
Character Biography

Brandir

By Himring

Brandir is a character from the *Tale of the Children of Húrin*. Although he is mentioned a number of times in the corresponding chapter of the published text of *The Silmarillion*, there are a few more details in the *Narn i Hîn Húrin*, in the version in which it appears in the *Unfinished Tales*, and in the closely corresponding published version of *The Children of Húrin*, although his character essentially remains the same. Material relating to the *Later Quenta Silmarillion* and *The Wanderings of Húrin* (both in *The War of the Jewels*) fills in a couple of interesting details on Brandir's family and background, without having much more to say on Brandir himself. At the other end of the development of the Legendarium, the earliest version of the tale, *Turambar and the Foalókë*, in *Book of the Lost Tales II*, already contains an early version of Brandir's character, named Tamar: he has quite a similar role to play in many respects, but there are one or two significant differences, to which I will be returning, later on.¹

In a nutshell, Brandir is the leader of the Haladin at the time when Túrin arrives in Brethil. He is the one who, after Túrin has slain Glaurung, reveals to Túrin the reason why his sister Niënor killed herself. Túrin silences him by killing him, although he cannot shut his ears to the truth for long.

Let us consider Brandir's background. Brandir is one of the Edain, a scion of the House of Haleth. The House of Haleth is consistently characterized as the smallest of the three Houses of the Edain and the most isolated. Tolkien at various points in his writings gave this House features that could be interpreted as "other", but features of a Mannish kind of otherness, rather than an affinity with Elves (which especially characterizes the House of Bëor according to the published *Silmarillion*). He attributed a tradition of female leadership and of female warriors to them, starting with Haleth and her bodyguards²; he gave them a language that was not mutually intelligible with that of the other two Houses³; and he gave them an old association with the Drúedain.⁴ Also, in the *Wanderings of Húrin* (*The War of the Jewels*), they appear to have a quasi-democratic judicial procedure reminiscent of the Icelandic Thing.

It is uncertain or doubtful whether any of these somewhat more peripheral ideas are relevant to Brandir as a character, but the idea of the smallness and isolation of this people is very important to the narrative role he and his people are assigned in *The Children of Húrin*, for they represent Túrin's unsuccessful attempt to retire willingly into obscurity after his involvement in disastrous events in Nargothrond and Hithlum. Moreover, the isolation of Brandir's people and the limits of that isolation are pivotal to the most important plot twists that lead to the death of Túrin and his sister Niënor: if they had been less isolated, Niënor's true identity could not have remained unknown among them for so long, despite her loss of memory, and her incestuous marriage to Túrin would have been prevented. However, their isolation is by no means complete and, despite Brandir's efforts to preserve it, is continuously being breached, with serious consequences to all involved.

Looking back at the history of the immediately preceding generations, it becomes apparent that the isolation of the House of Haleth was not a consistent policy from Haleth onwards, although

they retained their comparative independence throughout. Brandir's insistence on non-involvement can be interpreted as a reaction against recent events and the current situation in Beleriand; it is not of the same kind as Haleth's.⁵

The territory of the House of Haleth in the wood of Brethil is technically part of Doriath, although not within the Girdle of Melian. They reside there by Thingol's originally somewhat ungracious permission,⁶ but nevertheless, under Halmir, they cooperated successfully with Thingol's march-wardens, led by Beleg, in the period just after the Dagor Bragollach to defend Brethil and the crossings of Teiglin against Morgoth.⁷ Subsequently they sent troops to join the Union of Maedhros, led by Halmir's son and successor Haldir, but Haldir with all his men fell in the rearguard of the High King of the Noldor, Fingon, at the battle of Nirnaeth Arnoediad.⁸ Nevertheless Brethil, unlike Túrin's homeland Hithlum, remained unoccupied by servants of Morgoth and continued to be so.⁹ In their defence against the Orcs, the House of Haleth probably benefited for a while from the efforts of the march-wardens as long as Beleg and his companions were holding Dimbar to the north of them, and possibly also (very temporarily) from Túrin's activities in Dor-Cuarthol and Nargothrond, but clearly the defence of Brethil essentially rested with Handir, Haldir's son and successor, who is characterized as a staunch fighter. However, he too fell in battle against an incursion of Orcs, earlier in the same year that led up to the fall of Nargothrond.¹⁰

In other words, by the time Brandir succeeded his father, the House of Haleth had already lost two generations to the battle against Morgoth. Furthermore, Brandir's grandmother Gloredhel (who coincidentally was Túrin's great-aunt) had died of grief at the outcome of the Nirnaeth Arnoediad and the loss of her husband. Also, if we follow the genealogical information given independently for the House of Haleth, Brandir's mother Beldis was an exile of the House of Bëor from Dorthonion.¹¹

Brandir seems strongly contrasted with Túrin—even Túrin and Brandir tend to regard themselves as completely different from each other¹²--and his role seems rather more comparable to Gwindor's or Orodreth's at earlier stages of the story. Although this is probably everyone's predominant impression on first reading, it may be worth considering how much Brandir has in common with Túrin with regard to his background. Despite an early foreshadowing in a discussion between Húrin und Morwen, it is never explicitly mentioned,¹³ but the two are quite closely related, definitely on the father's side (doubly, as Túrin's paternal grandmother was of the House of Haleth¹⁴) and apparently also on the mother's side, where Beldis's fate seems to mirror Morwen's. Both of them have male forebears lost in battle; both families were deeply affected by the loss of the Nirnaeth. However, unlike Túrin, Brandir has not lost his home—at least not when he first encounters Túrin. But by the end of the story, the impact of Túrin's activities drives him into a self-declared exile, as he abandons the remainder of the Haladin and follows Niënor to the Crossings of Teiglin.

Túrin and Brandir are also both the last of their respective lines and their names themselves seem almost to predict this, as the alliterative pattern in *H-* that links the family's names together fails and the sons' names are linked to the fathers' by end-rhyme instead—although this analogy may perhaps appear a little too forced or fanciful.¹⁵ In Brandir's name an alternative interpretation is offered (although perhaps retrospectively), for according to the genealogical table that traces his maternal descent he seems to be named after his uncle, who was of the house of Bëor, which would align him with the alliterative naming pattern of that House in *B(r)-* instead.

If we go with the date of birth for Brandir given in the same genealogical table that gives his maternal descent (465), Túrin and Brandir are almost the same age. Brandir is, in fact, about a year younger, although one might be tempted to think of him as the older, more mature of the two. They are both in their early thirties at the time of their encounter. Both of them also suffer from childhood trauma. However while Túrin's childhood trauma is a psychological one—in that he never gets over his exile and his separation from his family and this exacerbates all his character flaws—Brandir's is physical. He has an accident in childhood that lames him,¹⁶ making him physically incapable of following in his father's footsteps as a warrior—disabled in a society that places a great deal of emphasis on heroic valour and in a hostile environment in which Brethil is in continuous danger of being overrun by foes.

This accident must have been a severe personal blow—we can deduce that even without comparing the earliest draft of the story, which states that more directly—and it aligns Brandir with other disabled characters in the story and their sufferings: Sador, who lamed himself in an accident with an axe, and Gwindor, physically debilitated by his sufferings during his imprisonment in Angband and (according to some versions of his story) by the loss of his hand during his escape. Both of these characters lose respect and standing in their respective societies as a consequence. Brandir, at the time of Túrin's arrival, has been able to overcome this hurdle, however, at least to some extent: he has acquired skill as a healer and a reputation for wisdom, particularly the lore of the wood and living things.¹⁷

In this he might be seen as drawing on his Bëorian inheritance, if we compare his skills to those of Andreth. But it is probably more pertinent to pursue further the parallels with Sador and Gwindor, who both seem, in their way, to have gained in insight and wisdom through their respective sufferings. However, like Sador and Gwindor, Brandir has difficulty gaining a hearing for his insights. In principle, Brandir is in a better position to be listened to than the other two, as he is his father's undisputed successor. However, already at the beginning of the Brethil episode, we apparently see Dorlas and other Haladin disobeying his orders.¹⁸

Brandir has decided that the best chance for the Haladin to survive is a policy of secrecy, withdrawal, and avoidance.¹⁹ (As part of his defensive policy, he perhaps has also fortified the Haladin's main settlement on Amon Obel, although this is less certain, as it seems only to be extrapolated from the place name Ephel Brandir.) This policy is explicitly a reaction to the earlier losses mentioned above²⁰ and Brandir's assessment of the strategic situation of the Haladin after the fall of Nargothrond seems reasonable: geographical exposure to an overwhelmingly strong foe on three sides and only limited expectations of assistance, if any, from Brethil's only ally, Doriath. How readers evaluate this policy of Brandir's may, however, depend in part on which version of the story they are reading—as the existence of the settlement of the Haladin in Brethil itself is known and not a secret, Brandir's tactics can only work as long as Morgoth does not choose to expressly target the Haladin, as eventually he surely will (even without the factor of Túrin presence), and, in the most detailed version in *Children of Húrin*, the narrator is at pains to point this out.²¹ Also, the most detailed version makes more of Brandir's almost visceral abhorrence of war, which emerges most clearly in his later conversations with Níniel. In any case, because of Brandir's disability and personal preferences, his policy also lays him open to misunderstanding and slander: he becomes vulnerable to accusations of personal cowardice, as later events prove.

Dorlas's tendency to disobey Brandir's policy and his orders does not at first seem inexcusable, but even in its early stages, his involvement is ominous. His involvement in the attempt²² to try

and free the prisoners of Nargothrond seems both courageous and altruistic, but the outcome is disastrous, as the prisoners, including Finduilas, are killed before they can be freed. Moreover, this chain of events later leads to Dorlas and his companions carrying Túrin into the heart of Brethil in the deadly swoon into which he has fallen on hearing of Finduilas's death.

This is Túrin and Brandir's first meeting, although Túrin's fame as the Mormegil of Nargothrond precedes him. Brandir, by prophetic insight, knows that this unconscious stranger in urgent need of help is at the same time a deadly threat to Brethil. He protests against Dorlas's action in bringing Túrin so far in but, after a brief struggle, his healer's ethics win out over his concern for his people and he takes him into his own house for treatment.²³

It sounds as if it takes weeks, if not months, for Túrin to recover from unconsciousness—we are not told much of Brandir's efforts to keep him alive but it cannot have been easy. Although eventually Túrin seems to wake up almost by himself, arguably Brandir, after Beleg and Gwindor, as his healer becomes the third saviour of Túrin's life who will reap his own death as a reward.

The interaction between Túrin, Brandir, and the rest of Brethil that follows lends itself to rather different interpretations, depending on one's point of view. Túrin has convinced himself he is turning over a new leaf and making a fresh start, jettisoning his past to overcome his fate. The reader, perhaps rather wearily, observes that Túrin is as oblivious of how what he does affects others as ever and that the changes he considers so significant are relatively minor, to some extent even cosmetic: changing his name, taking up the bow rather than the sword, etc. The fact that Túrin once again denies his identity, as he did in Nargothrond, although the majority of the Haladin have a clear idea who he is from the beginning, does not help: it is meant to stop Túrin's past from catching up with him, but instead the effect is of quashing open discussion of Túrin's previous failures so that neither he nor anybody else can learn from his mistakes. Túrin proceeds to undermine Brandir's authority and subvert his policies, gradually but as thoroughly as he subverted Orodreth's in Nargothrond—or rather even more so, despite occasional lip-service to Brandir's skill and wisdom.²⁴ Brandir, to some extent, has the insight to perceive that Túrin is behaving in Brethil as he did in Nargothrond, as words he addresses to Túrin indicate.²⁵ However—stating the obvious—for Brandir, this is his own life and necessarily singular. Even if he were aware of the extent of the parallels between his situation and Orodreth and Gwindor's, it would not make his loss of authority less of an intensely personal experience than it is.

The details of events tend to shift some blame away from Túrin. He is expected by Dorlas and others to take up the defence of Brethil against Orc attacks and Dorlas upbraids him for not doing so—and that is the kind of open demand that Túrin finds difficult to resist. But the fact remains that Túrin does not truly respect Brandir's authority and, even where he goes along with his policies, does so only in so far as they suit his own ideas. He also apparently fails to recognize how much Brandir's tolerance is grounded in his greater insight, gentle disposition, and fear of conflict—and the extent to which Brandir is offended by his actions. It is unclear whether Brandir himself at any point at all has felt the pull of Túrin's charisma, to which many others respond so strongly but, if he does, it seems quite dispelled by his overwhelming concern for Niënor.

With the arrival of Níniel, Túrin's sister Niënor, robbed of her memory by Glaurung and as unconscious when she is brought into Brethil as Túrin was, Brandir becomes part of an unhappy

love triangle that recalls the earlier triangle between Túrin, Gwindor, and Finduilas. Once again Brandir's healing skills are called upon²⁶ and he immediately becomes Níniel's confidante, as Finduilas became Túrin's. There are touching scenes between the two, in which they go for walks together. He teaches her the names of things, while she supports him as they walk. Up to a certain point, Níniel trusts Brandir and listens to his advice²⁷—in fact Brandir seems a little more successful in influencing Túrin by means of persuading Níniel than in any other way. It is also in this context that Túrin first seems to become more fully aware that Brandir is opposed to him and his aims, with regard to Níniel, if nothing else.²⁸ However, from the first, it is clear that Níniel's stronger emotional response is to Túrin.²⁹

Níniel calls Brandir "brother".³⁰ Of course, to some extent this is the familiar, everyday situation in which the trusted friend is forced to realize he (or she) has less appeal, simply because he is trusted and safe; Túrin is more magnetic, more exciting. Misclassifying Brandir as a brother is a kind of rejection because he is thereby disqualified as a lover. But in Niënor's case, there is more than that going on. Niënor-Níniel has been relegated by Glaurung to a second childhood and her complete loss of memory and background naturally makes her cast around for adoptive family; she does want and need a brother. She has a choice of two men in her life for the roles of brother and lover, but misassigns their roles. And comparison with the relationship between Túrin and Finduilas suggests that it is not just the memory loss that causes this fatal confusion, for both brother and sister, but also the earlier trauma of separation that underlies it. Brandir, unlike Túrin, is too tactful, responsible, and unselfish to push courtship on Níniel in the vulnerable situation she finds herself in.³¹ The reader may wonder, especially in the light of modern relationship advice, whether Brandir is not being too self-effacing for his and Níniel's own good, but it is not clear that Tolkien would have agreed. In any case, even if Brandir had been more forceful, he would not have stood a chance against Túrin, who has far less scruples and resorts to an ultimatum that amounts to emotional blackmail. It would certainly have run the risk of making his prophetic intuition and sincere warnings against the marriage of brother and sister seem less genuine, but they fail to do more than delay the marriage even so. Whenever she is threatened by the loss of Túrin, Niënor-Níniel becomes unresponsive to Brandir. In the final scenes, when she fears he is dead, she becomes as deaf to Brandir's appeals as Túrin was to the cries of Finduilas during the fall of Nargothrond.

Despite Brandir's warnings (he goes so far as to reveal Túrin's identity to Níniel), the marriage between Níniel and Túrin takes place and, despite Brandir's hopes and efforts, some months afterwards Brethil is attacked by Glaurung, the dragon who is the chief executor of Morgoth's inimical will in this part of the narrative, but also seems to have an insidious malignity of his own. He is coming both for Túrin and for the Haladin.

In this situation, the degree to which Brandir's authority has been gradually eroded is finally laid completely bare. It is the kind of situation to which Brandir's talents and skills are not well suited, as Túrin will kindly, but condescendingly point out to him³²—or at any rate he is not suited to the part that involves confronting Glaurung. He might be able to handle other, more defensive aspects of the situation more successfully, as Túrin suggests—if he had not previously been undermined by Túrin and Dorlas and publicly humiliated by them. Dorlas's implied accusation of cowardice is blatant, as it is evident that Brandir with his lame leg could not climb up the gorge to waylay Glaurung together with Túrin. Also Brandir can hardly be blamed for the lack of other volunteers to join Túrin, since he has been so completely bypassed in Túrin's proceedings up to this point.³³

Túrin's own words, with which he seeks to alleviate Dorlas's crude insult, may be more gracious, but are in no way an apology for the way Túrin himself has slighted Brandir and, in fact, what he is in effect doing is issuing orders to Brandir, even if they are politely worded.³⁴ It is no wonder that, as we are told, Brandir is not mollified, but his patience does not entirely snap yet.

However, it snaps completely when not only does Níniel disregard his attempts to keep her safe, but also incites the majority of the Haladin to follow her into danger toward the Teiglin—against Túrin's express orders as much as against Brandir's advice and persuasion. It is at this moment that it fully emerges how much Brandir's resentment has been building up all the while. He publicly resigns his leadership.³⁵

It is indeed hard to see how the relationship between Brandir and the Haladin as a whole could now be mended, whether Túrin succeeds in killing Glaurung or not—and Brandir, unlike the rest of the Haladin, believes he is unlikely to survive the attempt. As it turns out, even though his assessment is more realistic than theirs and his forebodings are well-founded, he does not guess what is actually about to be happen and to be revealed. Although Níniel has even less personal ill will towards Brandir than Túrin, it is she who gives his authority the final death blow. Also, Níniel has made it clear that she is so completely focussed on Túrin that even survival—for her own sake, for her unborn child's, or for the sake of her friends—has become a very secondary consideration to her. Brandir's private hopes with regard to her—and he may well not really be hoping for more than her well-being and continued friendship by this time—are dashed. Brandir gives up—on his inherited position and also on his ideals. He no longer tries to repress his grudges.

Despite the very strong provocation, I think Brandir is forsaking a real duty to his people there, and Tolkien may intend it to be seen that way. Some of the Haladin, even if they are a comparative handful, do remain loyal to him and he is abandoning them without warning in a very dangerous situation. (There is also the matter of Brandir's cousin Hunthor, who joined Túrin to defend the honour of the family name from Dorlas's aspersions. Brandir has warned him of involvement with Túrin and does inquire about his fate later, but perhaps seems a little less concerned about him than he might be.) We do not hear how the remnant of loyal Haladin react to his declaration—his later confrontation seems to be only with those who had been disloyal to him and so are the more inclined to disbelieve him when he brings them unwelcome news.

Brandir girds himself with a sword—a very significant gesture, for a man like him, and an ill-omened one, although he is only thinking of defending Níniel with it.³⁶ He goes after her, but his attempts to lead her to safety fail and are even counterproductive. He wakes her out of a fugue state that delays her from following Túrin. She shakes him off. Nevertheless he manages the climb up to Glaurung and Túrin—thus disproving all of Dorlas's accusations, as he does not yet know Túrin succeeded and the dragon is dying—but only catches up with her in time to witness the exchange between Glaurung and Niënor that reveals the incest and Niënor's subsequent suicide. He is powerless to interfere in either.³⁷ Niënor is beyond his help—he follows her all the way to the precipice as she flings herself into the Teiglin, but not over it.³⁸

Despite that, her loss and the horror of her suicide leave him in a state almost as fey as hers (although the word is used by Tolkien only used for his final mood). His words, sentiments, and behaviour are changed in a way that those who knew him previously apparently find difficult to make sense of. With his will to live, he loses both his sense of caution and his previous

reluctance to attack. He reproaches Dorlas outright for deserting Túrin after all his previous bragging. Even now, it is still Níniel-Niënor's fate that is his priority—in his eyes, despite all his offenses, Dorlas's greatest sin is a sin of omission: that he failed to bring news that might have saved her. However, when Dorlas responds with further insults and tries to hit him, expecting Brandir to fail to retaliate, as he did before—he gets the surprise of his life (the last surprise of his life), as Brandir draws the ill-omened sword that he never got a chance to use to defend Níniel and kills him.³⁹ Not only are the tables turned on Dorlas, who believed Brandir incapable of martial action and despised him for it—but Brandir, the gentle and wise, has been driven to the same kind of killing rage that is one of the banes of Túrin's life, as if the Doom of the Children of Húrin were infectious in more than one way. After that, he throws his sword away, sickened—unlike Túrin who adopts the sword and dies by it—but he does not therefore become less fey.

The way he delivers news about Túrin and Niënor to the waiting Haladin is hardly a model of lucidity—not that that is to be expected of a man shocked out of his wits.⁴⁰ The news itself is of a kind that is hard to assimilate and that anyone would prefer not to believe. It is perhaps not so surprising that the Haladin refuse to do so at first and accuse him of madness—especially that they revert to the accusation when his words are partly disproved, as Túrin who was assumed dead by Niënor and Brandir turns up alive. But the accusations of madness nevertheless also reflect the earlier breakdown of mutual trust.

Túrin's reaction, although he was so slow even to perceive Brandir's opposition to begin with, is worse. He accuses Brandir not of madness, but of lying and malice. Brandir, torn all the while between pity and rage, is perhaps in a sense, by this point, beyond taking personal offence—as he also wishes that what he is saying were not true. But he is also beyond sparing Túrin in any way, as the one who caused Niënor's death—and so he consciously eggs Túrin on to kill him for speaking the truth by demanding that Túrin silence him, quoting Glaurung's words at him—which Túrin does. We are told Brandir laughs, as the final fey mood seizes him—it is the only time he is said to do so in the text.⁴¹

Brandir's death breaks Túrin's hold on the Haladin—not that he shows interest in retaining it. It is also one of the two deaths, which the sword Gurthang reproaches him with when eventually Túrin falls on his own sword:

'Yea, I will drink thy blood gladly, that so I may forget the blood of Beleg my master, and the blood of Brandir slain unjustly.'⁴²

Perhaps astonishingly, Tolkien seems to have felt that the Haladin got off too lightly. At any rate, in his late writings, he sent Húrin among them to wreak even more havoc among Brandir's relatives and in Brethil after Túrin's death.⁴³ Brandir himself clearly did not get off at all lightly—a character made wise and gentle by suffering in childhood who is pushed beyond endurance in middle age and loses most of what he hoped and stood for, enmeshed by the Doom of the Children of Húrin and by the malice of Glaurung and Morgoth. The tale of Túrin is a tragic one—that is how Tolkien viewed the original plot. By the time the plot has fully evolved, it is not only the tragedy of Túrin, but of many others, among whom Brandir, son of Handir, is not the least. Even the woman that he longs to be reunited with in death has never quite existed, although many of her traits were genuine enough.

Finally, let us return to the earliest version of the character, when he was still called Tamar.⁴⁴ Astonishingly, Tamar was the son of a leader of Men and an unnamed Elf. Elves were

sometimes much less impressive to begin with than they became in the developed legendarium, this unnamed elf was evidently not intended to be a member of a major house, and the Elvish descent of Imrahil was to become canonical, but it is still not surprising that Tamar's Elvish mother did not survive into the later versions of the *Narn*. Perhaps Tamar was conceived as having inherited some Elvish wisdom from her. Unlike Brandir, Tamar is despised by his people for his lameness from the start, despite his intelligence, and never gains leadership, despite the status of his father. Already in the earliest version the character is hopelessly in love with Turambar's sister Nienóri and follows her to witness her death. The sword he girds on to do so is apparently merely a futile gesture of defiance in this version; he does not use it and there is no character corresponding to Dorlas. When Tamar-Brandir brings news to the others, there is somewhat less emphasis on their disbelief and Tamar's final provocation of Turambar is less consciously suicidal, although he speaks in unaccustomed rage.

Thus it seems that while the basic outline for Brandir's character was there to begin with, some of the repetition of motifs and mirror effects within the story that we have observed and traced with regard to his characterization were gradually introduced by Tolkien, culminating in the most detailed and complex version of the story in the *Narn*.

Works Cited

1. For an account of the relationship between the published versions of the story in *The Silmarillion*, *The Unfinished Tales*, and *The Children of Húrin*, see the section *The Composition of the Text* in the Appendix of *The Children of Húrin*, and also Douglas C. Kane, *Arda Reconstructed: The Creation of the Published Silmarillion* (Cranbury, NJ: Associated University Presses, 2009).
2. *Unfinished Tales*, "The Drúedain".
3. "...the Haladin, a people from whom we are sundered in speech" (*The Silmarillion*, "Of the Coming of Men into the West").
4. *Unfinished Tales*, "The Drúedain".
5. Their original desire for independence is characterized as: "Haleth was proud, and unwilling to be guided or ruled, and most of the Haladin were of like mood" (*The Silmarillion*, "Of the Coming of Men into the West").
6. "... he would have denied it to Haleth; but Felagund, who had the friendship of Thingol, hearing of all that had befallen the People of Haleth, obtained this grace for her" (*The Silmarillion*, "Of the Coming of Men into the West").
7. "... issuing from the deeps of the forest Halmir and Beleg took an Orc-legion at unawares and destroyed it" (*The Silmarillion*, "Of the Ruin of Beleriand and the Fall of Fingolfin").
8. "Haldir lord of the Haladin was slain in the rearguard; with him fell most of the Men of Brethil, and came never back to their woods" (*The Silmarillion*, "Of the Fifth Battle: Nirnaeth Arnoediad").
9. "In Brethil some few of the Haladin yet dwelt in the protection of their woods, and Handir son of Haldir was their lord" (*The Silmarillion*, "Of the Fifth Battle: Nirnaeth Arnoediad").
10. "Soon afterwards Handir Lord of Brethil was slain, for the Orcs invaded his land, and Handir gave them battle; but the Men of Brethil were worsted, and driven back into their woods" (*The Silmarillion*, "Of Túrin Turambar").
11. In the Notes on the chapter "Of the Coming of Men into the West" in *The Later Quenta Silmarillion, The War of the Jewels*.
12. Compare e.g. Brandir's later comment that Turin is descended from "the warlike House of Hador" (*Unfinished Tales, Narn i Hîn Húrin*, "Niënor in Brethil").
13. Except in an isolated note suggesting that the Haladin were so ready to accept Túrin precisely because of the relationship, cited in the Notes on the *Wanderings of Húrin (The War of the Jewels)*. For the discussion of Húrin and Morwen, see *Unfinished Tales, Narn i Hîn Húrin*, "The Childhood of Túrin".
14. "In the days before the Dagor Bragollach those two houses of the Edain were joined at a great feast, when Galdor and Glóredhel the children of Hador Goldenhead were wedded to Hareth and Haldir the children of Halmir lord of the Haladin" (*The Silmarillion*, "Of the Ruin of Beleriand and the Fall of Fingolfin").
15. That is to say, I am fairly certain the break in the alliterative patterns is significant, even though in Túrin's case the earliest form of those names goes back to the earliest layers of the Legendarium. What is less easy to pin down is what precisely it signifies.
16. The *Silmarillion* text says: "lame also from childhood". It is the *Narn* that specifies this is due to an accident in childhood: "being lamed by a leg broken in a misadventure in childhood" (*Unfinished Tales, Narn i Hîn Húrin*, "The Coming of Túrin into Brethil").
17. "... he had skill in healing" (*The Silmarillion*, "Of Túrin Turambar"). The *Narn* makes more of this. Initially, his wood lore is mentioned: "loving wood rather than metal, and the knowledge of things that grow in the earth rather than other lore" (*Unfinished Tales, Narn*

- i Hîn Húrin*, "The Coming of Túrin into Brethil"). Later, both Niënor and Turin mention his wisdom.
18. Compare also the later comment by Hunthor: "how can it be said his counsels were in vain, when they were never taken? You, his liege, have ever set them at naught" (*Unfinished Tales, Narn i Hîn Húrin*, "The Coming of Glaurung").
 19. "... he trusted rather in secrecy than in deeds of war to save them from the power of the North" (*The Silmarillion*, "Of Túrin Turambar").
 20. "... for the People of Haleth were now dwindled by war" (*The Silmarillion*, "Of Túrin Turambar").
 21. "... in the end the counsels of Brandir must prove vain." But compare also Hunthor's comment, contradicting both Dorlas and the narrator: "...how can it be said his counsels were in vain, when they were never taken?" (Both from *Unfinished Tales, Narn i Hîn Húrin*, "The Coming of Glaurung").
 22. It may not be his initiative—when he narrates the event, he only uses the pronoun *we*. But he also never mentions Brandir.
 23. "... when he beheld the face of Túrin as he lay on the bier a cloud of foreboding lay on his heart. Nonetheless being moved by his woe he took him into his own house and tended him" (*The Silmarillion*, "Of Turin Turambar"). "With great labour you have brought hither the last bane of our people" "...should we leave a man woe-stricken to lie as carrion by the way?' 'You should not indeed.'" "He took Turin into his house and tended him with care." (All from *Unfinished Tales, Narn i Hîn Húrin*, "The Coming of Túrin into Brethil".)
 24. "... now he ordered things as he would, and few gave heed to Brandir" (*The Silmarillion*, "Of Turin Turambar"). "... he now ordered things as he would, as if he were lord of Brethil, and no man heeded Brandir" (*Unfinished Tales, Narn i Hîn Húrin*, "Niënor in Brethil").
 25. "... have a care lest the valour of Turambar bring a like vengeance on Brethil!" (*Unfinished Tales, Narn i Hîn Húrin*, "The Coming of Turin into Brethil").
 26. "... ere the autumn came by the skill of Brandir she was healed of her sickness" (*The Silmarillion*, "Of Turin Turambar"). "Brandir used all his skill in her healing" (*Unfinished Tales, Narn i Hîn Húrin*, "Niënor in Brethil").
 27. "... she was most eager to learn the names of all living things, and he knew much of such matters" (*Unfinished Tales, Narn i Hîn Húrin*, "Niënor in Brethil"). "... nothing that you do is done unkindly" (*Unfinished Tales, Narn i Hîn Húrin*, "Niënor in Brethil").
 28. "... he was ill pleased" (*Unfinished Tales, Narn i Hîn Húrin*, "Niënor in Brethil").
 29. "Brandir loved her; but all her heart was given to Turambar" (*The Silmarillion*, "Of Turin Turambar").
 30. "... she called him her brother" (*Unfinished Tales, Narn i Hîn Húrin*, "Niënor in Brethil"). He accepts it, but with some bitterness: "'Wise brother?' he answered. 'Lame brother, rather, unloved and unlovely'" (*Unfinished Tales, Narn i Hîn Húrin*, "Niënor in Brethil").
 31. "Brandir foreboded he knew not what, and sought to restrain her, rather for her sake than his own or rivalry with Turambar" (*The Silmarillion*, "Of Turin Turambar").
 32. "'I deem that your place is with your people. For you are wise, and are a healer; and it may be that there will be great need of wisdom and healing ere long'" (*Unfinished Tales, Narn i Hîn Húrin*, "The Coming of Glaurung").
 33. "Dorlas upbraided the people, and spoke scorn of Brandir, who could not play the part of the heir of the house of Haleth; and Brandir was shamed before his people, and was bitter at heart" (*The Silmarillion*, "Of Túrin Turambar"). "'Will none of you take the place of the son of Handir, that the House of Haleth be not put to shame?'" (*Unfinished Tales*,

Narn i Hîn Húrin, "The Coming of Glaurung"). "Brandir who sat indeed in the high-seat of the lord of the assembly, but unheeded, was scorned; and he was bitter in his heart, for Turambar did not rebuke Dorlas" (*Unfinished Tales, Narn i Hîn Húrin*, "The Coming of Glaurung").

34. "But these words, though fair spoken, did but embitter Brandir the more" (*Unfinished Tales, Narn i Hîn Húrin*, "The Coming of Glaurung").
35. "At this Brandir was filled all the more with dread, and he sought to dissuade her and the people that would go with her from this rashness, but they heeded him not. Therefore he renounced his lordship, and all love for the people that had scorned him" (*The Silmarillion*, "Of Túrin Turambar").
36. "... having naught left but his love for Níniel he girt himself with a sword and went after her" (*The Silmarillion*, "Of Túrin Turambar"). For the following events in the *Narn*, see *Unfinished Tales, Narn i Hîn Húrin*, "The Death of Glaurung" and "The Death of Túrin". The narrative in the *Narn* from here on is both very detailed and dramatic and I was unable to cover it more fully with illustrative quotations within the scope of this biography, as my own treatment conversely becomes increasingly condensed here.
37. "Thus Brandir saw her from the hill-side, and turned to cross her path, but he was still behind her when she came to the ruin of Glaurung nigh the brink of Cabed-en-Aras" (*The Silmarillion*, "Of Túrin Turambar"). "Then Brandir who had heard all, standing stricken upon the edge of ruin, hastened towards her; but she ran from him distraught with horror and anguish, and coming to the brink of Cabed-en-Aras she cast herself over" (*The Silmarillion*, "Of Túrin Turambar").
38. "Then Brandir came and looked down, and turned away in horror; and though he no longer desired life, he could not seek death in that roaring water" (*The Silmarillion*, "Of Túrin Turambar").
39. "... he met Dorlas in the woods, and slew him: the first blood that ever he had spilled, and the last" (*The Silmarillion*, "Of Túrin Turambar"). The scene is much more detailed in the *Narn* (*Unfinished Tales, Narn i Hîn Húrin*, "The Death of Glaurung").
40. "... he answered: 'Níniel is gone for ever. The Dragon is dead, and Turambar is dead; and those tidings are good.'" (*The Silmarillion*, "Of Túrin Turambar").
41. "Then suddenly a fey laughter seized on Brandir." (*Unfinished Tales, Narn i Hîn Húrin*, "The Death of Túrin").
42. *The Silmarillion*, "Of Túrin Turambar".
43. *The War of the Jewels, The Wanderings of Húrin*.
44. *The Book of the Lost Tales II, Turambar and the Foalókë*.

About the Author

Himring has been writing Tolkien fan fiction since the winter of 2009. She mostly writes *Silmarillion* fan fiction, with a particular focus on the Sons of Fëanor, especially Maedhros and Maglor. Her main archive is at the Silmarillion Writers Guild. Her stories can also be found at Many Paths to Tread and Archive of Our Own (AO3), including those that are not *Silmarillion*-centred.