

# The Second Music: Eucatastrophic Apocalypse

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## The Fall

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The Second Music is the moment, at the end of the Dagor Dagorath, when the weight of Morgoth's marring finally falls away from the world. The Marring had seeped into the very substance of Arda, a heaviness borne by every creature without knowing its source. It was the lingering echo of Morgoth's discord, woven into the matter of the world itself - a truth hinted at in the later lore, where the Dark Power is said to have "entered into the very matter of the Earth".<sup>1</sup> When Eru at last silences that ancient reverberation, the long burden lifts. The world becomes what it was always meant to be, and every being within it becomes more itself - freer, clearer, more whole.

[1]: *Morgoth's Ring*, "Myths Transformed" - Tolkien describes Morgoth dispersing his power into the physical matter of Arda.

## The Unmaking of the Morgoth

Though Morgoth himself is long removed from Arda, the deeper wound he left behind was never merely personal. In the ancient ages he poured his power into the very substance of the world,<sup>1</sup> diffusing his will-to-dominate into earth, water, air, and even the hearts of the Children.<sup>2</sup> This diffusion was not a moral failing but a metaphysical distortion—a dark gravity that bent all things subtly toward fear, possessiveness, and despair.<sup>3</sup> Its presence made evil more than choice; it made it *weight*.<sup>4</sup>

The healing of Arda, therefore, is not the erasure of the idea of domination—for free beings may still err—but the cleansing of its embodiment.<sup>5</sup> The Dagor Dagorath was the final unbinding of this corruption: the dissolution of the ambient force that once magnified malice and made sorrow cling like shadow.<sup>6</sup> With this corruption purged, the Children remain free, yet no longer labor under a world tilted against them.<sup>7</sup> Their missteps are their own, not echoes of a fallen Vala's dispersed power.<sup>8</sup>

Thus the unmaking of Morgoth is not the destruction of a person, nor the denial of repentance, but the purification of Arda from the lingering distortion of a rogue impulse within the divine theme - a

fragment of Eru's thought turned against its purpose; a concept that has proven itself unending.<sup>9</sup> What began in apparent strength and inevitability waned through the long ages, until at last, by Ilúvatar's mercy, it came to its appointed end. Only when that distortion was lifted could the Second Music begin-not in perfection imposed, but in freedom restored.<sup>10</sup>

[1]: *Morgoth's Ring*, "Myths Transformed" - Morgoth disperses his power into the matter of Arda.

[2]: *Morgoth's Ring*, "Part One: Ainulindalë" - Melkor's discord affects the shaping of the Children.

[3]: *The Silmarillion*, "Ainulindalë" - Melkor's discord introduces fear, confusion, and possessiveness.

[4]: *Morgoth's Ring*, "Part Five: Mythmaking in Tolkien" - the Marring as a metaphysical burden or "weight."

[5]: *The Peoples of Middle-earth*, "Last Writings" - reflections on the Marring as an embodied corruption.

[6]: *The Shaping of Middle-earth*, "The Quenta" - early accounts of the Last Battle and Morgoth's final undoing.

[7]: *Morgoth's Ring*, "Part One" - the Marring tilts the conditions of life against the Children.

[8]: *Morgoth's Ring*, Vol. 10 - Morgoth's dispersed power influencing the moral environment of Arda.

[9]: *Letters of J.R.R. Tolkien*, No. 153 - Ainur as thoughts of Eru and evil as a misuse of divine intention.

[10]: *Morgoth's Ring*, "Athrabeth Finrod ah Andreth" - Arda Healed and the renewal following the removal of the Marring.

## Arda and the Ainur

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Arda Healed is not a new beginning nor a replacement, but the unveiling of what always lay beneath the Marring-the world as it was first sung. With the weight of Morgoth's corruption at last lifted, its true pattern stands revealed, though not yet fully wrought.<sup>1</sup> The lands and seas do not leap instantly into their perfected form; rather, freed from fear and distortion, all the Children and the Powers may at last shape them according to Ilúvatar's unmarred design. What was bent may now be straightened, what was dimmed may grow bright, and what was wounded may be made whole-not by sudden remaking, but through the harmonious labor of Arda working as it was meant to work.<sup>2</sup> Thus Arda Healed is both familiar and ever-renewing: its hidden beauty emerging as its peoples bring it forth in freedom.

In the healing of Arda, the Ainur rejoice not with the untouched wonder of their first shaping, but with the deep, aching gladness of those who have carried a long vigil and finally see their labors made whole. They would remember the griefs-the darkening of Valinor, the long wars, the slow wounding of the Children-and those memories would still stir sorrow, like the echo of a lament whose final chord has at last resolved. Yet their joy would be greater for that remembrance, for in Arda Healed they behold the world as they once glimpsed it in the mind of Ilúvatar: every valley and star restored to its unmarred design, every green thing growing without fear, every work of their hands no longer shadowed by Morgoth's malice.<sup>3</sup> The burden of guardianship falls away, and what remains is the pure delight of sub-creators whose themes now ring true-the Music they loved from the beginning returning to them, whole and shining, after ages of distortion.<sup>4</sup>

Now that the burden of stewardship has passed, they look with new, unburdened eyes upon the true diversity of Eru's Children, and marvel rises within them like a dawn after endless night.<sup>5</sup> The Valar behold the diversity of being and intent-each a distinct theme, vibrant and whole, sounding forth in freedoms no guardianship could have foreseen; and in that multiplicity, the mighty spirits

find not diminishment, but the greater glory of Ilúvatar's inexhaustible design.<sup>6</sup>

- [1]: *Morgoth's Ring*, "Myths Transformed" VII - Arda Re-made as unveiling imperishable design beneath marring
- [2]: *Morgoth's Ring*, "Myths Transformed" IX; *Athrabeth Finrod ah Andreth* - gradual healing through sub-creation
- [3]: *Morgoth's Ring*, "Myths Transformed" VIII - Ainur's joy remembering griefs resolved in restoration
- [4]: *Morgoth's Ring*, "Myths Transformed" VII-IX - themes ringing true after discord, sub-creators' delight
- [5]: *Morgoth's Ring*, "Myths Transformed" VIII - Ainur's release from guardianship revealing new wonders.
- [6]: *Letters of J.R.R. Tolkien*, No. 131 - sub-creation's consummation in unity through diversity of free wills.

## Of Elves

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Elves, bound to Arda from the beginning, find themselves immersed in this healed world as if stepping out of a long illness.<sup>1</sup> The weariness and fading that marked their long history slips softly away. What Mandos does in sorrow and necessity becomes the natural state of their being: restoration, clarity, and harmony. They remain themselves - wise, enduring, deeply attuned - but now the ages of grief and loss are tempered and made whole within their unburdened hearts. Sorrow is no longer a weight to bear, but a depth of understanding that gives shape to their joy.

- [1]: *Morgoth's Ring*, "Athrabeth Finrod ah Andreth" - Tolkien's discussion of Elvish weariness, fading, and the hope of Arda Healed.

## The Second Born

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Men stand revealed in this healed world, their innate mode of being now unclouded. They move with urgency and reverence born of mortality's truth-coveting life's span, as immortals cannot. The Gift shines clear in its nature: some embrace the crossing eagerly, others hesitate, a few feel unease at the unknown; yet all respond freely, without Morgoth's lies twisting death to oblivion's dread.

Death, no longer boundary or burden-the Gift met openly, its mystery unshadowed.<sup>1</sup> That lingering unease-of uncharted horizon, not twisting of the Gift-precisely shapes their immediacy, the passion immortals lack. In Arda Healed, mortality marks transcendence: their span woven into Ilúvatar's vast thought, ever seeking the greater Music.

- [1]: *Letters of J.R.R. Tolkien*, No. 212 - Tolkien's explanation of the Gift of Men and the unshadowed nature of death as intended by Ilúvatar.

## The Adopted

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When the Second Music begins and the deep marring of the earth is lifted, none feel it more sharply than the Dwarves. Made of the substance of Arda itself,<sup>1</sup> they have borne its corruption in their very being since their awakening. Now that weight falls away, not as repentance but release. Their nature - stubborn, proud, fiery, fierce in loyalty - remains unchanged, only unburdened. In them the healing of the world is bodily: the bones of the earth made sound again.

Then Aulë calls them, and the long-waiting Halls are opened.<sup>2</sup> From these halls the Fathers of the Seven Houses rise, and the living answer their Maker's call. The scattered Houses gather-Durin's Folk from the West, the Firebeards and Broadbeams from the Blue Mountains, and at last the far Eastern kindreds long sundered from their kin.<sup>3</sup> For the first time since their making, the Seven Fathers stand together, and the Dwarves are one.

Thus their ancient hope is fulfilled: they aid Aulë in the remaking of Arda.<sup>4</sup> Beneath the cleansed mountains their hammers sound anew, setting the deep foundations right. Their work remains unseen at the first, yet it endures in the world's renewed strength - for in its hidden stone the Dwarves have written their joy.

[1]: *The Silmarillion*, "Of Aulë and Yavanna" - Aulë's making of the Dwarves from the substance of Arda.

[2]: *Morgoth's Ring*, "Laws and Customs among the Eldar" - references to the Halls of Waiting and the fate of created beings.

[3]: *The Lord of the Rings*, "Appendix A" - genealogies and histories of the Seven Houses of the Dwarves.

[4]: *The Peoples of Middle-earth*, "Of Dwarves and Men" - Tolkien's notes on the Dwarves' role in the remaking of Arda.

## Willful Discord

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In this healed creation, Elves and Men stand together as companions - each bringing what the other lacks.<sup>1</sup> Elves offer their long memory and deep understanding; Men bring the fire and clarity forged in short lives. And the Ainur, no longer burdened by the marring, work alongside them with joy. In the Second Music, the Ainur and the Children work together in a harmony of free wills, each contributing what Ilúvatar placed uniquely within them; and when Men shape or imagine something new, the Ainur answer as fellow sub-creators, rejoicing that the Children bring themes no one else could have conceived.<sup>2</sup>

Yet this harmony does not abolish freedom or difference. Beings may still err, disagree, even wound-but without the marring's weight, evil bends no longer toward metaphysical domination. Without Morgoth's lies about the nature of reality, no one mistakes power for meaning or destruction for creation. Discord remains possible, but it does not become metaphysical; it does not organize the world around itself.<sup>3</sup>

[1]: *Morgoth's Ring*, "Athrabeth Finrod ah Andreth" - Finrod imagines "Friendship shall be restored" between the Kindreds in the ultimate restoration.

[2]: *Letters of J.R.R. Tolkien*, No. 131 - Unity-in-diversity as the consummation of sub-creation.

[3]: *Morgoth's Ring*, "Myths Transformed" - Corruption of Arda as metaphysical; healing restores moral freedom

without enforced uniformity.

# The Unshackled

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When the Marring is lifted, the last chains of Morgoth fall away, and the Orcs stand bewildered beneath a sky that no longer commands their fear. No master drives them now; no voice compels. Some cry out for orders that do not come, others flinch from blows that never fall. In that strange stillness begins the first free thought - rough, uncertain, but their own.<sup>1</sup>

Not all endure it. Some fade swiftly, unable to bear a world no longer shaped by terror.<sup>2</sup> Others linger, wounded and wary, and for a time the wilds remain troubled - not with the great dread of old, but with the violence of the broken, who strike from habit rather than command, many of whom were slain. Yet even this shadow thins. A few drift toward the edges of the Free Peoples and live out their days quietly at the margins, tolerated but watchful, until the years take them.

No new ones arise<sup>3</sup>, and when they die they do not remain as a race apart; the Firstborn among them return to Mandos, the Secondborn pass beyond the Circles of the World,<sup>4</sup> and thus the long thralldom ends in release rather than ruin. Even the last servants of the Shadow come to rest, and the Music that once was twisted receives again the voices that were lost to it, the dark note resolving at last into harmony as the wounds of will are made whole.

[1]: *Morgoth's Ring*, "Myths Transformed" - Morgoth's will sustains corrupted creatures and collapses when he is removed.

[2]: *Morgoth's Ring*, "Orcs" essays - Tolkien's exploration of Orc origins, enslavement of will, and their dependence on domination.

[3]: *Morgoth's Ring*, "Part One: Ainulindalë" - Melkor's discord distorts the unfolding of the Children, enabling corrupted forms that cannot persist without him.

[4]: *The History of Middle-earth*, Vol. 10: *Morgoth's Ring*, "Athrabeth Finrod ah Andreth" - metaphysics of fear and the restoration of beings after the Marring.

# Chordal Harmonics

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In the Second Music, the Children of Ilúvatar and the Ainur each embody distinct modes of being, and it is in the interplay of these modes that the world's fullness is realized. These modes are not limits upon any soul, for all the Children are polyphonic—capable of will, wisdom, endurance, and feeling—but each race bears a native resonance, a fundamental voicing through which its nature most readily sounds.

There are those who can—the Ainur—whose nature is power and agency, shaping and sustaining Arda according to vision and will. There are those who know—the Elves—whose long memory and deep understanding perceive patterns, consequences, and the harmonies woven into the substance of the world. There are those who feel—Men—whose finitude grants them immediacy,

passion, and the luminous sensitivity to life's fleeting beauty. And there are those who endure—the Dwarves—whose steadfastness, once hardened by fear and exile, now stands unburdened: a strength without bitterness, a constancy without suspicion, the deep foundation upon which renewal takes root.

In Arda Healed, these modes no longer compete under the weight of the marring but resonate together: the Ainur bring their capability without domination, the Elves their enduring insight without cold abstraction, Men their fiery presence without the fear of their mortality, and the Dwarves their unyielding strength without animosity. Each contributes what the others cannot, and in their unity through difference, the Second Music unfolds—a harmony that is neither enforced nor uniform, yet complete, echoing the theme that Ilúvatar first laid into being.

**This is the Second Music:** the world healing, the Children of Ilúvatar whole, and all voices—Ainur, Elves, Dwarves, and Men—joined in the harmony that was always meant to be.<sup>1</sup>

[1]: *The Silmarillion*, "Ainulindalë" — Ilúvatar's theme and the vision of all voices joined in the Music.

## The Little Folk

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Being a quiet branch of the Secondborn they scarcely mark the change at all. Great matters seldom trouble them, and the remaking of Arda is no exception. They do not speak of the Second Music, nor of the lifting of the Marring; such thoughts belong to Elves and lore-masters. Yet even they feel something different, though they would not name it. The days seem a touch more cheerful, the harvests a little surer, and neighbors a shade less sharp-tongued when gossip turns sour. The world sits more comfortably around them, as if it has finally settled into its proper shape.

But their lives go on much as before: pipes are lit, long-bottom leaf is savored, and good ale is shared at day's end. They remain content with gardens, hearths, and the small pleasures that have always been their strength. If any Hobbit were told that the world had been healed, they might nod politely, but they would think mostly of whether the taters were boiling over. For they have always lived close to the quiet heart of things, and in Arda Healed they simply continue as they ever have - steady, cheerful, and untroubled by the great works of the Big Folk.

## The Quiet Memory of Old Tom

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Not all will speak of the Second Music in the tongue of the Valar. There are some, older and simpler, who need no word for renewal. Down by the water-meadows, Tom would not give a grand answer about the lifting of the Marring or the remaking of the world. Such talk belongs to the Elves and the Wise (*The Fellowship of the Ring*, Book I, chs. 6-8, for Tom's nature beyond fear or burden).

If Goldberry asked him what had changed, Tom would only laugh and shake his head.

Just a change, my pretty lady.  
Things are always a-changing.  
But this one... this one I remember.

For him, the world made whole would not be a revelation, but a return - the long rhythm of Arda's breathing come round again. While others marvel at the Music restored, Tom would hum along, untroubled, as though it had been there all along.

# Ever Present Horizon

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Yet even this harmony is not the end. For Ilúvatar's thought is inexhaustible, and no music He begins can ever be the last. The Second Music will stand for ages unnumbered, bright and whole, until perhaps, beyond all reckonings, another theme is heard-soft at first, older and yet new. And those who remember the first will listen in wonder, knowing that every ending is but a pause in a greater song, and that the heart of Eru is not silence, but everlasting beginning.

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