

Wealth in the hobbit essay



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

It seems that greed never allows you to think you have enough, and in the case of *The Hobbit* by J. R. R. Tolkien it demonstrates how corruptive it can truly be. From the surface one may not think of a half sized person as the usual hero. However, by looking into the personalities of the characters from *The Hobbit* it is obvious that heroes come in many different shapes and sizes. By comparing the various cases of greed and selflessness exhibited by Smaug, Thorin, and Bilbo, it becomes apparent that the what each character valued as important was one of the true driving forces behind their actions throughout the novel.

The dragon Smaug is the true epitome of greed. Its conquering of the Lonely Mountain had the sole purpose to collect treasure. It has absolutely no use for the treasure that used to better the lives of people such as those who live in Lake Town. Smaug symbolizes the true extent of what happens when one gives in to greed. Furthermore, any interest Smaug didn't place on his gold was instead focused on himself and his reputation. This is shown when Smaug risks the loss of his gold by allowing Bilbo to live when he is given compliments, bolstering his self centered attitude. In a way Thrór had taken the place of Smaug long before his conquering when he embraced the power that comes with gold. The day that Smaug came simply shifted power from a figurative dragon to a real one.

Although Thorin and the dwarves claim that their journey is to reclaim their homeland, their real motivation is greed to become wealthy once more. This is shown when the dwarves rush to find a way to protect their treasure when the armies of men and elves come to the mountain. Greed even brings Thorin to rather childish behavior of refusing to negotiate with the other

racers. However, the fact that he does not seek wealth only for himself makes him different than Smaug. Despite being the king of the dwarves he travels with, he asks for a share of treasure of equal size to theirs. Thorin also shows utter selflessness in giving everything he has in an attempt to change the tide of battle during The Battle of Five Armies, knowing that should he perish there would no longer be a king preventing the races from dividing his gold. Throughout the novel Thorin endures a massive inner battle with his greed, and only on his deathbed does he truly show his victory telling Bilbo " if more of us valued food and cheer and song above hoarded gold, it would be a merrier world."

Bilbo's stance on wealth seems to be heavily endorsed throughout The Hobbit as he seems to be able to improve any situation with his views. The promise of treasure is what originally motivated Bilbo to embark on the adventure. However, throughout the journey he learns to not only control the greed within himself, but that within others as well. This is shown when Bilbo realizes that the Arkenstone is the only thing that Thorin worries about, and in giving it to the other races he is using the stone, and Thorin's greed, to prevent an outbreak. Decisions with what others might see as an immeasurable amount of wealth are fairly simple for Bilbo to make. This is because he does not view wealth the way the dwarves do. Bilbo knows that what he values most is not the mountain of gold, but the warmth of his home back in Bag-End.

So while Bilbo may not be the most athletic or powerful fighter, it is his personality which is endorsed by J. R. R. Tolkien. Through immense selflessness he was able to rise above the shadow of corruption that was

cast by the mountain of gold. Bilbo is able to see where true wealth lies, something that Smaug never knew, and Thorin learned too late.