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Artist's Comments

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Barbara Reynolds has filled in the gaps. I have only one cavil, and that is that readers who have not yet read Dr. Reynolds' previous study of Miss Sayers' encounter with Dante will find that it is still essential reading; the present biography devotes only a brief and summarizing chapter to this massive and culminating period of Miss Sayers' life.

I'm happy to report that Dr. Reynolds is at work on an edition of Miss Sayers' letters, which will be, I am certain, equally essential reading. In the meantime, *Dorothy L. Sayers, Her Life and Soul* tells us in the fullest possible terms the story of Miss Sayers' personal life. We not only learn the full name of her son's biological father, we see a photograph of him, as dashing as one would have hoped, astride his motorcycle in full leathers (mercy!). And there are plenty of other new photographs too, as well as long, detailed descriptions of the places Miss Sayers lived, the clothing she wore, the schools she attended, and, equally delicious, even longer quotations from her wonderfully personal letters, many of which are new to print. Don't misunderstand, I wouldn't recommend scrapping the previous biographies, only making very sure to place this one in a particularly prominent position among them. There can be no such thing as a finally definitive biography of anybody, and in the case of Miss Sayers, every encounter with her life adds to her status as a major 20th century icon.

In what roles is this multifaceted woman cast? She is a daughter, a schoolgirl, a teacher, a woman, a friend, a lover, a mother, a wife. On these matters the present biography is richly forthcoming, authoritative, and convincing. Among other things, it convinces me that Miss Sayers was right (as well as compelled by circumstances) to leave her son with his foster mother/cousin rather than taking him away in mid-childhood. She is also a poet, a copywriter, an autobiographer, a playwright, a novelist, a translator, a scholar, an essayist, a social commentator, an apologist, and a theologian. Of these achievements we learn much but certainly not (nor did Dr. Reynolds attempt or intend to write) all. Many other studies of Miss Sayers' "work" as well as works have been and will continue to be written, not least Dr. Reynolds' own study, *The Passionate Intellect* (Kent, Ohio: Kent State University Press, 1989), to which I have referred above. And, in line with this latest biography's title, there is still one more category, by no means fully explored, the subject of Miss Sayers' soul. On this subject, the definitive study has yet to be written, but very much to her credit, Dr. Reynolds has defined the categories and pointed the way: Miss Sayers as a daughter of the Church of England, squarely placed upon the *via media*, both catholic and protestant; Miss Sayers as an exemplar of and theorist upon the sacramentality of one's own work; Miss Sayers as a follower of the Affirmative Way, which (as her life so richly and poignantly demonstrates) is as difficult and costly as the more widely known *via negativa*; Miss Sayers as a champion of orthodoxy, explicator of the mystery of the Holy Trinity, and

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ARTIST'S COMMENTS

"Doubt Not the Power of Morgoth Bauglir! Is It Not Written In Me?"

Then the heart of Finduilas was turned from Gwindor and against her will her love was given to Túrin; but Túrin did not perceive what had befallen. And being torn in heart Finduilas became sorrowful; and she grew wan and silent. But Gwindor sat in dark thought; and on a time he spoke to Finduilas, saying: 'Daughter of the house of Fianrfin, let no grief lie between us; for though Morgoth has laid my life in ruin, you still I love. Go whither love leads you; yet beware! ... [T]his Man is not Beren. A doom indeed lies on him, as seeing eyes may well read in him, but a dark doom. Enter not into it! And if you will, your love shall betray you to bitterness and death. For hearken to me! Though he be indeed *agarwaen* son of *imarith*, his right name is Túrin son of Húrin, whom Morgoth holds in Angband, and whose kin he has cursed. Doubt not the power of Morgoth Bauglir! Is it not written in me?'

Then finduilas sat long in thought; but at the last she said only: 'Túrin son of Húrin loves me not; nor will.'

— *The Silmarillion*

Fate has handed Gwindor a very raw deal. Once a lord of Nargothrond who was young and strong, he now has become, under Morgoth's cruel torture, a "bent and fearful shadow of his former shape and mood," and "seeming as one of the aged among mortal Men." When he escapes from Angband and returns with Túrin to Nargothrond, his own people fail to recognize him — all except for Finduilas, who was Gwindor's lover before his capture.

I like the psychodrama of this scene: the torn Finduilas, loathing herself for falling out of love with Gwindor and in love with Túrin — yet knowing that Túrin will never love her; and the defeated Gwindor, who, although willing to release Finduilas from any obligations of the heart, can't resist (out of jealousy) an urgent (and in the end all-to-accurate) warning to avoid the object of her desire — or else.

Tolkien does not describe Gwindor as leaning on a cane, but I thought that, at least in this scene, it would help depict the utterly broken nature of the elf. It also gave me something to do with his left hand. Gwindor is drawn hunched over, with deeply lined face and hands, defining not only his physical torture, but also the merciless labor he was forced to endure. His former strength and attractiveness are gone, never to be regained. I considered giving him some gray hair, but finally decided to leave it dark. His hair color is the only thing he retains from his former "youth of the Eldar." There was no point begrudging him this small shred of dignity.

— *Paula DiSant*

