



The Hobbit

Author: J. R. R. Tolkien
Genre: Survival and Adventure
Publisher: London: Collins, 1998
ISBN: 0-00-675402-3
RRP: £ 6.99 (+£2.80 p&p)

This is J.R.R. Tolkien's best-selling tale of a very little person on a very big adventure, and is quite probably one of the best children's books ever to be written.

Bilbo Baggins is a Hobbit, a little fellow just over three feet tall that lives in his house under the hill. His peaceful life is interrupted when Gandalf, a wizard and an 'old friend of his uncle's', arrives at his door one morning with a bit of a business proposition. His business partners are a group of 13 dwarves, led by the mighty Thorin Oakenshield, who need a burglar, yes, a burglar(!) to help them defeat Smaug, a fearsome red dragon who took their home (and money!) many years ago. Bilbo's adventurous side soon gets the better of him, and he is whisked off on a journey that he will ever forget!

However it's a long way to the dragon's mountain lair. To get there, the band of travellers battle elven kings, goblins and giant spiders to name but a few; just as well, then, that Bilbo finds something magical along the way to aid him in his mission. The great story-line is helped along with songs, riddles and humour (and enormous talking eagles), and builds to a very exciting end, which I will not ruin here. But, if you do like *The Hobbit* you might want to consider Professor Tolkien's (he really was a professor!) follow-up book, the equally famous (and excellent) *The Lord of the Rings*.

I'll be honest. When I picked up this book yesterday to re-read it – it had been many years since I'd last had the pleasure – I must confess to having been a little nervous. The intervening years have seen me read a degree on much of the 'source-material', and I was worried that my new understanding would ruin the magic. In fact the opposite was true. Tolkien's masterful story has taken many wonderful ideas from the earliest beginnings of English Literature and gifted them to the modern world. More to the point, it's a nice easy book to read for almost anybody over the age of about 8 (the first ever review was written by the author's young son), and great fun too. Enjoy!

10 sausages out of 10

RW Mar 2014