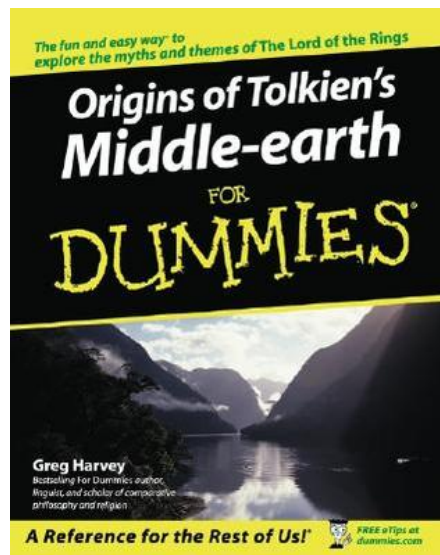




The Origins of Tolkien's Middle-Earth for Dummies

Greg Harvey

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J.R.R. Tolkien's novels of Middle-earth - *The Hobbit*, *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy, and *The Silmarillion* - have become some of the most famous, and most beloved, literary works of the twentieth century. And the *Lord of the Rings* films by director Peter Jackson have re-ignited interest in Tolkien and his works, as well as introduced his stories to a new generation of fans. Even if you've never read the novels and have only seen the films, you know that the world of Middle-earth is a complicated one. Tolkien took great care in representing this world, from creating new languages to including very particular cultural details that add to the richness of the world's fabric. Many other books have been written about Tolkien and his works, but none have come close to providing the kind of reference needed to comprehend the world of Middle-earth. That's what veteran *Dummies* author and unabashed Tolkien fan Greg Harvey attempts to do in *The Origins of Tolkien's Middle-earth For Dummies*.

As the author says in his introduction to the book, this is not an encyclopedia or quick guide to all the diverse beings, languages, and history that make up Tolkien's Middle-earth. Nor is it a set of plot outlines for the novels. Rather, what you'll find in *The Origins of Tolkien's Middle-earth For Dummies* is a basic guide to some of the possible linguistic and mythological origins of Middle-earth, plus a rudimentary analysis of its many themes and lessons for our world. This book can help enrich your reading (or re-reading) of Tolkien's novels, and it will challenge you to think about the themes inherent in Tolkien's Middle-earth and their implications in your own life.

Here's just a sampling of the topics you'll find covered in *The Origins of Tolkien's Middle-earth For Dummies*

Exploring the main themes in Tolkien's works, including immortality and death; the heroic quest; love; fate and free will; and faith and redemption Investigating the diverse lands of Middle-earth - including the Shire, Gondor, and Mordor - and their significance Examining the different cultures of Middle-earth, such as Hobbits, Elves, Men, and those wily Wizards Touring the history of Middle-earth Understanding Tolkien's creation of new languages to enrich the story of Middle-earth Top Ten lists on the battles in the War of the Ring, online resources, and the ways the films differ from the novels So, whether you're reading Tolkien's novels or watching the films for the first time, or you've been a fan for many years and are looking for a new take on Tolkien's works, *The Origins of Tolkien's Middle-earth For Dummies* can help you enhance your reading or viewing experience for years to come.

The Origins of Tolkien's Middle-Earth for Dummies Details

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From Reader Review The Origins of Tolkien's Middle-Earth for Dummies for online ebook

Aaron Masters says

This is actually a very good introduction to Tolkien's larger legendarium, identifying and defining the various groups and characters clearly and accurately. It also contains a brief overview of the invented languages, which are a vital part of the works and of Tolkien's creative process. The later sections are devoted to thematic studies on topics such as gender, which are encouraging if for no other reason than that Tolkien's works so are so rarely treated to the same style of literary criticism as are those of most other great 20th Century authors. Obviously those looking for more in-depth analysis must look elsewhere, but this is a worthy beginning, and not to be underestimated.

Erik says

Long story short, wanted more backstory on Middle Earth while reading LOTR but didn't want to slog through *The Silmarillion*.

Jason says

This book is steeped in meaningful coincidence, which is kind of odd, considering it is a "For Dummies" book, not exactly the first place I would search for a synchronicity or two. I purchased it at the local Goodwill for \$.75 and later that same evening received an unexpected invitation from friends to see *The Hobbit*. Some of the info from this book (written before the release of *The Return of the King*) helped set the "extraneous" material from Jackson's *Hobbit* into the larger context of Tolkien's mythos and confirmed my positive opinion of the latest film.

The real strangeness involves the author, Greg Harvey. He earned his undergraduate degree at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, where I have worked for over eight years. Stranger still, he was working on his Master's degree in the Humanities in the area of Philosophy and Religion with a concentration in Asian and Comparative Studies (PAR-ACS) at the California Institute of Integral Studies in San Francisco, at the same time I was there doing doctoral coursework in the same field! (To my recollection, we never met.)

All of that made this a hard book to review "objectively." Luckily, the book is excellent on its own merits, in addition to resonating oddly with my own particular life circumstances. Harvey explores Tolkien's world-canon with a broad understanding of philosophy, religion, literature, and languages, and uncovers many insights along the way. This is a definite recommendation for the fan of TLOTR who wants to dig a little deeper, but maybe not go all the way and read *The Silmarillion*.

Susan Ferguson says

Interesting reading. I picked up several things I had not noticed before - and, of course, one or two I disagreed with. On the whole, a very good read for those interested in Tolkien's works. The only fault I had

to find - which wasn't much - was the comparison of the books to the movies only covered the first two movies. Apparently when this was written, the third movie was not yet out. But that's a minor detail and not of much importance except as a curiosity.

Tracey-anne McCartney says

Informative book. I loved it.

Steven Brodbeck says

Clarity for casual fans

For those who love The Hobbit and The Lord of the Rings, this book gives you a fairly thorough look into the history of Middle-Earth leading up to the events of the books and the films. From the creation myth, to the first Dark Lord, to possible origins of the Hobbits, this proves accessible to those who found the labyrinthine Silmarillion a little difficult to get through.

An enjoyable read that gives one a new appreciation to the meticulous thought JRR Tolkien put into his creations and what we the reader see in his books and films.

Pamela says

This is a fantastic resource for those that found themselves at times confused by the incredible complexity of the world that Tolkien created. The history of the Elves and how they arrived in Middle-Earth is made a lot more understandable. In fact, I recommend keeping this handy if you are reading The Lord of the Rings for the first time. It is a great reference.

Kassilem says

I highly enjoyed this book. I was on a big Tolkien fan kick for a while the past month, partly due to the new release of The Hobbit movie, which sparked a re-watching of all the other movies as well, which then caused a domino effect of moving further out in fanfiction and eventually to reference books when I came across too many references I was curious about. That all led me to the the 823 decimal place in the library where I found this book. I needed something simple that would explain the history behind the references and that's exactly what this book gave me, in addition to all the other interesting facts that I didn't even know to look for. I had no idea there was so much history behind the stories I had read (barely) and watched. Another thing this book did for me was to get me excited to read The Silmarillion, which is on my TBR-Best 20th fantasy list. It also makes me want to look into rereading The Hobbit and The Lord of the Rings. Now that I know the history and can understand the references I feel like I would get a lot more out of the books, and even the movies. I'm actually really looking forward to it. One problem I had with the book with it's many typos. Bad editing on the publisher/editors part there. If you don't know the intricate history in Tolkien's world, I recommend this book. It explains it all in a fairly interesting and easily understandable way.

Leslie D. Soule says

Such a great book. I feel like I understand The Silmarillion a million times better now.

Christine says

A great source for a crash course in the Legendarium.

Joe says

I could have written a better book!

Dave Sammath says

A good overview of the Tolkien legendarium. I liked a lot of the authors identification of the parallel stories that Tolkien used, though I found it odd that he saw the Akallabêth as a simple Tolkien Atlantis story, whereas it resembles the Old Testament Books of Kings far more than Atlantis. All in all though, I'd recommend it to someone who just finished the major works.

HBalikov says

Harvey is no dummy. Four stars if you are looking for a great introduction to Tolkien -- including and beyond The Hobbit and Lord of the Rings.

This isn't just a fact compendium. Be advised that Harvey has his point of view that is evident from time to time.

Pluses:

Well organized

Well indexed

Plenty of trivia

Nicely subdivided into easy-to-digest bits

Must be time for elevensies.....I'm taking a break

taarak says

Better than Cliff Notes but peppered with the author's own bias (as opposed to Tolkeins), this is still a decent primer in familiarizing oneself with how the Silmarillion and the LOTR trilogy relate to one another.

Dawn Livingston says

I saw the three Fellowship of the Rings movies and The Hobbit movies but never read all the books. I guess I'm one of the few to read them and not be fascinated. I just found them difficult to read.

I got this book because I know I'm missing stuff because I haven't read the books and there was one thing in particular that puzzled me; aspects of Arwen and Aragorn's relationship as well as confusion over where the ship is going at the end of Return of the King. And then there were questions answered that didn't occur to me to ask covering the history, the races, individual people and Tolkien's inspirations and point of view.

I personally don't need to own this book and I may or may not read it again, but you may want to own this book if you're a fan of the movies, the books, Tolkien, mythology, Christianity, language.

The one thing I didn't like is that the author didn't stay hidden. I didn't need to know his religion, him stating something as his opinion. I would have preferred him to have said stuff like: "It might be that...", "One might think...", "It's possible that..." I usually prefer my authors to remain hidden except for memoirs, biographies, auto-biographies, etc.
