

THE HOBBIT[™]

BOARD GAME

Synopsis and Game Rules

In a hole in the ground there lived a Hobbit. This Hobbit's name was Bilbo Baggins, and his hole was a pleasant, comfortable hole named Bag End, near the village of Hobbiton. Hobbits, as perhaps you already know, are small, quite jolly creatures, perhaps half the height of a human, extremely fond of food and drink, and not at all fond of adventures.

But adventure came to find Bilbo, in the form of Gandalf the Wizard, with 13 Dwarves in tow. The Dwarves, led by Thorin Oakenshield, were intent on recapturing treasure which had been stolen from them many years before, and which is now being guarded in a cave in The Lonely Mountain by a fierce dragon named Smaug.

The Dwarves planned to enter the Lonely Mountain by way of a secret door in the side of the mountain, and then to employ the services of a burglar to spirit away such treasure as can be recovered. To Bilbo, this all sounded rather suspiciously like an adventure. To the Dwarves, Bilbo didn't seem to be quite the sort of person they had in mind to help them. But Gandalf merely laughed and smiled, and soon enough the strange party were setting out, quite against Bilbo's better judgement!

The adventure began almost immediately, when Bilbo and all 13 Dwarves were captured by three trolls. Gandalf tricked the trolls into quarreling until the sun came up, turning them to stone! Next they arrived at the Elves' stronghold, Rivendell, where they met the Lord of the Elves, Elrond. After taking his advice they headed for the Misty Mountains, where they ran afoul of Goblins that drove them underground. Gandalf again came to the rescue, but Bilbo was separated and lost in the dark!

While lost in the darkness, Bilbo came across two things that would change his life forever. The first was a simple gold ring. The second was a strange, fish-eyed creature named Gollum. Bilbo and Gollum engaged in a deadly game of riddles, with Bilbo the eventual winner, and Bilbo managed to escape by wearing the ring – which makes the wearer invisible, the first hint of its greater purpose and power.

Reunited at last, Bilbo and the Dwarves set off again, but this time they were pursued by Goblins and wolf-like Wargs and only

just saved by eagles before being taken to the house of Beorn, a strange man who lived alone and attended by remarkable animals.

From thence they came to the Mirkwood forest, this time without Gandalf, and with a simple warning not to leave the path. Of course they did exactly that, and so were attacked by Giant Spiders and then captured by Wood-elves. After a daring escape, again engineered by Bilbo, the party floated down a river inside barrels towards Lake-town, the human settlement near The Lonely Mountain – where Smaug still slept atop his pile of treasure.

They then set off to The Lonely Mountain and found the secret door that Gandalf had told them about. Bilbo crept through the door and stole a great golden cup from beneath the sleeping dragon, but soon afterward Smaug awoke! The dragon was enraged by the theft of his treasure, and scoured the mountain for signs of the thieves. Discovering the Dwarves, ponies, he concluded that the men of Lake-town were responsible, but not before Bilbo spotted a weak spot on the dragon's scaly breast. So it was that when Smaug descended upon Laketown, all fire and death, Bard the Bowman was able to shoot him from the sky.

The men of Lake-town and the elves of Mirkwood then mustered their armies and marched on the Lonely Mountain, believing that they, too, were entitled to some portion of the dragon's lair. But Thorin would have none of it, desiring only the Arkenstone that was his family's special treasure. In an effort to broker peace, Bilbo snuck out of the mountain and delivered the Arkenstone to the men of Lake-town, but this only enraged Thorin further. Even Gandalf couldn't resolve the situation.

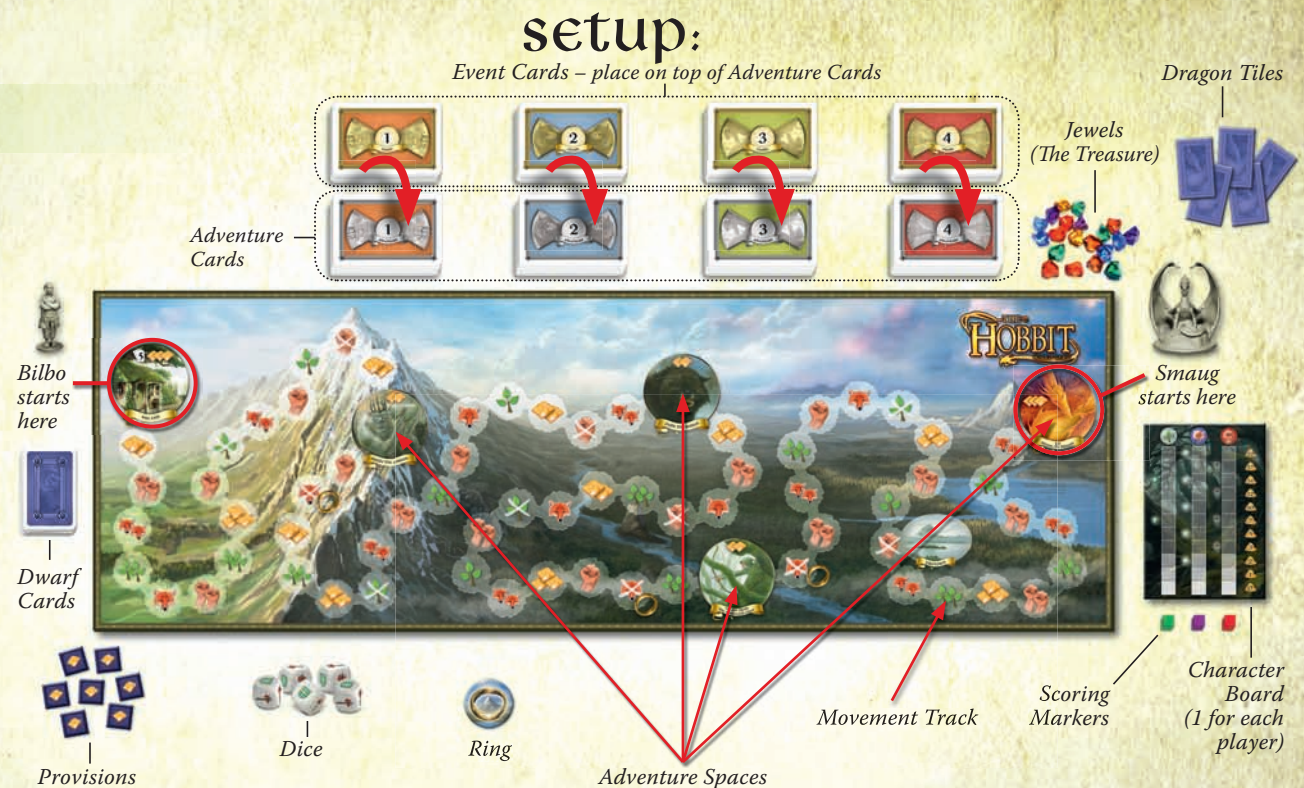
Suddenly, an army of Goblins and Wargs attacked the mountain, forcing the humans, Elves and Dwarves to band together to defend themselves. Thorin and his kin fought heroically, but all seemed lost until Beorn, in the form of a great bear, and the eagles arrived.

As Thorin lay dying from wounds suffered in the Battle of Five Armies, he finally forgave Bilbo, and he was buried with his precious Arkenstone. Bilbo received more treasure and wealth than he knew what to do with, and returned to Bag End a very rich Hobbit indeed...but his greatest treasure was the magic ring...

RULES

contents:

- 1 Game Board
- 1 Bilbo Figure
- 1 Smaug the Dragon Figure
- 38 Event Cards
- 31 Adventure Cards
- 5 Character Boards
- 15 Scoring Markers (5 green, 5 purple, 5 red)
- 60 Dwarf Cards
- 24 Dragon Tiles
- 50 Provision Tokens
- 1 Ring Token
- 5 Dice
- 60 Jewels



setup:

1. Unfold the board and place it on the table. Place the Bilbo figure on the “Bag End” space and the Smaug figure on the “Kill Smaug the Dragon” space (see diagram).
2. The Event cards and Adventure cards are numbered “1–4” on their backs. Sort the Event cards and Adventure cards by number to create eight different face-down stacks. Shuffle the eight stacks separately. Then place the face-down Event stack “1” on top of the face-down Adventure stack “1.” Repeat this process for stacks “2,” “3,” and “4.” Then position the four stacks as shown in the diagram above.
3. Each player receives a character board, puts it in front of him, and places the following:



a green scoring marker
on the Initiative track




a purple scoring marker
on the Cunning track



a red scoring marker
on the Strength track



Character board
(with markers in 'easy'
starting position)

4. For your first game, each player should position his scoring markers two spaces up from the bottom on each of his tracks. For a standard game, each player should position his scoring markers one space up from the bottom on each of his tracks. For a real challenge, each player can position his scoring markers on the bottom space of each of his tracks. (Any unused boards and markers are returned to the box.)
5. Shuffle the Dwarf cards and deal a hand of five cards to each player. Place the remaining cards next to the game board as a face-down stack.  Dwarf Card
6. Each player receives  three provisions.
7. Place the jewels in a pile near to the game board.
8. Shuffle the Dragon tiles and place them all face down near the board.
9. Place the remaining provisions, the Ring, and the dice near the board.

CREDITS:

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OBJECTIVE:

Players take on the role of Dwarves accompanying Bilbo on a long and perilous journey from Bag End in the Shire to The Lonely Mountain where Smaug the Dragon lives. The aim is to bring back the treasure stolen long ago from the Dwarves, much of which is now guarded by Smaug.

Through Event cards, Bilbo advances on his journey. Moving forward, each of the spaces on the board also represents a chance for players to enhance their characters. Event cards can also provide players with gifts and opportunities!



Movement Track

On Adventure spaces, players acquire treasure by successfully battling the adversaries in the adventures using the resources they have gained along the journey. The player with the most treasure at the end of the game is the winner!

how to play:

Play begins by revealing the top Event card on stack “1.” Event cards come in three types:

- (A) Travelling cards say “The party advances”
- (B) Ability cards are kept for later advantage
- (C) Gift cards immediately grant benefits to players

Note that some Event cards have different effects depending on the number of players: The same card might either be resolved like a Travelling card, or like a Gift card, as instructed.

(A) Travelling Cards

If the revealed Event card is a Travelling card, do the following steps in order:

1. Each player looks at his hand of Dwarf cards, secretly chooses one, then places it face down in front of him. The number on the Dwarf cards determines the order in which the players act from lowest to highest.
2. The players reveal their chosen cards simultaneously. The player who revealed the lowest-numbered Dwarf card becomes the active player.
3. The active player discards his Dwarf card by placing it face up next to the stack of Dwarf cards. He then advances Bilbo one space on the game board, reaping the gains, or suffering the losses the space indicates, namely: additional provisions, character development or character damage (the latter are indicated by an X over the icon).
4. The player with the next-lowest numbered Dwarf card then becomes the new active player. Repeat steps “3–4” until all players have acted.
5. After playing Dwarf cards, players immediately refresh their hands to 5 cards by drawing from the face-down deck of Dwarf cards.



Travelling Card



Example (see diagram):
Four players reveal Dwarf cards numbered “2,” “10,” “22,” and “35.”
The player with the number “2” has the lowest card and therefore

moves Bilbo one space on the board and receives one Cunning, advancing his scoring marker on his Cunning track by one space accordingly. Next, the player with the “10” card moves Bilbo one space, receiving two provision tokens. Next, the player with the “22” card moves Bilbo one space and receives two Initiative, and finally the player with the highest card, “35,” moves Bilbo one space and loses one Strength.

When a player advances Bilbo onto a space that depicts the Ring, the player places the Ring token in front of him and must decrease the purple Cunning marker on his Character board by one space.

When a card says “All lowest positions advance,” all players first compare the position of their green scoring markers on their Character boards, and the player with the green scoring marker in the lowest position advances his green scoring marker one space. If there is a tie, all tied green scoring markers advance one space. This process is then repeated by comparing all purple scoring markers, then all red scoring markers.

Note: The markers on the Character board cannot increase beyond the top space and they cannot fall below the bottom space.

IMPORTANT: If you are playing with just two players, reveal one extra Dwarf card from the deck during Step 2, so that the party always advances three spaces. When Bilbo advances on the path due to this third card, all the effects of the reached space are ignored.

(B) Ability Cards

If the revealed Event card is an Ability card, the players bid for it by performing the following steps in order:

1. Each player looks at his hand of Dwarf cards, secretly chooses one, then places it face down in front of him.
2. After each player has secretly chosen his Dwarf card, the players all reveal their chosen card simultaneously.

Each Ability card says whether the highest or lowest revealed Dwarf card receives the Ability card. All revealed Dwarf cards are then discarded by placing them face up next to the stack of Dwarf cards.

(C) Gift Cards

If the revealed Event card is a Gift card, simply follow the instructions on the card. Gift cards immediately grant benefits such as provisions, or increases to Initiative, Cunning, or Strength.



Ability Card



Gift Card

After the activity on the Event card has been completed, the Event card is returned to the box, unless it is an Ability card in which case it remains displayed in front of the successful bidder. Then, reveal the next Event card. Carry on until Bilbo has reached the final space of the first journey towards Adventure 1: "Battle the Goblins." Then move him onto the Adventure space. The first part of the journey is over. (With four players Bilbo will automatically go onto the Adventure space. The player who moves him there does not experience any consequences of moving.) Remove any remaining Event cards from the stack and return them to the box. After Bilbo enters an Adventure space, he won't move again until the current Adventure is complete. Now it is time to win some treasure!

Playing the First Adventure



Adventure Area

First each player receives the number of provisions indicated in the Adventure space. Then the player with the highest Initiative (i.e., the player with the green scoring marker on his Character board in highest position) reveals the first Adventure card and places it on the table in front of himself. In the case of players having equal highest Initiative, these players each reveal a Dwarf card from the deck, and the highest-numbered Dwarf card wins the tie.

Now players in turn try to win the number of jewels marked on the right hand side of an Adventure card (see red arrow in card illustration to the right).



To attempt to win the jewels the player will need at least 2 provisions, or he must pass! If he needs to pass for this reason, or if he declines the challenge on the Adventure card, the Adventure card is passed to the next player, in clockwise order.

If the player decides to attempt to overcome the challenge, the player must produce the number of shields, axes, and provisions shown on the Adventure card.

The player first rolls all 5 dice. He may then reroll up to the number of dice indicated by the dice symbols at or below the purple scoring marker on his Cunning track. Next, he totals the symbols on all the dice and adds any additional shields provided by his Initiative track and any additional axes provided by his Strength track. He may also add additional provisions by spending provision tokens, which are returned to the box.



If a player possesses the Ring, he can, after this roll, turn any one of his dice onto any side he chooses. This ability remains with the player who has the Ring for as long as he possesses it.

If necessary, the player may also add one or more of his Ability cards to improve his results. Each Ability card can only be applied once and is then returned to the box.

If the player meets or exceeds all of the requirements on the Adventure card, he wins the challenge and takes the indicated number of jewels from the treasure pile and returns the Adventure card to the box. Then the player to the left of the successful player reveals the next Adventure card.

If the player fails to achieve any of the requirements on the Adventure card, he loses the challenge and must draw a random Dragon tile and suffer the consequences. The symbols on the Dragons tiles may include:

Crossed-out Provisions: the player loses these provisions.

Crossed-out Initiative, Cunning, or Strength: the player must decrease the corresponding scoring marker on his Character board by one space.



Dragon Tile

In this example the player loses 2 provisions and Smaug advances 1 space.

Dragon's Head: Smaug advances the corresponding number of spaces on the game board towards Bilbo.

After a player loses a challenge, he passes the Adventure card to the next player, in clockwise order. The new player then decides if he wants to pass or attempt to overcome the challenge fight, and so on. If all players have either passed or failed the challenge, the Adventure card is returned to the box and the player with the highest Initiative reveals the next Adventure card. If all players pass without at least 1 player attempting to overcome an Adventure card, Smaug automatically advances one space on the board toward Laketown.

Once Smaug reaches Laketown (as he may if too many challenges are lost or passed) the game ends prematurely.

After all cards in this Adventure are played, it is time to start on the next journey by revealing the next Event card in the next stack. Continue with journeys and Adventures until the final Adventure has been completed (assuming that Smaug has not advanced to Laketown and prematurely ended the game).

At the end of the game, the player with the most jewels wins. If there is a tie, the tied player with the most provisions wins. If there is still a tie, then these players are joint winners!

GAME VARIANTS

Character Points: The players can agree to award additional jewels for their character development. The right edge of the Character boards shows these bonuses. At the end of the game, each player awards himself the indicated number of jewels that corresponds to the position of his lowest scoring marker. This is to encourage all participants on the long journey to make sure they achieved a good balance!

Defeat: The players may agree that the game is lost for everyone if Smaug reaches Laketown. This is motivation for the players to cooperate. But if the game ends successfully, it is still the player with the most treasure who wins.

Handicaps: In order to balance the game between players of unequal abilities or experience, players may start the game with their markers on their Character boards at different difficulty levels.