
Character Biography

Dior Eluchíl

By Oshun

Dior is the only child born of the union of Beren and Lúthien. He marries an Elf of Doriath, Nimloth,¹ and they have three children: two sons, Eluréd and Elurín, and a daughter Elwing, who is to marry Eärendil the Mariner. Tolkien considered the tale of Dior's parents as one of the principal pillars, if not the most significant one, supporting his extended history of Middle-earth. He wrote several versions of Dior's story, beginning with the one he presents in *The Book of Lost Tales*, which is revised and edited to take its final form as the one best known by readers found in the published version of *The Silmarillion*.

The section in *The Book of Lost Tales 2* referred to as *The Tale of the Nauglafring* is an entire alternative version to the story of Dior, his kingship in Menegroth, his possession of a Silmaril, and his fight to hold onto it. Although the differences between this and the later version are numerous, the most basic roots of the story are set firmly within this account. (For you cat lovers out there: this is one which contains the tale of Tinúviel and the evil cat Tevildo.) Therein, Tolkien writes of Beren as a Gnome (the term in his early tales for the beings who are to evolve into the Eldar or Elves in future emendations of his legendarium). In this version, the son of Beren is also called "Damrod the Gnome" among other names. Later, Tolkien refers to

the son of Beren and Tinúviel, the father of Elwing, by the name Daimord, although in the actual tale as written the son is as he was to remain Dior. Presumably Daimord is to be equated with Damrod.²

In *The Book of Lost Tales*, Dior is also given the name Ausir (Gnomish for "The Wealthy"). In *The Etymologies* the name Dior is translated from Doriathrin as "successor." It is said to have been derived from *ndeuro* (Primitive Quendian) meaning follower or successor.³

At the tender age of twenty-seven, Dior marries Nimloth, a full-blooded Elda of illustrious parentage. In the Unfinished Tales, Nimloth's father, as well as Celeborn, are named as sons of

Thingol's brother Elmo – a shadowy figure about whom nothing is told save that he was the younger brother of Elwë (Thingol) and Olwë, and was 'beloved of Elwë with whom he remained'. Elmo's son was named Galadhon, and his sons were Celeborn and Galathil; Galathil was the father of Nimloth, who wedded Dior Thingol's Heir and was the mother of Elwing.⁴

After Lúthien dies of grief at the loss of her beloved mortal mate Beren, she is taken to the halls of Mandos where she argues for his return to life at the feet of Námo the Doomsman of the Valar. Námo concedes to her wishes at the cost of her own quasi-immortality. Beren and Lúthien return to Middle-earth as a mortal man and woman, where they settle in Ossiriand on the island of Tol Galen, and there she gives birth to their only child. He is called

Dior Aranel the beautiful, who was after known as Dior Eluchíl, which is Thingol's Heir. No mortal man spoke ever again with Beren son of Barahir; and none saw Beren or Lúthien leave the world, or marked where at last their bodies lay.⁵

The Loss and Recapture of the Silmaril

Thingol engages the Dwarves of Nogrod to re-craft the Nauglamír (the Necklace of the Dwarves--of the treasure held in Menegroth, second only in value to the Silmaril itself), fitting the Silmaril into it, so that he might wear it all of the time. The Dwarves who set the stone in the Nauglamir then fell under its enchantment. They demand that, since the Nauglamír had originally been Dwarven-made and one of their greatest treasures, it should be returned to them, Silmaril included. That is met with a predictable response. In the ensuing melee, Thingol is murdered in his treasury and Doriathan Elves chase the Dwarven artisans out of Doriath, killing all but two of them. The surviving two stir up the Dwarves of Nogrod and return with an army to sack Menegroth, no longer protected by Melian's magic.

When news of the death of Thingol, the theft of the hard-won Silmaril, and the destruction wrought upon the mythic Thousand Caves of Menegroth reach Beren and Lúthien, "[t]hen Beren arose and left Tol Galen, and summoning to him Dior his son they went north to the River Ascar; and with them went many of the Green-elves of Ossiriand."⁶ The implication of Beren calling his son to assist him in this quest is that Dior is a trained warrior.

In that battle by Sarn Athrad Beren fought his last fight, and himself slew the Lord of Nogrod, and wrested from him the Necklace of the Dwarves; but he dying laid his curse upon all the treasure. Then Beren gazed in wonder on the selfsame jewel of Fëanor that he had cut from Morgoth's iron crown Beren took the Nauglamír and returned to Tol Galen.⁷

Dior Goes to Menegroth

Now Dior Thingol's heir bade farewell to Beren and Lúthien, and departing from Lanthir Lamath with Nimloth his wife he came to Menegroth, and abode there; and with them went their young sons Eluréd and Elurín, and Elwing their daughter. Then the Sindar received them with joy, and they arose from the darkness of their grief for fallen kin and King and for the departure of Melian; and Dior Eluchíl set himself to raise anew the glory of the kingdom of Doriath.⁸

Dior is presented here as a man with a sense of purpose and intent that has no basis in anything obsessive or wrong. He is still young by calculation of either Elves or Men, but he accepts the challenge laid upon him as Thingol's heir, and he brings hope to a grief-stricken, shattered people.

The Second Kinslaying and the Death of Dior

A short time after Dior begins his work in Doriath, a messenger arrives with the news of the deaths of his parents—a casket containing the fabled jewel. The words that follow are chilling to the reader, bearing a weight of foreshadowing and dread. Lingered beneath the surface here, there is a tone of inexorability that Dior's strength will not be sufficient to enable to withstand the heavy weight of the presence of a Silmaril.

Dior has come to Doriath to repair and restore his grandfather's wrecked and wasted caverns to their legendary magnificence, taking upon himself simultaneously the mixed legacy of Thingol. Tolkien professor Verlyn Flieger, in her study of Light within in the context of *The Silmarillion*, points out that, although many are quick to criticize both Dior and Thingol for their lust to hold onto the jewel at such a price, in fact it may be seen as an admirable goal.

Yet through him [Thingol] that Silmaril is recovered to shine upon Middle-earth, to be a sign of hope to Elves and Men. Beren and Lúthien come together, and in their child, Dior, they begin the half-elven race that will combine all that is best of Elves and Men.⁹

Key to the story of Dior is the fact that few can touch the Silmaril without falling under its spell. Possession of the Silmaril had brought no peace to Thingol.

For as the years passed Thingol's thought turned unceasingly to the jewel of Fëanor, and became bound to it, and he liked not to let it rest even behind the doors of his inmost treasury; and he was minded now to bear it with him always, waking and sleeping.¹⁰

The jewels which give the name to Tolkien's epic history by this point in the story raise contradictory emotions in the mind of the reader whenever one appears.

Long did Dior gaze upon the Silmaril, which his father and mother had brought beyond hope out of the terror of Morgoth; and his grief was great that death had come upon them so soon. But the wise have said that the Silmaril hastened their end; for the flame of the beauty of Lúthien as she wore it was too bright for mortal lands.

Then Dior arose, and about his neck he clasped the Nauglamír; and now he appeared as the fairest of all the children of the world, of threefold race: of the Edain, and of the Eldar, and of the Maiar of the Blessed Realm.¹¹

Dior's sudden obsession is transparent in the above lines. The reader senses that his desire to hold the Silmaril to himself will challenge his strength to withstand any ill fate it will bring upon him. Professor Flieger expresses the contradictory power of those stones.

As artifacts, the Silmarils embody light as a physical reality, tangible matter that can be touched, handled, and worked. As jewels, they are a metaphor for the desire of humankind for beauty and for the negative of this desire— possessiveness, covetousness, selfishness, and lust. Since the light of the Silmarils is enclosed in jewels, it does not necessarily shine for all and on all, as does the light of the Trees from which it comes. It can be owned, possessed by a single individual to the exclusion of others; it can be held in the hand, worn as ornament, or hidden away at the owner's whim. While Fëanor's motive in making the Silmarils is to preserve the light, his choice of jewels as the containers or bodies for that light leads to misunderstanding and misuse¹²

Inevitably the sons of Fëanor become aware that Dior wears and flaunts the Silmaril. Pride of possession, the pull of the stone, and an unbreakable oath all collide under the shadow of the Doom of Mandos and the ill fate that seems to follow all who seek to hold that jewel. Maedhros drafts a letter to Dior demanding the return of the Silmaril. Dior tosses the letter away without even bothering to respond.

Not without dissension in their ranks, the sons of Fëanor descend upon Doriath.

They came at unawares in the middle of winter, and fought with Dior in the Thousand Caves; and so befell the second slaying of Elf by Elf. There fell Celegorm by Dior's hand, and there fell Curufin, and dark Caranthir; but Dior was slain also, and Nimloth his wife, and the cruel servants of Celegorm seized his young sons and left them to starve in the forest. Of this Maedhros indeed repented, and sought for them long in the woods of Doriath; but his search was unavailing, and of the fate of Eluréd and Elurín¹³ no tale tells.

Thus Doriath was destroyed, and never rose again. But the sons of Fëanor gained not what they sought; for a remnant of the people fled before them, and with them was Elwing Dior's daughter, and they escaped, and bearing with them the Silmaril they came in time to the mouths of the River Sirion by the sea.¹⁴

Dior's Legacy

The lasting legacy of Dior comes not from his judgment or wisdom, military or diplomatic, or lack thereof, or even his bravery as a warrior in helping his father regain the Silmaril or his fight to the death to hold defend Doriath against the sons of Fëanor.

True, he did rebuild the Halls of Menegroth, but he could not protect them, with his loyalty divided, between defending his people and holding onto the jewel. There is little good or ill reported of his kingship over the Doriathan Sindar, except that his arrival initially brought them hope. He is, however, remembered as a significant link in the chain of possession of a Silmaril. (Those who have held a Silmaril take upon themselves a similarly unique position and responsibility in *The Silmarillion* to that of those called Ring-bearers in *The Lord of the Rings*—and also share the danger of falling under the spell of a magical artifact.) Dior's daughter Elwing carries the Silmaril won by Beren and Lúthien out of the destruction of Doriath with her into exile. That Silmaril is then used to finally gain the attention of the Valar and persuade them to offer assistance to the peoples of Middle-earth--Elf, Man, and Dwarf--fighting their losing battle against Morgoth.

The deeds of Dior's progeny through Elwing's union with Eärendil tie the story of the creation of the Silmarils, the flight of the Noldor from Aman to Middle-earth, and all of the great deeds of the First Age to Tolkien's account of the waning of the time of the Elves played out to its conclusion in *The Lord of the Rings*. Dior's grandson Elros, choosing the path of Men, founds the dynasty of the rulers of Númenor, whose descendants return to aid and later exploit the peoples of Middle-earth. Elrond as an Elf endures the "long defeat," enabling him to give succor to and to advise those who finally succeed in defeating the shadow of Morgoth in the form of Sauron from Middle-earth.

The narrative threads of the separated descendants of Dior, Elf, and Mortal Man, come back together in the union of Aragorn and Arwen, whose attempt to rebuild their fragmented homeland is not the end of the story begun in *The Silmarillion*, but a tidy break in an unfinished tale which, according to these legends, will only end in the *Dagor Dagorath*, the Battles of Battles at the end of Arda.

Works Cited

1. *Unfinished Tales*, Index.
2. *The Book of Lost Tales 2*, Notes.
3. *The Lost Road and Other Writings*, *The Etymologies*.
4. *Unfinished Tales*, *The History of Galadriel and Celeborn and Amroth King of Lórien*. It is interesting to note here that Christopher Tolkien characterizes this section of his father's works with the advisory that "[t]here is no part of the history of Middle-earth more full of problems than the story of Galadriel and Celeborn, and it must be admitted that there are severe inconsistencies 'embedded in the traditions'"
5. *The Silmarillion*, "Of the Fifth Battle: Nirnaeth Arnoediad."
6. *The Silmarillion*, "The Ruin of Doriath."
7. Ibid.
8. Ibid.
9. Flieger, Verlyn (2002-01-28). *Splintered Light: Tolkien's World*, Revised Edition. Kent State University Press, Kindle Edition.
10. *The Silmarillion*, "The Ruin of Doriath."
11. Ibid.
12. Flieger, Verlyn. *Splintered Light: Tolkien's World*, Revised Edition.
13. See the SWG Monthly Character Biography of [Eluréd and Elurín](#). Also, see the biographies of [Elwing the White](#), [Nimloth of Doriath](#), and [Thingol](#).
14. *The Silmarillion*, "The Ruin of Doriath."

About the Author

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