



La Historia de Kullervo

J.R.R. Tolkien , Martin Simonson (Translator)

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Kullervo el Desdichado, como Tolkien lo llamaba, es un niño huérfano sin fortuna alguna, con poderes sobrenaturales pero marcado por un destino trágico. Educado en la granja del oscuro mago Untamo, Kullervo estaría solo en el mundo si no fuera por el amor de Wanona, su hermana gemela, y por la protección de los poderes mágicos de Musti, el perro negro. Kullervo es vendido como esclavo y jura vengarse del mago, pero cuando está a punto de llevar a cabo la venganza se da cuenta de que no puede escapar al más cruel de los destinos.

Tolkien afirmó que 'La historia de Kullervo' fue «el germen de mis intentos de escribir leyendas propias» y que constituía «uno de los temas principales en las leyendas de la Primera Edad». De hecho, su Kullervo era el precursor de Túrin Turambar, el trágico héroe incestuoso de Los hijos de Húrin.

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From Reader Review La Historia de Kullervo for online ebook

Hazal Çamur says

Eser benim için bir kurgudan öte hitabet, kurmaca unsurlar? ve ustal?k seviyesinde kurgular yaratmak için ustalar?n neler yaptı?n? görmek aç?ş?ndan bir kaynak kitab? oldu. Kullervo'nun Hikayesi her ne kadar Turin Turambar öyküsünün atas? olsa da, içerde?i makaleler, konu?malar, ara?t?rmalar ve ara?t?rma biçimlerine olan nokta at??lar?yla i?aret etti?i ?eyin sadece küçük bir k?sm? Turin.

Çok de?erli bilgiler içeren, çok de?erli saptamlara yer verilmiş? ve bugün tanr?salla?m?? isimlerin bu seviyeye gelmek için neler ödedi?ine, ne gibi terler döktü?üne dikkat çeken bir eser. Sadece kurmacas? için okunursa be?enilmeyebilece?ini düşünüyorum.

Steve says

The story was okay, but this was much more interesting because of the fact that it was written so early in Tolkien's writing career. The writing is very basic, but there are flashes of brilliance here.

Sud666 says

The Story of Kullervo was Tolkein's take on the Finnish saga the Kalevala.

Kullervo was the precursor to Tolkein's later "dark" characters like Hurin or even Frodo. Kullervo's father is killed, his mother raped and he is the product. Brought up to hate Untamo, his father, Kullervo is alone except for the love of his sister Wanona. He is guarded by the magical powers of a dog named Musti. This is the tale of revenge and destiny.

It is a good tale but is not for everyone. It is not an easy read like his later works (if you found LOTR to be a "difficult" read avoid Kullervo). It is also based off an ancient Finnish myth so much of the story is left to the imagination. Sagas are not meant to be novels. This book also contains a few nice articles about the Kalevala and Tolkein's research and creative goals with the tragic figure of Kullervo.

So I did enjoy this tale, but it is not the most "fun" of stories. It is dark and grim. Most Northern sagas are. I appreciated it for an older Tolkein work. But not likely to pick this one up again.

Jen says

I really hate giving anything with Tolkien's name on it three stars, but the work he did isn't fully finished and the part that isn't him is kind of boring (the intro) or a bit too in-depth for my taste.

The story was actually very good, even in it's unpolished state. The commentary wasn't horrible, though it didn't really explain fully the brother/sister connection. I wasn't into the essays Tolkien wrote about the story

his was based off of and the commentary in the intro was confusing.

This is good for a die-hard Tolkien fan who wants to read everything he wrote or something new by him. If you aren't a huge Tolkien fan, maybe just read the story and skip the intro and essays.

Three stars, sadly. I wanted to like this more. It has inspired me to re-read the Hobbit and LOTR though.

My thanks to NetGalley and Houghton Mifflin Harcourt for an eARC copy of this book to read and review.

Jason Koivu says

A take on a Finnish myth by J.R.R. Tolkien similar to his *Silmarillion*, only much shorter, narrower in vision, and a good deal more unfinished.

Since my father's side comes from Finland, my ears perk up whenever Finnish things get mentioned. It happens *that* infrequently. Sort of like how when I grew up in the country and only a handful of cars would drive by our house everyday, so I'd prairie dog it every dang time. Anywho, back to the review...

This edition, edited by Verlyn Flieger, goes the extra length to recoup and curate the essence of Tolkien's attempt at *The Story of Kullervo*. There is a helpful introduction that sets up the story nicely for the uninitiated. There are reprints of Tolkien's handwritten notes. Following the actually story, which is about 40 pages long, are nearly a hundred pages worth of plot synopses notes and essays regarding Finnish myth. There is more written about the story than the story itself. That's due diligence.

The story is fairly brutal in the good, ol' fashioned sense of the word. Like many old fairy tales, people die often and often in horrible ways. However, in keeping with tradition, Tolkien alludes to the horror rather than give you every bit of the gory details. Sometimes the alluded to scene is so fleeting you have to stop, go back, and reread. On two or three occasions I had a "wait, what?" moment.

The story is not "one for the ages", but it does have that classic and epic mythological feel to it. For story enjoyment, this gets 3 stars from me. But from a production value standpoint, I've bumped the book up a star.

Anatoly says

Painful to admit, but I didn't enjoy it at all. It's an uncompleted work, and it feels like it and more. The writing style was nothing like the Middle Earth books I love and I felt lost so many times, which is even worse when considering the length of this work.

Sérgio says

Publicado no Literatura à Solta, disponível em
<http://literaturaasolta.blogspot.pt/2...>

Depois da redundância literária que foi *Os Filhos de Húrin*, o recontar, pela terceira vez, de uma história já incluída em *O Silmarillion* e aprofundada nos *Contos Inacabados*. Uma vez mais, a história repete-se. Mais um livro de Tolkien, publicado a partir do vasculhar dos papéis do autor legados à biblioteca da Universidade de Oxford, e mais uma desilusão. Trata-se de um conto, a primeira incursão de J. R. R. Tolkien no género fantástico, facto que me atraiu sobremaneira. Contudo, depressa nos apercebemos de que algo vai mal. Afinal não é um conto de Tolkien, apenas um recontar de uma história pertencente ao épico do folclore finlandês *Kalevala*. O conto está incompleto, foi abandonado quando o autor se alistou no exército para combater na Primeira Guerra Mundial, o que deixa ainda mais a desejar. Como cereja no topo do bolo, seguem-se dois ensaios, transcrições de palestras dadas sobre a *Kalevala* pelo próprio Tolkien, que se vem a descobrir serem pura e simplesmente o mesmo ensaio, um na sua versão manuscrita, completo, o outro na sua versão dactilografada, um pouco mais desenvolvido, mas por terminar. A rematar, um novo ensaio, desta feita da lavra da editora do material original, Verlyn Flieger.

Ao contrário de Pessoa, de cujos baús ainda hoje se desencantam poemas, ensaios, guiões de cinema, policiais, entre outros, completos e inéditos, Tolkien não possui baús da mesma estirpe, está mais do que provado. Insistir no contrário é uma indigna exploração do filão editorial que se veio a revelar ser *O Hobbit*, *O Senhor dos Anéis* e *O Silmarillion*. Compreendo a publicação por motivações académicas, de forma a disponibilizar material de investigação aos estudiosos da obra e dos processos literários do autor. Esta edição, todavia, tem precisamente a motivação contrária, afirmada no prefácio, dado já existir uma edição académica de *A História de Kullervo*.

Pessoalmente, apenas o ensaio final veio salvar a leitura, de outra forma, truncada e redundante. Tomei nota de algumas das fundamentações biográficas para o maravilhamento de Tolkien pelo folclore finlandês, e a sua identificação com Kullervo, personagem de uma certa monta na *Kalevala*, cujo resultado foi a inspiração criativa do que viria a ser o seu próprio trabalho de fantasia. *Kalevala*, que apenas conhecia de nome por a ter visto publicada, nos tempos de faculdade, pela Dom Quixote, numa tradução directa do original, tão importante para Tolkien que planeou criar uma “mitologia para a Inglaterra”, na falta de semelhante corpus folclórico anglo-saxão. *Kalevala*, que levou à *A História de Kullervo*, inspiração para Túrin, personagem de concepção primeva que levou à criação de todo o *O Silmarillion* para o enquadrar, *Silmarillion* que abriu as portas para *O Hobbit* e *O Senhor dos Anéis*.

Alejandro says

A relevant reading.

BEFORE THE HOLE IN THE GROUND

This book is publication of the first prose work written by JRR Tolkien, before of this, his usual written format was of poems. Even you can find some of that here, but it's clear that prose is the predominant style. It's not a finished work, so at the “end”, you will find notes made by Tolkien where he was planning how to end the story.

This story isn't based on his “Middle-Earth” universe. In fact, it's a re-telling of the character of “Kullervo”, part of the Finnish folklore mythology found on *The Kalevala* epic poetic works.

Tolkien's wish was to create a mythology for his native England, therefore, he was reading mythology works

from other countries like Greece, Rome and Nordic lands, but it seems that the story about the character of Kullervo from the Finnish mythology provoked a huge impact in Tolkien and before of beginning to conceive his own mythology, it was natural to “play” writing a re-telling of mythology events from other cultures.

There is a consensus for the experts in Tolkien’s works that this unfinished first attempt of prose writing by Tolkien was pivotal for his later creation of the character of “Túrin Turambar”, protagonist of the book *The Children of Húrin* set in the Middle-Earth universe.

THE IMPACT IS STRONG HERE

It’s obvious that in the middle of the several influences for George Lucas for his *Star Wars*, you can find elements from *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*, but knowing certain aspects of how Tolkien made the re-telling of Kullervo’s story, you will be able to find relevant elements here that most likely George Lucas read at some point and used in own way for his saga in a galaxy, far, far away.

WHAT'S YOUR NAME AGAIN?!!

If you are Spanish-speaking person, it’s very likely that you may find kinda funny his name... Kullervo, since for me it sounds like “Butt-ervo”, that again, as I mentioned in the Brandon Sanderson’s saga of “Reckoners” about the city of Newcago (a city based on the “old” Chicago), again it’s clear that some linguistic scholar should be consulted when a “new word”, a “new name” is created to check if in some language it sounds funnier than it’s intended.

IT'S BAD TO BE KULLERVO

Kullervo is a very dark character, his life wasn’t anything nice at all, and even it’s like fate was punishing him for things beyond of his own actions. He won’t catch a single break in his story.

Even that until now, *The Story of Kullervo* was published as a stand-alone work (before was part of Tolkien’s letters), it’s clear that he was pioneering in the kind of character that nowadays are hugely popular: Characters of ambiguous morality, the “hero” of the story but willing to do very bad things to others without any remorse.

I can understand why the powerful tragedy found in *The Story of Kullervo* can be an appealing inspiration for other writers for their own works. However, the story per se is hard to find it appealing itself, at least for me. Since a tale about a character who always is suffering, everything that happens is tragic, and even when you think that finally there will be some due payback, the suffering instead reaches insanely nasty levels, well, I can’t understand the reason of why writing books with such too sickening series of events without any rest for the protagonist (and the reader (in my case)).

Is it a strong solid bold story? Oh, yes, without any doubt. Even an unfinished single prose work by Tolkien is better than many totally finished book series by others.

It’s just that for me, even an anti-hero (including a villain if it’s presented to be the protagonist of a story) deserves a break, some moments of triumph (true ones).

In my very personal point of view, I can't see the point of writing stories where everything what happens to the protagonist is bad.

Additionally, the book contains stuff from *The Kalevala*, that not only helps to illustrate better *The Story of Kullervo* but brings a good image about general Finnish mythology.

Bettie? says

Description: *Kullervo son of Kalervo is perhaps the darkest and most tragic of all J.R.R. Tolkien's characters. 'Hapless Kullervo', as Tolkien called him, is a luckless orphan boy with supernatural powers and a tragic destiny.*

Brought up in the homestead of the dark magician Untamo, who killed his father, kidnapped his mother, and who tries three times to kill him when still a boy, Kullervo is alone save for the love of his twin sister, Wanona, and guarded by the magical powers of the black dog, Musti. When Kullervo is sold into slavery he swears revenge on the magician, but he will learn that even at the point of vengeance there is no escape from the cruellest of fates.

*Tolkien himself said that *The Story of Kullervo* was 'the germ of my attempt to write legends of my own', and was 'a major matter in the legends of the First Age'. Tolkien's Kullervo is the clear ancestor of Túrin Turambar, tragic incestuous hero of *The Silmarillion*. In addition to it being a powerful story in its own right, *The Story of Kullervo* – published here for the first time with the author's drafts, notes and lecture-essays on its source-work, *The Kalevala* – is a foundation stone in the structure of Tolkien's invented world.*

Opening: In the days {of magic long ago} {when magic was yet new}, a swan nurtured her brood of cygnets by the banks of a smooth river in the reedy marshland of Sutse. One day as she was sailing among the sedge-fenced pools with her trail of younglings following, an eagle swooped from heaven and flying high bore off one of her children to Telea: on the second day a mighty hawk robbed her of yet another and bore it to Kemen?me. Now that nursling that was brought to Kemen?me waxed and became a trader and cometh not into this sad tale: but that one whom the hawk brought to Telea he it is whom men name Kalerv?: while a third of the nurslings that remained behind men speak oft of him and name him Untam? the Evil, and a fell sorcerer and man of power did he become.

Kullervo marches to war, fresco by Akseli Gallen-Kallela, 1901 – Kullervo goes to war against Untamo and his people.

A snippet from the Finnish *Kalevala* is the basis for Tolkien's short tragic story.

Ukko possessed a weapon, often a hammer called Ukonvasara, sometimes also an axe or a sword, by which he struck lightning

Kullervo finally snaps, drawing his sword and asking it to take his life.

Hadrian says

One of Tolkien's earlier pieces - unusually grim for him - shows clear influence from Finnish language and mythology. Includes notes, a glossary, character list, and two drafts of a lecture on the Kalevala.

Carla Estruch says

-Vamos a publicar este borrador de la primera historia de Tolkien que no está ni acabada.
-Pero es muy corta, no tiene ni 50 páginas.
-A ver, ¿qué más hay por aquí?
-Pues tenemos un par de borradores sobre unas charlas del mismo tema...
-Mételo.
-Hay un estudiioso que dice que quiere hacer unos comentarios o nosequé historia.
-Mételo.
-¿Y en qué sección publicaremos esto, en ensayo?
-¿Estás de coña? Hay que ser coherente. Esto irá con los otros de Tolkien.
-Pero si no es narrativa ni es na...
-Tú no pongas nada en la contraportada y verás cómo cae algún pringao, que Tolkien sigue vendiendo.

Majo says

Un relato corto y trágico, de los primeros escritos por Tolkien.

Contado a manera de leyenda, relata la historia de **Kullervo** desde su nacimiento, hasta su muerte, pasando por toda su desdichada vida.

Lamentablemente, el relato no está acabado. No solo porque no tiene final (la última página no es narrativa, es un boceto del autor sobre como acabar la historia), sino también porque no está pulido. Hay muchas notas sobre cambios de nombres y situaciones.

Estoy segura que, de haber acabado el cuento, sería un clásico maravilloso de Tolkien. Ahora solo es una muestra de como funcionaba el proceso creativo de este magnífico autor.

Nikki says

The Story of Kullervo is definitely a disappointing book, even for someone as interested in Tolkien's legendarium and influences as I am. The actual content written by Tolkien is fairly slight and incomplete; the same talk is included twice with only minor changes, and the story isn't that long. If his tale of the children

of Hurin is something that really interests you, his interpretation of the *Kalavala* might be worth a look, but it feels honestly lacklustre. I've often felt that the Tolkien estate has been releasing stuff that J.R.R. himself would never have let into the light of day, and I felt that especially here — he loved the material, and he would've wanted to do better by it. The *Silmarillion* is one thing; his commentary on *Beowulf* was significant enough to be worth publishing, considering how important his 'The Monsters and the Critics' essay was. But this?

Still, there are glimmers of interest here; the way Tolkien tried to flesh out the story and fix some of the inconsistencies, like Kullervo's family. I don't know enough about the source material to really understand what he was doing with the names, but there are often glimpses of the kind of names and places that appeared in *The Silmarillion* et al. Musti is a forerunner of Huan, perhaps; Kullervo is a rather graceless model for Túrin...

But overall, I feel like I rather wasted my time here, which is saddening. J.R.R. Tolkien did amazing work, and I think his legacy is being rather diluted by the popular reissue of things like this — it should, of course, be accessible to scholars, biographers, etc. But please stop selling this stuff as a complete work ready for public scrutiny!

Originally posted here.

Mladen says

Na knjizi bi trebalo da piše "Tolkinofili napred, ostali stoj!". Šalu na stranu, ovo zaista nije naslov za prose?nog ljubitelja fantastike, jer ?e ?injenica da je u pitanju nedovršena pri?a (završava se bukvalno u pola re?enice), kao i nesre?en tekst (neuskla?ena imena, delovi koje je Tolkin brisao, itd.) ostaviti istog u krajnjem isfrustriranom stanju. Doduše, postoji nekoliko re?enica o tome kako se pri?a završava, ali to nije to... Ko o?ekuje Hobita ili *Silmarilion*, grdno ?e se razo?arati.

Ina?e, ovo nije prvo objavljivanje - prethodno je tekst objavljen u *Tolkien Studies*, ali tržište ?ini svoje... Tolkinofili, kako oni koji vole da ga ?itaju tako i oni koji vole da naslažu knjige s njegovim imenom na policu, uživa?e u još malo njegovog pisanija, koje prati uvod, brojne napomene i objašnjenja, kao i eseji o ovom delu, koje je nastalo pod uticajem finske *Kalevale*.

U svakom slu?aju, tekst je zanimljiv jer je Kulervo zna?ajan kao seme kasnijeg rada. Verovatno najzna?ajniji uticaj je imao na lik Turina, tako?e tragi?nog junaka i upošte na Tolkinovu mitologiju i namenu da stvori mitologiju za Englesku koja, kako je smatrao, svoju mitologiju nije sa?uvala. Želeo je da Engleskoj podari njenu sopstvenu *Kalevalu*. Ovim tekstrom to svakako nije u?inio, ali svime onim što je nakon ovoga usledilo, zaista jeste.

U svakom slu?aju, vredno pažnje ako ste vrištavi fan, zaobi?i u širokom luku ako samo tražite fantasti?ne pri?ice za uživanje ili ubijanje dosade.

Bookdragon Sean says

This was such a tragic thing to read, and not just because of the harrowing nature of the tale; it was also tragic because Tolkien never finished it. It is truly lamentable that he didn't, as this would have been masterful in its final polished form; it would have been simply brilliant and a true pleasure to read. But, alas,

he did not. Woe to Tolkien fans everywhere.

A true Tragedy

I'm deeply saddened by this, but I am glad that, at the very least, we have some of it. The story is complete, but not completely written. The ending is laid down in a series of notes and statements. The truly tragic nature of the tale can be seen, and appreciated somewhat, even if it is a very basic form of representation. The redeeming feature of this edition resides in the fact that it can clearly be seen as an inspiration for Tolkien's later works; he used this as a platform to propel himself into his own original writings. For that reason alone, is this edition worth reading because it provides insight into his journey as a writer; it shows how this story led him down the road to Middle-Earth.

The introduction eluded me to the fact that this is a tragedy in the true nature of the word; it harbours the features of what Aristotle considered to be tragic. This is hard to actually spot when reading the story itself because of its incompleteness. Therefore, I strongly recommend reading the introduction before actually reading the story. I normally skip introductions myself but, in this case, I most ardently suggest reading it. It added to my understanding of the story, and without it I honestly think I would have enjoyed it less. So, I think it is a bit of a necessity with this work.

Not easily recommended

The quality of the editorial procedure of this book is very high but, overall, I think this is very expensive for what you get. There are only around forty pages of Tolkien's actual writing in here. The commentaries are helpful, but not completely exhaustive. I think they mainly served to be page fillers, as did Tolkien's lectures. The two lectures were very similar and almost identical in parts. I think if anything only one should have been included in here. Personally, I think all of Tolkien's incomplete verse and prose should be published in one volume because editions like this simple are not worth the asking price.

This is not something I recommend to a casual Tolkien reader. The full force of the tale, and its impact on Tolkien as a writer, will only be felt by those that have read *The Silmarillion*; and, by a lesser extent, *The Children of Hurin*. This is because without having a prior knowledge of these previous works, it would be hard to comprehend how he drew on this tale to develop his own fantasy world, which is much more beyond the surface value of *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*. Indeed, the tale in itself is not what one would constitute as light reading. It is the sort of thing that needs to be read a multitude of times before it can be fully grasped. This is not because it is complex, but because it feels fragmented and lacks the flow of a final draft. I think with this, the reader has to use their imagination, and see beyond the simple words on the page; they need to try and imagine what this could have looked like had it been finished. The editor, of course, did her best, but short of actually tampering with Tolkien's writing, majorly, there was nothing else she could do.

Overall, I'm glad I got the chance to read this, the work that inspired Tolkien so greatly. But, I only recommend it to those that have read a lot of Tolkien's work, and I do think it is very expensive overall. The publishers know that because this is Tolkien, his fans will buy it no matter the cost.

A tragic three stars
