

# The hobbit: character analysis of bilbo



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Have you ever had to make a change in your life and been scared about what might happen? I have gone through such a change in mine and so has a character called Bilbo. In *The Hobbit* by J. R. R. Tolkien the main character, Bilbo Baggins, a simple hobbit who goes on an adventure that changed his life. Bilbo lives a simple life. He is a hobbit which Tolkien says “are inclined to be fat in the stomach, they dress in bright colors, wear no shoes because their feet grow natural leathery soles and thick warm brown hair like the stuff on their heads” (p. 16). Bilbo lives in a shire “in a hole in the ground”. His home was simple and comfortable. His life was a normal life for a hobbit until a Wizard named Gandalf came along and changed Bilbo’s life. Gandalf convinces Bilbo to be a thief for the dwarves and once Bilbo sets out, his adventure would change who he is and his life. When I left my home in Cuba City Wisconsin for Yuma Colorado, my life and who I am changed as well. Bilbo did not want to go on the adventure with Gandalf. He was content to be a hobbit, he didn’t want to go away from his home where he was safe. Much like when I learned I was going to be going away from the home that I knew for 8 years. I was happy with my friends, my school, my room, with everything that made me safe. The thought of going somewhere else I didn’t know scared me. Bilbo may have been scared about leaving. Tolkien says “this is a story of how Baggins had an adventure and found himself doing and saying things all together unexpected”. In Bilbo’s adventure he encounters many obstacles. He meets dwarves, dragons, and Gollum. With each meeting Bilbo has to overcome something. With each task, he becomes braver and willing to take chances. He also becomes more sure of himself. One of his challenges is in a cave with Gollum, a strange creature. When Bilbo is in the cave, he has been separated from his group. He is alone and

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doesn't know which way to go. " He could not think what to do; nor could he think what had happened; or why he had been left behind;...The truth was he had been lying quiet, out of sight and out of mind, in a very dark corner for a long while" (p. 76). Bilbo feels alone and no one is there for him. When we moved to Yuma I felt much that way as well. I knew no one. I was going to a new school where I did not have any friends. The first day of school was terrifying. No familiar faces of teachers to greet me, no one to play with at recess or sit with at lunch. I didn't know my way. Bilbo was in the same situation. But Bilbo does go on. He finds the strength to pick himself up and find his way out. "' Go back?' he thought. ' No good at all! Go sideways? Impossible! Go forward? Only thing to do! On we go!'" (p. 77). With his sword at his side, Bilbo went on. I too went on. My sword was my family encouraging me. I knew I could make friends, get to know my teachers, and I believed in myself. I met my challenges head on and I survived our move. Bilbo met his challenges and he too became better and stronger. Another obstacle for Bilbo is his killing of the giant spider. This shows how Bilbo continues to grow in being able to stand up for himself and leaving his simple life behind. " Somehow the killing of the giant spider, all alone by himself in the dark without the help of the wizard or the dwarves or of anyone else, made a great difference to Mr. Baggins. He felt a different person and much fiercer and bolder..." (p. 154). I think this is where Bilbo changes who he is. He is no longer the simple hobbit content to blow smoke rings but strong and self confident in what he can do. In the end, Bilbo returns home to the shire. But he is no longer the same. He does not fit with the other hobbits. The things he has done and seen have changed him. Bilbo senses that he is different but does not understand the change. Gandalf says

to him “‘ My dear Bilbo!’ he said. ‘ Something is the matter with you! You are not the hobbit that you were.’” (p. 284). He has seen much more than his neighbors. His adventures with dwarves, trolls, goblins, wizards and dragons have made life different for him, which the other hobbits will never be able to understand. When I return to Wisconsin I feel different too. Things are different. I have had different things happen to me and I have been able to do things the people back home have not done. They cannot understand life in Colorado. Since I have been gone, I have changed just like Bilbo. There was always something in Bilbo that he didn’t see in himself. The quote “ There is a lot more in him than you guess, and a deal more than he has any idea of himself” shows that Gandalf knew Bilbo would be a great hobbit. If we can all believe in ourselves the way Gandalf believed in Bilbo, we would be able to do anything. Bilbo rose above his obstacles to change his life. Even though he was no longer accepted by the other hobbits, his friendships with wizards and elves made his life more worthwhile for him. He changed and for him it was for the better.