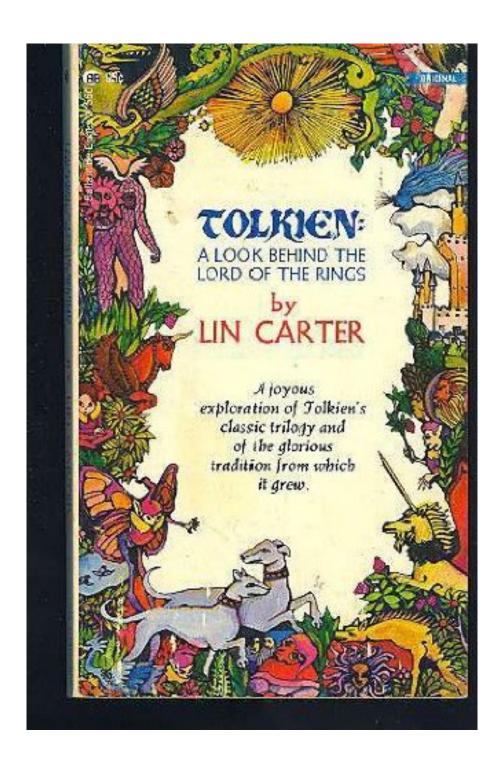


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If JRR Tolkien was the single author most responsible for the existence of Fantasy as a modern publishing genre then the single editor and critic with the same claim was Lin Carter. His tireless advocacy of both modern fantasy writers and their historical forbears as the first editor on the Ballantine Adult Fantasy series was hugely influential.

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Lin Carter's joyous 1969 exploration of Tolkien's classic trilogy and the glorious tradition from which it grew.

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A fine introduction to both Tolkien & classic fantasy

By OwlSong

This was one of the first books to delve into Tolkien's now-classic tale, and in many ways, it's still one of the best. By exploring the roots of both Tolkien's work & the fantasy genre overall, Carter provides much-needed perspective ... to say nothing of having introduced an entire generation of fantasy readers & future fantasy writers to the masters of the field. I still recall the excitement of learning about Lord Dunsany & Wiliiam Morris for the first time, and my appetite for their work was whetted by the brief samples Carter so tantalizingly provided to his readers!

The entire Ballantine Adult Fantasy series so wonderfully developed & edited by Carter can be seen as an outgrowth of this seminal work; for that reason alone, it's deserving of praise. But it's also enjoyable & informative reading on its own merits. Carter wrote at the height of the intial Tolkien craze & much of that exhilaration & delight is reflected here. His prose is deceptively easy-going & always accessible: he's clearly writing about a living man & his living work, not the ponderous monument so many writers have since made of him. Yes, there are more detailed (and more accurate) books about Tolkien, but this one truly conveys the pleasures of masterful & classic fantasy. Recommended!

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By Tim Lieder

Lin Carter's book is a tour through the literary world of Europe in the last thousand years touching on Norse Epics, warrior tales and the Spanish adventure series parodied by Don Quixote. It's amazing in it breadth even if its depth is shallow. As she goes over the literature that influenced Tolkein in his epic you will understand why you can't read The Lord of the Rings just once and why there's so much going on (even in those boring appendices of Tolkein). You will also understand why you haven't read a fantasy book for years.

Tolkein was a genius. But everyone else imitates Tolkein these days. There are some exceptions - Tanith Lee, Stephen King, Barry Hughart but the Terry Brooks and Robert Jordans of the world set their books in that pseudo medeival tripe you know there's something missing. This book explains why. Tolkein had decades of research and pure love behind him. The other fantasy writers can only imitate Tolkein.

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