BALIN. But he did say don't leave the path.
THORIN. Well, we haven't left it. Only Fili and Kili have.
BILBO. Curious--it's so quiet--as horribly quiet as it is before something awful happens.
BALIN (looking off R). Fili and Kili are coming back.

(FILI and KILI come on R and rush up to THORIN.)

FILI and KILI (together). It's Elves! They've got food!
OTHERS. Elves! (The following speeches are said in such rapid succession it is as if one person were talking.)
FILI. We crept up----
KILI. To the lights----
FILI. What a sight!
KILI. In a clearing----
FILI. Lots of Elves sitting 'round a fire.
BALIN. What luck!
KILI. Laughing!
FILI. Eating!
KILI. We couldn't bear it. We ran up to beg some food and poof! The lights went out.
FILI. As if by magic!
KILI. Somebody kicked the fire and it went up--(Gestures widely.) --in glittering sparks----
FILI. And they all vanished!
THORIN. Those were wood-elves.
BOMBUR. Friendly elves! And they've got food!
THORIN. No, no, the wood-elves aren't very friendly. They don't like strangers. Mirkwood breeds distrust. (There is another flash of light.)
BILBO. The lights again!
BOMBUR. Let's all go to the feast!
DWARVES (ad lib). Whoopee! Let's go! (They

The Elven Queen



start to go, leaving the path at an angle.) Come on, Bilbo.
BILBO (standing fast). Wait! A feast will be no good if we don't get back alive from it.
BOMBUR. Well, I'm going. We won't last much longer without food anway.
BILBO. That's true--I guess.
BIFUR. Come on, Bilbo. (BILBO reluctantly follows the others off the path.)

(The ELVEN-QUEEN and several of her attendant LORDS and LADIES enter from L. The QUEEN wears a trimly fitted garment of forest green and a crown of oak leaves and berries. She carries a wand of carved oak. Her attendant LADIES carry bows and arrows.)

ELVEN-QUEEN. Halt! (DWARVES and BILBO freeze in surprise.)
THORIN. By whose authority do you bid us halt?
ELVEN-QUEEN. I am the Elven-Queen. Who are you that trespass on my domain?
THORIN (stage whisper to BILBO). Quick, Bilbo, make yourself invisible. Put on your ring. (BILBO does so, and from then on he is ignored by all.)
ELVEN-QUEEN (imperiously). Speak.
THORIN (stepping forward proudly). I am Thorin Oakenshield, son of Thrain, son of Thror, King under the Mountain!
ELVEN-QUEEN (disdainfully). A dwarf all the same. Why did you and your folk attack my people?
THORIN. We did not attack them, your majesty. We came to beg because we are starving.
ELVEN-QUEEN. What are you doing in Mirkwood?
THORIN. We are looking for food and drink.
ELVEN-QUEEN (impatiently). But why are you here

at all? (THORIN remains silent.) Come now! (THORIN remains silent.) Very well! You shall all go to my dungeons where you shall remain until you tell me the truth--if it takes a thousand years! Seize them! (The Elf GUARDS grab THORIN and surround the others. To the GUARDS.) How many are there?

GUARD. Thirteen, O Queen.

ELVEN-QUEEN. Away with them. (She exits L.)

FIRST GUARD. Step lively, dwarves!

SECOND GUARD. March! (The Elves march the dwarves off L.)

BILBO (taking off his ring and speaking to it.). Well, my friend, thanks to you I'm still free. We should have stayed on the path as Gandalf warned us. And now they'll all be shut up in a stone dungeon. That's a hard thing! Somehow I must get them out! (BILBO runs off L.)

BLACKOUT

(or CURTAIN)

# ACT TWO

## Scene Two

SCENE: The dungeon of the Elven-Queen's palace. At rise, the DWARVES are discovered behind the bars of a large prison cell in the center section of the stage. They are seated on wooden stools in attitudes of despondency. THORIN occupies a private cell to their right. On the platform at R there are a table and chairs. On the platform L are a pile of straw and four wine barrels. Also in this section, somewhere in the background, are various possessions of the dwarves: bags containing tools /drills and hammers/; jackets, pad and pencil.)

AT RISE OF CURTAIN: BILBO sits against one of the barrels, writing busily in his journal. As lights come up on platform L, BILBO finishes writing and holds up his diary to see better.)

BILBO (reading impressively). "Well, so far I haven't come up with a plan of escape. I might as well be locked up with my friends. Being invisible day after day is driving me mad. This is without a doubt the dreariest, dullest part of this wretched adventure. At least the dwarves are eating well. I have to steal my scraps of food from the kitchen." (Nods approval and scribbles again.)

THORIN (calling softly to BILBO). Psst!

BILBO (ignoring him, reading again, impressively).