

THE HOBBIT

J. R. R. TOLKIEN

A NOVEL STUDY CONCERNING
SECONDARY WORLDS & BELIEF

BY R. J. DELAINEY

RJ
20

YER ENMR THM NHTA NFN+TFITH LFTW
BE NNTXMFTH NMMC F+W LFNMRTH FTW

“IF MORE OF US VALUED FOOD AND CHEER
AND SONG ABOVE HOARDED GOLD, IT WOULD
BE A MERRIER WORLD.”

THORIN OAKENSHIELD

M NHT FPER MRM BRMFH FP NFA
TF HMMH THM CFM M+KHF+TMM XF+TW

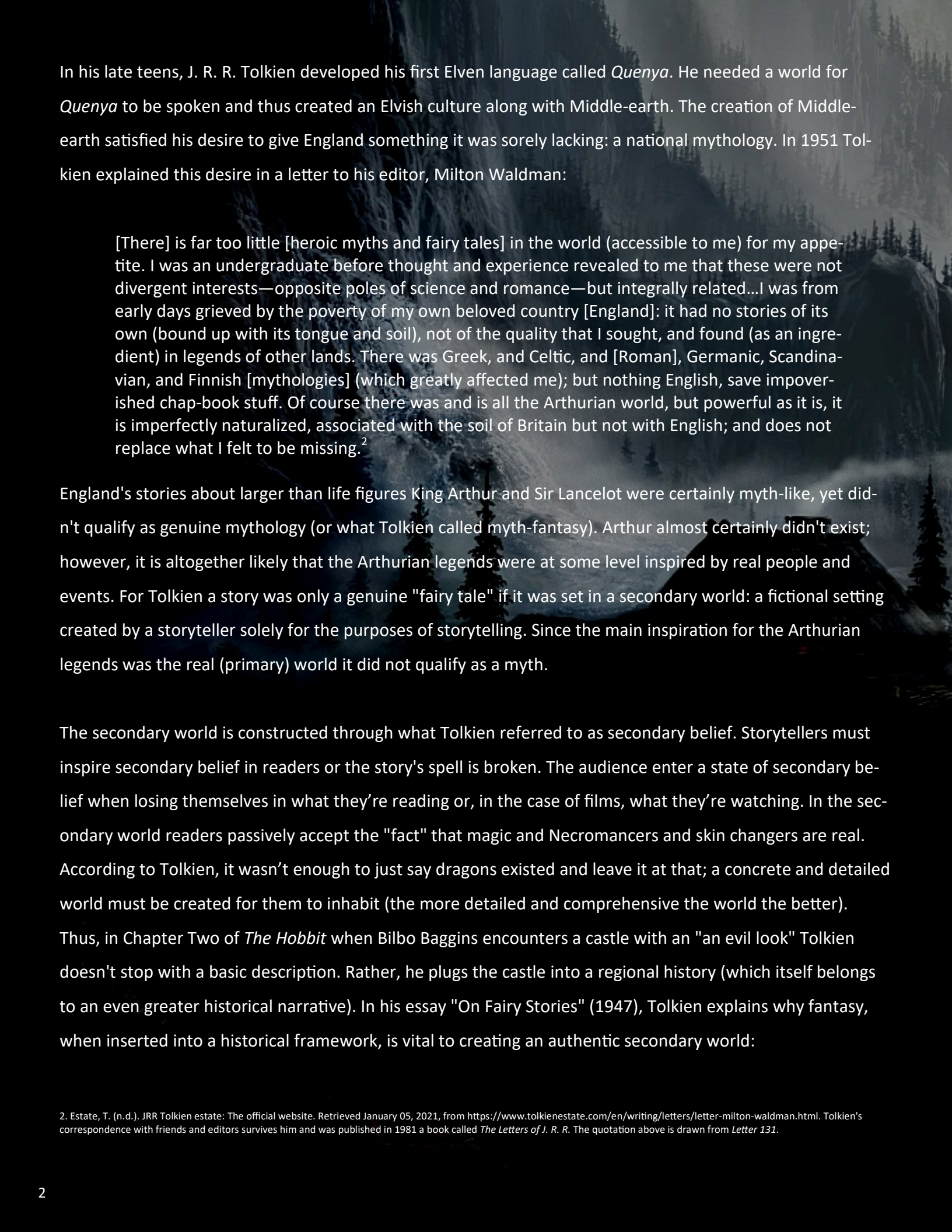
Introduction: The Secondary World & Secondary Belief

My first encounter with Tolkien was accidental: it was 1981 and I was ten, bored, and visiting my maternal grandmother for the weekend. There's not much to do in small towns. So I spent a lot of time in her basement rifling through boxes of my Uncle Tom's old comic books (igniting what became a lifelong interest in Batman and Superman). After lunch I wandered into my uncle's vacant bedroom. The gadgets and trinkets on his desk immediately caught my attention. After satisfying my curiosity, I turned to leave. I stopped in my tracks when a collection of three books bound together in a single case caught my eye. I drew the case from the shelf turning the case over in my hand. I read one word: Tolkien. I'd never heard of either him or his stories before. I inspected the art on the case: there was a volcano exploding into a pastel pink sky while a bunch of black writhing and evil looking creatures clamored towards a war banner. The art piqued my interest enough to open the first book *The Fellowship of the Ring*. I read a couple pages and the rest, as they say, is history. Those same books are sitting on a bookshelf in my office some forty years later.

Bilbo Baggins, the protagonist of J. R. R. Tolkien's *The Hobbit*, first appeared as a character in a series of bedtime stories Tolkien told to his children in the late 1920s. As a youth Tolkien was fascinated by dragons and he enjoyed telling his kids the kinds of stories he found fascinating as a boy. His storytelling career started humbly enough but evolved into an epic narrative effort spanning seven decades. During this time he created and conceived the various peoples, lands, languages and histories of Middle-earth which is the setting for both *The Hobbit* (1937) and later *The Lord of the Rings* (1954) trilogy. Through these and other works like the *Silmarillion* (1977) Tolkien describes the unfolding of the ages, the rise and fall of godlike beings, an endless clash between the forces of good and evil, along with bitter sweet love stories. In addition to entertaining his children, his interests in storytelling were academic: he created Middle-earth out of a genuine desire to give expression to certain elements of the English worldview he felt so deserving of recognition: specifically, the importance of doing one's duty and the eternal power of heroism expressed through the human spirit; and in *The Hobbit* Tolkien expresses this through the most unlikely of creatures, not a great man, but a tiny hobbit living in a hole in the ground.¹

1. In the same sense something of the German "courageous" and Greek "heroic" soul was exhibited through their respective mythologies, Tolkien created Middle-earth to give voice to elements of the English spirit he felt similarly deserving of expression. Rabbitt, G. L. (2018, May). "That Noble Northern Spirit": J. R. R. Tolkien,. Retrieved January 05, 2021, from <https://collected.jcu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1088>, p.11.

* This novel study was designed to be used in conjunction with Douglas Anderson's *The Annotated Hobbit*, Houghton-Mifflin, Boston (1996).



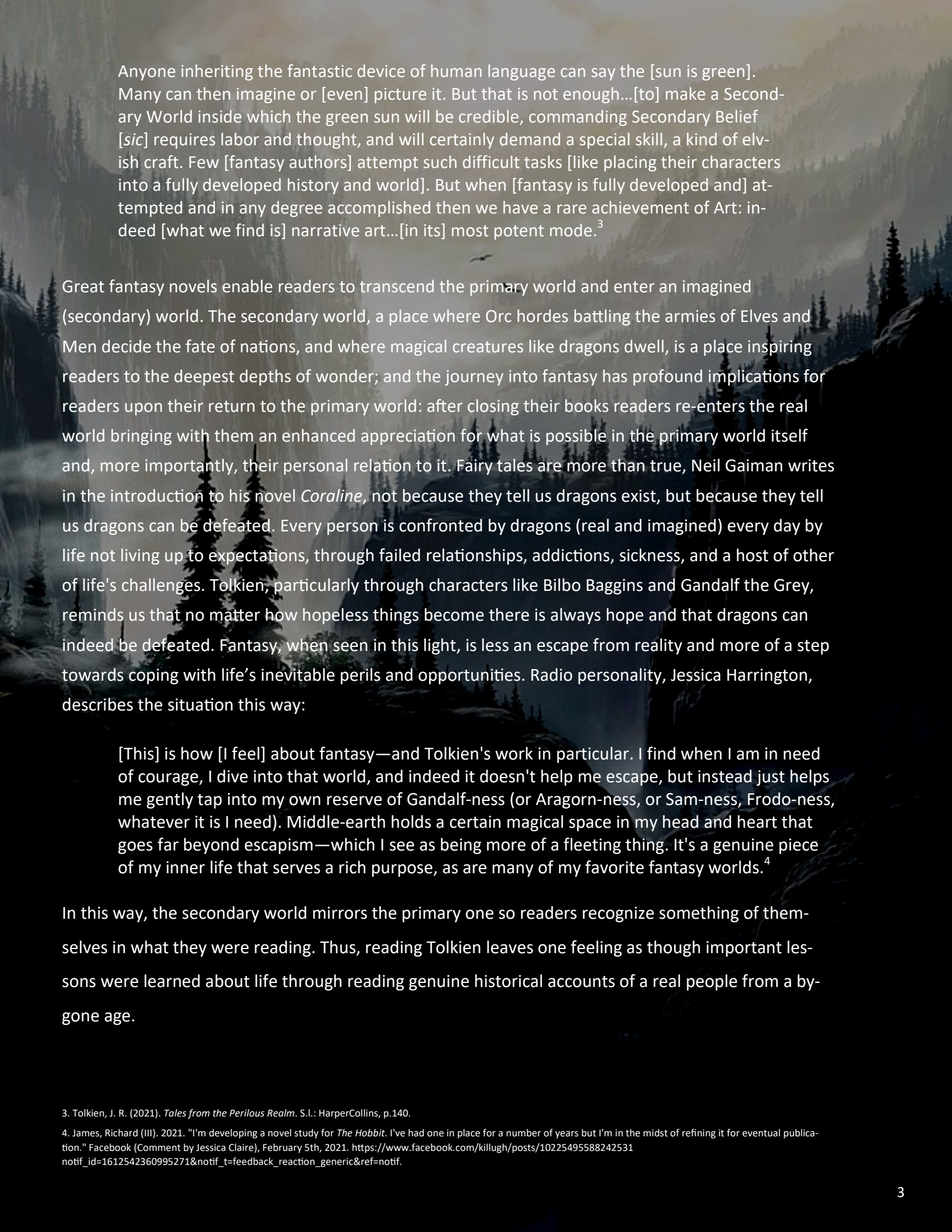
In his late teens, J. R. R. Tolkien developed his first Elven language called *Quenya*. He needed a world for *Quenya* to be spoken and thus created an Elvish culture along with Middle-earth. The creation of Middle-earth satisfied his desire to give England something it was sorely lacking: a national mythology. In 1951 Tolkien explained this desire in a letter to his editor, Milton Waldman:

[There] is far too little [heroic myths and fairy tales] in the world (accessible to me) for my appetite. I was an undergraduate before thought and experience revealed to me that these were not divergent interests—opposite poles of science and romance—but integrally related...I was from early days grieved by the poverty of my own beloved country [England]: it had no stories of its own (bound up with its tongue and soil), not of the quality that I sought, and found (as an ingredient) in legends of other lands. There was Greek, and Celtic, and [Roman], Germanic, Scandinavian, and Finnish [mythologies] (which greatly affected me); but nothing English, save impoverished chap-book stuff. Of course there was and is all the Arthurian world, but powerful as it is, it is imperfectly naturalized, associated with the soil of Britain but not with English; and does not replace what I felt to be missing.²

England's stories about larger than life figures King Arthur and Sir Lancelot were certainly myth-like, yet didn't qualify as genuine mythology (or what Tolkien called myth-fantasy). Arthur almost certainly didn't exist; however, it is altogether likely that the Arthurian legends were at some level inspired by real people and events. For Tolkien a story was only a genuine "fairy tale" if it was set in a secondary world: a fictional setting created by a storyteller solely for the purposes of storytelling. Since the main inspiration for the Arthurian legends was the real (primary) world it did not qualify as a myth.

The secondary world is constructed through what Tolkien referred to as secondary belief. Storytellers must inspire secondary belief in readers or the story's spell is broken. The audience enter a state of secondary belief when losing themselves in what they're reading or, in the case of films, what they're watching. In the secondary world readers passively accept the "fact" that magic and Necromancers and skin changers are real. According to Tolkien, it wasn't enough to just say dragons existed and leave it at that; a concrete and detailed world must be created for them to inhabit (the more detailed and comprehensive the world the better). Thus, in Chapter Two of *The Hobbit* when Bilbo Baggins encounters a castle with an "an evil look" Tolkien doesn't stop with a basic description. Rather, he plugs the castle into a regional history (which itself belongs to an even greater historical narrative). In his essay "On Fairy Stories" (1947), Tolkien explains why fantasy, when inserted into a historical framework, is vital to creating an authentic secondary world:

2. Estate, T. (n.d.). JRR Tolkien estate: The official website. Retrieved January 05, 2021, from <https://www.tolkienestate.com/en/writing/letters/letter-milton-waldman.html>. Tolkien's correspondence with friends and editors survives him and was published in 1981 a book called *The Letters of J. R. R.* The quotation above is drawn from *Letter 131*.



Anyone inheriting the fantastic device of human language can say the [sun is green]. Many can then imagine or [even] picture it. But that is not enough...[to] make a Secondary World inside which the green sun will be credible, commanding Secondary Belief [*sic*] requires labor and thought, and will certainly demand a special skill, a kind of elvish craft. Few [fantasy authors] attempt such difficult tasks [like placing their characters into a fully developed history and world]. But when [fantasy is fully developed and] attempted and in any degree accomplished then we have a rare achievement of Art: indeed [what we find is] narrative art...[in its] most potent mode.³

Great fantasy novels enable readers to transcend the primary world and enter an imagined (secondary) world. The secondary world, a place where Orc hordes battling the armies of Elves and Men decide the fate of nations, and where magical creatures like dragons dwell, is a place inspiring readers to the deepest depths of wonder; and the journey into fantasy has profound implications for readers upon their return to the primary world: after closing their books readers re-enters the real world bringing with them an enhanced appreciation for what is possible in the primary world itself and, more importantly, their personal relation to it. Fairy tales are more than true, Neil Gaiman writes in the introduction to his novel *Coraline*, not because they tell us dragons exist, but because they tell us dragons can be defeated. Every person is confronted by dragons (real and imagined) every day by life not living up to expectations, through failed relationships, addictions, sickness, and a host of other of life's challenges. Tolkien, particularly through characters like Bilbo Baggins and Gandalf the Grey, reminds us that no matter how hopeless things become there is always hope and that dragons can indeed be defeated. Fantasy, when seen in this light, is less an escape from reality and more of a step towards coping with life's inevitable perils and opportunities. Radio personality, Jessica Harrington, describes the situation this way:

[This] is how [I feel] about fantasy—and Tolkien's work in particular. I find when I am in need of courage, I dive into that world, and indeed it doesn't help me escape, but instead just helps me gently tap into my own reserve of Gandalf-ness (or Aragorn-ness, or Sam-ness, Frodo-ness, whatever it is I need). Middle-earth holds a certain magical space in my head and heart that goes far beyond escapism—which I see as being more of a fleeting thing. It's a genuine piece of my inner life that serves a rich purpose, as are many of my favorite fantasy worlds.⁴

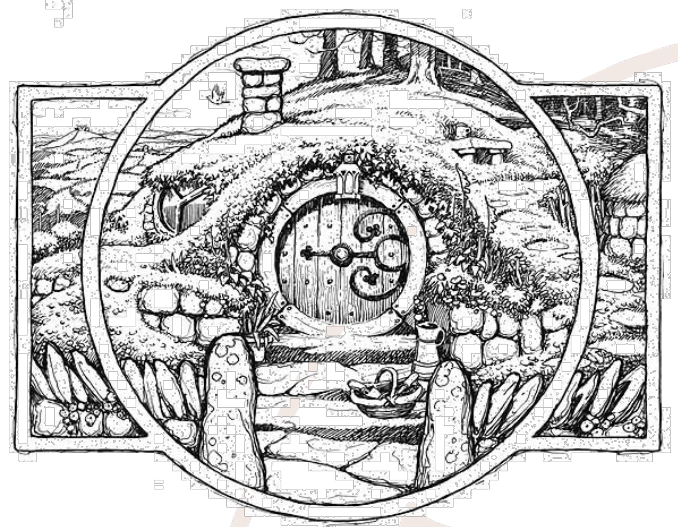
In this way, the secondary world mirrors the primary one so readers recognize something of themselves in what they were reading. Thus, reading Tolkien leaves one feeling as though important lessons were learned about life through reading genuine historical accounts of a real people from a by-gone age.

3. Tolkien, J. R. (2021). *Tales from the Perilous Realm*. S.I.: HarperCollins, p.140.

4. James, Richard (III). 2021. "I'm developing a novel study for *The Hobbit*. I've had one in place for a number of years but I'm in the midst of refining it for eventual publication." Facebook (Comment by Jessica Claire), February 5th, 2021. https://www.facebook.com/killugh/posts/10225495588242531notif_id=1612542360995271¬if_t=feedback_reaction_generic&ref=notif.

CHAPTER ONE: AN UNEXPECTED PARTY

Gandalf the Grey shows up unexpectedly at Bilbo Baggins' hobbit hole. Bilbo doesn't remember Gandalf. The wizard jogs the hobbit's memory and concludes it's time for Bilbo to go on an adventure. Several days later, Gandalf returns for tea at the head of 13 dwarves. During the visit, Bilbo learns the dwarves are without a home and have come asking his assistance in getting it back. He has misgivings and the dwarves aren't confident in him either. Nonetheless, Gandalf insists Bilbo join the quest to recover the Arkenstone, a Dwarvish heirloom, from The Lonely Mountain (Erebor). The problem is Erebor is occupied by a fire-breathing dragon named Smaug.



COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

- 1.1. *The Hobbit* was originally written as a children's story; it is full of humor and funny interactions. Identify and cite an example of humor during Bilbo's first conversation with Gandalf (p.32-35).
- 1.2. What affect does Tolkien achieve by getting Gandalf to say "I am looking for someone to share in an adventure I am arranging" (p.32)?
- 1.3. List the names of all the Dwarves who came to Bilbo's house (p.37-41).
- 1.4. Briefly explain how the dwarves lost their kingdom (p.54).

VOCABULARY: APPARENTLY (P.31), ADVENTURE (P.36), SCUTTLING (P.38), FLUMMOXED (P.41), AUDACIOUS (P.46).

— MIDDLE-EARTH HISTORY & LORE —



On pages 47 and 48 Gandalf assures Thorin that Bilbo is fierce because he's descended from **Bandobras Took**. Bandobras, also known as **Bullroarer**, was large enough to ride a horse and singlehandedly charged a band of invading orcs knocking their chieftain's (**Golfimbul's**) head clear off with a club. The head flew a hundred yards landing in a rabbit hole (incidentally leading to the invention of the game of golf). Gandalf is alluding to the **Battle of the Green Fields** (T.A. 2740). This was the only time **The Shire** was invaded in the first 1000 years of its existence. The second and final time is described near the end of book three, *Return of the King*, from Tolkien's trilogy *The Lord of the Rings*. Disgraced and humiliated, the formerly powerful Saruman the White, along with a band of men, take control of The Shire for a brief period.

Gandalf was one of the five **Istari** (wizards) sent to Middle-earth by the Valar in the year 1000 of the Third Age. Wizards are **Maia** (immortal beings similar but less powerful than the Valar) who took the form of old men. They were sent to help and encourage the peoples of Middle-earth against **Sauron** (the **Necromancer**). The word "Istari" is derived from the Elvish meaning "those who know." There were five wizards: **Rámostamó** (far left) and **Morinehtar** (far right); **Radagast the Brown** (second from left), **Saruman the White** (center) and **Gandalf the Grey** (second from right). Radagast, Saruman and Gandalf figure prominently in Tolkien's stories, but little is ultimately known about the fate of the blue wizards.

CHAPTER TWO: ROAST MUTTON

Thorin and Company set off on their quest to Erebor. Initially things go well, but on the first rainy night while seeking shelter they stumble across three stone trolls. The Company is captured; however, Gandalf outwits the trolls and they end up turning to stone at dawn. The expedition plunders the trolls' hoard. Gandalf and Thorin both take swords, Bilbo takes a small elvish knife, and the dwarves bury the trolls' remaining gold.



COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

- 2.1. On pages 64 and 65, Bilbo talks about traveling north through nice places and comfortable inns. Eventually he mentions a place called the "Lone Lands" and old castles with an evil look as if they'd been built by "wicked people." These old castles are remnants of a kingdom that disappeared long ago called Rhudaur. Who first established Rhudaur and why did this society disappear (website: tolkiengateway.net/wiki/Rhudaur)?
- 2.2. Why does Bilbo decide to pick William's pocket (p.73)?
- 2.3. Thorin sends Bilbo to investigate the light. Do the dwarves care or not care about Bilbo's well-being at this part of the story (critical thinking)?
- 2.4. The Party discovers three precious weapons from the trolls' hoard. What were they?

VOCABULARY: SELDOM (P.69), GNAWED (P.77), HILT (P.82).



Trolls first appeared at the end of the First Age. They were created by a powerful **Valar** named **Melkor** (see image above). Well, created is not the right word: Melkor could not so much create life; instead, he was only capable of corrupting and altering existing life forms. For example Melkor captured elves and then turned them into a new race called **orcs**. He did something similar with **ents** (large treelike beings known as tree shepherds). **Tree-beard**, an ent and one of the oldest creatures in Middle-earth, explained that "trolls were made in mockery of ents" (similar to the way orcs were designed to be a twisted parody of the elves). There are different breeds of troll: there are cave trolls, mountain trolls, snow trolls and so on. The stone trolls appearing in *The Hobbit*, for example, are only capable of walking outside at night because when exposed to direct sunlight they turn to stone. Sauron, Melkor's most powerful lieutenant, bred trolls called **Olog-hai**. They were more powerful trolls first appearing in the latter part of the Third Age and capable of walking in the day. The *Olog-hai* appear in book one, *The Fellowship of the Ring*, of Tolkien's trilogy.



Tom, Bert and **William** were stone trolls encountered in the Trollshaws, in Eriador, by Thorin and Company. There's some debate but it seems stone trolls were not living beings so much as literally rocks themselves enchanted by Sauron to mimic life. The enchantment only worked in darkness (so they remained in the relative safety of caves). Bilbo was caught by a stone troll while attempting to steal a purse. **Troll purses** are actually sapient beings (which means they're capable of thought). This is why when Bilbo places his hand in the purse it responded, "Ere, 'oo are you?" alerting William his pocket was being picked. Trolls were used not only as fighters but also as messengers by Melkor, and later Sauron, since the First Age. The purses may well have been created by Sauron to help prevent trolls from having important plans or information stolen from them by enemies; it is possible they're not really a purse at all so much as an animal dressed up to look like a purse.

CHAPTER THREE: A SHORT REST

The expedition arrives at Rivendell where Elrond and his fellow elves live in the Last Homely House. Elrond deciphers Thrór's map while identifying Gandalf's and Thorin's swords as famous Elvish blades called *Orcrist* (literally "orc cleaver") and *Glamdring* ("the foe hammer").



COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

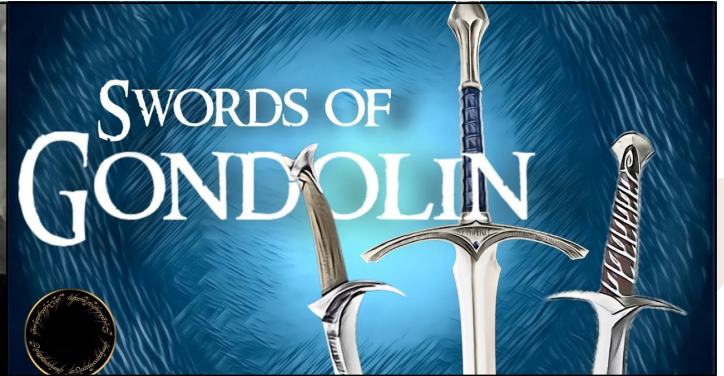
- 3.1. Why is Rivendell so hard to find (p.87-90)?
- 3.2. Who was Elrond and why is he a significant figure (p.94)?
- 3.3. How do moon letters work exactly (p.95)?
- 3.4. What is Durin's Day (p.96)?

VOCABULARY: WONDROUS (P.92), CUNNING (P.95), THRESHOLD (P.96).

— MIDDLE-EARTH HISTORY & LORE —



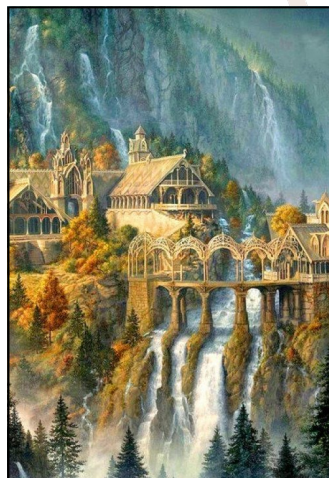
The **Misty Mountains** was a mountain range stretching north and south between the lands of Eriador in the west and the **Great River Anduin** in the East. The Misty Mountains were originally created by Melkor as a barrier to the Valar, Oromë. Oromë was essentially the god (an **Ainur**) of forests and he took great delight in hunting Melkor's orcs, goblins and trolls. Melkor created the mountains to make it more difficult for Oromë to hunt these creatures.



Orcrist and **Glamdring** were crafted in the **City of Gondolin** by the **High Elves** sometime during the First Age. Melkor sent an army of orcs, dragons and balrogs to destroy Gondolin. The city was destroyed but not before the King of Gondolin, **Turgon**, used Glamdring to cut down hundreds of orcs. Orcrist was created to be the "mate" of Glamdring, but was likely wielded by someone in King Turgon's entourage. The weapons were lost after the armies of Melkor sacked Gondolin (F.A. 510); it is likely the swords were looted and eventually made their way to the trolls Bilbo and Thorin encountered on the road to Rivendell.



Durin I, known as the **Deathless** due to his longevity (he lived to be well over 2000 years old), was the eldest of the Seven Fathers of the Dwarves and the founder of the **City of Khazad-dum** and the first king of the Long-beard clan. There are six other Dwarvish clans: **Fire-beards**, **Broadbeams**, **Iron-fists**, **Stiffbeards**, **Stone-foots** and **Blacklocks**. Thorin Oakenshield was a direct descendant of Durin I.



Rivendell, or **Imladris**, was an Elven outpost in the Misty Mountains on the eastern edge of Eriador; it was called the **Last Homely House East of the Sea** from the point of view of a traveler going to the Misty Mountains and Wilderland; it was founded by **Elrond** in S.A. 1697 as a refuge from Sauron and remained Elrond's seat through the Second and Third ages.

CHAPTER FOUR: OVER HILL AND UNDER HILL

As they cross the Misty Mountains, a storm drives the expedition into a cave. Inside the cavern they are surprised and attacked by Goblins. The Company is captured and driven into underground Goblin Caves. Gandalf rescues them and slays the Great Goblin, but as they flee Bilbo is knocked unconscious.



COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

4.1. Use the following passage to answer the next two questions:

“The end of their argument was that they sent Fili and Kili to look for a better shelter. They had very sharp eyes, and being the youngest of the dwarves by some fifty years they usually got these sort of jobs (when everybody could see that it was absolutely no use sending Bilbo). There is nothing like looking, if you want to find something (or so Thorin said to the young dwarves). You certainly usually find something, if you look, but it is not always quite the something you were after. So it proved on this occasion (p. 104-105).”

- a). State a generalization (insight) about life based on this passage.
- b). Identify and cite an example of foreshadowing in this quotation.

4.2. Some literary critics believe Tolkien’s writing reflects his general distrust of technology. Develop a character sketch for goblins with this distrust in mind, e.g. what do they value and why do they behave the way they do? Also, Explain how they use technology for evil purposes (p.108-109).

4.3. *Eucatastrophe* is a literary term literally meaning in Greek “good catastrophe.” J. R. R. Tolkien coined the term to refer to a sudden turn of events at the end of a story ensuring the protagonist does not meet some terrible end. Explain how Gandalf’s rescue of Thorin and Company in the Goblin Caves is an example of *eucatastrophe* at work (p.111).

VOCABULARY: WAIL (P.101), INGENIOUS (P.109), INCONVENIENCING (P.110), GNASHED (P.110).



In T.A. 2770, **Erebor** was taken by the Dragon Smaug and its Dwarvish residents were pushed out. This wasn’t the first time Dwarves were forced from their home: in T.A. 1981 they were forced from Khazad-dûm by a **balrog** (a Maiar demon of the ancient world who followed Melkor during the Song of the Ainur (see page 28 of the novel study’s *Appendices*)). In both instances, **Durin’s Folk** became homeless. Eventually they settled in **Dunland** (foothills west of the Misty Mountains). Among these Dwarves was **Thrór**, formerly the King Under the Mountain (Erebor), and his son **Thráin**, and grandson **Thorin II** (Oakenshield). In T.A. 2790 Thrór visited the hall of his ancestors in Khazad-dûm (**Moria**). He unwisely entered alone and was slain by **Azog** the Pale Orc, Chieftain of Moria. Word spread of Thrór’s murder. Thráin organized an attack and over the next few years Dwarvish armies attacked orc strongholds along the north-south spine of the Misty Mountains. Eventually the **War of the Dwarves and Orcs** ended in T.A. 2799 with the **Battle of Azanulbizar** fought below the East-gate of Moria (see image at top right).

CHAPTER FIVE: RIDDLES IN THE DARK

Lost and alone in the Misty Mountains, Bilbo gathers his courage. He finds a ring and puts it in his pocket. Then he encounters Gollum, a loathsome pathetic creature. They play a riddle-game to determine if Gollum will show Bilbo the way out or eat him instead. Bilbo wins the contest, but Gollum realizes that Bilbo has found his ring (which confers invisibility upon its wearer). Bilbo flees and is pursued by Gollum. Gollum suspects Bilbo has found the exit and runs to cut off the hobbit's escape. Bilbo follows Gollum, finds the exit, and manages to get out of the Goblin Tunnels.



COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

5.1. Tolkien is a master of language. Even though *The Hobbit* is written mostly in prose, Tolkien includes many songs and sentences with poetic elements. Sometimes his sentences has meter like the lines found in a poem. Find a short passage in Chapter Five demonstrating Tolkien's poetic writing style through the use of some sort of figure of speech.

Note: there are examples of consonance, repetition, internal rhyme, onomatopoeia, hyperbole, alliteration and imperfect rhyme in this chapter.

5.2. Pages 115 to 117 of Chapter Five presents Bilbo's transformation from initial self-pity and despair to self-reliant and courageous. He finds himself alone in the Goblin Tunnels with only his Elvish blade—glowing dull blue when orcs (goblins) are near—to comfort him. Bilbo is confronted by a genuine dilemma: go back the way he came or press forward? He presses forward. What does Bilbo's determination suggest about the courage of hobbits (critical thinking)?

5.3. Irony exists whenever there is a contrast between the reader's expectation and reality. Is Bilbo's escape from the caves an example of irony (p.130-133)? Why or why not?

— MIDDLE-EARTH HISTORY & LORE —



Sméagol was a hobbit who lived on the banks of the **Anduin River** in the latter part of the Third Age. In the year T.A. 2463, on his birthday, he and a friend named **Déagol** went fishing. Déagol was pulled under the water by a large fish and discovered a golden ring on the river floor. When Déagol emerged from the water holding a ring, Sméagol demanded it as a birthday present. Déagol refused so Sméagol strangled him taking the ring. After returning home, Sméagol soon realized the ring made him invisible. He used his treasure to spy on and steal from his fellow hobbits. What Sméagol didn't realize was he'd stumbled upon a lost magic ring, called the **Ring of Power** or **One Ring**, of the Dark Lord Sauron (referred to as the Necromancer in *The Hobbit*). The One Ring immediately began corrupting him: he developed a permanent cough and was given the nickname "**Gollum**" for the gurgling sound he continually made. He was exiled and forced to wander the wilderness. His body and mind became twisted. He eventually settled in a network of caves deep inside the Misty Mountains. He talked to the Ring like it was a person calling it his "**precious**" (while also referring to himself as precious, as well). By the time he meets Bilbo in the Goblin Tunnels, Sméagol was afflicted by a split personality: Sméagol was what remained of anything hobbitlike (or good) in him while Gollum personified the evil influence of the Ring.

5.4. *The Hobbit* follows the pattern of a typical quest story in many ways: like many heroes, Bilbo begins ignorant and untried, and he undergoes a series of adventures which transform him. These adventures give him an opportunities to learn more about the world and the extent and proper use of his own abilities. Also, his experiences bring him the friends and tools he needs to ultimately be successful. In a well-constructed quest story, the development of wisdom and self-restraint is as important as the growth of physical strength; the lessons such stories teach us are those of growing into adulthood, e.g. thinking before acting, weighing alternatives, calculating the risk versus benefit of doing something, and so on. One of the characteristics of a hero is a sense of fair play. In what way does Bilbo demonstrate the heroic trait of fair play in this chapter (p.132-133)?

VOCABULARY: THROTTLED (P.119), FLUSTERED (P.123), ANTIQUITY (P.126), UTTERLY (P. 129).



The **Wraith-world** is the unseen cursed realm where the **Nazgûl (Ringwraiths)** dwell. Whenever someone puts on the One Ring they become invisible by entering the Wraith-world (an alternate plane of reality). The ring wearer is invisible in the real world, yet perfectly visible to either a wraith or the creator of the One Ring itself, Sauron. In Peter Jackson's film rendition of *The Lord of the Rings: Fellowship of the Ring* (see image above), Frodo Baggins puts on the One Ring entering the Wraith-world and sees the Nazgûl as wispy ghostlike beings. In Jackson's *The Hobbit* trilogy, Bilbo likewise enters a wispy and windy world and can even see the auras of different creatures (white for Elves, black for Orcs).

The **One Ring** (image top right) was a magical artifact created by the Dark Lord Sauron in S.A. 1600. The One Ring goes by a series of different names, e.g. **Ring of Power**, **Master Ring**, and **Isildur's Bane**. The One Ring grants its bearer control and influence over anyone else wearing one of the other nineteen **rings of power** in Middle-earth. Elvish smiths, led by the great craftsman **Celebrimbor**, crafted the nineteen rings of power at Sauron's encouragement, e.g. three rings for the Elven-kings, seven for the Dwarf-lords, and nine for mortal Men. Sauron secretly crafted his own ring, the One Ring, at Mount Doom in Mordor. He imbued the Ring with his will to dominate and control the peoples of Middle-earth. This was the Master Ring. Fortunately for the Elves, they removed and hid their rings so Sauron could not control their wearers. Men and Dwarves were not so fortunate: the kings of Men who wore their rings eventually became Nazgûl (neither living nor dead). The Dwarves for their part remained relatively unaffected because Aulë endowed them with a sort of stubbornness and independence of will. But the seven Dwarvish rings of power apparently increased their bearers' desire to gather and pursue treasure.

The history of the One Ring is an interesting one: Sauron wore it during the **War of the Last Alliance of Elves and Men** (S.A. 3429-3441). During this war, **Prince Isildur** (son of **Elendil, King of Númenor**) cut the ring from Sauron's hand. This caused Sauron, who'd poured much of his power into the One Ring, to become disembodied. Sauron's army was defeated (for a while anyways). Isildur took the Ring and had this one chance to destroy it in the fires of **Mount Doom** where it was crafted. Isildur refused to destroy it because it quickly became precious to him. The defeat of Sauron saw the end of the Second Age and the beginning of the Third Age.

In T.A. 2 Isildur was ambushed and killed during the **Battle of Gladden Fields**. The One Ring fell into the Anduin River where it remained until Déagol found it approximately 2400 years later. The Ring in a sense has a will (ego) of its own. For example when Bilbo found himself at the back door to the Goblin Tunnels he didn't realize it but he'd apparently taken the Ring off: "Whether it was an accident, or a last trick of the Ring before it took a new master, it was not on his finger (p.135)." The Ring also appears to have abandoned Gollum by falling out of his pocket in the Goblin Tunnels; and long before that it'd fallen off of Isildur's finger when he was being pursued by a group of Orcs at the Gladden Fields (which lead to his death). Ultimately, the One Ring is trying to get back to its Master, Sauron.

CHAPTER SIX: OUT OF THE FRYING PAN INTO THE FIRE

Bilbo finds himself on the eastern side of the Misty Mountains. Using his magic ring, he enters the Dwarves' camp undetected. Thorin and Company flee down the mountain only to be overtaken by Goblins and Wargs. The Company is trapped hiding above in five fir trees in a clearing. The Goblins set fire to the trees. The Eagles of the Misty Mountains rescue the expedition.



COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

- 6.1. Why do you think Bilbo doesn't tell Gandalf about his magic ring (critical thinking)?
- 6.2. On page 142 Bilbo complains he is dreadfully hungry. Tolkien is suggesting eating is a kind of a big deal to hobbits. They usually eat seven meals a day. What's the name, and what time of day, are these meals typically eaten (Internet research)?
- 6.3. Proverbs are short pithy sayings containing some sort of general truth or advice about life, e.g. a watched pot never boils or you can lead a horse to water but cannot make it drink. On page 145 Bilbo creates a proverb right on the spot, e.g. Escaping goblins only to be caught by wolves! Tolkien explains this was the origin of the saying *out of the frying pan into the fire*. Create your own proverb that means something similar to Bilbo's italicized saying above (creative writing).
- 6.4. Why won't the Eagles fly near where Men live (p.159)?
- 6.5. Based on what you've read so far which of Tolkien's races—Orcs, Elves, Wargs, Men or Hobbits—is the noblest (critical thinking)?

— MIDDLE-EARTH HISTORY & LORE —

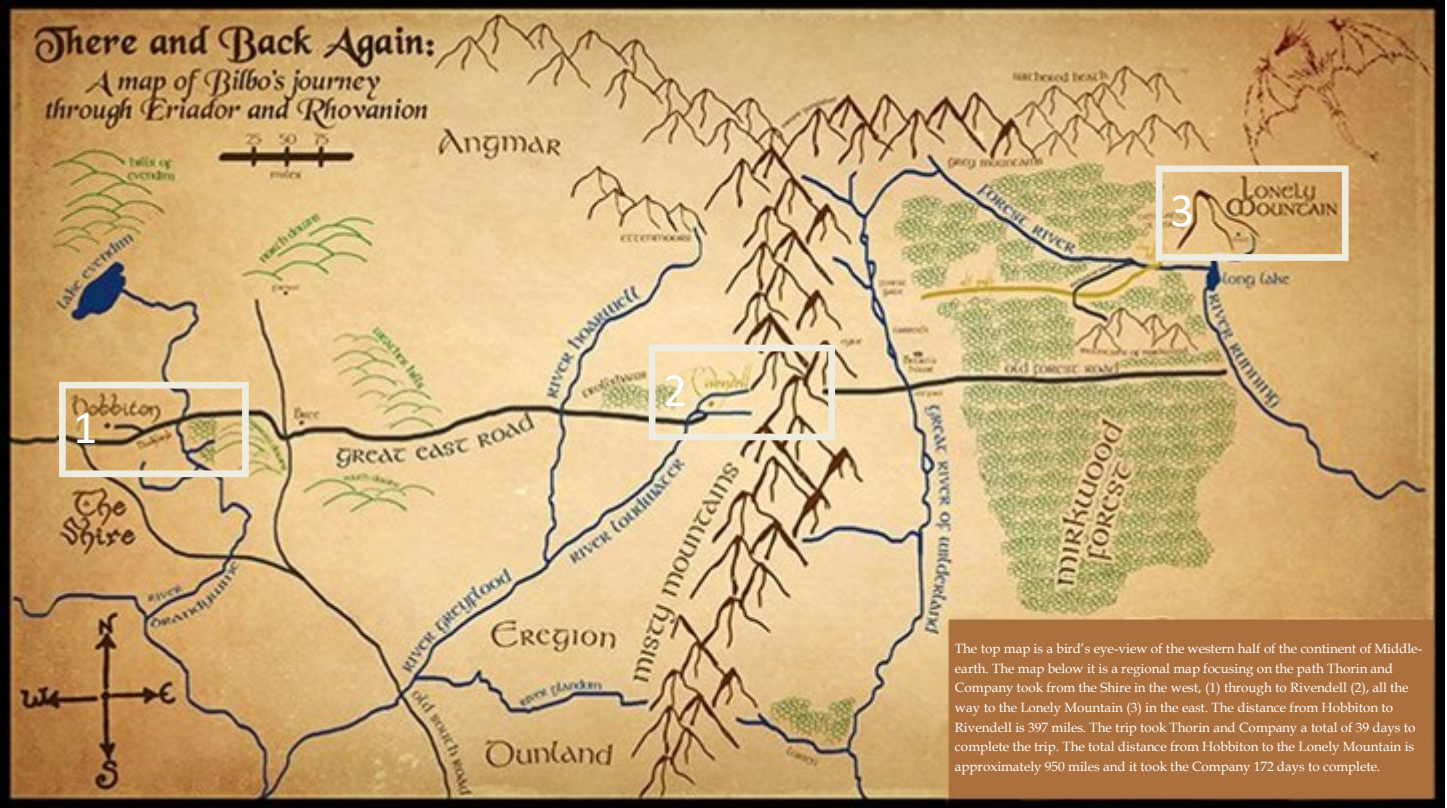


A congregation of **Eagles** lived at the **Eyrie**—a high rocky point—on the north-eastern side of the Misty Mountains. The exact location of the Eyrie is unknown, but it's rumored to be located somewhere just beyond and above **Goblin-town**. The Eagles helped Rivendell keep track of the comings and goings of the orcs. The **Great Eagle** was the Lord of Eagles. He is presumed to be the descendant of the first and greatest of the eagles, **Thorondor**. The eagles serve the Valar, **Manwë**, directly. They serve primarily as messengers keeping watch over Middle-earth while protecting Men and Elves. Gandalf has a strong relationship with the Eagles. The Great Eagle once suffered from a poisoned arrow wound and Gandalf healed him. From that point on wizard and the Great Eagle were close friends.

Wargs were a race of evil wolves. Wargs were servants of Sauron in the Third Age. They were often allied with the Orcs of the Misty Mountains who rode them like horses. They were extremely intelligent and possessed a language of their own (which only Gandalf appears to have been capable of understanding out of the group). The Valar, Melkor, could not create life but could twist and contort existing life forms. Thus, in as much as it's likely he captured and twisted Elves turning them into orcs he likely did the same with wolves, i.e. he captured regular wolves and then modified them into the larger, more intelligent, and evil Warg.

6.6. The last line of this chapter describes how Bilbo dreams about his own house. In the dream he wanders around his house “looking for something that he couldn't find nor remember what it looked like (p.159).” What do you suppose Bilbo is looking for in his dream?

VOCABULARY: ABOMINABLE (P.138), ACQUAINTED (P.141), GLADE (P.149), DREADFUL (P.156).



The top map is a bird's eye-view of the western half of the continent of Middle-earth. The map below it is a regional map focusing on the path Thorin and Company took from the Shire in the west, (1) through to Rivendell (2), all the way to the Lonely Mountain (3) in the east. The distance from Hobbiton to Rivendell is 397 miles. The trip took Thorin and Company a total of 39 days to complete the trip. The total distance from Hobbiton to the Lonely Mountain is approximately 950 miles and it took the Company 172 days to complete.

CHAPTER SEVEN: QUEER LODGINGS

The Eagles carry the expedition to the Carrock, a rock in the middle of the Great River Anduin. From there the expedition heads to the House of Beorn, a skin-changer who is fierce towards his enemies but gentle with animals. Gandalf wins Beorn's hospitality by introducing the Dwarves in small groups while he tells the story of their adventures. After two nights at the house, the expedition receives Beorn's advice and departs for Mirkwood. At the forest-gate, Gandalf leaves the expedition.



COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

- 7.1. What is the most important advice Beorn and Gandalf give the Company about Mirkwood and do you think it will be followed (p.183)? Defend your answer citing evidence or using logic (or a combination of the two).
- 7.2. Why does Gandalf leave them at the edge of Mirkwood (p.188)?
- 7.3. What does Gandalf believe is necessary for the quest to Erebor to succeed (critical thinking)?

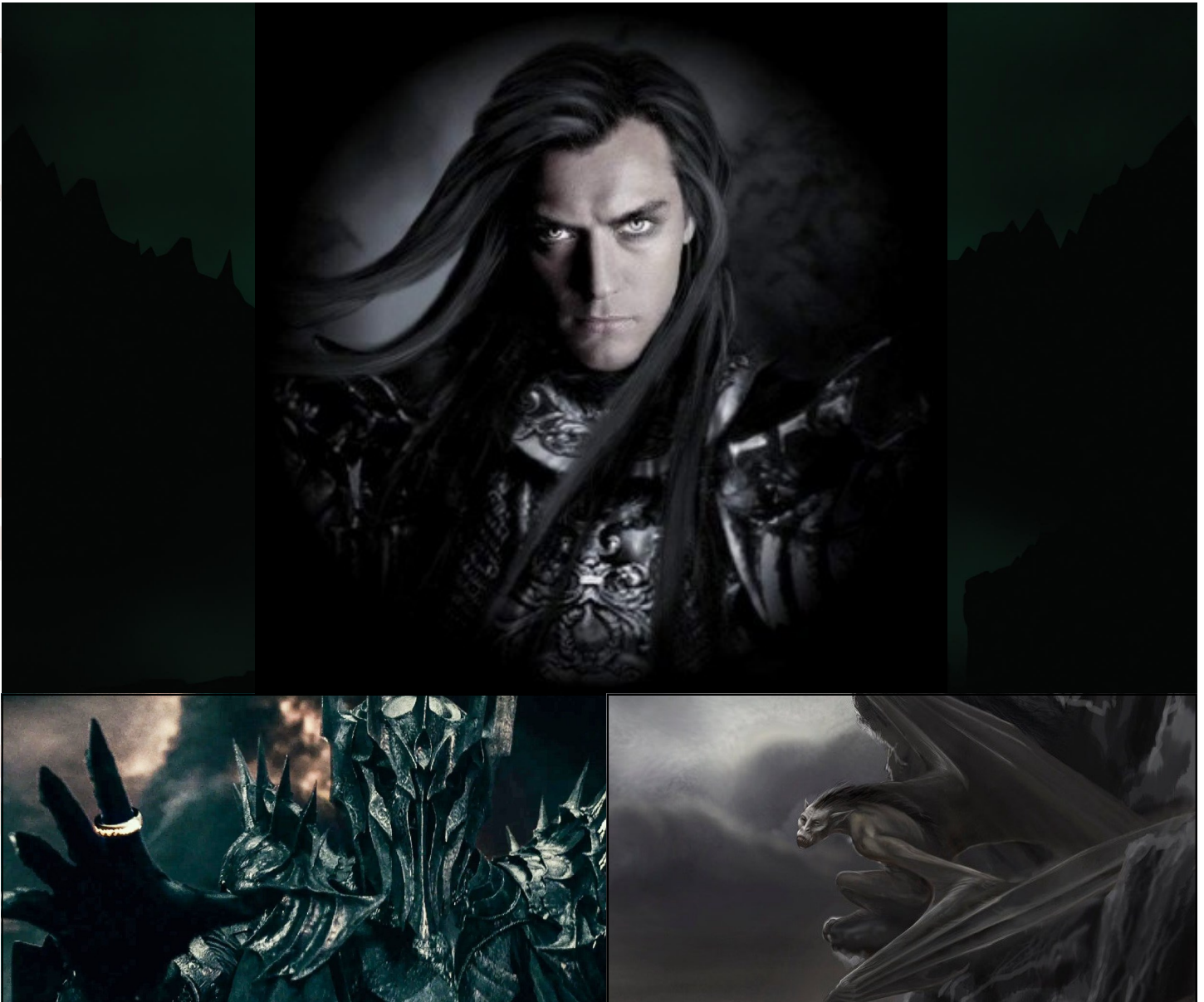
VOCABULARY: PINNACLES (P.161), WHOLESOME (P.162), QUEER (P.175), ENCHANTED (P.179), SAVAGE (P.183).

— MIDDLE-EARTH HISTORY & LORE —



Beorn was the last remaining **Skin-changer** (who could transform into a bear). Gandalf suspected Beorn and his people originally lived in the Misty Mountains until the Orcs drove them out. They guarded the ford at the **Carrock** so it couldn't be used by Orcs. His people were hunted essentially to extinction by Sauron's servants. He lived between the eastern frontier of the Misty Mountains and the western border of Mirkwood. Beorn was generally benevolent and hated Orcs (goblins) and Wargs; but he was also a loner and distrustful of travelers (and not particularly fond of Dwarves); however, once convinced of someone's goodwill he became welcoming, even generous.

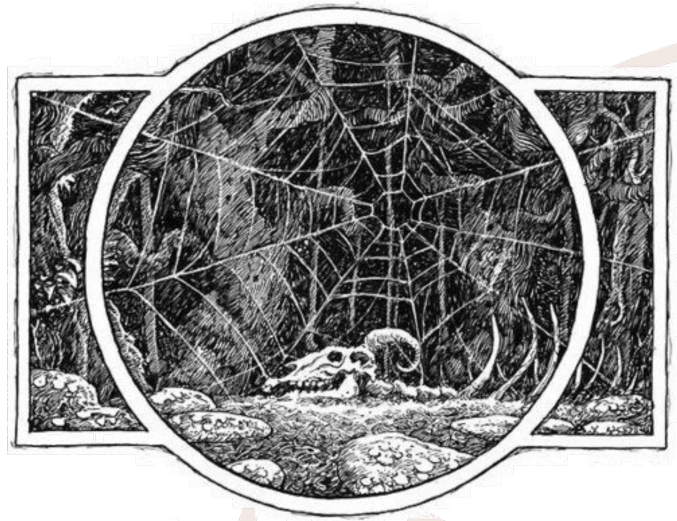
Radagast the Brown was one of the five wizards sent to Middle-earth by the Valar to contest the will of Sauron. He served Manwë's wife, **Yavanna** (Queen of Arda). He was called the Brown which possibly is an allusion to his strong love for animals and growing things. He existed at the beginning, during the **Song of the Ainur** at the start of creation, as a spirit. Unlike Gandalf the Grey or Saruman the White, Radagast was not much of a traveler. He spent almost all of his time on the western borders of the **Greenwood** (Mirkwood Forest's original name). Like the other wizards he was sent to encourage and support the free peoples of Middle-earth against the Dark Lord. In T.A. 2460 Sauron returned to Middle-earth setting himself up at the ancient abandoned Elvish fortress of **Dol Goldur** (in the Southern Greenwood). Rumors spread of a "shadow" taking root in the Greenwood causing much of the forest to grow into decay (and the forest became called Mirkwood thereafter). He was friends with the Great Eagles; although his close neighbor Beorn wasn't sociable, Radagast visited him from time to time and the skin-changer considered him "not bad for a wizard."



The **Necromancer** (Sauron) is a **Maia** originally named **Mairon**. Although he initially served the Valar, **Aulë**, he became enthralled by the Valar, Melkor. Sauron was absolutely fixated on order and the abolishing of chaos. For this reason he shared his new Master's love of power. He sought to use it to bring order to disorder. Sauron demonstrated the ability to take the form of a wolf, a serpent, and a vampire (see top right). After Melkor's downfall, Sauron continued his Master's work attempting to conquer Middle-earth throughout the Second and Third Ages. During the Second Age, he assumed an Elvish form (see image top center) and lived among the Elves of Eregion teaching them how to craft the **Rings of Power**. He secretly crafted the One Ring so he could control anyone who wore any of the Rings of Power. Thus, Sauron became known as the **Lord of the Rings**. He failed to corrupt the Elves and then turned his attention to attacking cities and settlements along the western coastline of Eriador; it was at this time he became known as the Dark Lord. He managed corrupting the **Númenóreans** (a civilization of Men who lived on the island of **Númenor**). Eventually Sauron convinced the Númenóreans to invade Valinor and worship Melkor. Númenor was destroyed by a massive tidal wave sent by **Eru Ilúvatar** in S.A. 3319. Those Númenóreans remaining loyal to the Elves and the Valar, sailed eastward settling on the continent of Middle-earth establishing two kingdoms, **Arnor and Gondor**. During the War of the Last Alliance, Elves and Men in S.A. 3441 fought Sauron at the foot of Mount Doom. Sauron struck down King Elendil of Númenor. Isildur, the King's son, managed cutting the One Ring from Sauron's hand thereby destroying the Dark Lord's bodily form. Sauron's spirit fled Middle-earth. In T.A. 1050 Sauron returned and, as the Necromancer, established himself at the Elven fortress of Dol Goldur. Following an attack by the White Council (e.g. Gandalf, Elrond, Galadriel, Saruman and Círdan) in T.A. 2941, Sauron returned to his fortress of **Barad-dûr** in **Mordor**, marshalling his armies. All subsequent events are described in Tolkien's trilogy *The Lord of the Rings*.

CHAPTER EIGHT: FLIES AND SPIDERS

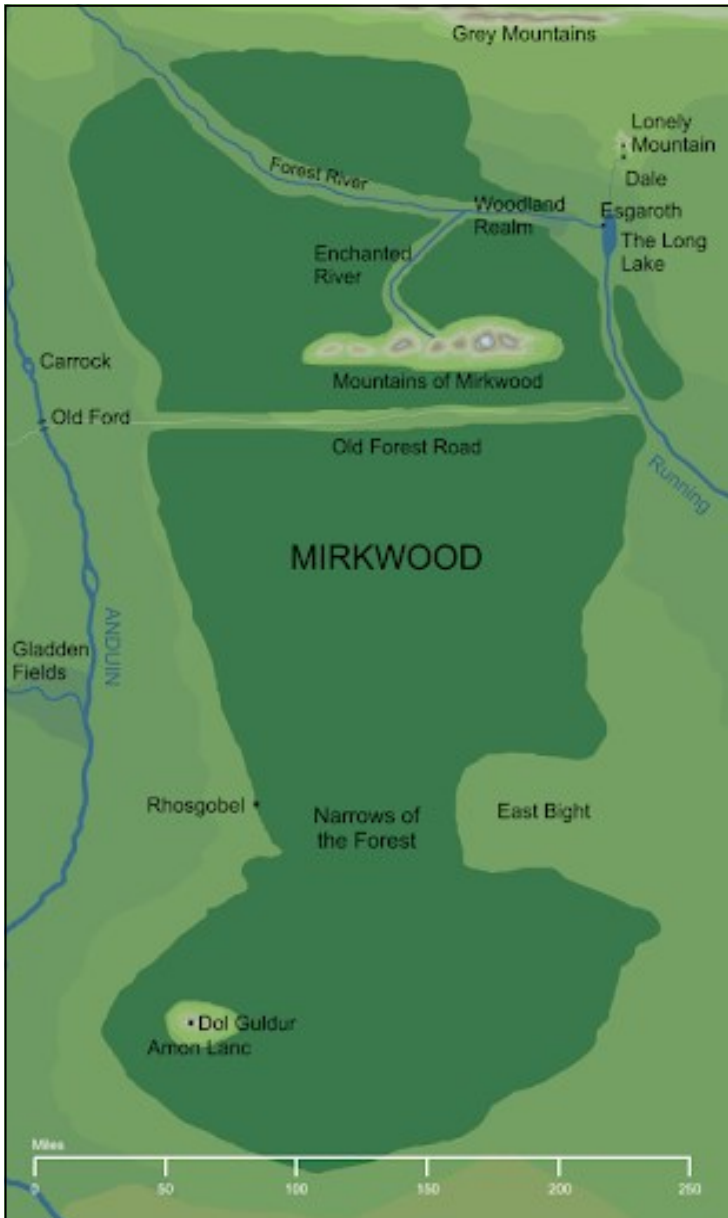
Mirkwood is dark and unpleasant: the expedition runs low on food, water, and hope. Bombur falls into the Enchanted River and sleeps for four days. Balin sees firelight off the path. Everyone in the group leaves the path to go to the light. They become lost when they interrupt an Elven feast. The Party is captured by spiders while Bilbo comes to the rescue. Thorin is captured by the Wood-elves.



COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

8.1. A motif is an element, idea or concept constantly repeated throughout a story. In the case of *The Hobbit*, Bilbo's luck is a repeated pattern. On pages 197 and 198 Thorin and Company encounter a white deer. The appearance of white animals is a motif commonly used in numerous faërie stories in the English, Celtic and German traditions. What does the appearance of a white stag (sometimes called the White Hart) by the Enchanted River suggest is about to happen to Thorin and Company (197-198 and Internet)?

— MIDDLE-EARTH HISTORY & LORE —



Mirkwood was an extensive forest covering some 77,000 square miles. Originally called **Greenwood the Great**, Mirkwood was a tiny fraction of what remained of a vast ancient woodland covering most of Middle-earth near the time of Arda's creation. The forest is divided into two equal halves—a northern half and southern half—by the **Old Forest Road**. Although the Dwarves were building roads as early as the First Age, it's likely the Old Road was established around T.A. 1999 (around the same time the Kingdom of Erebor came into being). The road linked the Dwarves of Erebor with their kin at Khazad-dûm. The road also established economic ties with both Men and Elves. This last fact, the road linking Dwarves and Elves, reveals the relationship between these two groups was friendly sometime in the distant past. The road became impassable decades before the events of *The Hobbit*. Thus, a second route was constructed further to the north. Rising between these two roads are the Mountains of Mirkwood. A river, called the **Enchanted River**, flows from the Mountains' northern margin the western boundary of the **Elvenking's Halls**.

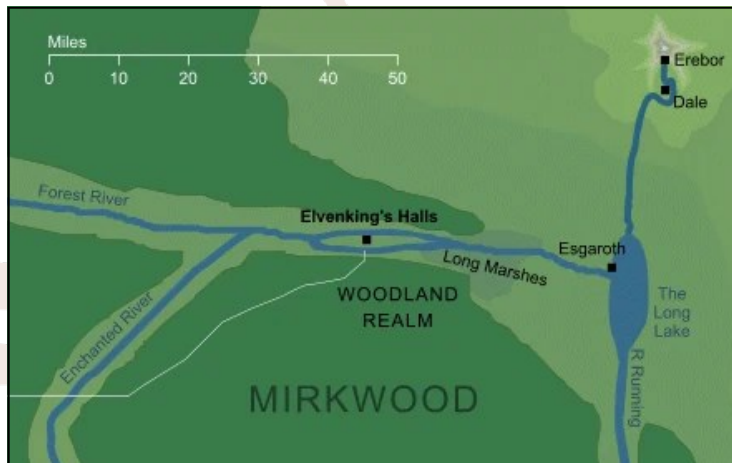
The ruins of the Elvish fortress of **Dol Guldur** were used by Sauron when he returned to Middle-earth in T.A. 2460. The **Lady Galadriel** destroyed this fortress about a month before Sauron was defeated for good in March of T.A. 3019. Following Sauron's defeat, the **Elven King Thranduil** and Galadriel's husband, **Lord Celeborn**, renamed Mirkwood **Eryn Lasgalen** (Elvish for "wood of green leaves"). The forest recovered its original luster with the departure of Sauron and the spiders. Some other noteworthy geographical facts about this region: the wizard, Radagast the Brown lived at **Rhosgobel** (see map at left) and the Men of Lake-town dwelled on the Long Lake (look northeast). During the Fourth Age, many of the Woodland Elves joined their kin at Lórien and Rivendell or left Middle-earth for good by sailing to Valinor. Those that remained eventually faded and became forest spirits.

8.2. Tolkien writes about giant spiders in the *Silmarillion*, *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*. Why was he so fixated on spiders (Internet research)?

8.3. How did Bilbo's Elvish dagger receive its name (p.208-216)?

8.4. What evidence is there that the Wood-elves are "Good People" (p.221)?

VOCABULARY: WHIRRING (P.194), WAIL (P.197), ENCHANTED (P.198), EERIE (P.199), FASTENED (P.204), LAMENTED (P.208).



The **Woodland Realm** was the great kingdom of the **Silvan Elves** in Mirkwood. The realm was founded in S.A. 750 after the War of Wrath in which Melkor and his armies were defeated. The Silvan Elves declined the offer of the Valar to go live in Valinor. Instead, they established the Woodland Realm. The Woodland Elves participated in the war against Sauron as part of the Last Alliance of Elves and Men in S.A. 3430. Thranduil was the second of the Elvish kings of the Woodlands (his father **Oropher** was killed at *Dagor Dagolad*, the battle with Sauron). Around T.A. 1100 the Necromancer established a stronghold at Dol Guldur. Thranduil retreated to the northeast and constructed a fortress and great halls underground. The Enchanted River serves as a protective barrier for his realm.



the monstrous spider **Ungoliant** (depicted standing beside Melkor in the image above) was alive during the Years of the Trees (approximately 50,000 years before the start of the First Age). She and Melkor destroyed the Two Trees—**Laurelin the Gold** and **Telperion the Silver**—by sucking the light out of them. Ungoliant and Melkor then fled Valinor for Middle-earth to escape the wrath of the **Ainur**. Melkor betrayed his spider-ally and she tried killing him. He was only saved when his cries for assistance were answered by his balrog-servants. She escaped south, but not before her offspring began populating Middle-earth; it's not known whether or not she continued to live during the Fourth Age or after. The most infamous of Ungoliant's offspring is Shelob. Shelob isn't as large as her mother; however, she is giant—many times the size of a cow. Her lair is **Cirith Ungol**, a pass in the **Ephel Dúath Mountains** (in the common-tongue, Mountains of Shadow), on the western borders of Mordor. She has had offspring of her own; they are smaller than her in stature but similarly intelligent and cruel like their mother. Her babies are the spiders Bilbo Baggins encounters in Mirkwood in Chapter Eight: Flies



CHAPTER NINE: BARRELS OUT OF BOND

Lost in Mirkwood, Thorin and Company are captured by the Wood-elves and imprisoned because they refuse to reveal they are traveling to The Lonely Mountain. Bilbo, invisible, follows them into the underground palace of the Elven king. He finds Thorin and later discovers the water-gate, the palace's delivery entrance. When the chief guard becomes drunk, Bilbo steals his keys, releases the dwarves, and hides them in empty barrels. The barrels are cast into the river to float to Lake-town; Bilbo follows them riding on top of a barrel.



COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

9.1. Bilbo follows his friends into the palace of the Elven-king. He could escape, but he feels obligated to his friends. Thus, he cannot leave without helping them escape. Bilbo thinks the following to himself: "I am like a burglar that can't get away, but must go on miserably burgling the same house day after day (p.226)." Is Bilbo's quote an example of situational or verbal irony (or both)? Explain.

9.2. The Dwarves are imprisoned and desperate. Bilbo buoys their spirit by helping everyone stay connected. Tolkien's writing style is sometimes criticized as heavy because he doesn't follow a natural-feeling syntax; however, he is almost universally recognized as a master storyteller. What effect does Tolkien achieve by removing Gandalf from the situation forcing Thorin and Company to rely on small insignificant Bilbo (p. 227)?

9.3. "Luck of an unusual kind was with Bilbo then (Pg. 230)." Do you believe Bilbo's successful escape plan is due to luck, opportunism, or personal courage? Cite incidents from this chapter to support your answer. Don't forget to record the page number(s) you draw your information from.

VOCABULARY: HASTE (P. 223), NIMBLE (P.225), WRETCHED (P.227), UNUSUAL (P.229), JOSTLING (P.234), WADED (P.238).

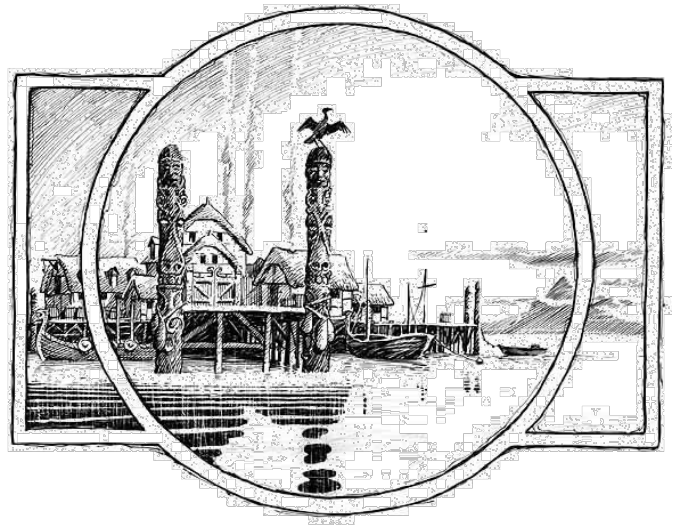
— MIDDLE-EARTH HISTORY & LORE —



Thranduil, also known as the Elvenking, was a Sindharin Elf and King of the Silvan Elves of Mirkwood of the Woodland Realm. He was the son of Oropher and father of Legolas (a prominent character in *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy). Thranduil's kin originally settled in a forest called Doriath in Beleriand. However, Beleriand was destroyed during the War of Wrath in F.A. 587. Thranduil made his way east to Greenwood the Great (later called Mirkwood) where his father Oropher established the Woodland Realm in around S.A. 750. Oropher was killed during the War of the Last Alliance in S.A. 3434. Prince Thranduil became known as Elvenking thereafter.

CHAPTER TEN: A WARM WELCOME

Wet and bedraggled, the expedition arrives at Lake-town, a trading town of men. They are welcomed by the Master, and the townspeople recall prophecies of the downfall of the dragon and a return to an affluent past. After two weeks of rest the expedition departs for The Lonely Mountain and their encounter with Smaug.



COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

10.1. "As for the Master he saw there was nothing else for it but to obey the general clamor, for the moment at any rate, and to pretend to believe that Thorin was what he said (p.251)." What does the above quotation suggest about the character and leadership qualities of the Master of Lake-town?

10.2. The extended stay in Lake-town does the dwarves and Bilbo a lot of good. Thorin, in particular, was given his own home and he "looked and walked as if his kingdom was already regained and Smaug chopped up into little pieces (p.252)." Thorin seems to be changing the closer he gets to the Lonely Mountain. Why?

VOCABULARY: LOOMED (P.241), FAMISHED (P.246), DARESAY (P.252).



Erebor was established in T.A. 1999 as a Dwarvish colony at **The Lonely Mountain**. The colony developed into a permanent settlement, and eventually a city, following the discovery of the Arkenstone. The **Arkenstone** was a multi-colored sparkling gem that glowed softly in the dark. This brilliant gem was adopted by Erebor's kings as a symbol of their royal power and an heirloom of their royal house (passed on from father to son). Over the next two hundred years, Erebor was the greatest and wealthiest city of Middle-Earth. For reasons Tolkien never really explains, the Dwarves abandoned Erebor to join their cousins in the **Grey Mountains** to the northwest. Thus, Erebor was abandoned for three hundred years. However, conflicts with the dragons of the Grey Mountains forced the Dwarves to leave by T.A. 2590. They broke into two groups: one heading east settling the **Iron Hills** while the other group returned to Erebor. In T.A. 2770, the dragon Smaug flew in from the north attacking The Lonely Mountain. After laying waste to both Erebor and Dale, Smaug made the mountain his lair while hoarding the kingdom's wealth for himself. Those dwarves who managed surviving the attack fled and lived as exiles in the **Blue Mountains** until Thorin Oakenshield returned in T.A. 2941.



Dale was a city built by Men of the North taking advantage of the wealth generated by the Dwarves of Erebor. Dale was situated in the valley between the south-western and south-eastern arms of the Lonely Mountain, nestled in a sharp U-shaped bend of the **River Running**. It was known as a merry town that traded, mainly in food-supplies, for the skills and craft pieces of the Dwarves. Dale's toy market was the wonder of the North and the town was renowned for its bells. The city was destroyed by Smaug in T.A. 2770. The Men of **Lake-Town**, descendants of Dale, hoped Thorin's return meant a return to former glory.

Lake-town, also known as **Esgaroth upon the Long Lake**, was the township of the Lake-men in Wilderland. The town was constructed entirely of wood standing upon wooden pillars sunk into the bed of the Long Lake, as a protection against the dragon Smaug (who dwelt nearby in the Lonely Mountain); it is not known when Lake-town was built; however, it's believed the descendants of the former Kingdom of Dale built it following the destruction of their capital by Smaug.

CHAPTER ELEVEN: ON THE DOORSTEP

The expedition finds the secret side-door but cannot open it, and they all become gloomy. One evening Bilbo hears a thrush cracking snails and realizes that this is the sign that the door will open. The Company manages to open the door and enter The Lonely Mountain.



COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

11.1. Pathetic fallacy is a literary element referring to the attribution of human emotions or actions to inanimate things (non-human things like rocks and clouds, for example); it's a form of personification that occurs in poetic descriptions, when, for example, clouds seem sullen, leaves dance, or when rocks seem indifferent. In what sense is the Desolation of Smaug—the land doesn't appear to support life or growing things—an example of pathetic fallacy (p.257)?

11.2. Balin and Bilbo stood some distance below the Front Gate. Then the narrator observes "[they] were at the end of their journey, but as far as ever, it seemed, from the end of their quest." Explain what this statement means (p.258)?

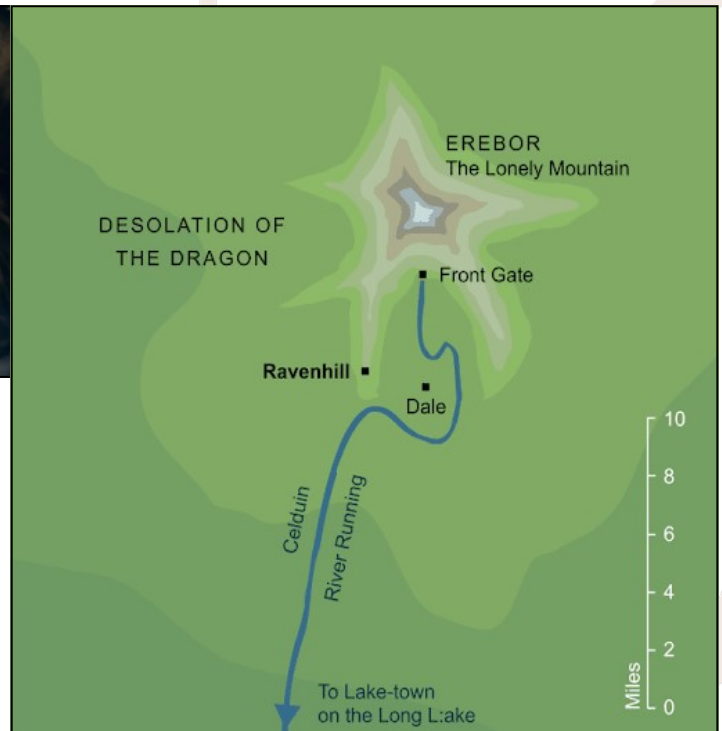
11.3. Foreshadowing is a literary device where writers hint at something that is going to happen later in the story; it helps the reader develop expectations about upcoming events and creates tension. Cite an example of foreshadowing from Chapter Eleven.

VOCABULARY: DESOLATION (P.257), PERILOUS (P.258), MARAUDING (P.260), YAWNING (P.266).

— MIDDLE-EARTH HISTORY & LORE —

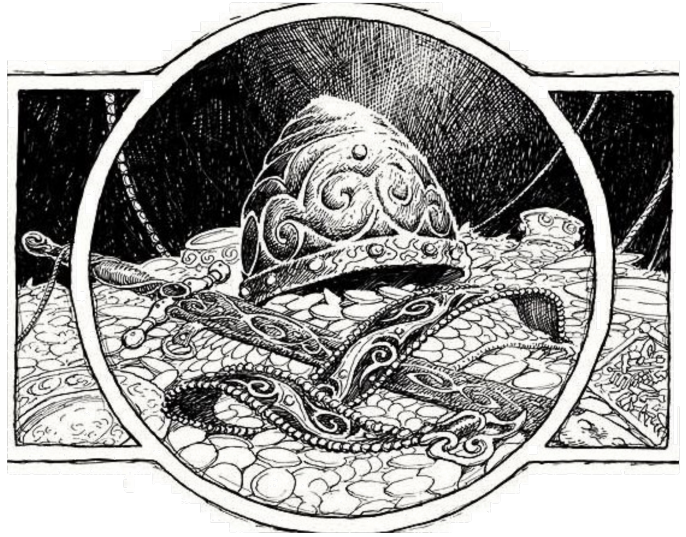


Ravenhill was an outlying hill beneath The Lonely Mountain. It stood at the end of a ridge of high ground extending southwards from the mountain itself overlooking the River Running and the valley of Dale. The Dwarves of Erebor built a guard-post on the hill, about five hours march from the Front Gate to the Mountain, and above its chamber for many years lived friendly intelligent ravens like **Carc**; it was they, and the ravens of the hill, that gave the hill its name.



CHAPTER TWELVE: INSIDE INFORMATION

Bilbo enters a secret side-door and, overcoming his fear, goes down a tunnel towards Smaug's lair. Overwhelmed by the splendor of the dragon-hoard, he steals a large cup and escapes. The theft wakes Smaug, who goes through the Front Gate, attacks the expedition on the mountainside, driving them into the tunnel. Bilbo volunteers to explore the lair again. This time he has a dangerous conversation with Smaug, during which he spots an unarmored patch on the dragon's breast. Smaug later attacks their camp, but thanks to Bilbo's forewarning the dwarves are safe, though trapped, inside the tunnel.



COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

- 12.1. On page 269 Bilbo descends into the inner-halls and chambers of Erebor. In the process, Tolkien describes Bilbo as "a very different hobbit from the one that had run out without a pocket-handkerchief from Bag End long ago." Cite text from page 269 indicating how Bilbo has changed yet remained the same.
- 12.2. Bilbo quotes at least two of his father's sayings. What are they (p.267, 277 and 290)?
- 12.3. What is it about Bilbo that puzzles Smaug (critical thinking)?
- 12.4. List three important characteristics about dragons Bilbo learns while talking to Smaug (p.279-281).
- 12.5. A proverb is a short pithy stating a general truth or piece of advice. Find an example of a proverb on page 283.
- 12.6. What is the Arkenstone of Thráin (p.287)?

VOCABULARY: DIMLY (P.270), DIRE (P.271), EAGERLY (P.277), CALAMITIES (P.279), ANXIOUS (P.285).



Smaug was the greatest fire-breathing dragon (**fire drake**) of the Third Age. Dragons served Melkor during the First Age in the War of Wrath (which ended in Melkor's defeat). Dragons served Melkor but it is not entirely clear how they came to exist in the first-place. Specifically, only Eru Ilúvatar was capable of actually creating life. Melkor, however, could alter, mar and change existing creatures—like he corrupted Elves turning them into orcs and corrupted Ents thereby making trolls. Some Tolkien scholars argue dragons were indeed created by Eru, and Melkor managed getting to them early and corrupting them (as he did with Men). In the case of Smaug, it's unlikely he was from one of the first generations of fire drakes from the North (like the ones serving Melkor back in the First Age). This is because even Smaug considered himself relatively young for a dragon (which Gandalf confirms) when he first appeared in Middle-earth's history in T.A. 2770. For the next two centuries Smaug only occasionally left The Lonely Mountain to apparently carry away people (he really liked eating maidens) and continue the destruction of Dale. The area surrounding the mountain became known as the **Desolation of the Dragon** (Smaug). Interestingly, while the Dwarves and Bilbo were traveling to Erebor, Gandalf traveled to Dol Guldur and confirmed the Necromancer was in fact Sauron, the Dark Lord. Gandalf was concerned Sauron might be capable of commanding Smaug's allegiance, using the dragon to devastating effect; it's for this reason Gandalf sought to neutralize Smaug and limit Sauron's growing power in the North of Middle-earth.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN: NOT AT HOME

Encouraged by Bilbo, the dwarves go down into the hall and find Smaug gone. Bilbo finds and hides the Arkenstone. The dwarves celebrate their recovery of the treasure. Bilbo reminds them that Smaug is still a peril, and they move to a watchtower on a spur of the mountain.



COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

13.1. Why does Bilbo conceal the Arkenstone from the dwarves (p.293)?

13.2. What happens to their “dwarfish hearts” when Thorin and the others see the piles of gold and jewels in Smaug’s lair (p. 294 and 295)?

13.3. Why do Bilbo and Balin want to leave the main gateway to the Mountain (p.299)?

VOCABULARY: MOUND (P.292), WITS (P.294), BEWITCHMENT (P.296), DOMINION (P.301).

— MIDDLE-EARTH HISTORY & LORE —



Hobbits and wizards, with exception of course, are great encouragers. On pages 289 and 290 the Dwarves despair because Smaug damages the door when he unleashes his fury upon the mountain side. They couldn't open the door fearing they'd die trapped in the mountain. Bilbo, however, encourages them when he says, "Come, come! While there's life there's hope!" Interestingly, in Peter Jackson's film version of the *The Hobbit* (2012), Galadriel, the Lady of Lothlórien, asks Gandalf why he choose Bilbo to go on the quest to Erebor. Gandalf responds, "...I don't know. Saruman believes it is only great power that can hold evil in check, but that is not what I have found. I found it is the small everyday deeds of ordinary folk that keep the darkness at bay. Small acts of kindness and love...and he gives me courage." This interaction between Galadriel and Gandalf doesn't actually take place in any of Tolkien's books; however, the conversation perfectly illustrates the vital role wizard and hobbit alike play in the unfolding of Middle-earth's history and the fulfilling of its virtuous destiny.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN: FIRE AND WATER

Smaug flies to avenge himself on the men of Lake-town. He is destroying the town when a thrush tells Bard the Bowman, a descendant of the former Lords of Dale, about the bare, vulnerable spot on Smaug's breast. Bard slays the dragon and directs his people's efforts to feed and shelter themselves. When the Elvenking hears of Smaug's death, he sets out to seize the treasures of Erebor while also assisting the people of Lake-town once he hears of its distress. Eleven days after Smaug's death, a combined army of Men and Elves marches on The Lonely Mountain.

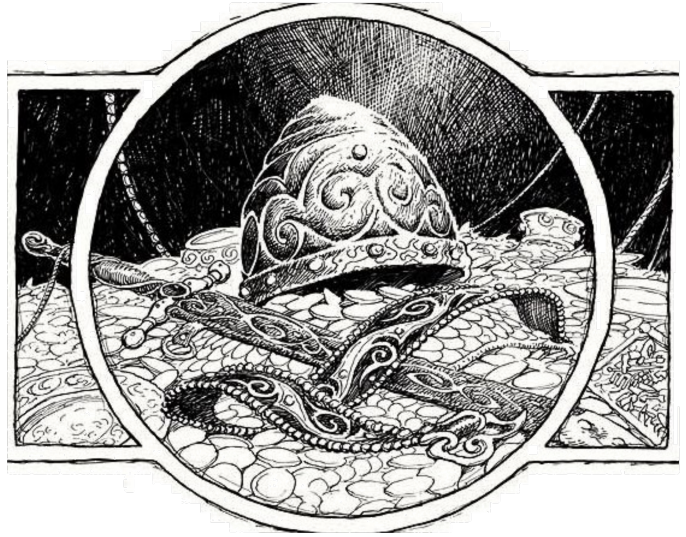
COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

14.1. How does Bard manage to slay the dragon (p.307)?

14.1. In what sense could the ease with which Smaug was killed be potentially regarded as disappointing for readers (critical thinking)?

14.2. Why do you think Tolkien names the man who slays the dragon after a word for poet, e.g. Bard (critical thinking)?

VOCABULARY: SELDOM (P.302), UNQUENCHABLE (P.305), WAXING (P.308), PERISHED (P.311).



Bard the Bowman was a man of Lake-town and later the first of the restored Kings of Dale. He was a skilled archer and the heir of **Girion**, the last Lord of Dale. Noted for his grim face and spirit, he was an able archer who inherited a dragon-killing **Black Arrow** from his ancestors. He organized the defense of Lake-town when the Smaug attacked following the encounter with Bilbo at The Lonely Mountain.



On page 295 Thorin gives Bilbo a mighty gift, a mithril shirt. **Mithril**, also known as Moria steel or Moria silver, was a precious silvery metal, stronger than steel but much lighter in weight, which was mined by the Dwarves of Khazad-dûm. A kingly gift, the mithril-coat Thorin gave to Bilbo was worth more than the entire Shire itself. Dwarves prized mithril above all other precious metals and had a secret name for it which they refused to reveal.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN: THE GATHERING OF THE CLOUDS

Summoned by the thrush, Roäc, a raven of an ancient family friendly to the Dwarves, tells the Thorin of the death of Smaug and the gathering of Men and Ives. Roäc advises Thorin to deal with Bard, but Thorin sends for aid from his cousin Dáin and fortifies the Front Gate. Thorin denies that Bard has a right to any of the treasure, and Bard declares the mountain besieged. Bilbo is sick of the whole business.



COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

15.1. How did Ravenhill get its name (p.315)?

15.2. On page 317 Roäc informs the Dwarves that Smaug was killed by the Men of Esgorath (Lake-town). The Old Raven goes on to explain that news of Smaug's demise is spreading across the countryside. Some people were happy for the Dwarves but others were not. The Raven observes "[you] may go back to your halls in safety; all the treasure is yours—for the moment." What is Roäc implying when he says "for the moment" (critical thinking)?

15.3. Find a passage in this chapter showing that the dwarves and Bilbo want peace with their neighbors (p.320-321).

15.4. Briefly list the reasons Bard thinks his people deserve part of the treasure (p.322-323).

VOCABULARY: AMENDS (P.317), CONTRIVED (P.319), SMOTE (P.324), PARLEY (P.324).

— MIDDLE-EARTH HISTORY & LORE —



Ravens were large black birds. The intelligent ravens of **Ravenhill** near Erebor, could live to a great age and some could even speak **Westron** (the common tongue) and were friendly with the Dwarves of Erebor. Carc had been one of these, and his son Roäc was the leader of the remaining ravens around T.A. 2941 (when Thorin and Company reclaimed the mountain from Smaug). In traditional folklore, ravens and crows typically mean "ill news" or "bad luck"; however, it appears Tolkien was more influenced by the **Edda** (Norse mythology) where two ravens, Huginn and Muminn, acted as Odin's faithful messengers.



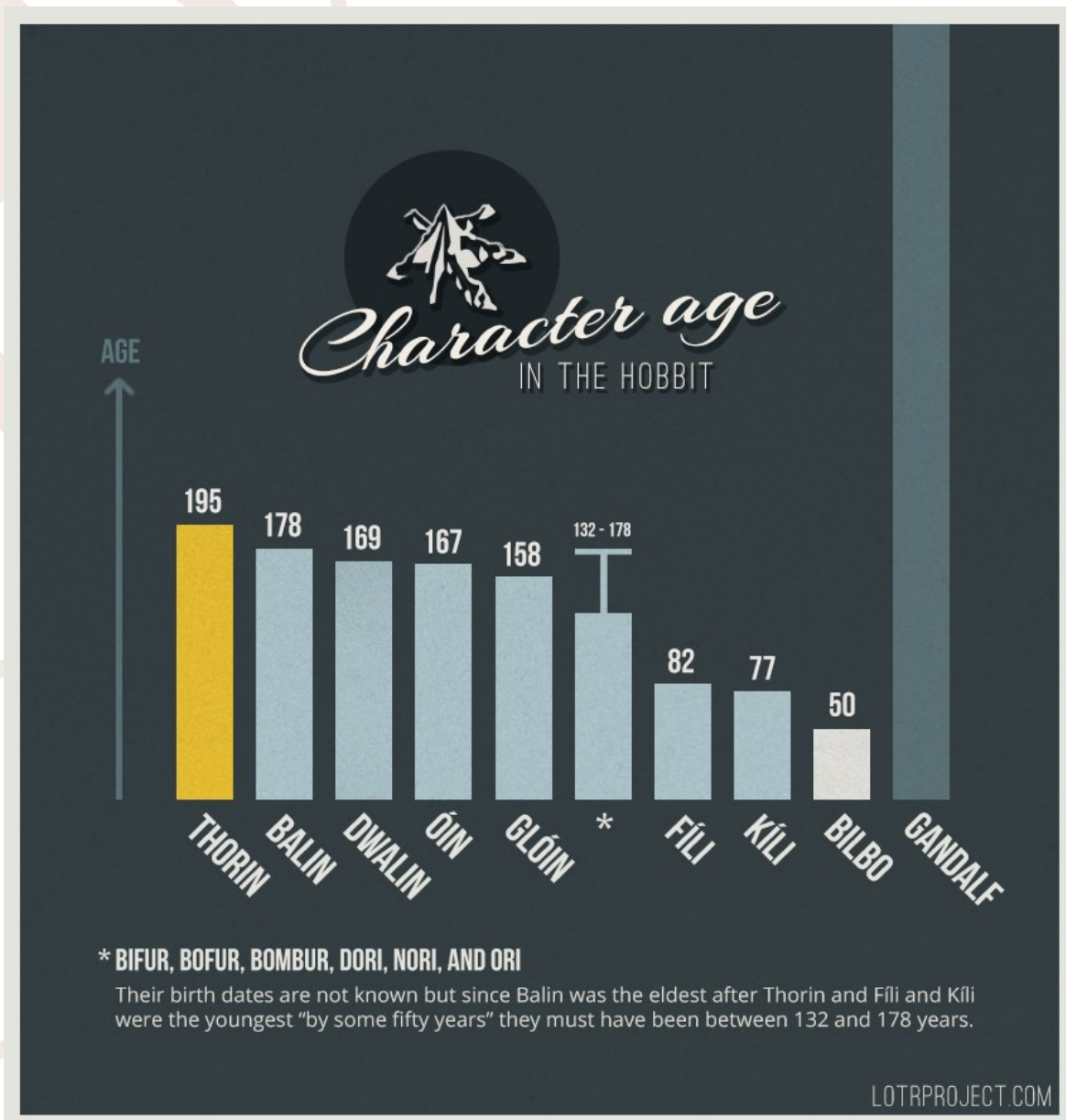
CHAPTER SIXTEEN: A THEIF IN THE NIGHT

Despite Roac's counsel, Thorin prepares for war. To break the impasse, Bilbo gives the Arkenstone to Bard and the Elvenking. He meets Gandalf in their camp. Bilbo returns to the mountain despite the Elvenking's warning about Thorin's anger.

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

- 16.1. In what way is Bilbo trying to help "everyone concerned" (including himself) by giving Bard the Arkenstone (p.330-331)?
- 16.2. Is Bilbo justified in calling himself an "honest burglar" when he knowingly crossed an ethical line by stealing the Arkenstone and giving it to Thorin's enemies (p. 331 and critical thinking)?

VOCABULARY: AVENGED (P.326), BETRAYING (P.331), CLAMBERED (P.332).



CHAPTER SEVENTEEN: THE CLOUD BURSTS

Thorin promises to give to Bard the hobbit's share of the treasure in exchange for the Arkenstone. Dáin's army arrives before the exchange is made, and Bard refuses to let it pass into the Lonely Mountain. The two sides are about to battle when a vast army of goblins and Wargs attacks both. Dwarves, Elves, and Men unite in the face of their common enemy, and the Battle of Five Armies begins.



COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

17.1. Thorin is furious at Bilbo for giving the Arkenstone to Bard. He agrees to give Bilbo's share of the treasure to Bard and Elves in exchange for its return; however, Thorin still considered it might be possible to keep the treasure and get the Arkenstone back (using Dáin's army). Tolkien describes the situation in the following way: the bewilderment of the treasure [was already so strong] upon him [Thorin], he was pondering whether by the help of Dáin he might not recapture the Arkenstone and withhold the share of reward. Tolkien is alluding to Thorin suffering from something called Dragon Sickness. What is Dragon Sickness (use the Encyclopedia of Arda to answer this question, e.g. www.glyphweb.com/arda/d/dragonsickness.php).

17.2. List the participants in the Battle of the Five Armies (p.339).

17.3. The Battle of Five Armies is almost over and things are looking grim for Elves, Men and Dwarves. The clouds were torn by the wind, and a red sunset slashed the West. Bilbo looked to the sky and gave a great cry exclaiming, "The Eagles! The Eagles! The Eagles are coming!" Explain how this event is an example of the literary element *eucatastrophe*. See Chapter Four for a definition of *eucatastrophe*.

VOCABULARY: HAILED (P.333), HEIRLOOM (P.334), HASTENING (P.337), REKINDLED (P.339), SWIFTEST (P.340).

— MIDDLE-EARTH HISTORY & LORE —



Dáin Ironfoot, also known as **Dáin II**, was the Lord of the Iron Hills and cousin to Thorin. He fought at the Battle of Azanulbizar and slayed Azog. He was young for a dwarf, only 32, when he killed the Orc Chieftain. He ultimately became renowned as a great warrior across Middle-earth. During his reign as Lord of the Iron Hills, his people became the strongest in Wilderland (a region lodged between Rivendell in the West and Mirkwood in the East).



Bolg (right) was an Orc chief and the son of Azog (left). After the **Great Goblin** was killed, during an encounter with Thorin and Company in T.A. 2941, his hatred for the Dwarves was solidified. Bolg gathered an army from orc-strongholds along the Misty Mountains and marched them eastward through the Grey Mountains with a host of Wargs and a cloud of bats overhead.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN: THE RETURN JOURNEY

Bilbo comes to his senses the next day and is brought to the camp. On his deathbed, Thorin makes amends with Bilbo. The outcome of the battle is retold: Beorn rescued the wounded Thorin and then killed Bolg, but the battle was not won until the Eagles cleared the mountainside of Goblins. Dáin, the new King under the Mountain, makes a generous settlement with Bard. Bilbo and Gandalf begin the return journey leaving The Lonely Mountain behind.



COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

18.1. On page 348, a dying Thorin meets with Bilbo one last time in order to part as friends. Thorin observes that "if more of us valued food and cheer and song above hoarded gold, it would be a merrier world." What truth was Thorin ultimately trying to convey to Bilbo here (critical thinking)?

18.2. Geography plays a significant role when it comes to characterization in *The Hobbit*. The land shapes the events, peoples and creatures inhabiting it: rustic and down-to-earth Hobbits live inside the green treed hills of The Shire; mechanistic and crude goblins occupy squirreling dark tunnels; Elves dwell in a majestic though decaying Greenwood; vigilant yet aloof, the Eagles watch events from high above in their eyries. At the end of chapter Eighteen, Tolkien describes Bilbo's journey home. He is again nearing the entrance to the Goblin Tunnel. The tunnel is approximately halfway between The Shire and the Lonely Mountain. Bilbo, Tolkien observes, makes a decision to turn his back on adventure because the "Tookish part was getting very tired, and the Baggins was daily getting stronger." With the role of Middle-earth's geography in mind, answer the following questions:

- Where in Middle-earth did Bilbo perform his first truly heroic act? Explain what made this action heroic.
- Discuss how the Misty Mountains functioned as both a physical and symbolic obstacle that Bilbo had to overcome.
- What was Tolkien suggesting when he said Bilbo's "Tookish part was getting very tired" while the "Baggins was daily getting stronger" as he began crossing the Misty Mountains to get home?

VOCABULARY: SORROW (P.346), CAPTIVITY (P.350), DREADFUL (P.352).



One autumn evening in T.A. 2949, many years after the **Battle of Five Armies**, Bilbo was sitting in his study writing his memoirs. There was a knock at the door. Bilbo opened the door surprised to find Gandalf and Balin standing there. During their visit, Balin explained Bard rebuilt Dale and that green things were growing again around The Lonely Mountain. He explained how the Woodland Elves and Dwarves were getting along now and that the Master of the Town stole money from Laketown (only to die of starvation in the wilderness as he fled with his loot). Forty years later Balin mounted an expedition to retake Khazad-dum in T.A. 2989. He hoped to find Thrór's Dwarvish Ring of Power. After a brief battle with a small Orcish occupying force, Balin set up a throne for himself in the **Chamber of Mazarbul** (see image at left) proclaiming himself **Lord of Moria**. For five years a colony thrived. They found many treasures; however, on November 10th T.A. 2994, Balin was killed by an Orc archer. His body was placed in a tomb in the Chamber of Mazarbul (and not discovered until sometime around T.A. 3019 when his kinsmen, Gimli son of Gloin, happened upon it.

CHAPTER NINETEEN: THE LAST STAGE

Bilbo and Gandalf arrive at Rivendell, where Gandalf speaks with Elrond. Bilbo takes the treasure from the troll hoard. Finally Bilbo returns home just in time to save his hole and belongings from being auctioned off. He settles down contentedly, although he finds that he is no longer considered respectable. In an epilogue, Balin and Gandalf visit him several years later.



COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

19.1. What was Gandalf up to while Thorin and Company trekked across Mirkwood (p.357)?

19.2. On page 360, Gandalf and Bilbo are approaching the end of the road. Gandalf looks at Bilbo and observes, "My dear Bilbo...[you] are not the hobbit that you were." In what respects is Bilbo changed?

19.3. Write a detailed paragraph identifying and exploring *The Hobbit's* theme.

VOCABULARY: WEARINESS (P.358), STROLLED (P.359), RESPECTABLE (P.361), PROSPERITY (P.362), DRAGON SICKNESS (P.362).

— MIDDLE-EARTH HISTORY & LORE —



The **Sackville-Baggins** Family was a branch of the Baggins Family. Camellia Sackville was the daughter of the head of the Sackville Family. She married Longo Baggins, the son of Mungo Baggins. Some time prior to the birth of their first son, Otho, Camelia's father died. As was the custom in the "younger" families when there was no male heir, the headship passed to the daughter's eldest son. He would then use his mother's name, and add his father's to it. Thus, the Sackville-Baggins branch was created. Otho married Lobelia Bracegirdle of Hardbottle, and the two had one child, Lotho. Despite being the heir of the wealthy Sackville Family, the Sackville-Bagginses yearned for the headship of the Baggins Family, and more specifically, their residence, Bag End, the residence of Bilbo Baggins. They became hopeful when Bilbo disappeared and were disappointed when he returned. Their hopes were finally dashed

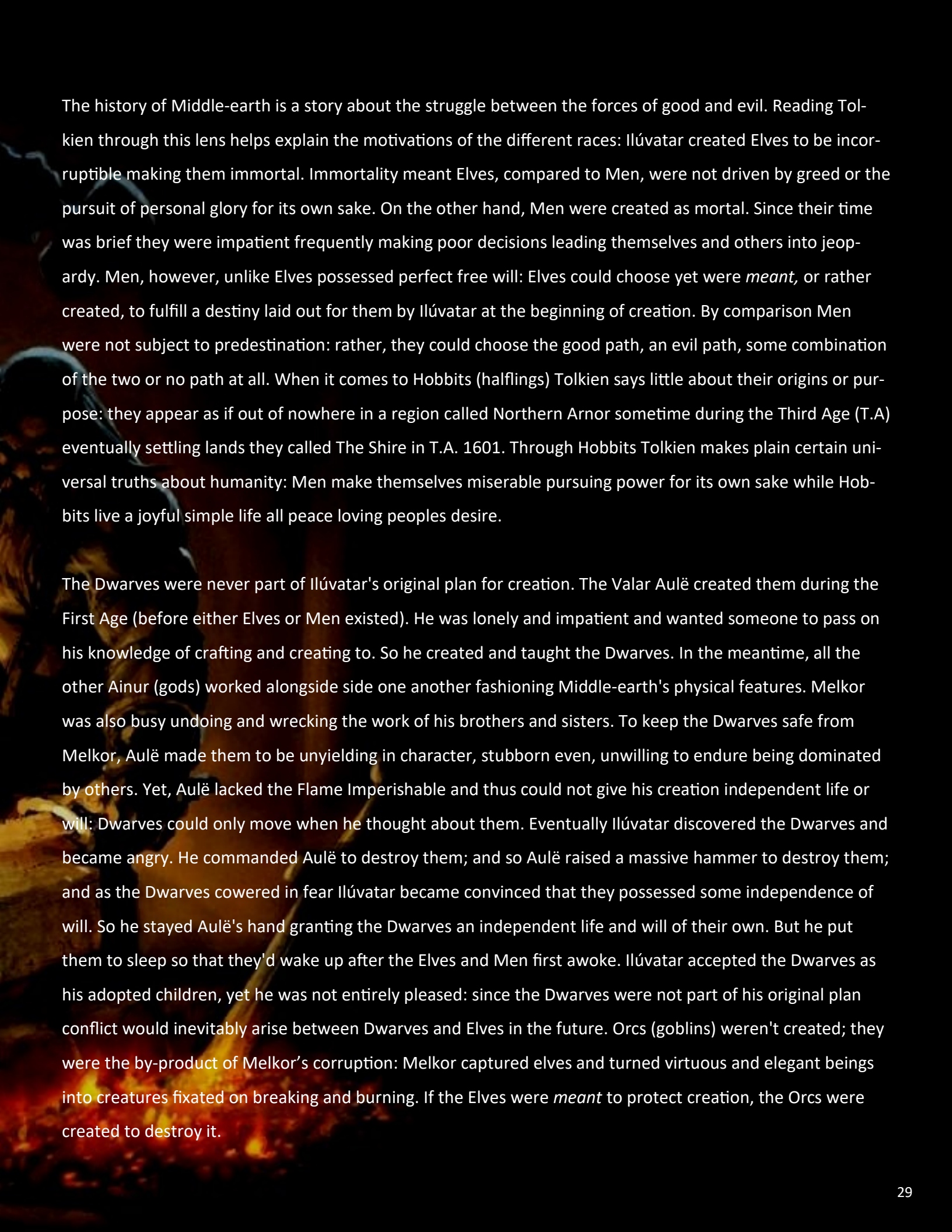
[illegible][illegible][illegible]

Middle-Earth: Origins & Cosmology

To many readers Tolkien's allure is largely a reflection of the time and attention he placed into creating Middle-earth's elaborate history. Most readers are acquainted with only a small part of that history through either *The Hobbit* or *The Lord of the Rings*. However, these books form only a fraction of the entire legendarium. The *Silmarillion* is the primary history explaining the origins and lore of Middle-earth. Tolkien insisted he wasn't writing fiction so much as translating genuine Elvish history into Westron (English or the common tongue); this approach gave his storytelling a significant degree of authenticity. Since Tolkien died before actually finishing the *Silmarillion's* its completion was left to his youngest son, Christopher. The younger Tolkien doubted if the work was even completable: his father's notes were incomplete and lacked organization. Nonetheless he persevered and four years after his father's death the *Silmarillion* was published.

The *Silmarillion* elaborates on the peoples and major events of the First and Second Ages of Middle-earth. The book opens with a creation story where Eru Ilúvatar, the Creator-God, creates angelic beings called Ainur (Elvish for "Holy Ones"). There are two types of Ainur: the greater Valar (Elvish, "powers of the world") and the lesser Maiar ("excellent, admirable"). The Ainur were the offspring of Eru Ilúvatar's thoughts. They drew power from what Tolkien called the Flame Imperishable (Ilúvatar's creative power). Tolkien describes how Ilúvatar spoke to the Ainur through music and their individual voices combined into a perfect harmony. Through music the Ainur learned the purpose of creation and their role within it.

No story is complete without a villain: enter Melkor. He was the most powerful Valar. He began singing his own song causing many of the other Valar and Maiar to stumble and break away from Ilúvatar. Thus, what started as a single harmony turned into two competing themes. Eru introduced a new theme and gave Manwë, another powerful Valar, dominion over his brother Melkor; and finally Ilúvatar introduced a third and final movement through which the ideas of Elves and Men were conceived. Then Eru spoke the word *Eä* ("let it be") and his music became Arda (the world). Ilúvatar created the Ainur to bring his creative vision to life. They created the mountains, rivers, lakes, streams, oceans, hills, plains, and valleys. Manwë ruled the air and wind and created the creatures of the sky (like the Eagles who figure so prominently in *The Hobbit*); yet, Manwë could not control either water or fire. Aulë was able to shape the land but could not create living creatures like Manwë. Unlike his brothers, Melkor didn't seek to create, only to corrupt and dominate and destroy. A war broke out between Melkor and his siblings. This is when Tulkas, a god of war of sorts, entered creation and physically overcame Melkor. Melkor possessed all the spiritual and magical powers of the others; yet, he lacked Tulkas' strength and could not defeat him in battle.



The history of Middle-earth is a story about the struggle between the forces of good and evil. Reading Tolkien through this lens helps explain the motivations of the different races: Ilúvatar created Elves to be incorruptible making them immortal. Immortality meant Elves, compared to Men, were not driven by greed or the pursuit of personal glory for its own sake. On the other hand, Men were created as mortal. Since their time was brief they were impatient frequently making poor decisions leading themselves and others into jeopardy. Men, however, unlike Elves possessed perfect free will: Elves could choose yet were *meant*, or rather created, to fulfill a destiny laid out for them by Ilúvatar at the beginning of creation. By comparison Men were not subject to predestination: rather, they could choose the good path, an evil path, some combination of the two or no path at all. When it comes to Hobbits (halflings) Tolkien says little about their origins or purpose: they appear as if out of nowhere in a region called Northern Arnor sometime during the Third Age (T.A) eventually settling lands they called The Shire in T.A. 1601. Through Hobbits Tolkien makes plain certain universal truths about humanity: Men make themselves miserable pursuing power for its own sake while Hobbits live a joyful simple life all peace loving peoples desire.

The Dwarves were never part of Ilúvatar's original plan for creation. The Valar Aulë created them during the First Age (before either Elves or Men existed). He was lonely and impatient and wanted someone to pass on his knowledge of crafting and creating to. So he created and taught the Dwarves. In the meantime, all the other Ainur (gods) worked alongside side one another fashioning Middle-earth's physical features. Melkor was also busy undoing and wrecking the work of his brothers and sisters. To keep the Dwarves safe from Melkor, Aulë made them to be unyielding in character, stubborn even, unwilling to endure being dominated by others. Yet, Aulë lacked the Flame Imperishable and thus could not give his creation independent life or will: Dwarves could only move when he thought about them. Eventually Ilúvatar discovered the Dwarves and became angry. He commanded Aulë to destroy them; and so Aulë raised a massive hammer to destroy them; and as the Dwarves cowered in fear Ilúvatar became convinced that they possessed some independence of will. So he stayed Aulë's hand granting the Dwarves an independent life and will of their own. But he put them to sleep so that they'd wake up after the Elves and Men first awoke. Ilúvatar accepted the Dwarves as his adopted children, yet he was not entirely pleased: since the Dwarves were not part of his original plan conflict would inevitably arise between Dwarves and Elves in the future. Orcs (goblins) weren't created; they were the by-product of Melkor's corruption: Melkor captured elves and turned virtuous and elegant beings into creatures fixated on breaking and burning. If the Elves were *meant* to protect creation, the Orcs were created to destroy it.

GENEALOGY — OF THE — AINUR

The Ainur, or "Holy Ones," were the first beings created by Eru, the one God. According to the Elda tale known as the Ainulindalë, their spirits predated the creation of Ea, "The World that Is." They came into Existence in the very Beginning. Eru's thought gave birth to two groups of Ainur: the exalted Valar (Q. "Powers") and their lesser but more numerous brethren, the Maiar (Q. "Hands" or "Beautiful Ones"). Together, these immortal servants form a community borne out of Eru's conception, a community entrusted with the both the making and guardianship of Arda, "the Place." (Endor, "Middle-earth," is the central continent in Arda.) Eru (who the Eldar call "Ilúvatar") kindled the Ainur with the Flame Imperishable, the Secret Fire, giving the Holy Ones Being and Vision. After sending the Flame to burn at the heart of Ea, the One spoke to the Ainur. He imparted themes of music and the Ainur sang. They sang separately at first, but Eru eventually gathered them in the Timeless Halls and instilled in them a grand theme. This theme guided the Ainur into harmony and gave birth to the Great Music. The Ainu chorus sang the Great Music, and the pattern and being of all that exists was born. Ea—the World and the Heavens—grew out of the Song, as did Fate.



MELKOR

Called Morgoth. The greatest of the Ainur. He fell from glory when he disrupted the Music of the Ainur and defied the will of Eru Ilúvatar. Morgoth corrupted many of the Ainur to his allegiance, fought the Valar, and corrupted Arda. His theft of the Silmarils and wars against Elves and Men encompassed much of the history of the First Age.



MANDOS

Also called Nāmo, Mandos was the Doomsman of the Valar who pronounced judgement in matters of fate. He was the keeper of the slain in his Halls in the north of Valinor. Mandos knows and remembers nearly all things that were and shall be. Only Ilúvatar knew with full certainty what the full doom of Arda will be, and he will not reveal it all, even to Mandos or Manwë.

LÓRIEN

Also called Irmo, Lórien was the Vala who is master of visions and dreams and keeps the Gardens of Lórien after which he is usually named. His gardens were in the land of the Valar at Lórien, where he dwelled with his consort Estë the Gentle. After the birth of Fëanor, his mother Míriel languished and Manwë delivered her to the care of Irmo.

OROMĒ

Known as the huntsman of the Valar, Oromë delights in hunting monsters and evil creatures, riding on his steed Nahar and blowing his great horn Valaróma. He loves horses and hounds as well as all trees and forests. In Yavanna's woods in Valinor he trains his folk and beasts for hunting.

TULKAS

Tulkas He was the most warlike of the Valar and the spouse of Nessa. Tulkas was so strong and quick that he needed no weapon or steed. He delighted in deeds of prowess and strength such as wrestling and fighting. But he was not dreadful; he laughed loudly in sport and war and his anger dispelled darkness and clouds.



ESTĒ

Grey is her raiment, and rest is her gift. She was the healer of hurts and weariness. Estë the gentle is the wife of Irmo and offers rest and cure of hurts and weariness. Her favorite place is an island in the tree-shadowed lake of Lórellin where she sleeps during day, always clad in grey.

NESSA

Nessa was noted for her speed, fast like an arrow, able to outrun the deer who follow her in the wild, and also for her dancing ability, as she danced on the ever-green lawns of Valimar. She wed Tulkas upon the Isle of Almaren in the Year of the Lamps 3400. In the "due order" in which the queens of the Valar were named, Nessa was named last.

MANWĒ

Manwë Sûlimo was the King of the Valar, husband of Varda Eäntári, Brother of the Dark Lord Melkor (Morgoth), and King of Arda. The winds, airs and birds were his servants. He was the greatest of the Ainur in authority, but not in power. The Lord of the Breath of Arda, he was appointed as its Ruler, hence his most common title, the Elder King.

ULMO

Ulmo is the Lord of Waters and King of the Sea. He is the Ainu most deeply instructed in music, and it is said that in water the Eldar hear the echo of the Music of the Ainur. He lives in the deeps under Ambar who alone has seen where he devises his music and whence he governs all waters, bays and rivers.

AULĒ

Aulë governs the substances of the Ambar and he delights in all works and crafts all of which he is master, from small works of skin to the forging of all lands and mountains and basins of the sea. He made the rocks, the gems and all minerals. Aulë created his own race of beings, the Dwarves, because he was unwilling to wait for the Children of Ilúvatar to appear.



VARDA

Varda is the Queen of Arda and wife to Manwë. She is the highest Valie and the queen of stars; he created the newer stars with the dew from the vats of Telperion, the first of the Two Trees, in preparation for Awakening of the Elves. She also hallowed the Silmarils of Fëanor when he created them. She established the courses of the Sun and Moon. At the end of the First Age, she placed Eärendil as a star in the sky.

YAVANNA

The second of the Queens of the Valar, Yavanna is the spouse of the Smith Aulë. She is the Queen of the Earth, the incarnation of the spirit that makes living things grow and flourish. Her labors have provided the World with its plants, including the Two Trees of Valinor. She was responsible for all things that grew in the earth, from the towering trees to the moss on the rocks.

NIENNA

Nienna was a Queen of the Valar, the sister of Mandos and Irmo, acquainted with grief and sorrow but also pity and courage. The sister of the Fëanturi, she is ranked as one of the eight Aratar, the most powerful of the Valar. Her element is grief, ever mourning for the wounds of the world by evil. Those who listen to her learn wisdom and endurance in grief.

VANA

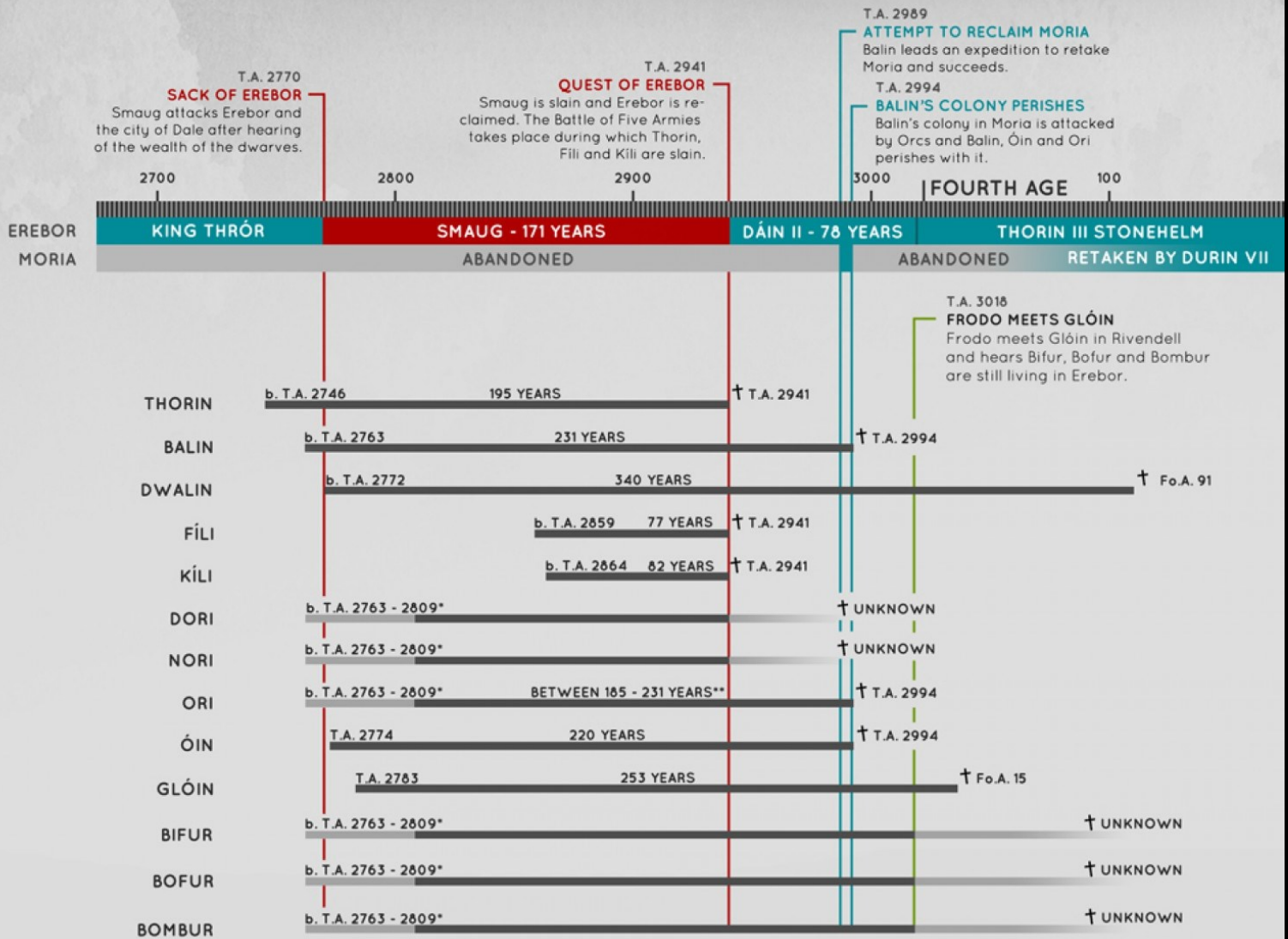
Also called the Ever-young. She was the younger sister of Yavanna and wife of Oromë. "All flowers spring as she passes and open if she glances upon them; and all birds sing at her coming. She dwelt in gardens filled with golden flowers and often came to the forests of Oromë. Before her departure to Middle-earth, the Maia Melian served Vána and Estë, tending the flowering trees in the gardens of Irmo.

VAIRĒ

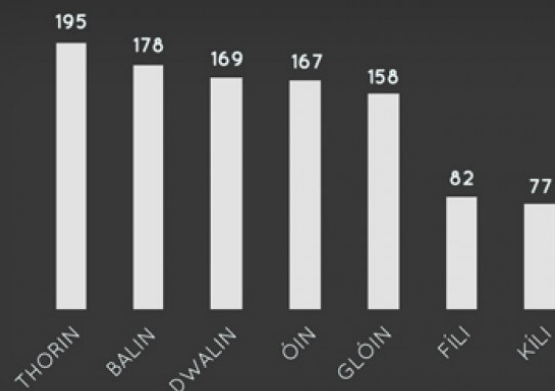
Called the weaver. The Valie was responsible for weaving the story of the World, with which the Halls of Mandos are clothed, and ever widen. After the death of Finwë, Míriel returned to life and entered the service of Vairë, recording all the deeds of the House of Finwë.

TIMELINE OF THE DWARVES IN THE HOBBIT

LOTRPROJECT.COM | EMIL JOHANSSON



AGE AT THE TIME OF THE HOBBIT



NOTES

* The birth dates of Dori, Nori, Ori, Bifur, Bofur and Bombur are not known. However, since it is stated in the Hobbit that Fili and Kili were the youngest "by some fifty years" they must have been born before T.A. 2809. It is also said that Balin was "the eldest left" after Thorin's capture which means they must have been born after T.A. 2763.

** The birth date of Ori is not known, see above, which means his age could be anywhere between 185 and 231 years.

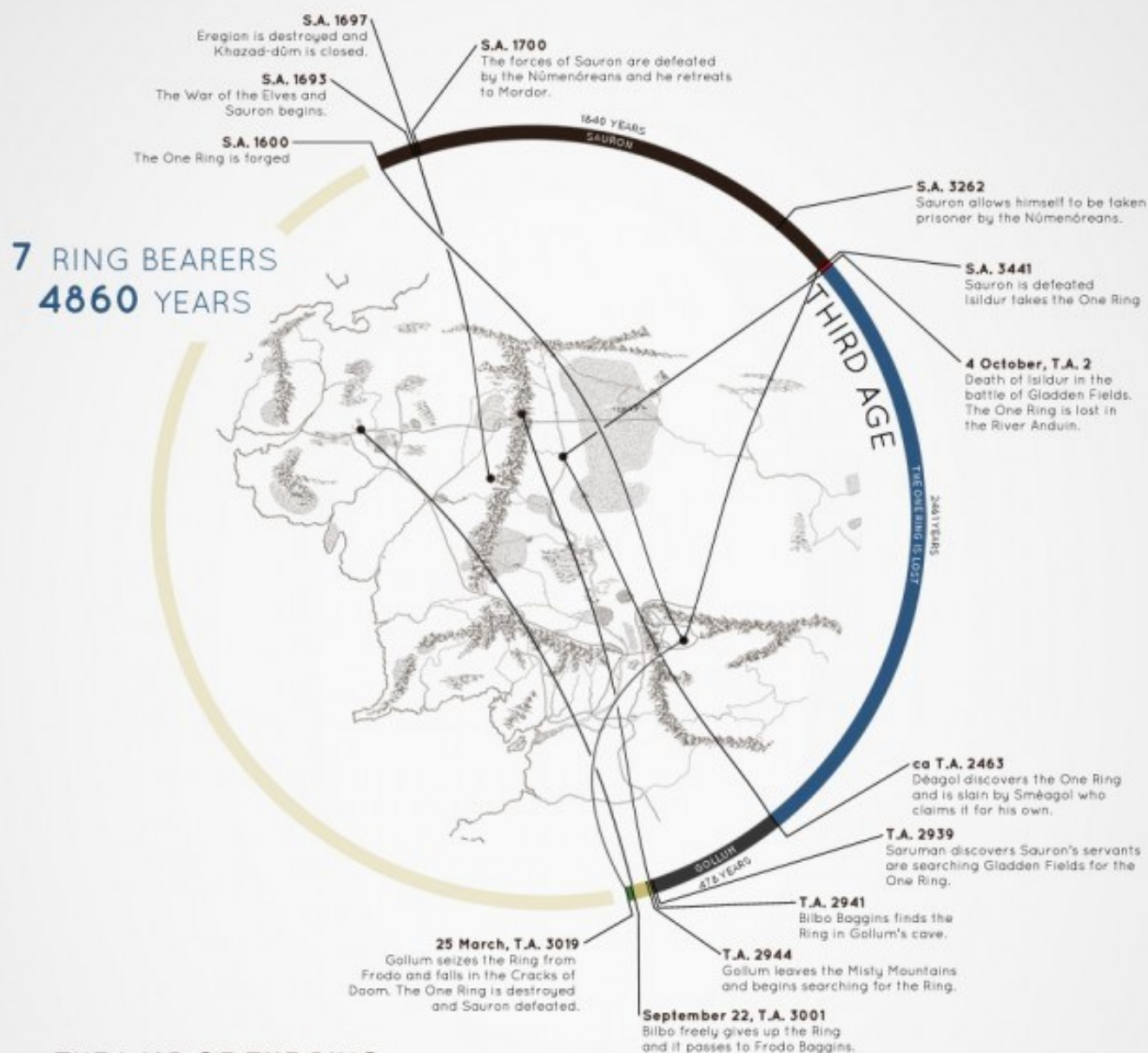
REFERENCES

Birth and death dates are from Appendix A, "Durin's Folk" from the Lord of the Rings. Dates of events are taken from the Hobbit and the Lord of the Rings. Information on the reclaim of Moria in the fourth age has been taken from The Peoples of Middle-earth, "Of Dwarves and Men" by Christopher Tolkien.



TIMELINE OF THE ONE RING

BY LOTRPROJECT.COM | EMIL JOHANSSON



THE WAR OF THE RING

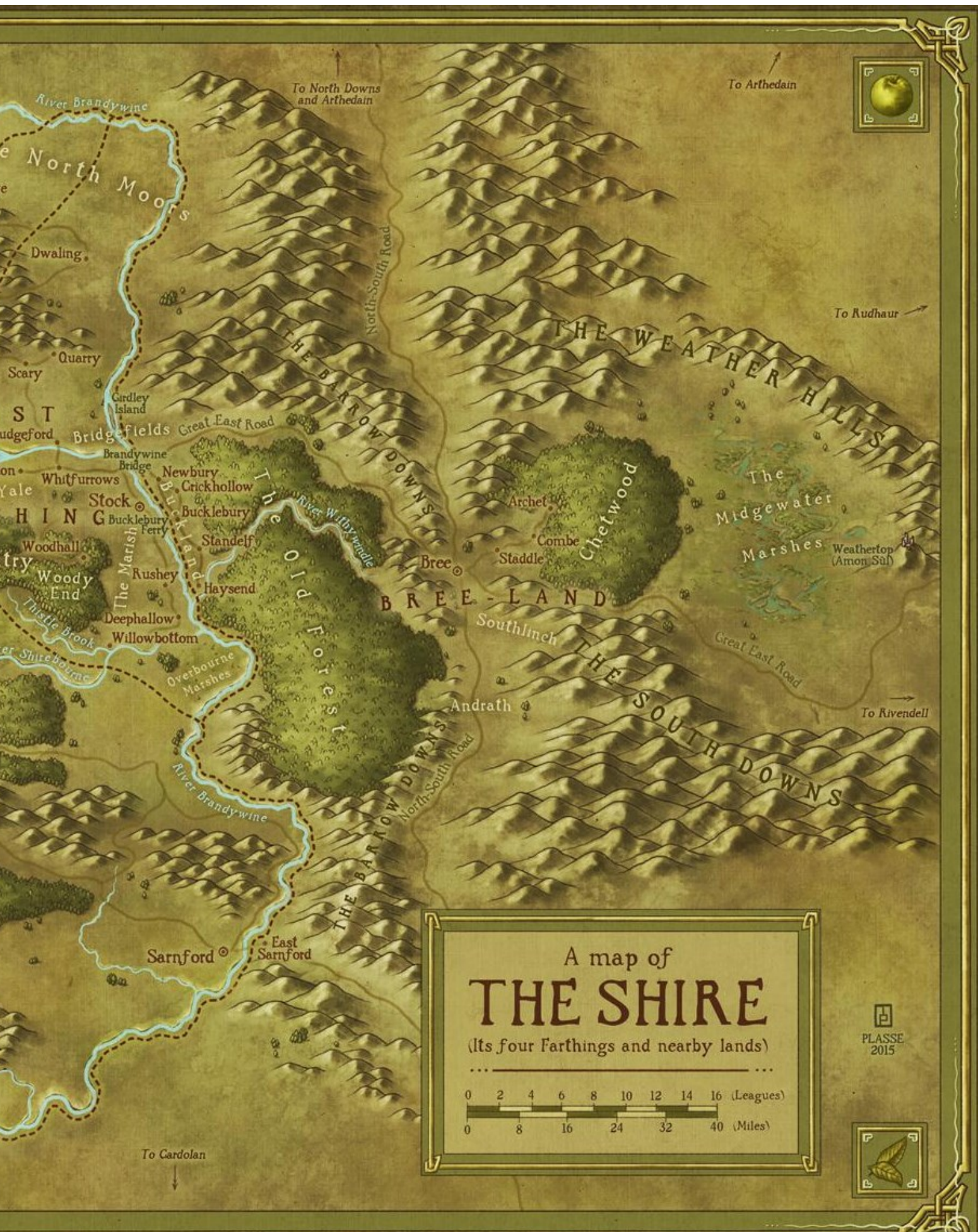
T.A. 3017 — **T.A. 3018**
Gandalf finds a scroll written by Isildur describing the One Ring in Minas Tirith. Gollum is captured by Sauron and under torture reveals the names Shire and Baggins.

T.A. 3018

- 23 March, T.A. 3018**
Gandalf questions Gollum about the Ring in Mirkwood.
- 13 April, T.A. 3018**
Gandalf holds the Ring briefly before throwing it into Frodo's fire and thus revealing its inscription and confirming its identity.
- 27 September, T.A. 3018**
Tom Bombadil wears the Ring but appears unaffected by it.
- 25 October, T.A. 3018**
The Council of Elrond is held in Rivendell and it is decided that the Ring shall be destroyed.
- 25 December, T.A. 3018**
The Fellowship of the Ring sets out from Rivendell on their mission to destroy the One Ring in the fires of Mount Doom.

T.A. 3019

- February 14, T.A. 3019**
Frodo offers the One Ring to Galadriel but she refuses to take it.
- February 26, T.A. 3019**
Boromir attempts to take the Ring from Frodo by force. He dies shortly thereafter defending Merry and Pippin from Saruman's Orcs.
- 13 - 14 March, T.A. 3019**
Samwise Gamgee wears the Ring for about two days while Frodo is held captive by the Orcs in the Tower of Cirith Ungol.
- 25 March, T.A. 3019**
Sam and Frodo reach the Cracks of Doom in Mordor but Frodo refuses to destroy the Ring and claims it for himself. Gollum attacks Frodo and takes the Ring but loses his balance and falls into the fires of Mount Doom, thus destroying the Ring.



A map of
THE SHIRE

(Its four Farthings and nearby lands)

... ..
0 2 4 6 8 10 12 14 16 (Leagues)
0 8 16 24 32 40 (Miles)

PLASSE
2015

A MAP OF MIDDLE-EARTH



AND THE UNDYING LANDS.



THE AGES OF ARDA

The various ages followed one after the other. The beginning and ending of ages is determined by some sort of significant event taking place, e.g. the destruction of the trees or by the decision of a major battle.

THE YEARS OF THE LAMPS

Identifying Acronym: Y.L., e.g. Y.L. 13,241

Duration: 33,537 years

The Years of the Lamps began shortly after the creation of Arda. When the Ainur entered the world, Arda was lifeless having no distinct geographical features. The initial shape of Arda, chosen by the Valar, was a large circular single continent lit by two lamps — one in the north (called Illuin) and one in the south (called Ormal). The lamps were destroyed by an assault by the Valar Melkor. Arda descended into darkness and Arda's perfect symmetry was ruined. The single continent became four: Aman in the far West, Middle-earth in the middle, the Land of the Sun in the far East, and the Dark Land in the far South. With destruction of the lamps so began the Years of the Trees.

THE YEARS OF THE TREES

Identifying Acronym: Y.T., e.g. Y.T. 2772

Duration: 14,373 years

Valinor was lit by the light of Two Trees — Laurelin and Telperion. Time itself began flowing following the creation of the Two Trees. Middle-earth remained in darkness. The only light shining upon it was starlight. Melkor dwelled alongside his lieutenant Sauron in the far north of Middle-earth in a region called Angband. During this period, Aulë also made the Dwarves. But they remained asleep until the Awakening of the Elves. The Elves awoke in a place called Cuiviënen in the far east of Middle-earth. In order to protect the Elves, the Valar began the Battle of the Powers against Melkor. Melkor's stronghold at Angband was destroyed and he was brought back in chains to Valinor. The Valar summoned the Elves to come and live with them on Valinor. The Elves and Valar dwelt together basking in the light of the Trees. Melkor was imprisoned and the Fathers of the Dwarves awoke.

These Years came to an end when Manwë released Melkor from his imprisonment. For a time Melkor pretended to be friends with the Elves, but he turned back to his evil ways. Melkor and his spidery ally Ungoliant destroyed the Two Trees. They also stole the Silmarils (powerful gems containing the last remaining light from the Lamps destroyed during the Years of the Lamps). During the Long Night that followed, an Elvish leader named Fëanor arose leading the Noldor Elves out of Valinor to resettle the western coast of Middle-earth (a region which came to be called Beleriand). The Valar created the Sun and Moon to give light to the rest of Arda and so began the Years of the Sun. The Years of the Trees ended and so began the Years of the Sun.

The First, Second, Third and Fourth Ages all belong collectively to the YEARS OF THE SUN. This age began with the destruction of the Trees and the creation of the Sun and Moon. Years in Tolkien's legendarium are 365 days. The Valar have their own unique year called the Vallian Year (approximately one Valian year for every ten earth years).

THE FIRST AGE

Identifying Acronym: F.A., e.g. F.A. 1529

Duration: 587 years

The First Age saw the flourishing of the Elves in both Valinor and in Beleriand. Some historians argue the First Age began with the creation of the Two Trees; others argue it began with the Awakening of the Elves. For our purposes we're assuming the First Age began once the Valar created the Sun and Moon. The age is characterized by a series of wars waged by the Ñoldor Elves on Melkor at his stronghold at Angband. Another important event during this time is the first Men awoke in the far east of Middle-earth at Hildórien.

The Elves besieged Melkor in his Fortress of Utumno in Angband for many decades. The siege was partially successful, in that, the Elves managed containing Morgoth (the name the Elves gave Melkor meaning "Dark Enemy") but could not defeat him outright. Melkor eventually broke the siege by pouring forth rivers of fire from his stronghold. The Ñoldor mustered a defense (though their losses were severe). It was in the years following this battle called *Dagor Bragollach* (Battle of Sudden Flame) when a man named Beren stole back one of the Silmarils from Melkor. The Noldor initiated another war against Melkor which became known as *Nirnaeth Arnoediad* (the Battle of Unnumbered Tears). The battle ended in a victory for Melkor over Men and Elves dashing any hopes of a final victory over evil.

A third war, called the War of Wrath, took place after a half-man half-elf named Eärendil sailed to Valinor to persuade the Valar to ally with Man and Elf. The Valar gathered an army composed of themselves and various Elvish groups. The war did not go well for Morgoth; thus, he released his last and most terrible weapon, an enormous winged dragon named Ancalagon the Black. Eärendil and the Eagles of Manwë duelled with Ancalagon (and other dragons). Eärendil was eventually victorious casting Ancalagon down destroying a bunch of mountains in the fall. Ancalagon's death marked the end of Morgoth's final resistance and the First Age. The War of Wrath had devastating consequences: the lands Melkor occupied, as well as much of Beleriand, were destroyed during the battle sinking under the sea in the heat of battle.

THE SECOND AGE

Identifying Acronym: S.A., e.g. S.A. 2112

Duration: 3,441 years

The Second Age is the longest of all the recorded ages; it began after the destruction of Beleriand during the War of Wrath. The creation of a stronghold for men, the island kingdom of Númenor, took place during this time. Eru gave the Men of Númenor the gift of long life for the part Eärendil played in the War of Wrath. Eärendil's twin sons – Elros and Elrond – went on to become kings of Númenor and Rivendell, respectively. These two brothers, and their children, have the unique ability to choose to either be a mortal man or an immortal elf.

In the early part of the Second Age many Noldorin Elves journeyed east establishing settlements near the Misty Mountains. These Elves, led by great jewel-smith Celebrimbor, became close friends with the Dwarves of Khazad-dûm. Together they made great technological leaps forward in smithcraft, until the skill of the Elves reached a height never to be matched again. This attracted the attention of Sauron, who tricked the Elves into making the Rings of Power. When the Elves perceived that he desired to rule them with his own One Ring, they resisted, and Sauron waged war against them. In this war, the Elvish Kingdom of Eregion was destroyed and Celebrimbor killed.

The Second Age is in many respects really the Age of Númenor. The power of the Númenóreans grew and they sailed east, exploring Middle-earth and founding great cities there. Sauron was captured by the Númenóreans and taken to their home island for a time. There he quickly went from captive to adviser (becoming known as Zigûr the Wizard). He encouraged the Númenóreans to invade Valinor so they could become immortal like the Elves. The Númenóreans sent a huge naval force against the Valar but Eru Ilúvatar destroyed the Mannish navy and Númenor itself using a massive tidal wave. Those Men who remained loyal to Eru left Númenor to found kingdoms in Middle Earth called Arnor in the north and Gondor in the south.

Most of the Men of Middle-earth lived in simple tribal societies or were under the domination of Sauron. Those men who served Sauron revered him as a god and feared him greatly. In the beginning of the Second Age, the Dúnedain (or last remaining Men from Númenor) attempted to help the other Mannish civilizations. Númenor's downfall was not the end of the Second Age. The end came once an Elvish King named Gil-galad, Elrond of Rivendell, Thranduil of the Woodland Realm, and King Elendil of the Númenóreans created the Last Alliance of Elves and Men. They marched on Sauron, who had grown strong again, and attacked the Dark Lord's home at the Tower of Barad-dûr. King Elendil was killed during the battle. But his son, Prince Isildur, cut the One Ring from Sauron's hand killing the Dark Lord. Isildur didn't destroy the ring. He kept it for his own. The Second Age ended.

THE THIRD AGE

Identifying Acronym: T.A., e.g. T.A. 2021

Duration: 3021 years

The Third Age began after Sauron's first downfall when he was defeated by the Last Alliance of Elves and Men in Mordor. The Third Age is largely characterized by the rise and decline of Gondor and Arnor and the slow recovery of Sauron's power. During the period, the power of the Elves and Dwarves started to wane. This period is therefore also called the Fading Years marking the waning of the power of Elves. The Third Age lasted for 3021 years, until Sauron was again defeated, this time, once and for all, when the One Ring was finally destroyed once Frodo Baggins of the Shire cast it into the fires of Mount Doom. In the years following Sauron's defeat, many of the Elves made their way westward back across the Belegaer Ocean to return permanently to Valinor (the Undying Lands). The age ended with the Last Riding of the Keepers, e.g. Gandalf, Galadriel and Elrond – all keepers of Rings of Power – sailed west never to return to Middle-earth. The Fourth Age began.

THE FOURTH AGE

Identifying Acronym: F.O., e.g. F.O. 32

Duration: 6000 years to present

This age began with Sauron's defeat and Aragorn assuming the kingship of Gondor. This period is marked by the recovery of the Númenórean kingdom of Arnor and Gondor and the Dwarves (House of Durin) retaking Khazad-dûm. The Dwarves go extinct as a race during the Fourth Age. Tolkien explains in Appendix A of *The Lord of the Rings* that "because of the fewness of women that Dwarves increase slowly. For Dwarves only take one wife or husband each in their lives. The number of dwarf-men that marry is actually less than one-third. For not all women take husbands: some desire none; some desire one that they cannot get, and so will have no other. As for the males, every man also do not desire marriage, being engrossed in their crafts." Any Elves remaining in Middle-Earth, not already in the Undying Lands, faded as did all other magical creatures like Ents and skin changers and so on. This lead to the final and complete Dominion of Men over Arda.

DAGOR DAGORATH

At some unspecified point in the future, Tolkien observed Melkor and Sauron would return from the Void and there'd be one final battle between the forces of good and evil. Essentially *Dagor Dagorath* (the Battle of All Battles) is an Armageddon-style event which meant it would lead to the end of the world. Following the defeat of evil, Eru Ilúvatar would remake reality but this time omit Melkor altogether so the new world would be perfect.