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THE AUTHORIZED EDITION

# J.R.R. TOLKIEN

THE ENCHANTING PRELUDE TO  
*The Lord of the Rings*

## THE HOBBIT



THE SPELLBINDING WORLDWIDE  
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# About the "Lord of the Rings" Trilogy by J. R. R. Tolkien:

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—Arthur C. Clarke

"There are very few works of genius in recent literature. This is one."

—Michael Straight, *The New Republic*

In 1956 *The Return of the King* was published by Houghton Mifflin in the United States—thus completing the publication of the first edition of Tolkien's epic trilogy **THE LORD OF THE RINGS**.

As Tolkien's American paperback publisher, we are celebrating the 25th anniversary of one of the world's most beloved classics with this special Silver Jubilee Edition.

## And what is a Hobbit?

Hobbits are little people, smaller than dwarves. They love peace and quiet and good tilled earth. They dislike machines, but they are handy with tools. They are nimble but don't like to hurry. They have sharp ears and eyes. They are inclined to be fat. They wear bright colors but seldom wear shoes. They like to laugh and eat (six meals a day) and drink. They like parties and they like to give and receive presents. They inhabit a land they call The Shire, a place between the River Brandywine and the Far Downs.

THE HOBBIT is a story of these delightful creatures—a story complete in itself yet full of portent. For this is the book that tells of Bilbo Baggins, the far-wandering hobbit who discovered (some say stole) the One Ring of Power and brought it back to The Shire.

And so this is the absolutely necessary beginning to the great story of the War of the Rings which J. R. R. Tolkien completes in his epic fantasy trilogy, *The Lord of the Rings*.

THIS IS THE AUTHORIZED PAPERBOUND EDITION  
PUBLISHED BY BALLANTINE BOOKS

It's been fifteen years at this writing since I first came across **THE LORD OF THE RINGS** in the stacks at the Carnegie Library in Pittsburgh. I'd been looking for the book for four years, ever since reading W. H. Auden's review in the *New York Times*. I think of that time now—and the years after, when the trilogy continued to be hard to find and hard to explain to most friends—with an undeniable nostalgia. It was a barren era for fantasy, among other things, but a good time for cherishing slighted treasures and mysterious passwords. Long before *Frodo Lives!* began to appear in the New York subways, J. R. R. Tolkien was the magus of my secret knowledge.

I've never thought it an accident that Tolkien's works waited more than ten years to explode into popularity almost overnight. The Sixties were no fouler a decade than the Fifties—they merely reaped the Fifties' foul harvest—but they were the years when millions of people grew aware that the industrial society had become paradoxically unlivable, incalculably immoral, and ultimately deadly. In terms of passwords, the Sixties were the time when the word *progress* lost its ancient holiness, and *escape* stopped being comically obscene. The impulse is being called reactionary now, but lovers of Middle-earth want to go there. I would myself, like a shot.

For in the end it is Middle-earth and its dwellers that we love, not Tolkien's considerable gifts in showing it to us. I said once that the world he charts was there long before him, and I still believe it. He is a great enough magician to tap our most common nightmares, daydreams and twilight fancies, but he never invented them either: he found them a place to live, a green alternative to each day's madness here in a poisoned world. We are raised to honor all the wrong explorers and discoverers—thieves planting flags, murderers carrying crosses. Let us at last praise the colonizers of dreams.

—Peter S. Beagle  
Watsonville, California  
14 July 1973

THE AUTHORIZED EDITIONS  
*of the works of J. R. R. Tolkien*

THE HOBBIT

*The Lord of the Rings Trilogy*

*Part I*

THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE RING

*Part II*

THE TWO TOWERS

*Part III*

THE RETURN OF THE KING

THE TOLKIEN READER

SMITH OF WOOTTON MAJOR  
AND FARMER GILES OF HAM

J. R. R. Tolkien (1892-1973) was at Pembroke College, Oxford, as Professor of Anglo-Saxon from 1925 to 1945 and then, until his retirement in 1959, Merton Professor of English Language and Literature. His chief interest was in the literary and linguistic tradition of the English West Midlands, especially in *Beowulf*, the *Ancrene Wisse*, and *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*; but he is better known to the reading public as the author of *Farmer Giles of Ham*, *The Hobbit*, *The Adventures of Tom Bombadil*, and the three volumes of *The Lord of the Rings*.

# The Hobbit

or

There and Back  
Again

*(Revised Edition)*



by  
J. R. R. Tolkien

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Published by Ballantine Books**

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In this reprint several minor inaccuracies, most of them noted by readers, have been corrected. For example, the text on pages 32 and 62 now corresponds exactly with the runes on Thrór's Map. More important is the matter of Chapter Five. There the true story of the ending of the Riddle Game, as it was eventually revealed (under pressure) by Bilbo to Gandalf, is now given according to the Red Book, in place of the version Bilbo first gave to his friends, and actually set down in his diary. This departure from truth on the part of a most honest hobbit was a portent of great significance. It does not, however, concern the present story, and those who in this edition make their first acquaintance with hobbit-lore need not trouble about it. Its explanation lies in the history of the Ring, as it was set out in the chronicles of the Red Book of Westmarch, and is now told in *The Lord of the Rings*.

A final note may be added, on a point raised by several students of the lore of the period. On Thrór's Map is written *Here of old was Thrain King under the Mountain*; yet Thrain was the son of Thrór, the last King under the Mountain before the coming of the dragon. The Map, however, is not in error. Names are often repeated in dynasties, and the genealogies show that a distant ancestor of Thrór was referred to, Thrain I, a fugitive from Moria, who first discovered the Lonely Mountain, Erebor, and ruled there for a while, before his people moved on to the remoter mountains of the North.

↑ East lie the In  
where is D

The  
Lonely  
Mountain  
y t x t.  
t



Here of old was Th  
King under the M

VB PINM  
PQTHIXN  
PMNFRM  
M·HRO·MFA  
PMH·FBRM  
FHT: .P.P.

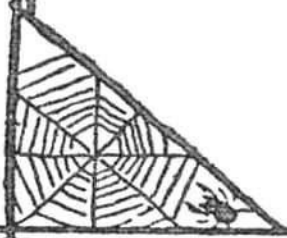
← Far  
to the North  
are  
the Grey Mountains  
the Withered Heath  
whence came the



Great Worms.

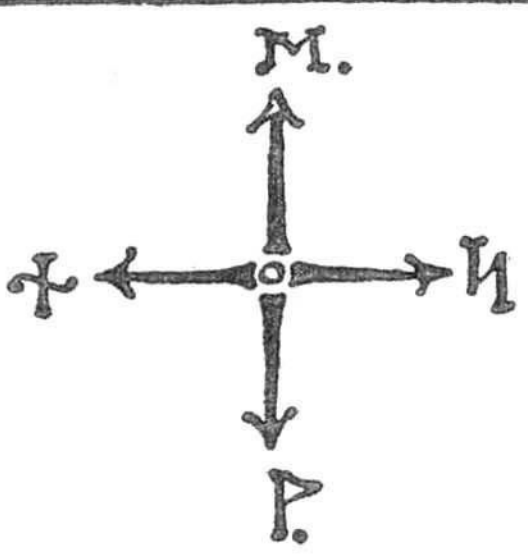


Thror's Map



West lies M

n hills  
in.



Here was Girion  
lord in Dale



Here is  
the gateway  
of the Long  
Lake

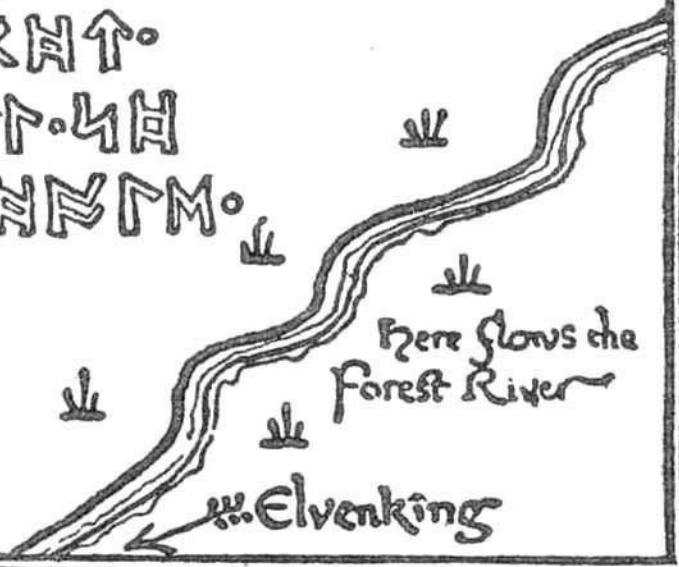
rain  
mountain

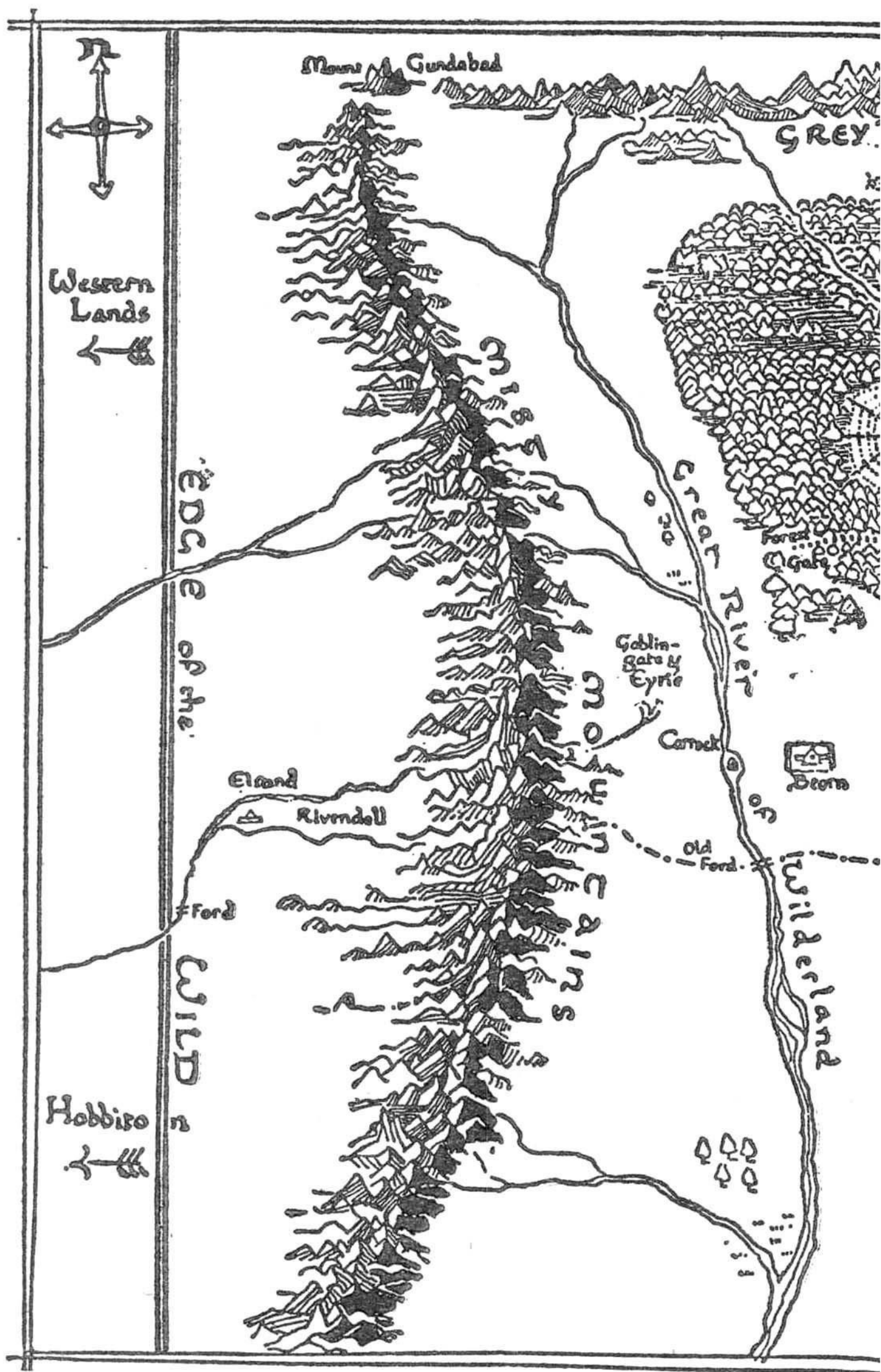
# The Desolation of Smaug

↑↑↑⊠·BA·TM·XRMA·H↑  
↑M·HPMT·TM·TRNH·H↑  
↑H·FT⊠·TM·HM↑↑IX·H  
↑PI·TM·TFH↑·FIXH↑·  
P·DNRIH·DFH·PIFT·H  
M·NHFT·TM·HMAHFE·M·

In Esgaroth upon  
the Long Lake  
dwell Men

↑  
kwood the Great  
there are Spiders.







Withered Heath  
MOUNTAINS



WILDERLAND





## *Chapter 1*

# An Unexpected Party

In a hole in the ground there lived a hobbit. Not a nasty, dirty, wet hole, filled with the ends of worms and an oozy smell, nor yet a dry, bare, sandy hole with nothing in it to sit down on or to eat: it was a hobbit-hole, and that means comfort.

It had a perfectly round door like a porthole, painted green, with a shiny yellow brass knob in the exact middle. The door opened on to a tube-shaped hall like a tunnel: a very comfortable tunnel without smoke, with panelled walls, and floors tiled and carpeted, provided with polished chairs, and lots and lots of pegs for hats and coats—the hobbit was fond of visitors. The tunnel wound on and on, going fairly but not quite straight into the side of the hill—The Hill, as all the people for many miles round called it—and many little round doors opened out of it, first on one side and then on another. No going upstairs for the hobbit: bedrooms, bathrooms, cellars, pantries (lots of these), wardrobes (he had whole rooms devoted to clothes), kitchens, dining-rooms, all were on the same floor, and indeed on the same passage. The best rooms were all on the lefthand side (going in), for these were the only ones to have windows, deep-set round windows looking over his garden and meadows beyond, sloping down to the river.

This hobbit was a very well-to-do hobbit, and his name was Baggins. The Bagginses had lived in the neighbourhood of The Hill for time out of mind, and people considered them very respectable, not only because most of them were rich, but also because they never had any adventures or did anything unexpected: you could tell what a Baggins would say on any question without the bother of asking

him. This is a story of how a Baggins had an adventure, and found himself doing and saying things altogether unexpected. He may have lost the neighbours' respect, but he gained—well, you will see whether he gained anything in the end.

The mother of our particular hobbit—what is a hobbit? I suppose hobbits need some description nowadays, since they have become rare and shy of the Big People, as they call us. They are (or were) a little people, about half our height, and smaller than the bearded Dwarves. Hobbits have no beards. There is little or no magic about them, except the ordinary everyday sort which helps them to disappear quietly and quickly when large stupid folk like you and me come blundering along, making a noise like elephants which they can hear a mile off. They are inclined to be fat in the stomach; they dress in bright colours (chiefly green and yellow); wear no shoes, because their feet grow natural leathery soles and thick warm brown hair like the stuff on their heads (which is curly); have long clever brown fingers, good-natured faces, and laugh deep fruity laughs (especially after dinner, which they have twice a day when they can get it). Now you know enough to go on with. As I was saying, the mother of this hobbit—of Bilbo Baggins, that is—was the fabulous Belladonna Took, one of the three remarkable daughters of the Old Took, head of the hobbits who lived across The Water, the small river that ran at the foot of The Hill. It was often said (in other families) that long ago one of the Took ancestors must have taken a fairy wife. That was, of course, absurd, but certainly there was still something not entirely hobbit-like about them, and once in a while members of the Took-clan would go and have adventures. They discreetly disappeared, and the family hushed it up; but the fact remained that the Tookes were not as respectable as the Bagginses, though they were undoubtedly richer.

Not that Belladonna Took ever had any adventures after she became Mrs. Bungo Baggins. Bungo, that was Bilbo's father, built the most luxurious hobbit-hole for her (and