UNIT 8

Into the Forest

Frodo, Merry and Pippin are hobbits. They are on a long and dangerous journey. They come to the beginning of a huge, dark forest. There is no way around it. They have to go through it!

Looking ahead, they could see only tree-trunks of innumerable sizes and shapes: straight or bent, twisted, leaning, squat or slender, smooth or gnarled and branched. All the stems were green or grey with moss and slimy, shaggy growths.

Merry alone seemed fairly cheerful. 'You had better lead on and find a path,' Frodo said to him. 'Don't let us lose one another...'

They picked a way among the trees, and their ponies plodded along, carefully avoiding the many writhing and interlacing roots. There was no undergrowth. The ground was rising steadily, and as they went forward it seemed that the trees became taller, darker, and thicker. There was no sound, except an occasional drip of moisture falling through the still leaves. For the moment, there was no whispering or movement among the branches; but they all got an uncomfortable feeling that they were being watched with disapproval... The feeling steadily grew, until they found themselves looking up quickly, or glancing back over their shoulders, as if they expected a sudden blow.

There was not, as yet, any sign of a path, and the trees seemed constantly to bar their way...

Frodo began to wonder if it were possible to find a way through, and if he had been right to make the others come into this abominable wood.

The Lord of the Rings, **J R R Tolkien**