is never say his name again. We will never talk of him again.”

“I only wish he and all his family could be swept back to the place they came from.”
Chapter 13

Mother had felt a bit better and had wished to sit in the sitting room for a little while. I helped her get situated before making us some tea.

Gandalf arrived later that morning and a messenger from Erebor arrived at the same time with another bouquet of roses for Mother.

“How kind of Mister Thorin.” Mother says admiring the flowers.

“The most splendid flowers I’ve ever seen. They remind me of the one’s you used to grow in the Shire.” Gandalf says.

“And a card.” Mother says. “Written in his own hand. He has always been most thoughtful. But I wouldn’t have believed he’s have the time. He’s a king after all and I’m just a simple Hobbit.”

“It shows his high regard for you my dear.” Father tells her.

“Bilbo, you must visit Erebor and ask after Mister Thorin and thank him for this most gracious gift.”

“I am sure a note will do as well, Mother.” I say.

“I saw Thorin today. He didn’t seem quite in control as usual.” Gandalf says.

Guilt churns in my belly.

“Really?” Father asks.

“He seemed very distracted this morning. Do you have any idea why he would be so scattered, Bilbo?”

I look at Gandalf while Father looks at me.

“I don’t know. He does have a Kingdom to run. Excuse me.”

I stand and leave the room.

The next day Gandalf asked me to go on a walk with him.

There was no way I could refuse.

We walk down the streets of Dale and I introduce him to my friends.

“Thorin! Thorin, so good to see you up and about.” Gandalf calls.

I stare down at my feet.

“I am the son of Durin, it will take more to bring me down.” Thorin says.

I can feel Thorin’s gaze.

“You know Bilbo right?”

“He’s always been rather abrupt but this is very peculiar. Do you happen to know why that is?”

“Gandalf. I’m grateful for your friendship and for your presence. My Father has felt very alone here.”

“But you wish I would mind my own business?”

I nod.

“You’re absolutely right my boy and it will stop immediately. But you know, I do take an interest in your life. I would like to think if you needed help, I would be the first you’d call upon.”

“You have my word. You’ll be the first I call upon.”

He pats my hand.

I enter the sitting room carrying some of Father’s new books.

“We got a letter from Thranduil.”

“Really?”

“Yes. He apologizes for not coming to visit but he is inviting us to come to Lake Town where he will be for a few days. Oh I so wish I could go. Don’t worry, I know that I shouldn’t. But you could go.”

“I can’t go to Lake Town. Not when you’re…Not until I know that you’re feeling better.”

“Yes but…if you went you could tell me all about it and maybe bring me something back for my collection. And that would give me something to look forward to.”

“I’ll think about it.”

“My dearest, you have no idea how wonderful it is to be in your presence once more.”

I smile at Thranduil.

He had insisted on coming with me on a walk through Lake Town.

“It is so good to see you too. I have missed your company greatly.”

“Forgive me for not coming to see you as promised.”

“I know you have a kingdom to run.”

“And a son to look after.”

“I am glad he came with you.”

“So is he, though he is not looking forward to sitting in that meeting with the Dwarves. Neither am I for that matter.”
I smile.

“I can only imagine what it must be like for you having to live so close to them.”

“They are not all that bad. I’ve made some very good friends.”

“At least you have not been completely miserable. Though I am saddened to hear about Belladonna.”

“She really wanted to come.”

“Perhaps after the meeting tomorrow I can go back with you to Dale.”

“You don’t have to. Mother understands that you are busy.”

“I cannot in good conscious go back to Greenwood without at least seeing my dearest friend one last time.”

I shudder.

“Forgive me.” He says kneeling in front of me. “I did not mean to be so blunt, dearest.”

“No. No. I understand.”

He cards his fingers through my hair.

“I wish I could shield you from pain.”

I smile at him.

“It makes it better knowing that you care so much.”

“I do.” He says kissing the back of my hand.

I look up only to be pierced by Thorin’s icy glare.

Thranduil follows my gaze and a smirk adorns his face.

He turns back to look at me.

“If I am not mistaken, I do believe that the King under the Mountain has set his eyes on you.”

“I doubt it.”

“You shouldn’t. Though I cannot say that it does not gladden my heart immensely to see that fool of a Dwarf want something he can’t have.” He says kissing my cheek.

“You shouldn’t say those things about him and you should not be glad of his pain.”

“Ah! So he has admitted his feelings for you.”

“I think they were misguided. I had just saved his life.”

He smiles at me.

“You still continue to surprise me my dearest Bilbo.”

He stands and we continue on our walk.
I look back at Thorin before facing forward again.

The next morning I took the time to walk by myself while Thranduil and Legolas were in the meeting.

Afterwards I waited for them outside the Great Hall of the Master of Lake Town.

“Bilbo.” Legolas says kneeling in front of me and hugging me.

“Legolas. I have missed you.”

“And I you my friend.”

He smiles at me.

“Uncle Bilbo!”

I look up to find Fili and Kili coming towards us.

Legolas stands and moves in front of me in a protective stance.

I pat his hip.

“It is alright. I know these two rascals.”

“Uncle Bilbo.” Kili says pushing Legolas aside and hugging me.

Fili eyes Legolas with mistrust.

“Lads, this is the Prince of Greenwood. Legolas these two are the princes of Erebor.”

“Yes. We know who this leaf eater is.” Fili says.

“Fili. That insult was uncalled for, now apologize to my friend.” I say.

Legolas smirks.

“But Uncle.”

“No. Apologize, right this instant.”

Fili sighs angrily.

“Apologies.” He says through gritted teeth.

“Legolas.” I say.

He uncrosses his arms.

“Apologies accepted young prince.”

They bow at each other.

Kili looked like he wanted to laugh.

“Kili is very skilled with the bow.” I say.
“Really? I did not know Dwarves valued archery.” Legolas says.

“We don’t but we were all blessed with different gifts.” Kili says defensively.

“Hmm. Are you sure you can hit a target? You’re too short.”

“Taller than most.” Kili says.

“Still as ugly.”

“Legolas.” I say.

“Come on then, show is what you can do you poncy elf.”

“Kili!”

“Alright.” Legolas says grabbing his bow.

They walk away insulting each other and sharing archery techniques.

I shake my head at the lot of them.

I go inside the Hall to wait for Thranduil.

I walk around admiring the tapestry when I hear Thorin’s voice.

I walk closer.

“I suppose we are far more advanced in our ways of getting the jems from the mountain walls. But it is mostly thanks to the miners who take care in not damaging the precious stone. I know other Dwarf kingdoms are not as successful in their mining operations.”

He glances at me before looking away.

“If only there was a way we could all live together, to take advantage of the great benefits shared knowledge could give us. But that will never come to pass.” He cocks his head my way. “As Mister Baggins can tell you, we Dwarves of Erebor are greedy and we want nothing more than to take into possession what we deem to be ours.”

The men he was speaking to turn to look at me.

“I certainly do not think that. As the King of Erebor could tell you, if he knew me at all.” I say sending a glare Thorin’s way.

I turn and walk away.

I can hear him following.

“I’ve presumed to know you once before and have been mistaken.”

“Bilbo.” Thranduil says walking up to us.

I turn to look at him.

“Thranduil. You know Mister Thorin.”

“Of course. How could I not?” Thranduil says inclining his head.
Thorin returns the gesture.

Thranduil rests his fingers against my shoulder.

Thorin cast his gaze somewhere above my head.

“I must get back to Erebor.” Thorin says.

“Give our regards to the Baggins’. You must tell them how this short break away from Dale is suiting my dearest Bilbo quite well. Don’t you think Thorin?”

Thorin glares at Thranduil.

“Doesn’t Bilbo look well?”

“Good day.” Thorin says turning away.

“Tell Mother I’ll be home soon, with so much to tell her.” I say touching his arm.

He walks away.
There is a knock on the door and I hurry answer it before it wakes Mother.

I open the door.

“Is Mister Baggins in?” The Hobbit looking fellow asks before lifting his face and smiling at me.

“Adalgrim Took! Is that you?”

“Hello cousin Bilbo.”

“Adalgrim.”

I embrace him before ushering him into the house.

“I got your letter.” He tells me. “Auntie Bella?”

“She’s still alive.”

He breathes a sigh of relief.

“She’s as ill as she could be, but she lives.”

“Thank the green lady. I thought I would not get here in time.”

“It is so good to see you.”

“You did expect me, didn’t you?”

“I knew someone would come but we had no letter.”

“I travelled before it.”

“Father and Mother will be surprised. I wrote before I left Lake Town and I didn’t say anything in case...I am so glad you came.”

“As am I.”

“Bilbo? Did I hear the door?” Father asks coming down the stairs.

“Look Father, look who arrived.” I say.

“My boy! What are you doing here?” Father asks embracing Adalgrim.

“Hello Uncle. I came to see Auntie Bella.”

“Well, come on then.” Father says leading him up the stairs.

I follow.

“What a strange home.” Adalgrim says tripping on the steps.
I giggle.

“Takes some getting used to.” I tell him.

We walk to Mother’s room.

“Who was it Bungo?” Mother asks.

“Look my dear, look who has come to see you.”

“Adalgrim Took, is that really you?”

He rushes forward to embrace my mother.

“Auntie Bella.” Adalgrim says.

Mother weeps quietly.

I wipe my eyes with my handkerchief.

“Everyone back at the Shire sent you letters. And look, look what Father sent you.”

He produces a red velvet ribbon.

Mother gasps.

“This was my Mothers. She wore it all the time in her hair.”

“He wanted you to wear it.” Adalgrim says taking Mother’s hair and braiding the string in.

Mother touches her hair.

“The Gamgee’s have prepared Bag End for your return.”

Mother sniffls.

“I know I will not see it again.”

“Do not say such things.” Father says sitting beside her.

“You are strong and nothing before has stopped the great Belladonna Baggins, not when she’s put her mind to it.” Adalgrim tells her.

Mother smiles and pats his hand.

“Tell me of what is happening in the Shire.” Mother says.

“Well. Drogo married Primula Brandybuck.”

“Really?” I ask. “He always did fancy her.”

“Yes. She was a very beautiful bride.” He says.

“Bilbo. You should find something to send them.” Mother tells me.

“I will Mother.”

“She is already with child.” Adalgrim says chuckling.
“So soon?” Father asks.

“What a blessing.” Mother sighs closing her eyes. “Tell me more.”

I open the door to find Thorin standing at our doorstep.

“Mister Thorin.”

“Mister Baggins. I have come only to bring this book for your Father and these flowers for your Mother.”

He hands them to me.

“Thank you. Would you care to come in?”

“I would not want to intrude.”

“No. You do not. You are my Father’s friend and no matter what has transpired between us…you are still his friend.”

Bofur arrives.

“Bofur.” I smile.

“Bilbo. Yer Majesty.” He says with a bow.

Thorin inclines his head in greeting.

“Can you take these inside?” I ask.

Bofur takes the book and the flowers and goes into the house.

“I’m sorry. You have company already.” Thorin says.

“No. Bofur is here all the time.”

His face becomes hard and his eyes like ice.

“Good day Mister Baggins.” He says turning away.

“Mister Thorin. Don’t be silly, come in.”

He walks away.

“You are most welcome!” I shout after him.

I sigh and go back inside.

“Who was that?” Adalgrim asks.

“Mister Thorin Oakenshield. He is the King of Erebor.”

“What a scowl he has.”

I smile.
“He is very fierce, yes.”

“What did Auntie mean by placing you in the company of these Dwarves?”

“Mister Thorin is…He’s a gentleman and has been very good to us.”

“A most disagreeable fellow, I am sure.”

“As with many, something has happened to make him scowl. Don’t judge him too harshly.”

“I’m sorry cousin. Who am I to criticize?”

“It is alright Adal.”

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Thorin POV

I watch Bilbo come towards Erebor with another Hobbit on his arm. They were of the same height and body type, though Bilbo looked thinner. The other had light brown curly hair and was dressed much in the same fashion as Bilbo. The strange Hobbit stopped to look around. He puts his hands on his hips and nods before saying something to Bilbo. Bilbo laughs. The Hobbit looks up at me and lifts a hand in greeting. I nod. He threads his arm with Bilbo’s and continues. “They are multiplying.” Balin says. “Soon we will be surrounded by Hobbits.” I smile. “Uncle Bilbo! Uncle Bilbo!” Kili cries rushing out of Erebor to meet Bilbo. “I do not know why my sister’s sons insist on calling him that.” I say. “I have asked but they will not tell me.” Fili follows his brother at a more sedate pace. “The lads wish to show their affection for him. He has been good to them.” “For which I am glad.” I say staring down at the top of Bilbo’s head. “How is his mother doing?” “From what Oin tells me, she gets worse every day.” I sigh. Fili and Kili embrace Bilbo before they are introduced to his Hobbit friend.
Hopefully he was just a Hobbit friend.

“I feel bad for the lad. Perhaps I should go and pay my respects.”

“I hear Bofur is there all the time.” I say.

“Aye. He and Bilbo are very good friends.”

I look at Balin before looking back down at Bilbo.

“It seems everyone but me is a good friend.”

Balin pats my back.

“More incentive for you to practice being approachable.”

As if that would redeem me in Bilbo’s eyes.

Chapter End Notes

I wanted someone from the Shire to come and visit the Baggins’s but it had to be a Took because of the family connection to Belladonna and because they are the most adventurous type of Hobbit. So I settled for Adalgrim Took who I imagine must be around Bilbo’s age.
“Bilbo.” Mother says quietly.
I take her hand in mine.
“My child.” She says caressing my face.
I sniff back my tears.
“Take care of your Father.”
I nod.
Adalgrim stands at the foot of the bed crying silently.
Gandalf was sitting in a chair in the shadows.
Father was standing at the doorway, too afraid to come into the room.
“Bungo.” Mother says holding her hand out to him.
Father comes and sits next to her.
He kisses her hand.
“My dearest Belladonna.” He whispers brokenly.
“Look after our son.”
“Please. Please don’t go where I can’t follow.” He tells her.
I look away.
Adalgrim puts his hand on my shoulder.
“I must go on this adventure on my own, my love.”
Father bows his head and weeps.
“I am sorry for the pain I am causing you.”
“No Mother. We will be alright.” I say trying to be brave.
She smiles at me.
“I am glad we all got to go on this adventure together. I have seen the East and met the Dwarves. I had a child and married a Hobbit I loved. I have lived in the rolling green hills of the Shire. I have
danced with Elves and men. There is nothing else I desire. I have completed my life’s work.”

“No. Bella.” Father says.

Mother closes her eyes.

“May the green lady lead you to the eternal garden.” Adalgrim says shakily.

“I have loved you with all my heart Bungo Baggins. I only regret we did not marry sooner.” Mother says with a sigh.

“I have loved you with all my heart too Belladonna Took.” Father says reclining his forehead against her shoulder.

We watch as her breathing slows until it stops.

My Father releases a great wail of pain.

Gandalf comes forward and puts a hand to her forehead before closing his eyes.

I stare at him, hoping that he can restore her life and her health.

He sighs and removes his hand.

He looks at me.

I shake my head.

“I am sorry.” He says.

I rest my head close to my Mother’s hip and I weep.

Adalgrim sits behind me and rests his head against my back.

We sit for a long while, each lost in our own pain.

“We must prepare her for the journey back to the Shire.” Gandalf says.

I sit back up and look at him.

“She would have liked to be buried there.” He says.

I nod.

“Do not worry about anything. I will take care of it.” Gandalf says before walking out.

“Father?” I say.

He continues to weep.

I place a hand on his back.

He looks at me, his eyes red and dazed.

I grab his hand.

“I am going with her.” He says.
“We will all go.” I say. “We will all go home.”

He nods.

Thorin POV

“Gandalf. To what do I owe your visit?” I say standing. “Please, join us.” I say gesturing to the table.

My sister and nephews were already seated having dinner.

“No, thank you. I have come to inform you of Belladonna Baggins’ passing.”

I swallow down the sudden lump in my throat.

Kili and Fili stare at Gandalf in horror.

Dis looks down at the table.

Kili stands in a hurry, his chair clattering to the floor.

Fili goes after his brother.

“How is Mister Baggins and Bilbo?” I ask.

“As well as can be expected.”

“Will she be buried in Dale?”

“No. She will be taken back to the Shire for a proper Hobbit burial. They prefer to be laid in the ground amongst the flowers.”

I nod.

“Do you think they would prefer company or would they rather keep to themselves?”

“When a Hobbit dies, the family and friends all gather in support.”

“I am sorry they do not have many family here.”

“Don’t worry Thorin, they have many who will look after them at the Shire. We will leave at morning light.”

“If there is anything I can do…”

“Everything has been taken care of. The elves are on their way to help prepare the body. Elvish and Hobbit burial customs are similar.”

“Regardless. I offer my services.”

He nods.

“You can be sure I’ll let you know if your help is needed.”
Bilbo POV

I stare at the elves Thranduil had sent.

They sang as they prepared my mother.

I look at her peaceful face.

“We will leave once they have finished.” My Father says pacing in agitation.

“I have to say good-bye to my friends. I can’t just leave without a word, they would worry unnecessarily.” I say.

“It doesn’t matter! We need to take your Mother home.” Father tells me.

I take his hand in mine.

“Father.”

“I am sorry my dear boy but I just….I can’t stay here a moment longer.” He says patting my hand.

“Don’t worry Bilbo. I will travel with your Father. You can join us in a few days.” Gandalf tells me.

“I don’t want to be late for Mother’s burial.”

“I am sure you will arrive with plenty of time.” He assures me.

I nod.

“I will go with Uncle.” Adalgrim tells me.

“Thank you.”

“I will help with anything I can.” Bard says.

I nod.

“Thank you for your friendship and your hospitality.” My Father tells him.

“We are ready.” One of the Elves says.

My Father stands.

“I will be there soon.” I tell him.

“Take care my boy.” He says hugging me.

“You too Father. I will see you very soon.”

He kisses my forehead before following Gandalf and the Elves out of the house.

My eyes sting to see my Mother’s wrapped body placed upon a cushioned wagon.

Father climbs in and sits beside her body.

“Don’t worry Bilbo, I will look after Uncle until you return.”
I nod and hug my cousin.

Bard stands beside me and his presence was a comfort.

I watch until they are out of sight.

“Come inside Bilbo. You are exhausted.”

“There is so much to do.”

“If you wish, I will let everyone know of what has happened. You do not have to linger here when you don’t want to.”

“No. I must do it in person. It’s only proper after all they have done for us.”

He nods.

“Alright. Just remember that I am here if you need anything.”

“Thank you Bard. Your friendship means a lot to me.” I say shaking his hand.

He pats my hand.

“And your means a lot to me and my family as well.” He says.
I had not slept for most of the night.

Thoughts of my Mother and my Father swirled in my head making it impossible to sleep.

I get up and start sorting the things I would take back with me and what I would leave.

It was how I spent most of my day really and it seemed as if I had not even started.

When we came we did not have much and now we seemed to have accumulated more than we thought.

Bard and his family kept me company and helped me from falling into dark thoughts.

The following day I forced myself to look presentable.

I had to say good-bye to my friends.

Just as I was about to leave, there was loud knocking on my door.

I open it up and the Dwarves tumble into the house almost creating a Dwarven avalanche.

“What on earth?”

“Uncle!” Kili cries before hugging me.

My eyes sting.

I pat his back.

“We are sorry for your loss Mister Baggins.” Dori tells me.

“Thank you.”

“We thought you might need some time to yourself but we just couldn’t wait anymore to see you. I hope that’s alright.” Bombur tells me.

“No, no. It’s fine. Come in. Kili, it’s alright. You can release me.”

“Sorry.” He says ending the hug.

“It’s alright.” I say patting his face.

Fili moves in to hug me.

“We are very sorry Uncle.”
“I know my boy.”

He releases me.

I lead them into the sitting room.

“I will make some tea.” I say.

“Don’t worry yourself. I will see to it.” Dori says standing.

“Your mother was good woman.” Ori says.

I nod.

“How are ye holding up lad?” Dwalin asks.

“It is difficult to sleep. I am worried about my Father.”

“Understandable. Losing your One is devastating.” Balin says.

Dwalin puts an arm around his brother.

I wipe my eyes with my handkerchief.

“He has not loved any other but my Mother and I fear he will follow her in death.” I whisper.

Fili and Kili put their arms around me.

“Should anything happen, you are more than welcome to stay in Erebor.” Balin tells me.

“Thank you.”

Dori arrives with the tea.

“Bilbo. This is my brother, NOri.”

I nod at the red headed Dwarf.

“Bilbo Baggins at your service.”

“Nori at yours. Thank you for looking after my brothers.”

I smile.

“If anyone needs looking after, it’s you.” Dori tells him.

They start bickering.

Oddly, it made me feel comfortable.

They keep me company for the rest of the afternoon.

At one point, Bifur lighted the lamps and Bombur made some dinner for everyone.

That night, surrounded by my friends, was the first night since my Mother’s death that I slept peacefully.
The next morning they helped me to box up the belongings I would take with me.

We were loading up the carriage when Bard arrived.

“Mister Baggins. I have news from Gandalf.” He says.

There was a serious look on his face and it made my heart sink.

I swallow.

“What is it?” I ask afraid of the answer.

He kneels on one knee in front of me and he takes ahold of my hand.

“I am sorry.” He says.

My heart beats faster in my chest.

“Your Father, he…he died.”

The Dwarves begin to shout questions around me.

My vision blacks out and I feel myself falling.

***************

Thorin POV

“Thorin.”

I look at Balin.

He has a grave look on his face.

I stand.

“What is it?”

He sighs and comes closer.

“I am sorry to tell you this but it seems that Bilbo’s father has also passed.”

I place a hand over my chest.

My breath becomes ragged and my heart wanted to burst out of my chest.

“Mister Baggins? Dead?”

“Aye, in his sleep. Poor fellow.”

My throat closes up and my eyes sting with tears.

My knees felt weak and I hold on to the table top.

“Thorin. Sit down lad.”

He helps me into a chair.
I put a hand to my temple.

I try to control myself.

“And Bilbo? What of him?”

“He took the news very hard. He passed out once he received the news.”

I close my eyes.

“He was inconsolable once he came to, thankfully Oin was on hand to administer some medication to help calm the poor lad.”

“I wish with all my heart that I could take his pain away.”

He pats my back.

“He is going to head home this same afternoon, once he is calmer. Thranduil is coming to lead the way back.”

I put a fist to my mouth.

It should be me.

“He has seen a great deal of sorrow since he’s been here. We’ll be sorry to see him go.” Balin says.

“As will I.”

**********************

Bilbo POV

I sit and wait for Thranduil to arrive.

I could not stop the flow of tears that fell from my eyes.

The Dwarves stayed with me and kept me company.

“Uncle Bilbo.” Kili says quietly.

I look at him.

“Will you come back?”

“I don’t know.”

“We will come and visit you once you’ve had enough time to grieve. Won’t we Kili?” Fili says.

“Aye. Mother or Uncle won’t be able to stop us.”

I smile at them.

“I would like that.”

They smile back.
There is a knock on the door and Bofur offers to see who it was.

Moments later Dis and Thorin enter the sitting room.

I stand with help of Fili and Kili.

“I am sorry that you are leaving under these circumstances.” Dis tells me.

I nod.

“I know it was a while ago but I regret the way I spoke to you.” I tell her.

“And I to you. We have not always seen eye to eye Mister Baggins but I never wished this tragedy to befall you.” She says.

“Thank you.”

She inclines her head.

Thorin comes forward.

“So you are leaving.”

I nod.

“I must see to my parents.”

“I am sorry for your loss.”

I wipe my eyes.

“Thank you.”

“Your Father was a good friend to me.”

“I know he valued your friendship greatly.”

“Will you ever come back?”

“Bilbo! The Elves are here!” Ori says rushing into the room.

“Thank you Ori. Tell them I will be right down.”

He nods and goes to do as instructed.

I look back at Thorin.

I offer him my hand.

He takes it in his.

“I wish you well, Mister Thorin.” I shake his hand before releasing it.

Dori hands me my coat.

I look at them one last time before walking down the stairs.

*****************************
Thorin POV

I watch from the doorway as Bilbo is placed upon the horse, Thranduil mounts onto the horse behind him.

I can hear Fili and Kili crying behind me.

One of the Elves accompanying Thranduil gets into Bilbo’s wagon and starts off down the road towards Greenwood.

Thranduil turns his horse and follows.

I stare at Bilbo.

“Look back.” I whisper. “Look back at me.”

But he does not and I feel a despair and emptiness in my chest as he disappears from my sight.

Dis puts her hand on my shoulder and I bow my head.

He was gone.

My One was gone.
I arrive at the Shire and not at all as I had left it.

I had dreamed of coming home and now that I finally was, it was to bury both my parents and to the dire news that my dearest cousins had drowned leaving their young son behind.

The following days were dark in my mind and in my heart.

My home gave me no comfort.

It was filled now with memories of what I’d had and could never get back.

It was filled with an emptiness and a sadness that could not be lifted from my heart.

For days I kept to my bed until one afternoon I heard children laughing and I thought about my cousin who had also just been left an orphan.

“You were lucky to have gotten so many years with them and many memories of better times. But that poor fauntling.” I tell myself.

I get up out of bed and force myself to look respectable before going down to the Thain’s office to inquire about the boy.

“Are you sure you can handle the responsibility Bilbo?” He asks.

“Yes.”

He sighs.

“I do not know if placing that young lad in your care is the best thing, for either of you.”

“He needs me, as much as I need him. We can help each other heal.”

He shakes his head.

“Grandfather.”

He looks at me.

“Bag End was not made to house only one person. It needs to be filled with love and joy. None of which I have at the moment. But I will try for that boy, he deserves to have good memories instead of just sadness and emptiness.”

“Alright. I am sure he will be better off with you than where he is now.”

“Thank you.”

“His name is Frodo Baggins.”

Frodo.
“I will make sure he grows up the way my cousins would have wanted him to.” I promise.

“I have no doubt about that.”

********************

Dis POV

I walk down to the treasure room.

I stand by one of the pillars and look down at my brother.

He was just standing there amongst the gold.

“Thorin?” I call.

He does not move or acknowledge that he heard me.

I walk down the steps and go towards him.

“Thorin.” I say again.

I touch his shoulder.

He turns to look at me.

There is a vacant look in his eyes that frightens me to my core.

“Thorin. What are you doing? You have been down here for days.”

“I was just looking….” He trails off and stares off into the distance.

“For what?” I ask.

“Hmm?”

He turns his face away.

I shiver in fear.

“Thorin.” I whisper.

He moves way to walk amongst the gold.

I stand there for a long moment before turning away.

I bite my lip to stop my tears.

My brother needed me to be brave.

I go looking for Balin.

I find him in the war room.

“Balin.”

“My Lady.”
“Have you noticed anything wrong with my brother?”

He sighs and looks down at his hands.

“Aye. I have noticed the vacant look in his eyes. He cannot concentrate on anything and he spends every waking moment down in the treasure room.” He looks at me. “I have seen that before.”

“What can we do?”

“There is nothing you or I can do. There is only one who can bring Thorin out of this.”

“But what is it Balin? What has robbed my brother’s mind?”

“It’s the dragon sickness and it will only get worse.”

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Thorin POV

I do not know how much time had passed since….since I had lost my One.

I tried to distract myself with work but it was useless.

Every moment of every day was spent thinking of Bilbo.

Until something else caught my attention.

A whispering in my mind that only became louder until I could not ignore it.

I found myself wandering the halls looking for the voice that called to me.

My moments of lucidity started to become scarcer until I did not even recognize my own name.

I did not know anything except the beauty of the gold.

Of the jewels.

The gold shined like my One’s hair and the jewels reminded me of his eyes, of the color of his clothes.

It made me feel closer to him somehow.

I wandered amongst the wealth of Erebor searching for the best jewel I could gift him with.

He deserved the very best my mines had to offer.

“Thorin?”

I ignore the call.

Hands grab me and I turn to shove them off.

“Thorin. It’s just me. What are you doing?”

I stare at his face for a long while until I remember his name.

“Dwalin.”
“Aye. What are you doing?”

“I have to find it.” I say turning away.

He blocks my way and I glare at him.

“What Thorin? What do you have to find?”

Find?

Yes.

I had to find it.

The gold and the jewels called to me, offering themselves for this mission.

I bend and pick up a sapphire.

“It is important that I do.” I tell Dwalin.

“Yer not making sense Thorin. Come back with me, you need to sleep and you haven’t eaten in days.”

“I must do this.”

“Do what?”

I look at him.

“I can’t leave without it.”

I move around him and kneel amongst the treasure.

“Thorin.” He says grabbing me and forcing me to my feet.

The jewels slip out of my hands.

“Look at what you’ve done!” I shout.

“Yer sister and nephews are worried, as are yer friends. Erebor needs their king!”

“Don’t you see? This is more important than any of that. Nothing else matters but this.”

“Dis is right. You cannot see what you have become.”

I stare at him.

“Yer sick Thorin. You need help.”

“You don’t know what you’re talking about.”

I turn and walk further amongst the treasure.

“You need to snap out of this.”

“Just go. You’re being more of a hindrance anyway.”
I bend to move the coins about looking for the perfect stone.

“Thorin.”

I ignore his calls and soon he gives up and leaves.

Thank Mahal for that.

Now I could concentrate on what I was doing.

Chapter End Notes

I needed Thorin to fall into the dragon sickness but not for the same reason as in the movie/book because I didn’t want him to go into a murderous rage. Also, some of the dialogue was inspired by the trailer for ‘The Hobbit-The Battle of Five Armies’.
Chapter 18

Three Years Later

I look at Frodo sitting at the table eating his breakfast, his feet swinging under the table.

I can’t help but smile.

I sigh and stare down at my cup of tea.

As of late my thoughts were of Erebor.

Who was I kidding?

My thoughts had been of Erebor ever since I got Frodo settled at Bag End.

I had only written to let my friends know that I had arrived to the Shire safe and sound but since then it seemed harder to pick up the quill and write to them.

I missed them all but not the way I missed Thorin.

I sigh.

I often dreamt of what it would have been like if I had accepted his proposal.

If he really did love me the way he had insisted he did.

If I hadn’t been afraid of the things he made me feel.

I shake my head at myself.

He had claimed to have feelings for me but I know they it was just misguided gratitude.

What would someone like Thorin want with me?

I wasn’t special.

And he...he was everything.

I close my eyes trying to remember every exact detail of his face, of his hair.

If only.

I look at Frodo again.

Then again, I cannot deny that I was glad I had come back and taken custody of my little Frodo.

I caress his dark head.

He smiles at me.

There is a knock on my front door.
I stand.

“If that is Lobelia claiming I set the pigs lose in her garden again.” I say.

Frodo giggles.

I walk to the front door and pull it open.

“Uncle Bilbo!” Two voices cry before I fall onto the floor, two heavy Dwarves on top of me.

I wince.

“Fili. Kili. What are you doing here?”

I squirm out from under them and stand.

I stare down at the two disheveled heads.

They roll onto their backs and stare up at me.

“We came to see you.” Fili says.

“You didn’t write and we were worried.” Kili tells me.

“Begging your pardon Mister Baggins.”

I turn to find a redheaded Dwarf standing in my doorway.

“Hello.” I say.

“That’s our cousin.” Kili says.

“Gimli son of Gloin at your service.” He says bowing.

“Your Father is a very good friend.”

“He often speaks of you.”

“Bilbo Baggins at yours. Come in.”

He comes into the house.

“Uncle Bilbo?” A small timid voice asks.

I look at Frodo.

“Come here my boy.”

He rushes forward and hides behind my legs.

I pat his head.

“Look Frodo. Look who came to visit us.”

“Frodo?” Fili and Kili asks in confusion.

Frodo peeks from behind my leg.
“Who are they?” He asks quietly.

“That’s Fili and Kili.”

He looks up at me.

“From your story?”

“That’s right.”

He looks back at the boys.

“Frodo Baggins at your service.” He says.

I smile at him.

“He’s very cute isn’t he Fili?”

“Aye. Adorable. Might have to kidnap him and take him with us.”

Frodo hides back behind my leg.

“They’re just kidding.” I assure him.

I kick at Fili and Kili’s legs.

They laugh before standing.

“We didn’t meant to frighten you Frodo.” Fili says.

“Our apologies young Mister Baggins.” Kili says with a bow.

Gimli scoffs and crosses his arms over his chest.

“Knuckleheads.” He says shaking his head. “Stop frightening the poor boy. He’s not used to being around so much idiocy.”

“I like you Gimli.” I say shaking his hand.

“Thank you.”

Fili and Kili tackle their cousin to the floor.

I move myself and Frodo away from the commotion.

Frodo stares at them.

“They are very…different.” Frodo says.

I chuckle.

“That they are my boy. That they are.”

********************

After the boys had settled down, I prepared second breakfast and we all sat down to eat.

Frodo stared at our guests clearly intrigued.
“So. Are you ready now to tell me why you are here?” I ask sitting down.

Fili and Kili glance at each other.

Gimli bows his head over his plate.

“We are here because of Thorin.” Fili finally says.

I swallow.

“What of him?” I ask.

“He is not well.”

“I suppose you can say that.” Gimli says.

Kili shoves him.

Gimli shoves him back.

Frodo giggles.

“Enough.” I say. “Now tell me what has happened.”

“Thorin has been lost to the dragon sickness.” Fili says.

“What?”

Kili nods.

“Yes.”

“But…how?”

“He was weak. You were gone and he was more susceptible to it.”

“I don’t understand.” I frown.

“Maybe you two idiot Dwarves might want to start from the beginning.” Gimli says.

Fili and Kili glare at him before turning their attention back to me.

“You are Thorin’s One.” Kili tells me.

“His….his One?”

“You are the love of his life, he can’t continue living without you.” Fili tells me.

“The way your Father couldn’t continue living without your Mother.” Kili says.

I lower my gaze.

I swallow down my sorrow for my parents.

Kili yelps in pain.

I look back up.
He rubs the back of his head.

“Sorry Uncle Bilbo.” He says.

“It’s fine.”

“When you left, Thorin was weak and distracted. It’s how he started to become affected by the dragon sickness. It wasn’t that obvious at first but now…” Fili lowers his face.

“All he does is wander amongst the gold. He doesn’t recognize anyone. I don’t think he even knows who he is anymore.” Kili says quietly.

My heart beats faster in my chest.

“I don’t understand how or why he feels so strongly about me. We didn’t really know each other all that well.”

“That doesn’t matter. His heart and his soul recognized yours and they became one.”

I swallow.

“Do you love him, Uncle Bilbo?” Fili asks.

I look at them.

“I think I do.”

Kili smiles.

“You have to come back with us. You can help Thorin.”

“What can I do?”

“You can bring him out of the madness. There are rumors that the Dwarves of the Iron Hills are marching to Erebor.” Gimli says.

“Why? Fili is still the crowned prince.”

“Aye. But they fear that the entire Durin race is cursed.” Fili says.

Gimli says what can only be curses in the Dwarf language.

“They will march against Erebor and Uncle is not in his right mind to command the army. We will do all we can but without a leader, Erebor will fall.” Kili tells me.

I chew on my lip.

“I owe it to him to help if I can.” I say.

“So you’ll come?” Fili asks.

“Frodo.”

He looks at me.

“Frodo. What would you think if we were to go on an adventure east?”
“Lobelia says it’s not proper.” He says shaking his head.

“That woman thinks going to the bathroom isn’t proper.” I say.

Frodo laughs.

“Forget I said that.” I tell him. “What do you think?”

“Would we see the Elves?” He asks.

Gimli snorts.

“What would you want to do that lad? Those tree shaggers aren’t anything special.” He says.

“Gimli.” I say.

“Apolgies Mister Baggins.”

“Can we ride ponies and find treasure? Can I get a sword?” He asks excited.

“Yes to the ponies, no to the sword.” I say.

“What about a little one? Like yours.”

“Maybe when you’re older.”

“You have a sword?” Fili asks.

“Never mind that. Well Frodo?”

“The Baggins’ are going on an adventure!” He shouts.

***********************

I spend the rest of the day packing and writing a letter to the Gamgees and the Thain.

I know Drogo would not approve of his son going off on an adventure.

But I would not leave him behind and I could not leave the Dwarves to their demise.

Thorin needed me and I would not fail him.

I go to my closet and take out the sword I had found all those years ago.

I stare at it before putting it next to my pack.

The next morning we rise early.

I make breakfast and watch Frodo gobble everything down before rushing off to finish packing.

I eat at a more sedate pace before making sure we had everything we needed.

The Dwarves help me clean up the dirty dishes and they pack up some of the food for us.

Once everything was ready, I grab my pack and take it to the front door.

I make sure Frodo had packed what he needed before placing his pack by the door.
Frodo was vibrating with excitement by the time I announced that we were ready to go.
I help him put his pack on.
Once his pack is secure on his back, he runs to the door where Fili, Kili and Gimli are waiting.
“Don’t forget your handkerchief!” I call.
He comes back and grabs it out of my hand before running out the door.
I shake my head.
Fili and Kili laugh.
I strap my own pack to my back and my sword to my waist.
I grab the other sword and my walking stick.
I look around my home one last time before walking to the door.
I close the green door behind me, making sure to lock it.
I walk down the lane and drop off both letters in the Gamgee mail box before hurrying after my boy.
I know they will make sure the Thain receives his letter.
“Frodo.” I call out.
He runs down the hill, the handkerchief in his hand flying like a flag behind him.
Fili and Kili follow clearly enjoying the commotion Frodo was making.
Gloin follows at a more sedate pace.
I watch in horror as Frodo barely misses running into Lobelia.
“Frodo Baggins! Where are you off at such an inappropriate manner?” She asks.
“Can’t talk. I’m going on an adventure!”
I chuckle.
I run after Frodo, Fili and Kili let out shouts of excitement before running after us.
Gimli sighs before running after us.
I catch up to Frodo and I lift him in my arms.
He squeals in excitement.
“Better save some of your energy.” I tell him. “You’re going to need it.”
I wanted only a year to have passed since Bilbo left Dale but I also wanted Frodo to be big enough that he could talk and run. Don’t know how Hobbit’s age but I figured that three years was enough.
I stare at the sight before us.

Frodo gasps.

The Dwarves roll their eyes.

“There it is. Rivendell. The Last Homely House.”

I lead the pony down towards the bridge and into Rivendell.

An Elf comes down the great stairway to greet us.

I get off the pony before helping Frodo down.

“I am Lindir, welcome.” He says bowing.

“Bilbo Baggins at your service.”

“My Lord Elrond wishes me to show you to your rooms in order for you to rest. Tonight we will feast in your honor.”

“Generous of him.” I say. “But you really don’t need to go to so much trouble for us.”

“My Lord insists. Do not worry about the ponies, they will be taken care of.”

“Thank you.”

“If you would follow me.”

He turns and walks back up the stairs.

I take Frodo in my arms and follow.

I can hear the Dwarves grumbling behind us as they follow.

“Is Lord Elrond available? I would like to thank him in person.”

“My Lord Elrond is not here at the moment but he will arrive in time for supper.”

I nod.

Lindir leads us to extravagant rooms, the Dwarves were taken to the room beside the one Frodo and I would be staying in.

Frodo goes to investigate the room.

I look out the windows down onto the great garden.

I smile.

“I hope they are to your satisfaction.”
I look at Lindir.

“They are more than I could ever ask for. Thank you.”

He bows his head.

“I will come back to call you for supper but if you are in need of some sustenance now, I can have the kitchens make something for you.”

“No, no. We’re fine. Thank you.”

“I will leave you to rest.”

He leaves the room, the door falling shut silently after him.

Frodo runs into the bedroom and jumps onto the bed.

Thank goodness he landed on the mattress.

Last thing I needed was for him to get hurt at the beginning of this long journey.

I made Frodo take a nap before supper.

I take the time to bathe and change.

Once he woke from his nap, I cleaned him up before dressing him.

After all, we were going to be dining with Lord Elrond.

We visit with the Dwarves until supper time.

Lindir comes to collect us and leads us to the dining hall.

Lord Elrond was waiting for us at the table.

He bows his head in greeting.

“Welcome.”

“Thank you for your hospitality.” I say.

He indicates for us to sit.

Once we sit down, Elves bring the food.

I serve Frodo before serving myself.

The Dwarves dive in.

“I knew your Mother and I was sorry to hear of her passing.” Lord Elrond tells me.

“Thank you.”

“I never met your Father but Belladonna always spoke highly of him. I am sure he was a great person.”

I nod.
“I am sorry I did not write before arriving.” I tell him.

“It is alright. I hear that you have travelled to Dale before.”

“I did. With my parents.”

“I see. For what purpose?”

“Mother wanted to see the east.”

“I hope you did not have problems at Greenwood.”

“No. Thranduil is a good friend.”

“Hm.”

“I am sorry to hear that he is feuding with you. He can be very stubborn when he thinks he is right. I think living so close to the Dwarves has corrupted him.”

The Dwarves protest.

Elrond chuckles.

“Well. I think that explains everything.” Elrond says.

I smile back at him.

“I hope you did not take this young fellow with you on the first trip.” He says indicating Frodo.

I touch Frodo’s back.

“No. He came into my custody after I came back.”

“I am sorry to hear that. For ones so young you both have already suffered greatly.”

I swallow.

“I have Frodo and that is more than enough.”

“You have us.” Kili says.

“I know.” I say patting his hand.

“I’ve heard that Hobbits are very resilient.” Elrond says.

I look at him.

“Really?”

He nods.

“Mm. I’ve also heard that they’re fond of the comforts of home.”

“Who told you that?” I ask.

“A certain young Hobbit I knew in her youth.”
My mother.

“You probably thought it strange then to see her go on adventures.”

“We all long for something more than home sometimes.” He says.

“I hear much of elves and magic when I was a fauntling.” I say.

Elrond smiles.

“I’ve heard that it’s unwise to seek the council of Elves. That they will answer with yes and no.” Fili says. “Much like a wizard.”

I kick him under the table.

He looks apologetic but I know it’s just for show.

Elrond stares at Fili before chuckling.

I smile in relief.

Elrond pats my hand.

“You are in good company Mister Baggins. But you are very welcome to stay here, if that is your wish.”

“Thank you my Lord.”

He nods.

**************************************

That night Frodo and I slept soundly.

We woke to the sound of singing.

I sigh and stretch before getting out of bed.

I dress and wash up before getting Frodo ready.

Someone knocks on our door.

I go to answer it.

There is a young man standing there.

“Hello. I am sorry to bother you but I heard that there is a baby Hobbit with you. I’ve never seen one before.”

“Sorry. Who are you?”

“Pardon me, I forgot my manners. I am Estel.” He says inclining his head.

“Bilbo Baggins.”

“Mister Baggins. I would be much obliged if you allowed me to see your son.”

“He’s not a baby but come in.”
He comes into the room.

“You’re a man.” I say.

“I am.”

“And you live here?”

“Yes. Lord Elrond is like a father to me.”

I nod.

“Frodo. You have a guest.” I call.

He comes out of the room.

Estel drops to one knee.

“Hello. Frodo Baggins at your service.” Frodo says.

Estel smiles.

“I am Estel. Though I am sometimes called Aragorn. It is a pleasure to meet you.”

“You’re really big.” Frodo says. “How old are you?”

Estel chuckles.

“Frodo.” I say.

“Sorry.” He says.

“It’s alright.” Estel says.

“He hasn’t really been around the taller folk.” I tell Estel.

“I am twenty-five.” Estel addresses Frodo.

Frodo stares at Estel.

“Would you like to play a game?” Frodo asks.

“I would love to.”

“We haven’t had breakfast yet.” I say.

“It is alright Mister Baggins. I will take him to the kitchen to eat.”


“Yes Uncle.”

He runs out the door, Estel following him.

With Frodo gone, I take the time to walk around.

I end up finding the library and I lose myself among the shelves.
“Mister Baggins.”

I look up from the book I was admiring.

Two dark haired Elves approach me.

“Hello.”

“I am Elladan and this is my brother Elrohir.”

“A pleasure.”

“We have been instructed by our father to lead you to breakfast.”

I frown.

“Lindir is too young to be your father.”

They chuckle.

“Lord Elrond is our father.” One of them says.

“Oh! My apologies.”

“No worries.”

“Well, lead on then.”

I follow them out of the library.

“We saw your son with Estel.”

“He is adorable.”

“Thank you.”

“We would like to visit more with you Mister Baggins. How long will you be staying?”

“Only until tomorrow morning. I have important business in Erebor and I must make haste.”

“Is this about King Thorin?”

“Yes. How do you know about that?”

They glance at each other.

“Legolas has sent word. The Elves of Greenwood are preparing themselves should a war among the Dwarves of Erebor and of the Iron Hills break out.”

“I believe the Lord of Dale is also concerned.” The other one says.

Bard and his family.

They might get caught in the crossfire.

They are just at the foot of the mountain.
“Uncle Bilbo!” Kili shouts.

He waves at me from where he is seated at the table.

“Thank you for telling me this.”

They incline their heads before walking away.

I take a seat between Fili and Kili.

“Where is Frodo?” Fili asks.

“He is playing with his new friend.”

“You sure that’s wise?” Gimli asks.

“He will be fine. No harm can come to him here.” I assure.

He nods.

An Elf maiden places the plates of food on the table.

I smile at her.

Kili was oddly silent beside me and I look at him.

He smiles at the Elf maiden before winking.

I hide my smile.

Fili and Gimli stare at Kili.

He notices our attention on him and he works his face into a scowl.

“I can’t say I fancy Elf maids myself, too thin. They’re all high cheekbones and creamy skin. Not enough facial hair for me.”

An Elf with blond hair places the cups on the table.

He reminded me of Legolas.

“Although that one there is not so bad.” Kili says staring at the blond elf.

I smother my laughter with my napkin.

“That’s not an Elf maid.” Gimli tells his cousin.

Kili looks at us.

“Really?”

Fili and Gimli roar with laughter.

“I knew that.”

I pat Kili’s hand.

“That’s funny.” He says chuckling.
Chapter End Notes

I imagine Aragorn was an adult by this time, he does live longer than an average human. And I know Kili has already met a male Elf (Legolas) but he only knew that was a male because he is the Prince of Greenwood. I am sure he is still confused by the other elves, especially the really pretty ones.
“I am sorry that you are unable to spend more time here.” Lord Elrond tells me.

“I have enjoyed my visit, brief as it was.”

He inclines his head.

I strap the sword over my pack.

Lord Elrond comes closer.

“May I?”

“Oh. Sure.”

He takes the blade out of the scabbard.

“This is Orcrist the Goblin Cleaver. A famous blade forged by the High Elves of the West, my kin. It was made for the Goblin War of the First Age. How did you come by it?”

“I found it and another in a Troll hoard on the Great East Road. At least, that’s what my mother said.”

“May it serve you well.” He say putting the sword back.

“Thank you.”

“Frodo!”

Estel comes towards us, an Elf maiden on his arm.

“Bilbo. I am sure you’ve met Estel, my ward.”

“I have. He and Frodo seem to have become fast friends.”

“This is my daughter, Arwen.”

Kili trips over his own feet, his mouth agape as he stares at Arwen.

Fili and Gimli chuckle.

“My Lady.” I say with a bow.

She smiles at me.

“It is a pleasure to meet you Bilbo Baggins.” She says.

Estel kneels down on one knee in front of Frodo.

“I have something for you, if it is alright with you Mister Baggins.” Estel says.

“It’s fine.”
He hands Frodo a small wooden sword.

“This is the sword I practiced with when I was a boy. I want you to have it. Something to remember me by until our paths cross again.”

“Thank you.” Frodo says hugging Estel.

“Well. I suppose we best be going.” I say.

“Send my regards to Thranduil.” Elrond says.

“I will. I cannot promise they will be well received.”

Elrond chuckles.

“Have a safe journey.” Arwen tells us.

“Thank you my Lady.”

Estel helps me onto my pony before lifting Frodo and settling him on the pony with me.

I put my arms around Frodo as I take the reins.

“You and your friends will always be welcomed here.” Elrond tells me.

“Thank you.”

********************

“Look Frodo, there is Greenwood.”

He perks up.

He has been rather sullen since we had left Rivendell.

I urge our pony to walk faster and soon we are in Greenwood.

“Are we going to meet more Elves, Uncle Bilbo?”

“Yes we are.”

“The trees are so big.” Frodo says straining to see the very top of the trees we pass.

A large blue butterfly comes down from the canopy and settles on the side of Frodo’s head.

Frodo moves his head this way and that trying to see it.

I chuckle.

I take the butterfly and hand it to Frodo.

He holds it in his cupped hands and stares down at it in wonder.

“I tell you that we can always go around. There is no need to see anymore pointy-eared leaf eaters.”

I turn back to glare at Gimli.
“Apologies Mister Baggins.”

“Thranduil is my friend. He will welcome us in his Kingdom.”

“Besides, there is a certain blond conceded Elf I look forward to seeing.” Kili says.

“You are always looking forward to it if memory serves me correctly.” Fili says.

Kili tries to kick his brother but since he was on a pony, it was harder to do.

Fili laughs.

“Kili likes an Elf?” Frodo asks.

Gimli snorts.

“Shut up. He’s just teaching me some new archery techniques. He can shoot two arrows at once!”

Kili says.

“I am sure it’s quite a sight. I myself can do without seeing it thought, thank you very much. Nothing extraordinary in that.” Gimli says.

“Archery is just as hard to master as an axe or a sword.” Kili says defensively.

“Oh you do it quite well Cousin but I just don’t understand what that Elf can teach you. They do like to show off.”

“Aye. It’s all about looking pretty to them.” Fili adds.

“Well I don’t care what you say. You’ll be cheering on once I learn to outdo Legolas.”

“I think you will find it harder than you think.” Legolas says appearing out from the trees.

He jumps down to the forest floor and walks towards us.

I can hear Gimli grumbling under his breath.

“Well, well. Look what the forest threw out.” Fili says.

Legolas smirks at Fili before focusing on me.

“Bilbo. It is good to see you.” He says standing beside me.

“And you.”

He places his hand over mine.

“We were so worried.” He says.

I pat his hand.

“It was hard but I manage. We Hobbits are resilient.”

He smiles.

“Of that I had no doubt.” He looks at Frodo. “And who is this?”
“This is Frodo, my ward.”

“Hello Frodo, I am Legolas.”

“Frodo. Legolas is Prince of Greenwood.”

Frodo stares at Legolas, his mouth agape.

I nudge him.

He closes his mouth.

“Frodo Baggins at your service Master Elf.”

Legolas smiles at him.

“You are very proper Young One.” Legolas smiles at me before looking at Frodo again. “I am sure you are all Bilbo aspires to be.”

Frodo giggles.

I push Legolas away.

He chuckles.

“Come. Father will be very glad to see you. He will probably never let you leave again.”

“Like you could keep him. Uncle Bilbo belongs to us, Princess.” Kili says.

I roll my eyes.

Frodo looks on with interest.

Legolas looks at Kili.

“Ah, young Prince of Erebor. I almost didn’t recognize you. Your beard is thinner than the last time I saw you. Soon you will be able to pass for a short Elf, albeit an ugly one.”

“You better watch your mouth lad before I put this axe between your pointy ears.” Gimli says.

Legolas looks at the red headed Dwarf.

“And what is this horrid creature? A goblin mutant?”

“I am Gimli, son of Gloin. And you best mind your manners.”

Legolas raises an unimpressed eyebrow.

“And here I thought I had seen the worst the Dwarves had to offer with these two.” Legolas says.

Gimli growls.

“Don’t think that just because you’re a pointy eared Elvish princeling that I won’t get down from this pony and show you what’s what.”

“Can you get off that pony on your own or would you like me to get you a box?”

“Why you-”
“Alright. That’s enough.” I interrupt.

Legolas smirks at Gimli before turning and coming back towards me.

“Come. Let us get you to the palace so that you may rest and replenish yourself.”

“Thank you.”

******************************

“Bilbo.” Thranduil says coming down from his throne.

Frodo gasps as he watches Thranduil descend the stairs.

“Thranduil.”

He goes down on one knee before me.

“I am so glad to have you here with me again.” He takes my hand in his and kisses my knuckles. “I could not bear the thought of you all alone in Bag End. Say you’ve come to stay here.”

“I wish I could.”

“Ah, but you can if you so choose it.”

“I would love to but I am needed in Erebor.”

He raises an eyebrow.

“So. The princes of Erebor have informed you of what has befallen Oakenshield.”

“They have.”

“And you think you can help him?”

“I have to try.”

“Hmm.”

“Thranduil.”

He casts his attention to Frodo.

“And who is this young fellow?”

“This is Frodo.”

“Frodo. You are such a lovely young Hobbit.” Thranduil says carding his fingers through Frodo’s dark curls.

Frodo flushes under Thranduil’s praises.

“What a heartbreaker you will be. Just like Bilbo.”

“Don’t say those things. I never meant to-”

“I know my Dearest. But the heart wants what it wants and mine happens to have set its eyes on
“Why wouldn’t it? Nothing can ever compare to your beauty.”

“Stop saying such romantic things.”

“Do they make you uncomfortable?” He smiles.

“No.”

“Liar. You are blushing.” He chuckles.

“It’s just a bit warm here, that is all.”

“You sure?” He asks quietly as he leans in closer to me.

“You’re very beautiful.” Frodo says before putting a hand over his mouth.

Thranduil chuckles and looks at Frodo.

“Thank you. I am sure that by now you’ve met the Elves of Rivendell. Tell me, am I prettier than Elrond?”

“Thranduil.” I chide.

“Let the child speak.”

I shake my head.

“Yes. You are prettier.”

“Prettier than all of them?”

“I think Estel is pretty too, for a man.” Frodo says.

Thranduil raises an eyebrow.

“I see. Come, you must both rest and tonight we will feast.” He says standing.

“You know that I have to be in Erebor as soon as possible.”

He sighs.

“Yes. I know. I hope that fool of a Dwarf knows how lucky he is to have your attention. If he does not, I will march to that mountain of his and claim back what is mine.”

I touch his hand.

“You will always be my friend.”

“And you mine. Even if you do end up with a Dwarf.”

“Lord Elrond sends his regard.”

“Ugh.”

I chuckle.
Was going to add Tauriel in this but then Kili not knowing the difference between a female or a male Elf from the previous chapter would become contradictory so I didn’t add her. And I could not resist putting in Legolas’ thoughts on Gimli from “The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey”. 
I enter the mountain.

It felt colder and looked darker than the last time I was here.

I shiver.

Frodo takes my hand.

I pat it.

“It’s alright my boy.”

“Mister Baggins.”

I look at Dis.

“Lady Dis.”

“I am sorry that you have come this far for naught.”

I put a hand to my chest.

Please no.

“Mother?” Fili asks.

“My brother cannot be saved from what torments him, even by you.”

I breathe a sigh of relief.

“I have to see him.”

“I can’t allow it. It might be dangerous, he’s become very hostile with any who enters the treasure room.”

“I must.”

She stares at me.

“I am sorry Mister Baggins. But my answer is still no.” She says turning away.

“You once said to me that only a fool would turn away Thorin Oakenshield.”

She stops.
I walk closer to her.

“And you were right. I was a fool. I did not understand his feelings for me. I still don’t. But I know that I love him and I will do all I can to save him from this.”

She looks at me.

“Then I wish you luck.”

I nod.

I kneel and look at Frodo.

“Frodo my boy, I need you to stay here with Fili and Kili.”

“Yes Uncle.”

“That’s a good lad.”

I kiss his head before standing.

I grab Orcrist.

“I will show you the way.” Dwalin says.

I nod at him.

“Good luck Uncle.” Kili says.

“Thank you.”

I follow Dwalin down to the treasure room.

“He is down there. Be careful. I will wait here in case you need me.”

I nod.

I walk down the staircase.

I look around but I cannot see him.

“Thorin?”

There were coins and jewels strewn about.

I try to step around them.

“Thorin?”

I walk further into the room.

My heart was beating really fast and my hands felt sweaty.

“What do you want?”

I almost jump out of my skin.
He comes out of the shadows.

I swallow.

“Thorin.”

He looked older somehow.

There was a grey streak in his hair and his shoulders were drooped.

He was a far cry from the Dwarf I met all those years ago.

“What do you want?”

“I came to see you.”

“You shouldn’t have come. You’ll just get in the way.”

“In the way? Never mind. Thorin, do you know who I am?”

“What does it matter?”

He glares as he walks past me.

“Thorin. Your family is worried about you.”

“I am fine.”

“You’re not.”

He turns to face me.

“What would you know? You don’t belong here.”

“I am sorry.”

He frowns.

“I did not understand. But you have to admit that it’s partly your fault. You never told me how you felt and the proposal doesn’t count.” I say pointing at him. “You were confused at the time.”

“I don’t know what you’re talking about.”

“Yes you do. You just don’t remember.”

“Stop wasting my time Hobbit. I have important business.”

I walk towards him slowly.

He eyes me warily.

“Thorin. I need you to stop acting crazy because I have something important to tell you.”

“I am not crazy!”

“You are. Just a little bit.”

He takes a threatening step towards me.
“State your business and then leave before I throw you out.”

“Try it and you will find more than you bargained for.”

He presses his lips together angrily.

“Fine. What do you want?”

“Let me help you.”

“You can’t help me.”

“Why do you wander down here like this? You have become lost Thorin. You don’t have to be.”

“I’ve been lost ever since….it doesn’t matter. It seems I am meant to wander, forever searching for what can’t be found.”

“That was almost poetic, if a bit dark. You’re not very optimistic are you?”

His lips twitch a tiny bit into a smile.

“Thorin.”

I take his hand.

He looks down at our joined hands before looking at me.

It felt like he was finally looking at me.

“I am sorry that I’ve brought this upon you.”

“It is my curse to bear.”

“It doesn’t have to be. It’s just that…I was afraid.”

“Afraid? Of what?”

“Everything. Of you, of what you made me feel. I am sorry for the way I spoke to you that day, you caught me off guard. I was just coming to thank you for the flowers.” I shake my head and look down at the hand I was holding. “I wanted to say yes.” I whisper. “For a second, I wanted to say yes.”

He places his hand over mine.

I tighten my fingers over his.

“I am sorry.” I sniff. “For the pain I have caused you. It was not my intention, no matter what you might think of me. I never wanted to hurt you like this. I’m sorry Thorin.”

I lift his hand to my lips and I kiss his hand.

He touches my face.

I look at him.

“Are you really here?” He whispers.
“I am.”

“Bilbo.”

I smile at him.

His mouth crashes down on mine, my lips sting with the force of it but I kiss him back.

I tangle my hands in the lapel of his fur coat.

His hands press me close.

Orcrist falls with a clatter.

He breaks the kiss and looks down.

“What is that?”

“I found it. Back before we came to Dale the first time.”

I bend down at pick the sword.

I hold it out to him.

“I want you to have it. I’ve been saving it. For you.”

He takes it.

He unsheathes the sword.

“It’s Elvish and before you toss it away, let me just say that it is a fine blade. You will not find a better sword than this. And don’t look at me like that, you know I’m right.”

He looks back down at the blade in his hands.

“Thank you.”

He puts the sword back in the scabbard.

“I have something for you.”

He pulls out a white glowing jewel from his coat.

He takes my hand and places the jewel upon it.

“We call it the Arkenstone. It was found in the mines during the time of Thror, my grandfather. I want you to have it.”

“Thorin. I-”

His hand caresses my cheek.

“I love you Bilbo Baggins. I really do.”

“I love you too.”

He closes his eyes for a moment before looking at me.
“Say you will stay here with me.”

“Yes. I will.”

He kisses me again.

“Come on, there will be time for a proper reunion later. You need rest and food. Maybe a bath or two.”

He smiles.

“What do you mean by ‘proper reunion’?”

“Nope. No need for you to worry about that now.”

“Will you be naked?”

My face heats up.

“Thorin Oakenshield! Of all the improper, lewd things to say.”

He laughs.

I try to contain my smile.

“You are very beautiful when you blush.”

“Stop it.”

“Does it extend lower?” He asks plucking at my shirt.

I slap his hand away.

“You’re lucky I love you.”

He kisses my cheek.

“Luckiest Dwarf to ever have lived. Luckier if you marry me.”

“Are you asking?”

“Will you say yes?”

“Can I think about it?”

He stops and looks at me.

I chuckle.

He picks me up and throws me over his shoulder.

“Thorin! Put me down this instant!”

“Need a hand?” Dwalin drawls.

“No thank you. I can handle this Hobbit on my own.”

“You won’t be handling anything on this Hobbit you brute! Put me down, right now Thorin. I am
not joking.”

He chuckles.

“Now that I have you, I am never letting you go.”

“This is not a proper.”

“Never said I was.”

“Put me down! Dwalin, help.”

“Sorry lad. Can’t get in the way of the King and his treasure.”

“Ugh, you blasted Dwarves! You just wait until I am on my feet again. You will rue the day you ever crossed Bilbo Baggins. Mark my word. There will be no scones for anyone!”

The End.

Chapter End Notes

I didn’t to drag out the dragon sickness and since it was because of Bilbo, his touch snapped Thorin out of it. Thank you for reading.

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