
Character Biography Amárië of the Vanyar

By Oshun

The one certain detail that we know about Amárië is that she did not follow her man, Finrod Felagund, to Middle-earth.

One might assert that the majority of women in Tolkien's work fall into three categories: 1) the unnamed women who must have played a substantial role in the unfolding of his history of Arda, but whose stories are never developed; 2) the few named women who actually have their actions documented to a greater or lesser degree (2); and 3) the women who receive a name but little to no description of their lives. Amárië, the love interest of Finrod, falls into the last category.

Amárië is mentioned in the published *Silmarillion*, at the end of an account of the construction of Nargothrond by Finrod, in the following wistful and prophetic words.

Now King Finrod Felagund had no wife, and Galadriel asked him why this should be; but foresight came upon Felagund as she spoke, and he said: 'An oath I too shall swear, and must be free to fulfill it, and go into darkness. Nor shall anything of my realm endure that a son should inherit.'

But it is said that not until that hour had such cold thoughts ruled him; for indeed she whom he had loved was Amarië of the Vanyar, and she went not with him into exile. (3)

In *The Grey Annals*, the language describing this same exchange between Finrod and Galadriel is somewhat different: the spelling of her name and addition of the statement that "she was not permitted" to leave Aman with Finrod.

But it is said that not until that hour had such cold thoughts ruled him; for indeed she whom he had loved was *Amárië* of the Vanyar, and *she was not permitted to go* with him into exile. (4) [Emphasis added.]

The only other occasion Amárië is mentioned in the published *Silmarillion* is in the "Index of Names" as a "Vanyarin Elf, beloved of Finrod Felagund, who remained in Valinor" (5).

Later in *The Grey Annals*, it is noted that, after his death, Finrod was reunited with Amárië in Valinor.

Thus perished from Middle-earth the fairest of the children of Finwë, and returned never again; but dwells now in Valinor with Amárië. (6)

Amárië is referenced also in the Index of *The War of the Jewels*, which reads simply, "Vanyarin Elf, beloved of Felagund." The references noted above all refer to Amárië as Finrod's beloved and not his wife. *The Shibboleth of Fëanor* states explicitly "Felagund had no wife, for the Vanya

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Amárië whom he loved had not been permitted to leave Aman” (7). However, a page later, the text contradicts itself with the statement that Finrod “had no child (he left his wife in Aman)” (8). It is perhaps significant that references to Amárië by name always describe her as his beloved and never as his wife, which could lead one to assume that once Tolkien had inserted the named character of Amárië, he had decided she was not his wife, but his beloved left behind.

In conclusion, one can assume from the texts that Finrod Felagund had a girlfriend, her name was Amárië, she was Vanyarin, she stayed in Aman, and they got their happily-ever-after ending.

Amárië or Amarië?

The spelling Amarië is used in the published *Silmarillion*. However, all other references to her use Amárië (9). Darth Fingon notes that “[p]honologically speaking, it should probably be *már* with the long á. The element comes from the earlier word *magra*, which morphs into Q *mára* and S *maer* (10).” He goes on to speculate that Amárië was likely “constructed to mean 'most good' ” (11). And further that Tolkien invented many of his names in pairs or sets, and Amárië looks like it may have been invented in the same manner as Anairë ('most holy'). Anairë was originally assigned as the name of Turgon's wife, who, at that point, was not permitted to leave Aman because she was a Vanya (sound familiar?). When Anairë became Turgon's mother and perishing-on-the-Ice Elenwë became his wife, it looks like the beloved-stayed-behind-in-Aman story was shifted over to Finrod with a new yet similar name now that Alairë/Anairë was taken: Amárië. (WJ 323) (12)

Since Tolkien uses the spelling Amárië in every other instance aside from the published *Silmarillion* and it appears linguistically logical, while *Amarië* appears to be a deviation from an established rule, I have chosen to use *Amárië* here.

Author's Note: I would like to thank Darth Fingon for allowing me access to his unpublished notes and guiding me to the relevant references to Amárië throughout the texts.

Works Cited

1. See the section “Amárië or Amarië?” below in this article for an explanation of the spelling of the character’s name.
2. See the index of [SWG Character Biographies](#) for other women of the *Silmarillion*. Among the women whose biographies have not yet been added, the absence of Galadriel and Lúthien is notable. Both of these women have large and detailed histories and hopefully will be included in the future. Lúthien’s role is central and well-documented. Likewise, accounts of Galadriel’s actions extend throughout significant parts of Tolkien’s history.
3. *The Silmarillion*, “Of the Noldor in Beleriand“
4. *The War of the Jewels, The Grey Annals*
5. *The Silmarillion*, “Index of Names”
6. *The War of the Jewels, The Grey Annals*
7. *The Peoples of Middle-earth, The Shibboleth of Fëanor*
8. Ibid.
9. *The War of the Jewels, Maeglin*
10. Informal written discussion on the spelling of her name, unedited by its writer, originally posted to The Garden of Ithilien writers group.
11. Ibid and *The War of the Jewels, Maeglin*
12. Ibid.

About the Author

Oshun's *Silmarillion*-based stories may be found on the [SWG archive](#).