

The Silmarillion Reading Guide

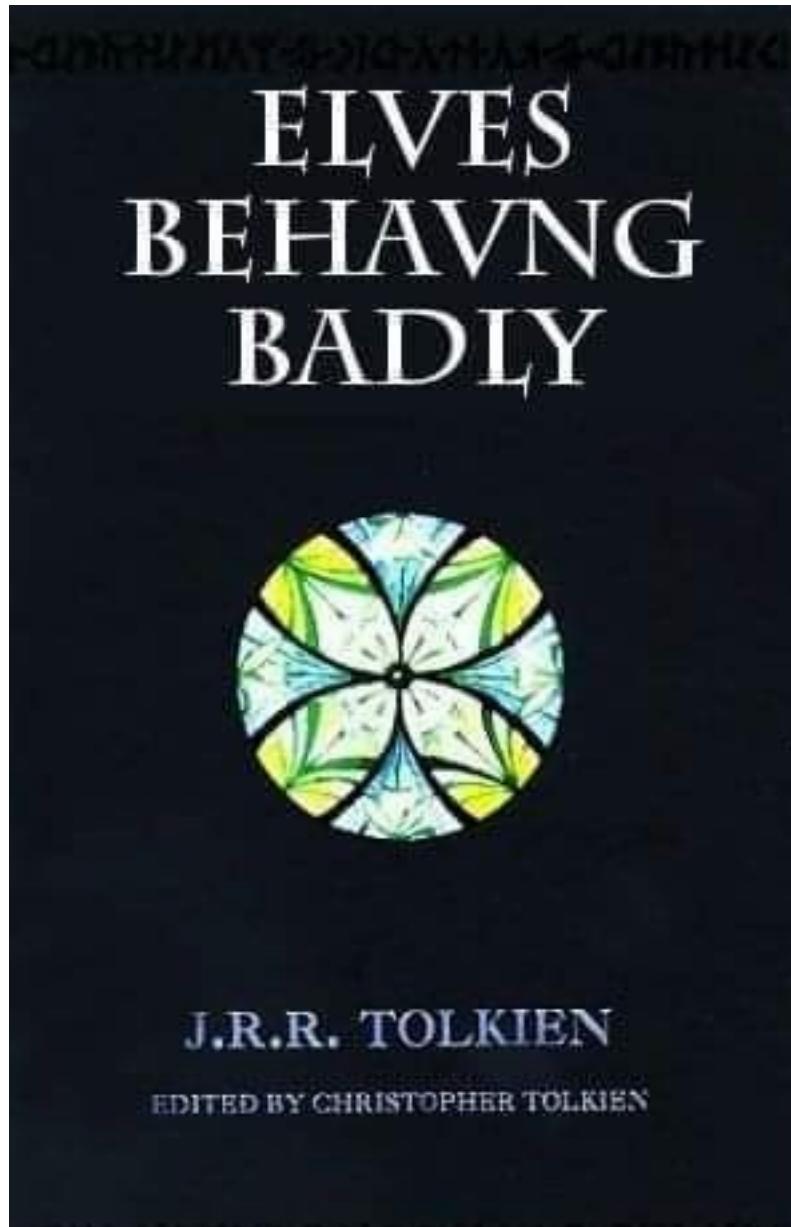


Figure 1: The Silmarillion

Abbreviated Reading

If you want to read The Silmarillion but find it too difficult, I recommend reading some of these chapters in isolation as individual stories.

1. Of Beren and Lúthien
2. The Children of Húrin (aka Narn i Chîn Húrin)
3. The Fall of Gondolin
4. TODO: which one of the creation tales?

The Children of Húrin is also available as a more fleshed out, standalone book. The audiobook is read by Christopher Lee. This version has more details but leaves out a few segments that tie it in with the rest of the Silmarillion.

Difficult Chapters

Of Beleriand and its Realms is a notoriously difficult and boring chapter. It's got some lovely moments, but it's largely just land descriptions. If you get bored there, just skim it or skip it.

Terms

There's a million terms for varying groups of elves; “the elves who went here” vs. “the elves who didn’t”, “the elves who went here but didn’t go further” vs. “the elves who went further”, etc etc etc. I made it thru my first read thru by

defining each of these terms as simply “a group of elves”.

Audiobook

I've listened to the version read by Martin Shaw several times and loved it; his tone and voice are appropriately epic for the material. But I'm sure the Andy Serkis version is also very good.