
Character Biography

Elrond

By Oshun

Elrond Half-Elven of all of Tolkien's elves might be the one most widely known to his readers, whether they prefer the epic tales of *The Silmarillion* or the more novelistic approach of *The Lord of the Rings*. He is additionally one of few characters who plays a significant role in both of those books and in *The Hobbit* as well. The major events in the life of Elrond tie together the main threads of Tolkien's great history from the First Age through the Fourth Age. Elrond is a major symbol of the meshed and undividable fate of Elves and Men in Middle-earth throughout those four Ages. Elrond played a principal role not only in the long fight against Sauron in the Third Age and finally the destruction of the One Ring as recounted in *The Lord of the Rings*, but his personal history points directly back to the earliest events of the First Age as described in *The Silmarillion*.

Elrond and his brother Elros were the only children of Elwing (daughter of Dior, the son of Beren and Lúthien) and Eärendil (son of Idril of the Noldor, daughter of Turgon, and Tuor of the Edain). Thus, unique in Tolkien's legendarium, Elrond's ancestry includes Noldor, Sindar, Vanyar, and Maiar blood. He is as well a descendent of all three Houses of the Edain. Through his brother Elros, Elrond recognized a bond of kinship with the Númenórean heirs to the kingship of Gondor and Arnor. Of special interest to the confirmed aficionado of *The Silmarillion* is his unusual relationship with the sons of Fëanor. The father of Elrond and Elros, Eärendil the Mariner, was absent on one of his many sea voyages when the surviving sons of Fëanor decided to attack the community of exiles of Doriath and Gondolin at the havens of Sirion in an attempt to acquire the Silmaril that Beren and Lúthien had wrested from Morgoth. It had been snatched from their grasp when Elwing had fled with it after the death of Dior. Rather than relinquish the stone, Elwing had thrown herself from a cliff into the sea still holding onto it, leaving her sons Elrond and Elros defenseless behind her. In the words of *The Silmarillion*, "Maglor took pity upon Elros and Elrond, and he cherished them, and love grew after between them." Maglor, most likely in the company of Maedhros, fostered the two boys for an extended period of time.

Meanwhile, Elrond's mother Elwing did not die but had been rescued from the sea by Ulmo, and taking the form of a bird with the Silmaril on her breast, sought and found the vessel of her husband Eärendil. Reunited, the couple sailed to Valinor, with Eärendil bearing the Silmaril upon his forehead to light their way. Successful in reaching the shores of Eldamar, Eärendil was intent upon approaching the Valar and begging for their mercy and their aid to the Elves and Men of Middle-earth who, at the cost of incalculable sacrifice and despite great heroism, were slowly losing the battle to protect Middle-earth from the ravages of Morgoth. The Valar were moved by Eärendil's efforts and ruled that Eärendil and Elwing could choose between the mortal and Elven kindreds. Eärendil's ship was transformed so that each night he sailed the skies bearing the Silmaril, becoming the brightest star. The Valar extended the right to choose between the life of Men and that of the Elves not only to Eärendil and Elwing, but also to their offspring.

In response to the pleas of Eärendil, the Valar did decide to finally extend their assistance to the exiled Noldor and the Second Born by organizing an expedition to Middle-earth to defeat Morgoth in the War of Wrath. At the end of the War of Wrath, Elros and Elrond, who by then had been returned to their kindred, were asked by the Valar to make their choice. Elrond chose to remain with the Eldar and his brother chose the Edain. Elros left the shores of Middle-earth to become the first king of Númenor. Elendil was one of his descendants.

Elrond pledged himself to Ereinion Gil-galad, the last High King of the Noldor, then ruling from Lindon, and went on to participate in the significant battles of the Second Age. It was Elrond who led the troops of Gil-galad against Sauron in Eregion where, vastly outnumbered, the elves were defeated, yet at significant cost to their enemy as well. Elrond also served as Gil-galad's herald and second in command of the elven forces in the Battle of Dagorlad in the Last Alliance of Elves and Men. Everyone who has read *The Lord of the Rings* or seen the recent films is familiar with the story of how Elrond unsuccessfully pled with Elendil's eldest son Isildur to destroy the One Ring after he had taken it from Sauron in that battle. Before Gil-galad was killed at Dagorlad, he had given Vilya, the most powerful of the three rings of the Elves, also called the Ring of Air, to Elrond for safekeeping.

After the Last Alliance, Elrond wed Celebrian, daughter of Galadriel and Celeborn, and the tales of their children, Elladan, Elrohir, and Arwen, feature prominently in the events of *The Lord of the Rings*. The story of Arwen and Aragorn, of course, harks back to the choice given by the Valar first to Eärendil and Elwing, then to Elrond and Elros, and passing through Elrond to his children. Much of the poignancy of Arwen's decision to renounce Elven immortality and cast her lot with Aragorn is based upon Elrond's loss of his brother Elros an Age before.

Throughout the Third Age, it was Elrond's haven in Rivendell that served as an oasis in darkening times. Elrond not only helped to preserve the line of Númenórean kings in Middle-earth but additionally brought together in discussion, including in the White Council, those who sought to defend Middle-earth against Sauron. Elrond became known in those years as a great healer and loremaster. For most of the Third Age, Elrond stood at the center of the struggle of the free peoples of Middle-earth through his commitment and well-cultivated connections to Elves, Men, Dwarves, and Hobbits. One of his principal supporters in that endeavor was the Istar Gandalf. In modern terms, Elrond was the facilitator, organizer, and coordinator of information whose efforts largely enabled the Ring Quest to set out and in doing so significantly contributed to its success. After the destruction of the One Ring, Elrond sailed with Gandalf, Galadriel, and the remainder of the Noldor left in Middle-earth. The fate of his sons Elladan and Elrohir is not covered in Tolkien's stories. But the departure of Elrond harkened the end of the days of the Elves in Middle-earth and the beginning of the Age of Men.

About the Author

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