

Lynn Forest (ed.), *The Mirror Crack'd: Fear and Horror  
in J.R.R. Tolkien's Major Works*,  
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Lynn Forest-Hill (ed.), *Mirror Crack'd: Fear and Horror in J.R.R.  
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'The depth of the tale depends on the greatness of monsters' (49). When I first read *Lord of the Rings* as a ten-year old, I recoiled in horror when Shelob tried to catch Frodo in the caverns of Cirith Ungol. Much later, when reading *Two Towers*, I was moved in grief when the orcs catapulted the severed heads of the slaughtered warriors into sacked Minas Tirith. Yet Tolkien's works have always been (at least to me) a strange mixture of gripping horror and lighthearted, sometimes even overwhelming, joy. The essays of this volume were able to explain these reactions to me without breaking the spell, as academic explanation sometimes tend to do.

*Mirror Crack'd* contains ten articles on horror- and monster-related events and themes in Tolkien's works. Tolkien's monsters turn out to be even greater than the first peek through your fingers might have suggested. Shelob plays the main role in several articles; nevertheless, dragons, balrogs, wolves, the undead and other usual suspects get their share too.

This is an excellent way to revisit one's childhood (and adulthood) fears with a fellowship of trusted guides. A fine example of first-rate Tolkien-scholarship, the volume also functions as a good introduction to the horror genre in general. Insights grounded in etymology, literary studies, metaphysics and theology enrich each other and make this volume an enjoyable read.

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