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### My Journey with The Hobbit

It was a cool fall night when I read *The Hobbit* for the first time. I walked through my uncle's home office, which was filled with floor-to-ceiling bookshelves. The golden light of the setting sun shone through the huge bay window. I was eleven years old and bored after school one day. I longed for an adventure far from my normal life in the suburbs. I became interested in a small hardback book. The well-worn burgundy cover had a detailed picture of a tiny hobbit man smoking a pipe outside. I took the valuable book off the shelf because it looked like it could take me to amazing places. As I turned the pages, Tolkien's clever wording immediately caught my attention. For example, the "unexpected party" of dwarves coming to Bilbo's hobbit hole made me laugh loud (Tolkien 12). At an early age, J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Hobbit* sparked my interest in fantasy literature and showed me the transformational potential of imaginary worlds through its vivid narrative and extensive world-building.

I was already a shy and quiet child, even though I was only eleven. While my friends went on adventures around the neighborhood, I stayed inside and read or watched TV. I wanted to be active, to go out and find it but I was too scared and shy since I had only been in the US for 2 years. I have always wanted to escape my boring life and go on exciting adventures like the characters in my best stories. On that fall night, I walked around my uncle's office, which was full of books, without a plan. I was impatient and wanted to get away from it.

The shelves were full of leather-bound books, each with a worn-out spine that spoke of different topics and places. There was only one small, and what seemed as a readers' favoring

book that caught my eye. The burgundy cover had become faded and wrinkled from being read many times. On the cover, a small man with a beard and a green robe walked over hills and trees in a complicated picture. There was much smoke in the air from his pipe. I was interested in the picture because it had a charming and bold vibe. I took the valuable book from where it was lying because I was interested in it.

From the start, I was taken through: "In a hole in the ground there lived a hobbit...when Bilbo opened the door...he had a most dreadful kind of frights. Instead of a thrush reviving shrill and eager, there was a loud knocking without, and outside the door was a DWARF" (Tolkien 12). It looked like Tolkien's wonderful writing was floating in the air. Thoughts of the cozy hobbit hole and Bilbo's shock at the exciting adventures beyond the door came to life. This "unexpected party" of dwarfs had such a big impact on me that I did not know it would.

As the story went on, Middle Earth became more real to me than the neighborhoods outside my window. I became immersed in Tolkien's fantasy world. As I followed Bilbo on his trip, I walked through a lush mix of rolling fields, thick forests, and rough mountain peaks. Tolkien's love for nature gave even the smallest details a magical quality, and his detailed descriptions put me right in the middle of these places (Tolkien 107). That old tree branch sound swinging in the wind and the earthy smell of moss moving through the air could be heard and felt. Middle Earth filled all of my senses. In particular, this book made this alternate world even stronger. I thought about Tolkien's strange made-up words and let them paint pictures of strange plants and foods I had never seen before. Because of his thoughtful and beautiful words, the ordinary road turned into a magical world full of life and begging to be explored. Even the strangest details came to life thanks to Tolkien's skilled writing.

When I first read *The Hobbit*, I felt like I knew Bilbo Baggins. He was also happy with how easy and predictable his life was in the Shire. When the dwarves came, they called him on a great journey, and part of Bilbo wanted to go along with them. Bilbo's adventures hit home because I also want to travel and do something different from the norm. I admired Bilbo's daring to leave his safe hobbit hole and go out into the dangerous world beyond, which was a big change from his normal life.

I was amazed at how Bilbo changed from a shy homebody to a brave, smart hero who faced serious risks without fear as his journey continued. In the last few lines of the book, the author emphasizes this big change. **The Bagginses had at last become famous for more than muddledness; his great and brave heart had grown by the quest (Tolkien 14).** These moving descriptions of how the events changed Bilbo over time touched a nerve. Since he pushed himself into the unknown, I saw him become more determined, strong and focused on what was important.

Ultimately, *The Hobbit* taught me a lot about accepting the world around me, following my inner urges for adventure, and leaving my comfort zone. For me, Bilbo's bravery in facing his fears and the fresh perspective he got from seeing the magical landscapes and fantastical wonders of Middle-earth inspired me to seek out new experiences and explore mystery. For me, the book was a passionate and endless call to fight boredom and pursue a heroic path filled with bravery, magic, and a meaningful life.

During my awkward and shy childhood, *The Hobbit* was a deep artistic escape that I looked for comfort in. I was able to let go of my fears and feel the thrill of high-stakes adventure when I got lost in Tolkien's beautifully detailed Middle-earth. As a child, reading such creative and interesting stories made me appreciate the power of thought to make things better for a long

time. Even though much time has passed, I still want to follow the bravery, awe, and meaningful living lessons woven throughout Bilbo's amazing trip. His theory is to keep your head on your shoulders and have adventures as thick as you can stand them. It has made me want to face fear instead of running away. The Hobbit was not only the first fantasy book I ever read, but it also sparked my mind and made me love all things fantasy forever. This book will always be very important to me because it made an impact on me that will last.