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Journal of Literary Onomastics

Volume 4 | Issue 1 Article 4

11-3-2015

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Nelson, Marie (2015) "From Honor to Ridicule to Shame to Fame: The Naming and Re-Naming of Túrin Son of Húrin," *Journal of Literary Onomastics*: Vol. 4 : Iss. 1 , Article 4.
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From Honor to Ridicule to Shame to Fame: The Naming and Re-Naming of Túrin Son of Húrin

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ERNST CASSIRER, a senior contemporary of J.R.R. Tolkien, wrote in *Language and Myth* that "Before the intellectual work of conceiving and understanding of phenomena can set in, the work of naming must have preceded it and have reached a certain point of elaboration. For it is this process which transforms the world of sense impression . . . into a mental world, a world of ideas and meanings" (28).

For Tolkien the work of naming did come first, we learn from Humphrey Carpenter's *Tolkien: The Authorized Biography* and T.A. Shippey's *The Road to Middle Earth*; and understanding could be slow to follow. It might seem to survivors of History of the English Language and Old English courses that "hobbit," a word Tolkien scribbled on the blank page of a student exam, was a recognizable reduced form of the compound "holbyltla." Turning to Clark Hall and Meritt's *Anglo-Saxon Dictionary* we can see that "hole" is the Modern English equivalent for "hol." And since the sound represented by "t" is a voiceless equivalent of the voiced "d" and "a" can be heard in the language of some speakers of English as the agent suffix "-er," "byltla" can be read as an agent noun equivalent to "builder." The hobbits, then, were hole-builders.

But, as John D. Rateliff tells the "hobbit" story in *The History of the Hobbitt Part One: Mr. Baggins,* though Tolkien wrote the word with his own hand he did not immediately know what it meant. It was just a name he wrote on a blank page that appeared in an enormous pile of boring student exams, he said in a 1968 BBC interview (xii), and it took some time for him to realize that the name of the fictional characters to whom he gave life were essentially like himself. So much, then, for the act of naming as it relates to the origin of *The Lord of the Rings*. The word "hobbit" may have come to Tolkien unexpected, but the *Anglo-Saxon Dictionary* and the *Oxford English Dictionary* – and Carpenter, incidentally, tells how Tolkien began his work as a lexicographer when his wartime service came to an end (98) – present ways to trace the meaning of this seminal word back to its sources.

The situation is different with the names of characters who came into being in *The Children of Húrin*. The *OED* provides no equivalents for Tolkien's Ainur or "Holy Ones," the Noldor or "Knowing Ones," or the Valar, a name Christopher Tolkien, the editor who made it possible for his father's story to come to published life, glosses in his "List of Names in the Tale of the Children of Hurin" as ""The Powers, those great spirits that entered the World at the beginning of Time." These are names that came from Tolkien's intention to create a language of his own that would enable him to tell the stories he was determined to tell. And, perhaps not surprisingly, we also find in Christopher Tolkien's *Silmarillion* Appendix a meaning for the first syllable of the hero of *The Children of Húrin*'s name in an entry that reads "*Tur 'power, mastery in Turambar, Turgon, Turin, Feanturi, TarMinyatur*" (365).

Húrin, Túrin's father, did not follow the *Beowulf* tradition of repeated initial consonants for the naming of sons born into ruling families. He chose instead to replace the initial consonant of his name and keep the basic form of what followed; and in doing so it would seem that he not only gave his son a name that reflected their close relationship but also predicted that Túrin would grow up to be the kind of man that he was. Húrin was known as Húrin the Steadfast, and he wanted his son to achieve the kind of respect that he had earned for himself.

This intention becomes visibly and audibly apparent in the first chapter of *The Children of Húrin,* which bears the title "The Childhood of Túrin." Here we see Húrin place his eight-year-old son on a table, look up to him, and, addressing him as "Heir of the House of Hador," predict that Túrin will someday be taller than *he* is when he stands on his own feet (48). Members of Túrin's mother Morwen's family do grow tall, Jesse Mitchell notes in "Master of Doom, by Doom Mastered," adding that Túrin was like his mother in a number of other ways. He had dark hair, he spoke little, and he was "slow to forget injustice and mockery" (91). But the significance of Húrin's prediction, as far as the prediction itself and the setting in which he makes it are concerned, can be related to two meanings for young Túrin's "stature," a word the editors of *The Oxford American Dictionary* define as "the natural height of the body" *and* "greatness attained by ability or achievement" (668*).*

Túrin's name, then, can be read as a prediction that he will achieve a success comparable to the recognition his father has gained for himself as a man of courage and a protector of his people. In any case, as Janet B. Croft writes in "Túrin and Aragorn: Evading and Embracing Fate," as he leaves the scene Túrin "repeats the name to himself, savoring it, proud of what it means" and refers to himself as 'Heir of the House of Hador' when he gives the "elf-wrought knife" his father gave *him* as a birthday present to Sador, a loyal servant of the household (157).

Cassirer also wrote about the *changing* of names, a topic of central importance to an understanding of Túrin's efforts to define and re-define himself that provide the basic structure of *The Children of Húrin*. Here he asserted that "The mythic consciousness does not see human personality as fixed and unchanging, but conceives every phase of a man's life as a new personality, a new self," and adds that "this metamorphosis is first of all made manifest in the changes which his name undergoes" (51). And, as Elizabeth Broadwell demonstrated in a 1990 essay titled "Essë and Narn: Name, Identity, and Narrative in the Tale of Túurin Turambar," the succession of names assigned to the son of Húrin sometimes *anticipate* changes in his own perception of himself.

Soon after the scene in which he predicts Túrin's growth to a height that exceeds his own Húrin leaves Hithlum to fight the invading forces of Morgoth, who, as Christopher Tolkien's *Children of Húrin* "List of Names" reminds us, was known in *The Silmarillion* creation story by the Qenta name Melkor (307). But it is not his name that provokes Húrin's defiance. It is Morgoth's claim to be the first and mightiest of the Valar. Morgoth, Húrin knows, was *not* the first of the Valar. And he did not create Arda, or The Earth. Nevertheless, with his armies of Orcs and the aid of Glaurung the dragon, Morgoth has launched a monstrous effort to make Middle-earth his own kingdom and unleashed a plague that causes the death of Túrin's beloved younger sister Unwen, who, because her laughter was "like the sound of the merry stream that came singing out of the hills past the walls of her father's house" (38-39) was known by the onomatopoeic name "Lalaith" – and to the end of Túrin's joyful childhood. And, with an act that gives literal meaning to "Thalion" or "the steadfast," a word that often accompanies Húrin's proper name in his story as Tolkien tells it, Morgoth chains him to a chair of stone from which he can view the action that takes place in Hithlum and Beleriand, lands over which he and his people were formerly free to travel.[1]

In a scene that follows soon after the birthday scene of Chapter I Morwen tells her son why he must leave his home to go to Doriath, a neighboring kingdom ruled by elves friendly to Húrin's people. Here there is no reference to the status of a descendant of Hador Goldenhead Lord of Dor-lomin. Morwen simply tells Túrin what could happen if he remains in Dorlomin. He could not just lose his claim to the land his father has ruled and he should inherit. He could become a thrall or slave.

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[1] Alan Lee's illustration, which appears between pp. 64 and 65 of *The Children of Húrin*, makes the irony of the new meaning of "steadfast" visible.

Túrin arrives in Doriath and his status rises. In an act without precedent — Elves do not adopt children of Men — King Thingol takes Túrin as his foster son and promises to hold him as his son as long as he lives. And he gives Túrin a gift Morwen had sent to *him*. This gift, a helmet that bears an image of the dragon Glaurung on its crest, is called "the Helm of Hador" and may predict that Túrin will someday receive the honor due not just to a leader – the man at the *helm* steers the ship, but also to a *protector* – the helmet is part of the warrior's protective armor – of his people.

That honor is slow to come. In a later scene Túrin, having reached the physical height of a grown man to which his father looked forward with such optimism, returns in a bedraggled state from one of his forest forays, and the elf Saeros, perhaps provoked because Túrin assumed a right to take *his* place at a table reserved for elders in the hall, asks what can perhaps be read as a prophetic question: "'If the Men of Hithlum are so wild and fell, of what sort are the women of that land? Do they run like the deer clad only in their hair?'" (87). Túrin of course cannot look ahead to the time when his sister Niënor, who has not yet been born, will lose *her* sense of identity and run wild. He simply responds by throwing a drinking vessel into Saeros's face – which leads the Elf to perform an act of name-*calling*.

The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines "name-calling" as "the action or process of calling someone names; abusive language, insulting speech" and provides "A wild man of the woods; a savage" as equivalents for "woodwose." Saeros, presumably intending to show his respect for the rules of Thingol's hall, further challenges Túrin when he says, "'Outside the hall I could answer you, Woodwose!'" (88). The contest continues with savage behavior on both sides and ends with the death of Saeros, who, running to escape a sword Túrin threatens to poke into his naked buttocks, tries to leap from one high cliff side of a stream to another and falls to his death. And Túrin refuses to return to await Thingol's judgment, choosing instead to become a man of the woods.

Meeting with Forweg, the leader of the Garwaith, or Wolf-men (*their* name identifies them as a group with which Turin refused to be associated when Saeros insulted him), Túrin refuses to comply with his demand for ransom and quickly hurls a stone that strikes a bowman who has just shot an arrow aimed at *him* dead. Túrin offers himself as a replacement for the bowman. Asked for his name, he replies "'Neithan the wronged, I call myself'" (101), and with "I call myself" he assumes a right to name himself that he will call upon more than once as the story of his self-imposed exile plays out.

Next, in defense of a woman Forweg is pursuing, Túrin kills *him* and nominates himself for Forweg's position. "'Hear me now!'" he says to the Wolf-men. "'These choices I give you. You must take me as your captain in Forweg's place, or else let me go. I will govern this fellowship now, or leave it'" (106). Andróg, Forweg's former second in command, supports Túrin, who has now become Neithan, and the outlaws accept him as their leader. He may have been ridiculed by Saeros. He may have left his foster home to live in the wild. But Túrin quickly rises to a position of leadership, and when Beleg the Strongbow (whose extended name represents just one of his virtues) finds him Túrin is reminded of his former happy life.

"'Neithan is a name unfit,'" Beleg says; and reminding him of the generosity of Thingol, who gave him the dragon helmet Morwen had sent to *him* when the need for his help became apparent, he tells Túrin that "'The Dragon-helm has been missed too long'" (114). And Túrin responds with these proud words: "Not yet will it suffer me to go back to Menegroth and bear looks of pity and pardon, as for a wayward boy amended. I should give pardon, not receive it" (115). But despite his proud rejection of the possibility of forgiveness it is clear that Túrin has begun to resume his former status. With Beleg at his side, he bargains for accommodation for himself and his followers in the chambers of Mîm the Dwarf, and, this step taken, he advances further in his effort to establish or re-establish his self esteem by re-naming himself Gorthol, the Dread Helm.

The dragon helmet his adoptive father gave to Túrin has now taken on a strongly combative significance, and would seem, at least for the moment, to have lost its protective meaning. Beleg counsels caution, but Túrin responds with boast words[2] worthy of Beowulf, "I will be the captain of my own host . . . and if I fall, then I fall. Here I stand in the path of Morgoth, and while I so stand he cannot use the southward road" (147). But unfortunately – and perhaps, as Mitchell suggests, as a result of the arrogance he takes on when he becomes Turambar, the Master of Doom – Túrin is captured by Morgoth's forces and bound to a tree. His loyal supporter Beleg comes to rescue him and succeeds in cutting the fetters that bind him. But Túrin, awakened suddenly by a "prick" on his foot from the sword Beleg accidentally drops, mistakes his loyal friend for one of the enemies who have captured him and his host – and, seizing the sword he dropped, kills Beleg with a single blow.

Beleg's sword, which originally bore the name "Anglachel," is reforged at the order of Thingol, renamed as "Gurthang," or "Iron of Death," and given to Túrin by the king who sheltered and adopted him. It will return to play a defining role in the story of Túrin's life, but I will turn now to the story of Túrin's sister Niënor, who was born after his mother sent him to Doriath. Morwen, after years of delay, at last agrees to go to Doriath herself, but not with an intention to stay protected in a safe haven. She remains there very briefly before, motivated by a strong sense of independence that she may well have passed on to her son, she asks Thingol for companions to accompany her return to her people. Her request denied because Thingol is too concerned for her safety to grant it, Morwen determines to set forth on her own. And her daughter Niënor — like mother like daughter — conceals herself by taking on the armor of a member of the small group Thingol has ordered to protect her mother and rejects his protection as well.

Morwen orders Niënor to return to Doriath when she discovers what she has done. "Go back! Go back! I command you!" she cries. And Niënor responds, "If the wife of Húrin can go forth against all counsel . . . then so also can Húrin's daughter." And, denying what we might call the power of nominal determinism, she says, "Mourning you named me, but I will not mourn alone for father, brother, and mother. But of these you only have I known, and above all do I love. And nothing that you fear not do I fear" (202). The name Morwen gave her daughter in the sad time that followed Húrin's departure from Hithlum may not simply reflect a present sorrow. It could predict a sorrow to come. But concern for the danger they will face does not stop the two brave women from taking on what they perceive to be a responsibility to act.

The two set forth, and Mablung, the leader of the Elves assigned to protect Morwen, says to his company, "Truly, it is by lack of counsel not of courage that Húrin's kin bring woe to others!" (203). And, careful as he is to keep watch, woe does come. The dragon Glaurung, first of the dragons of Morgoth, brings wild terror to the group. What happens to Túrin's mother at this point is not clear, but like the other travelers Morwen mounts a horse and her horse, like the others, is made "ungovernable" by the fog and stench of the approaching dragon. But we do learn that Niënor is thrown from her horse, and that, wandering aimlessly, she comes upon Glaurung the Dragon.

In the scene that follows Glaurung asks "What seek you here?" and Niënor answers "I do but seek one Túrin that dwelt here a while. But he is dead, maybe." The Dragon's answer to Niënor's unasked question of where her brother is now is an insulting "I know not. He was left here to defend the women and the weaklings; but when I came he deserted them and fled. A boaster but a craven, it seems." And when he asks why she should seek "such a one" his insult leads to Niënor's revelation of her own identity when she says "You lie. The children of Húrin at least are not craven. We fear you not" (208).

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[2] I am using "boast words" here in a sense related to the heroic promise as the concept was developed by Dwight Conquergood in "Boasting in Anglo-Saxon England: Performance and the Heroic Ethos."

And now, with Glaurung's revelation of *his* identity a great darkness descends upon Niënor, and an emptiness in which "she knew nothing, and heard nothing, and remembered nothing" (209). In this state she is led back toward Doriath by Mablung, along with his company of Elves. The weary group is suddenly attacked by Orcs, and the daughter of Húrin, experiencing a "strange change," outraces everyone and flies like a deer through the trees with her hair streaming behind her – which, incidentally, may recall the question Saeros asked Túrin about the women of Hithlum. But the spell passes, and Niënor is found naked and wordless, "like a wild thing that is trapped," by the men of Brethil Forest whose leadership Túrin has now taken on.

Different as its setting may be from that of the scene in which Húrin placed his son above him on a table and addressed him as "Head of the House of Hador," the naming scene that follows plays an equally important role as preparation for the events that follow. Here Túrin gently asks his sister, who lies helplessly on the ground, "'Now, lady, will you not tell us your name and your kin, and what evil has befallen you?'" and Niënor, apparently unable to answer, simply puts her hand in Túrin's as a sign of trust. Continuing his quest for an answer Túrin says "'With us you are safe. Here you may rest this night, and in the morning we will lead you to our homes up in the high forest. But we would know your name and your kin, so that we may find them, maybe, and bring them news of you. Will you not tell us?'"

When Niënor continues to fail to answer Túrin continues, "'Maybe the tale is too sad yet to tell. But I will give you a name, and, suiting the name to the pain she suffers, he says that he will call her "Níniel, Maid of Tears."' Niënor utters the word "'Níniel,'" the first word she has spoken since the attack of the Orcs (215-16), and the name Túrin has given her, with its repeated nasal consonants, is very close in sound and meaning to Niënor, child of mourning, her birth name. But she still cannot remember that name.

Níniel/Niënor slowly reaches a point at which she can ask Túrin what *his* name is, and the naming scene continues. Since her rescue from the Orcs who held her captive, Niënor has been engaged in a slow language recovery process, and she now asks this question: "'Of all things I have now asked the name, save you. What are you called?'" and Túrin answers "Turambar." There is a pause, as if Níniel listens for an echo – and the first syllable of the name Túrin now gives his sister *is* very close in sound to the name his father gave him – before she asks "'And what does that say, or is it just the name for you alone?'" And Túrin answers, "'It means Master of the Dark Shadow. For I also, Níniel, had my darkness, in which dear things were lost; but now I have overcome it, I deem'" (217-18), thus overestimating — and this is not the first time — his ability to overcome the fate for which he is destined.

The echo Níniel may listen for could be "Túrin." Though the three-syllable name that Túrin has taken on to establish a new identity would seem to resonate with a sound of power in a way that the echo of his father's name does not, but the first syllables of Túrin and Turambar, like the first syllables of Niënor and Níniel, are close. But in neither case are they close enough to establish the relationship between the current names and the original names of the speakers involved in this scene. Turambar, in time, asks Níniel to marry him, and she agrees to marry the man who has taken on, with a prideful assertion of his ability to determine his own destiny, a name that carries the meaning "Master of the Dark Shadow."

And now Túrin meets the Dragon, and greeting him with pretended good will Glaurung says "'Hail, son of Húrin. Well met!'" Túrin attempts to raise his sword in response, but he is forced to listen to Glaurung's condemnation, which begins "'Evil have been all your ways, son of Húrin'" and continues with the following reasons for shame: Túrin is (1) a thankless fosterling, (2) an outlaw, (3) the slayer of your friend, (4) a thief of love, (5) the usurper of Nargothrond, (6) a captain foolhardy, and (7) the deserter of your kin (178-79).

Each "evil way" (Mitchell calls them "tallies" in his assessment of guilt) can be related to an event in Túrin's life. He did fail to show proper gratitude for the shelter and good advice provided him by Thingol and his wife Melian. He became an outlaw and a leader of outlaws. Mistaking Beleg Strongbow in the darkness of night for one of the Orcs who had bound him to a tree he killed his loyal friend with Beleg's own sword. He attracted the love of Finduilas, an Elf maiden loved by Gwindor, an elf of Nargothrond who had befriended him. He usurped the power of Orodreth, the King of Nargothrond. He insisted on openly hunting the Orcs when the leader of the People of Haleth wished to pursue a more cautious course. But he did *not* desert Morwen and Niënor. Forced to choose between trying to rescue Finduilas and finding his mother and sister Túrin returned to his childhood home, only to learn that Morwen and Niënor have long been gone.

Túrin makes careful plans for his second meeting with the Dragon. He knows Glaurung will have to cross the river Teiglin to continue his southward path, and he knows that the path he is likely to take reaches a place where two cliffs rising on either side are close enough to allow him to leap from one side to the other. He plans to strike a blow to Glaurung's "vulnerable underbelly" as he completes his leap – and as a reader and re-reader of *Beowulf*, I find myself turning back to see in ll. 2697-2702a that a blow struck lower down caused the fire of Glaurung's predecessor to begin to diminish. Túrin strikes his fatal blow. But the dying dragon, like the dragon of *Beowulf*, inflicts a baleful injury in return. Glaurung glares at Túrin with such concentrated malice that Turin falls unconscious by his side.

And now Niënor and the Dragon meet again. Niënor climbs to the scene of Túrin's confrontation with the Dragon, where she finds her brother in a deathlike state and the Dragon still capable of speech. And Glaurung now delivers an ironically loaded denunciation of Túrin. "'Hail Niënor, daughter of Húrin,'" he begins. "'I give you joy that you have found your brother at last. And now you know him: a stabber in the dark, treacherous to foes, faithless to friends, and a curse unto his kin, Túrin son of Húrin!'" And *then* he adds, "'But the worst of all his deeds you shall feel in yourself'" (243). And Níniel, who carries in her womb a child fathered by her brother, leaps to her death on the sharp rocks of the river that flows below.

Brandir, identified in Christopher Tolkien's nineteen-page list of names as "Ruler of the People of Haleth in Brethil when Túrin came" (298), used all his skill in healing to help Niënor/Níniel when she was found in the woods. He grew to love her, and faithfully followed her to her confrontation with Glaurung. And now, returning to announce the death of the Dragon *and* of Túrin to the people of Brethil, he finds reason to rejoice in *both* deaths (246). His listeners of course have reason to rejoice that Glaurung is dead, but how can Turambar's death be good news? Some say Brandir must be mad. But he continues, "'Hear me to the end! Níniel too is dead. . . . She leaped from the brink of the Deer's Leap, and the teeth of Teiglin have taken her! She is gone, hating the light of day. For this she learned before she fled: Húrin's children were they both, sister and brother. The Mormegil he was called, Turambar he called himself, hiding his past. . . . Níniel we named her, not knowing her past. Niënor she was, daughter of Húrin'" (247). And the double identities of Túrin and Niënor have now become crystal clear.

Brandir's people, a people Túrin saved from the Dragon, weep as they stand before him. They have accepted the fact that the river Teiglin has become Níniel's grave, and thinking that Mormegil the "Black Sword," Turambar, their courageous defender, is also dead, they resolve to honor him with an appropriate memorial. And this task remains for Tolkien: he must tell the story of the death of Túrin. And we should not find it surprising that he calls upon the powers of naming to tell it.

Brandir confronts Túrin. He tells him Niniël is dead. Then, responding to Túrin's refusal to believe what he has said, Brandir denies that *he* is crazed. Refusing to give Túrin the respect he has so steadily endeavored to achieve, he addresses him not by his birth name but by one of the names he chose for himself, a name that *did* bring him a recognition he gloried in, when he says "'Nay, crazed are you, Black Sword of black doom'" (251) and condemns the son who – though he has demonstrated his physical courage again and again – has failed to fulfill his father's expectations.

And now "Mormegil," a sword name Túrin took for himself as he moved from the indignity of "Neithan the Wronged" (101) to "Agarwaen, the Bloodstained, Son of Ill-fate" (159), takes on a much darker meaning as Brandir tells him that the woman he rescued and impregnated was Niënor, daughter of Húrin and Morwen, his own sister. Túrin's responses are, first, to deny the truth of what he has just heard, and, second, to slay the bearer of truth with Gurthang, Beleg's re-forged, re-named sword. And now Túrin wanders as a man who has gone mad.

At this point Mablung, Túrin's loyal friend from the years he spent under the protection of Thingol, comes upon him and recognizes him as the Black Sword of Nargothrond; and the name of the bearer of the sword and the sword itself seem, for the moment, to have become one. But the elves who accompany Mablung show their veneration of the *man* Túrin/Turambar by crying out "'You have slain the Great Worm! Praised forever shall your name be among Elves and Men!'" (254). Their praise, however, means nothing to Túrin. He wants to know what has happened to his mother and sister — and, refusing to believe what Mablung tells him about Niënor's time of aimless wandering because it establishes her identity as Níniel – he turns to address his sword.

Cassirer, writing of a time much earlier than our own, when naming began to play a seminal role in the efforts of human beings to perform the creative roles that language enabled them to play, asserted that "as soon as man employs a tool, he views it as not a mere artifact of which he is the recognized maker, but as a Being in its own right, endowed with powers of its own" (*Language and Myth*, 59). Tolkien takes this a big step further with the following exchange in which Túrin addresses the sword once owned by Beleg by the name it now bears.

"'Hail Gurthang, iron of death, you alone now remain!" Túrin says. "From no blood will you shrink." Then, referring to himself with both his birth name and one of the names he has given himself, he asks "'Will you take Túrin Turambar? Will you slay me swiftly?'" And Gurthang, enabled to speak by the creator of the story of the children of Húrin, says "'Yes, I will drink your blood, that I may forget the blood of Beleg my master, and the blood of Brandir slain unjustly. I will slay you swiftly'" (256). And Túrin ends his life by placing the hilt of his sword in the ground and throwing his body upon its point. But the *story* does not end here.

I think Jesse Mitchell was quite right in his refusal to read the conclusion of *The Children of Húrin* as an example of the "eucatastrophe" or "happy ending" of escape from death that Tolkien defined in his essay "On Fairy Stories." Túrin does not escape death and, in fact, did not *wish* to escape death. He, as we have just seen in the scene between the son of Húrin and Beleg's renamed sword, *chose* to die, and was enabled to do so by the re-forged and re-named sword with which he accidentally killed a friend who had saved *him* from death during a life-threatening time of crisis.

A sudden "joyous turn," another defining feature of the "fairy story" as Tolkien defined it in "On Fairy Stories" *may,* however*,* come for Húrin when he is released at last from Morgoth's long imprisonment that can be read and *seen* – if we turn back to Alan Lee's illustration – as a living death. For years the exemplary leader who could be counted on to remain resolute has been ironically held "fast," or firmly, in place, or "stead," on a high mountain from which he could observe the suffering of his wife and children, but now, released at last from the shackles that have bound him, Húrin searches for Morwen. When he finds her at last at the site of Túrin's death she is so aged and bent down by grief that he cannot recognize her. But suddenly he sees that an "elven light" still shines forth from her eyes.

"'Eledhwen! Eledhwen!'" Húrin calls out, and for a poignant moment the name brings back a past when "for the light of her glance and the beauty of her face men called her Eledhwen, the elven-fair" (34). But the moment of joy is brief. Morwen is mortal, and, as Sador explained to Túrin back in the sad days when his sister Urwen, or Lalaith, was one of the first to die from the plague unleashed by Morgoth, there are essential differences between elven and human mortality. "As all can see," Sador said, "we weary soon and many meet death even sooner." "The Elves do not weary," he continues, "and they do not die save by great hurt. From wounds and griefs that would slay Men they may be healed; and even when their bodies are marred they return again, some say." And then Sador concludes, "It is not so with us" (42-43).

The words TURIN TURAMBAR DAGNIR GLAURUNG (TURIN TURAMBAR SLAYER OF GLAURUNG), engraved on his gravestone, mark the place where Túrin died, and this is the place where Húrin and Morwen are finally reunited and pay tribute to the son who, if he has not succeeded in fulfilling them, has nevertheless honored the expectations his father expressed in the birthday scene of "The Childhood of Túrin." Though the people of Brethil have not been able to recover her body from the Teiglin, they pay their respect to *her* as well with the names NÏENOR NINIEL inscribed directly below the tribute to Túrin. But Húrin cannot give Morwen the news about their children she would wish to hear.

Tolkien ends his story, perhaps with an intention to communicate a degree of consolation, not with an answer to Morwen's question of how Niënor found Túrin, but by simply writing that "Húrin did not answer, and he sat beside the stone with Morwen in his arms." The two do not speak again, and we learn that "The sun went down, and Morwen sighed and clasped his hand and was still; and Húrin knew that she was dead" (259).

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