

# **The Shaping of Middle-earth: The Quenta, the Ambarkanta, and the Annals,... Study Guide**

**The Shaping of Middle-earth: The Quenta, the Ambarkanta, and the Annals,... by J. R. R. Tolkien**

(c)2015 BookRags, Inc. All rights reserved.



# Contents

<a href="#">The Shaping of Middle-earth: The Quenta, the Ambarkanta, and the Annals,... Study Guide.....</a>	<a href="#">1</a>
<a href="#">Contents.....</a>	<a href="#">2</a>
<a href="#">Plot Summary.....</a>	<a href="#">3</a>
<a href="#">Chapter 1, Prose Fragments Following the Lost Tales.....</a>	<a href="#">4</a>
<a href="#">Chapter 2, The Earliest.....</a>	<a href="#">5</a>
<a href="#">Chapter 3, The Quenta.....</a>	<a href="#">7</a>
<a href="#">Chapter 4, The First.....</a>	<a href="#">12</a>
<a href="#">Chapter 5, The Ambarkanta.....</a>	<a href="#">13</a>
<a href="#">Chapter 6, The Earliest Annals of Valinor.....</a>	<a href="#">15</a>
<a href="#">Chapter Seven, The Earliest Annals of Beleriand.....</a>	<a href="#">17</a>
<a href="#">Characters.....</a>	<a href="#">20</a>
<a href="#">Objects/Places.....</a>	<a href="#">25</a>
<a href="#">Themes.....</a>	<a href="#">27</a>
<a href="#">Style.....</a>	<a href="#">30</a>
<a href="#">Quotes.....</a>	<a href="#">32</a>
<a href="#">Topics for Discussion.....</a>	<a href="#">34</a>



# Plot Summary

The Shaping of Middle Earth, Volume IV is the fourth in a series of twelve volumes of the History of Middle Earth. It follows two books of Lost Tales and the Lays of Beleriand. In The Shaping of Middle Earth, J. R. R. Tolkien's son Christopher analyzes his father's unpublished manuscripts.

Christopher Tolkien mostly describes the original "legendaria" or legendary material that is found in The Book of Lost Tales as it evolved to The Silmarillion, the detailed great historical narrative of the World of The Lord of the Rings, mythology, cosmology and all. The book includes a number of important manuscript edits, and many maps and other diagrams.

The Shaping of Middle-Earth contains seven texts that vary widely in length. Chapter 1 is the Prose Fragments Following the Lost Tales, which are brief bits of manuscript that cover the time of Tuor in Gondolin and the Nordoli's departure from Valinor and their coming to Middle-Earth; Christopher Tolkien speculates that it was written around 1920.

Chapter 2 is The Earliest "Silmarillion" otherwise known as the "Sketch of the Mythology." The "Sketch" is a condensed overview of Tolkien's World's mythology. It was written alongside of The Lay of the Children of Hurin though it was later revised; it is thought to have been written in 1926 and revised between 1926 and 1930.

The third text is the Quenta or Noldorinwa which is a re-worked and greatly expanded "Sketch of the Mythology." It gives a detailed history of the Ages prior to the period that the reading public is most familiar with, the Third Age in which the Hobbit and The Lord of the Rings takes place. Various earlier details are different, less specific and less coherent. The piece includes a poem known as The Horns of Ylmir and includes a translation of the Quenta into Old English; the piece is thought to have been written in 1930.

Chapter 4 is the first Map that was the basis of writing the "Silmarillion." The Map was used quite often and the text has a large number of comments on the various locations of important. It was written in 1926, though greatly revised later.

Chapter 5, The Ambarkanta, explains the shape and geography of The World alongside its associated maps and was written in the middle of the 1930s. The next text is The Earliest Annals of Valinor which is a list of dates associated with the great events that occurred on those dates. It starts at the creation of The World and ends when the Nordoli go to Middle-Earth. The Annals are also given in an Old English translation.

The final text is The Earliest Annals of Beleriand which ranges from the creation of the Sun and the Moon to the Great Battle against Morgoth, though there is a revision at the end. Further included is another Old English translation. Both of the latter pieces were written in the early 1930s.



# Chapter 1, Prose Fragments Following the Lost Tales

## Chapter 1, Prose Fragments Following the Lost Tales Summary and Analysis

Christopher Tolkien opens each chapter with an explanation of the texts printed therein. All the texts were written by J.R.R. Tolkien, author of the much beloved Lord of the Rings trilogy. The first chapter collects a series of prose fragments, such as a piece written early and discarded called Turlin and the Exiles of Gondolin. This work is tied to the start of the story of The Fall of Gondolin found in Chapter 2.

However, the work contains new information; it was to be the opening of a later incarnation of the story and this is obvious from the Mithrim name, which replaced Asgon through edits of the final text of The Fall of Gondolin. Briefly, the text opens with a conflict between factions of elves in part over the attitude they have towards the dwarves and the influence of magic in the land of "Outer Earth." However, the text here is hard to follow. Men at that time live in the North and the text speaks of a Turgon, then King of Gondolin.

The next text is part of the manuscript for Turlin and the Exiles of Gondolin and tells the tale of how Noldor came to Middle-earth, helping to outline Gilfanon's Tale; the text here is hard to make out. The last piece is a single sheet of paper which outlines a stage of evolution from The Flight of the Noldoli and the Sketch of the Mythology.



# Chapter 2, The Earliest

## Chapter 2, The Earliest Summary and Analysis

In a previous volume, Christopher Tolkien explains the text of the Silmarillion and repeats that explanation here. The "Sketch" has a unique beginning for the history of "The Silmarillion" and is a brief synopsis. Later it was revised; Christopher reprints the text as it was written originally and broken it up into short sections. The first section outlines the mythology but focuses on the "Children of Hurin."

The second section introduces the conflict between Morgoth and his Balrogs and Orcs and Orome, who discovers the Elves have awoken on Earth. He returns to Valinor to tell the Valar; they have a duty to govern the two races of earth at the time. The Eldar are invited to Valinor due to the fear of Morgoth and Orome leads them. On the march the Eldar are split into three groups, the Quendi, or Light-Elves, the Noldoli (Gnomes or Deep-elves) and the Teleri (Sea-Elves). Many died on the march. Section three explains the make-up of the Valar, particularly those of the sea and explains where the hosts of Elves split and settled.

Section Four explains that the Gods and Morgoth were in conflict. Morgoth had been imprisoned for seven ages and was finally released. Morgoth wishes to destroy the Eldar since they are favored by the Gods but is allowed to live in Valinor. He also desires the immortal Silmarils, though they cannot be touched by God, Elf or mortal without curse. Tulcas is sent to imprison Morgoth again but he escapes and acquires new power, creating twilight at midday, upsetting the Gods. Morgoth has killed the Trees and gives Ungoliant a series of jewels that she consumes. Morgoth goes to Angband and his power increases, as do the numbers of his demons and Orcs. He then imprisons the Silmarils in an iron crown but his hands are burned by them and he is never free of the pain.

Section Five explains how the Elves reacted to the news of Morgoth's exploits and the murder of the Trees. The Gnomes are cursed for enslaving some of the Teleri. In Section Six, the Gods create the Moon and the Sun from magical fruit and this scatters light across the Earth. When the Sun rises, the younger children of the earth awake in the Far East though they had no god to guide them. They later learn speech and befriend the Elves; they also spread throughout the Earth in the West and North.

In Section Seven, there are great wars between Morgoth and his followers and the Men, Ilkorins and Gnomes from Valinor. It turns out that the Elves are immortal and immune to disease. If they are slain, their souls return to the halls of Mandos where they wait a millennium to be born again, but Men can get sick and die quickly and it is not clear where their souls go; they are also never born again. After losing to Morgoth, Men and Elves are estranged; the Eldar in the world fade and Men expand.



Speeding up, in Section Eight, Feanor and his sons go north to find Morgoth. In Section Nine, Gnomes beleaguer Angband and meet Men. Section Ten shows Morgoth's power spreading again and overthrowing Men and Elves in the North. Maidros forms a league against Morgoth, which he loses. The wife of Hurin, Morwen, gives birth to Turin in Section Twelve and in Section Thirteen, Flinding leads Turin to Nargothrond, who becomes a great leader and reviews some of his other exploits. In Section Fourteen, Morgoth releases Hurin and in Section Fifteen Morgoth triumphs again against the Elves, Gnomes and Ilkorins and seeks again after Turgon. Section Sixteen covers events in the lives of Turgon's family.

In Section Seventeen, the survivors of Gondolin become seafaring. The sons of the Valar lead the Qendi to new lands. Elrond, the son of Elwing and Ylmir, is born and is saved by Maidros. He is half-elf and half-mortal and decides to stay on the Earth with men. Fionwe marches into the North for the Terrible Last Battle in Section Eighteen, where the Balrogs are all destroyed. Morgoth uses his dragons in a final attack, but they are destroyed save two; Morgoth is again imprisoned and two Silmarils are rescued. The Gods and Elves release Men. The remaining two Silmarils split to live in the sea and the earth.

The judgment of the Gods occurs in Section Nineteen. The Men inherit the Earth and those Elves who do not leave for the Lonely Isle or Valinor must accept a future of fading. The remaining dragons and Orcs will cause the earth difficulties but the Men will one day kill them all. Morgoth is sent through the Door of Night beyond the Walls of the World and he is guarded for eternity, though the lies he told Men and Elves survive and cannot be stopped by the Gods.

Some worry that Morgoth's black shadow still affects the Earth; the Gods may one day become weary after the earth ages significantly and Morgoth will come back to initiate the last battle of all. Turin's spirit will kill Morgoth, avenging the children of Hurin. The Silmarils will be brought from sea, earth and air and give birth again to the Two Trees and light shall come forth, regenerating the youth of Gods, Elves and Men and their dead will be resurrected.

The last Silmaril goes to the air and the Gods tie him to Earendel for ages. Maidros is found and restored by the Silmaril and Elwing. With Earendel, the Silmaril and Elwing watch Morgoth. When Morgoth enters the Door again, Earendel will sail until the last battle and then will descend. These are the myths of the end of days in the North regions of the Western World. Christopher Tolkien then comments that the text was composed hastily and shows in reading it. Tolkien then reviews the Sketch of the Mythology but only lists the differences between the previous work and The Earliest Silmarillion. It is composed of a number of details and lists differences in the texts.



# Chapter 3, The Quenta

## Chapter 3, The Quenta Summary and Analysis

J.R.R. Tolkien wrote this as a typescript though it has no apparent previous drafts or even notes. It was written likely in 1930. It is also a reworking and expansion of the Sketch of the Mythology. The Quenta more resembles the published Silmarillion. The Quenta or "Q" was written and finished though it was merely a compendium that was to appear as a summary of a longer work. The text contains a number of emendations; Christopher has divided the text into the same nineteen sections as The Earliest "Silmarillion" and the Sketch.

The World was created by Allfather (Iluvatar in Elvish) and the greatest spirits that existed with him entered the world to govern it. The Elves call the spirits the Valar and Men call them Gods. Some Gods were called the Eldar and while they appeared as Elves, were not. Elves and Men awoke first in the world after the Valar came. The Valar had nine chieftains: Manwe, Ruler of the Sky, Varda, the star maker, Ulmo, Lord of Waters, Osse, subject to Ulmo and master of the seas of the lands of Men and whose spouse is Uinen the Lady of the Sea. Aule was a smith and craftsman, whose wife was Yavanna, a lover of all that grew in the soil. Other Gods are named, including Mandos, Lorien, Nefantur, Olofantur, and the strongest of all the Gods was Tulkas and was the enemy of Melko.

The final God named is Melko, though the Gnomes have named him Morgoth Bauglir, the "Black God Terrible." AllFather made him powerful but he became evil and was jealous of Manwe; he came to love violence, rage and excessive cold and heat.

In Section I, the Valar saw that the world was dark and made two lamps to light it, but Morgoth fought them and the Gods left to the West and Morgoth build a fortress for himself underground and the Valar couldn't capture him. Instead they created their land Valinor and gathered the light and beautiful things. At this time, Yavanna planted two trees that governed the changing of night and day, named Silpion and Laurelin.

The Outer Lands east of Valinor had no light, however. They only had a few forests; Morgoth build strength in the North and created Balrogs and Orcs. Varda created the stars from Silpion's silver light; some of them made a sign to signal Morgoth's doom. The Elves are thought to have awoken when the stars were made; Orome found them awoken; the Valar knew that they had a duty to govern them; due to the Elves, the Gods assaulted Morgoth's fortress in the North. Tulkas overthrew Morgoth and found him and peace last for a long age. But Morgoth's fortress and demons were not totally destroyed. Morgoth was then imprisoned in Valinor.

The Elves obeyed the Gods and Orome split them into three groups, groups that were to be known as the Elves, the Gnomes and the Teleri or Sea-elves. Many were lost on a long march and never made it to Valinor or saw the Two Trees. These are called the



Dark-Elves and they had a chief named Thingol. Thingol was enchanted by the nightingales of Melian; Melian and Thingol came to govern the woodland Elves of Doriath.

In Section Three, the hosts of the Eldar find their way to the Western shores and many of the Quendi and Noldoli entered the land of the Gods, though many elves stayed behind and were tended to by various Gods. Finn, the King of the Gnomes had seven sons, including Maidros the tall, Fingolfin who would give birth to his own sons and daughters, including Turgon, and Feanor who would make the three jewels named Silmarils, whose fire blended with the light of the Two Trees.

Section Four explains how the Gods were tricked by Morgoth. He had laid in the halls of Mandos for seven aged and still had greed and hatred in his heart and hated the Elves as well. He humbled himself before Manwe and he was given a small home in the city. Morgoth behaved and aided the Elves, though the Quendi were suspicious of him. Morgoth then sowed discord and lies among the Gnomes; he also told them the truth that the Allfather was to create Men but lied that the Gods would give Men their kingdoms. Mostly Gnomes believed Morgoth, only a few men and none of the Teleri. Valinor's peace was poisoned.

Morgoth fanned the flames of hatred because he desired the Silmarils. He then sowed discord among the sons of Finn. Feanor, maker of the Silmarils, was banished from the Gnomish city of Tun. Finn, his father, and many other Gnomes went with him. The Gods then sent Tulkas to imprison Morgoth again but Morgoth escaped and went to Arvalin where Gloomweaver dwelt. They plotted together and swept into Valinor. Morgoth stabbed the trees and Gloomweaver sucked their juices and swelled to a monstrous form. Dismay fell on all in Valmar and the Trees died. Morgoth, however, was protected by Gloomweaver's darkness. Then Morgoth killed Finn and stole the Silmarils.

Little is known about Morgoth's doings since that day, though it is known that as payment for her help, Morgoth gave Gloomweaver the jewels he plundered and she consumed them and she grew even more; but Morgoth withheld the Silmarils from here and in response, Gloomweaver enmeshed him. The Orcs and Balrogs aided him and drove her away to the deep South. Morgoth returned to Angband and the hosts of the Orcs and Balrogs expanded. He set the three Silmarils in his crown.

In Section V, the Gods mourn the death of the Trees and Feanor becomes king of the Gnomes; he was enraged at the rape of the Silmarils and encouraged the Gnomes to disobey the Gods for failing to protect them. They would then seek war with Morgoth; he and his sons swore an unbreakable oath to pursue with hatred anyone who held the Silmarils against their will. Other of Finn's sons did not join him, neither would the Teleri (who never listened to Morgoth). Feanor and some of his brothers' armies marched to the North and stole the ships of the Teleri in battle to fly up the coast to Morgoth. When they had gone some way, Mandos prophesied that they must return to seek pardon; they had also spilled the blood of kindred and would therefore suffer from treachery among their own kind. Finrod led some Gnomes back to Valinor and sought pardon but others did not.





Section VI: when the Gods heard that the Gnomes left, they were awakened; Yavanna could not heal three trees though Silpion had a last bloom and Laurelin a golden fruit, which became the Sun and Moon. But the Sun and Moon cannot compare to the light of the Silmarils and the Gods and Elves hope for the Trees to be returned. Ulmo foretold that only with the aid of Men would this come to pass. When the Sun first rose, the Men awoke; no God guided them or invited them to Valinor. The Dark-Elves met and aided them.

In Section VII, the great wars of the Northern powers begin, fights between Gnomes and Men against Morgoth. The Elves were immortal but Men were not. When Elves were killed, their souls returned to Mandos but it was not clear where the souls of Men went. Perhaps the Allfather himself governed their fate. In later days, Morgoth's victories would estrange Elves and Men; the Elves would fade in the moonlight and Men rule the day.

In Section Eight, Men and Elves are still allied and various battles between Elves and Men and the forces of Morgoth are told, as are the wars of the Gnomes. At this time, Manwe created the race of Eagles. The feud between the sons of Finwë was ended but the Silmaril oath remained.

In Section Nine more the new settlements of the Gnomes are explained. There the Gnomes and Men flourished and the Gnomes, Elves and Men got on well together. But then the ruin of the Gnomes came. Morgoth had prepared his forces and attacked the Gnomes of Finrod's sons. The Gnomes, Men and Elves were scattered. The scattering of the Men, Gnomes and Elves are explained. Morgoth and Fingolfin fight; Fingolfin was killed though not before he wounded Morgoth seven times. Thorndor, king of the Eagles, rescued Fingolfin's body and scratched Morgoth's face.

In Section Ten many more skirmishes and wars between the Gnomes, Elves and Men against Morgoth are explained, as are the exploits of their leaders. Section Eleven explains the attempt by Maedros, son of Feanor, to fight Morgoth. The Battle of Unnumbered Tears began and its details are many; Morgoth triumphed and the Gnomish peoples were scattered. Here the tale of Hurin begins, of his imprisonment. In Section Twelve, the exploits of Turin are outlined and in Section Thirteen his interactions with Flinding and his growing power. Conflicts between Men, Elves and Gnomes are also discussed. Turin dies.

In Section Fourteen, Hurin is released. The curse on the Gnomes continues to play out. Morgoth's dragons took over some Gnomish treasure and the Gnomes some of whom are the Dwarves came to lust for the Silmaril which had earlier. Dior, a child of Men, Elves, Gods and Gnomes, returned to Doriath and had possession of the Silmaril. Dior's daughter Elwing escapes from Gnomish land with the Silmaril, which Beren had captured from Morgoth's crown to wed Thingol's daughter Luthien.

In Section Fifteen the story of Gondolin is told, which begins with the people of Turgon escaping battle with the aid of Hurin. Two versions of the tale are laid out. In Section Sixteen, more of the tale of Gondolin is explained, with Tuor son of Huor, brother of



Hurin, betrays his people to Morgoth. Morgoth wreaked havoc on the oath of the Gnomes to recapture the Silmarils and cared not for the one he lost because by breaking the oath he thought he would drive the Gnomes from the World and cause them to fade like the Elves. Another version of Section Sixteen is also listed.

Section Seventeen has two versions as well. Ulmo in Valinor spoke to the Valar and the Elves who lived there; he asked them to forgive the ruined Gnomes and rescue the world from Morgoth and to win back the Silmarils where the light of the Two Trees still shone. The sons of the Valar prepared for battle; Elwing possessed her own Silmaril and would not give it up, which led to the last and cruelest killed of Elf by Elf. Before the sons of Feanor could get the Silmaril, Elwing cast it (the Nauglafring) into the sea where it would not return until the end. Maidros pitied her child Elrond and raised him.

Section Eighteen's first version explains the battle between Fionwe's hosts and Morgoth's forces in the North which is called the Last Battle or the Battle Terrible. All of Morgoth's forces were amassed, but all the Balrogs were killed as did countless numbers of Orcs. Morgoth and his dragons fought but the sons of the Valar killed them all but two, who escaped. Morgoth was thrown down and bound with the chain Angainor which Tulkas chained him with before. The Silmarils were taken by Fionwe and Morgoth's crown was made into a collar for his neck. Morgoth's pits were uncovered and would never be rebuilt.

Fionwe marched through the lands and summoned the last Gnomes and Dark-Elves who had never seen Valinor, as with a number of other Elves. Only Elrond, the Half-Elf was left. He was bound by mortal blood to the younger race. From Elrond the blood of the older race and the divine seed of Valinor came to mortals. Maidros would not obey the call, still wanting to fulfil the oath and wanted to give battle with Fionwe to achieve them. Fionwe said that he had the right of Feanor who had made them. Maidros and his brother Maglor must first submit to divine judgment before he would yield the Silmarils. Maidros and Maglor then tried to steal the Silmarils but the Valar stopped them. Maidros was taken prisoner and Maglor escaped. He had a Silmaril but it burned him and so he cast it into the bosom of the earth.

Only a few Gnomes and Dark-Elves stayed behind and most returned to Valinor; those who returned sought pardon and received it. The Teleri forgave the Gnomes and the curse ended.

In Section Nineteen the Gods judged Fionwe and the sons of the Valar. The Outer Lands were given to Men; the Elves were given the gateways to Valinor in the West and if those chose to stay outside they would fade and fail. Orcs and Dragons remained but fate provided that they would die at the hands of Men. Morgoth was sent through the Door of Timeless Night into the Void; a guard is set forever on the Door. Earendel watches him. Not all the lies of Morgoth have died and some lurk in the hearts of Elves and Men. Morgoth's shadow is said to still inhabit the land. Earendel, with his wife Elwing and the Silmaril on his brow, will sail the skies to watch Morgoth until the Last Battle; when the world grows tired, Morgoth will return and destroy the Sun and the Moon. The last battle will occur in Valinor and Tulkas shall fight Melko with Fionwe and



Turin, son of Hurin. Turin's black sword will kill Morgoth forever and his children and the Men will be killed.

The Simrails will be found and Feanor will give those Three to Yavanna. She will break them and rekindle the Two Trees and the Mountains of Valinor will be flattened and the light will go out into the world. The Gods would become young, the Elves awaken and their dead resurrect and the Allfather's purpose for them will end. The Prophecy does not speak of Men, except for Turin who is among the Gods. This ends the tale of the North Regions of the West part of the World.

Christopher Tolkien then lists a great deal of commentary on the textual edits and editions of the manuscripts, section by section. Some translations of fragments of the text into Old English are included as are some Old English equivalent names of the Elves. The Fall on Gondolin is told in verse form.

# Chapter 4, The First

## Chapter 4, The First Summary and Analysis

This map was placed on an exam paper from the University of Leeds; some names of places seem not to be in texts prior to the Quenta. This was Tolkien's working map for several years. Two other sheets are included that show an Eastern or Western part along with it and they are annotated. The main map has Northern and Southern halves. Christopher Tolkien comments on every item in every map. This guide will only list a small number of entries of import.

The Northern map is where Angband is located during the period of Hurin's children and the Battle of Unnumbered Tears is placed here as well. Gondolin is listed, as is the Sirion river. On the Southern Half of the Map, one can find Doriah, the area where Luthien was caught by Celegorm and Nargothrond.

The Westward extension contains the Orc-Mountains where Morgoth reached the shores after the Battle of Unnumbered tears. Ylmir's Way is placed as well. Ylmir is probably Gnomish for Ulmo. The Eastward Extension contains an additional reference to the Sons of Feanor but also includes a number of relatively unimportant areas.



# Chapter 5, The Ambarkanta

## Chapter 5, The Ambarkanta Summary and Analysis

The Ambarkanta is very short and is called "The Shape of the World." The Ambarkanta follows the Quenta maybe by several years. The name Utumna appeared and "Middle-earth" does not. The text has six pages and few edits. Christopher Tolkien presents the final edits. It also has three diagrams of the World and two maps.

The Walls of the World or Ilurambar surround the world and cannot be penetrated or imagined by the Children of Earth. They cannot be seen or passed but by the Door of Night. Inside, the Earth is a globe and is surrounded by Vaiya, the Enfolding Ocean. Below the Earth in Vaiya we can find Ulmo and above the Earth is Air, called Vista. The Ulmo regions sometimes hide the stars and the Moon often hides there, but not the Sun.

The air only lies on Middle-Earth and the Inner Seas and is bounded by the Mountains of Valinor in the Seas. Clouds are rarely seen in Valinor. In the North and South there is cold and darkness and Middle-Earth extends to the Walls of the World. The Ilmen is a kind of air that lies above Vista and no one can escape from Vista except Manwe's servants and those he permits. One can move from Vista to the Earth and from Ilmen one can move to Valinor.

Days differ in Valinor and Middle-Earth. The most light comes in the Evening and it sinks into Vaiya but then fades and takes light away from Valinor and the Gods then mourn Laurelin. The moon spends little time in Valinor. Valinor extends from the feet of the Mountains to the Walls of the World and the Door of Timeless Night is found there as well. The World is found within Kuma or the Void; it is Night with no form or time. Only the Valar can pass Vaiya to the Door; they made the Door to imprison Melko.

Middle-Earth is in the middle of the world and has land and water. The surface is the center of the world. It is highest in the middle. The Valar first came to Middle-earth at the center, though Melko came to the North. The Gods placed lamps on this area but the lamps fell because they were made on pillars of ice that Morgoth/Melko had made. The Gods then retreated and made Valinor. They then bent Middle-Earth to protect themselves. Beyond there is the East of which little is known but it is called the Land of the Sun. Mountain ranges extend in the Northland and the Southland.

The first Battle of the Gods, when Melko was changed, broke the symmetry of ancient Earth. It was broken a second time in the second battle. Though the most important change occurred when the First Design was annihilated and the Earth was made round and separated from Valinor. This occurs when the Numenoreas assaulted the land of the Gods. After that time, the world forgot what happened before, along with the names and memories of the old geography.



Following the text, Christopher Tolkien leaves a number of notes and explains the various words of the areas and geographical zones described in the manuscript. Following this, Christopher Tolkien makes an extended commentary on this "elegant" universe which is a move forward, in his view, from the cosmology of the Lost Tales. Diagrams are then outlined. He focuses on which aspects of the cosmology changed, which were added and were subtracted over the course of Tolkien's work. Endor, in the Lord of the Rings, first appears in the Ambarkanta.



# Chapter 6, The Earliest Annals of Valinor

## Chapter 6, The Earliest Annals of Valinor Summary and Analysis

These are the "Earliest" annals because a later version followed in the late thirties and a third, "The Annals of Aman," was associated with *The Lord of the Rings* and was completed in 1951-52. The earliest Annals of Valinor is a short manuscript only nine pages long with a great deal of edits. The text in this chapter comes from the original writing of the Annals with few changes. These Annals should be associated with the Quenta though they come later. In short, the Annals are records of what occurred in each year of Tolkien's universe, starting with Year 0, when the world was created.

In Year 0, Illuvatar/Allfather created the Earth and the Valar, of which there were nine, went to the World. Melko became evil and so Morgoth. Many lesser spirits, their children, came with them; they are the Valarindi. Before the Sun and the Moon the Valar measured time by ages; a Valian age is 100 of Valar years which are ten years now.

In the year 500, Morgoth destroyed the Lamps that lit the World. In the year 1000, after Valinor was built, the Valar created the Two Trees that gave light to Valinor. Morgoth built his fortress in the North in Middle-Earth and broke the Earth.

In the year 2000, "Noontide of the Blessed Realm," Varda made the stars and placed them. Some of the Valarindi went to Middle-earth, including Melian. Varda's sickle in the heavens was a threat to Morgoth and the Elves awoke in the middle of the World. Orome found them and made friends with them and marched them West and North. Morgoth was also made captive and imprisoned within Mandos where he was confined for nine ages (900 Valian years). The lands were rent in that time. The Quenti and Noldoli reached Valinor and built Tun. The Teleri stayed on the shores of Beleriand and never left. This period lasted until 2100 Valian Years.

Between 2100 and 2200, the Teleri stayed on the Great Sea; in 2200 they went to Valinor and created Swan-haven. In 2500, the Noldoli started to create gems and Feanor the smith, the son of Finwe, chief of the Noldoili, created the three Silmarils; they had their own light, possessing the Two Trees' radiance. In 2900, Morgoth sought pardon and Mawne released him despite Tulkas and Aule's wishes. He then befriended the Elves and lived in Valinor but he then lied and produced corruption, particularly within the Noldoili because of their desire to learn; he wanted the Silmarils.

In two more ages, Valinor was in bliss but a shadow of foreboding came; Morgoth was causing problems between Finwe's sons—Feanor, Fingolfin and Finrod. The Noldoli also started to mistrust the Valar. In 2950, Feanor and his household were deposed from leading the Noldoili; Morgoth stole their treasure and the Gods pursued him but he hid in Arvalin.



In 2990-1, Morgoth and Ungoliante/Gloomweaver, left Arvalin and entered Valinor, killing the Trees. Then the dwelling of Feanor was sacked and Morgoth stole the Silmarils. Morgoth killed Finwe and many Elves, bringing defilement to Valinor. The Valar then hunted him but he escaped and started to breed Orcs and Balrogs. In 2991, Valinor was in mourning and darkness. Feanor returned the Tun to govern the Noldoli and filled them with the lies of Morgoth without realized it. Most of the Noldoli followed him out of Valinor to keep the coming Men from dispossessing them. Feanor and his sons also swore the oath to slay or follow anyone who held a Silmaril.

In 2992, the march began, though the Gods forbade it. Feanor stole the Teleri's ships which started the battle of Alqalonde. Ships in hand, the Noldoli sailed. In 2993 they ran into Mandos and he cursed Feanor's house and to a lesser extent those who followed him. They would suffer unless they sought the Valar's pardon. Their oath would turn them against themselves; they would also fade before Men; the Valar would also prevent them from returning the Valinor. Feanor and Fingolfin's people stayed out of Valinor but Finrod and his people returned.

In 2994, the Noldoli went North and conflict broke out between Feanor and Fingolfin. Feanor sailed east. In 2995, Feanor went to Mirthim. In 2996, they fought Morgoth's army and won, driving back the Orcs. This was the First Battle of Beleriand; but Feanor died during the battle by the Balrog Lord.

In 2997, Maidros, Feanor's oldest son, was trapped by Morgoth who offered to help him. Madros was held hostage by Morgoth and would only release him if the Noldoli would go back to Valinor or at least away from Beleriand. The Noldoli did not trust him; thus in 2998 Morgoth hung Maidros on the mountain Thangorodrim. Fingolfin and Finrod's sons crossed back to Valinor and hated Feanor. 30,000 years have passed, 3000 Valian Years. The first Thousand were before the trees, Two Thousand minus nine were the Years of the Trees and Silmarils and the Nine were Years of Darkness.

At the end of this time, the Gods made the Sun and Moon and set them over the World, bringing light. Men awoke in the East at the first Dawn. With the first Moonrise, Fingolfin went north and marched through Morgoth's land; the Orcs fled the light and hid. The Elves smote the gates of Angband and went to Mithrim, finding Feanor's house. Feanor's men camped on the southern shores and the Years of the Sun followed this. Then measured time came into the World. Growth and change and aging came much faster than before, even in Valinor.

Christopher Tolkien then lists a number of additions and comments on the Annals. Pengolod, a supposed Elf who was born in Valinor is thought to have written the Annals. In an appendix, the book lists the Old English versions of the Annals of Valinor, supposedly created by AElfwine/Eriol. Old English names are listed, as are Dates in Version I. Finally notes are given for future versions. Then another beginning of the Annals is listed but is incomplete. Christopher Tolkien analyzes it.





# Chapter Seven, The Earliest Annals of Beleriand

## Chapter Seven, The Earliest Annals of Beleriand Summary and Analysis

These Annals are the "earliest" in the same sense as the previous chapter; the last version is called the Grey Annals. There are two versions, AB I and AB II. AB I covers the entire First Age and AB II is very brief. Christopher Tolkien gives both texts. AB I is a good manuscript though it was written quickly. The Annals are parallel with the Quenta though major new developments are found here. The manuscript was heavily amended, mostly concerning dating. Fingolfin's march to Angband is not mentioned here.

In Year 1, the Sun and Moon appear. Fingolfin leads the second house of the Gnomes into the Hither Lands and the son of Finrod, Felagund, follows with the third house. They come to Mithrim and feud with the sons of Feanor. Morgoth retreats under the light and sends black clouds forth. In Year 2, Fingon son of Fingolfin ends the feud by rescuing Maidros. Between 1 and 100, the Gnomes settle Beleriand and Sirion save Doriath. In 20, feasts are held for the uniting of the Elves of Valinor and the Dark-elves. Peace begins.

In 50, Morgoth grows in power and earthquakes start in the North along with Orc-raids. Turgon, Fingolfin's son, is friends with Felagund, Finrod's son. The other sons of Finrod are friends with Feanor's sons Celegorm and Curufin. Turgon and Felagund are troubled by dreams and Turgon finds Gondolin.

In 51, the Gnomes drive the Orcs back and lay siege to Angband and the North has peace. Fingolfin becomes overlord of the Dark-elves. Other brothers gather power. In 70, Beor is born and in 88 and 90 Haleth and Hador are born. In 100, Felagund finds Beor the mortal and his Men; Beor then becomes Felagund's vassal. His son Bregolas is born. In 102, his son Bahrahir is born. In 120, Haleth goes to Beleriand, along with Hador and many Men. The sons of Finn's sons give rise to their own sons up until 120.

In 122, the Men and Gnomes enclose Morgoth; Morgoth recruits Dragons. The Men grow and multiply and are subject to the Elf-lords and learn Gnomish crafts. Beor's grandchildren are born in 124 and 128 and Barahir son is born in 132. More children of import are born up until 150 when Rian, mother of Tuor is born. Beor dies.

In 155, Morgoth attacks Beleriand. The Battle of Sudden Fire begins and Glomund, the Father of Dragons, appears. Felagund and Orodreth are saved by Barahir. Celegorm and Curufin fled. Turgon in Gondolin receive messages from Ulmo asking for Men's help. He starts to build ships and some sail for Valinor though none returns. Fingolfin sees the Gnomes ruined and challenges Morgoth to single combat and is killed.



In 157, Morgoth takes over more land and many have to retreat. In 158, Haleth begins life in the woods. Gorlim betrays Barahir in 160 and his men are killed. In 162, Morgoth renews his assaults. Hurin comes to fight and rules the Hador house, serving Fingon. In 163, Swarthy Men come to East Beleriand. They have many men and like the Mountain Dwarves. It is not known where the Dwarves came from, but they are not Elf-kin, from mortals or Morgoth. Maidros allies with Men. Between 163 and 154, King Felagund dies. Beren and Luthien go to Angband and find a Silmaril.

In 165, Turin son of Hurin is born and between 165 and 170, Maidros unites men to fight against Morgoth. He assembles many Men, Feanor's Gnomes and many Dark-elves. Turgon prepares in secret for war. In 167, Dior is born to Beren and Luthien; Haleth, last of the Fathers of Men, dies in 168. The Orcs are driven out of Beleriand. 172 is the year of sorrow; Maidros plans to assault Angband with Fingon. This is the Battle of Unnumbered Tears, the third battle between the Gnomes and Morgoth. Despite Turgon's help, they lose horribly after much fighting. Fingon died. Hurin has a great stand but Morgoth captures him. His son Turin is three years old. Orcs enter Belriand to ravage. Huor's son Tuor is born and the Dark-elves care for him.

In 173, Morgoth takes all Beleriand, but Doriath stands. 181, Morgoth grows in power and Turin starts off to war, slaying Orgof in 184 and becoming outlaw for three years. Turin is captured in 189 and Beleg rescues him; Turin kills Beleg by accident. Turin travels in Nargothrond between 190 and 195 and then Turin leads Gnomes to victory. The Orcs are driven out of many lands.

In 195, Glomund and Orcs defeat the Gnomes in Erydlomin. Glomund spellbinds Turin. Tuor is led out of Hithlum by Ulmo. Tuor meets Bronweg in 196 and Ulmo appears to him, guiding them to Gondolin. Turin finds Neinor and they wed in 198. Turin kills Glomund in 199, along with Brandir. Turin dies as well. This is the worst of Morgoth's evil; Hurin is released from Angband. Tuor marries Turgon's daughter.

Earendel and Elwing are born in 200. Hurin gathers men and finds treasure. In 201 the Dwarves make Nauglafring which the Silmaril is hung on. Elves and Dwarves find enmity between each other and the Dwarves leave, but in 202 fight the Elves in Doriath. Thingol is killed. Luthien and Beren die and Mandos is doomed. Melian returns to Validor.

In 203 the necklace goes to Dior and in 205 the sons of Feanor demand the jewel. Dior fights them in 206 and is killed, but the sons of Feanor are as well. Elwing is saved and gets the necklace. Meglin betrays Gondolin to Morgoth and Morgoth sends dragons there in 207. The Orcs attack and kill the king and most of his people. Tuor kills Meglin and escapes with Earendel. Thorndor saves the last of Gondolin and the Elves are ruined; they have no realm.

In 208, the wanderers of Gondolin join Elwing and the Silmaril blesses them; they grow, build ships and many gather with them. Maidros gives up his oath in 210. In 224, Ulmo starts communicating with Tuor again; he leaves and is not heard from again. Earendel



and Elwing wed. Earendel seeks Vilnor and Tuor but does not find them. Elrond Half-elfin, son of Earendel is born. The Sirion people refuse to give up the Silmaril.

In 229 Sirion is besieged by Damrod and Direl. Maidros and Maglor help. Elronad is taken to grow with Maglor and Elwing throws herself and the Silmaril into the sea, but Ulmo sends a bird to rescue her. Earendel binds the Silmaril on his brow and leaves with Elwing for Valinor in 233. Earendel comes to Valinor in 233 and speaks to the Gods on behalf of Elves and Men.

In 240, Maglor, Maidros and Elrond hide from Morgoth who rules Beleriand and the North and moves East and South. Between 233 and 243, the sons of the Gods, led by Fionwe son of Manwe, prepare for war. The Light-elves prepare but the Teleri do not aid. However, they build ships. In 247, Fionwe's army reaches the Hither Lands and fight the Battle of Eldorest. War comes to Beleriand and Fionwe summons all Elves, Dwarves, Men, beasts and birds but many did not obey.

In 250, Fionwe fights the last battle of the ancient North, the Terrible Battle. Morgoth comes forward with his hosts but are driven back; the Balrogs are entirely destroyed and Morgoth flees to Angband. He then sends all winged Dragons and Fionwe is driven back, but Earendel comes from the sky and overthrows Ancalagon the Black Dragon; his fall breaks Thangorodrim.

The sons of the Gods wrestle with Morgoth in his dungeons. Earthquakes spread throughout the World. Beleriand is broken and changed and many die but Morgoth is imprisoned. Fionwe leaves for Valinor with the Light-Elves and many Gnomes and other Elves but Elrond stays and rules the world. Maidros and Maglor die in a last effort to take the Silmarils that Fionwe took from Morgoth's crown. The First Age of the World ends here and Beleriand no longer exists.

Christopher Tolkien ends the chapter with a large number of notes concerning revisions. He then comments on the opening section and the Annals in order. He also lists a family tree. Following this, Christopher Tolkien reproduces AB II, based on AB I. It is a new work from 51 forward but the text is much shortened. Then Tolkien produces an extended commentary on AB II. Finally there is an Old English version of the Annals of Beleriand made by Eriol. This section ends with several notes. An extended index follows.



# Characters

## J. R. R. Tolkien

John Ronald Reuel Tolkien (1892-1973) was one of the most famous writers of the 20th century for his fantasy novels—the Hobbit, The Lord of the Rings, and The Silmarillion. He was an English poet, well-known philologist and Professor of Anglo-Saxon and the English Language and Literature at Oxford between 1925 and 1959. He is widely believed to have caused the resurgence in fantasy literature in the second half of the 20th century.

Tolkien grew up with an interest in nature, fantasy and languages and read widely. He also started to write poetry, a practice that would continue throughout his life. When he returned from fighting in World War II, he started to write the Book of Lost Tales, some of the fragments of which are contained in The Shaping of Middle Earth.

Tolkien's first job after World War I was with the Oxford English Dictionary where he studied the history and origin of words starting with W and started to teach at the University of Leeds in 1920 and was made professor there in 1925, writing a number of pieces. In 1925 he became Professor of Anglo-Saxon at Oxford with a fellowship at Pembroke. While there, he wrote The Hobbit and the first two novels of the Lord of the Rings trilogy. Many of the pieces of the Shaping of Middle Earth were written at this time, with the rest following in the mid-1930s.

The Shaping of Middle Earth comprises many of the ideas of Tolkien's early adulthood and middle-age which shaped the production of the Silmarillion and the setting and background for the Hobbit and the Lord of the Rings.

## Christopher Tolkien

Christopher Tolkien is J.R.R. Tolkien's youngest son and is well-known as the editor of almost all of his father's work published after his death. He also drew the maps for the original Lord of the Rings. Born in Leeds when his father was a professor at the University of Leeds, Christopher grew up to read English at Oxford. He learned to interpret his father's work and reconcile contradictions at an early age and taught the English language, following his father at Oxford, from 1964 to 1975. At the time of the production of this study guide (2010), Tolkien still lives.

When J. R. R. Tolkien died, the Silmarillion was still not finished. Thus, Christopher took up the cause of organizing the vast quantity of his father's notes, many composed on small scraps of paper fifty years before. Much was handwritten, not typed and names were changed, making connections hard to draw. Only someone who knew Tolkien personally, as his son did, could have embarked on the challenge.



There were many editorial decisions that the younger Tolkien had to make; all of the decisions that relate to the texts of that volume are recorded in *The Shaping of Middle Earth*. Christopher, who clearly aims to honor his father and his father's intentions, extensively defends his choices and lays out an extended number of amendments and revisions.

## **Allfather/Iluvatar**

Later "Eru-Iluvatar," this is the supreme being of J.R.R. Tolkien's universe. Iluvatar created the world and delegated its governance primarily to the Valar, or the lesser beings created before *The World*. The Elves and Men are his elder and younger children respectively.

## **The Nine Valar/Gods**

The Valar are angelic powers that were created by Iluvatar and who chose to go into the physical world. Nine came into the world: Manwe, Varda, Ulmo, Yavanna, Aule, Mandos, Nienna, Orome and the ninth, which is a combination of Lorien and Mandos.

## **Melko/Melkor/Morgoth**

The first spiritual being created by Iluvatar but not one of the nine Valar to enter the spiritual world for good reasons. He was to be Manwe's spiritual brother. He sowed evil among the Valar, the World and the Valarindi (or lesser Valar spirits), along with the Elves. He is the "villain" or dark force throughout all the texts in *The Shaping of Middle Earth*. Sauron, the villain of *The Lord of the Rings*, was his lieutenant who took over after the Gods imprisoned him outside the Walls of the World after the second age.

## **Gloomweaver/Ungoliante**

A massive spider and early ally of Morgoth, the two plan an assault on Valinor and kill the Two Trees, Laurelin and Silpion, who light *The World*. Gloomweaver sucks the sap of the Trees, becoming massive, and consumes jewels stolen from Valinor, though Morgoth denies her the three Silmarils.

## **Ulmo**

The Valar that is Lord of the Seas and aided Turgon to build Gondolin and Finrod to build Nargothrond, both of which helped to defeated Morgoth. Ulmo was the Valar most directly involved in the early Elven sagas.



## The Quendi

All of the Elvish people who awoke in Middle-Earth. They were all marched to Valinor, though some refused to go in (the Dark-Elves) and others entered (the Light-Elves).

## The Teleri

The final of the original three groups of Elves; they stayed behind on the seas and became great ship and crafts makers. Feanor of the Noldoli stole their ships in the first battle between children of Iluvatar and took them North.

## Gnomes/the Noldoli

Later the "Noldor," the Noldoli were the second clan of Elves; Finwe became their King and it was this line of Elves that was cursed and are the center of major events and conflict in the Second Age. They were also corrupted by Morgoth, who was imprisoned in Valinor while they were still there. Feanor, son of Finwe, created the Silmarils. The Noldoli were exiled to Middle-Earth.

## Men

The younger children of Iluvatar who awoke only after the Sun and Moon were created. They were mortal, unlike the Elves, who were immortal and whose souls would always be bound to the world. When Men die, their souls leave the World into the hands of Iluvatar directly.

## Dwarves

The stout, mountain-dwelling and weapon-forging race created by Aule and only later adopted by Iluvatar.

## Turgon

The Elven king of the Noldor and Fingolfin's second son (who in turn was Finwe's son); he ruled Gondolin and with Ulmo's help kept it secret from Morgoth for some time.

## Turin

The tragic hero of The Children of Hurin, a Man from Middle-Earth's First Age who was cursed by Morgoth. He was the son of Hurin of the House of Beor, the first of the Fathers of Men.



## **Tuor**

The grandfather of Elrond and one of the greatest ancestors of the Men from Numenor. He was the hero of Men's Third House in the First Age and the cousin of Turin and son of Huor.

## **Feanor**

The oldest son of Finwe, king of all the Noldoli. He was the older half-brother of Fingolfin and Finarfin. He had seven sons all of whom were important in the First Age. However, he is one of the most important figures in the history of Middle-Earth because he created the Silmarils and when Morgoth stole them he and his sons swore an unbreakable oath to do anything possible to get them back. This led to their house being cursed.

## **Maidros**

Feanor's first son and leader of the war against Morgoth though he brought ruin on himself and his brothers.

## **Fingolfin and Fingon**

Half-brothers of Feanor and sons of Finwe, they lead major clans of Elves and often have tension with Feanor and his clan.

## **Finwe**

Father of Feanor, Fingolfin and Fingon, Finwe was king of all the Noldoli.

## **Balrogs**

Maiar or Valarindi, lesser beings of the same level of being as Sauron and Gandalf, Morgoth corrupted them and used them to fight the Valar and their hosts.

## **Orcs**

The creation of Morgoth, used primarily as his dark forces.

## **Elrond Half-Elfin**

The ruler of Rivendell and one of the only old rulers who stayed in Middle-Earth into its Third Age. He was the child of Earendil and Elwing and was over six thousand years old at the time of the Lord of the Rings. Elrond is descended from Valarindi.





# Objects/Places

## The World

The creation of Illuvatar and the area the Valar inhabited. Middle-Earth is contained here.

## Valinor

The land of the Valar; only immortals can live there, save a handful of mortals. The Valarindi and some Eldar live there. The Two Trees were planted here and were destroyed by Morgoth and Gloomweaver. It was created when Morgoth destroyed the original home of the Valar. It surrounds Middle-Earth.

## Middle-Earth

The setting of most of J.R.R. Tolkien's stories, created by Morgoth when he split it from Aman, the land of the elves called the Eldar. Many the details of the shape of Middle-Earth, where it was a continent on a sphere, a flat area, and its relation to Valinor and the universe, generally vary somewhat over J.R.R. Tolkien's development of them.

## Walls of the World

The invisible boundary of The World that can only be crossed by the Valar and outside of which Morgoth eventually comes to be imprisoned.

## The Two Trees, Laurelin and Silpion

The trees created by Yavanna which lit Valinor and were destroyed by Morgoth and Gloomweaver. Their remaining light was placed in the Silmarils by Feanor.

## The Silmarils

Three gems created by Feanor which held the last remaining light of the Two Trees and that are obsessively sought by Morgoth and eventually used by him in his iron crown. The Silmarils come to different fates, changing hands and moving across The World at various ages. Eventually they will come to be used by the Valar to rekindle the Two Trees.



## **Gondolin**

Founded by Turgon with the aid of Ulmo, Gondolin is a hidden city of Elves.

## **Beleriand**

An area of Middle-Earth in the First Age whose history is told in The Silmarillion. It was broken in the War of Wrath between Morgoth and the Valar.

## **The Sun and the Moon**

Created by Aule, they were made to hold the last light of the Two Trees, Laurelin and Silpion. The rising of the Sun led to the awakening of men and the retreat of Morgoth and the Orcs. It also led to the beginning of the Second Age.

## **The Quenta**

An earlier version of the Silmarillion included in The Shaping of Middle-Earth.

## **Annals**

Documents containing dates and important events associated with those dates. The Annals of Valinor and the Annals of Beleriand are contained in their earliest versions in The Shaping of Middle Earth.

## **Angband**

Morgoth's fortress in the First Age.



# Themes

## Creation

J.R.R. Tolkien intended to create an entire world of myth over the course of his life. The documents that compose *The Shaping of Middle-Earth* show the development process of the broader cosmology and history of *The World* that Middle-Earth is a part of. Creation begins when the Allfather or Iluvatar creates the greater and lesser spirits, named the Valar and the Valarindi respectively.

When Iluvatar creates the World, he allows the Valar and Valarindi to enter it, permitting both good and evil in the world. Initially all the beings created by Iluvatar existed in a singing of a universal song that kept them in harmony but the music was eventually broken by Melko, the first Valar, who eventually became Morgoth and was exiled to Earth.

Nine good Valar came to the Earth and made their home, though battles with Morgoth eventually drove them to create Valinor. They then created the Two Trees, Laurelin and Silpion, that lit all of Valinor. However, Morgoth destroyed them with the help of Ungoliate. Prior to this, the elder children of Iluvatar, the Elves, awoke in Middle-Earth and many were led to Valinor, though some stayed in Middle-Earth.

Morgoth was bound for ages in his first battles with the Gods and after being released caused dissension among the second race of Elves known as the Noldoli. When the Trees were destroyed, Morgoth also destroyed the light of the Trees stored by Feanor, son of Finwe, King of the Noldoli, in three gems known as the Silmarils. After Morgoth was exiled to Middle-Earth and the Valar created the Sun and the Moon and Men awoke, the Second Age began.

This is, in brief, the creation story of the World that Middle-Earth is only a part of. It sets the stage for all of the events in J.R.R. Tolkien's famous works. *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings* take place in the Third Age when the dark forces of the world are led by Sauron, a Valarindi who became the lieutenant of Morgoth. Morgoth at this time was imprisoned in the Void outside of the World.

The theme of creation is not only embodied in this story but is displayed in the various early creations in the creation story, including the creation of the Valar, the creation of the World, of Valinor, of Middle-Earth, or the Two Trees, of the Silmarils, of the Elves of all kinds, of the Men and the Dwarves, and so on. Tolkien's philosophy of creation, in short, was that only Iluvatar had the original power to create life which was partially delegated to the Valar. Morgoth could only distort life and corrupt it.



## Good and Evil

J.R.R. Tolkien's universe embodies a key principle of Greek and Medieval Philosophy—that strictly speaking, evil does not exist. Instead, just as cold is the absence of heat, and light is the absence of dark, so is evil the absence of good. In ancient and medieval terms, evil is a "privation." This philosophy of evil was explicitly placed by Tolkien in his work. It is clearest in the popular imagination in the form of Gollum, who as he turns evil becomes only a shadow of his former self. Morgoth too becomes a shadow of himself when he was Melko, and Sauron too is a shadow of the Valarindi he once was.

The Good, on the other hand, is positive being. To be good, in short, is to be all that you can be. It is to fulfill your nature; evil actions corrupt the being who commits them. Tolkien believed that a being with no good would literally cease to exist, thus even Morgoth and Sauron possessed good deep inside of them but had substantially distorted it.

Despite evil being only the absence of good, there are clearly good and evil forces in the manuscripts in *The Shaping of Middle Earth*. The Valar are good and Morgoth is bad. Many Valarindi are good, though Sauron and the Balrogs are bad; Gandalf is a good Valarindi, for instance. The children of Iluvatar are initially good though they can be corrupted and often are, such as the Noldoli who believed the lies of Morgoth.

There are many battles between good and evil at every level of being. The Valar and Morgoth have direct battle at several points in the History of the World. The Valaridni do battle, as do the first Elves, and the Noldoli against the Teleri, and the Noldoli against themselves. The Men, Elves and Dwarves sometimes fight each other though mostly they fight the Orcs, Sauron's creations.

## Mythology

J.R.R. Tolkien is one of the greatest myth-makers in human history, to be sure. While he was deeply influenced by myths of the past (especially Beowulf, of which he was one of history's greatest scholars), the legendaria (legendary details) of Middle-Earth and the broader World in general is vast, original and extraordinary. Tolkien invented the Elvish tongue and had variations upon it. He created the vast number of characters in *The Hobbit*, *The Lord of the Rings* and *The Silmarillion* and while a number of Germanic and English books, myths, poems and historical details inspired Tolkien, in many ways the features of his mythological world are unique, a cultural tale in itself.

The manuscripts of *The Shaping of Middle Earth* show the incredible path of development towards the production of the *Silmarillion* and related text. Tolkien's son, Christopher, displays with great detail the revisions that Tolkien went through, the simplifications and elaborations he engaged in. Names were changed, characters altered, personalities developed and geographical locations born and destroyed. Tolkien also puts together a dramatic and unique creation story that combines the God of

Judeo-Christian theism (Iluvatar) with the classical Gods of Greece, Rome and related cultures (the Valar).

The world of Middle-Earth also has a kind of Apocalypse, where Morgoth makes his final war on The World after escaping into the World from the Void. The Valar ultimately bind him forever, break the Silmarils and revive The Two Trees. The mountains of Valar are leveled and their light fills the World. The Elves are all resurrected, though the Men's souls have gone beyond the Valar, perhaps into Iluvatar's care directly.

# Style

## Perspective

Two perspectives are to be found in *The Shaping of Middle-Earth*, that of J.R.R. Tolkien and of his son Christopher Tolkien. *The Shaping of Middle-Earth* is the fourth volume in a twelve volume series put together by Christopher Tolkien from J.R.R. Tolkien's unfinished work. Each work of Tolkien's, in all seven chapters, is reprinted, sometimes in several versions, as are his maps, but most of the actual text is Christopher Tolkien's detailed commentary on the revisions, many of the details of which are so complex and distinct from one another that little common information can be drawn from them.

All of Tolkien's work in *The Shaping of Middle-Earth* consists in earlier versions of later published works or more developed unpublished works. Most of the elder Tolkien's text is a series of versions or partial versions of previous versions of the *Silmarillion*, Tolkien's history of *The World* of which Middle-Earth is a part.

The elder Tolkien's perspective in these works is that of a master writer and philologist, combining his creation of languages, characters, histories and stories in early forms that would later develop. The perspective is grand, as its subject matter is grand, though there is nothing melodramatic or pretentious about the description of creation. Tolkien also has deeply medieval influences and was a master of Old English; he was in particular an admirer of Germanic and English medieval (early, middle and late) cultures.

The younger Tolkien's perspective is the polar opposite of grandiose. He focuses on incredibly detailed commentary on even the most minor changes between versions of Tolkien's manuscripts. In cases where the younger Tolkien must make editorial changes, he not only explains his decision but often defends it. Thus, his perspective, while in admiration of his father, is one of extreme meticulousness in accord with minor detail. This is not to say that the elder Tolkien is not concerned with details; far from it, but the matter of Christopher Tolkien's focus is much more mundane.

## Tone

The tone of *The Shaping of Middle-Earth* is similar to its perspective. Again, *The Shaping of Middle-Earth* has two perspectives, that of the elder and younger Tolkiens, J.R.R. and Christopher. The book concerns the development of Tolkien's writings, particularly the material that was finally published in the *Silmarillion*.

The texts, particularly the "Sketch of the Mythology," the *Quenta*, the *Annals of Valinor* and *Beleriand* and the "Earliest" *Silmarillion*, show a substantial development of the cosmology of Middle-Earth; however, in the main story line, only a few of the names are changed and few of the concepts. Tolkien's ideas were there in broad outline early on.



Throughout these works, the tone is that of a creation story in a real-world religious tradition. The text can, without attending to the content, appear rather matter-of-fact, particularly in the Annals. Tolkien simply reports the stories without going into great detail about dialogue; instead, his writing covers tens of thousands of years stopping for only the most important events. Thus even a matter of fact tone has a grandiose and deep element.

Christopher Tolkien's tone is sometimes excruciating in contrast. While Tolkien wrote of mythological events over tens of thousands of years, Christopher Tolkien is focusing on reasons that Tolkien may have altered this or that word, updated such and such a sentence structure, or changed a character's appearance, lineage and the like.

## Structure

The Shaping of Middle-Earth is composed of seven distinct though related texts, some of which are very short and others of which are quite long. The Prose Fragments Following the Lost Tales comes first; it is a manuscript that covers Tuor's time in Gondolin and the story of the Noldoli leaving Valinor for Middle-Earth. The Earliest "Silmarillion" follows and it is sometimes referred to as the "Sketch of the Mythology," which is a synopsis of the mythology of The World.

The Quenta or Noldorinwa comes next; it is a future version of the "Sketch of the Mythology" though it is very different. The history of the First and Second Ages is given. The chapter also contains a poem, The Horns of Ylmir, and an Old English version of the Quenta. Chapter 4 is the Map the Silmarillion was based on and was used frequently.

Chapter 5, The Ambarkanta is the cosmology and geography of The World reproduced with actual maps that Tolkien created. Chapter 6 is the first of two series of Annals, the Annals of Valinor; it lists the dates that occur during the First Age, when the Noldoli leave for Middle-Earth extending back to Creation. An Old English translation is reproduced as well. Chapter 7 is The Annals of Beleriand which covers the Second Age; it also has an Old English translation. Both Annals are the earliest versions of themselves.

Most of the book is not the elder Tolkien's text, however; instead, Christopher Tolkien's commentaries on the main text comprise most of the book; the details are innumerable, however and are all tied to small details of the text.



## Quotes

"Then came the Gnomes to Turgon and guided him along the dark passages amid the mountains until he came out once more into the light." (Chapter 1, 5)

"After the dispatch of the Nine Valar for the governance of the world, Morgoth (Demon of Dark) rebels against the overlordship of Manwe, overthrows the lamps set up to illumine the world, and floods the isle where the Valar (or Gods) dwelt." (Chapter 2, 12)

"In those days the Silmarils shall be recovered from sea and earth and air, and Maidros shall break them and Belaurin with their fire rekindle the Two Trees, and the great light shall come forth again, and the Mountains of Valinor shall be leveled so that it goes out over the world, and Gods and Elves and Men shall grow young again, and all their dead awake." (Chapter 2, 41)

"And this is the last end of the tales of the days before the days, in the Northern regions of the Western World." (Chapter 2, 41)

"After the making of the World by the Allfather, who in Elvish tongue is named Iluvatar, many of the mightiest spirits that dwelt with him came into the world to govern it, because seeing it afar after it was made they were filled with delight at its beauty." (Chapter 3, 78)

"Thereafter shall the Silmarils be recovered out of sea and earth and air ... Then Feanor shall bear the Three and yield them unto Yavanna Palurien; and she will break them and with their fire rekindle the Two Trees." (Chapter 3, 165)

"In that light the Gods will again grow young, and the Elves awake and all their dead arise, and the purpose of Iluvatar be fulfilled concerning them. But of Men in that day the prophecy speaks not, save of Turin only, and him it names among the Gods." (Chapter 3, 165)

"Such is the end of the tales of the days before the days in the Northern regions of the Western world. Some of these things are sung and said yet by the fading Elves; and more still are sung by the vanished Elves that dwell now on the Lonely Isle. To Men of the race of Earendel have they at times been told...." (Chapter 3, 165)

"Only the reeds were rustling, but a mist lay on the streams/Like a sea-roke drawn far inland, like a shred of salt sea-dreams/'Twas in the Land of Willows that I heard th'unfathomed breath/Of the Horns of Ylmir calling—and shall hear them till my death." (Chapter 3, 217)

"Angband. The placing of Angband in relation to Thangorodrim shows how my father saw them at the time of the long Lays and the 'Sketch.'" (Chapter 4, 220)

"About all the World are the Ilurambar, or Walls of the World. They are as ice and glass and steel, being above all imagination of the Children of Earth cold, transparent and





hard. They cannot be seen, nor can they be passed, save by the Door of Night."  
(Chapter 5, 235)

"Valinor is filled with mingled light as of silver and gold; and the Gods smile remembering the mingling of Laurelin and Silpion long ago." (Chapter 5, 255)

"At the beginning Iluvatar, that is 'Alfater', made all things, and the Valar, that is the 'Powers', came into the World. These are nine, Manwe, Ulmo, Aule, Orome, Tulkas, Osse, Mandos, Lorien, and Melko." (Chapter 6, 263)

"Here Sun and Moon, made by the Gods after the death of the Two Trees of Valinor, appear." (Chapter 7, 295)

"So ended the First Age of the World and Beleriand was no more." (Chapter 7, 310)



## Topics for Discussion

What is the purpose of the *The Shaping of Middle-Earth, Volume IV*? In other words, why did Christopher Tolkien compile and publish it? What is its significance?

What is the *Silmarillion*? What is its relation to the "Earliest" *Silmarillion* and the *Quenta*?

Take three of the major pieces in the book that have substantial changes between two versions of itself; describe the changes and their significance.

Explain, in brief outline, the basic creation story of *The World*, include the role of Illuvatar, the nine Valar, Valinor, the Trees and Morgoth.

Who are the elder children of Illuvatar? Who are the young children? When did they "awake," respectively?

Which race was cursed and why? When and why was the curse given? How did the curse manifest itself? How was it ended?

Describe the conflict wrought by the Sons of Feanor.

Explain, in brief outline, the basic "End of the World" story of *The World*; include the role of the nine Valar, Valinor, the *Silmarils*, the Trees and the fate of the major races.