

**(B)THE LORD OF THE RINGS: THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE RING,**  
**BY J. R. R. TOLKIEN**  
CHAPTER 1  
**A LONG-EXPECTED PARTY**

When Mr. Bilbo Baggins of Bag End decided that he would celebrate his eleventy-first birthday with a party, there was much talk and excitement in Hobbiton.

Bilbo was very rich and had been the wonder of the Shire for sixty years since his remarkable disappearance and unexpected return. The riches from his travels became a local legend, and it was believed, that the Hill at Bag End was full of tunnels with treasure.<sup>1</sup>

At ninety he was much the same as at fifty. At ninety-nine they began to call him *well-preserved*<sup>2</sup>, but it was better to say *unchanged*.

‘He will pay for it,’ they said. ‘It isn’t natural!’

But Mr. Baggins was generous with his money, so most people forgave him for being rich and strange. But he had no close friends, until some of his younger cousins began to grow up.

The eldest of these, and Bilbo’s favourite, was young Frodo Baggins. When Bilbo was ninety-nine, he adopted Frodo as his heir,<sup>3</sup> and brought him to live at Bag End.

Bilbo and Frodo had the same birthday, September 22nd.

‘It’s better for you to come and live here, Frodo,’ Bilbo said one day; ‘and then we can celebrate our birthday-parties together.’

Twelve more years passed. Each year the Bagginses had great birthday-parties at Bag End; but now everybody understood that something interesting would happen.

Bilbo was going to be *eleventy-one*, 111, and Frodo was going to be *thirty-three*, 33, an important number.

The talk about the party travelled all over the Shire.

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<sup>1</sup> Treasure - сокровища

<sup>2</sup> Well-preserved – хорошо сохранившийся

<sup>3</sup> A heir - наследник

Old Ham Gamgee, known as the Gaffer had a small inn *The Ivy Bush*. His youngest son, Sam Gamgee helped him. Both father and son were friends with Bilbo and Frodo. They lived on the Hill itself, in Number 3 Bagshot Row just next to Bag End.

‘A very nice hobbit is Mr. Bilbo, as I’ve always said,’ the Gaffer declared. With perfect truth: Bilbo was very polite to him, calling him ‘Master Hamfast’, and consulting him on the growing of vegetables.

‘But what about this Frodo that lives with him?’ asked Old Noakes of Bywater. ‘Baggins is his name, but he’s more than half a Brandybuck, they say.’

‘Mr. Frodo is as nice a young hobbit. Very much like Mr. Bilbo. After all his father was a Baggins. A respectable hobbit was Mr. Drogo Baggins!’ the Gaffer said.

‘What about that time when Mr. Bilbo went off and was thought to be dead. And then he came back and he went on living and living, and never looking a day older, bless him! And suddenly he produced an heir. The Sackville-Bagginses will never see the inside of Bag End now.’

‘There’s a lot of money there,’ a stranger said, a visitor on business from Michel Delving. ‘All the top of your hill is full of tunnels packed with gold and silver, by what I’ve heard.’

‘Then you’ve heard more than I can say,’ answered the Gaffer. ‘I know nothing about it. Mr. Bilbo is free with his money, but I don’t know about tunnel-making. I saw Mr. Bilbo when he came back, sixty years ago, when I was young. But my son Sam knows more about that. He’s crazy about stories of the old days, and he listens to all Mr. Bilbo’s tales.

*‘Elves and Dragons’* I say to him. *‘Cabbages and potatoes are better for me and you. Don’t mix up in this business, or you’ll be in trouble,’* I say to him. ‘And I might say it to others,’ he added with a look at the stranger and the miller.

But the Gaffer did not convince<sup>4</sup> his audience.

‘He’s often away from home,’ the miller argued. ‘And look at the strange men that visit him: dwarves<sup>5</sup> coming at night, and that old one Gandalf, and all. You can say what you like, Gaffer, but Bag End’s a strange place, and its people are strange.’

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<sup>4</sup> To convince - убеждать

<sup>5</sup> A dwarf - гном

‘And you can say *what you* like. Our Sam says that *everyone’s* going to be invited to the party, and there’s going to be presents, presents for all - this very month.’

That month was September. A day or two later they started to talk about fireworks.

Days passed and The Day was nearer. An odd-looking cart rolled into Hobbiton one evening and went up the Hill to Bag End. It was driven by a man, singing strange songs: dwarves with long beards and deep hoods.

At the end of the second week in September a cart came to Bywater. An old man was driving it all alone. He wore a tall pointed blue hat, a long grey cloak<sup>6</sup>, and a silver scarf. He had a long white beard and big eyebrows.

Small hobbit-children ran after the cart all through Hobbiton. It had a lot of fireworks. At Bilbo’s front door the old man began to unload<sup>7</sup>: there were great fireworks of all sorts and shapes.

The old man was Gandalf the Wizard, who was famous in the Shire for his skills with fires, smokes, and lights. His real business was more difficult and dangerous, but the Shire knew nothing about it.

When the old man had finished unloading. Bilbo gave a few pennies away. Then he disappeared inside with Bilbo, and the door was shut.

Inside Bag End, Bilbo and Gandalf were sitting at the open window of a small room looking out on to the garden. The late afternoon was bright and peaceful. The flowers were red and golden.

‘How bright your garden looks!’ Gandalf said.

‘Yes,’ Bilbo said. I like it so much, and of all the Shire; but I think I need a holiday.’

‘You mean to go on with your plan then?’

‘I do. I made up my mind months ago, and I haven’t changed it.’

‘Very well. Stick to your plan - and I hope it will turn out for the best, for you, and for all of us.’

‘I hope so. Anyway I want to enjoy myself on Thursday, and have my little joke.’

‘Who will laugh?’ said Gandalf.

‘We will see,’ Bilbo said.

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<sup>6</sup> A cloak – плащ, мантия

<sup>7</sup> To unload – разгружаться

The next day more carts rolled up the Hill. They were sent to get provision. People became enthusiastic; and they began to tick off the days on the calendar; and they waited for the postman, hoping for invitations.

Bilbo was busy: writing invitations, packing up presents, and making some private preparations of his own.

One morning the hobbits woke up and found the large field covered with ropes and poles for tents and pavilions. The tents began to go up. There was a specially large pavilion, so big that the tree that grew in the field was right inside it. An enormous open-air kitchen was erected in the north corner of the field. Excitement rose to its height.

Then the weather got cloudy. That was on Wednesday, the day before the Party. Then Thursday, September the 22nd, actually came. The sun got up, the clouds disappeared, and the fun began.

Bilbo Baggins called it a *party*, but it was really a kind of entertainment. Practically everybody living near was invited.

Bilbo met the guests at the new white gate in person. He gave away presents to all. Hobbits give presents to other people on their own birthdays. Not very expensive ones, as a rule; but it was not a bad system. Actually in Hobbiton and Bywater every day in the year it was somebody's birthday, so that every hobbit had one present once a week. But they never got tired of them.

On this occasion the presents were unusually good. The hobbit-children were so excited that for a while they almost forgot about eating. There were toys they had never seen before, all beautiful and some magical. Many of them had been ordered a year before, and had come all the way from the world.

When every guest had been welcomed and was finally inside the gate, there were songs, dances, music, games, and, of course, food and drink. There were three official meals: lunch, tea, and dinner (or supper). All the time people were eating and drinking - from eleven until six-thirty, when the fireworks started.

The fireworks were by Gandalf: they were not only brought by him, but designed and made by him.

There were rockets like birds singing with sweet voices, butterflies, green trees with flowers on them, fires that rose and turned into eagles, swans or sailing ships. There was a red thunderstorm and a shower of yellow rain.

And there was also one last surprise, in honor of Bilbo. The lights went out. A great smoke went up. It looked like a mountain, then there were green and scarlet flames and a red-golden dragon flew out - not life-size, but terribly life-like. The dragon passed near the guests like an express train and burst<sup>8</sup> over Bywater.

‘That is the signal for supper!’ said Bilbo. Hobbits jumped to their feet. There was a splendid supper for everyone invited to the special family dinner-party. This was in the great pavilion with the tree. There were only twelve dozen<sup>9</sup> invitations.

There were many Bagginses and Boffins, and also many Tookes and Brandybucks; there were various Grubbs (relations of Bilbo Baggins’ grandmother), and various Chubbs; some Burrowses, Bolgers, Bracegirdles, Brockhouses, Goodbodies, Hornblowers and Proudfoots. The Sackville-Bagginses were not forgotten. Otho and his wife Lobelia were there. They disliked Bilbo and hated Frodo, but the invitation card was so nice. Besides, Bilbo’s table had a high reputation.

After the feast (more or less) came the Speech. Hobbits were having their favourite drinks and food. They were prepared to listen to anything.

*My dear People*, began Bilbo, rising in his place. ‘Hear! Hear! Hear!’ they shouted. Bilbo left his place and went and stood on a chair under the tree.

*My dear Bagginses and Boffins*, he began again; *and my dear Tookes and Brandybucks, and Grubbs, and Chubbs, and Burrowses, and Hornblowers, and Bolgers, Bracegirdles, Goodbodies, Brockhouses and Proudfoots*. ‘ProudFEET!’ shouted an elderly hobbit from the back of the pavilion. His name, of course, was Proudfoot. His feet were large and both were on the table.

*Proudfoots*, repeated Bilbo. *Also my good Sackville-Bagginses that I welcome back at last to Bag End. Today is my one hundred and eleventh birthday: I am eleventy-one today!* ‘Hurray! Hurray!!’ they shouted.

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<sup>8</sup> To burst - взрываться

<sup>9</sup> A dozen - дюжина

*/ hope you are all enjoying yourselves as much as I am.* Loud cheers. Cries of *Yes* (and *No*). Some music began. Master Everard Took and Miss Melilot Brandybuck got on a table and with bells in their hands began to dance.

But Bilbo had not finished.

*/ will not keep you long,* he cried. Cheers. */ have called you all together for a Purpose.* There was almost silence.

*Indeed, for Three Purposes! First of all, to tell you that I am fond of<sup>10</sup> you all, and that eleventy-one years is too short time to live among such good hobbits.*

*Secondly, to celebrate my birthday.* Cheers again. */ should say: OUR birthday. It is, of course, also the birthday of my heir and nephew, Frodo.* There were some loud shouts of ‘Frodo! Frodo!’ from the juniors.

*Together we score one hundred and forty-four. Your numbers were chosen to fit this remarkable total.* No cheers.

*It is also, the anniversary of my arrival. Though I didn't remember it was my birthday. I was only fifty-one then, and birthdays did not seem so important.* Silence. They were getting bored. Why couldn't he stop talking and let them drink? Bilbo paused for a moment.

*Thirdly and finally,* he said, *I wish to make an ANNOUNCEMENT.* He spoke this last word so loudly and suddenly that everyone sat up who still could. *I regret to announce that - though, as I said, eleventy-one years is far too short time to spend among you - this is the END. I am going. I am leaving NOW. GOOD-BYE!*

He stepped down and vanished<sup>11</sup>. Bilbo was nowhere to be seen. One hundred and forty-four hobbits could say nothing. Old Odo Proudfoot removed his feet from the table. Then there was a dead silence, until suddenly every Baggins, Boffin, Took, Brandybuck, Grubb, Chubb, Burrows, Bolger, Bracegirdle, Brockhouse, Goodbody, Hornblower, and Proudfoot began to talk at once.

It was generally agreed that the joke was very bad. ‘He’s mad. I always said so,’ was probably the most popular comment. Even the thought Bilbo’s behaviour was absurd<sup>12</sup>.

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<sup>10</sup> To be fond of – любить

<sup>11</sup> To vanish – исчезать, растворяться

<sup>12</sup> Absurd – нелепый, абсурдный, смехотворный

Frodo was the only one who had said nothing. For some time he had sat silent beside Bilbo's empty chair. He had enjoyed the joke, of course, he had known about it. He had difficulty in keeping from laughter at the surprise of the guests. But at the same time he felt deeply troubled: he realized suddenly that he loved the old hobbit. He gave orders for more wine; then he got up and left the party.

As for Bilbo Baggins, while he was making his speech, he had a golden ring in his pocket: his magic secret ring. As he stepped down he put it on his finger, and he was never seen by any hobbit in Hobbiton again.

He walked back to his house, and stood for a moment listening with a smile to the party. Then he went in. He took off his party clothes and put it away. Then he put on quickly some old clothes and a leather belt. There was a short sword<sup>13</sup> on it. He also took out an old cloak and hood.

He then went into his study, took out a large envelope. He put his golden ring into the envelope and then sealed it, and addressed it to Frodo. At first he put it on the mantelpiece<sup>14</sup>, but suddenly he took it and put in his pocket. At that moment the door opened and Gandalf came in.

'Hello!' Bilbo said. 'I wondered if you would come.'

'I am glad to find you visible,' the wizard replied, sitting down in a chair, 'I wanted to catch you and have a few final words. I suppose you feel that everything has gone off according to the plan?'

'Yes, I do,' Bilbo said.

'You have wisely kept that ring secret all these years. I think we should give your guests something else that can explain your sudden vanishment.'

'And spoil<sup>15</sup> my joke' Bilbo laughed, 'but I expect you know best, as usual.'

'You have had your joke and given the whole Shire something to talk about for nine days, or ninety-nine. Are you going any further?'

'Yes, I am. I feel I need a holiday, a very long holiday, as I have told you before. Probably a permanent holiday: I don't expect I will return.'

'I am old, Gandalf. I feel it in my heart. I need a change, or something.'

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<sup>13</sup> A sword - меч

<sup>14</sup> A mantelpiece – камин, каминная полка

<sup>15</sup> To spoil - портить

Gandalf looked curiously and closely at him. ‘I believe your plan is probably the best.’

‘I want to see mountains again, Gandalf, *mountains*, and then find somewhere where I can *rest*. In peace and quiet, without a lot of relatives and visitors. Somewhere where I can finish my book. And finish it like: *and he lived happily ever after to the end of his days*. ‘

Gandalf laughed. ‘I hope he will. But nobody will read the book.’

‘Oh, they may, in some years. Frodo has read some already. You’ll take care of Frodo, won’t you?’

‘Yes, I will.’

‘He would come with me, of course, if I asked him. But he does not really want to. I want to see the wild country again before I die, and the Mountains; but he is still in love with the Shire, with woods and fields and little rivers. I am leaving everything to him. I hope he will be happy.’

‘Everything?’ Gandalf said. ‘The ring as well? You agreed to that, you remember.’

‘Well, er, yes, I suppose so,’ Bilbo said.

‘Where is it?’

‘In an envelope,’ Bilbo said. ‘There on the mantelpiece. Well, no! Here it is in my pocket!’ He hesitated<sup>16</sup>. ‘Isn’t that strange?’ he said softly to himself. ‘Yet after all, why not? Why shouldn’t it stay there?’

Gandalf looked again at Bilbo. ‘I think, Bilbo,’ he said quietly, ‘You should leave it. Don’t you want to?’

‘Well yes - and no. I don’t really see why I should. Why do you want me to?’ he asked.

‘Magic rings are - well, magical. I was professionally interested in your ring and I still am. I want to know where it is, if you disappear again. You have had it for too long. You won’t need it anymore.’

There was an angry light in Bilbo’s eyes. ‘Why not?’ he cried. ‘It is my own. I found it. It came to me. It is mine, I tell you. My own. My precious<sup>17</sup>. Yes, my precious.’

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<sup>16</sup> To hesitate - сомневаться

<sup>17</sup> Precious – драгоценный, прелесть

The wizard was worried. 'It has been called that before,' he said, 'but not by you.'

'But I say it now. And why not? Even if Gollum said the same once. It's not his now, but mine. And I will keep it, I say.'

Gandalf stood up. 'You will be a fool if you do. Bilbo,' he said. 'Let it go! And then you can go yourself, and be free.'

'Well, if you want my ring yourself, say so!' cried Bilbo. 'But you won't get it. I won't give my precious away, I tell you.'

His hand was on the small sword.

'It is my turn to get angry,' Gandalf said. He took a step towards the hobbit, and he was so tall that his shadow filled the little room.

Bilbo backed away to the wall with his hand in his pocket. They stood for a while facing one another.

'I don't know what is with you now, Gandalf,' he said. 'You have never been like this before. What is it all about? It is mine isn't it? I found it.'

'I'm trying to help you,' Gandalf replied. He turned away and was an old grey man again.

'I am sorry,' Bilbo said. 'But I feel so strange. Sometimes I feel it is like an eye looking at me. And I always want to put it on and disappear. I tried locking it up, but I found I couldn't rest without it in my pocket. I don't know why.'

'Then trust<sup>18</sup> me,' Gandalf said. 'Go away and give it to Frodo, and I will look after him.'

Bilbo stood for a moment undecided.

'All right,' he said. 'I will. It goes to Frodo with all the rest. And now I really must go, or somebody else will catch me. I have already said goodbye.' He picked up his bag and moved to the door.

'You still have the ring in your pocket,' the wizard said.

'Well, yes!' cried Bilbo. 'And my will and all the other documents too. Will you deliver it for me? That will be the safest.'

'No, don't give the ring to me,' Gandalf said. 'Put it on the mantelpiece. It will be safe enough there, till Frodo comes. I will wait for him.'

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<sup>18</sup> To trust - доверять

Bilbo took out the envelope, but the packet fell on the floor. Before he could pick it up, the wizard set it in its place. A look of anger was over the hobbit's face again. Suddenly it got a look of a laugh. 'Well, that's that,' he said. 'Now I'm off!'

They went out into the hall. Bilbo chose his favourite stick. Three dwarves came out of different rooms where they had been busy.

'Is everything ready?' asked Bilbo. 'Everything packed and labeled?'

'Everything,' they answered.

'Well, let's start then!' He stepped out of the front-door.

It was a fine night, and the black sky was dotted with stars. He looked up. 'What a fun! What a fun to be off again, off on the Road with dwarves! This is what I have really been waiting for, for years! Goodbye!' he said, looking at his old home and bowing<sup>19</sup> to the door. 'Goodbye, Gandalf!'

'Goodbye, Bilbo. Take care of yourself!'

'Take care! I don't care. Don't worry about me! I am as happy now as I have ever been,' he added, and then he turned away from the lights and voices in the fields and tents, and followed by his three companions went round into his garden, and then down the long path.

'Goodbye, my dear Bilbo - until our next meeting!' Gandalf said and went back indoors.

Frodo came in soon afterwards, and found him sitting in the dark, deep in thought. 'Has he gone?' he asked.

'Yes,' answered Gandalf, 'he has gone at last.'

'I wish - I mean, I hoped until this evening that it was only a joke,' said Frodo. 'But I knew in my heart that he really meant to go. He always used to joke about serious things. I wish I had come back sooner, just to say Goodbye.'

'Don't be too troubled. He'll be all right.' Gandalf said. 'He left a packet for you. There it is!'

Frodo took the envelope from the mantelpiece, looked at it, but did not open it.

'You'll find his will and all the other documents in there, I think,' the wizard said. 'You are the master of Bag End now. And also, you'll find a golden ring.'

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<sup>19</sup> To bow - кланяться

‘The ring!’ Frodo exclaimed. ‘Has he left me that? But why? Still, it may be useful.’

‘It may, and it may not,’ said Gandalf. ‘I wouldn’t use it, if I were you. But keep it secret, and keep it safe! Now I am going to bed.’

As the master of Bag End Frodo had to say goodbye to the guests.

Next morning the hobbits got up later. People came and began to clear away the pavilions and the tables and the chairs, and the spoons and knives and bottles and plates, and the flowers in boxes, and the uneaten food. Then a number of other people came: Bagginses, and Boffins, and Bolgers, and Tookes, and others. By midday, there was a large crowd at Bag End.

Frodo was waiting on the step, smiling, but tired and worried. He welcomed all the guests. Some of the visitors he invited to come inside, as Bilbo had left ‘messages’ for them.

Inside in the hall there were a lot of packages and parcels<sup>20</sup> and small articles of furniture. On every item there was a label. There were several labels of this sort:

*For ADELARD TOOK, for his VERY OWN, from Bilbo, on an umbrella. He always didn’t have an umbrella.*

*For DORA BAGGINS in memory of a LONG correspondence<sup>21</sup>, with love from Bilbo, on a large waste-paper basket<sup>22</sup>. Dora was Drogo’s sister and the eldest female relative of Bilbo and Frodo; she was ninety-nine, and had written a lot for more than half a century.*

*For MILO BURROWS, hoping it will be useful, from B.B., on a gold pen and ink-bottle. Milo never answered letters.*

*For ANGELICA’S use, from Uncle Bilbo, on a round mirror. She was a young Baggins, and too worried about her face.*

*For the collection of HUGO BRACEGIRDLE, from a contributor, on an (empty) bookcase. Hugo was a great borrower of books, and never returned them.*

*For LOBELIA SACKVILLE-BAGGINS, as a PRESENT, on a case of silver spoons. Bilbo believed that she had taken a lot of his spoons, while he was away on his journey.*

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<sup>20</sup> A parcel - посылка

<sup>21</sup> Correspondence - переписка

<sup>22</sup> A waste-paper basket – мусорная корзина

Lobelia knew that quite well. When she arrived later in the day, she took the point at once, but she also took the spoons.

Every gift had a label, written out personally by Bilbo, and several had some point, or some joke. But, of course, most of the things were given where they would be wanted and welcome.

There was plenty of everything left for Frodo. And, of course, all the chief treasures, as well as the books, pictures, and more than enough furniture, were left in his possession. There was, however, no sign of money.

Frodo had a very hard time that afternoon. Labels got torn off<sup>23</sup> and mixed, and quarrels broke out. Some people tried to exchange gifts or steal them. The road to the gate was blocked.

Frodo was tired and left his friend Merry Brandybuck to look after the things. Then the Sackville-Bagginses arrived. When Otho loudly demanded<sup>24</sup> to see Frodo, Merry bowed politely.

‘He is resting,’ he said.

‘Hiding, you mean,’ Lobelia said. ‘Anyway we want to see him. Just go and tell him so!’

Merry left them in the hall and then they were shown into the study. Frodo was sitting at a table with a lot of papers in front of him. He looked unhappy - to see Sackville-Bagginses, but he stood up and spoke quite politely.

‘I insist<sup>25</sup> on seeing the will.’ Otho said.

He read the will carefully. It was, unfortunately, very clear and correct.

‘Foiled again<sup>26</sup>!’ he said to his wife. ‘And after waiting *sixty* years. Spoons?’ A little later Frodo came out of the study to see how things were going on and found several small gifts inside his wife’s umbrella. She found nothing more to say, but:

‘You’ll live to regret it, young fellow! Why didn’t you go too? You don’t belong here; you’re no Baggins - you - you’re a Brandybuck!’

‘Did you hear that, Merry?’ Frodo said as he shut the door on her.

‘It was a compliment,’ Merry Brandybuck said, ‘and so, of course, not true.’

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<sup>23</sup> To tear off - отрывать

<sup>24</sup> To demand - требовать

<sup>25</sup> To insist - настаивать

<sup>26</sup> To be foiled – потерпеть неудачу

When they went round the hole, and kicked out young hobbits who were trying to find gold in the house, Frodo sat on a chair in the hall.

‘It’s time to close the shop, Merry,’ he said. ‘Lock the door, and don’t open it to anyone today.’ Then he went to make himself a cup of tea.

He had hardly sat down, when there came a knock at the front-door. ‘Lobelia again,’ he thought. ‘She must have thought of something really bad, and have come back again to say it. It can wait.’

He went on with his tea. The knock was repeated, much louder, but he took no notice. Suddenly the wizard’s head appeared at the window.

‘If you don’t let me in, Frodo, I’ll come in by myself,’ he said.

‘My dear Gandalf! Half a minute!’ cried Frodo, running out of the room to the door. ‘Come in! Come in! I thought it was Lobelia.’

‘Then I forgive you. But I saw her some time ago with an angry look on face.’

‘When she was here, I nearly tried on Bilbo’s ring. I wanted to disappear.’

‘Don’t do that!’ said Gandalf, sitting down. ‘Be careful of that ring, Frodo! In fact, I have come to say a last word about the ring.’

‘Well, what about it?’

‘What do you know already?’

‘Only what Bilbo told me. I have heard his story: how he found it, and how he used it: on his journey, I mean.’

‘Which story?’ Gandalf asked.

‘Oh, not what he told the dwarves and put in his book,’ Frodo said. ‘He told me the true story soon after I came to live here.’

‘That’s interesting,’ said Gandalf. ‘Well, what did you think of it all?’

‘I thought the true story was much better.’

‘So did I. But odd things may happen to people that have such treasures - if they use them. Let it be a warning to you to be very careful with it. It may have other powers than just making you vanish when you wish to.’

‘I don’t understand,’ Frodo said.

‘Neither do I,’ the wizard answered. ‘I have just begun to think about the ring. No need to worry. But if you take my advice you will use it very seldom, or not at all. I say again: keep it safe, and keep it secret!’

‘You are very mysterious! What are you afraid of?’

‘I am not certain, so I will say no more. I may be able to tell you something when I come back. I am going off now: so this is goodbye for the present.’ He got up.

‘Now!’ Frodo cried. ‘Why, I thought you were staying for at least a week. I was looking forward to your help.’

‘I did mean to - but I have had to change my mind. I may be away for some time; but I’ll come and see you again, as soon as I can. Expect me when you see me! I’ll come secretly. I find that I have become rather unpopular here. They say I helped Bilbo to disappear.’

‘Some people!’ Frodo exclaimed. ‘You mean Otho and Lobelia. I would give them Bag End and everything else, if I could get Bilbo back and go off with him. I love the Shire. But I begin to wish, somehow, that I had gone too.’

‘Goodbye now! Take care of yourself!’ Gandalf said.

Frodo saw him to the door. He gave a final wave of his hand. Frodo did not see him again for a long time.