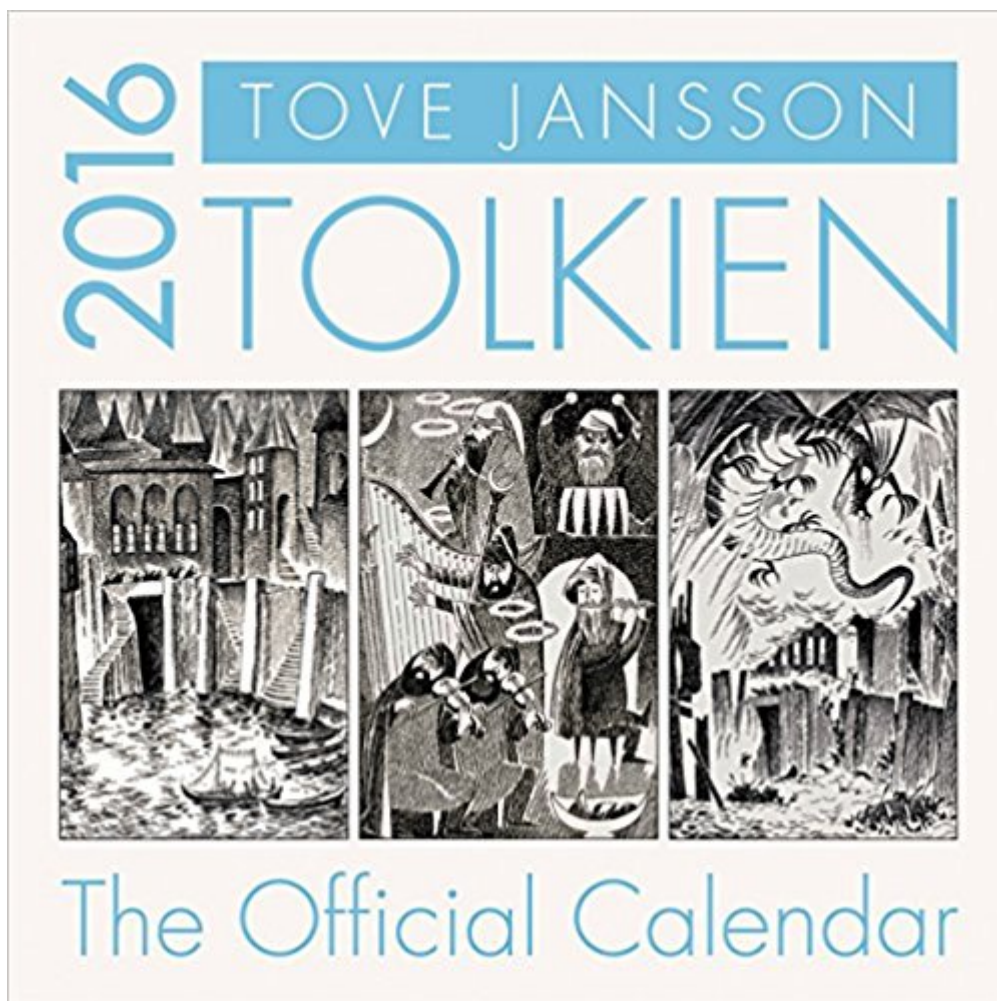


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Tolkien Calendar 2016



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Customer Reviews

John Ronald Reuel Tolkien (1892-1973) was a major scholar of the English language, specializing in Old and Middle English. Twice Professor of Anglo-Saxon (Old English) at the University of Oxford, he also wrote a number of stories, including most famously *The Hobbit* (1937) and *The Lord of the Rings* (1954-1955), which are set in a pre-historic era in an invented version of the world which he called by the Middle English name of Middle-earth.

The 2017 Official Tolkien calendar features the artwork of Finnish artist, Tove Marika Jansson, which was originally used as the illustration of the Finnish and Swedish translations of *The Hobbit*. Most of the images are black & white images, which measure 10 x 14 in. (25 x 36 cm), with the exception of a lovely "centerfold" color plate, featuring Smaug and the dwarves and the December image, featuring Bilbo. The calendar includes an essay by renowned Tolkien scholar, Brian Sibley, entitled "From Moominland to Middle-Earth," which sheds light on the artist and her artwork. Each month also has a short excerpt from *The Hobbit* relating to the artwork. The calendar includes notations of usual U.S. and Canadian holidays, religious holidays, moon phases, and dates of first publication of many of Tolkien's writings. My primary complaint is with the size of calendar. The artwork for each month extends approx 1/4 of the way up onto the top page, leaving a relatively small, faint calendar which is illegible when viewing it from 6 feet away (see attached photo). If you are buying this for the artwork, by all means, go for it. If you are wanting a wall calendar that you will be able to read from across the room, look elsewhere.

The official Tolkien Calendar for 2016 is a striking creation featuring dramatic illustrations from the Finnish artist Tove Jansson. Jansson, who died in 2001 aged 86, was an author and illustrator best known for her books and comic strips depicting the Moomins, who inhabited a valley which is as pleasant and peaceful as Tolkien's own Shire but beset by a wider and more dangerous outside world. In the early 1960s Jansson was asked to illustrate the Swedish edition of *The Hobbit*, and it is from that work that the illustrations for this calendar have been taken. Jansson's favored technique was to use pen and ink to create etching like illustrations. With the exception of the center illustration depicting Smaug about to attack the dwarves and Bilbo on Erebor and of December's Bilbo in helmet and spear standing in front of Erebor while Smaug circles menacingly (which was the original cover illustration) all of the drawings are black and white. Many are done in great detail while others are more impressionistic. Jansson excelled at depicting landscapes, particularly water and mountains. I particularly liked July's depiction of Laketown with steps leading down to the water and March's landscape of Rivendell showing the dwarves crossing the narrow bridge. May's drawing of the goblins and wargs dancing around the burning pine trees in which the dwarves and Bilbo are cowering is appropriately eerie, as is June's depiction of Mirkwood as a labyrinth of twisted tree trunks through which the Company struggles to find a way. October and November's battle scenes are alive with action and menace. I was less impressed with the final drawing on inside back cover showing beastlike Elves with horns throwing barrels into the Forest River. Author and illustrator Brian Sibley, who provided a very informative essay on Jansson and her work for the inside front cover, mentions an unsuccessful illustration not included in this calendar of a huge Gollum towering over Bilbo. Despite these occasional missteps Jansson did a fine job of illustrating *The Hobbit*, and I look forward to enjoying this calendar throughout 2016.

I like that I'm seeing images I've not seen before, but I would like some more vibrant work again.

I love Tove's work and what a perfect fit to illustrate Tolkien's *Hobbit*! The calendar is too small to really use however, as others have commented. One other hiccup is that the most controversial artwork that Tove did for the *Hobbit* - a picture of Gollum, although mentioned in the introduction is not displayed or pictured. Should have included it if you mentioned it. Otherwise, a nice black and white kinda minimalist vision of Middle Earth.

The calendar itself is too small.

Nice to see a departure from the past few calendars with a (by the numbers anyway) unpopular (not me - I am enjoying the slow reveal over the year of this artist's interpretation) change in style. Evocative and subtle.

I get a Tolkien calendar for my husband every year. It's become harder and harder to find one that isn't full of movie shots, but the illustrations on the 2016 calendar are beautiful!

Love the illustrations, since my whole family are Tove Jansen fans (Moomins). Thanks to whomever resurrected the drawings from years ago!

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