

The prophecy behind a beard

In the Lonely Mountain, also known as Erebor, there lived a dwarf girl. It was not an ordinary mountain like ours, but a mountain full of gold where many creatures called dwarves lived. Dwarves, but don't forget about the dwarves girls! In fact, they were very similar to dwarves boys, for this reason, there was a legend that dwarves girls did not exist. Certainly it was not like that, the dwarves girls existed indeed! But they had beards like dwarves boys so it was difficult to recognize them.

However in the west of the Lonely Mountain there was a dwarf girl without a beard. Her name was Barly, she had very long black hair and dark eyes. She loved the sun and light and bright colors, in fact she often dressed in bright colors. She also liked staying outdoors, especially in her gardens. Barly was a very kind and generous girl but she did not have any friends, no one wanted to be with a beardless dwarf. But anyway she had a family who loved her.

Barly's eighteen birthday arrived, after the party she could finally realize her dream — to find out why she was born without a beard. Later, the wiser dwarves told her to leave for Rivendell, where there would be a surprise waiting for her. Although Barly was confused, she decided to go and explore. So she immediately packed up everything that she would need. She thought it was just a short trip so she did not bring a lot of stuff.

The next day, Barly got up very early. It was a beautiful day and the sun was shining. She quickly had breakfast and she could not wait any longer because it was her first time to leave her home, and she was also alone! Although she never left her house, Barly was not afraid of anything, like all the dwarves. So Barly greeted all the dwarves, who already knew she was leaving and all excited, whistling, left the Lonely Mountain, for the first time in her life.

Barly, with the ancient map of Middle-earth donated by the wise dwarves, first passed along the Long Lake Esgaroth and then arrived in front of Mirkwood,

where it was situated the Elvenking's Halls. Barly took the Old Forest Road, which was the main trail. Accidentally, Barly stopped to admire the flowers and she noticed not far from her some elf guardians. She was not afraid and, remembering the words of the wise dwarves which said to be careful of the elves, she immediately hid behind the bushes. After a few minutes, when she was sure the guards had gone away, Barly came out and continued the journey. Finally after several weeks she came out from Mirkwood and, always following the map, Barly took the path to the Misty Mountains, also known as Hithaeglin. Unexpectedly, the journey to the Misty Mountains had turned out to be easier than expected, Barly took less than a month to cross them from side to side. She stopped only once on the way, luckily she went by the biggest and easiest trail, and she stopped for two days in a shed. In fact, the wise dwarves had told her that she should stop at the hut of the old dwarf Varli who would host her for a break from her journey, and so it was.

As soon as she arrived Barly was a little hesitant about what to do "What if he's not home? Or worse, if he turned bad with the weather?" She thought, but fear was not a dwarf thing so she took a long breath and knocked. After a little while the door opened and an old dwarf with a disheveled, white beard appeared, and in his deep, stern voice (which Barly did not like) he asked: «Who are you?» he paused to look at the spot where there should have been a beard «Or rather, what are you?» and the dwarf girl: «Oh, yes, I am Barly, I am a dwarf like you and I am going to Rivendell to find out why... I don't have a beard.» With a nod Varli invited her in. The little house was small but cozy, anyway better than sleeping in the open air in the middle of Autumn. Barly stayed there just a couple of days, because old Varli seemed a little strange to her: he often looked at her suspiciously and hardly ever spoke to her. This made Barly a little uncomfortable so after resting she felt ready to go again, with new supplies and even more curiosity than when she had left the Lonely Mountain.

The days were getting colder and colder, and Barly began to think she would not reach Rivendell. But one day during the first snowfall she had a glimpse of some lights, and his hope was kindled: she wanted to find out at all costs why she was born without a beard and to be accepted more in her community so she had to get to Rivendell!

It took almost two days to reach Rivendell but finally, she got there. Bearly stood in front of a majestic door and that sight sent shivers down her spine, but she told herself: "I am a dwarf, without a beard, but still a dwarf, brave and loyal." Then she plucked up courage and knocked. The door opened but there was no one behind it, then Barly went slowly into into the building «Is there anyone there?» she asked, then she waited for a minute for an answer that never seemed to come, but from somewhere came a voice: «Who are you? what are you doing here?» The voice was mighty and Barly knew in a moment that that must be the great Elrond she had heard so much about before, so she answered: «Good Morning great Elrond, my name is Bearly and I am a dwarf, specifically a dwarf girl from Erebor and I am here to know why I was born without a beard. The wise dwarves told me to come to you so I did all this journey to get here.» The voice resented: «Oh, we were waiting for you, we knew you were coming, please enter this door.» A door opened, the dwarf girl entered the room and found him there: the majestic Elrond was waiting for her. Elrond was a half-elf, son of Eärendil and Elwing, Lord of Rivendell. He was the most powerful and wise of Men and Elves to live in Middle-earth. In times not too far from those he had several fights against the Dark Lord, but that is another story...

Elrond told Bearly to sit down next to him and only at that moment she realized that in the room there was someone else, to be precise there was a hobbit, he did not look like an old hobbit. He was young, very young, he must have been about the age of Barly. Then Elrond started to talk: «Hello Barly, he is Mingo and he is here for your same reason, he is also special like you. As you can see he does

not have big and hairy feet like hobbits but he wears shoes. Please listen to me carefully, I will explain everything later but first listen:

*A beardless dwarf will meet
a hobbit with small feet,
when they both turn eighteen
the trouble will begin.
A White dragon will be born to destroy
everything in its way,
before that day the two should be away,
at the Blue Mountains they need to go
and the Cherry Tree they have to find.
In that case the dragon will not breathe,
their trouble will disappear
and they would save Middle-earth.*

This is an old prophecy that was created by elves a long time ago but that had been forgotten by now. A few days ago when Mingo arrived it came back to my mind and I knew that if all went well you would come. Now there is no more time to lose, tonight you will sleep here but tomorrow you will have to leave and you will have to go to the Blue Mountains before Mingo turns eighteen. You only have six months, when you arrive there you will have to eat a cherry from its tree so the White dragon will not be born and if you want, your troubles will be solved. Now go and rest. Tomorrow you will have to leave early.» Barly and Mingo were very confused but they were able to confront each other during dinner and until sleep struck them.

The next morning they woke up early, Elrond prepared for them many supplies and especially two ponies that would help them during their journey. After

thanking Elrond, they left for what was perhaps the greatest adventure of their lives.

After leaving Rivendell, the hobbit and the dwarf girl arrived at the troll forest. They passed from there but they were surprised because they did not see any troll in the forest. In addition, they had no problems apart from the cold weather. When they exited the forest they were very tired so they let their ponies have a break. After an hour, Mingo suddenly exclaimed: «Hey! Who is there? Leave the ponies alone!» Near their ponies there was a man who heard him speaking and turned around. He slowly approached them and he presented himself: «I am Radagast and I am here for a journey. I just passed the Weather Hills and I saw the trolls on a journey passing by. I want to advise you that it is not safe to stop here.» The Weather Hills were the easiest road to arrive at the Blue Mountains but they had to pass from the South Downs even though no one had ever been there.

It took them about a month to cross them and that made them understand why no one ever passed that way: the road certainly had fewer dangers, but there was no path through all that tall, thick grass. For this reason, Barly and Mingo had to go around the hills at least three times before they managed to cross them. Despite this, after passing the South Downs, the hobbit and the dwarf decided to go to the Shire where the hobbit lived as they were running low on reserves. Mingo was about to be eighteen so they had to hurry up, otherwise the White dragon would be born.

When they arrived at the Shire, the Hobbit's family, who were worried about him, began to celebrate and cure him. Hobbits always throw big parties for their birthday and Mingo was also very popular. There would be a lot of people invited to the birthday party which lasted three days.

Preparations began and everyone was busy cooking, wrapping presents and preparing confetti and festoons. Barly, who was also invited to the party, tried to tell Mingo that they only had a few hours to get to the destination and persuade

him to leave, but the hobbits did not listen to her and continued on. The desperate Dwarf was looking for the Hobbit but she could not find him. In the meanwhile, Mingo was with his relatives who made him stay at home so as not to worry and relax. Barly did not know what to do because she had come from the Lonely Mountain and she didn't care about that foolish party.

Barly looked for Mingo all night and when midnight struck, suddenly, there was an earthquake and a roar — the White dragon was born. The Dwarf resigned and told to herself: “It is too late, now the dragon is born. I failed my mission, I made the prophecy come true and now I can not do anything to save Middle-earth.” After the roar Barly saw the Hobbit coming upon her and out of breath he said: «I heard the roar and I took advantage of the earthquake to escape from my relatives. They even blocked me like a prisoner! I am very sorry.» Barly said: «It is now too late and the dragon is born, I feel it.» Mingo answered him: «Do not lose all hope now, after all this journey. Let's go and check, you can never be sure.» Then, they heard voices calling the Hobbit — they were the relatives who were looking for him so Mingo said whispering: «We have to get to the mountain as soon as possible. We can not wait until tomorrow, we have to go now but my relatives absolutely must not see us otherwise everything will start again. Come on, I know how to leave without being seen.» and they escaped across a cornfield.

The two friends proceeded quickly thanks to the ponies that had rested during the party. On their way they only found one ogre wandering around there, and unfortunately, he was very hungry. In fact, they could not escape because the ogre as soon as he smelled the food he came towards them. Fortunately Barly was a dwarf and on this trip she had reconfirmed her idea: “I am a dwarf, without a beard, but still a dwarf, brave and loyal.” So Barly took her dagger and stabbed the ogre as soon as he got close.

As soon as they arrived on the top of the Blue Mountains they saw a white tail swinging between the trees — this meant that the dragon was already born.

Although their mission had failed, they did not give up. At that sight Mingo exclaimed: «Oh! The Dragon is already born and now Middle-earth will be destroyed! We have done all this for nothing...» Barly then disconsolate exclaimed: «We have come this far, we cannot stop, we have to try at least!» Since the dragon was just born, the two decided to train the dragon. They thought that once they trained it, the dragon would be familiar with them, so they may gain his trust. Perhaps they could reach the Cherry Tree thanks to the dragon's trust in them.

After two weeks of training the dragon had become strong and thick. Not surprisingly, they really gained his trust. So the next and last step was the Cherry Tree. With the help of the White dragon, they managed to eat some cherries from the only snowy Cherry Tree on the Blue Mountains. In the end, after eating the cherries they set off for home.