“And for me,” said Thorin.
“And raspberry jam and apple-tart,” said Bifur.
“And mince-pies and cheese,” said Bofur.
“And pork-pie and salad,” said Bombur.
“And more cakes—and ale—and coffee, if you don't mind,” called the other dwarves through the door.

“Put on a few eggs, there's a good fellow!” Gandalf called after him, as the hobbit stumped off to the pantries. “And just bring out the cold chicken and pickles!”

“Seems to know as much about the inside of my larders as I do myself!” thought Mr. Baggins, who was feeling positively flummoxed, and was beginning to wonder whether a most wretched adventure had not come right into his house. By the time he had got all the bottles and dishes and knives and forks and glasses and plates and spoons and things piled up on big trays, he was getting very hot, and red in the face, and annoyed.

“Confusticate and bebother these dwarves!” he said aloud. “Why don’t they come and lend a hand?” Lo and behold! there stood Balin and Dwalin at the door of the kitchen, and Fili and Kili behind them, and before he could say knife they had whisked the trays and a couple of small tables into the parlour and set out everything afresh.

Gandalf sat at the head of the party with the thirteen dwarves all round: and Bilbo sat on a stool at the fireside, nibbling at a biscuit (his appetite was quite taken away), and trying to look as if this was all perfectly ordi-
nary and not in the least an adventure. The dwarves ate and ate, and talked and talked, and time got on. At last they pushed their chairs back, and Bilbo made a move to collect the plates and glasses.

“I suppose you will all stay to supper?” he said in his politest unpressing tones.

“Of course!” said Thorin. “And after. We shan’t get through the business till late, and we must have some music first. Now to clear up!”

Thereupon the twelve dwarves—not Thorin, he was too important, and stayed talking to Gandalf—jumped to their feet, and made tall piles of all the things. Off they went, not waiting for trays, balancing columns of plates, each with a bottle on the top, with one hand, while the hobbit ran after them almost squeaking with fright: “please be careful!” and “please, don’t trouble! I can manage.” But the dwarves only started to sing:

*Chip the glasses and crack the plates!*
*Blunt the knives and bend the forks!*
*That’s what Bilbo Baggins hates—*
*Smash the bottles and burn the corks!*

*Cut the cloth and tread on the fat!*
*Pour the milk on the pantry floor!*
*Leave the bones on the bedroom mat!*
*Splash the wine on every door!*
Dump the crocks in a boiling bowl;
Pound them up with a thumping pole;
And when you’ve finished, if any are whole,
Send them down the hall to roll!

That’s what Bilbo Baggins hates!
So, carefully! carefully with the plates!

And of course they did none of these dreadful things, and everything was cleaned and put away safe as quick as lightning, while the hobbit was turning round and round in the middle of the kitchen trying to see what they were doing. Then they went back, and found Thorin with his feet on the fender smoking a pipe. He was blowing the most enormous smoke-rings, and wherever he told one to go, it went—up the chimney, or behind the clock on the mantelpiece, or under the table, or round and round the ceiling; but wherever it went it was not quick enough to escape Gandalf. Pop! he sent a smaller smoke-ring from his short clay-pipe straight through each one of Thorin’s. Then Gandalf’s smoke-ring would go green and come back to hover over the wizard’s head. He had a cloud of them about him already, and in the dim light it made him look strange and sorcerous. Bilbo stood still and watched—he loved smoke-rings—and then he blushed to think how proud he had been yesterday morning of the smoke-rings he had sent up the wind over The Hill.
“Now for some music!” said Thorin. “Bring out the instruments!”

Kili and Fili rushed for their bags and brought back little fiddles; Dori, Nori, and Ori brought out flutes from somewhere inside their coats; Bombur produced a drum from the hall; Bifur and Bofur went out too, and came back with clarinets that they had left among the walking-sticks. Dwalin and Balin said: “Excuse me, I left mine in the porch!” “Just bring mine in with you!” said Thorin. They came back with viols as big as themselves, and with Thorin's harp wrapped in a green cloth. It was a beautiful golden harp, and when Thorin struck it the music began all at once, so sudden and sweet that Bilbo forgot everything else, and was swept away into dark lands under strange moons, far over The Water and very far from his hobbit-hole under The Hill.

The dark came into the room from the little window that opened in the side of The Hill; the firelight flickered—it was April—and still they played on, while the shadow of Gandalf’s beard wagged against the wall.

The dark filled all the room, and the fire died down, and the shadows were lost, and still they played on. And suddenly first one and then another began to sing as they played, deep-throated singing of the dwarves in the deep places of their ancient homes; and this is like a fragment of their song, if it can be like their song without their music.

Far over the misty mountains cold