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Contents Foreword I. The Cottage of Lost Play Notes and Commentary II. The Music of the Ainur Notes and Commentaries III. The Coming of the Valar and the Building of Valinor Notes and Commentary IV. The Chaining of Melko Notes and Commentary V. The Coming of the Elves and the Making of Kôr Notes and Commentary VI. The Theft of Melko and the Darkening of Valinor Notes and Commentary VII. The Flight of the Noldoli Notes and Commentary VIII. The Tale of the Sun and Moon Notes and Commentary IX. The Hiding of Valinor X. Gilfanon's Tale: The Travail of the Noldoli and the Coming of Mankind Appendix: Names in the Lost Tales Short Glossary of Obsolete, Archaic, and Rare Words Index Foreword: This collection of stories written 60-70 years ago was J.R.R. Tolkien's first significant work of imaginative literature and presented the Valar, Elves, Men, Dwarves, Orcs, and lands like Valinor and Middle-earth in a narrative form. After his father stopped working on it 57 years later, The Silmarillion was published with profound changes from its predecessor, six years ago. This foreword reflects upon both works. It is commonly said that The Silmarillion is difficult to read due to its complex nature, contrasting it with The Lord of the Rings. In his book "The Road to Middle-earth", Professor T.A. Shippey explains this, stating two main reasons: the absence of mediation like hobbits, which provided a link between modern times and an archaic world in The Hobbit; and the lack of explanation or guidance on how to approach it. The King of Rohan, an elderly man with a polite demeanor, engaged in conversation with hobbits who were eager to share their family histories. Meanwhile, a literary critic discussed the unique characteristics of Tolkien's book "The Silmarillion", which diverged from his earlier works such as "The Hobbit" and "The Lord of the Rings". The critic noted that Tolkien refused to follow conventional novelistic practices by not focusing on a single main character. Instead, he presented multiple stories and characters in a non-linear fashion, often without providing background information or context. This approach resulted in a sense of depth and richness, reminiscent of the Old English epic "Beowulf". However, this style also led to some readers feeling disappointed, as if they were being denied the pleasure of following a single character's journey. One reader expressed their frustration by comparing the book to the Bible, stating that it was like trying to read a sacred text without any context or guidance. Another issue with "The Silmarillion" was its lack of a central narrative thread, making it difficult for readers who were used to following a straightforward story. The critic noted that Tolkien himself was aware of these challenges and had expressed doubts about writing the book. Despite this, the book still holds a special charm due to its unique style and ability to evoke a sense of wonder and magic in readers. Tolkien once wrote that stories without being told are no stories, yet it's the untold tales that move us most. He felt that "The Celebrimbor" conveys a sense of countless untold stories - distant mountains, unapproachable trees, or historical events like those in Nargothrond and Gondolin, now lost beyond the Western Seas. In Moria, Gimli's song illustrates this concept beautifully, mentioning the Elder Days before the fall of mighty kings. Sam's reaction to the song, "I should like to learn it," highlights how the 'high' and powerful can become more distant and magical when told in an allusive manner. Professor Shippey noted that retelling these stories as standalone tales would be a mistake, not because they're inherently flawed, but because our expectation of their charm might change if we see them separately. Tolkien's father was uncertain about publishing "The Silmarillion" after the success of "The Lord of the Rings," fearing it might be too late. He saw the need to revise and integrate the legends into a cohesive narrative that would work in conjunction with "The Lord of the Rings." The task seemed daunting, requiring significant reworking to make the stories consistent, relevant, and engaging. Despite this, Tolkien's children were not swayed by his initial doubts, believing that sharing the larger history of Middle-earth through "The Silmarillion" could only enrich the narrative of "The Lord of the Rings," adding depth and meaning to its stories. They felt that the impressions of a vast past created by songs and digressions within "The Lord of the Rings" should not limit our understanding of the world's history, but rather invite further exploration and knowledge. The Lord of the Rings employs various literary techniques, including the use of made-up devices such as backward movement in imagined time. However, these devices should not be understood mechanically, but rather nuanced to convey depth and complexity. The concept of 'depth' implies a relationship between different temporal layers or levels within the same world, which can be achieved by establishing a powerful sense of areal time-structure. To truly appreciate the story, one must place themselves in the imagined time from which to look back, such as Sam Gamgee's perspective at the end of the Third Age. The Silmarillion, with its compendious form and manner, evokes a sense of 'untold tales', never losing distance between the narrative and the reader. The author notes that his father initially desired to publish The Lord of the Rings together with The Silmarillion, but the subsequent publication order was inverted by chance. This raised questions about whether it was wise to present the primary 'legendarium' standing alone and claiming to be self-explanatory, as the published work lacked a framework. The author now believes that the original mode of presentation, found in The Book of Lost Tales, would have been more effective in conveying the legends of the Elder Days. When I recall my father's passing in 1973, "The Silmarillion" was a jumbled mess. The early parts were rewritten or overhauled numerous times, while the final sections remained untouched for nearly twenty years. However, as he wrote more recently, there's no hint of any underlying structure or framework for it to be placed within. I believe that in the end, he simply concluded nothing would suffice, and so, an explanation was made for how it came to be recorded within the world he imagined. In The Lord of the Rings' original edition, Bilbo left Frodo at Rivendell with 'some books of lore' he'd written, adorned with his signature squiggly handwriting. These translations from Elvish were bound in red leather and labeled as being by B.B. Later, when editing The Lord of the Rings for its second printing in 1966, Tolkien clarified that these weren't just any volumes but 'three books'. Furthermore, he noted in a Prologue note that those three large volumes contained all his knowledge from Rivendell, both written and living. However, since Frodo didn't frequently refer to them as they mostly dealt with the Elder Days, not much more was said about them. In The Complete Guide to Middle-earth, Robert Foster writes: 'Quenta Silmarillion was undoubtedly one of Bilbo's translations from Elvish, preserved in the Red Book of West-march.' I've made a similar assumption myself. Hence, it was indeed 'The Silmarillion' that provided the solution as Bilbo's books of lore given to Frodo. Tolkien faced a tripled challenge when dealing with "The Silmarillion". He could have indefinitely postponed its publication due to its incomplete and disjointed nature between sections. Alternatively, he could have published it as it was, acknowledging its diverse elements that spanned over half a century, albeit requiring a considerable undertaking of divergent texts linked by commentary. However, Tolkien chose the third path - presenting a unified text through selection and arrangement to produce the most coherent narrative. This effort, in collaboration with Guy Kay, aimed to integrate "The Silmarillion" into The Lord of the Rings as a completed entity, though its cohesion couldn't be entirely achieved. Thus, the purpose was to create 'a completed and cohesive entity', even if this goal could not fully be met. When Christopher Tolkien published The Silmarillion, he deliberately excluded any detailed explanation of its complex history. The result has been a persistent uncertainty about the book's age and editing process. This ambiguity has led to misunderstandings about the work's true nature. Scholars have debated whether The Silmarillion is an early or late work by J.R.R. Tolkien, as well as the extent of editorial intervention. Professor Randel Helms has framed this problem in literary criticism: what constitutes a literary work? Is it the author's intended meaning or the edited version that eventually emerges? The issue becomes even more complex when a writer dies before completing their work and leaves multiple versions behind. Professor Christopher Tolkien has clarified the situation, stating that the published Silmarillion is actually his own creation, not his father's. However, this fact has been misinterpreted in some quarters. Other scholars, such as Professor Shippey, have also questioned the book's chronology, with some viewing it as a late work. Despite these difficulties and obscurities, there is one certainty: J.R.R. Tolkien had a deep understanding of his fictional world's coherence and interconnectedness, which transcended literary modes and temporalities. He recognized that readers might enjoy The Lord of the Rings without wishing to explore the deeper structures beneath its surface. However, these structures are not an illusion; they are real, as evidenced by the comprehensive linguistic systems he developed, such as Quenya and Sindarin. In this world, there is room for exploration and comprehension beyond literary-critical analysis. The creation myth of Middle-earth is worthy of attention in its own right, and every person and feature that seemed significant to Tolkien's imagination deserves scrutiny. The study of Middle-earth and Valinor is complex due to its dynamic nature. These worlds exist "longitudinally" in time, evolving as the author's vision shifted during his lifetime. Key elements include the Silmarils, the Great Music, divine hierarchies, the abodes of the Valar, and the fates of the Children of Iluvatar. The author's original collection, Unfinished Tales, was created based on an acceptance of the imagined world as a valid object of contemplation. However, his vision underwent continuous change throughout his lifetime, with significant parts emerging in The Hobbit and The Lord of the Rings. The publication of 'The Silmarillion' cut this longitudinal view transversely, imposing a finality that didn't reflect the complexity of Middle-earth's development. This led to an attempt to present the longitudinal view through The Book of Lost Tales for public release. This book presents Middle-earth and Valinor in their early stages, before significant events such as the drowning of Beleriand, the emergence of the Elves, or the development of the historical relations between Quenya and Sindarin. Features such as the princes of the Noldor being barely formed, Beren being an Elf rather than a Man, and the Dwarves being an evil people are notable. Despite these changes, there is a firm underlying structure that endures throughout the history of Middle-earth, reflecting the development of legends through subtle transformations over generations. The Book of Lost Tales was begun in 1916-17 during the First War, marking the starting-point for the history of Valinor and Middle-earth, but its completion was left unfinished, with the author instead turning to other works like the Lay of Leithian and The Children of Hurin. The evolution of 'The Silmarillion' began anew from a 1926 synopsis. This prose form developed directly into the version nearing completion by 1937, but there were also side texts like the Annals of Valinor and Beleriand, Ambarkanta (a cosmological account), the Lhammas on languages, and others. The history of the First Age was set aside until 'The Lord of the Rings' was completed. Subsequently, my father returned to these works with vigor before its publication. A series is planned, starting from this edition of the Lost Tales in two parts. The Lost Tales of Middle-earth were never published during my father's lifetime as they were still experimental and visionary works. The manuscripts were written on tattered notebooks, making them difficult to read due to rapid pencil writing and erasures in ink. To present these tales in a printed book has posed many editorial challenges. One issue is the difficulty of the manuscripts themselves, requiring magnifying glasses and patience to decipher. My father often rewrote original pencilled text in ink, leading to disconnected portions of tales being written within other tales. The texts were also not always written in chronological order, making it hard to determine the correct sequence. After much experimentation, I found that presenting the Tales in the sequence of the narrative is the most feasible method. However, as the writing progressed, relationships and names changed, leading to revisions and developments in the languages. The History of Middle-earth series consists of 12 volumes, published between 1983 and 1996, collecting and analyzing much of my father's legendarium. The History of Middle-earth, a series compiled by Christopher Tolkien, reveals the evolution of his father J.R.R. Tolkien's vision for the fictional world of Middle-earth over time. This concept began as "a mythology for England" and eventually developed into the stories that comprise The Silmarillion and The Lord of the Rings. Unlike a traditional history book set within Middle-earth, this series provides an outside perspective on Tolkien's creative process. Initially published in 12 volumes between 1983 and 1996 by George Allen & Unwin in the UK and Houghton Mifflin in the US, the series documents the development of Tolkien's legendarium. This extensive collection of drafts, written throughout his life, offers insight into Middle-earth's history, cultures, and languages. Christopher Tolkien, a philologist like his father, played a crucial role in shaping this narrative by editing The History of Middle-earth. His editorial frame inadvertently reinforced the mythopoeic effect that J.R.R. Tolkien had aimed for. J.R.R. Tolkien himself was a professor of English language at various institutions, specializing in philology and Old English works like Beowulf. While he is best known for his novels The Hobbit and The Lord of the Rings, much of his time was dedicated to working on his legendarium, which remained unpublished during his lifetime. After J.R.R. Tolkien's death, Christopher compiled a summary of the legendarium stories, published in 1977 as The Silmarillion, followed by Unfinished Tales in 1978. Further information on J.R.R. Tolkien's bibliography can be found elsewhere. The series, initially divided into 12 volumes, was later republished in three limited edition omnibus volumes in the year 2000. Scholars such as Gergely Nagy and Vincent Ferré have commented that J.R.R. Tolkien wanted to create a shared mythology but envisioned it evolving through multiple hands and editorial frames. This history of Middle-earth provides a comprehensive look at the development of Tolkien's legendarium, showcasing his work on various drafts throughout his life. Christopher Tolkien decided not to include The Hobbit material in The History of Middle-earth due to it being a children's story with different intentions than his father's mythology. Instead, he published The History of The Hobbit in two volumes edited by John D. Rateliff. Reviewers praised the series for its accomplishment, changing perspectives on Tolkien's writings from focusing on The Lord of the Rings to the Silmarillion-centric view his father had intended. The history series revealed more about Tolkien's invented world than readers could have imagined before The Silmarillion. It provided an unprecedented opportunity to examine a writer's creative development over 60 years and demonstrated Christopher Tolkien's editing skills in organizing his father's chaotic papers. Tolkien's mythology, as documented in the History, is considered a work of great power and scope. Readers were initially looking for another Lord of the Rings but instead found The Silmarillion presented as a coherent narrative by Christopher Tolkien through combining and modifying his father's diverse drafts written in different styles and levels of completeness. Tolkien's legendarium, characterized by perpetual change, presented a significant challenge for his son Christopher. To tackle the diverse writings of his father, including prose, verse, and cosmological accounts, Christopher set out to create The History. Some readers criticized the work, claiming it should never have been published due to its display of Tolkien's mistakes and false starts. Others objected on grounds of "canonicity," arguing that Tolkien hadn't approved these texts for publication or finalized details for use in games and adaptations. However, Christopher emphasized that The History represents a living creation, showcasing the creative process behind Tolkien's work. In his commentary, Christopher notes that The History offers a unique opportunity to view the creative spark behind one of the most influential writers of the 20th century. He predicts that this new era in Tolkien studies will begin with the publication of The History. Christopher took on the responsibility of editing and publishing his father's writings after Tolkien's death in 1973. He spent 45 years working on the project, eventually publishing 24 volumes, including the 12-volume series, The History of Middle-earth. This work presents Tolkien's mythology in chronological sequence, tracing its evolution from its earliest conception to its author's final meditations. The textual complexities surrounding J.R.R. Tolkien's manuscripts were multifaceted. Drafts were often handwritten, sometimes hastily, making them difficult to read due to their illegibility. Many drafts were in pencil, with earlier versions frequently erased and overwritten, adding layers of complexity. The same sheets of paper were sometimes used for both annotated and extended versions, which made it challenging to establish the exact sequence of events. Furthermore, the papers were in disarray, requiring scholars to deduce relative dates from evidence within the texts themselves or by analyzing the source materials used by Tolkien's father. This involved identifying a stock of paper that originated from a specific location or time period, providing an earliest possible date for those manuscripts. Scholar Gergely Nagy observed that Tolkien envisioned his works as being within the fictional world itself and believed in the importance of presenting multiple and sometimes contradictory accounts to achieve his desired effect. As a philologist, Tolkien drew inspiration from professionals such as Elias Lönnrot, compiler of the Finnish epic Kalevala. This was seen as essential for creating a mythology that would be representative of England, as it necessitated being written by many hands. By publishing his father's writings, Christopher Tolkien, also a philologist, essentially placed himself in the functional position of Bilbo Baggins as an editor and collector. In doing so, he unintentionally reinforced the mythopoeic effect that his father had aimed for, making the published book perform the function that Bilbo's book was intended to do. Tolkien's Middle-earth writings evolved into a complex work created by different hands over time, involving editing, annotation, and commentary. Elizabeth Whittingham noted that Tolkien valued the impression of depth gained from mentioning much older events in The Lord of the Rings but realized this couldn't be replicated for The Silmarillion stories as they were set in an earlier time. Instead, a man from a later age, such as Eriol from The Book of Lost Tales, could visit Middle-earth and record the tales of the Elves. This provided a frame story that separated readers from these tales of past loss and faded glory. Flieger commented on Christopher Tolkien's remark about not providing a frame story for his 1977 Silmarillion, observing that the one-volume work gave a misleading impression of coherence and finality. However, she noted that the book was essential in making the History available to readers, with the twelve-volume work providing exactly the framework that Christopher felt was lacking in the earlier book. The History of Middle-earth was editorially framed by Christopher Tolkien using his philological skills to present his father's legendarium as a set of historical texts. This framing, similar to that in The Monsters and the Critics, presents the series as scholarly work. Other authors have contributed humorous framing elements outside of this frame. A collection of references on J.R.R. Tolkien's work, including his theories on mythology and culture, as well as various publications and reviews. The text mentions several sources, including McIlwaine's "Timeline", Flieger's "Interrupted Music: The Making Of Tolkien's Mythology", Tolkien's own works such as "The Book of Lost Tales" and "The Return of the Shadow", and scholarly analyses like Nagy's "The Silmarillion: Tolkien's Theory of Myth, Text, and Culture". Additionally, reviews and articles from publications like the Bodleian Library Publishing and McFarland & Company are also included.