

The Desolation of the Dragon

“The land about them grew bleak and barren, though once, as Thorin told them, it had been green and fair. There was little grass, and before long there was neither bush nor tree, and only broken and blackened stumps to speak of ones long vanished. They were come to the Desolation of the Dragon, and they were come at the waning of the year.” (187)

“They could see in the wide valley shadowed by the Mountain’s arms the grey ruins of ancient houses, towers, and walls.

‘There lies all that is left of Dale,’ said Balin, ‘The mountain’s sides were green with woods and all the sheltered valley rich and pleasant in the days when the bells rang in that town.’ He looked both sad and grim as he said this: he had been one of Thorin’s companions on the day the Dragon came.” (187)

“I am Bard, and by my hand was the dragon slain and your treasure delivered. Is that not a matter that concerns you? Moreover I am by right descent the heir of Girion of Dale, and in your hoard is mingled much of the wealth of his halls and towns, which of old Smaug stole. Is not that a matter of which we may speak? Further in his last battle Smaug destroyed the dwellings of the men of Esgaroth, and I am yet the servant of their Master. I would speak for him and ask whether you have no thought for the sorrow and misery of his people. They aided you in your distress, and in recompense you have thus far brought ruin only, though doubtless undesigned.” (241)

[Thorin speaking] “But nothing we will give, not even a loaf’s worth, under threat of force.” (242)

“In this third appeal lies an invitation to Thorin to step forward and re-establish the Kingdom under the Mountain in its glory of old, when it was a source of blessing, prosperity, and protection to all of the surrounding peoples. Thorin has the opportunity to open the Gate of the King once more and help to bring about the renewal of the lands, just as the old songs foretold. Thorin refuses this invitation with indignation. The gate is shut.” *Exploring J.R.R. Tolkien’s The Hobbit* Corey Olsen (256-257)