



# British Legends: The Life and Legacy of J.R.R. Tolkien

*Charles River Editors*

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For more than half a century, the name J. R. R. Tolkien (1892-1973) has been synonymous with epic fantasy. Known across the world for his classic *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy, Tolkien both revived interest in fantasy literature and set the standard for the genre. Today he is widely acknowledged as the father of modern fantasy and as its most famous author.

While Tolkien made Middle Earth famous and vice versa, Tolkien's works were influenced by a lifetime of his own personal experiences. His tales concern creatures of myth, yet the plot lines and characters are human at heart. Tolkien drew his inspiration from war, nature, history, love, and language, and through the lens of fantasy he examined bravery, loyalty, and friendship. That essential humanness at the core of his writing, whether it was displayed by a man, a hobbit, or even a tree, struck a chord with readers that continues to resonate today. *The Hobbit* has been released in more than 40 languages, and *The Lord of the Rings* has sold more than 150 million copies. In 2008 British daily newspaper *The Times* named him number six on its list of 50 greatest British writers since 1945.

At the same time, there is more to Tolkien than his books and their popularity. He is famous for his writing, but Tolkien led an exceptional life. Over the course of 81 years, he was a professor and a poet, a veteran of war and a champion for nature. His own love story influenced one of his beloved tales, and his friendship changed the course of one man's writing.

*British Legends: The Life and Legacy of J. R. R. Tolkien* chronicles the life and work of the famous writer and examines the enduring legacy.

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