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SILMARILLION SUMMER
2022 READ-ALONG



Silmarillion Summer: A Five-Part Overview of *The Silmarillion* by J.R.R. Tolkien
Presented by the Tea with Tolkien Community

Part Three: The Great Tales

Chapter Nineteen: Of Beren and Lúthien

Beren, the Wandering Outlaw

Barahir and his companions were pursued to the death by the servants of Morgoth and dwelt in the wilderness as wandering outlaws. Eventually, all were killed except Beren. Beren pursued the orcs that had killed his father and retrieved his father's ring. After that, he wandered in the wilderness for about four years.

Beren Meets Lúthien

He came to the land of Doriath and stumbled upon Lúthien as she danced in the grass. Upon seeing her, he was unable to speak as he had fallen under some kind of spell. Lúthien vanished.

In the spring, Beren found her again, and the spell of silence was lifted from him. He called to her, naming her **Tinúviel**. She came to him and loved him, but she slipped away once more, and Beren fell deep into grief. However, after a time she returned to him, placing her hand in his. After that, they spent a lot of time together in secret.

Daeron the Minstrel also loved Lúthien and was jealous that she was hanging out with Beren, so he told Thingol about their meetings. As you might guess, Thingol, who wouldn't even allow Men into his service, was pretty mad.

Lúthien wouldn't tell Thingol anything about Beren until he swore not to harm or imprison him. So after he agreed, Lúthien led Beren before the throne of Thingol. Beren declared to Thingol that he loved Lúthien and would like to marry her. Thingol was very offended and regretted his oath to Lúthien.

Thingol gave Beren a deal: **If you bring me a Silmaril**, I will give you permission to marry Lúthien. Beren laughed, accepting the quest and setting off at once.

Beren's Quest Begins

Beren passed through Doriath and sought out Felagund, who felt bound to help him. But Celegorm and Curufin, who had been living with Felagund, were furious to hear that someone else was seeking a Silmaril, and they refused to help.

Felagund gave the crown of Nargothrond to his brother Orodreth and left with Beren. The companions disguised themselves as orcs and were eventually brought before Sauron. Sauron stripped them of their disguise, but he was unable to learn their names or purpose, so he imprisoned them in a deep pit. Every so often, a werewolf would come and devour one of the companions, but all of them were faithful. Eventually, one by one were slain until only Felagund and Beren remained. At last, Felagund was also killed.

Lúthien Joins Beren

Lúthien learned that Beren was held captive by Sauron and decided to run away to help him. She asked Daeron for help, and he betrayed her. Thingol built a tree-house in which to hold Lúthien captive, but she wove a cloak and rope from her own hair and escaped.

Huan, the great hound of Valinor, found Lúthien and brought her to Celegorm and Curufin. Lúthien asked them for help, but they betrayed her, instead scheming to force Thingol to give her in marriage to Celegorm. However, Huan was pure of heart and loved Lúthien, and he helped her escape.

Sauron's Isle

In the hour of Felagund's death, Lúthien came to Sauron's isle. Sauron recognized the voice of Lúthien and was eager to capture her and bring her to Morgoth for a reward. Sauron sent out wolves, but Huan slayed them one by one until Sauron himself came as a great werewolf. Huan held wolf-Sauron, and Sauron was unable to escape without forsaking his body entirely, which he wanted to avoid because it would have been humiliating to return to Morgoth without it. Lúthien demanded Sauron yield the mastery of his tower and isle, which he agreed to, and then he shapeshifted into a vampire and fled away.

Lúthien found Beren and they buried Felagund together. Beren resolved to take Lúthien back to Doriath and finish his quest, but she was unwilling to be parted from him.

Of Celegorm and Curufin

Huan returned to Celegorm, and there was tumult in Nargothrond as the people grieved the loss of Felagund. They suspected Celegorm and Curufin of treachery. Celegorm and Curufin left Nargothrond; however, **Celebrimbor**, the son of Curufin, remained.

In the Forest of Brethil, Celegorm and Curufin came upon Beren and Lúthien and tried to kill him. However, Lúthien used her power to heal him. Once again, after this, Beren tried to leave Lúthien behind. However, Huan and Lúthien pursued him, and Beren finally understood that he could not dissuade Lúthien.

Beren and Lúthien disguised themselves in the raiment of two of Sauron's servants, putting on the wolf-hame of Draugluin and the bat-fell of Thuringwethil, and came to the Gate of Angband.

Of Morgoth

Carcharoth, Morgoth's hound, was set before the doors of Angband. Lúthien commanded him to sleep, and they were able to walk past him.

Together they came before the throne of Morgoth, but Beren, still disguised as a wolf, lay before the throne. Lúthien was stripped of her disguise but was not daunted.

Lúthien's song lulled everyone in Morgoth's court to sleep, and when she cast her cloak before Morgoth's eyes, he fell to the ground, and the iron crown rolled from his head. Beren drew Angrist and cut one of the Silmarils from the crown. Beren tried to free a second Silmaril, but the knife snapped and a shard smote the cheek of Morgoth. After this, they fled.

Carcharoth met them at the gate, and he bit off Beren's hand as it held the Silmaril. The Silmaril burned the hound from inside, and he went forth in rage and madness, killing anything that crossed his path. The great eagles came and carried Beren and Lúthien away, just as the forces of Morgoth were awakening.

“Even Now a Silmaril is in my Hand”

After Beren was healed, he and Lúthien returned to Doriath and came before the throne of Thingol.

“But Beren knelt before him, and said: ‘I return according to my word. I am come now to claim my own.’ And Thingol answered: ‘What of your quest, and of your vow?’ But Beren said: ‘It is fulfilled. Even now a Silmaril is in my hand.’” After this Beren showed that his right hand was gone, which softened Thingol's mood.

Together they told Thingol of their journey and everything that happened, and Thingol finally agreed to allow them to marry. However, Carcharoth was still on the loose, and so they prepared to hunt him. Huan slew Carcharoth but also died in doing so. And Beren was mortally wounded after protecting Thingol.

Lúthien's Choice

As Beren died, Lúthien bade him to “await her beyond the Western Sea,” and his spirit tarried in the halls of Mandos. Lúthien's spirit also faded. Lúthien came to the Halls of Mandos and sang before his throne, and he was moved to pity (which had never happened before and never happened again).

Mandos offered Lúthien a choice: to go to Valimar and dwell in the Blessed Realm, free from all grief; or to return to Middle-earth, taking Beren with her, and becoming mortal. **Lúthien chose mortality.**

Chapter Twenty: Of the Fifth Battle: Nirnaeth Arnoediad

The Union of Maedhros

Beren and Lúthien returned to Doriath, but Melian grieved the loss of Lúthien's immortality and turned away from her. After this, Beren and Lúthien lived in Tol Galen until their death. They had a son named Dior, who was Thingol's heir.

In this time, Maedhros was emboldened by the victory of Beren and Lúthien against Morgoth and urged the Eldar to unite against him. He formed the **Union of Maedhros**. However, the Oath of Fëanor loomed over the Noldor, and he received little help from the rest of the Eldar. Maedhros and his brothers demanded that Thingol give them the Silmaril, or else become their enemy. Melian counseled him to surrender it, but Thingol refused. Celegorm and Curufin vowed to kill Thingol, and Thingol fortified Doriath.

The Nirnaeth Arnoediad

With the help of the Naugrim and some of the houses of Men, Maedhros prepared for war with Morgoth. The hosts of Turgon from Gondolin came unexpectedly to aid Fingon.

The Treachery of Men

“Yet neither by wolf, nor by Balrog, nor by Dragon, would Morgoth have achieved his end, but for the treachery of Men. In this hour the plots of Ulfang were revealed...”

Morgoth had many spies amongst the houses of Men, and they ultimately betrayed the Eldar. The Naugrim stood firm against Glaurung, and if not for them, all of the Noldor would have perished. Fingon and Turgon were attacked by Gothmog, Lord of Balrogs, and Fingon was killed. Húrin and Huor urged Turgon to return to Gondolin, and so he escaped. Huor was then slain, and Húrin stood alone. At last he was taken alive to Morgoth.

Morgoth's victory was great, and the sons of Fëanor were scattered. Thus ended the Nirnaeth Arnoediad.

The Aftermath of Battle

The servants of Morgoth roamed freely, destroying as they desired. The Easterlings who had served Morgoth were given the realm of Hithlum. At Turgon's bidding, Círdan built seven swift ships to ask the Valar for help; only one returned (Voronwë).

Morgoth was obsessed with Turgon, and the thought of finding him consumed his mind. Húrin was brought before Morgoth but would not yield to him, so Morgoth cursed him and forced him to watch as everything he loved was destroyed. Morgoth also cursed Húrin's family/offspring.

Morgoth commanded his servants to gather the slain into a great pile, and the Elves named it the Hill of Slain, or the Hill of Tears.

Chapter Twenty-one: Of Túrin Turambar

Rían, wife of Huor, gave birth to a son named **Tuor** in the months after her husband died. He was fostered by the Grey-elves of Mithrim, and she died shortly after.

Morwen, wife of Húrin, had three children: **Túrin**, Lalaith (who died at age 3), and Nienor. In this time, the Easterlings oppressed the people of Hador, and Morwen feared that Túrin would be enslaved, so she sent him to Doriath. Túrin was fostered by Thingol, who sent messengers to Hithlum asking Morwen to join them in Doriath, but she would not leave the house in which she had lived with Hurin. When Túrin grew up, he became friends with **Beleg** Cuthalion.

The Flight of Túrin

One day Saeros, one of the Nandor, taunted Túrin, and Túrin lashed out at him. The next day, Saeros died by accident after getting into a fight with Túrin. Túrin left Doriath, thinking himself an outlaw, despite Thingol's promised pardon. Túrin lived in the wilderness with a band of criminals.

Beleg sought out Túrin and tried to persuade him to return to Doriath, but Túrin refused. Beleg returned to Thingol and resolved to go back out again to seek out Túrin. Beleg was given Anglachel, a sword of great worth, and a store of Lembas.

Túrin and his companions took a dwarf named Mîm captive, but Túrin pitied him and spared his life and told him to bring them to his home. Túrin realized that he had killed Mîm's son, and he repented and promised to pay Mîm a ransom of gold for his son. After that he lived in Mîm's home.

After some time, Beleg and Túrin met once more. And since Túrin would not return with him, Beleg remained with their company.

Every so often, Morgoth would send out his forces across Beleriand. Túrin bore his father's dragon-helm in battle, and by this, Morgoth knew that he had found Hurin's son and sent out his spies to find him.

Mîm was taken captive by orcs and was forced to lead them to his home, where they captured Túrin and slew many of his company. However, Beleg was left alive and looked desperately for Túrin. Beleg met up with Gwindor and they searched together for Túrin. Beleg and Gwindor found Túrin and cut him free, but Túrin — seeing someone above him with a knife — mistook Beleg for an orc and killed him. When Túrin realized what he had done, he repented bitterly.

Túrin in Nargothrond

Gwindor and Túrin went to Nargothrond together. But Túrin did not tell them his real name. There, Finduilas, who had loved Gwindor, fell in love with Túrin instead. Gwindor then told Finduilas Túrin's real name. However, Túrin did not love her and was angry at Gwindor for revealing his name.

Túrin became a great warrior in Nargothrond and counseled the King to fight in open battle, rather than in stealth, and **to build a bridge over the Narog**.

Mowen and Nienor fled, at last, to Doriath but were saddened to learn that Túrin was not there anymore. Nevertheless they remained in Doriath. Ambassadors came to Nargothrond and urged the king to cast down the great bridge, but Túrin would not allow it.

Morgoth sent out his forces against Nargothrond, and Gwindor died. As he died, he warned Túrin and urged him to return to Nargothrond and save Finduilas. "And this last I say to thee: she alone stands between thee and thy doom. If thou fail her, it shall not fail to find thee. Farewell!"

Túrin fled to Nargothrond, but Glaurung (the Dragon) got there before him. Glaurung blocked Túrin from the bridge. Túrin fell under the spell of the Dragon's eyes, and the Dragon told Túrin to go to his kin, cursing him as he fled away.

Túrin came to Dor-lómin seeking his mother, but he learned that they had gone to Doriath. He decided not to go to Doriath because he brought doom with him wherever he went. Instead he decided to search for Finduilas, but it was too late for she had already died. Because of this, he fell into a grief that was like death.

Turambar and Níniel

He was taken in by the people of Haleth, and they gave him a new name, **Turambar**, which meant "Master of Doom." Morwen left Doriath in search of Túrin, and Nienor fled as well.

Nienor met Glaurung. He cast a spell of forgetfulness upon her so she couldn't even remember her own name. He left her standing alone upon Amon Ethir and went back to Nargothrond. Turambar found Nienor and brought her into a lodge nearby. Since she didn't know her own name, Turambar named her **Níniel**, Tear-maiden. After three years, Turambar and Níniel were married.

After a while, Turambar went off once more to fight Glaurung. Turambar killed Glaurung but was burned by his venomous blood, and he swooned and "lay as one dead."

Níniel came to find Turambar, and Glaurung spoke to her: "Hail, Nienor, daughter of Hurin. We meet again ere the end. I give thee joy that thou hast found thy brother at last...." Nienor was freed from Glaurung's spell and remembered who she was, then in despair she cast herself off a cliff into the waters and died. Turambar awoke and killed Brandir, but he later understood that this was unjust. After this, Turambar killed himself.

Chapter Twenty-two: Of the Ruin of Doriath

The Deaths of Morwen and Húrin

Morwen wandered alone and distraught in the wild. After 28 years, Morgoth feigned to pity Húrin and so released him. He wandered, unwelcome with his own kin, and sought out Gondolin without realizing that the servants of Morgoth were watching him. Thorondor saw Húrin and brought word to Turgon, but Turgon would not allow him into Gondolin at first. After a while, his heart changed, but it was too late because Húrin was gone by then.

Húrin had called towards Gondolin in desperation, and the servants of Morgoth heard him. “This was the first evil that the freedom of Húrin achieved.”

Húrin found Morwen at the tomb of Túrin and Nienor, and she died in the morning and he buried her.

Húrin went to Nargothrond, where he killed Mîm the dwarf and took the Nauglamír. Húrin went to Doriath and gave the Nauglamír to Thingol. At first, Húrin was wrathful, thinking his family was wronged by Thingol, but Melian spoke to him, and the lies of Morgoth were understood. Húrin then cast himself into the western sea.

The Death of Thingol

Thingol had the idea to have the Nauglamír remade to hold the Silmaril. After the dwarves completed this task, they refused to return it to Thingol. Thingol lashed out against the dwarves, and they ended up killing him. The dwarves were pursued, and the Nauglamír was brought to Melian. The Dwarves of Nogrod sought vengeance against Doriath.

After this, Melian's power was diminished, and Doriath lay open to its enemies. And she knew that the doom of Doriath was coming near. After this, Melian disappeared and returned to Lórien.

The Nauglamír

The dwarves passed into Menegroth where they met the elves in battle; the dwarves were victorious and reclaimed the Nauglamír.

In Tol Galen, Dior was wed to Nimloth, and they had three children: Eluréd, Elurîn, and **Elwing**. In battle, Beren killed Nogrod and gave the Nauglamír to Lúthien. After this, Dior — Thingol's heir — brought his family to live in Doriath.

At last, Beren and Lúthien died, and the Nauglamír was brought to Dior in Doriath.

Dior refused to give the Silmaril to the sons of Fëanor, re-awakening their oath. Celegorm attacked Doriath, killing Dior and Nimloth, and left their two young sons in the forest to die. However, they did not retrieve the Silmaril as Elwing had escaped to the mouth of the River Sirion with it.

Chapter Twenty-three: Of Tuor and the Fall of Gondolin

Of Tuor

The son of Huor, brother of Húrin, was named Tuor and was raised by Annael of the Grey-elves. When he was 16, he was taken and enslaved by Lorgan, chief of the Easterlings in Hithlum. After three years, he escaped. When he had lived as an outlaw for four years, Ulmo put it on Tuor's heart to seek out Gondolin.

Tuor came to Nevrast, where Ulmo arose from the waters and spoke to Tuor: "And Ulmo bade him depart from that place and seek out the hidden kingdom of Gondolin; and he gave Tuor a great cloak, to mantle him in shadow from the eyes of his enemies."

Tuor met Voronwë, and they traveled to Gondolin together. Tuor stood before Turgon and warned him that the Curse of Mandos was now drawing near and urged him to depart from Gondolin and go down Sirion to the Sea. But Turgon's pride did not allow him to accept this counsel.

Tuor remained in Gondolin, where he married Idril; Maeglin hated Tuor because he had loved Idril. Tuor and Idril bore a son, **Eärendil Halfelven**.

In this time, Morgoth continued to desperately seek Gondolin, and Idril built a secret path that would lead out of Gondolin in case of emergency.

The Betrayal of Maeglin

A time came when Maeglin had traveled outside the realm of Gondolin and was taken as prisoner to Angband. Maeglin purchased his life and freedom by telling Morgoth the location of Gondolin. In return, Maeglin was promised the lordship of Gondolin as Morgoth's vassal and the possession of Idril.

The Fall of Gondolin

When Eärendil was seven years old, Morgoth attacked Gondolin. **Ecthelion** and Turgon both fell in battle. Tuor fought Maeglin and cast him down (remember what doom Maeglin's father laid upon him as he died?).

Tuor and Idril escaped with as many people as possible through the secret passages Idril had made. Thorondor came to their aid. Glorfindel dueled with the Balrog but died; and Glorfindel was buried.

Tuor led the remnant of Gondolin through the mountains in secret and came to the Vale of Sirion, and Morgoth thought himself victorious. Idril and Tuor joined with the company of Elwing, Dior's daughter.

Ulmo came to Valinor and pleaded to the Valar on behalf of the Elves and Men, but the Valar did nothing. In the end of his life, Tuor built a ship and set sail into the sunset in the West with Idril, and they were not heard from again.

Chapter 24: Of the Voyage of Eärendil and the War of Wrath

The Children of Eärendil

Eärendil and Elwing had two children: **Elrond** and **Elros**. Eärendil grew restless and longed for the sea, desiring to seek out his parents and to find the last shore and bring the message of Elves and Men to the Valar. Eärendil built a ship called **Vingilot** with the help of Círdan. But he was unable to find his parents or the shores of Valinor on his journeys, and his heart instead caused him to return to Elwing.

The Oath of Fëanor Still at Work

After a time, Maedhros was tormented once again by his oath and demanded the Silmaril from Elwing. But she refused because it was won by Beren and Lúthien, and because of the slaying of Dior, and because Eärendil was not at home. War broke out once more: the sons of Fëanor came upon the exiles of Gondolin and the remaining people of Doriath.

The Flight of Elwing

Elros and Elrond were taken captive, and Elwing, with the Silmaril on her breast, cast herself into the sea. But she was not lost: for Ulmo bore her up in the form of a bird.

She found Eärendil and returned to her bodily form, and they had great sorrow over the destruction of their dwelling and the captivity of her sons. However, Maglor took pity on Elrond and Elros and loved them as much as he could despite the sickness of his heart and the burden of his oath.

The Journey of Eärendil

Eärendil and Elwing sailed to the Blessed Realm, but as they got closer Eärendil decided that he had to go on alone and said to Elwing: “Await me here; for one only may bring the message that it is my fate to bear.” Eärendil came to Túna and found it bare; Tirion was empty; “and his heart was heavy, for he feared that some evil had come even to the Blessed Realm.”

When he turned at last back to the sea, he heard the voice of Eonwe: “Hail Eärendil, of mariners most renowned, the looked for that cometh at unawares, the longed for that cometh beyond hope! Hail Eärendil, bearer of light before the Sun and Moon! Splendour of the Children of Earth, star in the darkness, jewel in the sunset, radiant in the morning!”

And Eärendil went into the halls of Valimar, never to set foot again upon the lands of Men.

Eärendil's Plea

Eärendil pleaded before the Valar: to pardon the Noldor and to have mercy upon the Men and Elves. This time, they agreed.

Manwë declared that Eärendil and Elwing should not walk again in the Outer Lands; and that they and their sons would be given the choice between mortality and immortality. Elwing and Eärendil chose immortality.

The ship of Eärendil, Vingilot, was taken and hallowed and filled with light. Eärendil was placed at its helm, with the Silmaril at his brow to journey through the sky as a star. For Elwing was built a tall tower from which she would sometimes fly as a bird to meet Eärendil.

When Eärendil arose in the sky, the people of Middle-earth were given new hope. They called the star **Gil-Estel, the Star of Hope**. Maedhros wondered if the star was a Silmaril. Maglor replied that if it is a Silmaril, this is good news because that means it is finally safe from all evil. The Elves despaired no longer, but Morgoth was filled with doubt.

The War of Wrath

At last, the host of the Valar prepared for their final battle against Morgoth. The Vanyar and the Noldor who had remained in Valinor with Finarfin marched with the Valar, as well as some of the Teleri.

The Changing of the World

Morgoth was bound, and the remaining two Silmarils were taken from him. Though the realm of Morgoth was ended, the world was changed entirely after this.

The remaining sons of Fëanor demanded the Silmarils, but Eonwë denied them this. They were tormented by their oath and felt it was inescapable. Maedhros and Maglor resolved, then, to take the Silmarils by force. The Silmaril burned Maedhros unbearably, and he ultimately cast himself with the Silmaril into a chasm filled with fire. The other Silmaril was so painful for Maglor to hold that he cast it into the sea. After this, he wandered the shores and lamented the loss of the Silmaril.

“And thus came to pass that the Silmarils found their long homes: one in the airs of heaven, and one in the fires of the heart of the world, and one in the deep waters.”

The Doom of Mandos Laid to Rest

The Noldor were then pardoned; the Doom of Mandos was laid to rest. **Elrond** chose to remain in Middle-earth as an elf while **Elros** chose to be counted among the Men. Morgoth was sent to the Timeless Void, never to be released again.

Here Ends the Silmarillion

“Here ends the Silmarillion; and if it has passed from the high and the beautiful to darkness and ruin, that was of old the fate of Arda Marred; and if any change shall come and the Marring be amended, Manwë and Varda may know; but they have not revealed it, and it is not declared in the dooms of Mandos.”