



## Chapter 2

### “Roast Mutton”

#### Journal and Discussion Topics

1. Sometimes in literature a change of clothing is symbolic of a new role. What do you think Bilbo's change of apparel might mean?
2. How does life on the trail differ from the life Bilbo is accustomed to? How does he cope?
3. Why do you think it is significant that people in the area in which they camp haven't heard of the king?
4. What saves the dwarves from the trolls?
5. How do the others react to Bilbo's mention of the key?
6. Compare and contrast the speech of the dwarves and the speech of the trolls.
7. How do you imagine the trolls look? Draw a picture.
8. What does Bilbo argue about with himself when he sees the trolls?
9. What do you think of the dwarves' ability to make strategic plans? Give evidence.
10. In this chapter, what important help does Bilbo provide toward attaining the dwarves' goal?
11. Think of another book in which somebody got out of a tight situation by a trick rather than by violence. Compare and contrast this with the situation in this chapter.

#### Vocabulary

**defrayed:** 29, paid for expenses  
**esteemed:** 29, honored  
**requisite:** 29, necessary  
**punctual:** 29, on time  
**paraphernalia:** 30, equipment  
**laden:** 30, carrying a load  
**bolted:** 33, ran away  
**canny:** 34, safe  
**cavalcade:** 34, procession  
**toothsome:** 35, attractive  
**purloined:** 36, stolen

**copped:** 36, caught  
**throttled:** 36, strangled  
**blighter:** 37, fellow, guy  
**lout:** 37, a cruel person  
**bickering:** 41, quarreling  
**incantations:** 42, magic spells  
**scabbard:** 43, a sheath for a sword  
**hilt:** 43, handles  
**smith:** 43, one who works with metals  
**embers:** 43, glowing ashes of a fire  
**waylaid:** 44, ambushed

#### Summary

Upon awakening the next morning, Bilbo believes that the dwarves have left on their expedition. He is both relieved and disappointed. Gandalf arrives and sends him scurrying off to the meeting place without any chance to pack, and he is just in time to join the dwarves. As the troupe passes beyond hobbit-lands into less populated areas with dreary landscape, the weather begins to turn bad and Gandalf disappears without warning.

They are caught in a cold rain and unable to light a fire when their lookout spies a light in the distance. They decide to approach the light and send Bilbo-the-burglar to investigate. Bilbo discovers three trolls sitting around a fire and is soon caught trying to pick one of their pockets. The trolls fight about Bilbo, and he manages to elude them by hiding behind a tree. But the dwarves, hearing a commotion, come hurrying up and are caught one by one and popped into sacks. As the trolls are about to eat them, Gandalf returns. By throwing his voice, he tricks the trolls into fighting among themselves until the sun comes up and turns them to stone. After raiding the trolls' cave for food and treasure—notably several swords made for the goblin wars and a dagger for Bilbo—the band sets out again.



# Strategy 3

## Setting and Mood

**Setting** is both the world in which the story takes place and the changing scenery that serves as the backdrop for each scene or chapter. Setting includes what the characters see, hear, smell, and can touch in their environment. Sights include:

- Time of day
- Season of the year
- Plants and animals
- Natural features
- Weather
- Landscape
- Buildings or other structures

The general setting of this story is Middle-earth, a land with certain kinds of people; certain kinds of landscape; certain plants, animals, and weather; and certain rules and customs. The particular setting within Middle-earth changes from scene to scene and chapter to chapter.

Some parts of a setting come from nature, and some are made by the creatures of the world in which the story takes place. The first part of the setting described in this book is Bilbo's hobbit hole, built by his father, and furnished by Bilbo himself. The setting described on pages 32–33, the night they encountered the trolls, describes a natural setting.

Settings can serve different functions in different stories and at different times in the same story. It may be a mere backdrop to the story, or it may have a more integral part. The setting may be symbolic and be a source of information about the inhabitants of the area. The setting may create conflicts for the characters of the story. The setting may help or hinder the characters in achieving their goal. It may provide materials or resources that help the characters solve problems, or create physical hardships or challenges that are difficult to overcome. Setting also helps establish characterization (see **Strategy 4**, page 16). For example, from reading the description of Bilbo's hobbit hole on page 1, you can begin to get an idea of Bilbo's character, even before you know his name. The setting of a story affects how we and the characters feel about their surroundings. This feeling is called **mood**. The setting can make things seem pleasant, or give an air of foreboding that makes you think that something bad is about to happen.

Although a novel is classified as a narrative, that is, a type of writing that tells a story, sections of a novel that deal with the setting are usually passages of description.

As you notice the setting, try to figure out what the writer is trying to convey. Pay attention to the possibilities and problems created by the setting, and the mood the setting creates for you in order to take advantage of hints the writer is giving about what might happen next.

1. Extend the following chart to create a record of *The Hobbit* settings and their functions. Skim Chapters 1 and 2 and enter the settings you find. Then, continue the chart as you read farther.

Page #	Setting Description	Function(s) in Story

### Strategy 3

*Directions:*  
 Read the explanation, then answer the question.





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Writer's Forum 1

# Writer's Forum 1 Shades of Meaning

Synonyms are sometimes defined as words that mean the same thing. This is not quite true. No two words mean exactly the same thing. Even if the denotation—the dictionary definition—is the same for two words, the connotation—the emotional associations and “flavor” the two words have—is always different. **Shades of meaning** refers to the differences found in words that are synonyms.

Some things that affect how we view a word are

- familiarity or lack of familiarity
- sound
- length
- famous occurrences
- formality/informality
- context
- emotional overtones

For example, consider the words *distraught* and *distracted*. Asher chooses an unfamiliar, important sounding, formal word that denotes extreme emotional discomfort. The Instructor suggests a more familiar, plain-sounding, informal word that denotes a temporary lapse of focus.

Jonas distinguishes between being *frightened* and being *eager* and being *apprehensive*. All three words have to do with expectation, but the sort of thing expected is different in each case. Because Lowry draws our attention to this issue, we can expect the language she uses to be precise, and we can expect that if we pay attention to her word choices, our analysis will help us reach a deeper understanding of the story.

With this in mind, consider the word *release*. To most people this word has a connotation of freedom (for example, from captivity) and positive emotional tones. Lowry has chosen to introduce it as a term to describe what the narrator calls a “terrible punishment, an overwhelming statement of failure” (page 2). This may contrast with our previous experience of the word, and make us pause and think about the language in the book. Because Lowry uses the word in this way, we need to think about whether the shades of meaning we generally attach to it are appropriate in this context.

1. Choose two paragraphs in Chapter 1 (at least 15 lines of the story), and rewrite them, changing the words to give different shades of meaning to the passage. Write a brief analysis explaining how your passage differs from Lowry's original.