



The Silmarillion

J.R.R. Tolkien

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The Silmarillion is actually Tolkien's first book and also his last. In origin it precedes even The Hobbit, and is the story of the First Age of Tolkien's Middle Earth. It shows us the ancient history to which characters in The Lord of the Rings look back, talk, rhyme and sing about. Tolkien worked on it, changed it, and enlarged it throughout his entire life. It was edited and published posthumously by his son Christopher Tolkien. The Silmarillion combines five parts: 1. The Ainulindalë - the creation of Eä, Tolkien's universe; 2. The Valaquenta - a description of the Valar and Maiar; 3. The Quenta Silmarillion - the history of the events before and during the First Age; 4. The Akallabêth - the history of the Second Age; 5. Of the Rings of Power and the Third Age. These five parts, in origin separate works, were put together as this is how J.R.R. Tolkien would have liked it. It's more than slightly staggering to consider the epic fantasy /"Lord of the Rings/" to be the tail end of Tolkien's invented history. The /"Bible/" of Middle-Earth, the /"Silmarillion/" stretches from the beginning of time to the departure of the Elves from Middle-earth. A complete summary is impossible, because the book spans millennia and has one earth-shattering event after another. But it includes the creation of Tolkien's invented pantheons of angelic beings under Eru Iluvatar, also known as God; how they sang the world into being; the creation of Elves, Men, and Dwarves; the legendary love story of Beren and Luthien, a mortal Man and an Elf maiden who gives up her immortality for the man she loves; the demonic Morgoth and Sauron; Elves of just about any kind - bad, mad, dangerous, good, sweet, brave, and so forth; the creation of the many Rings of Power - and the One Ring of Sauron; the Two Trees that made the sun and moon; and finally the quest of the Ringbearer, Frodo Baggins. This is a treasure, and a must-read for anyone who loved LOTR or /"Hobbit."/

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