
Did you know that *yet another* Tolkien book has recently been published? It's called *The Tale of the Children of Hurin* and it takes place during the First Age of Middle-earth.¹ During the First Age, the villain was a fallen angel named Morgoth, who was not quite as subtle as his evil lieutenant and successor, Sauron. (Indubitably, you have heard of *him!* In the Third Age, he was a lidless-eye, wreathed in fire.) In the First and Second Ages, Sauron could take human form and could make himself quite fair in appearance and demeanor.² Sauron could "politely" deceive you; Morgoth was blatantly power-bent and malicious.

This book begins in a nice, familial way, sort of like the ancient Roman hearth: "Hador Goldenhead was a lord of the Edain and well beloved by the Eldar. He dwelt while his days lasted under the lordship of Fingolfin, who gave him wide lands in the region of Hithlum . . ." ³ Hador had a son named Galdor, who married Hareth, and they had two sons: Huor and Hurin.⁴ Of Hurin, Tolkien says this:

Huor his brother was tall, the tallest of the Edain save his own son Tuor only, and a swift runner; but if the race were long and hard Hurin would be the first home, for he ran as strongly at the end of the course as at the beginning. There was great love between the brothers, and they were seldom apart in their youth.⁵

Wow! Even this early in the epic history of Middle-earth, friendship (a form of love) is central. Dare we say that the love and friendship of the brothers Huor and Hurin foreshadows the heroic friendship of Frodo Baggins and Samwise Gamgee?

To be continued in the August issue, which will be published early; so take heart, fellow Hobbits and Numenoreans!

¹ For the sake of perspective, *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy took place during the Third Age.

² Indeed, in the Second Age, Sauron had made himself fair in order to persuade the last king of Numenor to disobey the Valar by attempting to sail to the forbidden lands. Numenor, which had been the gift of the Valar to the Dunedain because they had helped the the Elves defeat Morgoth in the First Age, was consequently destroyed; however, faithful Elendil and his two sons, Isildur and Anarion escaped. They fled to Middle-earth, where they founded the kingdoms of Arnor and Gondor. They carried a sapling from the tree of Numenor. This sapling was planted in Minas Tirath and became the tree of the king, the White Tree of Gondor, of which Pippin was so fond! (Cf. *The Silmarillion* and *The Return of the King*)

³ J.R.R. Tolkien, *The Tale of the Children of Hurin* (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2007) 33.

⁴ Cf. *Ibid.*

⁵ J.R.R. Tolkien, *The Tale of the Children of Hurin* (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2007) 33-34.

"You have spent your strength upon yourself and wasted it in your own emptiness." - Hurin to Morgoth Bauglir