



The Book of Lost Tales, Part Two

J.R.R. Tolkien, Christopher Tolkien (Editor)

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The Book of Lost Tales 2 (The History of Middle-Earth, Vol. 2)

viii, 391 pp. "The Book of Lost Tales was the first major work of imagination by J.R.R. Tolkien, begun in 1916, when he was twenty-five years old, and left incomplete several years later. It stands at the beginning of the entire conception of Middle-earth and Valinor, for the Lost Tales were the first form of the myths and legends that came to be called The Silmarillion. Embedded in English legend and association, they are set in the narrative frame of the great westward voyage of a mariner named Eriol (or AElfwine). His destination is Tol Eressea, the Lonely Isle where Elves dwell; from them he learns their true history, the Lost Tales of Elfinesse. The Tales include the earliest accounts of Gods and Elves, Dwarves, Balrogs, and Orcs; of the Silmarils and the Two Trees of Valinor; of Nargothrond and Gondolin; of the geography and cosmography of their invented world. The Book of Lost Tales is published in two volumes. The first contains the Tales of Valinor; and this second part includes Beren and Luthien, Turin and the Dragon, and the only full narratives of the Necklace of the Dwarves and the Fall of Gondolin. Each tale is followed by a commentary, together with associated poems, and each volume contains extensive information on names and vocabulary of the earliest Elvish languages. Additional books in this series will extend the history of Middle-earth as it was refined and enlarged in later years and will include the long Lays of Beleriand, the Ambarkanta or Shape of the World, the Lhammas or Account of Tongues, annals, maps, and many other previously unpublished writings of J.R.R. Tolkien."Keywords: FANTASY SCIENCE FICTION HISTORY MIDDLE EARTH JRR TOLKIEN BOOK OF LOST TALES

The Book of Lost Tales, Part Two Details

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From Reader Review The Book of Lost Tales, Part Two for online ebook

Jay says

This is the second in the set of five books in which J.R.R. Tolkien's son, Christopher, has collected and edited his father's unpublished works--or in several cases, unpublished earlier versions of stories that later were published in different form.

This volume consists of:

* The Tale of Tinúviel, a much longer and much different version than is published in the Silmarillion as "The Tale of Beren and Lúthien." While many of the elements of the story here are interesting, I do like the published version better--for one thing, its plot is much tighter and easier to follow.

* Turambar and the Foalókë, an earlier telling of the story of Turin Turambar from the Silmarillion. Again, the earlier version published here is much longer, and much more rambling. Most of the essential plot points are the same, or similar, though there are a few major differences (such as Turin and the outlaws' encounter with Mim the Dwarf and his sons); but the edited published version is a much better read.

* The Fall of Gondolin--this, now, is a masterpiece, and a shame it's not as widely known as some of the Professor's other works. The version in the Silmarillion is much shorter. The version here gives great detail about the layout and organization of the hidden city of Gondolin; the various military units that defended it (down to details of heraldry and uniforms); and the ebb and flow of battle when the forces of Melko discovered the location of the city and forced their way through its defenses. It's a gripping tale beautifully told.

* The Nauglafring, or the Necklace of the Dwarves. This is a chronologically direct follow-on to the Fall of Gondolin, describing the flight of a handful of survivors from the sack of that city. It's unpolished and rambling, and apparently went through many revisions, and it's hard to know which details Tolkien eventually meant to be canonical.

* The Tale of Earendël, an earlier and much harder-to-follow version of the Earendil the Mariner story and poems from the Silmarillion and LOTR. In places the narrative here becomes almost incomprehensible, and Earendël's perigrinations all over the oceans between Beleriand (although it is not named as such) and Tol Eressëa and Valinor (also not named as such) are well nigh impossible to follow.

* The History of Eriol or Aelfwine and the End of the Tales, which is something even the most devout Tolkien fan (I am one) will be glad to hear by this point. This section mainly deals with how Tolkien originally intended the Lonely Island of Tol Eressëa to be England, but the thread of reasoning slips back and forth from actual terrestrial geography to various incarnations of Middle Earth geography and back again, that even having just read it I am challenged to summarize it.

I don't blame Christopher for the mess that most of these chapters are. He was working with (sometimes literally) scraps of paper with his father's scribblings on them, or manuscripts that had been written in pencil, then erased and overwritten in ink, then typed but then emended by hand. His mission was to set out the evolution of his father's conceptions in chronological order, then present the most evolved version as his father might have wanted it published; but in order to show that evolution, he has by necessity included so

many versions of names and events and places and altered plots that it becomes an utter chore to read, and to try to remember who and what is where and when.

I'm glad I read this book just so I can claim to be a "Tolkien scholar" of the lowest order, but unless I ever need to look up some obscure fact--or enjoy "The Fall of Gondolin" again--I'm relieved to be through it. Sorry, Professor, and sorry, Christopher.

Terry says

In the Book of Lost Tales, volumes 1 and 2, we have a more or less full picture of the earliest work Tolkien did in the development of his personal mythology that was to grow into the tales of Middle Earth. It was a mythology meant to provide his country England with something he felt it sorely needed, a foundation myth, and it was a vehicle which allowed him to explore and expand upon his own fascination with the world and stories of Faery and his love for the invented languages of his youth. The frame of the entire mythology at this point centred on the character of an English mariner (initially called Eriol and later Aelfwine each with varying origin stories) who was shipwrecked upon the isle of Tol Eressëa, the last bastion of the Elves who have all but fled the mortal world. Here are recounted to him the 'lost tales' of the Elves from prior to their departure from the wider world of men.

While it always remained the case that Tolkien envisioned his Middle-Earth stories to be tales about the earliest, unknown histories of our own world as opposed to stories set on some completely alien fantasy world, the two Book of Lost Tales volumes really point out just how strongly Tolkien initially envisioned this link to be. In the first volume we were presented with some of the more cosmogonic myths: stories of the Valar and the creation of the world, the creation of the two Trees of Valinor and the Silmarils, the creation of the sun and moon, and the ultimate exile of the Elves from Valinor to the wider world. In the second volume things get a little closer to the ground as we hear tales of heroes and their deeds in their attempt to fight against the forces of Melko who would overthrow all that is good and beautiful in the world.

I have to admit that volume 2 had a bumpy start for me with the Tales of Beren & Tinúviel and Turambar & the Foalókë being distinctly inferior to what they were to become in their fuller, more developed forms. In Beren and Luthien two things stood out as road blocks to my enjoyment: Beren as first envisioned was actually an elf of the Noldor and to me this robs the tale of his love of the immortal Tinúviel of much of its tragic grandeur, though it must be admitted that some does still remain; added to that was the fact that Melko's lieutenant in the tale, and the main opponent to the heroes, was not Sauron of the Ainur and lord of the isle of werewolves, but Tevildo Prince of Cats! It might just be me, but a giant house cat (no matter how large and mean) is a slightly less intriguing villain than one of the greatest of the gods. As I noted in my review of book 1, Tolkien was still working within a model that was much more based on traditional 'fairy tales' than what his stories of the First Age of Middle-Earth were to become so this element isn't exactly unexpected, just not my particular cuppa. As to Turambar, there wasn't anything specific I could point to as the deciding factor in my relative lack of enthusiasm, but having read what this tale was to become it certainly pales in comparison. For me that can pretty much sum up the points at which I was disappointed in both volumes: these are much paler, thinner, and in some ways shadowy versions of the tales I know. That being said, they have the virtue of being able to show me just how much the constant work and revision, the lifetime of unceasing development, love and thought that went into them truly turned what were inspired, but limited stories into things that truly were comparable to the mythic workings of a people. The depth and reality of the tales of Middle-Earth all started here with something much smaller and simpler, but which would prove to be the seeds of something so much greater. The layers that one can see were built upon these

first canvasses give a fascinating glimpse into a creative process that was truly monumental.

So on to what I did like in this volume: the tale of the Fall of Gondolin was almost all I could have hoped for. While I still weep at the unrealized potential of the rewrite to this story that Tolkien had started but abandoned far too early as presented in *Unfinished Tales of Númenor and Middle-Earth*, I at least was able to see the story of Tuor and his flight to the doomed city of Gondolin just as it is about to be overcome by the forces of Melko in a complete, and I must say rather satisfying, version. Tied in with this is the story of the Nauglafring, or the necklace of the Dwarves, which in itself is a rousing Germanic tale of greed, curses, and doom that also allows for two of the great love stories of Tolkien's mythology to this point (that of Beren and Tinúviel on the one hand and of Tuor and Idril on the other) to dovetail into each other and become the genesis for the tale of Eärendel which was in many ways the very heart of Tolkien's mythology from the beginning. Eärendel himself was the child of Tuor and Idril who falls in love with Beren & Tinúviel's granddaughter Elwing and whose great mission is to be the only mariner able to sail to the land of Valinor. Interestingly in some early versions of the tale as presented here Eärendel is sometimes either unable to make his way to Valinor or finds that his journey there proved unnecessary and ultimately this is another case where Tolkien's later development of the tale proved to be more satisfying than what we initially find, but it is still an intriguing (and more importantly a fuller) glimpse into what would otherwise be little more than some bare bones references in later works.

The final chapter of the volume is made up of scattered notes and poems that relate explicitly to the frame narrative and the life story of the mariner Eriol/Aelfwine. To me the greatest value these fragments hold is in showing how strongly Tolkien initially wanted to tie in his tales of Faery with the history of our own world (and specifically with England). I myself don't worry too much about this aspect of Tolkien's work, but it was obviously hugely important to him. Even in the later development of the tales of Middle-Earth which seem rather distant from any kind of mythological history of England we can see that the 'historical' element remains: specifically in the frame narrative of the 'Red Book of Westmarch' which lies as the pseudo-historical source of all of the published tales of Tolkien.

All in all while a bit uneven, this book gave some intriguing glimpses into Tolkien's art, especially in places where a later development of a given tale was either never done or where what does exist is only fragmentary. Definitely something of primary interest to the Tolkien aficionado.

Regitze says

The story of Lúthien Tinúviel and Beren is probably one of my favourite of Tolkien's stories. And for that reason alone, I love this book. It presents several versions of the story, essentially the same but with important and characteristic differences. And a different version still is the one found in *The Silmarillion*, but more on that book.

I think, on the whole, I like the stories in this book better than the stories in part I. But they're all connected and I think it is an important strength to this entire story of characters telling each other important myths and tales from their Peoples. You really can't read part II, without having read part I, I believe. At least you get a very different perspective on the tales of part II, if you haven't read part I.

I think the most interesting stories in part II are the ones that aren't written. The last two tales that is, they're mostly notes and outlines and *plans* of Tolkien's for stories he wanted to write. Some exist in the form of poems, some don't. But really, they're ridiculously interesting. And if I remember correctly, feature in *The*

Silmarillion, but as it has been years, I can't say for sure.

Christopher Tolkien does a marvelous job of stitching the tales together from various manuscripts of his father's, J. R. R. Tolkien, and with the help of a well-structured note section following each tale, as well as a commentary manages to bring back a large portion of the stories that J. R. R. Tolkien wrote in the trenches of WWI. And which was, many many years later, to become *The Silmarillion*, simplified: the origin on Middle-earth as we know it from LotR and the history of the elves. And thus, reading these books has made me want to reread *The Silmarillion*, but that probably is a way off.

NB: when I simply write "Tolkien", I of course refer to J. R. R. Tolkien.

For more thoughts on *Lost Tales*, see my review of Part I here.

Also reviewed together on my blog Bookish Love Affair.

Ben says

I want to once again point you to Corey Olsen (The Tolkien Professor) and his podcast that walked me through this book (in 2 or 4 hour long lectures for each chapter).

I am constantly amazed at how thorough Christopher Tolkien's analysis of his father's work is. It's hard to imagine anyone being as complete and meticulous as him -- he may even have surpassed his father!

The Fall of Gondolin was fascinating. The different conceptions of Elves, Dwarfs, and Humans is fascinating. And it was fun to watch JRR Tolkien play with the idea of making Tol Eressëa into England, or the other way around.

Next up (after a break): The Unfinished Tales!

Marwan Emad says

Another Tolkien Leaf in his Niggle tree. 5 Tales, I'll be reviewing each seperately.

1) Beren and Luthien (4/5)

I have read this Story over and over again in "The Silmarillion", "Beren & Luthien" and now in "The Lost Tales". Did I get bored? A Little. Did it stop me from reading it again? Hell No ! Did it slow me down a little bit? Definetly Yes. However this will forever be my favourite fictional love story I have ever read.

2) Children of Hurin (4/5)

Same as with "Beren and Luthien", having read this Novel more than once made me slack a little bit when reading it for the 3rd time, but it definetly didn't lose it its glamour. It remains the story bringng the deepest grief to my heart whenever I talk about or read.

3) The Necklace of the Dwarves (5/5)

A Tale showing the power of greed, Morgoth's strongest weapons from my own point view. How it's evil leaked to reach the hearts of the first-born, and how the dwarves were carved by that greed by then. Yet we

can argue that the Dwarves were only asking for their right to cherish their own making, but I believe even with that lies their greed. A sorrowful tale, linking The Tale of Beren and Luthien with the Tale of Earendel, giving a full picture of the History of Gnomes and Dwarves on Middle Earth.

4) Fall of Gondolin (4.5/5)

I did miss the rush of a Battle that is Tolkien written. That feeling of being in the middle of the battlefield, seeing this being killed, running with that from the field, striking with that through the Shield, bleeding with that from his wound. You can sense every single feeling a War Frenzy brings to its warriors. A Battle that remains to be one of the most important one in Middle Earth.

5) The Tale of Earendel (2/5)

I am at a loss of words. We've lost a tale that might have been the Core Link between the History of Middle earth and The Lord of the Rings. It is very sad that Tolkien died before finishing/drafting this tale in a rather more complete manner, yet what Christopher could gather shows us how masterly Tolkien has planned for Earendel to be part of his world.

Andreas Schmidt says

Mah.

Francamente questo "corpus tolkeniano" si poteva tranquillamente evitare. Posso capire il senso di voler dare uno sfondo a tutte le vicende de Il signore degli Anelli, ma pubblicare anche le bozze scritte da Tolkien (il padre) e dargli una veste grafica da romanzo finito è semplicemente una operazione commerciale.

Ahmad Sharabiani says

The Book of Lost Tales, Part Two (The History of Middle-Earth #2), J.R.R. Tolkien, Christopher Tolkien (Editor)

Connor says

This review will go over both of the Lost Tales parts

This is for those who just can't get enough of Tolkien's works. If you have not read or did not enjoy *The Silmarillion*, do not even bother reading *The Book of Lost Tales*. I would actually recommend reading *The Silmarillion* a couple of times before reading these books. *The Book of Lost Tales* seems to be a first draft of *The Silmarillion*. *Lost Tales* is more convoluted and probably drier, and is full of Christopher Tolkien's commentary (about the last 3rd of each chapter) that you probably have to slog through. Also I felt the tale of Eriol and "The Cottage of Lost Play" was a bit irrelevant.

I kept *The Silmarillion* with me for reference as I read due to the name differences. Many of the names in *Lost Tales* are significantly different than those in *The Silmarillion*. Some of the stories that you may know and love are also different. If you want more details, you'll just have to read for yourself.

Overall, I did thoroughly enjoy these books. It was a cool spin on *The Silmarillion*. I will probably just stick with *The Silmarillion* though if I want to reread about the First Age of Middle Earth.

Othy says

Though I liked the first Book of Lost Tales better, this one was still amazing. The stories in it not only give depth to the *Silmarillion* and *The Lord of the Rings*, but also as JRR Tolkien himself AND what being a human and an artist really means. Some of the work of both prose and poetry in this volume is equal in beauty to the most wonderfully beautiful pieces Tolkien himself published. Anyone who enjoys writing in any form should read these tales.

Ashley says

I really tried to get through this. In all honesty, all of these “lost and unfinished” tales books have all the same stories in them. The tales of Turin or Beren and Luthien are all great stories, but I don’t need to read them five times.

Megan Chrisler says

I bought this book because I like LOTR, and I wanted to have a better understanding of Middle Earth history. You will get that in this book. However, the style is closer to Old English, so it's very boring to the average reader. So, if you enjoy Old English literature or are a hardcore fan of LOTR, I recommend this book. If you don't like Old English and only like LOTR for its fantasy elements, don't bother.

Dru says

This will be my 12-volume write-up of the entire series "The History of Middle Earth".

This series is ONLY for the hardcore Tolkien fanatic. Predominantly written by JRR's son, based on JRR's notes on the creation of *The Silmarillion* and *The Lord of the Rings* (much less on *The Hobbit*). It is somewhat interesting to see the evolution of the story (for example, "Strider" was originally conceived as a Hobbit (one of those who "went off into the blue with Gandalf" as alluded to in *The Hobbit*).

But the downside to this is that it isn't very fun to read. You can only read yet another version of Beren and Luthien so many times before you're tired of seeing the minuscule changes from one version to the next.

So, overall, I slogged through this over about a year. I'd say it was worth it in the end for someone like me who loves Tolkien and his entire created world of Arda (and Ea in general). But I'll never re-read them. They come off too much as seeming like Christopher Tolkien just bundled every scrap of paper he could find, rather than thinning them down into a logical consistency.

Melissa says

As with Part One lots depth and early development of what would eventually become the *Silmarillion*, from brainstorming to outlines, to early and discarded drafts & entirely reworked ideas, all researched and expertly presented by Christopher Tolkien. As always great history into Middle Earth, but even more so into the writing process and the writer's working evolution as they craft their unique story.

Nicole says

Things I will never tire of:

1. Luthien being the biggest badass ever, no matter how many ways Tolkien writes it (she's the best character he's ever written- fight me if you think otherwise lol)
2. Turin and his family making the worst possible life choices (along with a reminder of why I lol every time someone says that Tolkien is 'too tame' or 'too PG' for them).

The Fall of Gondolin is my favourite piece that Tolkien has written. I'm not 100% sure why, but I find it fascinating and spectacular- the action, the imagery, the tone, the politics, the characters...all of it. I'm so glad we got this full version of it.

I love that he apparently ran out of names by the time he got to LOTR, and just recycled some from older works (can you imagine Gimli's horror if he realized his name first went to an Elf)?

I'm so very happy that the characterization of the Dwarves was improved by the finished copy, because good lord was it terrible here. Cringe worthy terrible, TBH.

I legitimately love these books because there's no way to totally make out Tolkien canon, which means that I can just kind of choose things I love the most and go with that.

I also fully admit that I think the whole 'this is the secret history of Europe/England' thing is lame and I just ignore it. The last chapter (Story of Elfwine) just reminds me why.

D-day says

I will give the same warning as Part One, **The Book of Lost Tales** is not for the casual Tolkien fan. These are early drafts of stories that later became the *Silmarillion*

Part Two of the **Tales** contains the more epic stories starting with the story of Beren & Luthien here called the *Tale of Tinuviel*. The earliest conception of the story is quite interesting; Beren is an Elf and Sauron (here known as Tevildo) is a giant evil cat!

The second tale is *Turambar and the Foaloke* and is the earliest version of the Turin saga, and again very interesting in its early conception.

The Fall of Gondolin is really the most interesting part of the **Lost Tales** as it is the only full length version of this story Tolkien ever wrote. It is also one of the first stories Tolkien ever wrote and it is astonishing and extremely unfortunate that he never was able to finish an updated full version in subsequent decades. He did begin a revised version that was subsequently published in **Unfinished Tales**, but this was only completed to the point where Tuor comes to Gondolin. So this early version is the only version telling in detail the marriage of Tuor and Idril, the treachery of Maeglin, the sacking of the city, the death of Turgon, and the flight of the Exiles.

The tale regarding the Necklace of the Dwarves is very fascinating for Tolkien's initial conception of Dwarves. Here they are portrayed as somewhat more morally dubious than the gruff, yet lovable characters from *The Hobbit*. Although not actually completed even in this early version, it remains the fullest account of the Nauglamir and the Fall of Doriath.

The next tale is the *Tale of Earendel*, and this is very sad, for what should be the climactic story of the **Silmarillion** was never written in full, even here in the **Lost Tales** there is only alternate outlines and brief summaries

The final tale is the *Tale of Aelfwine*. This is the conclusion of the framing story (in this version explicitly tying the Tales to English history) that Tolkien, correctly in my opinion, was to abandon.

So a treasure for the Tolkien fan, interesting for the details it contains but oh so frustrating for the fact that there is so much here that was never completed, which will be a common refrain from me for my reviews of all the subsequent volumes of the **History of Middle Earth**

Marko Vasi? says

If part one of The Book of Lost Tales was dedicated to Valar and to the World creation concepts, second part is dedicated to 6 pivotal stories for The Silmarillion substance. I enjoyed in the first version of the story of Beren and Luthien, where Sauron is mentioned for the first time, but in form of demon Tevildo - prince of cats. Also, tale about Turin is slightly different than the one in final version. The story about the fall of Gondolin is narrated in all its majesty and details. Also, full version of the creation of the Nauglafring (i.e. Nauglamir) is present in this book, as well as slaying of king Tinwelint (Thingol), that is different than the one in final version, and more logical and consecutive.

Schuyler says

While The Book of Lost Tales 2 encompasses 6 tales, I'm going to spend this review focusing on two. Several of them are early drafts of tales (Beren and Luthien, and The Tale of Turambar) that are covered in more detail in The Silmarillion and The Children of Hurin. You may find it interesting to compare the first draft to the later ones, and how Tolkien's ideas grew over time. But if you're not a die-hard Tolkien aficionado, then I wouldn't start with this book. It's a tough nut to crack, and some of the later stories, where we have less and less structure to work with, can be mind-numbing with the effort they require to read.

But two tales in particular linger in my mind with fondness as I shut this book. One is The Fall of Gondolin, and the other is The History of Eriol or AElfwine.

The Fall of Gondolin

The Fall of Gondolin was the biggest reason I started with Part 2 of Lost Tales instead of Part 1. Gondolin

was a hidden city in Middle Earth, the one that could always elude and withstand the evil war of Melko. But even Gondolin fell in the tragic war between Melko and the elves, and its fall was heartstirring and glorious. The last stand of Turgon on the walls, the valiant wisdom of Idril, wife of Tuor, the tragic shield brother action of Tor and Ecthelion as they defended each other in battle, and best of all, sightings of Legolas and Glorfindel in the same story, (two of my favorite elves) make for an epic combination.

The History of Eriol or AElfwine

The history of AElfwine lingers with a tugging of the heartstrings. The beginning half as Tolkien tried to fit this legend into English history is a bit slow and unbelievable, but a later draft of the legend that doesn't contain as much English history is a stirring, grand tale. At the peril of life, AElfwine and his companions sail in search of the island of the elves. In a heart-wrenching twist of fate, most of them catch a glimpse of it. But only one man attains elf land, and the others are blown in the mist all the way back home. The tragedy leaves you breathless.

You might be wondering, is The Book of Lost Tales for me? Here's a good way to go with Tolkien's books:

Read The Hobbit. Everyone reads the Hobbit first. Then read Lord of the Rings. If you love LOTR so much your soul starts singing in the language of elves (a normal and natural reaction) then go on to The Silmarillion. Once you're done with Sil, if you're still interested, then feel free to delve into Lost Tales and The Children of Hurin.

Why this order, Schuyler? Well, because that's the way I did it. But in all seriousness, I think that's a pretty decent order to go in. I'm a sucker for punishment, so I'm going on to The Unfinished Tales next, and hopefully I'll read Lost Tales Part 1 someday.

I think one particular reason why I appreciate reading a tough Tolkien book is the mental exercise it requires. You use a lot of the same skills you would use to read real history, so it translates well. Plus, starting and finishing it is like starting and finishing an intense physical workout. It exercises different parts of your brain (genealogies, geography, and history) and keeps it sharp.

So if you want a mind puzzle, or some glorious moments of valor and heart-wrenching, then give Book of Lost Tales 2 a try.

Shadowdenizen says

Finished at last! While I'm Tolkien/Middle Earth enthusiast, and this book is generally pretty insightful about the creation and mythology of the Elder Days, I found it a bit of a slog, honestly.

However, this book is (almost) redeemed by the bits on the Fall of Gondolin (which is pretty compelling stuff!) and the Nauglarung (Necklace of the Dwarves.)

I'm hoping my enthusiasm for the series stays high, overall; I'm diving right into Book 3, but if that's a slog, too, a break may be in order after that.

Nonethousand Oberrhein says

Heroics of a young author

As the narrative frame of *The Cottage of Lost Play* continues from the first volume, it is time to “listen” to the tales of the big heroes of the First Age. Far more naive and chaotic, while at the same time more enthralling and sparkling than the *Silmarillion*’s mature storytelling, this earlier account of the known legends sheds a light on Tolkien’s working process and allows a different perspective of some those famous characters. Aside from the studious dive into the myth building, the reader will be delighted and surprised as the narrative frame itself twists out of shape and bridges the fantastic geography of Tol-Eressea with the far more mundane one of the British Isles. A transition not to be missed!

Silvana says

Well, the reason I read this book is because Richard Armitage, the actor who plays Thorin in The Hobbit, has read it. If he is fluent in Tolkien lores, then why can't I? :-)

The story that I wanted to read is actually the Nauglafring (Necklace of the Dwarves). But it was interesting as well to read a more thorough version (at least from the version told in The Silmarillion) of Beren-Luthien's and Turin Turambar's stories. I found out that Beren was a gnome (don't freak out yet, gnome here apparently means that he was one of the Noldors) and that he was helpless without Luthien went to rescue him and left her kingdom shattered, broke her parents' hearts and her brother lost. Spoiled brat. Melian should have put her girdle around that girl. Anyway, Turin's story is awesome, it's always is. Children of Hurin, if you haven't read it then fly you fools to the nearest book store! Sad, extremely harrowing. Tolkien at his best.

And then came the story of Nauglafring. A bit shorter than what I expected but alright. It explained to me the origin of the enmity between the elves and the dwarves. Both sides were wrong, that's the gist. The elves were ungrateful SOBs and the dwarves clearly overreacted. Alliance with the orcs? Seriously, guys.

Then the book went downhill for me. The Tale of Earendil was really boring. Or maybe because there were just so many versions of it in one chapter so it became hellishly repetitive. And I still didn't understand why he got separated from Elwing and why she drowned.

The weirdest part from the book to me is not the scholarly remarks and analysis given by Christopher Tolkien on various subjects from etymology of names to different versions of poems, but it was the fact that Elves became fairies. So while Men were getting more evil and stuff, Elves were fading, became transparent and smaller, until finally Men could not see them. I had a feeling by then that there would be some connection made with the real (our) world. And I was right. So apparently Tol Eressea is now the modern day England! Weird huh? So that confirms the theory that Middle Earth is now the modern day continental Europe. Ha! Can you guess which country is Hobbitton? Mordor?

Anyway, this is not a book for everyone. You have to at least read The Silmarillion first. And you gotta love Tolkien a lot.
