

**A BOY, A GIRL,  
AND A DOG:  
THE LEITHIAN  
SCRIPT**

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[illegible]

ACT III

TINUVIEL AT BAY: A CACCIA OF BELERIAND

retold in the vernacular as a dramatic script  
(with apologies to Messrs. Tolkien & Shakespeare)  
(and thanks to M. Moliere & Miss Austen for assistance)

*This chapter in honor of  
John Edward Moreton Drax Plunkett, Lord Dunsany,  
for giving us  
King Argimenes and the Unknown Warrior*

*"--Bones!"*

*and Willie Yeats for so very much, and not forgetting  
The Countess Cathleen*

*"The storm is in my hair and I must go--"*

# BLACK IS THE COLOUR...

"WHAT'S WRONG with it?" "Well—  
it looks like you cut it yourself,  
in the dark..."

"Ah, yes—seeing that's what I did—" /

"—THEN  
WE'LL  
MATCH,  
WON'T  
WE?"

"Yes—but  
it looks  
it..."

"Oh, don't be so  
sensitive..."

...I don't see  
any-  
thing  
WRONG

...OF  
MY TRUE  
LOVE'S HAIR...

JB 2002



**Dramatis Personae & Cast, in order of appearance**

[this is how I'd cast them -- you're free to supply your own actors, of course.]

**The Human Bard Gower (appearing courtesy of The Rose Playhouse)**

Derek Jacobi (appearing courtesy Henry V)

**Luthien aka Tinuviel, Princess of Doriath**

Claudia Black (appearing courtesy Farscape)

**Orodreth, Prince of Nargothrond**

Hugh Grant (appearing courtesy Sense and Sensibility)

**Celegorm, Son of Feanor**

James Marsters in suave, charming, and gentlemanly mode (courtesy Mutant Enemy)

**Curufin, Son of Feanor**

James Marsters in sly, caustic and vicious mode (courtesy Mutant Enemy)

**Finduilas, Princess of Nargothrond, daughter of Orodreth**

Gelsey Kirkland (appearing courtesy the Baryshnikov Nutcracker telecast)

**Celebrimbor, Son of Curufin**

Alexis Denisof (appearing courtesy Mutant Enemy)

**Gwindor, a Lord of Nargothrond**

Ioan Gruffydd (appearing courtesy A&E's Horatio Hornblower series)

**Huan of Valinor**

Special guest appearance as Himself

**Assorted Nargothronders of both Houses: Rangers, Citizens, and Knights**

## SCENE I

Gower:

In longsome time  
fair Luthien to Nargothrond hath fared  
by pathways strange and secret under star  
and light of moon, 'scaping the trammels set  
by love that seeks too hardily to save  
drawn forth from that shelt'ring snare  
by binding far stronger than that rope of hair  
her path sheer straight from Hirilorn's crown  
--a track more steep than scales Gorgoroth down.

Now as a prize to the Elven city borne  
taken in her hasting flight by the Hound of Celegorm,  
the Nightingale of Doriath with close-pent wings  
rants against her cage; weeping, herself she flings,  
--having exchanged but snare for snare--  
in futile dread and rage and hot despair.  
Rising her sureness of yet one treason more  
by hours: first Daeron, jealous; then swore  
Elu Thingol, and yet forswore, though formal-true;  
then Daeron again, breaking his vow implied:  
whereon her father cedes wisdom to fear and pride  
prisoning her, whilst mourning her mother stood aside.  
This new betrayal less false than all of these,  
that she, and only she, is purposed to deceive,  
--not self, in fond disguise of pure devotion.  
Of all her kindred, all whom 'friend' should claim,  
but one, as yet, hath proven true: -- the same  
who clear once called by her heart's true name.

[The great hall (or probably, indeed, a great hall) of the fortress-palace of Nargothrond. A banquet is underway. In the high seats are the Regent Orodreth and his household, and in the places of honor, Lords Curufin, Celegorm, and their entourage. Especially honored on the royal dais is Luthien of Doriath. She does not look the part of an Elven princess of high degree. Her hair is bobbed short and rather wildly curly, her clothes are defiantly the travelworn white dress and blue wrapper, and she is not at all serene, but rather pale and stressed-out yet nonetheless determined. (She looks a bit like an older version of Trina Schart Hyman's illustration of Ronia, the Robber's Daughter by Astrid Lindgren, as a matter of fact, if Ronia were wearing a costume designed by Sir Lawrence Alma-Tadema instead.)

**Orodreth:**

Dear lady, you've not touched your plate at all. Is our food too rich for one accustomed to simpler fare?

**Luthien:**

No, my lord Regent -- it's only that I have no appetite when I think of Beren in pain and privation. How long till your army can ride forth?

**Orodreth:**

Highness, it is not that easily arranged. Such -- such things take time--

**Luthien:**

--It's been two days since you brought me here. Two entire days! He could be dying!

**Celegorm:** [aside to Curufin]

We could be so lucky--

**Curufin:** [low]

Hush.

**Luthien:**

--And I've seen no sign yet of any readying whatsoever. You told me, my lord Curufin, that you would expedite the preparation of a rescue mission, and I'd like to know what progress has been made. You haven't kept me updated at all.

[Conversation all around drops off to an all-time lull, for a variety of reasons; even the background music dies down as the harpers attempt to play low enough that they can follow the exchanges.]

**Curufin:** [very polite but patronizing nevertheless]

Lovely princess, it takes time as I explained before, to ready such things as equipment and provisions and horse and armor and all the equipage of war. You can't just grab a spear, a shield, and go, you see.

**Luthien:** [frowning]

That's funny, because we never stand down completely. Are you trying to tell me that Nargothrond is so complacent about your secrecy that you're completely unprepared for combat?

**Curufin:** [indulgent patience]

Planning an expedition to Angband is not like routing a few squads of probing Orcs, milady. There are plans

to be made, complex preparations, and much work to be taken care of, lest we simply run headlong into catastrophe as your friend has done.

**Luthien:** [coming to a new level of suspicion]

I see. Forgive my lack of understanding -- I've never waged a war, you see.

[to Orodreth]

You will let me know as soon as your men are ready to ride forth? And if there's anything I can do to help things -- mend gear, bake lembas, fletch arrows or ready medicinal spells -- I'll gladly work night and day until all's done.

**Orodreth:** [coolly, but not with obvious sarcasm]

Highness, we certainly are grateful for your offer of assistance, but Nargothrond scarcely needs such further heroic efforts from yourself. But we will certainly keep you advised of what progress has been made.

[Celegorm shoots him a narrow look, displeased. Celebrimbor raises an eyebrow, but keeps his thoughts to himself. The Regent's daughter and her fiancée look distressed.]

**Celegorm:** [changing subject by force]

Dear Lady Luthien! The voices of Melian and her fair daughter are renowned throughout the lands. Surely in return for your welcome and guesting here, you could spare us one shortest of songs?

[Luthien stares at him in disbelief. Something snaps.]

**Luthien:**

Yes. --I will sing you a song that you have perhaps not yet heard.

[She rises and gathers herself as if going into battle; the cold gleam in her eyes betrays the fact that she is also very much her father's daughter, however different their styles of combat.]

**Bard:**

Your Highness, what mode shall the accompanying flow be cast in? The primal mode of Starrise, or the threnodic mode of Moonrise, or the simpler, yet more vigorous strains of Sunrise?

**Luthien:**

None. There's no accompaniment. It should be a duet:  
I'll take both parts.

[hums note softly, finds the octave. Takes a deep breath  
and forges onward.]

*O fare thee well, I must be gone  
and leave you for a while--  
Where e'er I go I will return,  
if I go ten thousand miles!*

*O ten thousand miles it is so far  
to leave me here alone,  
While I may lie, lament and cry  
and you, you'll not hear my moan!*

*O the crow that is so black my love  
will change his color white--  
I'll never be false to you my love  
till the day, day turns to night!*

*O the rivers they all will run dry  
and rocks melt in the sun--  
I'll ne'er prove false to the one I love  
till all these things be done!*

[There is silence -- the hush of profound appreciation  
that is Elven applause.]

**Orodreth:** [at last]

Superb . . . superb. Is that one of your renowned  
Daeron's songs? Menegroth is justly proud of her sons  
-- and daughters!

**Luthien:** [in a small precise voice]

No. That is one of the songs of Dorthonion. My Beren  
learned it from his mother Emeldir, who sang it with  
his father Barahir and learned it of her father who  
was also named Beren, who gave it to my Beren's  
grandmother when first she came to dwell in Dorthonion  
from Hithlum. It is a very old song. It was believed  
that his grandfather's mother sang it first. I am  
glad you like it.

[She sits down and demurely sips her wine, with no indi-  
cation in her manner of having just suffered defeat, nor  
that she was attempting any Working in her song. There  
is a different kind of silence in the banquet hall.]

**Curufin:** [to Celegorm, undertone]  
That is not happening again.

## SCENE II

**Gower:**

Confident of their confirmed vic'try now,  
the sons of Feanor count o'er their spoils,  
the full-achieved, as bold they do allow,  
and the newer prize that's taken in their toils--

[The royal apartments, now occupied by Orodreth's household, and with a much less "lived-in" look to them -- though not cluttered before, it's clearly not a place belonging to an artist-architect-strategist-explorer-linguist-loremaster-musician, now -- merely a central location for government. Curufin and Celegorm are once again making free of the place, but the feel is very different when they come in and sprawl in the chairs by the fireplace. Orodreth is trying to work at the table, despite their presence. Huan is, once again, apparently dozing on the hearth.]

**Celegorm:**

I never get over how nice these digs are. Cousin Finrod certainly didn't stint himself. You've done well by the move, hey, Orodreth?

**Orodreth:** [flat voice]

I don't recollect that you were lodged in the kennels prior to and including this summer. If you wanted improvements you'd only to make them. That is, after all, what everyone else did.

**Curufin:** [ignoring this, continuing discussion with Celegorm from outside]

I wonder if they're really betrothed, or if she's only saying that to make it sound more respectable?

**Orodreth:** [dryly]

Yes, clearly that's of the most tremendous and pressing concern to Her Highness.

**Celegorm:** [ignoring this too]

I doubt it -- he wasn't wearing any rings but the signet, and she's certainly not got one either.

**Curufin:**

Well, naturally -- where would he get any silver to

make one? Not that he'd know how in any case. And even if she supplied both of them, it would be too obvious -- no chance of keeping it secret if she started wearing a ring all of the sudden.

**Orodreth:**

I didn't get the impression she was trying to be secret about it, myself, but rather that she thought it was no one else's concern but their own. --Is that even a custom of Middle-earth originally? It could well be something our parents' generation came up with, back home. I wouldn't know about that myself, of course: I was never the one interested in "was" and "might have been" and "could be"--

**Celegorm:**

--What's the matter with you? Weren't we boon companions before, always with the merry jest and the shared glass and the riding to the hunt and the cheer of good fellowship, Orodreth?

**Orodreth:**

Well, yes, but that was before you led a revolution against my . . . House -- we were all equals, in those days.

**Curufin:** [sweetly poisonous]

And now you are ruler, my lord--

**Orodreth:** [icy]

Now I am Regent, my lord -- a mere placeholder, and no more. When are you going to tell her? Or are you planning on waiting for her to get tired of waiting first?

**Curufin:** [colder still]

I thought we had reached an understanding in which you, and your House, were not going to interfere with us, and ours. Is that not so? Or am I mistaken, Lord Regent?

**Orodreth:** [sardonic smile]

My concern is the well-being of this City, and its realm, and its people. Apart from that, and outside of that, is not my concern. How you rule the affairs of your own household, so long as you do not risk Nargothrond by it, is your own business.

[goes back to scanning and occasionally signing parch-

ments. The brothers exchange Looks.]

**Curufin:** [going back to their conversation]

Dark-elf or not, it's unbelievable that any of our Kindred, however distant, could fall so far--

**Orodreth:** [shaking his head]

The daughter of Melian, a Dark-elf? Do you actually believe your own -- talk? --My lord.

**Celegorm:** [exasperated tone of someone going over something for the nth time]

Even if he wasn't a mortal, can you imagine anyone -- and of royal blood! -- being so lost to propriety as to strike up a relationship with a chance-met stranger of no estate and think it feasible that an alliance of blood and honor should be undertaken between them? Doesn't she, at least, understand that marriage is a binding not simply of individuals but of houses and traditions, that there are all kinds of implications for everyone else around them, and that no one, not least a scion of a ruling House of the Eldar, can act on their own whims without regard for these facts?

**Orodreth:** [as if observing to himself, aloud]

Oh no, it isn't as though anyone else in that family has ever run into someone in the woods by accident and spent time with them exclusively and not told anyone about it nor consulted with others nor sought advice before making it final and fait accompli, now, is it?

[nonplussed silence from the brothers]

--One night, in fact, consider it practically a family tradition . . .

**Curufin:**

You know, I don't care for your tone at all -- my Lord Steward of Nargothrond.

**Orodreth:** [not looking up from the scroll he is reading]

And unless you're interested in taking over all the mind-numbingly tedious tasks of management which now fall to me, with far less assistance, and in which you've never shown the least bit of interest heretofore, -- that fact is signally irrelevant, my lord cousin. --Unless your brother is perchance planning on forgoing some of his own sport to take



up the slack . . . ?

[long silence]

**Curufin:** [chilly]

--It's good we understand each other, isn't it?

[offhand, to his brother:]

Pass me that lute, will you?

[testing the strings, to Orodreth:]

Whose is this? Finduilas'? She shouldn't leave it tuned up, it'll ruin the frame, you know.

**Orodreth:**

--Have you not your own chambers, my lords?

**Celegorm:**

Yes, but they're not so nice as yours.

[There is a brief staring contest, before Orodreth shakes his head in disgust and gathers up all his parchments and writing equipment in angry, exasperated gestures.]

**Orodreth:** [curt]

If anyone's looking for me, I'll be working in the privacy of my own old office.

[leaves with his portfolio and scribe's case while Curufin plays a cheerful little syncopation on the strings, discordantly out of tune]

**Celegorm:** [sadly]

I don't think our cousin likes us very much any more.

**Curufin:**

You did notice that he wasn't absolutely committed without reserve on the matter of noninterference?

**Celegorm:**

I guess we aren't going to tell him about the Letter, are we? --How's that coming along?

**Curufin:** [smiling in anticipation]

Almost there. I've still got a few phrases that need work, and there are a couple of legal technicalities I want to be sure of before I send it off. I'll have the final draft done for you to look over in a few days.

**Celegorm:**

The one bad thing is, we won't be able to see Elwe's face when he gets it. I wish there were some way to scry that scene!

**Curufin:**

True, alas. That would be -- amusing.

[sighs]

Ah well, if wishes were horses then -- beggars -- would ride, indeed --

[They exchange grins. On the tiles Huan, head on paws, gives a soft worried whine.]

### SCENE III.

**Gower:**

Having crossed the gulf, the narrow bridge (though not sword but hair)

Tinuviel will brook no longer bidding, as caged woodthrush seeks the air--

[An empty hallway in Nargothrond. It shouldn't be spooky-looking at all, only deserted and rather winding, so that you can't see very far along it, because it follows the natural contours of the cavern from which it's been carved. Luthien appears around a curve, walking very carefully, one hand on the wall as though it were pitch-dark not pleasantly lit.]

**Luthien:** [under her breath, to herself]

--I never get lost. I don't understand it -- everything feels jumbled, disorganized, I can't find any center to it --I can't find East, I can't find West, all I can tell is up from down -- and I'm not even sure about that--

[she sags against the wall]

Oh, Beren, I'm no use to you at all! I've accomplished what? nothing -- I can't seem to make anyone understand the need for action -- you'd think they'd see the need for urgency right off, though -- There's something wrong here, some fog or darkness clouding everyone's mind, it seems, that they can't think straight, can't keep their priorities straight--

[even more worried]

I wonder -- no, surely not -- but -- I wonder if -- perhaps with the King being gone the wards are breaking down and Morgoth's managing to influence people somehow? I've heard of it, I know he tries it all the time with us and Mom stops him: is this what it would look like? Everybody muddled, acting like nothing's happened and everything is normal, no matter how crazy it is under the circumstances? Going about their daily business when they should be mobilizing like there's no tomorrow?

[frowns, shaking her head]

. . . but then I thought we had all the time in the world, too, even though I knew better, and now I grudge every hour I wasted this Spring -- so perhaps it's just that they can't help it, and I've changed so much that I can't understand us now . . .

[There's a noise behind her and she jumps up straight and whirls around in a single movement, facing that way -- never forget that she's been a dancer longer than most civilizations have lasted. Sharply:]

Who's there?

[There is no answer: she girds up her shawl and strides around the arc of the passage, camera following]

Who is -- Ah!

[Huan is standing there, looking a bit apprehensive]

**Luthien:**

Ohhh! --Hello. Come here--

[she holds out her hands and claps at him, making chirping noises]

Come on, don't be scared, good boy--

[Huan comes closer, shy-dog mode -- though if he were not a Hound one might think he was embarrassed instead]

Good dog!

[he sniffs her hand, then licks it, and she scratches his ears]

I'm sorry, I don't have any treats for you. I was wondering where you'd got to. --I wish you were my dog. That would surprise them at home, wouldn't it -- you wouldn't let them shut me up in a tree if you belonged to me, I'll bet. Where have you been? Oh, but you're a working Hound, I suppose you've been out doing your job, hunting Wargs.

[Huan wags tail; she pats him hard on the neck like a horse]

Beren would like you so much, he used to have dogs -- I wonder if you met him while he was here? I'm sure you'd love him too--

[Huan leans against her and whuffs in her hair: she wipes her eyes against his coat. From the same direction as Huan Celegorm comes around the passage and sees them]

**Celegorm:**

Huan!

[they are both startled by this]

--Don't be frightened, my lady, he won't hurt you.

**Luthien:**

Oh, I'm not. --I know.

**Celegorm:** [apologetic]

You seemed a bit shaken up when you were last around him.

**Luthien:**

Well, I was. Literally.

[Celegorm gives her an awkward smile]

**Celegorm:**

Yes, I know -- I'm -- I'm sorry about that, Your Highness.

**Luthien:**

I think twelve apologies is enough, milord, don't you? No harm was done. And the time could be better spent, I'm sure.

**Celegorm:**

Ah. --Right. What are you doing wandering around all by yourself? Can I help you?

**Luthien:**

I don't know. I was trying to find the Regent's office, and someone gave me directions -- several someones in fact -- but I think I must have taken a wrong turning somewhere. Or several.

**Celegorm:**

You know, you really shouldn't be just roaming about without a guide -- it could be dangerous, my lady.

**Luthien:** [narrows eyes]

Dangerous?

**Celegorm:**

There's all kinds of stuff goin' on here, you know. Workings you probably never even heard of, high-powered security features and maintainance and construction--

**Luthien:** [dryly]

I imagine that I can avoid walking into a hot stove or tripping into a cistern on my own, Lord Celegorm.

**Celegorm:**

Where are your ladies? Not slacking off on the job? Shouldn't you have an assistant?

**Luthien:**

I sent them away. I'm not used to having so many people around all the time. I haven't seen more than one or two people at once for weeks now -- until you caught me.

**Celegorm:** [ignoring the hints]

Oh. But -- who looks after your things?

**Luthien:**

I do. Why?

**Celegorm:**

I wish you'd accept some new clothes. You -- you shouldn't be obliged to go around in those awful old rags.

**Luthien:**

I told you, I don't feel comfortable taking charity from Nargothrond without having presented myself properly as a guest seeking asylum to the King my cousin, given the unofficial and destabilizing circumstances of my arrival. There's been enough

strife in our families as it is . . .

[aside]

. . . and I'm harder to ignore this way . . .

**Celegorm:** [blandly]

He wouldn't mind, you know.

[Huan's tail stops wagging and his head droops under Luthien's hand]

**Luthien:**

I know. But I still just don't feel right about it. And besides -- this outfit has sentimental meaning for me: it's the first dress Beren saw me in. And I made it myself, it isn't something my mother made for me -- I didn't take anything they gave me -- so for a lot of reasons I'm rather attached to it.

**Celegorm:**

But -- the edges, the what-d'ye-call-ems, hems, are all coming off. Getting to be less and less attached to it, so to speak.

**Luthien:**

It's not so bad. I can just rip the loose bits off.

**Celegorm:** [embarrassed]

But, well, I mean -- they're going to get awfully grubby, aren't they?

**Luthien:** [shrugs]

I wash them in the sink and put them on chairs in front of the fire at night. That's what I did while I was on the road. Only streams, of course, not a basin. That would have been a little much to carry along.

**Celegorm:** [distressed look]

But -- surely -- you weren't just hanging about the woods in the altogether, waiting for your garments to dry?!

**Luthien:**

Oh, no, I just wore my cape until I finished wringing them. Damp clothes are just an annoyance, anyway. They dry out fast enough if you keep walking quickly.

[Celegorm looks at a loss -- the expression of someone in

the difficult situation of wanting to say that's barbaric and revolting but recognizing that it would be impolitic to say so, and also wanting to find some way to excuse it just because of who the person responsible is...]

**Luthien:**

Anyway, where is my cape? Surely the Sages can't still be trying to figure out how it works? They ought to ask me, if they can't figure it out, though I probably won't be able to help them duplicate the results, since I made it all up as I went along.

**Celegorm:**

Ah. --Yes. You'd have to check with my brother about that, I really couldn't say myself. He'll know how they're coming along -- ask him when you next see him, all right?

[aside]

Which'll be quite a while if he can help it.

**Luthien:**

Maybe you can help me find him after we talk to Orodreth, then?

**Celegorm:**

My lady, I'll be happy and delighted to spend the day with you.

**Luthien:**

The day?! Surely it won't take that long to get to Orodreth's office!

**Celegorm:**

What? Oh -- I mean, it might take a while to get in to see him. He's awfully busy, you know.

**Luthien:**

Then can we go find Lord Curufin first, and ask him about my cape?

**Celegorm:**

Oh, he isn't around right now -- he's out with the Border Guard right now.

**Luthien:**

So can we go find him?

**Celegorm:**

Well -- they've ridden a good ways out--

**Luthien:**

And?

**Celegorm:**

It's dangerous out there, your Highness . . .  
besides, what do you need it right now for? You're  
not planning on leaving us so soon, I hope!

**Luthien:**

So? It's mine. And I'm not comfortable having it out  
of my hands. It is part of me, after all.

**Celegorm:** [chuckles]

Was, you mean.

**Luthien:** [narrow look]

My hair is still mine. I didn't give it away.

**Celegorm:** [grinning]

So, if you gave me a lock, then--

[pulls a curl and lets it spring back]

--would that mean you had a, hah, split personality?

**Luthien:** [annoyed]

Please don't touch my hair. --Can we go and find the  
Regent's office, now, milord?

[As Celegorm bows and starts walking leisurely back along  
the way he and Huan came, she steps up the pace so that  
he has to hurry to stay level with her. Something falls  
from the edge of her blue wrap and hits the floor with a  
sharp clink.]

**Celegorm:**

Oh--

[halts her]

**Luthien:**

What is it?

**Celegorm:**

You lost a star. --Part of a star, at least. A ray,  
looks like--

[He bends and picks up the gem for her.]



**Luthien:** [blankly]

Oh.

[keeps walking, disregards it]

**Celegorm:**

Don't you want it? I can have someone sew it back on for you--

**Luthien:** [shrugging]

I can do that. It -- just -- isn't very important, really.

**Celegorm:**

May I have it?

**Luthien:** [blinks]

You've a shortage of quartz, my lord?

**Celegorm:** [laughs]

I was going to make it into something else for you, since your mantle's such a wreck; I thought it might make the heart of a nice pendant. Though actually I'd get my brother to do it -- he's the artist of the family.

[pause -- Luthien just looks at him]

What? Don't you wear jewelry in Doriath? Or just things made from natural stuff, like, oh, flowers and leaves and all?

[pause continues]

**Luthien:** [flatly]

Aren't there really more important things to be devoting your energy to? --Such as getting the rescue mission underway?

[pause]

**Celegorm:** [utmost sincerity]

--We Noldor are good at multitasking, your Highness.

**Luthien:**

Ah.

[Huan's head and tail go lower]

**Celegorm:** [hurt]

You don't sound as though you believe me. I'm

crushed, Lady Luthien, absolutely crushed--

**Luthien:** [troubled]

Well, I'm not entirely reassured by what I've seen -- or haven't seen. And you still haven't explained why you pretended you didn't know what I was talking about when you met me, or why you pretended to be "Lords Atarin and Turcofin of Nargothrond"--?

**Celegorm:**

We weren't pretending. Never said we didn't know what you were talking about, did we?

**Luthien:**

But -- you know what I mean -- you certainly implied it --?! And you did lie about your names and all, didn't you?

**Celegorm:** [hurt]

I wasn't lying. Nargothrond is our home now, ever since the War drove us out of the North Country, just like your friend Barahirion.

**Luthien:**

And your names?

**Celegorm:**

We use names from both sides of the family in Aman. The custom's catching on here too, I've noticed. One from your mother, one from your father -- plus the extras everyone picks up along the way. So those really are our names, you see. Just not all of 'em.

**Luthien:** [musing]

Well, I suppose it saves a couple the trouble of actually having to agree on something, doing it that way.

[Celegorm laughs -- Luthien gives him a frowning look: it wasn't meant to be a joke. They start walking again]

But why did you let me go on like that, like a complete idiot, and not tell me you knew all about it or who you were until we reached the City?

**Celegorm:**

Well, if we'd said, "Oh, hullo, we're some of Feanor's boys, just happening through in your direction with an armed party," wouldn't you have taken off again like a pheasant breaking? After all

the harsh words your father's had for us?

**Luthien:** [very dry]

Given the way things have been going between me and my family, lately, I'd be far more likely to assume gross exaggeration and given you the benefit of the doubt -- but I suppose you couldn't've known that . . .

**Celegorm:**

And how were we to know that you weren't some phantom or figment of the Enemy's making, sent to lure us into an ambush or whatnot? I mean, it isn't every day that my Hound brings me a gorgeous girl instead of a disgusting dead wolf, you know. Not until you were inside the City's defenses and didn't disappear or turn into a wraith or something fell like that.

**Luthien:**

--I've heard of those . . .

[the Carillion is heard in the halls]

Oh! There's that bell-thing again -- it's been another what, four hours? Six? Can we hurry, please?

[She darts on ahead, forcing Celegorm to catch up to her, Huan trailing him with tail dragging the tiles until they are out of sight around another curve.]

#### SCENE IV

**Gower:**

Those who venture, forsaking paths, in forests  
dark and dolesome,  
may well find it harder far, returning to ways  
wholesome--

[The royal apartments. Most everything that was Orodreth's is out now. Through one of the inner chamber doorways Curufin can be seen -- he goes as if to open a small box lying on one of the tables, but hesitates, drawing his hand back before touching it. Instead he opens a large flat case next to it and starts to reach in, but stops as Finduilas comes stalking quickly into the suite. Hastily he shuts it and turns around, coming out into the antechamber.]

**Finduilas:** [acid]

So are you just moving in and taking over openly, now?

**Curufin:** [shrugs]

Ask your father, Sparkly.

**Finduilas:**

I did. I want to hear your version.

**Curufin:** [mild]

What does it matter, since you've already made up your mind?

**Finduilas:**

--So you are.

**Curufin:** [raises hands]

I didn't say that. You did.

**Finduilas:**

But you implied it.

**Curufin:** [surprisingly unsarcastic throughout]

No, you did. --Did you want something other than to snarl at me, little cousin?

**Finduilas:**

I'm here for my music things. And the Nauglamir.

**Curufin:**

Yes, I was surprised to see he'd forgotten it . . .

**Finduilas:** [biting]

You know he won't touch it. If it weren't so valuable he'd leave it on the throne with the Crown, but he says there's no sense in tempting people.

**Curufin:**

Well, you know where it is.

[Finduilas sweeps past him and comes back out with the large case under her arm.]

**Finduilas:**

Is that her cape in that casket beside it? The one that feels like there's water or wind coming off of it?

**Curufin:**

Why do you ask, when you already know?

**Finduilas:** [caustic]

What are you keeping it for, anyway? Shouldn't it be

in the Research Department for study? Or else give it back to her?

**Curufin:**

Little cousin, are you being naive or just affected?

**Finduilas:**

Oh! I hate you. Don't talk to me!

**Curufin:**

I know we've had our differences--

**Finduilas:**

Differences? You take over our home, and you call that -- "differences"? You threatened us with civil war, and those are "differences"--?

**Curufin:** [holding up his hand, overriding her interruptions]  
--Did I ever do that? No. That was the construction your uncle and his partisans put on my words, forcing a confrontation for reasons of their own. Ask yourself honestly why, after so long a time without difficulty -- with everything at last back to normal, or as close to normal as we will likely see in Nargothrond -- he should put us in such a position, fabricating an incident whereby such a clash was made inevitable? If that is not at all suspicious, I don't know what is--

[pause]

But that's neither here nor there. I won't argue with you when you've made up your mind -- especially when you know you agree with me . . .

**Finduilas:**

Stop making it sound like I'm the one being unreasonable -- what do you mean, "agree with" you?

**Curufin:** [shrugs]

--You don't want to hear what I have to say, so what does it matter?

**Finduilas:**

Stop that! You're treating me like a child -- again.

**Curufin:**

I beg your pardon. It's difficult being the one to see what those who haven't, alas, the same tragic experience can only imagine, and build opinions based on lofty ideals and half-heard facts not fully

understood. I'm afraid I tend to get a bit impatient, which comes out in sarcasm.

**Finduilas:**

Don't try to win me over to your side. I'm not stupid.

**Curufin:**

I would never suggest it. Merely -- young, and easily led.

**Finduilas:** [haughty]

May I remind you, cousin, that I crossed the Grinding Ice, too.

**Curufin:**

Indeed. --And why did you have to undergo that ordeal? Who led your group into that disastrous adventure? --We didn't tell you to follow us; it isn't my family you should be blaming for that expedition, now, --is it?

**Finduilas:**

Oh, be quiet! You twist everything around--

**Curufin:** [interrupting]

Yes -- that's what your sweetheart tells you, and I'm sure it's far more pleasant, as well as easier, to listen to him than to me.

**Finduilas:**

--Gwin doesn't tell me how to think!

**Curufin:** [clearly disbelieving]

No? Well, you should know best . . .

[she does not answer]

**Curufin:**

I don't expect you to change your mind about me. But I would request that you ask yourself -- you don't have to answer me, either -- just ask yourself, honestly, without worrying about what you should think, about permission -- do you truly think that it's a good thing? --This business of one of us, getting romantically involved with a mortal?

**Finduilas:**

I don't see that it's anyone's business but theirs.

**Curufin:**

Oh, you haven't thought about it at all, then.

**Finduilas:** [tossing her head]

You're impossible. I don't want to hear your rationalizations.

**Curufin:**

Of course not. You might have to actually think, then. --No, don't stamp your foot at me and stomp off, these shoot-from-ambush-and-run tactics aren't worthy of a Noldor princess. If you really believe I'm wrong, you'll be able to prove why.

[Finduilas just gives him a Look, but doesn't say anything to contradict him, or leave.]

**Curufin:** [mock surprise]

What, you're going to give me a chance to explain myself? I'm staggered by your generosity, your Highness! How can I repay you?

**Finduilas:** [dryly]

--Don't press your luck, cousin.

[but she is starting to smile though she fights it]

**Curufin:**

Certainly not, I wouldn't dare -- all right, then, how is this? The ex-Lord of Dorthonion is undoubtedly a warrior of great prowess in the fight against our common adversary. I would never deny that. But is that enough? Does that actually mean anything, when you come right down to it?

[Finduilas starts to interrupt, but he holds up his hand, and she waits]

Consider the facts -- the inescapable facts of the world -- which you surely know far better than she, on a practical level, not an intellectual one, having spent so much of the time since the Return actually in day-to-day contact with Men, not simply having heard about them secondhand from the extremes of hostility and favoritism, as she. You are aware of the brevity of mortal lifespan. You have heard more than mere legends and romantic tales -- you also have heard the true and dreary stories of petty squabbles and small concerns that involved the Beorings and

their allied nations over the centuries. But all that--

[He frowns, looking troubled and reluctant to go on -- she gives him an impatient look]

All that -- might not matter, were the Lady Luthien not who she is, but a simple woodland maiden with no other role in society. Her right to ruin her own life, her foolish self-deception as to the inevitable tragedy of such a union, would be hers alone. But that is not, unfortunately, the case. --She is, after all, like you the heir to a great responsibility, the throne of one of the few Elven dominions capable of withstanding the Enemy's assaults in these sorry days--

**Finduilas:** [interrupting]

--I'm not the heir to the throne!

**Curufin:**

--If not you, then who is? Why else does your father enlist you to do his work with him? He, at least, understands the need for prudence, howsoever his romantic ideallism wars with his sense of duty.

**Finduilas:**

My father can't stand you.

**Curufin:** [raises his hands helplessly]

We do not always know our friends -- nor, I venture to say, even like them, contradictory as that may seem.

**Fiunduilas:** [sarcastic expression]

Friends.

**Curufin:**

Say, at least, that we have common cause -- that we -- all of us -- value Nargothrond and this realm's people above any abstractions of "duty" and "honour" and that as a consequence, we are bound to be misinterpreted and misjudged by those who let heart rule head. --Have you not experienced that yourself? Are not you, and your future father-in-law, made scapegrace for the unwilling recognition of that duty by your fiancée?

[she does not answer]



I see that you do.

[Finduilas goes as though they had not had this conversation to get her lute and folders of sheet music. Her hands are shaking, her knuckles showing on the Nauglamir's case and she drops the portfolios -- while kneeling down to gather them up one handed, the lute strap slips off her shoulder. Curufin scoops it all together, puts the lute back up for her and hands her the music folios. She glares at him, her expression very still now, not scornful, just hostile.]

Thank you for at least hearing me out, Highness. Just -- think about it, that's all.

[She says nothing, and walks out with head held high. After she is out of sight, Curufin smiles.]

#### SCENE V.i [no dialogue]

[The Throne Room. It is deserted and dim inside.]

[Huan enters, very slowly, almost plodding, his head and tail still dragging. He approaches the throne and stands there, not moving, before collapsing down suddenly with a huff and putting his nose down on his outstretched forelegs. He lies on the lowest tier of the dais, not asleep, anxious.]

#### SCENE V.ii

**Gower:**

Blindly spun, the webs, snares and toils of deceit,  
haply may snare not only purposed prey, but other  
feet--

[The antechamber to Orodreth's apartments -- it's more of an indoor formal garden, with benches and carved planters integral to floor and walls and some water in raised squared channels -- very Amarna in style, in fact.]

[Luthien and Celegorm are sitting across from each other on an angle of benches, while an Aide of the Regent sorts scrolls from boxes into a rack in an annex on the side which has apparently been converted into an outer office. He keeps giving them Looks, covertly. There is a defi-

nitely closed look to the double doors leading to the inner rooms -- they don't look like they're meant to be opened at all.]

**Luthien:** [earnest]

So I've been thinking it over, and I think, personally, that we shouldn't rely on our forces alone, but ought to send word to your other cousins out West and try to get some reinforcements for the assault -- probably keep them for surprise and ambush on a retreating path, that seems like it might be most effective. Of course, you might have already thought of that. Anyway, what do I know about offensive missions, and perhaps it's completely foolish?

[She waits expectantly -- Celegorm is looking at her earnestly, his head a little on one side, kind of smiling, but with a bit of a glazed expression. He doesn't answer.]

**Luthien:**

--Are you even listening? You look like someone whose next words are going to be -- "I think I know why the clouds are white sometimes and why they change colors others." Or maybe, "Do you think one could build a flet that would go all the way across the river?"

**Celegorm:**

Eh? What? No, no, I'm paying attention -- I assure you, no one could possibly be paying more attention to you than I am right now. --You were saying--?

**Luthien:** [exasperated sigh]

I was saying that after we deal with rescuing them I am going to insist on a full-fledged plan of attack. I understand why for reasons of propriety and the rules governing quests and all, my cousin might have refused your offer of assistance, but obviously a small covert-ops mission is too dangerous, and we've got to use all the resources at our disposal.

[Orodreth's assistant gives them a sudden sharp glance from where he is working/eavesdropping, with an angry glare at Celegorm afterwards]

My father might take exception, but so long as the exact words of his demand are fulfilled, I don't think it matters one jot who actually pulls the damned thing off Morgoth's crown and so long as we

show up with enough of an escort, I'm not worried. Even if he tries to argue the legality of it, let me assure you, no one has ever won an argument with me when I'm right. I just don't think most things are worth arguing over, usually -- I guess I take after my Mom more that way, along with my hair. --Did that make sense?

**Celegorm:** [staring into her eyes again]  
Mm-hmm . . .

**Luthien:**  
And we should take Huan along, I imagine he must be just as good in a real fight as in a hunt--

**Celegorm:**  
Oh, he's a terror in battle, death-on-four-legs to Orcs just like wargs, always where the fighting's thickest -- Hey, there, you didn't mean "we" when you said "we" there, did you? As in you, yourself, did you?

**Luthien:**  
No, I meant "we" as in us, our side, that's all -- I can't think that I'd be anything but in the way, I'm no Galadriel, though I'm better-than-fair at patching people up afterwards.

[aside]

Though I'm beginning to think I'd better, so that there's one person whose mind isn't turned into mush by the Enemy!

**Celegorm:**  
No, I can't see anyone calling you "tomboy", even with that haircut, hah!

**Luthien:** [frowning]  
Where is Huan, anyway? I thought he was over there by the, I guess it's a pond, but obviously he isn't . . .

**Celegorm:**  
Oh, he always wanders about, shows up when you need him. He'll turn up for supper, too, you can be sure.

[pause]

You really do like him, don't you?

**Luthien:**

I think he's wonderful. I wouldn't mind having a Hound like him at all.

**Celegorm:**

I warn you, he eats like a horse.

**Luthien:** [half-smiling]

Yes, but you wouldn't need a horse with him around, would you?

[Celegorm laughs]

**Celegorm:**

I must say I'm still surprised -- but not really I suppose -- more in awe of, your courage. I keep expecting you to be terrified of him.

**Luthien:** [wry]

What, because he chased me up and down trees and all around the woods like I was some kind of giant black squirrel before carrying me back to you like a puppy?

**Celegorm:** [blinks]

Er, yes?

**Luthien:**

Why? I could tell -- once he stopped chasing me -- that he's Good and wouldn't ever hurt anyone not on Morgoth's side.

**Celegorm:** [admiring]

You're awfully perceptive.

**Luthien:** [bitterly]

Heh.

**Celegorm:**

Hey, did I tell you that Orome himself gave Huan to me?

**Luthien:**

Yes, you did. Now--

**Celegorm:** [oblivious]

He taught me the language of nature, how to understand animal communication and tracking and weather and so forth, you know. That's why I'm such a great hunter, y'see.

**Luthien:** [actually interested for the first time in something]

he's said]

Oh, really? That's just like Beren.

**Celegorm:** [taken aback]

What? --You're joking.

**Luthien:**

No, it's true. --I don't suppose he would have said anything if there wasn't a need for it -- it isn't like he brags about his accomplishments, "Oh, I'm this great hero and the Terror of the North and all," it's more like -- "Oh, so you're that Beren?!" and you get back "Er, which one? You mean me or my grandad?" It was hours of that before I got him to admit that yes, he was the one in the legends Mablung had been hearing, and I can't remember when I heard so many qualifications and disclaimers in a single conversation. He used to be the best hunter in his homeland, too, before he gave it up.

**Celegorm:** [chuckling]

Well, you know how it is, we all say we are, the best at huntin' or fishin' or any kind of a sportin' thing!

**Luthien:**

Oh, no, I've seen him track things in the dark and charm animals out from cover to eat from his hand.

**Celegorm:** [nonplussed]

Well.

[pause]

--I don't expect he learned it from a god, all the same.

**Luthien:**

No, he's almost certainly self-taught.

[she stops talking and looks rather fixedly ahead, then snuffles]

**Celegorm:**

Oh, don't cry -- please don't, I can't stand to see a lady crying--

[takes her hand]

Everything's going to be all right.

[clasps it in his other hand]

--Trust me.

[While she is trying not to break down, Finduilas enters with her various burdens. She is almost at the impromptu reception office by the time she notices them there, to her great and not-too-pleasant surprise. Setting down her music stuff on a bench she takes the Nauglamir into the annex and engages in a hasty whispered conversation with the Aide, before going over to where Luthien and Celegorm are sitting.]

**Finduilas:**

Luthien. I -- I understand you've been waiting, to talk to my father.

**Luthien:** [nods]

Y--yes. He's been in meetings all day. Or night. I'm not sure which it is now.

**Finduilas:**

I'm so sorry. He's -- not going to be free for at least another bell. Probably two.

**Luthien:**

Oh. Ohhh.

[She shakes her head, taking a deep breath, and makes an exasperated noise]

**Celegorm:** [sympathetic but patronizing]

I did try to tell you, milady . . .

**Luthien:** [distracted, shaking her head]

Why--? I don't -- I--

[she leans against a bit of decorative wall, panting]

**Finduilas:** [anxiously]

You look faint -- Have you eaten at all today?

**Luthien:**

I -- I'm not sure. I don't know what time it is down here--

**Celegorm:** [masterful]

--Why don't we see about having something sent up to your rooms, and I'm sure our little cousin here will be happy to look after everything, and as soon as our

good Regent gets free we'll have someone pop along to let you know, all right? No sense in you wasting your time and starving here for no good reason, is there?

[Reluctant, but not really up to arguing with both of them, Luthien allows Finduilas to take her arm and lead her outside. Celegorm wanders around, looking at the art on the walls with a critical eye and surveying the results of the unpacking.]

**Celegorm:**

What a mess this place is in! Though I dare say you've made a lot of progress.

[The Regent's Aide gives him a foul Look; Celegorm keeps poking around the solar]

So she likes Huan, eh?

[grins]

**Aide:** [stiffly]

Do you need to see His Highness about anything, my lord?

**Celegorm:** [waves hand languidly]

No, not at all. Carry on with your filing and what-not; I've got to see a dog about a girl myself . . .

[He strolls out, whistling; the Aide slams a scroll case into its pigeonhole with a loud bang.]

## SCENE VI

**Gower:**

--Met but with silence, the anxious traveler pursues answers -- prevented from her own pursuit, seeks clues to the dark mystery wrapped in Nargothrond's fair hues--

[Interior of Luthien's apartments. The outer room is a small solar, from which a hallway leads to the private suite, and has a paneled door opening onto the hallway that is meant to stay open. Around the room are arched panels made to look like windows, which are murals made of cut stones set in like stained glass and discreetly lit. The decoration is more naturalistic here than elsewhere in Nargothrond, less abstract, and it is of course exquisitely lovely. Luthien is standing there

with Finduilas, looking frustrated as well as tired.]

**Finduilas:**

Do you feel better now?

**Luthien:**

Not really. --I think your dad's avoiding me.

**Finduilas:**

Oh, no, I'm sure you're mistaken -- he -- he's just terribly busy. I hardly see him -- and I'm his assistant!

**Luthien:**

Then why can't I talk to him?

**Finduilas:** [patiently]

Because he's too busy.

**Luthien:** [leadingly]

With--?

**Finduilas:**

Well -- Nargothrond, of course.

**Luthien:**

And--?

[pause]

The rescue mission--?

**Finduilas:**

Oh -- well -- of course -- that too.

**Luthien:** [unconvinced]

Hm.

[walks over to the nearest of the artificial "windows" and runs her hand across the carvings]

**Finduilas:**

Aren't those wonderful? That's the view looking west from our house in Tirion.

**Luthien:** [making conversation]

The trees are very beautiful. They look almost like real beeches.

**Finduilas:**

Oh, those aren't beeches, they're mallorns. They only



grow in Aman -- they're sacred to Yavanna, you see.

**Luthien:**

Well, they look like they'd be perfect for climbing.  
I can see why she loves them.

[Finduilas gives her a funny look]

Did you bring these with you? They seem -- awfully --  
large.

**Finduilas:**

No, my aunt made them. These are her rooms when she comes to visit, and she did all the decoration for them herself.

**Luthien:**

Your aunt is an astounding person. I think she's the only Elf to ever master our double-harness loom in a single day.

**Finduilas:** [not trying to sound patronizing, but doing a darn good job all the same]

Well, she is Noldor, after all.

**Luthien:** [frowning]

Have you seen the loom my mother invented? The one that weaves the same pattern on both sides, only with different colors? It takes most people two days just to set it up. And isn't your family half-Teler, anyway? What does that have to do with anything?

**Finduilas:** [nervous giggle]

Well, -- obviously -- you understand --

**Luthien:** [clearly doesn't]

How long does it take you to set one up? I know she takes the loom she made with her, so maybe you've worked on it. Mine was only a quarter-sized version and it took longer to make enough width because of that, and it still took me forever to warp it all in -- I think I must have spent half the night getting it strung.

[curious]

How come you never came to visit us, when your family did?

**Finduilas:** [awkwardly]  
Oh. Well. So far to go, you know.

**Luthien:**  
It isn't that far, I've traveled it. And I didn't even have a horse.

**Finduilas:**  
It's just . . . there were so many things to do here, and . . . you know . . . nothing really to do, by comparison.

**Luthien:** [dry voice]  
Yes, that's why your aunt stayed with us all that time, because there was nothing to do there.

**Finduilas:** [condescending]  
Oh, don't be so sensitive. I'm sure it's a wonderful place. You must be very homesick for it, I'm sure.

**Luthien:** [shrugs]  
It isn't my home any more. It was. But my home is with Beren now.

**Finduilas:** [shocked]  
But you must have some regrets, leaving your family and your home and everything you've ever known--

**Luthien:**  
There is one regret I have, yes.

[brief pause]

--That I waited so long to follow after him.

[recovering/covering, tapping on one of the mallorn images]

How tall are they?

**Finduilas:** [a little thrown by the change and topic]  
Um -- tall -- I don't really know exactly . . .

**Luthien:**  
I wonder if they're taller than Hirilorn -- you could certainly build a house there, all right. Looks a good deal easier to get down from, though. Huh.

[she shakes her head]

**Finduilas:**

I can't imagine what you must have been thinking.

**Luthien:**

Mostly -- I hope I tied that knot properly.

**Finduilas:**

Oh! No, I meant -- for all of it.

**Luthien:** [gloomy]

They can't do this to me -- How can they do this to me? -- Star and water, that's a long way down! Not in any particular order.

[pause]

--Was that what you were asking about?

**Finduilas:**

Well . . .

**Luthien:**

I mean, really there wasn't a lot of thought, just planning, if you see what I'm getting at. By the time I actually succeeded in escaping I'd already done all the agonizing over it -- there was just a lag between, unfortunately.

**Finduilas:**

I more meant, have you really considered it? Do you think it was the wisest thing to do? Given the war situation, and your family, and your responsibilities to your kingdom and all?

**Luthien:**

I'm sorry, are you trying to say I shouldn't have run away, I should have stayed stuck in a tree forever?

**Finduilas:**

Not exactly, but, well, I mean they wouldn't have left you up there forever, really.

**Luthien:**

Considering the fact that their preconditions for release were completely unacceptable, and considering how stubborn we all are, forever is exactly what we're talking about here.

**Finduilas:**

But can't you see their point of view at all? I mean

you can't really blame them for wanting you to be safe, especially with what you said they said about those Orc-raids having been targeted at you all along--

**Luthien:** [interrupting]

I told you I think they were just saying that. Or rather my dad was, because Mom didn't say anything, which I think means it wasn't true, though not necessarily, because I've never heard her tell a lie in my life -- I don't think she can. Though come to think of it I haven't ever heard Dad tell one either. --But I still don't believe it, given the situation.

**Finduilas:** [shrugs]

Anyway, you can't deny that there are Wolf-riders and awful Things out there -- it only stands to reason that they shouldn't want you to get hurt by them. Imagine how they'd feel if you were captured by the Enemy!

**Luthien:**

What, the same way I feel knowing Beren's a prisoner?

**Finduilas:**

. . .

[pause]

**Luthien:** [relenting]

Look, I gave them every possible chance. If they didn't want this to happen then first, they shouldn't have lost it when they heard about Beren -- did you know that Daeron was actually hoping the search parties would shoot him, that's why he told my father? I was almost angry enough to throw him out of the tree when he admitted that -- and secondly they shouldn't have pulled that craziness about a Silmaril on us, and then they shouldn't have expected me to just sit there and say, "Oh, well," when my mom says he's been caught! What did she think I was going to do with that information?

[she begins pacing back and forth agitatedly, rant gaining power, while Finduilas is being a Good Listener]

**Luthien:**

So at that point, they could have given me a division and said "All right, you win, we're not going to approve, but at least you're going to go about it

properly," but no -- we get hours of lectures as if I was some stupid little kid caught stringing triplines in the house or something dumb like that, and not listening to me at all, and then "Well, we're going to have to lock you in your room, but you'd get sick, and you'd probably get out anyway, so we have just the solution!" --And then thinking that somehow having Daeron lecture me instead was going to work, and not only that but make me "get over" Beren? "Oh, we'll just substitute him instead and she won't notice"--? "We like him better, so of course she will too"--? I mean, really now!

[she pauses for breath, huffing indignantly]

**Finduilas:**

But you can understand that, can't you? I mean, from a no-- a -- an outsider's point of view, Daeron has a lot going for him. He's even famous at the High King's court. Everyone loves his music, and even if the cirth aren't as pretty as our writing, they are fast and easy. And they've known him long enough to know if he's reliable and trustworthy and Good, after all.

[pause]

**Luthien:** [very dry]

If what my parents meant when they said all my life, that the most important things were truth and goodness and right judgment and so on, and I should only ever marry someone she saw really embodied all of them, -- was that I should really marry the old family friend and world-famous artist, composer, and inventor of a unique compressed data-storage system who just happened to have never thought of me as anything but a little kid until I finally found someone who embodied all those qualities -- then they jolly well should have said something before!

**Finduilas:** [discomfort]

Should they have to? I mean . . . really--?

**Luthien:**

Ah, come again?

**Finduilas:**

Well, obviously they thought he was suitable for you, if they encouraged you to spend so much time together

for so long.

**Luthien:**

Actually it was because he made a very good baby-sitter when I insisted on climbing into my mother's yarn and trying to crawl through the looms. My father loves music but he isn't much of a musician himself, and they could always distract me with the flute. And then when I was older they all decided he could teach me too, and that would work out well. How was I to know that one day out of the blue he'd stop thinking of me as "cute little kid sister" and think "--A tender goddess!" instead?

[snorts]

--Idiot!

**Finduilas:** [shocked]

But -- he's a genius, Luthien!

**Luthien:**

I don't care how many disciplines Daeron counts as a Sage in -- he's still an idiot. The fact that he would think that getting my true love killed would make me like him better, or at all, just goes to show that lore isn't everything.

**Finduilas:**

But don't you feel at all sorry for him?

**Luthien:**

Of course. I started talking to him again, didn't I?

**Finduilas:**

Well, yes -- but that was because you need his help again, you said. Don't you feel you were just using him, rather?

**Luthien:**

No, it was long before that. I listened to his apologies for days before I made up my mind to escape and figured out how and enlisted him. But regardless -- are you trying to say, that because I needed his assistance, I should not have talked to him, but only if I hadn't needed anything of him should I have forgiven him? That seems rather cruel, not to mention counterproductive.

[pause]

**Finduilas:**

That doesn't make any sense.

**Luthien:**

That's what I thought.

[pause -- she leans back against a "window" and folds her arms]

I'm sort of getting the impression that you disapprove of what I've done.

**Finduilas:**

Well -- I did think it was incredibly romantic at first -- but then . . . I actually thought about it, and -- Luthien, how?

**Luthien:**

Ah, "how" what? That covers an awful lot of territory.

**Finduilas:**

Luthien, he's a child! He's not even half a yen old, and -- It's -- it's just wrong. In so many different ways.

[long silence]

**Luthien:**

Do you know how much older my mother is than my father?

[pause]

Neither does she.

**Finduilas:**

How can you not know how old you are?

**Luthien:**

Well -- there wasn't any way to reckon time for most of her life, so it's really a meaningless question. But the measurable part -- in the sense of there being landmarks, so to speak, is from before there were the Stars, before any of our people awoke, and before there were any differences between Elf and Elf in Middle-earth.

**Finduilas:**

All right -- but that's different.

**Luthien:**

How?

[Finduilas just gives her an exasperated look, as though she is being tiresome]

I'm serious -- this is what I keep asking, and not getting answers to.

[starts pacing again as she talks]

You're being just like them. "Oh, Luthien's gone crazy--" "He must have put some kind of Enemy sorcery on you--" "What's wrong with you? Don't you care about your mother and me?" "--You always used to be so responsible!"

[Finduilas, getting tired of turning around every time Luthien does another turn up the room, takes a chair from the octagonal table in the center of the room and leans forward, being Very Serious.]

**Finduilas:**

But don't you think they have a point?

**Luthien:** [short laugh]

I'm here, aren't I?

[pause]

**Finduilas:**

I mean, really, to just get engaged to some random stranger you met out walking in the woods? Did you actually think they wouldn't get upset? Even leaving aside the problematic fact that he's a human and not one of the Kindred.

[Luthien laughs out loud]

What? Why are you laughing at me?

**Luthien:**

That's the family legend, cousin! Don't tell me you haven't heard -- that's what my parents are famous for! It's this great romantic story they tell all the time, about how they met, how Dad heard Mom singing and left everything behind to follow her and when he touched her Time stood still for them and neither she nor he ever looked back to Aman after that. I've heard about it all my life from them, about how your



priorities change when you meet the the right person and not worrying about what the world thinks and all. They're being raging hypocrites about the whole thing.

**Finduilas:** [nonplussed]  
Well, yes, true, --

[recovering]

--but that was then. Things were different when they were young. The world is a more complicated place, now, and they have responsibilities, and so do you. You can't expect them to not be at least concerned, and to have grave reservations about it.

**Luthien:**  
Why? If they really trusted me to be wise and sensible like they said they did, then they would respect my judgment in this too.

**Finduilas:**  
Now you're being naive, on purpose.

**Luthien:**  
Naive?!

**Finduilas:**  
You don't really think that anyone looking at it objectively would consider it reasonable or appropriate for you to just enter into a relationship of such magnitude without consulting your elders or taking any advice first?

**Luthien:** [raising eyebrows]  
That's what they did.

**Finduilas:**  
Yes, but you're the Princess now, you're not just some private individual, not answerable to anyone. You have to take practical matters into consideration, including how it will affect the people around you -- because that's the most important decision in one's life, choosing whom one will marry!

**Luthien:** [dry]  
Then, wouldn't you agree, it's too important to be decided by committee?

**Finduilas:** [shaking her head in exasperation]  
Gwin and I thought about it for several decades,

before we decided to get engaged, just getting to know each other and making sure it would be a good thing for both of us, and we made sure our families approved first. It's much less trouble--

**Luthien:**

--Look, you may be indecisive as all get-out, but I've never been used to living my life as a reflection of other people's opinions. I've always gone and done exactly as I pleased, and my parents never had a problem with it. Until now.

[Finduilas blinks at the sheer bluntness of her dismissal, but decides to overlook it]

**Finduilas:**

But what did you expect would happen when you finally told them about him? Or were you even going to?

**Luthien:**

I expected that they'd be reasonable and realize that that they'd been mistaken about humans all along, I expected that they'd be sensible enough to see his worth too and that they'd treat him with the respect he deserves. I meant to introduce people to Beren a few at a time, after he wasn't so nervous any more, and have them get to know him in a setting where he was comfortable.

[bitter smile]

--It never occurred to me that he wouldn't know who I was, which I suppose was rather arrogant of me, but I honestly assumed he realized I was the King's daughter and I had no idea otherwise until I had to find him and tell him about the problem, and he said, "You have parents?" in this shocked voice -- he thought I really was completely independent and on my own.

[sighs]

He wasn't angry though, he just sort of laughed and said, "It figures," in this gloomy way, that he hadn't had anyone trying to kill him for over a year and he shouldn't have expected it to last.

**Finduilas:**

But then once you realized they were not going to be

pleased, or sympathetic, didn't you have any second thoughts about throwing away your position and your happiness for a Man?

**Luthien:**

Finduilas, he isn't just "a Man" -- he's Beren. Of all the people I know or have ever met -- he's the most beautiful.

[Finduilas gives an astonished laugh]

What?

**Finduilas:**

Luthien! How can you say that?! Beautiful--?

[Luthien just Looks at her]

He -- he's so scruffy, Luthien! Even when he tries, he still looks such a mess! I mean, really, his hair -- couldn't you have at least cut it for him?

**Luthien:** [astounded]

Is that what you think is important?

**Finduilas:**

It isn't just that -- he's got scars. And his hair is already going pale the way theirs does--

**Luthien:**

So? My father's hair is completely that color.

**Finduilas:** [patronizing]

You don't know much about Men, do you?

[Luthien gives her a Look again]

It means they're getting old.

**Luthien:**

Beren's not old, not even by human standards -- you were just complaining about that.

**Finduilas:**

It isn't just that, it means that their bodies are starting to wear out.

**Luthien:** [an edge creeping in]

I heard that Beren made it here from Menegroth half as quickly as I did. And I can go without sleep a lot longer than he can. That doesn't sound worn out to me.

**Finduilas:**

But he was in awfully bad shape when he got here.

**Luthien:**

--So was I. It's not much fun travelling cross-country by yourself, without anyone to help you and no proper gear. --But you know, you can do it, and -- you still get there. He's not "worn out" or old, Finduilas, he just went through a horribly stressful time and was very sick for a while afterwards. If you'd ever seen him fight you wouldn't even ask.

**Finduilas:**

When did you see him fight?

**Luthien:** [shrugs]

Well, not fight, exactly, but I've watched him practicing lots of times.

**Finduilas:** [bewildered]

Why?

**Luthien:** [holding out her hands]

Because it's beautiful. It's like a dance of another kind. Don't you ever watch your Gwin at training? Beren's spectacular -- I think he's as good as Mablung that way. Oh, and they have these dances with swords, real dances, that they do -- used to do -- for Arien, I finally got him to stop being self-conscious and show me, and they're amazing. And rather scary. Just the coordination and the sharp edges and everything--

**Finduilas:**

--Luthien, are you listening to yourself? Do you know how twisted that sounds? How -- how unladylike? My aunt is a little wierd that way, but with four older brothers encouraging her, everybody kind of expects it. But you -- I mean, you're not a warrior, and -- swords, for the gods?!

**Luthien:**

What? Just because I don't do it myself doesn't mean I can't appreciate it.

**Finduilas:**

But -- don't you think there's something wrong with using violence to honor the Powers? They don't approve of war and weapons.

**Luthien:** [raises eyebrows]

News to me -- my mother doesn't have a problem with them as such. And didn't they do an awful lot of it themselves before we showed up? The Wild Hunt and the assault on Angband and all?

**Finduilas:**

How can you have such a neutral attitude towards fighting?

**Luthien:** [shrugs in turn]

Maybe because we'd been doing it for centuries before you all arrived. We don't have your superstitious attitude about it. Or about weapons.

**Finduilas:**

Superstitious?!

**Luthien:** [shrugs]

Well, you're obviously very uncomfortable with them, in a "we'd rather pretend it's not something we really do, just on the side, out of necessity," kind of way and I've noticed that before among you Noldor, a lot of you. You just, well, make a bigger deal about it than we do.

**Finduilas:** [superior tone]

Surely you don't mean to say that you think War is a good thing?

[Luthien stops pacing and puts her hands on her hips, giving her a very ironic Look]

**Luthien:** [very dry]

Considering that there was a very real chance of us getting wiped out by Orcs before you ever showed up, and we stopped it only with appalling casualty levels, and considering that we still have to deal with incursions -- and therefore casualties -- on a regular basis along the borders, and considering that my mother, and her assistants, and that includes me, are the ones to deal with the consequences -- the chances of that are pretty fair slim, wouldn't you say? --How many poisoned arrows have you had to dig out of people lately, cousin?

[Finduilas gives an incredulous laugh, not sure she's serious]

What, you've never had to cut metal fragments out of someone before? Without letting them bleed to death while you're at it? It's not my idea of fun, either.

**Finduilas:**

We have trained specialists to do that kind of work properly. Anyhow, you're changing the subject.

**Luthien:**

No, I'm not. You already did.

**Finduilas:**

Honestly, Luthien, that's rather childish, don't you think? The point is, that he won't live very long, no matter what. Not by our standards. And then what?

[earnestly]

Have you thought about this? About the fact he can't possibly live more than sixty years more, at most? And that for most of those -- if he lives so long -- he'll be decrepit? And afterwards he won't be waiting for you in Aman, either.

**Luthien:** [wide-eyed]

--Thank-you for putting it so clearly, I never would have guessed that, despite the fact that we rent a quarter of our western frontier to mortals and we've only been hearing about them from Finrod since they first showed up in Beleriand.

[raising her voice slightly]

Of course I understand that Beren's people are more fragile and short-lived than we are! What I don't understand is why you are all so blasé about the fact that your King is in prison, isn't it stranger that you don't seem to care about getting your people out than that I want to get my true-love out -- and you're treating me like I'm the irrational one here?

[pause]

**Finduilas:**

You don't have to be so rude. But I understand that you're still exhausted and extremely stressed, so I'm making allowances.

[Luthien only stares at her, then runs her hands through her hair, making it stand up even more, and turns away to

look at the "window" that shows mountains in the distance, putting her palm flat against the carving.]

**Luthien:** [leaden voice]

--Yes. I'm that. Thank you, cousin.

**Finduilas:**

And what if you have children? What will they be?

**Luthien:** [turning back]

Er, --people?

**Finduilas:** [exasperated]

Please try to be serious. I meant, would they be Elves or mortals? Can you even have children together?

**Luthien:**

I don't know. As far as we know we're the first mixed-race couple in history. Except for my parents, of course.

[raises her hands]

--Does it matter?

**Finduilas:** [still more exasperated]

Luthien, I'm trying to have a serious conversation!

**Luthien:**

Why do you think I'm not? If we can, we can. If we can't, we can't. Worrying about it won't change things. Mortals aren't guaranteed children either -- nobody's actually guaranteed anything in life, are they, really? I mean, look at what happened to the gods!

**Finduilas:**

But what will you do after he dies? I know it isn't the same, but still -- it would be awfully strange to marry a second time. I can't imagine what anyone else would think of it, how they would feel, knowing . . . It almost seems indecent, frankly.

[Luthien turns around abruptly]

**Luthien:** [disbelieving]

Why would I want to marry anyone else?

**Finduilas:**

But . . . but you'll be . . . you'll be all alone.

**Luthien:**

I never wanted to marry anyone before I met Beren.  
Why should I think that would ever change?

**Finduilas:**

But . . . eventually you'll meet your soulmate, of course, and what then?

**Luthien:** [gesturing widely]

Finduilas -- he is my soulmate. I will never love another. --Who could compare? It would be unjust to anyone else to set him against Beren.

**Finduilas:** [nervous laugh]

You're so melodramatic, Luthien. You can't mean it.

**Luthien:**

--Are you so blind that you really can't see past externals? --That fine clothes and combed hair are the most important things to you? You'd never make it in the woods.

**Finduilas:**

It isn't just that, it's everything. The -- the gulf, of background, culture, everything that goes with age -- I don't see how it could work. I mean, yes, he's certainly a hero, and I do appreciate his valiant efforts against Morgoth, but when all is said and done there isn't anything he can actually do except kill things, is there?

**Luthien:** [shaking her head, wry]

Is that what he said? He's too shy. He sings beautifully. And he has the true dancer's grace.

**Finduilas:**

Now you're sounding superficial. --Aren't you?

**Luthien:** [looking up at the ceiling]

No, -- I was just trying to correct your misunderstanding that he has no talent, that he's inferior because he doesn't care about art. That's just not true.

**Finduilas:**

But does he make anything? He said not, to Celebrimbor.

**Luthien:**

Finduilas, when would he have had time to make



anything, or learn to make anything? He was hunted like a wild animal for most of the last ten years, while he was hunting down Orcs and trying to defend the last holdouts who hadn't fled the North-country already. --Do you know he had to bury his father and family and all his friends? I cried when he told me how his dad didn't want to send him to find out if it was true that Sauron himself had come out from the Fortress to get them, because he was afraid he'd never see him again, and -- it was true, but not that way. Can you imagine living that kind of life?

**Finduilas:** [nodding]

Oh, so it's that you felt sorry for him. Well, I can understand that, but -- to risk your life, your happiness, because of sentimentality is rather excessive. Spouses should be equals -- that's what "match" means, after all. Pity isn't enough to make a lasting relationship.

**Luthien:**

No, I'd been seeing him for some time before he told me about the really miserable bits -- I only knew some of the legends of Beren, and frankly I was more than a bit intimidated and figured he'd think I was rather silly and useless compared to him. --And now you're going to say, "Hero-worship isn't enough to build a relationship on." Right?

[Finduilas gives her a Look, but doesn't say anything.]

I've got Ages of practice at this -- I only did it half the summer, I can probably do both sides of the argument if you want to leave.

**Finduilas:**

Please don't be so hostile, cousin. I'm only trying to help you, because I don't think you've really thought things through. Being sarcastic doesn't help matters any.

**Luthien:**

I'm tired of this being treated like a fool. I thought you were on our side, and now you're doing it too! Didn't you talk to him while he was here? You must have seen how kind and intelligent and noble he is--

**Finduilas:**

--Luthien. Look me in the eyes and tell me: Do you

truly believe he is -- could possibly be -- your equal?

**Luthien:**

Yes.

**Finduilas:** [knowing look]

You're just saying that.

**Luthien:** [angry]

No, I'm not! --Well, yes, I am just saying it, but I'm "just saying it" because I just believe it. I wouldn't "just say" it if it was otherwise. What's wrong with you?

**Finduilas:**

I'm just afraid that you've put yourself into the position where you have to keep saying and defending what you've started out because you're too proud and too committed to keeping your own opinions to actually be objective. I don't think you're being fully honest when you say that you think you're really suited well. I think you're rushing into things. I grant completely that Lord Beren is a wonderful human being -- but he's still a human, not an Elf.

**Luthien:** [icy]

You might have gathered I'm not very pleased with my parents right now, but one thing in my father's benefit -- he's at least consistent. He doesn't despise mortals but use them anyway.

**Finduilas:**

You're putting words into my mouth, Luthien! That isn't what I said.

**Luthien:**

No? Because it sure sounds like it. That you, at least, think they're good enough to fight your war and get killed in it, but not as good as real people.

**Finduilas:**

You're reading things into what I said that aren't there. I just don't see how this can work. What can you possibly have to talk about, for example? How can you converse on the same level? --What do you see in him as a potential consort?

[silence]

**Luthien:**

--The world.

[brief pause]

Finduilas, the way he sees it -- the way he simply revels in learning about it, about everything, about music and trees and the names of the Stars and the stories and making things and everything -- it's as though I'd never seen it properly, all the things I thought I knew and understood and have taken for granted for centuries, and now he's learning them all for the first time, and I'm seeing it new as well--!

**Finduilas:** [very knowing tone]

That doesn't sound anything like a match of equals. It sounds like you enjoy having him around because he's so much more ignorant than you that he can't help but look up to you, and that makes you in turn feel like a Sage, because it's incredibly flattering to have such unquestioning respect and admiration.

[kindly]

--Which is understandable.

**Luthien:**

You're quite wrong about that. Beren isn't ignorant, he knows lots of things -- his mind's like a dark mirror--

**Finduilas:** [frowns]

--That doesn't sound attractive at all

**Luthien:** [exasperated]

Haven't you ever seen a pool at midnight when it's so black you can't even see the trees in it, only the stars are reflected with absolute clarity and it seems like it goes on forever, it's so deep--? That's what his thoughts are like, he just observes, with this amazing detail, and the faintest light is caught and noticed -- and then it's as if it changes, like the same pool freezing over, only instead of ice it's silver, and everything's reflected brightly and light is cast on all kinds of things nobody else ever saw before, and that's what talking to him is like. --Why are you so worried about me when--

**Finduilas:**

--Well, it is worrying. It's unprecedented, it's very strange, and you just keep trailing off when you're asked about him as if you're embarrassed about it all or talking as though unable to say anything sensible, so what else are we supposed to think?

**Luthien:**

No, that isn't it at all--! Do you -- you don't just talk about your private moments in public with everyone, do you? To people you don't know very well at all? Especially when everyone's been unsympathetic to it earlier and all your friends have deserted you.

**Finduilas:**

Well, he left you too, so you could say he deserted you as well.

**Luthien:**

No, deserting me would have been if he'd said, "--I'm really sorry, it's been great knowing you, but I'm going west to see if I can find any of my own people left and settle down with a nice mortal girl who doesn't have insane relatives giving me the choice between death, life imprisonment or a task that all the Kings of Arda and all their armies couldn't manage between them." Which, if he'd said it, I really couldn't have blamed him very well, either. Finduilas, Beren and I . . . he . . . he's -- I'm doing it again.

[shakes her head, laughing bitterly at herself]

All right, little cousin, you want details, you want to know it all, you want to understand. I will tell you -- but you have to promise not to be negative about it, not make sarcastic remarks while I'm telling the story.

[she sits down on the bench across from Finduilas' chair, under one of the "windows"]

So -- what do you want to know first?

**Finduilas:**

Well, you've never even really explained how you two met -- I thought no one could get into Doriath without your mother's permission. Were you outside the borders somehow?

**Luthien:**

No, he just walked right through them without even noticing them. And Mom never knew he was there, either.

[darkly]

--Which should have told them something right away.

**Finduilas:**

How could it, if they didn't know he was there?

[Luthien closes her eyes, rubbing her temples]

**Luthien:**

I meant, when they found out.

**Finduilas:**

Oh -- I see. So you really just ran into each other, completely randomly, without any introductions or anything, without knowing who the other one was, and decided that you were soulmates just like that. with just one look? Honestly, Luthien, that doesn't make any sense! How many people do you really know who haven't grown up together, or at least known each other for Great Years, before falling in love?

[Luthien starts to open her mouth]

And you're going to say your parents again, aren't you?

[pause]

**Luthien:** [deadpan, loftily]

--It was a very long look.

[Finduilas glares at her]

It was a little more complicated than that. It seemed like coincidence at the time, but I'm not sure really . . . was it coincidence for my parents? I just felt one night that I had to go to the upper reaches of Esgalduin -- I guess it was like Beren deciding he had to come down into Doriath, that that was where he was supposed to be, except that I didn't have any wargs hunting me, of course. I said to Daeron, "Let's go to Neldoreth, we haven't worked in Neldoreth for such a long time." And he said, "Because there's no one in Neldoreth," and I said, "Except trees," and he

said, "Oh, well, trees! That's rather boring, don't you think? They're not very appreciative an audience." And I started teasing him about being too vain to be a proper Sage, that the truly enlightened don't care about applause and that he was just concerned to impress the Singers, and if he was that lazy I'd just go by myself, I didn't really need an accompanist-- So he made this show of "Oh, the things I put up with for little Luthien, catering to her every whim," and we went . . .

[she stops, looking into the middle distance]

**Finduilas:** [reminding]  
Luthien . . .

**Luthien:** [wry laugh]  
--Right.

[giving herself a little shake]

Anyway, we went to Neldoreth, and Beren heard us and came to investigate -- and that's another sad thing about it all, Daeron hating him and Beren having no more idea of it than I, because he simply admired Daeron's performance skills and compositional abilities without limit. Daeron couldn't have asked for a more appreciative audience, Beren had never heard anything like it -- not that anyone has, of course, Daeron really is that good -- but not even remotely similar, their music's completely different from ours--

**Finduilas:** [patronizing]  
Well. In quality perhaps.

**Luthien:** [checking]  
What do you mean?

**Finduilas:**  
Well, Men don't really have any culture of their own -- they've borrowed it all from us, you know, starting with the language.

[pause]

**Luthien:** [chilly]  
That isn't what Finrod says. He's always talked about the creativity of mortals and their ability to make new things, to adapt.

**Finduilas:** [uncomfortable]  
Oh. Well. He would.

**Luthien:**  
Explain, please?

**Finduilas:**  
Well -- everyone knows my uncle is an incurable extrovert, going around talking to everybody, Dwarves and the Nandor and the coastal folk and the locals and--

[breaks off]

**Luthien:** [very dry]  
--Us?

**Finduilas:**  
. . .

**Luthien:**  
Sorry -- do go on--?

**Finduilas:**  
. . . but mortals have always been a particular hobby of his. Very likely because they are so ignorant and helpless on their own, not like the Naugrim or the native tribes.

[Luthien gives her a shrewd look.]

**Luthien:**  
--Really. You don't say.

[aside]

I wonder where you got that from. Not from listening to him!

[aloud]

Well, I don't agree with you on the matter of culture. But anyway, you wanted to know about the romantic parts, and you were supposed to not keep interrupting me and making caustic remarks.

[looks severely at Finduilas]

Do you want me to go on, or not?

**Finduilas:** [contrite]

I'm sorry. Please keep going.

**Luthien:** [tossing her head]

Right, then. --Beren came right out, he had no idea how surprised we would be, of course, and Daeron shouted to me that there was a stranger, and took off, but I just stood there, I couldn't believe it, until I saw this shadow out in the open at the edge of the wood, and I still couldn't believe it, because I couldn't recognize anything about it -- I had no sense of any sort whatsoever looking at him, and Daeron was calling me like I was an idiot, and then I got scared and disappeared into the woods as well -- and he vanished too.

**Finduilas:**

Vanished?

**Luthien:**

Completely - there was no sign of him after, and we decided we must have been startled by shadows, or an animal, and laughed at ourselves afterwards, because we knew that no enemy could have come through the Maze.

[getting indignant again]

And there, you see, is the thing that's the crux of this whole stupidity. If Daeron really thought that Beren was a danger to us, to Doriath or to me -- then why did he wait for almost half the year before even breathing a word of Beren's presence in the woods? He knew perfectly well that Beren was not evil, not dangerous, and not a threat, and any attempt to justify his behavior by claiming "good intentions" is just so much nonsense. If he really had them, he should have gone straight to my parents and our captains and got them out there that night, and not gone sneaking around for nearly two seasons dithering about it.

**Finduilas:** [trying to put the best construction on it]

Well . . . perhaps he just wanted to be sure . . .

**Luthien:**

You don't even believe that, and you're saying it. So -- was it at first sight? No, for me: I saw a shadow. One that frightened me -- but not like



anything fell, not like the fear of hearing a wolfpack on the borders or waiting for casualties to come in from a battle or like the sense you get when the wind is blowing steadily out of Angband for days. It was like . . .

[long pause, Finduilas clears her throat politely]

--It was like the start you get when you're out on a clear day and not a cloud in sight and the sun is suddenly cut off, and you realize it's not a cloud -- that shadow on the ground is wings, and you look up quick in hopes you don't miss them before they're past.

**Finduilas:** [short laugh, quickly stifled]

Are you trying to say that he was a divine messenger?!

**Luthien:**

No, I was saying it was like that, that sense that of something meaningful and important -- real fear, not because of anything so trivial as physical danger, but because you realize that here is something different: a change, a choice, -- a challenge, and you can either accept it or refuse it but you can't not do either. --Haven't you ever had anything like that in your life?

[Finduilas looks away nervously]

Oh, of course -- the Return. That was a decision you had to make, right, not let other people make it for you. --Or did you?

**Finduilas:** [severely]

You don't know what you're talking about, Luthien, so please stop.

[forcibly returning the conversation to topic]

But obviously that wasn't what made you decide you were soul-mates, or Daeron betray you -- it doesn't sound like under normal circumstances you'd ever have ended up together, from what you've just told me.

**Luthien:**

Yes, --obviously -- there's more.

[sighs]

I couldn't help having this nagging conviction that there really had been someone there, and that because nothing evil could get through, I shouldn't have been afraid, and that I needed to find out who or what was there. So I went back, many times, and I even dragged Daeron into Neldoreth again once or twice, in case it was the flute-playing that had been the important part, but although I sometimes thought perhaps someone was there, some sort of unknown presence, I never saw him again.

[smiling in spite of herself]

--Until I decided to call the Spring there, and he came as if from nowhere and joined me in my dancing and I was so astonished I didn't even react at first -- here I'd been looking, and then when I wasn't, he appeared -- and I didn't know what to say or do, and he put his arms around me as if he knew me since forever, and I was so startled I just ducked away and ran. And he followed me, and called my name, and it was as if the whole silent forest called out to me then . . .

[long silence]

**Finduilas:** [very strained]

Was he afraid of you before that? Was that why he stayed hidden?

**Luthien:**

No, he wanted to speak to me, but he couldn't manage to do so until that night.

**Finduilas:**

Why?

**Luthien:**

He didn't know why, he just couldn't. Every time he wanted to approach and talk to me it was as though he were bound and gagged, and he could only watch until I was gone, and then follow me.

**Finduilas:** [appalled]

So not only was he a complete stranger, but you're saying he was crazy as well? And you wonder why your parents were upset!

**Luthien:**

No! They didn't know about that. And he wasn't crazy. Not much. It was just something he had no control over.

**Finduilas:**

That's part of what "being crazy" entails, Luthien.

**Luthien:** [gesturing fiercely]

But you've seen him -- you know he's as sane as I am. It was just circumstances. --Not like Feanor, who did it to himself, from what everyone's said. Beren's not dangerous.

**Finduilas:**

He's a warrior, Luthien, of course he's dangerous. Add mental disturbance to that and -- what were you thinking?!

[silence]

**Luthien:** [very softly]

He called my name. He called my name, and I knew from the first instant I heard his voice that he would never ill-wish me, never harm me, and I stopped and waited for him, because I had to, and he came running up to me and -- I saw him -- Not a shadow, but him, his eyes, he -- he was like the brightest of fire, brighter than anyone else I've ever met, and -- he kissed me, and everything . . . just . . . stopped . . . we could have stood there for hours, just looking at each other --

[ruefully]

--we did, because all the sudden the nightingales weren't singing, the blackbirds were, and the sky was getting light and I panicked because I was so far from home and it was the first day of Spring and everything we had to do for it that I hadn't even started and I was -- rather -- overwhelmed, and I went dashing off before he could call me again or before I even remembered to ask his name . . .

[silence]

Finduilas, he called my name--

**Finduilas:** [coolly]

How did he know it? Did he spy on you and Daeron

talking?

**Luthien:**

No, you don't understand, it was my own name, not Luthien, not my old one, the first one anyone had ever given me -- except "little" and that's hardly a proper aftername, is it?

[softly]

He called me "Nightingale" . . .

[Finduilas says nothing, with visible effort]

**Luthien:** [rapt]

I went back home and all that day it was as if I was two people, not one, the calm ordinary one on the outside that everyone saw, just plain old Luthien, doing her rituals and tasks and practicing and walking around on the earth, and -- someone new, someone who was soaring through the air, singing, as though the nightingale had become a lark, someone who didn't just belong as part of Doriath, but who owned the whole world, who could do anything, because a mirror had been held up to me and for the first time I saw that I had wings -- and no one noticed.

[shakes her head, frowning slightly]

And then at sunset I walked back to Neldoreth, and I was so frightened, I didn't know if it was real anymore, or if -- I just wandered around, hardly knowing what direction to take -- and I found him, as if I couldn't have not found him, and he was so different, not the tireless hunter who'd been following me but someone exhausted and sad, just lying there on the ground by the stream --

[in a rush]

--and that's not what drew me, that he was weak, all right? --

[sighing]

and when I went up to him and touched his face and he looked at me and the amazement in his eyes -- I knew he'd been as afraid as I was that it wasn't real, that I wouldn't come back, and I knew I hadn't set my heart too high or in vain . . .

**Finduilas:**

Why would you think otherwise?

**Luthien:**

I didn't know what kind of spirit he was -- he'd disappeared before, he had come through the security system without getting caught in it, you never know who you might meet in a forest--

**Finduilas:** [trying not to smile]

You -- you thought he was a Power in disguise, like your mother?!

**Luthien:** [intensely]

I didn't say that, I only said I didn't know what he might be, I couldn't tell -- I just knew then that he was real, that he was someone I could never have imagined, a strange dominion given to me alone to explore, and know, and understand, and that I could never have dreamed such richness existed, and that this was what I had been choosing towards since that first glimpse of a strange shadow on a Summer night -- and so yes, it was a very long look after all.

[longish silence, Luthien looks hopefully and anxiously at Finduilas, who is impassive.]

**Finduilas:**

Well. That's a very unique story --if most unconventional.

**Luthien:** [snapping back into combat mode again just like that]

You want unconventional, you should listen to my parents when it's really late, or early, rather, and the wine's been flowing and they're getting all sentimental and reminiscing about the oldest days. Then you'll hear the story about the first time my father saw my mother and she was taking a nap in some leaves and he touched her hair and got knocked out for probably years before he woke up and went looking for her again. I tell you, we've got nothing on them.

**Finduilas:** [dismissive]

Oh, well, people are like that.

[superior tone]

But can't one sort of see why Daeron might feel

justified in spying on you? If you'd been encouraging Beren--

**Luthien:**

--Don't make me responsible for Daeron's neuroses! If he'd actually used that famous mind of his none of this would have happened. --Probably. I wasn't encouraging Beren to spy on me, I was trying to encourage him to reveal himself -- if he was really there. I didn't know. All I knew was that there seemed to be an invisible presence watching over me in Neldoreth -- a benevolent one -- but nothing I'd ever heard or sensed before, but still -- familiar, somehow.

**Finduilas:**

That doesn't sound romantic at all -- it just sounds creepy.

**Luthien:** [frustrated]

It wasn't creepy -- it was a little spooky that he was able to sneak up on me twice -- only the first time was sort of by accident, and it was really funny, actually, because there I was standing so perfectly hidden that he almost walked right into me, I must have jumped ten feet -- but that's because he just disappears when he's in the forest, he's not just quiet, no one can even sense him, not even Beleg -- except I can, now -- his mind just changes and becomes perfectly still, like a fox's.

**Finduilas:**

That still sounds creepy.

**Luthien:**

Well, it isn't -- you've met him, he isn't creepy, -- he's Beren. It -- I -- Oh, honestly! Do you think Huan's creepy, having him around, having him watching you?

**Finduilas:**

You're just making it sound worse and worse.

**Luthien:** [raising her hands for a moment, letting them fall into her lap]

You're just choosing not to understand.

**Finduilas:** [thoughtful]

Wait -- you said you hadn't worked in Neldoreth for a

while; that means you weren't just dancing, you were wielding an awful lot of power, both yours and the land's, correct?

**Luthien:** [wary]  
Yes . . .

**Finduilas:** [meaningfully]  
So he got caught in a Working. I see.

**Luthien:** [wary]  
What's that supposed to mean?

**Finduilas:** [condescending]  
Mortals can't cope with power unshielded and without precautions. Something that has only the appropriate effect on one of us has much more drastic and unpredictable impacts on them -- though of course you couldn't be expected to know that. If he just wandered into the middle of it like that, with no idea even of what was happening to him, it would be almost like training the horses, like a yearling being calmed for saddle or a foal imprinting -- he wouldn't be able to help it. And with the forest's power invoked too, -- no wonder he never wanted to leave that area. He was simply bound to it, and you.

**Luthien:**  
No. That's not true.

**Finduilas:** [sympathetically]  
Look, I do understand why you wouldn't want to believe that, because well, it isn't very flattering to think that someone is only attracted to you because of something that might as well be no more than animal instinct, as well as the fact that you must be feeling responsible already for the difficulties it's caused, but one does have to face facts--

**Luthien:** [interrupting, shaking her head]  
--No, you don't understand -- perhaps it was like that a little, at first, but -- no -- Beren's not under any working of mine, you might as well say he put a working on me, with his voice! He really does love me--

**Finduilas:**  
But how could you tell? It doesn't sound like the

action of a rational individual uncontrolled by anything to be willing to just obey a mad, impossible, and suicidal order without even stopping to think about it, does it? It sounds like -- and please don't get angry, cousin -- someone who's been brainwashed by the Enemy, really. Are you really sure that he's in love with you, or has he only been overwhelmed by your aura instead?

**Luthien:**

Beren doesn't do anything without a reason -- granted it might be a really horrific reason, like taking on Sauron single-handed because there wasn't anyone else left to do it -- but he isn't this weak-minded person who just does things because someone else wants him to. It might seem like a completely insane decision to you, but if it's the only way to do it, like taking on an entire company of Orcs to recover his father's hand, or crossing the Ered Gorgoroth, then he figures out the most simple way and just starts and keeps on till he's done it. If my father had actually listened to me talking about him he wouldn't have expected that asking for the wretched jewel would ever deter Beren from claiming my hand. How can I d--

**Finduilas:** [breaking in]

--Now you're making him sound rather frighteningly disturbed again.

[Luthien runs her hands wildly through her hair again, with the suggestion of one only barely restrained from screaming]

**Luthien:**

Either I'm not explaining very well or you're not listening very well. Beren is unlike anyone I've ever met, in the best way possible, and when I met him I finally understood exactly why your uncle would want to put so much time and effort into working with mortals when he doesn't have enough time to do the things he really wants to do anyway, and more than enough work already.

**Finduilas:** [sharply]

I don't know what you mean. My uncle always does just what he wants, going off wandering about talking to people instead of finishing the projects he's already working on.



[Luthien does not miss her discomfort at every mention of Finrod in the conversation]

**Luthien:** [rather condescending]

--You don't know what he does, do you?

**Finduilas:** [defensive]

What do you mean?

**Luthien:** [amazed]

You really don't. I always wondered when he and your aunt would joke about how odd it was that they'd let a dilettante dreamer like him be in charge, whether they were really joking or whether it wasn't a bit serious. And now I know I was right.

**Finduilas:** [annoyed out of gentility]

Would you please explain yourself or stop being cryptic, Luthien?

**Luthien:**

Do you have any idea how many minor wars and territorial disputes he's stopped or averted, just by "wandering about talking to people?" Do you have any idea how much chaos you all threw Beleriand into by just turning up out of the dark and carving up the countryside? Cutting down trees and sticking up towers on sacred sites and insulting people you didn't even know existed? Not to mention the fact that a lot of the Kindred blamed you for the Sun anyway. If he wasn't so good at "wandering about talking to people" do you think things would have been so easy for you?

**Finduilas:**

Why would anyone blame us for the Sun? Do you mean those tribes of nomads in the hills? Isn't everyone happy to have the light? --Except for fell things, of course. They should be grateful that we came to save them from the Enemy!

**Luthien:** [sighing]

Oh, honestly, I'm too tired to try to explain a thousand years of politics and cultural upheaval to -- from scratch.

[aside]

--to someone who clearly hasn't been paying attention to the last half-millennium of them!

[aloud]

Short version -- Shade is nice. Finding your large familiar boulders chopped up and turned into a watchtower isn't. People riding through on big noisy animals with lots of other big noisy animals looking to kill other animals noisily is very disturbing to people who don't kill anything, ever. Sometimes it's hard to see what's so much more preferable about you lot, and you've no idea the amount of damage that a determined bunch of saboteurs can do in a very short time. Part of the Singers' frustration with Men, I'm sure, was spillover from having been pushed out by Noldor for so long. "Oh no, not more of them, from the other side of the world!" and so on.

**Finduilas:**

Surely you're exaggerating. --But you've changed the subject again.

**Luthien:**

I'm not and I haven't. Pay attention when people talk, sometime, you'd be surprised. They have a word for you, you know. "Swarn" -- it means someone who's so stubborn that it's just impossible to work with them. Finrod think's it's funny -- but true.

**Finduilas:** [sighing]

We were talking about -- about you and Beren, not about politics.

**Luthien:**

I thought earlier you were saying it was the same thing. I agree, I just don't see it as a bad thing. It wouldn't hurt Doriath to have his perspective and lore to add to our own, how could it?

**Finduilas:**

But are you being fair to him? Have you thought about it from his point of view?

**Luthien:** [dangerous]

--Explanation, if you don't mind?

**Finduilas:** [voice of reason]

How could he ever hope to have a normal life with you, even if your parents hadn't reacted so badly? Wouldn't it have been better -- from his standpoint -- to go to his own kind and find one of them for a

mate? At least that way he could have had a home and a family and a place where he would have belonged, after all. Don't you think you're being rather selfish, even if he wouldn't ever say so?

**Luthien:**

No, actually not. I'm not so arrogant as to say that no one else could have healed him, or that he might not have been able to recover on his own, but after what happened to him in Dorthonion all those years, and then the Mountains of Terror on top of that, he was not well at all. Even a season in Neldoreth had only begun to diminish his stress levels, and you know how peaceful that area is--

[frowns]

--no, actually you might not, since you've never visited, but it is -- and he'd been isolated so long he could hardly talk. As you've so kindly pointed out, I haven't your family's experience of mortals, but I got the strong impression from Beren's stories that it isn't considered normal among Men to live year-round in the woods and on the heath in complete solitude, and that he wouldn't have fit back into their society at all. Though in Doriath, if he hadn't been human, no one would have blinked at it.

**Finduilas:** [genteel shiver]

I still don't understand how you could have dared to let him touch you that night.

**Luthien:** [forced patience]

Because I could tell he was Good the way I could tell Huan was Good even if I didn't know exactly what he was.

**Finduilas:**

But you couldn't know that--

**Luthien:**

Well, yes, I did--

**Finduilas:**

But you were taking such a risk--!

**Luthien:** [giving up, flippant]

No I wasn't, it's not as though anyone can catch me out in the open.

**Finduilas:**

Our cousins did.

**Luthien:**

That wasn't them, that was Huan.

**Finduilas:** [shrugging]

Well, anyway that's irrelevant. The crucial issue is that you're not the same as he is, and vice versa, and you never will be. It can't end happily.

[silence]

I'm right, aren't I?

**Luthien:** [matter-of-factly]

Nope. At least about us being different. That's the irrelevant part. I don't expect that things will be easy for us, or that we won't have unhappiness. And about endings -- I've seen far too many people die of grief -- though not lately, thanks to Mom -- either by fading or going out and getting killed with stupid risks, to think that anyone gets a happy ending. Not our Kindred, or his. --Haven't you?

[Finduilas says nothing]

And what you said before? That's not any different from my parents, either. My mother's not just immortal, she's an Immortal. Since as far as I can tell from her nobody knows what's going to happen when the world ends, and since you're so very sure that we're all just going to stop, and that's it, then they're in exactly the same position we are, by your standards.

[pause]

**Finduilas:**

But -- they'll have thousands upon thousands of years together, just like everyone else.

**Luthien:**

So? That's just longer. It isn't different.

**Finduilas:**

Did you raise that point with her?

**Luthien:**

Of course.

**Finduilas:**

What did she say?

**Luthien:** [bitter smile]

What she always says, when you say something she doesn't like. Which is to say, nothing.

[pause]

**Finduilas:** [rallying & going on again]

But really, it comes right back to one thing -- the fact that he's mortal. He isn't like us, and he never can be. Their fate is different, and it doesn't make sense to become so involved with someone who can't belong to Arda the way we do, and whom you shan't ever see again after such a short time. You're only setting yourself up for misery, can't you see?.

[silence]

**Luthien:** [slowly]

So . . . from what you're saying, the logical conclusion would be . . . that the Trees weren't really valuable either, because they died. They shouldn't have been loved, either, then, isn't that so?

**Finduilas:** [shocked]

Luthien! How can you say such things?

**Luthien:**

What? It's true -- it does follow.

**Finduilas:** [standing up in agitation]

But that -- that's -- that's blasphemy! You can't talk about the Trees that way!

**Luthien:**

Why not? You're saying that Men aren't worth caring about because they don't live as long as we do. Well, everyone here has outlived the Trees, and if you're going to say it about one then you've got to say it about the other. You shouldn't have loved them so much in Aman, since they were mortal, too.

**Finduilas:** [appalled, gesticulating]

You -- you just equated him with the Two Trees! Luthien, you -- I'm not going to listen to any more of this, you're just too outrageous, -- though I suppose you can't help it because you never saw them. But -- it -- it's absurd, ludicrous, indecent -- you

can't compare any mere person to the Trees, it's an insult to the Earthqueen to even think of it, let alone a human!

[Finduilas is overcome with sputtering agitation, shaking her head and looking away at the ceiling. Luthien just waits until she settles down.]

**Luthien:**

Finduilas. You've met him. Look at me -- look me in the eyes, and tell me -- that he isn't as much of a person as you or I.

[silence]

**Finduilas:** [stubbornly]

It's still wrong. It just is.

[pause]

**Luthien:**

Well, you don't have to approve. I'm not looking for that -- only help saving him. Which ought to be your top prior--

**Finduilas:** [over her]

--You really don't care what anyone else thinks, do you? That's so arrogant!

**Luthien:** [bemused]

Arrogant? Arrogant is people deciding that they know better than me what's good for me. Arrogant is people telling me what they think I want to hear and going and doing something else altogether. Arrogant is -- telling me I'm going to be grateful for it somewhere down the road.

**Finduilas:** [frowning a little]

I really think you should have given Daeron more of a chance.

**Luthien:** [shaking her head]

I feel like I'm walking around in circles. Now that we're back here again, can we stop? I'm terribly tired and this isn't helping any.

**Finduilas:** [instantly solicitous]

Oh, of course! I'm so sorry. Can I get you anything before you go to bed? Something to drink?

**Luthien:** [sighs]

No, thank you, cousin. Just -- make sure you get me up as soon as your father's free.

**Finduilas:**

O--of course.

[Finduilas leaves; Luthien stands still afterwards for several minutes before going over to shut the door. She pulls a pair of chairs out from the inlaid table in the middle of the solar to the fire, but then sits down in one of them, staring into the flames, instead of preparing for sleep. After a moment she sighs and leans back, looking up at the star-gilded ceiling.]

**Luthien:** [whispering]

I can't even convince Finduilas now . . . --We're doomed . . .

## SCENE VI

**Gower:**

Half-mad or horn-mad, the lunatic believes him  
sober-sane,  
and in his ranting plots perceiveth not the shape  
of his own bane--

[The royal apartments -- Celegorm is rocking back in his chair, laughing, while Curufin walks up and down before the hearth, reading from a scroll in his hand]

**Celegorm:**

Oh, that's just too perfect! Oh, I wish I could see his face then -- let's have that last bit again--

**Curufin:**

Right, then:

[reads]

"Since you haven't managed to hold onto your own daughter, it seems you're not fit to have care of her, and (just as with the rest of Middle-earth) the task of caretaking having fallen to us, we will undertake to defend her from the perils of the dubious lands we found her wandering unescorted in -- and do (no doubt) a far better job of it. After all, we could hardly do worse, seeing as you've

been unable to maintain the security of your vaunted borders, against even a solitary Mortal. With all due regards -- this by me, Curufin Atarin Feanorion of the House of Finwe, for Celegorm Turcofin Feanorion of the House of Finwe, of the Dominion of Nargothrond. PS: No need to send a present, we're provided for just fine here, and we'd not care to deprive you of any of the little you've managed to" -- heh -- "hold on to. But we do expect a good dinner when we come to visit next -- Father-in-Law."

**Celegorm:** [wipes eyes, gesturing]

He's going to go completely critical -- absolute boilover and meltdown -- where do you come up with these things?

**Curufin:**

My favorite's the bit where it goes: "You really should be grateful to us, considering that we've taken care of the problem that you carelessly allowed to occur, and still more carelessly allowed to continue. Doubtless a little applied Noldorin ingenuity would have found a way around such an imprudent promise, but don't worry, your trespasser's out of the picture -- permanently -- and you've gained not one, but seven, sons-in-law (any one of whom far outranks the least of your subjects) so you've come out it well ahead all the same."

**Celegorm:**

Or, or, what about: "If you'd wanted a Silmaril, you should have talked to us first--

**Curufin:**

Oh yes--

[reading]

--having seen your daughter's beauty and heard her voice, we would have rated her worthy of three, not one, and you could have joined our family and acquired a legitimate stake in them. But no harm done, despite your clumsy efforts to enlist our half-wit cousin (half-Teler, and no doubt a connection there) in your intrigue -- obviously it's time for some fresh blood, fresh thought, fresh power in your House, wouldn't you agree?"



**Celegorm:** [a little worried]

You know . . . Maedhros is not going to be happy when he hears about this. About any of it, actually.

**Curufin:**

Well, to be perfectly honest, I don't really care what Maedhros will think about it. It won't be as though he can actually do anything about it.

**Celegorm:** [more worried]

You're not -- suggesting -- I mean, he is the head of our family--?

[he gives Curufin an anxious look, hoping he's misunderstood]

**Curufin:**

I love our big brother dearly, but let's be completely frank here -- ever since he came back he's been, let us say, a few arrows short of a full quiver. I mean, giving up the Succession? Can one even do that? So while I respect and acknowledge him as yes, the head of our House, I don't feel obliged to consider his opinion and even his orders -- especially potential ones -- as automatically binding on me. --Or you.

**Celegorm:** [relieved]

Oh. --I agree.

**Curufin:**

Once it's a fait accompli, he'll be obliged to accept it, and that it's for the best -- the advantages to having Beleriand consolidated into a single powerful force under one coherent rule will be unarguable. It's the only way we'll ever get them back, after all.

**Celegorm:**

What about Fingon? A lot of people -- even ours -- do accept him as the High King, you know.

**Curufin:**

Well, considering as His Highness is high up in his mountains and can't really come out of them, he's made himself largely irrelevant for all practical purposes. A nominal High King doesn't bother me one way or the other, especially given the numbers. If he wants to try conclusions with us, let him -- I'll just point out to him that a two-front war with a

Dark Lord on his back porch is a really, really bad idea.

**Celegorm:**

That's why I leave the plotting and planning to you. I get hung up on one detail or other and you have the gift for going around and making it all fit together properly.

**Curufin:**

Yes, we do make a good team, don't we? --So, any thoughts on who we should send with it? It'll have to be someone we can trust, people who won't talk out of turn, you might say -- but at the same time someone we won't miss too much if Elwe reacts as I suspect he might and tosses them in the lock-up.

**Celegorm:** [frowning]

That is a problem. Who can we spare for a couple-score years until we've finished consolidating here?

**Curufin:**

Too bad we can't send Huan -- I can't imagine even Old Shadows would dare to try to toss him into a cell! --Where is he, anyway? I haven't seen him about for a while now.

**Celegorm:** [smugly]

Ah, that's my plot. I've left him with Luthien, who's taken quite a fancy to him, thus winning me points in absentia as it were.

**Curufin:**

Really? I'd think he'd be the last one she'd want to see. She was terrified when we found her.

**Celegorm:**

Oh, you know, girls and nature and all -- sentimental, don't y'know? -- and he's so cute when he wants to be, just like when he was a puppy.

**Curufin:**

Doesn't he get bored?

**Celegorm:**

No -- he can never get enough attention, you know how it is with dogs.

**Curufin:** [grinning]

Ah. She has snacks for him.

**Celegorm:** [grins back]

That too. Oh, and it makes a handy excuse for coming by to chat with her when I collect him.

**Curufin:**

Well, I'm glad that's going well. Now we have to figure out how we're going to get this out without Orodreth noticing -- or any tattletales noticing for him.

**Celegorm:**

Oh, pfft -- him!

**Curufin:** [resting his arm on the back of Celegorm's chair]

It's just the kind of thing he would kick up a row about. And we don't want that. The critical thing is to minimize strife -- let our enemies fight multi-front wars, not us.

[Celegorm nods slowly in agreement.]

Now, I'm guessing it will take about a fortnight at a reasonable travel speed, allowing for at least one autumn storm in there, just to be safe. We can arrange with our chaps on the Borders to take care of provisions for the messengers, and avoid drawing attention from Household by taking supplies . . .

[the camera pulls away from their plotting, fadeout]

## SCENE VIII

**Gower:**

Like to the ghost that sitteth down at table,  
welcomeless,  
amid the feasting guilty, roameth Tinuviel in her  
distress.

[The Great Solar. Luthien wanders through, appearing vague and distracted, looking around in rather a lost way. People stop talking briefly and look at her nervously, but do not approach her or speak to her. One woman in the robes of a Sage starts to get up and then sits down with her few companions in their alcove again. At the Carillon's court Celebrimbor is there doing something to the Chronometer; he watches Luthien's approach worriedly, but continues with his adjustments.]

**Luthien:** [aloud to herself]

Oh.

[stopping in front of the fountain]

That's what I was looking for.

[She fills her hands and bathes her eyes -- it's clear she's been crying a lot. Afterwards she takes the cup and fills herself a drink, and then sits down on the edge of the fountain and starts pouring cupfuls of water back into the basin with a fascinated expression. In the distance the Sage gets up again, pushing aside the hand of one of her companions who tries to hold her back, and moves determinedly towards the Princess of Doriath, coming up behind her]

**Sage:** [sharply]

Your Highness--

[But before Luthien has a chance to respond she breaks and flees back into the angles of the cavern, disappearing behind a column.]

**Luthien:** [puzzled frown]

Yes--?

[She looks around, but does not know who addressed her; after a moment she shrugs and goes back to playing absently with the water. Noticing something, she starts looking more closely at the ornate carvings and eventually gets up and kneels on the floor to see the base of the fountain better. When she doesn't get up Celebrimbor of all the people staring or trying not to do so obviously leaves off his work and goes over.]

**Celebrimbor:** [hesitant but concerned]

My lady?

**Luthien:** [offhand]

I've found another one.

**Celebrimbor:**

Another what, my lady?

[he kneels down next to her]

**Luthien:** [looking up at Celebrimbor]

Another serpent. See? He's right there, pretending to be a stem, but look, there's his eye, and there's his

smile, behind that leaf. They're all smiling -- happy little serpents. I've found seven of them so far now.  
--Finrod made this, didn't he?

[Celebrimbor nods]

They're like Beren's ring. --It's such an odd device. Oh look, there's another one, eating a flower, or carrying it. What are they? They look like grass snakes a little, but the scales are different, they don't have those lines down them.

**Celebrimbor:**

I'm afraid I don't know what they're called here, my lady, I -- I think they only live in Valinor. "Green-eyed golden house-snakes" I suppose would be the closest translation.

**Luthien:**

Do they really eat flowers?

[Celebrimbor nods]

They're not -- that big, are they? Or are those supposed to be very small flowers? No -- there's one with a flag-iris, pulling it out of the water. Are they real?

**Celebrimbor:**

Indeed yes, my lady.

**Luthien:**

Oh, my.

[pause]

They still look sweet. Not like adders at all. --But surely they don't make things? How would they do it? I can see why, I suppose, it would be like making a fancy subtlety for them, but still I don't see how they could do it with just their mouths.

[Celebrimbor looks at her rather anxiously]

--Flowers. Wreaths. Making things with their food.  
--But they're serpents.

[as he still looks blank, with a touch of impatience:]

--On the emblem.

**Celebrimbor:**

Oh. For some reason they struck my great-uncle's fancy. I think there was a story about it, something funny--

[Luthien looks at him with mild interest, and he continues:]

Oh, yes, now I remember. --Finarfin had made a garland for Earwen, when they were courting, and brought it to where she was working, but then he got distracted when he saw the project and set it down somewhere, and started, er, helping. Except then they got into a bit of a disagreement where the piece should go that she was carving, and he wanted to do something to bring out the grain of the wood and she wanted to leave it to weather, and they got rather cross about it, and he said something like "Don't let's fight -- I brought you flowers."

**Luthien:** [puzzled]

--But what does that have to do with finishing wood?

[Celebrimbor gives her an odd look and laughs politely]

**Celebrimbor:** [continuing]

--but then he couldn't find them, and she said he must have forgotten them, and it got a bit sharp again, -- and then they noticed that the pair of house-snakes had found them, somehow gotten the wreath off the bench, and were dragging it back to their hole. Except they weren't getting very far, because one of them wanted to stop and eat them right there, and the other was trying to keep going, and the string was slowing the first one down -- and Earwen started laughing and said, "Look! That's us!" So they decided to carve it for over the door, to remind them of . . .

[pauses, then goes on with a hint of bitterness]

. . . well, you know, need for cooperation and compromise and how silly they'd been and how easy it was to get caught up in one's own perspective without thought of anyone else having a valid point of view and so forth. And it just sort of stuck as a family joke, only after a few Great Years nobody even thought about it any more.

[without changing his tone, quietly]

--My lady, if you're troubled it would be better to speak to the healers and send for music rather than resorting to excess of wine for your spirits.

**Luthien:** [affronted]  
I'm not tipsy.

**Celebrimbor:** [regretful]  
Forgive my impertinence, but it's . . . apparent that you've had more in so short a time than your stamina will bear.

**Luthien:**  
I'm not. I haven't touched wine at all today.

**Celebrimbor:**  
Then what's wrong, my lady?

**Luthien:** [astounded]  
Is that a serious question?

[pause]

**Celebrimbor:**  
I -- I meant anything most particular, right now.  
That -- I could help with.

[Luthien sighs]

**Luthien:**  
I don't think -- I've slept more than half a watch or so a night -- since Beren was captured. Sometimes not even that. And I haven't been let go outside since I came here, everyone says it's too dangerous.

**Celebrimbor:**  
Well, there have been more wargs around this season than any time since the Fortress fell, so it isn't an exaggeration.

**Luthien:** [shrugs]  
I didn't see anything. And my people believe it's unhealthy to spend too long indoors, and I have to say it certainly seems to be true.

[splashes her hand in the water]

Maybe I'll just camp out here. I could probably sleep

here all right. The fountain sounds so nice, I could almost forget I wasn't outside.

**Celebrimbor:**

You're not serious--!

[realizes she is serious]

My lady, that's . . . not going to be possible. --You can't just, er, "camp out" in the Hall of Hours, as though it were a bivouac in the field!

**Luthien:**

Why not? Finrod wouldn't mind if he were here. He lived on our main staircase practically all of one visit, copying the friezes -- we just put up extra lights and some ropes so no one would trip on him or step on the scrolls if he wasn't there, and Lord Edrahil kept bringing him meals and taking the plates away and poking him to make sure he ate and checking that he hadn't accidentally rinsed brushes in his drinking goblet, and we all got so used to it that for months after they'd all gone we still were only using the other side of the steps . . . I wouldn't even be in the way, over by the wall here.

**Celebrimbor:**

That's -- true . . . but . . . His Majesty isn't here and . . . that just isn't done, Your Highness.

**Luthien:** [uneven smile]

If I do it then it will be, won't it?

**Celebrimbor:** [dismayed]

It's . . . beneath your dignity, to sleep on the floor, my lady.

**Luthien:**

No, it isn't.

[pause]

The other option would be to bring the fountain to my room. Which would be less convenient and not very considerate of everyone else. Though I'm sure my cousin would give me it if I asked as well. --If he were here.

**Celebrimbor:**

Does it have to be this fountain, or would another



do? I could probably make or find a smaller one, if you would like . . .

**Luthien:** [shrugging]

It's the pitch of it. Some fountains just sound hollow, others annoyingly busy. This one is properly musical. --That's how I knew it was Finrod's work before I saw the snakes on it, because of the tone. He retuned all the fountains at Menegroth, which was nice of him, even though it rather annoyed my parents that he started the project without asking. I didn't realize how much of a difference it could make -- did you even realize that, that water could be tuned like a drum?

**Celebrimbor:** [regretful]

Yes, I know. We -- discussed it, a few times.

**Luthien:** [frowning, as if realizing something]

You're Lord Curufin's son.

**Celebrimbor:**

Yes.

[He looks like he would say something else, sarcastic, but doesn't]

**Luthien:**

Your uncle said I should speak to him about getting my cape back from the Sages but I haven't been able to track him down.

**Celebrimbor:**

He . . . can be a difficult person to talk to.

**Luthien:** [earnest]

Will you try to get hold of him for me, tell him I need to speak to him, that I need my cloak back, or at least to know when they'll be done with it? I'm getting worried about it, and I don't want to be rude or seem ungrateful, but I can't find anyone who claims to know where it is, except your father secondhand through Lord Celegorm.

**Celebrimbor:**

I'm -- I'm afraid I don't have any control over his doings or goings, Your Highness, which are -- many.

**Luthien:** [forcefully]

I understand these things. Believe me, I do understand

about the troubles of rulers, and the business of running realms, and the responsibilities of lords.  
--Talk to him for me when next you see him. That's all I ask.

[long silence]

**Celebrimbor:**

I -- I will, my lady.

[pause]

Was there anything else you wanted here? Anything you need that isn't being provided for you?

[Luthien stares at him for a moment]

**Luthien:**

No. Huan wanted to come up here. I think it's up.

**Celebrimbor:** [looks around]

Huan?

**Luthien:**

He's not here right now. He went off somewhere while I was getting supplies.

**Celebrimbor:** [baffled]

--Supplies?

**Luthien:** [a bit frustrated, repeating with emphasis]

Yes, supplies. See?

[she unknots a corner of her mantle and shows him a handful of dried fruit and pastries]

**Celebrimbor:**

But . . . won't the household bring you whatever you ring for?

**Luthien:**

Yes, but you never pass up the chance to grab something when you can. --Beren taught me that, though I never expected to have to use the knowledge. I can't walk past a hazelnut thicket now without checking, or a tangle of berry canes, or a birds' nest, in case there's something I can scavenge.

**Celebrimbor:** [faintly]

You don't need to, now, my lady, you're safe and --

and provided-for, here.

**Luthien:** [shrugging]

It gets to be a habit.

[sighs]

I wish I had the canteen I made out of reeds, it was such a nice compact one, but I dropped it when I was treed by Huan and forgot to pick it up.

**Celebrimbor:**

--Reeds . . . ?

[realizes too late to stop himself how annoying this is getting]

**Luthien:** [very slowly]

The hollow things that grow in swampy depressions and along riverbanks. --And resin. The stuff that comes out of pine trees. It's very sticky. It makes the water taste odd but it keeps it in. --Did you not speak Sindarin much in Aglon?

[Celebrimbor blinks, doesn't answer; after a moment she bites her lip]

Um. That was really rude of me. I'm sorry. I'm just -- so horribly tired.

[she fights successfully to keep from breaking down.]

**Celebrimbor:** [gently]

Shall I escort you to your suite, Your Highness?

**Luthien:**

No, I should probably wait for Huan. He might get worried if he came back and couldn't find me. I'll just stay here.

**Celebrimbor:** [still troubled]

Very well, my lady.

[He returns to working on his clock, and Luthien watches him for a moment before putting her head down on her knees. Curufin enters, obviously looking for his son, and stalks over to where Celebrimbor is taking something apart.]

**Curufin:** [quietly enough not to make a public scene, but not

pleasantly]

Are you still wasting your time with that toy?  
Shouldn't you move on to something else? Or are you  
going to compulsively tinker with it for the next  
Great Year, too?

[Instead of answering, Celebrimbor nods over in the  
direction of the fountain. Curufin following his look  
sees Luthien asleep next to it and frowns, not expecting  
or pleased by this.]

**Celebrimbor:** [quietly]

She's been looking for you to talk to you, Father.  
Do you wish to wake Her Highness?

[Grimacing, Curufin turns quickly and strides off.  
Celebrimbor looks first relieved, then disgusted with  
himself at his stratagem. In the background Huan makes  
his way through the Hall of Hours, sniffing the air,  
and heads towards them. When he gets to where Luthien  
is sitting he stands in front of her, patient-dog-mode,  
huffing on her feet until she notices he's there and  
grabs his ruff to pull herself up. Trailing shreds behind  
her, she walks with a handful of his fur, as if they were  
arm-in-arm, and they go out without stopping or speaking  
to anyone else. A visible relief on the expressions of  
the crowd, save for Celebrimbor, who keeps working with  
a bitter & self-mocking smile.]

## SCENE IX

**Gower:**

--Slipped in thus stealthily, poison to the mind  
most subtle, lingering, and potent one shall find--

[The apartments of Lord Guilin's House -- the style here  
is very high Noldor, even more so than in Orodreth's  
suite: more geometric and abstract, though still with  
natural and organic themes (more early Dynastic and  
Assyrian, less Amarna). There is a lot of glass in the  
ornamentation, both blown and cut, both functional and  
used for atmospheric effect of light and color. Finduilas  
and Gwindor are having an animated conversation in the  
main hallway.]

**Gwindor:** [arms folded, very abrupt]

I can't believe you're going on with this. It's

completely inappropriate.

**Finduilas:** [exasperated and pleading]

It's been planned for months, Gwin. It would be far more awkward if we canceled it now.

**Gwindor:**

It's still inappropriate.

**Finduilas:**

We talked about it before -- if you were going to object you should have said something sooner.

**Gwindor:**

If you will recall, Finduilas, -- I did.

**Finduilas:**

Yes, but then you stopped.

**Gwindor:**

Because you clearly had no intention of listening to anything I had to say.

**Finduilas:**

Well, I'm sorry. But it's too late, to change it, now.

**Gwindor:**

It's never too late.

**Finduilas:**

Gwin, your father isn't going to cancel. Would you just -- oh, honestly--!

[she breaks off, shaking her head, turns away and folds her own arms. Brief pause.]

**Gwindor:**

Well, perhaps I won't be here.

[Finduilas whirls]

**Finduilas:** [outraged]

Milord, are you trying to be funny? Because you're failing dismally.

**Gwindor:** [just as haughty]

I wasn't jesting, your Highness. If you insist on holding celebrations with your snobby Eastern friends, you can just count me out.

**Finduilas:**

Gwin! They're your friends too.

**Gwindor:**

Not any longer.

**Finduilas:**

You're not serious, are you? Do you know how humiliating that would be, for you not to be here? You don't mean it really.

**Gwindor:**

I mean it. If you refuse to use your wits and your sensibilities and mindlessly accept things as they are, it's my duty then to think for both of us.

**Finduilas:**

How dare you!

**Gwindor:** [offhand]

Someone's got to -- it might as well be me.

[not so snottily]

Please try to look at things rationally--

**Finduilas:**

Do not try to slip out of this after those words, milord Guilinion! I will not put up with such arrogant, insulting, rude behavior without an apology!

**Gwindor:** [exasperated]

Faelivrin--

**Finduilas:** [raising her voice still more]

Don't you dare call me that right now!

[Enter Lord Guilin]

**Guilin:**

--Children, what's the matter? You're disturbing the whole household with your arguing.

**Finduilas:** [holding out her hands]

Sir, your son is being impossible. Again.

**Guilin:** [sighing]

Gwin, why must you take out your ill-humor upon your lady? Isn't there enough sorrow these days?

[Gwindor rolls his eyes]

Finduilas, dear, what is this trouble over?

**Finduilas:**

He's being hateful about the Gathering tonight.  
Calling me insensitive and frivolous, as if doing  
nothing instead would help--

**Guilin:** [reproachfully]

I'd hoped you were going to be mature about this,  
Gwin. I -- if you're going to attack anyone, attack  
me. Not the Princess. After all, I'm the one who made  
the decision; I should bear your scorn, not she.

**Gwindor:** [fiercely]

Father, if you cared so much for my good opinion,  
then why haven't you taken it into consideration  
before making decisions? Keeping me sheltered like  
so much glass isn't going to bring back Gelmir. --Or  
the King.

**Finduilas:**

Gwin! How can you be so cruel?

[Gwindor stands still, his expression angry and pained,  
and suddenly slams his fist against the paneling. One  
of the elaborate sculptures on the wall separates from  
its mount and drops onto the stone floor, shattering.  
Finduilas covers her ears instinctively, cringing,  
waiting for the breakage, and bursts into silent tears.  
Gwindor looks appalled and ashamed.]

**Guilin:** [sadly]

Son. --Did that aid anything?

**Gwindor:**

Faelivrin, I'm sorry--

**Finduilas:** [sniffling]

It doesn't matter, I'll make another one.

[Gwindor goes over to her and puts his arms around her.]

**Gwindor:** [whispering]

I'm so sorry, I lost my temper, I--

[she shakes her head]

I'll be here tonight. I promise. I won't say  
anything. --I'm sorry.

**Finduilas:**

It's all right.

[The Carillon sounds -- she starts.]

Oh! I've got to meet my father for dinner. I need to go change and see about a lot of things first.

[wipes her eyes]

Please excuse me, Lord Guilin.

**Guilin:**

Not at all, my dear. Please give him my regards.  
--Are you quite yourself again?

**Finduilas:** [bright smile]

I will. Yes, I'm fine, thank you.

[she gives Gwindor a quick kiss and goes off briskly. Her fiancée does not look away from his father's recriminating expression, but after Lord Guilin leaves he sighs and carefully begins picking up the broken pieces of blown glass.]

## SCENE X

**Gower:**

The lessons of an idle hour's gaming may be  
well-learned,  
by fairest maid no less than him whose scars  
hard-earned  
befell in fight more worthy than when ship and city  
burned--

[Luthien is sitting by the hearth with Huan, both of them watching the flames, him behind her rather like a sphinx with his head over/on her shoulder, (the way horses like to.) Celegorm, shown in by an attendant, looks around the solar for a moment before seeing them on the floor and is surprised. He has an ornate & longish box under his arm.]

**Celegorm:** [hesitantly]

Er, hullo, I was just looking for Huan -- I see he's there with you still . . .

**Luthien:** [looking around]

Yes, he's a little hard to miss.



[She gets up and comes around the Hound and greets Celegorm with a polite nod as to an equal; he takes her hand and bows over it with just short of exaggeration. She does not look quite so drugged and haggard as before.]

**Celegorm:**

Well, how's my little pup doing? Behaving himself?

[Huan stretches and whines, wriggling, conveying I'm-a-good-dog-but-I-don't-want-to-move]

**Luthien:** [wistfully]

Oh, yes. Do you have to take him away so soon?

**Celegorm:**

No, not at all. In fact, -- I was thinking you might like to play a few rounds of chess to divert yourself, so I brought a set and a board along . . . ?

[looks at her with an expression of mild hopefulness]

**Luthien:**

There's already one in this room,

[remembering manners]

--but that's kind of you. --Oh--

[her eyes light up]

--wait! with two we could play mortal chess.

**Celegorm:**

Mortal chess?

**Luthien:**

Yes, Beren taught me how to play it. It's very interesting. I'll teach you, if you like. I find our version rather dull now, to tell the truth.

[she takes the box and carries it over to the table, grabbing the other set off a sideboard as she goes]

**Celegorm:** [lightly]

Hm. Wouldn't have guessed he could fit a set in that little kit of his. Or was it yours?

**Luthien:** [serious]

Oh no. You can play it with rocks and acorns, or bits of stick with the bark peeled off some of them. All

you need is two colors and one bigger than the rest, to be the king-stone. And some flat ground and a twig or a flat rock and charcoal to draw the lines.

[she takes out all the pawns, leaving the rest of the figured pieces in the case.]

Now if you'll give me the other set--

[she takes out the red pawns only from this set and sets the pieces up tafl-style -- the red pawns go in clusters at the centers of the four sides, the white pawns go in the middle of the board, and in the center of them one white king.]

**Celegorm:**

Where do the rest of 'em go?

**Luthien:**

That's it. Now we play.

**Celegorm:**

You're joking!

[Huan comes over and sits down between them, leaning his head over the table to watch the game curiously]

**Luthien:**

No.

**Celegorm:**

But you can't win this. Or -- that is, only red can win, all the time. The unlucky soul playing center certainly can't.

**Luthien:**

Oh, you can -- it's just very hard. That's why I find it so much more mentally stimulating than ours, with everything all equal and balanced to start with. Very symmetrical, not very realistic. --Unless you could somehow bring out secret ones all of the sudden.

[he is looking at her rather oddly]

Just like in the Leaguer. This isn't realistic really, having everyone know what forces are on each side, since we're all trying to hide ours from the Enemy and he from us, and trick each other into mistaking what's what. --But at least this is more like what really happened. --And you can win it, which I think

is a hopeful sign.

**Celegorm:**

Even outnumbered. And surrounded.

**Luthien:**

Yes. As long as you don't lose your leader. The trick is to keep moving and get free.

**Celegorm:** [rubbing his lips pensively]

How do you take pieces, if they all move the same way?

**Luthien:**

Any warrior trapped between two enemies is down. And you only move in straight lines, ahead, back, or either side. I go first -- see, like that. Now you go.

[They go through the next few moves carefully]

**Celegorm:**

Oh, you made a mistake, you just went two squares with him.

**Luthien:**

No, that's right: you can go as far as you think safe. Generally you don't want to get out ahead of the line, though. Realism again.

**Celegorm:**

Hey, wait, your chap's down -- he just went between two of my pieces.

**Luthien:**

No, you can dash between two enemies already there.

**Celegorm:** [wry]

Now you tell me.

**Luthien:**

Sorry. It's just if you're engaged with one and someone else comes up behind you, then you go down. I believe that's an accurate reflection of how it works in real life, reduced to essentials, isn't it?

**Celegorm:** [heartfelt]

This is a weird game.

[moves]

Luthien:

--Path!

Celegorm:

Eh? What's that?

Luthien:

I have to warn you -- I have a clear path for escape there. --That's another way games differ from real life.

Celegorm:

So . . . if I move this warrior here, your king is blocked, and you don't have an out any more.

Luthien:

Right. But he won't last very long, because I'm coming up alongside of him here, and now -- he's down.

Celegorm:

But -- hmm.

[he scowls at the board, a bit chagrined]

Luthien:

That's all right, I lost all the time at first, too. No matter what side I was playing. It took a few bouts before I got the hang of it.

Celegorm: [indulgently]

Oh, you mean before he let you have a win.

Luthien: [sharply]

Beren didn't let me win.

Celegorm: [nodding in patronizing fashion as he moves]

Right, right.

Luthien: [snapping her piece down]

He didn't. --He wouldn't dare, I'd know.

Celegorm:

You really think I'm going to believe this can be won by the defending side?

Luthien:

When you see it.

[Celegorm moves, and she moves instantly, taking two of

his pieces]

**Celegorm:**

You can't do that!

**Luthien:**

Both of them were flanked. It's just like draughts:  
as many as are in range.

[he frowns, moves again, and she counters again]

--Field!

**Celegorm:**

What's that mean?

**Luthien:**

It means I win. See?

[points]

Even if you could block this side, you can't get your  
troops over to the other side fast enough to stop me  
from breaking through here.

**Celegorm:**

I'll be damned. You did win. --Are you sure you  
didn't cheat?

[Luthien looks indignant -- his expression and tone  
change completely to sincerest gallantry]

Oh, what am I saying? Of course you wouldn't cheat,  
you're a lady and far too fair and honorable for  
that. You've bested me in fair fight.

**Luthien:**

I've had far more practice at it. Here, I'll set up  
again and you'll know what to do now.

[she starts rearranging the pieces; after a moment  
Celegorm catches her first words and gives her a  
wary look]

**Celegorm:** [aside]

--Did she really say what I thought she said? . . .  
surely not . . .

[aloud, staring hard at the board]

Of course, you realize it's really ironic, dont'ya

know, when winning consists of turning tail and running for dear life! You can tell no Noldor mind came up with this game--

[he chuckles, but stops at her look and settles down]

--All right . . . so I want to prevent you from bracketing my pieces, or they'll all be picked off and flattened . . .

[suddenly stunned with realization]

--Wait, I know this -- it's a confounded sandastan!

[grinning]

Hah -- my lady, you won't draw me into this hedge so easily again. Your move, I believe, Your Highness?

[intensely they go through the next series of moves in silence.]

Well. I think -- I've won. Your warriors can't get out of that quadrant, can they? And your king can't get to the edge with my men there, right? So either you surrender now, or, you come out and get cut down one by one. Hm?

**Luthien:** [nodding]

Very impressive, my lord.

**Celegorm:** [smiling into her eyes]

I'm a fast learner.

**Luthien:** [not looking away]

But -- if this were real life, that might not be the end of it.

[She reaches into a box, takes out the rest of white pawns and sets them in a wedge at the opposite corner. Definitely--]

--Keep playing.

**Celegorm:**

Hey! You can't do that! --Can you?

**Luthien:**

I just did. It's called -- the Serech Variation. Your move.

[Silence. Huan whines. Celegorm swallows hard, and breaks from her glance to consider the board. After a moment, he makes an uncertain jerky slide, and she moves at once to counter. He gets back to business, and keeps pulling pieces away from her encircled king to throw them in front of her attack, but she just keeps moving, without stopping to consider the next move.]

Path. --And field.

[Celegorm stares at the board dismayed, and then looks up at her.]

**Celegorm:**

But you lost just about all of your forces to do it.

**Luthien:** [coolly]

And that, too, is more like real life -- isn't it?

[Celegorm doesn't say anything, although he tries. She reaches around the board and catches both of his hands in her own, staring intensely at him]

--You know what we have to do. You know how to do it. You've told me how it should be done. You've told me how Finrod befriended you and took you in and supplied your material losses out of his own stores without asking for any return or putting you "in your place" over it ever since the Sudden Flame -- and you told me I could depend on you. I am depending on you. --We are. Celegorm Turcofin Feanorion, will you redeem your pledge to me and your debt to the King and avenge your father all in one? --Which may perhaps even help effect a reconciliation not merely between my family and myself, but between our Houses as well, if only you but throw off this mirk that clouds all our minds and press forward without further delay!

[Celegorm stares at her, entranced, visibly torn, struggling to speak]

**Celegorm:**

I--

[his expression changes from receptive to baffled]

--would, -- but--

[he shakes his head sadly]

--it isn't entirely in my control --

[meaningful tone]

not as though I were Regent, after all--

[Luthien lets go of his hands, flattens hers on the table and stands up from her chair]

**Luthien:** [ominously]

Are you saying Orodreth is a traitor? That he's delaying on purpose--!?

[Celegorm is intimidated in spite of himself by her expression and backs down]

**Celegorm:**

I -- I didn't mean to imply that, my lady, only, only, -- only that he -- well, it's difficult to say, being friends for many years, but -- he -- he isn't -- well, you know, about the Fortress and all . . .

**Luthien:**

Know what?

**Celegorm:**

I really . . . shouldn't say . . .

**Luthien:**

You've said already -- too much, or too little, my lord.

**Celegorm:** [sighing]

He's got no nerve left for fighting. It seemed to happen with the onset of Sauron -- who as you might know is a spirit of no ordinary power and ability -- but I'm convinced it really all started with the Bragollach --

[spreading his hands regretfully]

not that I can blame him, certainly, not like he's the only Elf to be undone by that disaster -- but giving up the Fortress without a fight, running back here without even a retreatin' action -- there's a reason why he's never held command or even taken the field since then.

**Luthien:**

But he is not the only warrior -- soldier or officer



-- in Nargothrond!

**Celegorm:** [more confidently]

But he's in charge. He's the one who sets the tone, you know, that a command takes its lead from the commander, and so on. Without the will bein' there at the top, the bottom ranks can't have it either. Morale and whatnot, doncha know.

**Luthien:** [shaking her head, bewildered]

But -- but that doesn't make any sense -- if he can't handle the responsibility of ruling, then it would make sense to do everything possible to get the one who can back safely--

**Celegorm:**

True -- but, you know -- people don't always behave rationally, what?

[rising]

Oh -- Lady Luthien -- you won't mention to him that I told you about this, will you? He's very -- sensitive, about the rout -- understandable, of course.

[he takes her hand and bows over it]

**Luthien:**

Are you going so soon?

**Celegorm:** [awkwardly]

I -- I must.

[sudden inspiration]

You asked me to see what I could do.

**Luthien:** [taken aback, uncertainly]

Oh. Oh, good. Thank you. --May Huan stay a while longer? If you please, my lord?

**Celegorm:** [smiles]

Of course, my lady.

[He bows again and leaves, still a bit shaken, though covering it well]

**Luthien:** [beyond upset]

--Oh!

[leans on the table, her head hanging down]

Did I actually accomplish anything? --I don't know--

[Listlessly she starts putting the remaining chessmen away -- then struck by a sudden inspiration she picks up one of the white castles and turns it around in her fingers]

**Luthien:** [thoughtful]

So cousin Orodreth was there . . . I'd not realized that. For years. That means he knows the area well -- and the Fortress.

[A look of focused determination comes over her face. She puts the piece away, tosses the end of her mantle over her shoulder like a cape and folds her arms squarely.]

I need to talk to him. About everything. And the way to reach him is Finduilas -- I'm afraid I've got to catch her and not let go, even if I lose what's left of my mind as a result. --Oh well--

[looks at Huan; without irony:]

--Could I trouble you to find her for me, milord?

[Huan gets up, wagging his tail slowly, not unwilling, but not enthusiastic, and he sounds rather troubled when he replies:]

**Huan:**

[short bark]

**Luthien:**

You don't have to stay while we talk, unless you want to.

[Huan comes over to have his ears scratched before going out on his mission; Luthien goes over to a "window" and perches on the frame as if it was a real windowsill.]

**Luthien:** [musing]

--He didn't even notice that I let him win the second time . . . it's worse than I realized! But I don't know what to do, except talk -- if it's being underground, really, I've got no hope -- but if it's being cut off from the sky, you'd think it would be the same at home -- hah, perhaps it is! -- but no, nobody stays all the time in the Thousand Caves. Or

perhaps it's also the fact that Mom's there, and her presence counteracts the lack of stars. And then -- that could explain, actually -- with Finrod gone there's no one here who's strong enough to make up for the absence . . .

[traces the joins along the edges of the carved trees with her finger]

I wish Galadriel were here -- she wouldn't allow such a muddle and nightmare to go on. She'd know what to do, and do it. But instead -- we've just got me . . .

[she sighs heavily and leans back on the frame, closing her eyes]

## SCENE XI

**Gower:**

A broken faith less easy to repair  
when riven,  
one finds; yet may the pieces, severally,  
be truly given--

[The royal apartments. Celebrimbor enters from one of the farther chambers with a small chest and sets it down on the table, where there are a number of pieces of carved marble and bronze piping. Taking a piece of cloth from the chest he starts wrapping up the disassembled fountain and packing it in the box. One small basin he picks up, and blows across it like a flute, with a distant look. Behind him Curufin comes in, and he is all business again.]

**Curufin:**

So first you sneer at me, and then you go and help yourself to our lamented kinsman's belongings. --I do admire your mental flexibility, son.

**Celebrimbor:** [not looking at him, going on packing]

I helped with this project. There's a difference -- subtle, but I should think you'd appreciate subtlety . . . Father.

**Curufin:**

You watch that disrespectful mouth, boy, unless you wish to fend for yourself in the Wilds. I could arrange for you to stand a season on the remote

watches, you know. How much fiddling about, I wonder, could you manage out on patrol or in a roundhouse? I doubt you'd get such a dose of fawning appreciation from your comrades as you do around here.

[Celebrimbor flushes but doesn't say anything else.]

What are you thinking?

[his son grimaces, but still doesn't answer]

I asked you a direct question. Your continued silence is insolence. --What are you thinking there, Celebrimbor?

**Celebrimbor:** [looking at him defiantly]

That -- as usual -- our mothers were wiser than ourselves.

[it is Curufin's turn to flush]

**Curufin:** [biting off each word]

I don't expect you to understand my motives, nor consequently to appreciate them -- but you could at least try to make an effort -- particularly when it's for your benefit--

[Celebrimbor's expression hardens -- before things escalate further, Celegorm enters. To Celebrimbor:]

**Celegorm:**

Get out, I want to talk to your father.

**Celebrimbor:**

Presently -- I'm almost done.

**Celegorm:**

Now.

[He comes over and starts to grab a component and toss it in: Celebrimbor seizes the valve back from him and leans defensively over the table, blocking him.]

**Celebrimbor:**

Don't touch any of this!

**Celegorm:**

Snap at me and I'll muzzle you. --Punk.

[Glaring, Celebrimbor quickly but carefully puts the remaining pieces inside and closes the lid. As he picks

up the chest to go--]

**Curufin:**

Where are you taking that lot?

**Celebrimbor:**

To Her Highness of Doriath. She misses the sound of water. I offered to help.

[as he is almost out the door]

--I do follow through, when I make promises.

[The Sons of Feanor give the grandson of Feanor a dirty parting Look]

**Curufin:**

What's going on?

[Celegorm wanders around the chamber for a minute, not answering right away, leaning on furniture and tapping on mantelpieces.]

Well? Out with it!

**Celegorm:**

I just had a . . . very troubling encounter with Her Highness.

**Curufin:**

Sparkly? Or the other one?

**Celegorm:**

Her Highness of Doriath, nitwit. Finduilas just looks down her dainty nose at me, and I just smile at her, and she just goes off in a huff. She's no trouble.

**Curufin:**

What sort of trouble are we talking about, here?

**Celegorm:**

She was putting some kind of trance on me, something that made me start to forget all about our priorities and all. I've never felt anything like it.

[he looks at Curufin with desperate hopefulness, waiting for explanation and reassurance]

**Curufin:**

Was she singing?

**Celegorm:**

No. Not even humming.

[pause]

She just looked into my eyes, and I wanted to tell her everything and grovel on the rug and beg her pardon. Five minutes longer and I'd have been arming up to head out, I swear!

[Curufin looks alarmed and angry]

Oh, and she did invoke my full name.

**Curufin:** [thoughtfully]

Well, naming is the second oldest form of power there is, after song -- though to hear our cousin go on about it they're the same thing. But if you were able to walk away from it without any difficulty I wouldn't worry about it. She isn't that strong, it can't have taken that much power to overwhelm a couple of Dark-elven sentries, probably already sharing a wineskin and careless with overconfidence. Concentrate on impressing her -- though I'd recommend not looking at her eyes.

[Celegorm sighs regretfully]

**Celegorm:**

Most prudent thing, I guess. Oh well. Besides, as long as I'm paying attention it isn't like she can get anything past my guard. Right?

**Curufin:**

I'd think not.

**Celegorm:** [smugly]

You'd be proud of me -- I managed to make Orodreth take the fall, and at the same time appealed to her delicate sensibilities not to bring it up to him. The way he's hiding from her, there's no chance she'll get the chance to, anyhow. Well, thanks for taking a load off my mind! --I think I'll go bother our good Regent for a bit, now that I think of it. He can give me some pointers on how to achieve rapport with Sindarin Elves, eh? Being related to 'em and all.

**Curufin:**

Just don't give the plan away to him by accident. He may be unimaginative, but he isn't a complete fool.

**Celegorm:**

Don't worry, I won't breathe a word. I was thinking I'd make it seem like I'm worried about her health, her state of mind and all. I mean, obviously she's not quite normal, what?

**Curufin:** [smiling dryly]

The "Mad Princess of Doriath." Obviously she needs the best care we can give her. --I like it.

[they share a complicit grin]

Well, much as I'd never admit it before him that I've overlooked anything, 'Brim's reminded me there are all sorts of storage areas and work facilities about here that I've not investigated. So that should keep me busy for quite a while. Good luck on your, er, fishing expedition . . .

[Celegorm claps him on the shoulder and goes out cheerfully; Curufin begins opening cabinets fitted into the marquetry and paneling of the apartments]

## SCENE XII

**Gower:**

No hits so palpable, so lasting keen,  
shall e'er be felt  
as they that strike hearts where once  
friendship dwelt--

[Orodreth's office. Boxes of scrolls and bound ledgers are lined up along the walls and next to his desk, and stacks of them and loose sheets of parchment cover the top of it. He is holding a page in his hand as though reading it but not looking at it. The door opens suddenly: he looks up, startled, then angry, as Celegorm strolls in.]

**Orodreth:** [biting]

It is customary to knock, even if one is too busy and overwhelmed to manage to schedule an appointment, you know.

**Celegorm:**

Oh, come off your high horse, cousin, I've seen you silly with wine too many times to take you seriously--

[Orodreth continues to look around past him]

What?

**Orodreth:**

Where's your shadow? Or did he finally figure out how to make her invisibility cloak work?

**Celegorm:**

Ha ha. Cur's busy.

**Orodreth:** [setting down the paper and shaking his head]

That's a change.

**Celegorm:**

You could at least be civil, you know.

**Orodreth:** [sighs]

I could, I suppose. --What can I help you with, my lord? How may the Regent's office be of service to the House of Feanor today?

[Celegorm grimaces but forges on]

**Celegorm:**

You've been to Doriath; I haven't. --Don't say "Obviously" or anything like that. Just -- answer the question, all right?

[Orodreth says nothing]

What's it like there? Is she typical? All this independence and do-it-yourself and not seeming to notice the -- the -- grandeur of everything or the honor that's rendered her? I mean, it's almost like she's some kind of wild creature that doesn't recognize the work of people as being any different from trees!

**Orodreth:** [drumming his fingers on the desk]

Typical? No. I would not say that. Not even before. But yes, Doriath is a very different place from anything our people have ever built. It has to be. There are so many different ethnic groups living there, with separate traditions and their own historical sovereignties, and they mix them all up and swap them around, which makes it even more confusing to someone from Aman.



**Celegorm:**

What do you mean, "swap 'em around" --? How do you do that?

**Orodreth:**

Oh, Teler using Sindarin names, Singers borrowing Telerin musical instruments, Sindar copying Laiquendi pottery designs on leatherwork, and everyone trading songs back and forth.

**Celegorm:**

But -- "sovereignties" --! That can't be what you meant.

**Orodreth:** [shrugs]

Then I must have imagined the time that Angrod was arranging a fishing trip down to the Confluences and Elu told him to check with our great-aunt about whose it was then, as the local tribes had been exchanging it for stories and they'd had a Singing recently, and he wasn't sure who would have to grant us permission to take fish from the waters.

**Celegorm:**

What, they gave it away for a song? You're joking!

[Orodreth shakes his head; Celegorm snorts in disgust]

Daft!

**Orodreth:**

And of course there is the fact that the boundaries of Doriath proper are impenetrable, so that there is no need for the kind of careful watching and intensive security and secrecy that the rest of us must maintain outside.

[leans back in his chair]

After all, if no one can get inside, you don't need to worry about the presence of Enemy agents or invaders, and after a few Great Years of that I don't think anyone from Menegroth would even understand the basis for our policies and rules. It may be the model for this City, but it runs on a logic all of its own.

**Celegorm:**

Is logic even the right word for it, eh?

**Orodreth:**

Well, if there's no chance of invaders getting near your gates, what do you need to have people on them all the time for? The doors just stand open all the time, and you haven't wasted anyone's time that could be better spent on creative pursuits. And with all the preexisting cultures and lines of authority that converge there, there's little of what we would call formality -- does a Sindarin Lord outrank an Elder of the Following of Denethor? When a craftswoman of the local village recalls the Second Kindling and a war orphan with no name from father or mother is one of the foremost warriors of the land -- then best offer the same honor to all, and not worry about who ranks whom.

**Celegorm:**

Sounds like a proper mess.

**Orodreth:**

It works, though.

**Celegorm:**

I don't see how.

**Orodreth:**

No? Well, I have.

It just does, somehow. I gather that when you have a minor goddess as Queen, many of the ordinary little difficulties of getting people to cooperate, and do their jobs responsibly, simply disappear on their own -- they don't require alternately bludgeoning and coaxing people into keeping up with their duties.

[shakes head, ironic expression.]

For instance -- you might find this story interesting -- we heard that in the aftermath of the Burning there was a spillover of enemy troops into Brethil, which isn't in Doriath but is technically part of their domain . . . as even you should concede, since they've managed to hold on to it, so to speak.

**Celegorm:** [uncomfortable]

Oh come, don't be such a bad sport--

**Orodreth:** [impassive, slightly mocking tone]

It was after I lost Tol Sirion, to put a precise

date, and cause, upon it. My great-uncle won't have anything to do with the people who live there, they being mortals, which suits them admirably, as they're not much for government -- you might remember them, they used to stay in your brother's territory until they were almost wiped out by a fair-sized army of Orcs, and decided they'd prefer a home with a less exposed location, which is another story entirely -- but he still sent in Captain Strongbow and a massive relief force at lightning speed to deal with it before they were almost wiped out this time.

[he does not appear to notice Celegorm's glare]

--Though knowing Beleg, it probably went more like: "Orcs in Brethil -- I'm rounding up volunteers and we'll already have gotten there by the time you receive this and Her Majesty will already have told you so I'm not sure why I'm sending this at all."

**Celegorm:**

Can't imagine anyone of my people talking to me that way. Or any Noldor ruler.

**Orodreth:** [bitter smile]

--Can't you? Never paid much attention around here, did you?

[Before Celegorm can figure it out]

Elu really has to be upset to be handing out death threats and locking people up -- I can't think of anything to compare to it, except for when he threw us all out temporarily as a matter of principle and banned the Old Tongue for good measure, after he found out about the Kinslaying.

**Celegorm:** [frighteningly grim]

Do not bring that up again, cousin.

[Orodreth just looks at him, raising one eyebrow, not acknowledging the order. Brightly:]

Go on, go on, I can't believe you don't have any more to say about it!

**Orodreth:** [raising his hands]

What else is there to say? To describe it properly would take -- an Age, and then not be done. It's too much, too real, for that. But it's generally very

easygoing, once you're inside -- Doriath is the sort of place where if you want to live in a tree, instead of a cave, no one will mind -- and they won't, ordinarily, make you stay there if you don't want to, either.

**Celegorm:**

So -- is Elwe really a proper King at all? Sounds like anarchy to me.

**Orodreth:**

Oh yes. Very much so. Make no mistake of that.

**Celegorm:**

Why? If people just wander in and out, and no one's in charge and everyone is equal--

**Orodreth:**

--Because he is the center of it all -- or rather, they are, for you can't think of Elu without Melian -- the axle upon which the Stars revolve, so to speak . . . and because all choose to follow, remaining in their Circle.

[softly]

--That's the heart of it, isn't it? That's all that matters -- the rest is just . . . ornament, when you think about it. It doesn't mean much, if there's no holding-to there, nothing to keep one from spinning off into the Void as one pleases . . .

**Celegorm:** [oblivious]

So what's she like? I mean, really?

**Orodreth:**

She isn't crazy, if that's what you're getting at. She just sees things . . . differently from . . . nearly everyone, that I know of.

**Celegorm:**

What do you mean?

**Orodreth:** [shrugs]

She has a strange way of looking at things, as though from an angle high up, or far below, the best I can explain it -- as though someone were to paint you a picture of a ship from under the sea -- you'd look at it and wonder what it was, before your mind adjusted to it and it would still be the same painting but you

would understand it, now.

**Curufin:**

You're talkin' rot, cousin. Things are things. How you look at 'em doesn't change them.

**Orodreth:**

No? Then perhaps it changes one. Looking at them and thinking about them and not being able to go back to seeing them the old way only. But what do I know? I was never the Sage in our family -- you are of course free to agree with that humorously as you no doubt will--

[standing up and pacing as he remembers, while speaking]

What's a good example . . . ? --There are some flowering trees native to Doriath similar to summer-snow, but with dark-rose blooms . . . Once I remarked that I wished we had them growing around here, and the conversation turned to geographical distribution of species and migration patterns and the usual sorts of reasonable discourse you'd expect. Luthien was walking backwards practicing pirouettes on the gallery railing where we were sitting, by the way.

**Celegorm:**

Didn't anyone tell her to sit down and take part like a grown-up?

**Orodreth:**

No. Why?

**Celegorm:** [nonplused]

Well, when people are talking, having a quiet, civilized get-together, you don't usually have someone dancing through it at the same time! Time and place for everything, and so forth. Nobody thought it was -- well, odd?

**Orodreth:**

Not in the least. And after a moon or so there, you wouldn't either.

[Celegorm rolls his eyes, shaking his head]

Then a while later when we were talking about returning home, she came up to me and handed me a little jar, all done up nicely. "Your trees," she said to me, and I thought it was a joke at first.

"You packed them very well," I said, and she answered, "Just don't let them get wet until you're home. There's a grove at least in there." I started laughing, and said, "Oh, they're seeds, not trees," and very seriously she told me, "No, they're trees, they're just very small right now. I can't give you their parents, they'd be unhappy at being sent away, even if you could carry them."

[Orodreth stops pacing and leans on a pillar]

--At that point I got a bit patronizing and she said very definitely, "No, they are trees -- if they weren't already trees, they couldn't become them without being changed. Food-and-water is not a change." And then my sister said, "She's right. Think about it." And I did, and you know what -- she was. They've grown quite well around here, there's quite a grove of them around the Falls now, I'm sure you've noticed . . .

[shrugging]

But that's how she is: you think she's totally wrapped up in her art, and oblivious to everything going on around her, and in fact she's noticing everything and then some, and then she thinks about it, while she's singing or dancing or up in a tree somewhere, and then she simply goes and does -- whatever she thinks needs to be done about to it.

[pause]

**Celegorm:** [catching the subtext at last]

You don't approve of this mad attachment of hers, surely--

**Orodreth:**

It is not particularly relevant, one way or another. I have no authority over her.

**Celegorm:**

Oh, don't be coy -- tell me I haven't the authority either! Be bold!

**Orodreth:** [unaffected by sarcasm]

I know very well why you hold her here, and I have forfeited my right to interfere -- have pledged it, in fact, unbreakably.

**Celegorm:** [looks guilty]  
What do you mean?

**Orodreth:**

You fear she will indeed prove able to rescue her true-love and with him my brother and his followers -- and so you dare not let her go, any more than I dare let her go, and let open war break forth in the breaking of our unwritten accord -- which, by the by, is a figment of your imagination: I am under Royal Mandate to keep the peace here, which is the salve by which I staunch my bleeding conscience.

**Celegorm:**

Cousin, cousin, cousin! Can't we at least make peace and be friends again, on a personal basis, for old times' sake?

**Orodreth:** [gravely]

I'm sorry you're so lonely. But it's you who've isolated yourself, not the other way round.

**Celegorm:**

No? I'm not the one who's too proud to accept the way things are, pretending to be independent and honorable and all the while no better than the rest of us!

**Orodreth:**

Nor am I. But I am not your friend, either of policy or of private choosing.

**Celegorm:**

Didn't I save you a nasty skewering from that mutant boar up in the North Quarter?

**Orodreth:** [nods]

You did indeed.

**Celegorm:**

--Didn't I stand up for you after Tol Sirion, when everyone was whispering and questioning and giving you Looks?

**Orodreth:**

You did. And I was grateful.

**Celegorm:** [nastily]

Short-lived, though.

Orodreth:

Do you really not understand? Can you really not see -- that there is -- can be -- no going back to what was now? That place . . . doesn't exist now, for us -- there is no way back. The time for turning back was then , and you chose to press on, to . . . burn your ships behind you.

Celegorm: [sneering]

So much for "forgive and forget," eh?

Orodreth:

That's not how it works: what -- what happened at Losgar is become of a piece with this, and since you are the sort of person who can so casually and thoughtlessly betray your friends, I find that there is no one there with whom I can have any kind of a friendship -- and that there never was. I was simply deluded.

Celegorm: [upset]

--That's not it, you don't understand--

Orodreth: [interrupting]

--Perhaps. Perhaps I would have to be -- someone else, entirely, to understand -- your kind of treason. You, at least, are loyal to each other.

[pause]

If it's any consolation, I don't think you consciously regard your fellow Elves as tools, as mere means to further your ends, and not truly your Kindred at all -- I judge it's more that no one beside your siblings has any substance to you, exists save in relation to yourselves, and so it really is less monstrous than . . . others' behavior. I don't put you on the same level as . . . Morgoth, for example.

Celegorm: [sarcasm]

--How generous of you! Well, I'm off to defend your borders from wolf-spies and hell-boars -- you can go on flagellating yourself, since you seem to prefer it.

Orodreth:

No, as it happens I'm going to sit here and sort through paperwork, which is far worse punishment.

[Celegorm laughs disbelievingly]



You try it sometime -- going through leaf after leaf, scroll after scroll, when the handwriting's as familiar to you as your own, or in a page of dull clerical copy there's a note dashed across that makes you laugh out loud because you can just hear the tone of voice -- and then you remember . . . Surely you can understand -- What about going through your father's things?

**Celegorm:** [stricken]

That -- you -- that wasn't--

[raising voice]

We didn't betray him! We tried--

**Orodreth:** [gently]

I know. --Goodbye, Cel.

[Celegorm stares at him, then storms out, slamming the door behind him. Orodreth bends to collect the documents swept off by the air, and just stops, standing by the desk, closing his eyes with an anguished expression. Then he goes back again behind it, sits down and starts going through the Kingdom's records again. After a moment, however, he looks up in sudden realization, rises and hurries into the outer chambers.]

### SCENE XII.ii [no dialogue]

[A hallway in the heart of the City, running along a carefully-sculpted channel of one of the underground watercourses of the Narog. Huan trots through in a businesslike manner sniffing a trail. People stop talking as he goes by and look around him guiltily for Luthien.]

### SCENE XIII

**Gower:**

--Nor state nor ceremony shall e'er suffice  
to stand for power, that no more present,  
returns not twice--

[The Regent's private office -- Finduilas is pouring wax carefully for her father to stamp with the royal seal, which is a challenge because a circle large enough to

take a state seal wants to keep pouring off the page. She blows on it, watching it closely from an angle and waves him off when he goes to impress it.]

**Finduilas:**

--Not yet, not yet -- it's just like molten glass at this stage, hard on the surface, pure liquid underneath. You'll ruin it and we'll have to peel it off and start over again.

[He smiles at her officiousness, and she smiles back]

--Now.

[Orodreth emblazons the document.]

**Orodreth:**

No matter how many assistants I have, you'll still be the best.

[Finduilas tosses her head in mock arrogance]

**Finduilas:**

Of course I shall.

[reproachfully]

--But did you have to shout at him so?

**Orodreth:** [grimacing]

Yes, I did. He was supposed to be doing his job. I'm sorry if he got a sudden inspiration and wanted to sketch it down right away, but I didn't accept his application to mind the door and deal with the small matters and keep trespassers out of my office except when he feels like doing something else -- I took him at his word that he would, in fact, mind things for me and if I can't rely on him to do that, then he needs to find me someone who will be responsible enough to put his or her own enjoyments to the side for the duration of service and go back to his studio. --Grinding Ice, I'm doing it now.

[sighs]

Anyway, he hasn't bolted yet, so the shouting seems to have done some good. --Either that, or he's waiting to assassinate me.

**Finduilas:** [appalled]  
Father!

**Orodreth:**

But I don't think so. I do think it was necessary to get through to him, unfortunately.

**Finduilas:**

I don't know -- it just seems so -- uncivilized.

**Orodreth:** [wry]

Unfortunately, civilization requires a good deal of work to keep it so. And sometimes the work is rather rough on one. A good deal of suffering and sweat goes into creating any worthwhile performance, on a musical instrument, or out of a forge, or -- here.

[shaking his head]

I had no idea so much of it. It . . . all . . . seemed to take care of itself. Now -- I feel like someone building a city out of sand -- no blocks, only mortar -- and dry. Grain by grain by grain . . . I don't know how he did it. I'm beginning to think he wasn't joking when he said sleep was a waste of time.

**Finduilas:** [uncomfortably]

I do wish you wouldn't keep dismissing yourself, Father . . . He wouldn't have chosen if you if you weren't capable of doing it well.

**Orodreth:**

No, it's only that -- the alternative -- was even more unacceptable.

**Finduilas:**

But . . . I know you thought that there were things that should have been done better, or that didn't get done and should have, that you would have if, well--

[he doesn't say anything, and she looks away]

That is -- I mean -- you -- I always thought that people ignored you, that you felt relegated to the back ranks, overshadowed . . . by . . . him . . .

**Orodreth:** [sighing]

Overshadowed? . . . Yes. As one feels overshadowed by a mountain, or by the forest itself, and -- never

having known or experienced anything else -- cannot even conceive of what absence of same would entail. And now . . .

[shakes his head, runs his hands along the just-signed proclamation]

And the diplomatic complications . . . I swear I'd no idea there were so many different ethnicities in Narog alone, each with their own completely different idea of what's fitting and proper! Even in a single village . . . And they don't -- that is, mistrust is too strong a word -- but they don't trust me to understand what they're getting at or referring to, not without complicated explanations -- quite correctly, I'm discovering -- and that just leaves so much open to simple misinterpretation, and I hardly dare decide anything for fear of offending against someone's legitimate claims.

**Finduilas:** [frowning]

Is it true that the natives don't really understand what we did for them? That they think we're to blame for all the troubles in Beleriand? That's ridiculous, isn't it? I mean, obviously we're not.

**Orodreth:**

Who said that? Her Highness of Doriath?

[Finduilas nods]

I'm not sure that I would agree with the Doriathrin interpretation of history in all particulars, but the stance is not entirely without validity and the concerns worth bearing under consideration.

**Finduilas:** [wryly]

Is that a "yes" or a "no"?

**Orodreth:** [brief real smile]

Of course.

[considering look]

Are you going to invite her to your Gathering tonight?

**Finduilas:** [blushing]

I -- I hadn't -- I didn't think she'd wish it.

**Orodreth:** [pragmatic]

It's going to look very singular and undiplomatic if you don't. You've invited Lord Celebrimbor, haven't you?

**Finduilas:**

Yes, but he probably won't come.

[pause]

It would be so -- awkward -- if she did . . .

**Orodreth:**

As would not inviting your cousin and seniormost member of the nobility present.

**Finduilas:** [grimacing]

But--

**Orodreth:**

I know. Believe me, I know, dear. There are no good decisions, sometimes.

[silence -- Finduilas moves things about in distracted "tidying" of the desk]

**Finduilas:**

Are you coming?

**Orodreth:**

Most unlikely. I feel guilty in advance for taking the time away from this--

[gesturing inclusively of the office mess]

--to eat dinner with you. Whether Her Highness attends or not.

**Finduilas:** [doubtful, a bit skeptical]

There isn't really that much work, is there?

**Orodreth:**

You haven't any idea, child. --I haven't any idea. But I'm starting to.

**Finduilas:**

Father! You're not going to slide out of it, are you? You promised!

**Orodreth:** [snapping out of it]

What? Oh no. Even if you were willing to overlook

such abuse of your patience, it would be most ungracious to the chefs and disrespectful of their work. This isn't going anywhere, and a few hours won't make much difference, I'm afraid.

[stands up]

Would you mind putting out the warmer, dear?

[Finduilas extinguishes the flame under the wax and takes his arm; as they walk into the inner rooms of the suite:]

You'll have to tell me all about your latest composition over dinner; I'm afraid I didn't completely understand what you were trying to accomplish with the variations in the fourth movement when you described the idea to me last Summer...

### SCENE XIII.ii [no dialogue]

[Huan arrives at the entrance to the Regent's apartments. He goes into the antechamber and lies down rather surreptitiously among the raised beds of waterplants, not having been noticed by the Aide, who is working in the files with the rather set and diligent expression of someone who has been thoroughly dressed-down in very recent memory.]

### SCENE XIV.i

Gower:

--What would the melancholy heart, of peace,  
of quiet, or songs whose sadness is their beauty,  
will may yet forsake, for sake of duty--

[Luthien's apartments -- Finduilas enters, looking very exasperated, with Huan beside her holding her hand carefully in his mouth the way retrievers often like to do.]

Finduilas:

Huan, what's wrong with you? Do you know how -- why  
do you want to follow me?

[he lets go, giving a penitent twitch of his tail; to Luthien]

I was coming to talk to you and he insisted on

sticking to me like a burr -- he couldn't have been closer if he'd been sewn onto my skirts! And holding my hand -- ugh! I can't imagine why.

**Luthien:**

Er...

**Finduilas:**

One moment, if you please, cousin -- I've got to wash my hands.

[Luthien looks mildly guilty but says nothing while Finduilas goes into the private part of the apartments. Huan wags his tail, grinning]

**Luthien:** [whisper]

Thanks -- I didn't think she'd be so hard to find.

[He wags harder and flops down on the floor next to her. Finduilas returns, still shaking her hands reflexively]

**Finduilas:** [genteelly peevish]

I don't know what's gotten into him: he's never been clingy like this before. I know some dogs who are given to hand-holding, but it's rather different with a Hound that size.

**Luthien:** [innocently]

Oh. You, um, were coming to find me?

**Finduilas:**

Yes--

[she gives Luthien a funny look, finally realizing she's not sitting on a bench or chair but perched on the wall, and sits down in a chair herself, smoothing her skirts nervously]

I'm so sorry, but with everything I'd forgotten to mention it to you earlier -- we're having a little get-together tonight, at Gwin's -- well, actually his father's hosting it, but I'm mostly in charge, and -- it occurred to me very belatedly that I hadn't remembered to invite you.

[her tone of voice throughout is distinctly dismissive of it, oh-you-wouldn't-like-it designed to discourage interest, and she doesn't look enthusiastic either.]

**Luthien:** [neutral voice]

A get-together.

**Finduilas:**

--Just a small Gathering, some friends of ours and House Guilin. Perhaps some music, discussion of theories, nothing very elaborate -- nothing inappropriate, of course--

**Luthien:** [musing]

I've not had much heart for music, since my parents broke us up.

**Finduilas:** [relieved]

Well, I was pretty sure you wouldn't want to come, but I didn't want to make you think we were leaving you out--

[starting to rise]

**Luthien:**

--Who's going to be there? Your father? Anyone else I might know from Doriath?

**Finduilas:** [sitting down again, wringing the fabric of her dress nervously]

Well . . . I'm not sure that Father will be able to make it, but . . . there might be some people you'd recognize. Mostly friends of Gwin's, from the army, or mine, from here . . .

**Luthien:** [decisive]

I'll come. It might do me good to get out and talk to people, take my mind off things.

[Finduilas looks stricken, though covers well]

**Finduilas:**

Oh! Oh . . . er, of course . . .

**Luthien:**

What's the matter? Don't you want me to come? Isn't that why you asked me?

**Finduilas:**

Well -- please don't take this the wrong way, but -- I can lend you a dress, without too much trouble, since you're tall for being Sindar, but we'll have to start now to accomplish anything with your hair.



**Luthien:**

What's wrong with my hair?

**Finduilas:** [apologetic]

Well . . . it looks like you cut it yourself in the dark. Or without a mirror.

[pause]

**Luthien:** [flatly]

That's exactly what I did. As you know.

**Finduilas:**

Yes -- but -- it looks it.

[longer pause]

**Luthien:** [ice]

Well, then, we'll match, won't we.

**Finduilas:** [sighs]

Please don't be so sensitive about everything. Nobody takes you seriously when you're so touchy and, well, messy. It's as if you're trying to attract attention and be unpleasant, and that just rubs everyone the wrong way.

[Luthien glares at her, and Finduilas looks away in discomfort]

**Luthien:** [aside]

No one takes me seriously like this, hm?

[aloud]

Very well. This is your City, I'll do as you would, then.

**Finduilas:** [dismayed]

Oh . . . You're sure about this?

**Luthien:**

Once I make up my mind about something, I stick with it.

**Finduilas:**

Er -- yes.

[sighs]

All right, then, we'd best go and find something for

you now.

[she stands up, and Luthien jumps down from the ledge]

I've got one outfit that I think would suit you particularly well, and it wouldn't point up your haircut the way most of mine will. In fact--

[she walks towards the door, sounding a bit more enthusiastic]

I really think that will work well, because it's a style my aunt designed to wear her hair braided up with, and if we can just do something with the ends, then--

[Luthien, not listening, stops and bends down to scratch Huan's nose]

**Luthien:** [aside to Huan]

I don't expect you want to come to this. But thank you for finding her for me, and providing me moral support. I expect I'll see you later--

**Finduilas:** [curiously]

Luthien?

**Luthien:**

--Coming!

[aside, shaking head]

--The things one does...

## SCENE XV

**Gower:**

--"Faithful as a hound," the adage old,  
yet how shall faith be held with faithlessness?  
Of little use to have a form both strong and bold  
when mind and heart are held in such distress--

[On the terrace in front of the Gates Huan is lying down like a statue of a lion, while the sentries give him uneasy looks, wondering what he's doing there and if he senses something they can't. A party of hunters rides up from out the woods, Celegorm in the lead, and dismount, some of them leading the horses, others carrying the game. Celegorm notices his Hound when the rest of the

pack goes up to greet him. (Needless to say, it's somewhat loud.)]

**Celegorm:** [unpleasantly surprised]

What are you doing here? You're supposed to be entertaining the Princess Luthien. If you're not going to do that -- you should have been attending me. We could have used you, you know.

[shakes his head]

Now, you go back to Her Highness' rooms and stay this time, boy.

[Sadly Huan gets up and walks in with the rest of the party, while the other hounds make worried noises when he doesn't respond to them.]

## SCENE XVI

**Gower:**

--As well might gild the gold day-lily  
or plate with silver the brighter stars of night,  
as render fair yet fairer still by handwork silly  
changing changeless pattern to accustomed sight--

[The Regent's apartments, Finduilas' rooms -- Luthien is sitting on the bed looking rather ironic and put-upon. She is wearing a sumptuous and graceful gown of deep reds while Finduilas sits behind her fussing with her hopeless hair. She still holds on to her own dress and wrap, rolled up tightly in her hands, however. A jewelry casket is open on a small stand nearby.]

**Finduilas:**

No, of course you can't wear blue, it's Autumn.

**Luthien:**

But you're wearing blue.

**Finduilas:**

Yes, but I'm blonde.

**Luthien:**

--Is there someplace in Arda that that makes sense?  
Because I never heard anything like that from Mom.

[Finduilas laughs]

Why does everyone think I'm trying to be funny?

[aside]

I'm beginning to think I know why Galadriel never stays here very long -- nor Finrod!

**Finduilas:**

Do you want the gold earrings with garnets, or the red-enameled earrings that I made to go with it? They're both quite nice.

**Luthien:** [trying not to be rude]

If you made the enamels to match then I guess they'd go best with it, right?

**Finduilas:**

Well, I think so -- but then you might want to wear real gems, because of your rank. Either set has matching hair ornaments, so it doesn't matter.

**Luthien:**

Well that's how I feel about it all.

[she pokes listlessly through the jewelry in the case.]

Oh -- no, I think I'll wear these.

**Finduilas:** [looks]

Oh, no, those won't do.

**Luthien:**

Why not? They have matching hair ornaments too, I see--

**Finduilas:**

But those are for Summer. You can't wear roses right now.

**Luthien:**

But they're made of white enamel and gold. How can it matter when you wear them, since they don't fade?

**Finduilas:** [shaking her head in dismay]

You just can't. It would look so -- odd.

**Luthien:**

Well, they're what I'm wearing. Sorry.

**Finduilas:**

Oh Luthien, please--!

**Luthien:**

Nope, nope, it's that or no jewelry at all.

**Finduilas:** [humoring]

Oh, very well, as you please.

[pause]

--Does everyone in Doriath talk that way?

**Luthien:** [defensive]

What way?

**Finduilas:**

Oh, you know, --your accent.

**Luthien:**

I don't have an accent. You lot are the ones with the funny accents, changing all the sounds around.

**Finduilas:**

No, it's you who have changed the language: we spoke it the original way. --And those expressions. "Nope," "Yep" and the like?

**Luthien:**

Oh, that's North Country Sindarin. I picked those up from Beren. I got into the habit of using them to annoy my parents, it was an ideological thing, before I tried to run away and got shut up in the tree. --Now I don't even remember I'm doing it.

[half-smiles]

I've tried to get him to teach me his old language, the one they spoke before Finrod taught them Sindarin, but he says there's no point--

**Finduilas:**

Well, there isn't, really, is there? I mean, it isn't as though there's anyone left to speak it with.

**Luthien:**

How can you talk so casually about the death of an entire civilization?

**Finduilas:** [uncomfortable]

Well -- it isn't the same as if Nargothrond were destroyed, really.

**Luthien:**

Oh, don't start that about their culture being all derivative and all -- I don't want to hear it this time, either.

[Finduilas gives her a worried frown]

**Finduilas:**

You're not going to be like that all night, are you? Will you at least make an effort to be sociable and civil?

**Luthien:** [wry]

Don't worry. I will be sure to uphold the family honor.

[Finduilas gets up and goes out of the room to put away the jewel box. Luthien, frowning, looks at the rolls of cloth in her hands; after deliberating she briefly sets them down on the bedspread, but after a moment's hesitation picks them up again and stuffs them up the long sleeves of her gown, not trusting to still be there when she gets back.]

**Finduilas:** [businesslike]

Now, let's see if I can't make your hair a little more presentable. Perhaps if I use the roses to hold down the worst of these tufts . . .

[Luthien's expression becomes completely glazed as Finduilas gets more enthusiastic.]

## SCENE XVII

**Gower:**

Fleeing ceremony and the affairs of state,  
the princely artist ne'er can 'scape  
the burdens of his blood, duty, nor fate--

[Luthien's chamber. Celebrimbor is setting a final piece of coving in place around the fountain just installed across from the bed, where it can be seen as well as heard. Some trouble has been taken to make it fit into the surrounding decoration, which he pauses to admire. When Huan comes in behind him he doesn't look around to see who it is.]

**Celebrimbor:**

All right, you can turn the water on again, I've got everything connected up--

[starts when Huan breathes in his ear]

Oh! It's you. I thought you were one of the guards.  
--Don't, don't put your nose in that, I had to touch in some of the frieze around it and it's still wet in parts.

[the Hound gives him a reproachful Look and sits]

Sorry. I'm just so used to people being careless with my things. I guess the fact that you're back means my uncle's back as well, eh?

[Huan thumps the floor with his tail once and whines]

I suppose that answers my question -- am I going to this wretched affair tonight or not?

[sighs, gets up]

Well. I'll check this first, then head on over to Gwin's House. What joy.

[looks at Huan]

Aren't you coming?

**Huan:**

[whining, lies down]

**Celebrimbor:** [lifts his hands]

If her Highness doesn't mind you underfoot, it's no business of mine what you do.

[looks around at the room again]

Superb . . . Somehow between Finrod's "technical and organizational genius" and Orodreth's "terrifying warrior goddess" -- "intuitively brilliant artist" seems to have gotten overlooked. Not that I imagine she'd give me so much as a "good day" after this . . .

[snorts]

It's not as if I had anything to do with it, or as if I could have done anything -- Can you begin to understand what it's like, being the only person in

our family with even the barest capacity for empathy? It's hellish. Everyone assumes that I approve of Grandfather and the rest of the lunatics without even bothering to ask, and even my friends who know better are treating me as though first of all I must have known in advance, and secondly as though I must benefit from it. And you know what that means? Half of them won't speak to me, and the rest are too polite, and I can't figure out which of them want me to put in good words for them--

[short laugh]

--as if that would help them! -- and which ones are afraid of me now. Oh, the honour of belonging to House Feanor -- it's almost more than I can stand. [He turns, realizing that someone has entered the chamber and is witnessing his rant]

**Guard:** [warily]  
My lord?

[he looks around the room, confirming that no one besides Huan is present]

**Celebrimbor:** [savagely]  
What?

**Guard:**  
Er -- you -- you did want the water turned back on, did you not?

**Celebrimbor:** [haughty]  
As a matter of fact I was on the verge of coming to do it myself. --Should I?

**Guard:**  
No, sir, I'll . . . take care of it.

[he leaves, but can't help checking one last time.  
Celebrimbor shakes his head and laughs bitterly before beginning to put away his tools.]

**Celebrimbor:**  
You don't know how lucky you are, being a Hound. No conflicts of loyalty, no agonizing decisions for you, just to be happy doing a job you love!

[Huan sighs, putting his head down on his paws]



## SCENE XVIII

**Gower:**

--As though no auguries most solemn should presage,  
lightness and pretense hold sway in Nargothrond,  
where all have else forgot their most solemn bond,  
else pretend, penning self-reproach in pleasant cage--

[Guilin's House apartments. A long solar with a very high ceiling, set with gold mosaic -- very bright effects. Luthien is standing next to Finduilas, the ambient light and the dark outfit doing nothing for her pallor. Superficially she looks like a model of royal dignity and sophistication, but her eyes are suspiciously wide and her smile a little too set -- if she wasn't too proud she'd be hiding behind her cousin right now or looking for a corner to lurk in. Despite promises, Gwin is scowling off by the wines and not mixing at all, or else his expression is keeping everyone at bay. The people who have brought instruments are tuning up and/or having an argument about it.]

**Finduilas:** [aside to Luthien]

--Please don't look like this is such an ordeal --  
you wanted to come, after all--

[to a newly-arrived guest]

Oh, I'm so glad you're here -- we'll be able to make up the full ensemble, tonight, I think. --I don't believe you've had the honor of being introduced to my cousin, Princess Luthien of Doriath?

**Bard:** [startled, belated recognition]

Oh! Stars, I hadn't realized how tall you were when I saw you at the feast, the other night.

**Luthien:** [baffled]

Er, yes -- one often is, if one's parents are . . .

[she waits for some explanation; the Bard is embarrassed realizing the social blunder]

**Bard:**

Quite . . . so . . .

[Awkward pause]

I'd best go find out what tuning they've agreed upon.

--If you'll excuse me?

[Luthien turns to Finduilas, frowning.]

**Luthien:**

That's the seventh person to make a comment like that. Starting with our host, who at least managed not to laugh about it. What is so -- incredibly fascinating, not to say amusing, about my height?

**Finduilas:**

Oh -- Well -- most of the locals aren't anywhere near as tall as we are. It's, er, just surprising.

**Luthien:**

But why is it so -- humorous?

**Finduilas:** [whispering]

You wouldn't -- I'll explain later.

**Luthien:**

Explain what?

**Finduilas:** [trying to shush her]

Please, I'll tell you later.

**Luthien:** [edged]

Tell me why it's funny -- or I'm leaving right now.

**Finduilas:** [pleading]

You won't understand--

[Luthien turns and walks towards the nearest door, which turns out to be a closet.]

**Luthien:** [not backing down]

Where's the exit?

**Finduilas:**

Luthien -- it--

[gives up]

Beren -- isn't.

**Luthien:**

. . .

**Finduilas:**

I told you so.

**Luthien:**

I don't believe it. I'd ask why but I'm afraid the answer would completely destroy any remaining traces of sanity. --Why? My mother's taller than my dad.

**Finduilas:**

Yes -- but -- so much?

**Luthien:**

Well. No. --So what?

**Finduilas:**

It . . . just . . . looks awfully strange.

**Luthien:**

How would you know? You haven't seen us together.

**Finduilas:**

Cousin, please, I -- I have to go see to my guests--

[Flees. Luthien glowers, starts to look fierce and dangerously alert instead of wan and overwhelmed.]

**Luthien:** [aside, ranting to self]

Listening isn't working, since no one's saying anything meaningful to me. But how to start a conversation without throttling it in the same breath? If I just say, "Don't you all realize that the Enemy has put a forgetting spell on you so that you can't think about fighting him?" then won't they just forget what I said? I swear this feels more like one of Beren's weird stories from Dor-Lomin than anything real at all -- if you throw a stone into a certain pool you turn to stone or kill a bird and no one recognizes you after -- Like the world, only a little mad. Perhaps I've got to become mad myself, to speak to them? That's rather a frightening idea--

[The lady of House Feanor's following who was so patronizing to Beren sees Luthien alone and approaches, interrupting her deliberations]

**Lady:**

So! You're the famous Luthien of Doriath. Your mother really is a goddess, as they say?

**Luthien:** [brightly]

Yes, and I'm taller than you. And your consort.

**Lady:** [checking, at a loss for the next thing to say, her

lines having been stolen]

Ah, yes, I -- I -- I admit to having been rather --  
er, surprised, at that.

[frowning]

--Is that the fashion in Menegroth these days?

**Luthien:** [manic cheerfulness]

Yes, it's quite stylish, being tall, though I don't  
know what we'll do if it goes out. --No, I borrowed  
it from my cousin.

**Lady:** [struggling to regain composure]

No -- I meant -- that is to say -- your hair,  
Princess Luthien.

**Luthien:**

You haven't heard? I cut it off to make a cape out of  
it. And a rope.

**Lady:**

Truthfully? That -- wasn't exaggeration?

**Luthien:**

Hardly.

**Lady:**

It truly was that long?

**Luthien:** [shrugs]

When I finished with it, it was.

**Lady:** [shaking her head]

I still can't believe you did that. Everyone thinks  
it's completely bizarre.

**Luthien:** [finds this blunt curiosity rather refreshing,  
smiles not entirely hostilely]

Well, one does what one must. Sometimes I find it  
rather unbelievable myself.

**Lady:**

When are you going to grow your hair long again?

**Luthien:**

No idea.

**Lady:**

But don't you miss it?

**Luthien:**

Very much. But I'm working on getting it back.

[her interrogator looks confused]

You wouldn't happen to know who's got it at present? Supposedly I'm being all generous in allowing your Sages to study it, but I'm afraid it's gotten shoved off and forgotten, and if that's the case I'd really like to have it back.

**Lady:**

Your -- hair?

**Luthien:**

The rest of it, yes.

**Lady:**

Oh, your cloak! --No, I'm so sorry but I haven't the faintest idea. I assumed it was still in your possession.

[The way it often happens at parties, now that someone is talking to her, a little knot of conversation begins to form around Luthien. Finduilas drags Gwindor over as dubious moral support]

**A Musician:**

So -- is your mother really one of the Powers?

**Luthien:**

A minor Power, yes; she's Maiar, not Valar.

**A Courier:** [from Gwindor's old outfit]

But still a goddess, nonetheless. --I find that very difficult to imagine.

**Luthien:**

She looks just like anyone else -- well, not just like, there's nobody quite like my mother, but -- she isn't really different from any other Elf, except for what she can do.

**A Sculptor:** [dryly]

And the fact that people become legendarily tongue-tied upon first seeing her -- even those born in Aman -- and can't explain what it is about her afterwards.

**Luthien:** [shaking her head]

Oh, I don't think it was her, I just think it was the

awkwardness of the situation and the fact that we'd never met them. --And the effort of editing out recent events and all, which rather puts a strain on conversation.

**Lord:** [yes, this is the same chap who was so snide to Beren, joining his wife now]

Why ever did Melian come to Middle-earth, your Highness? I've always wondered about that.

**Luthien:**

The same reason as you, pretty much -- to explore, see the world, get out on her own.

**Lord:**

Of course, that all is long in the past, now, that she's settled down and devoted herself to looking after one small area.

**Luthien:**

Doriath isn't small. --But that does seem to happen, doesn't it?

[pause -- this begins to register on her audience]

Or are you really wondering why she married my father? I'm getting the impression that that's what you're really trying to ask.

**Lord:**

Er -- as a matter of fact, yes.

**Luthien:**

Because she fell in love with him, obviously.

**Lady:**

But why would one of the divine Powers marry so far beneath her? And not only a mere Elf, but a Dark-elf to boot?

**Luthien:** [heated]

My father is not a Dark-elf. My father was one of the three Chosen ones, just like your kings. He went to Valinor, with Ingwe and Finwe, he just stayed here with my mother instead of going back. He didn't need to go to Aman again.

[Perhaps in response to her own informal manner, perhaps not, the crowd of guests becomes less and less formal and more direct in their interrogations and opinions -- she

is both very much "at bay" and holding her own, for the moment]

**Bard:**

But then why did he choose to reject High-elven culture?

**An Archer:** [from Gwindor's old company]

Especially after we saved you all from the Dark Lord and taught you how to fight.

**Luthien:**

No, you didn't. You all showed up at the last minute, after we'd been fighting for Great Years, and acted like you invented warfare. We watched you relearn everything we knew for centuries.

**Lord:**

But if it wasn't for us rescuing you, fortunately before it was too late, you'd all have been thralls speaking the Black Speech in Angband long ago. We might not have "invented warfare" but we certainly improved upon it. Our weapons and armor protected you from invasion, Princess, whether you wish to believe it or not.

**Luthien:** [getting hotter]

No, actually, it was Denethor and his people who did that, long before you arrived. And then my mother set up the Labyrinth around and made a haven where the Enemy's powers can't come, though he keeps trying anyway. And again, that was completely without any Noldor help. The Singers didn't have your arms or horses, but they kept their pact with my father anyway -- why do you think we gave them complete freedom of our realm? They earned it with their blood!

**Lord:**

Oh, I think I'd have heard about that if it were so, your Highness.

[pause]

**Luthien:** [shrugs]

Well, it's like the old saying goes -- "Talks much, listens little." Hard to hear when you're making noise, or when you think there's nothing of value to be heard, or when everyone around you simply agrees

with you.

**Sculptor:** [aside to Gwindor]

I think she just insulted all of us.

**Gwindor:** [dry]

You don't say.

**Finduilas:**

This is becoming a disaster.

**Gwindor:**

You'll note I've refrained from saying -- I said as much.

**Finduilas:** [sharply]

Until now.

[Enter Celebrimbor unobtrusively. He drifts up in the background, nods to Gwindor]

**Lord:**

But don't you think, your Highness, that you ought to show some gratitude for all the benefits that we brought you from the West?

**Luthien:**

What benefits? All the benefits of Aman that we've got came from my mother, before you were even born. All you did was go off and make your own closed societies up north and out east and ignore the rest of us, until Morgoth trounced you and you had to find people to take you in.

**Bard:**

But if you're going to talk about closed societies, shouldn't you turn your mirror upon yourself, first, Highness? After all, it's your House that sealed off a quarter of central Beleriand and banned not only us but our very language from popular usage.

**Luthien:**

That was symbolic--

**Bard:**

It seemed entirely real to myself, at least.

**Celebrimbor:** [breaking in]

I always assumed it was a particularly clever way of protecting local cultural differences and dialects,



myself. Who could argue with a gesture of grief? Far more effective than any encouragements or logical arguments to that effect.

**Luthien:**

No, it was completely sincere, sir!

**Celebrimbor:** [placating (but rather lecturing -- he can't help it)]

I didn't mean that it wasn't, my lady, I only meant that there could well be more than one reason for a ruler to do something. I know that our cousin for instance was quite troubled by the rapid abandonment of native art forms and linguistic variations for imported ones, and was quite helpless to do anything about it, since any attempts to encourage the, er, retention of older forms were regarded with suspicion. Attempts to withhold those benefits of Aman, you know. We talked about it on several occasions.

**Luthien:** [a little doubtful]

I still don't think you're right, I don't think Dad would do things for ulterior motives like that.

**Finduilas:**

But you yourself talked about how subtle and underhanded his way of getting around his promise to you was, Luthien. And then locking you up afterwards.

**Bard:**

That wasn't just an exaggerated rumour, then? Your family really did keep you as a prisoner?

**Luthien:**

Well, it was house arrest, not a dungeon -- but thirty-odd fathoms of airspace is an extremely good barrier to leaving.

**Sculptor:**

Why did you escape that way? It sounds like utter insanity.

**Luthien:** [raising her eyebrows]

What better way would you have recommended?

**Sculptor:**

But -- your hair? That's just so -- unspeakably peculiar.

**Luthien:** [shrugs]

I didn't have anything else. It wasn't like I could have carved steps down the trunks without anyone noticing, or, in all likelihood, killing myself. So I just thought: what am I best at? --Music; healing; fibre arts; making things grow. --What have I got to work with? Not much. But if you can make a bowstring out of hair, why not a longer cord? It's sort of like a cape already, it's dark, I want to be invisible in the dark -- I just need more. So what do I need? Tools. What could be more natural than for me being bored to ask for some harmless crafts projects to keep busy with?

[raises her hands]

I guess I could have asked for a potted plant, some kind of creeper like flowering bindweed, and grown that down to the ground -- but it would have been hard to make camouflage out of it. So I just -- made enough of it to go round and made it strong enough to work.

**Bard:** [expert opinion]

I'm afraid I simply don't see how that's possible. You shouldn't be able to change the fundamental nature of anything.

**Luthien:**

I could try to explain what I did, but if you're convinced it won't work it probably won't make any sense to you. Essentially -- I just channeled every comparable thing out there into it, and combined their qualities with my own power to, hm, encourage it to imitate them. It wasn't a change so much as an -- oh, enhancement.

**Bard:**

Ah, I do understand the "sympathetic principle," your Highness; I'm simply unconvinced that so great an -- enhancement -- could be accomplished.

**Luthien:** [amazed]

The fact that I did it isn't enough?

**Bard:**

I would never deny that, but I feel certain that some other interpretation of the process must be looked for. Quite possibly some conjunction of forces aligned

between Arda and the nearer stars, occurring simultaneously, might have been responsible for the results, do you not think more likely?

**Luthien:**

--No.

**Lady:**

Well, I for one cannot imagine even attempting such a ploy.

**Luthien:** [nods]

I suppose I could have asked for a rucksack and camouflage and a compact tent and so forth, but that would have been rather obvious, wouldn't it? --Not that it wouldn't have been more comfortable, but I can't imagine no one would have commented on it. Besides, I'd have had to ask for rope to get down with, and none of that would have solved the problem of what to do about the sentries.

**Archer:**

But weren't you frightened? A bowstring is one thing, but a lifeline!

**Luthien:**

More like terrified out of my mind. But I'd done all the calculations, and it should have been strong enough for the tension.

**Archer:**

But what if you'd been wrong?

**Luthien:** [shrugs]

Then we wouldn't be having this conversation, would we?

[the meaning of this occasions some rather dismayed looks, when it sinks in]

**Archer:** [admiring]

I say, you're fabulously brave, Princess Luthien -- no wonder the Enemy's never been able to conquer Doriath, if you're typical of its people!

**Luthien:**

Hm -- they wouldn't say I was typical, because they think I'm a complete lunatic. And I didn't feel very brave.

**Archer:**

Well, we could have done with more of your sort of "terrified" in the Leaguer, without a doubt.

**Luthien:**

Oh, were you at Serech too? Did you know Beren's family?

[extreme embarrassment all around, especially among the veterans]

**Archer:**

No -- that is -- not at the Fen, but -- I -- I did know the Beorings, of course, from the siege, and -- over the years, you know, here -- and at our other forts.

**Luthien:**

You were stationed at the Fortress?

[awkward looks]

**Gwindor:**

We were there -- sometimes. Rotation.

**Luthien:**

Were you there at the end?

**Finduilas:** [hissed]

--Luthien!

**Luthien:** [ignoring her]

I understand that the Fortress was abandoned intact. Wouldn't that mean that the defenses would be the same as when you left them -- so they'd be more vulnerable to you, since you know their strengths and weaknesses?

**Courier:**

That -- would only be the case if the Enemy hasn't made changes. It's far from a safe assumption that he hasn't, your Highness.

**Luthien:**

Couldn't you tell?

**Archer:**

Well, by that time, it would be too late.

**Luthien:**

I don't mean when you're actually fighting there. I mean spying on their headquarters over the years.

**Courier:**

I'm afraid there haven't been any definitive reports since we were forced to retreat--

**Luthien:**

--You haven't kept it under observation?

**Courier:** [even more patronizing]

The entire region is under the Enemy's control--

**Luthien:** [annoyed]

--Yes, I know--

**Courier:** [less superior, more defensive]

I meant, your Highness, that it's too dangerous to try to infiltrate. It would just be wasting lives. We've concentrated on a strong front line of defense to prevent further encroachment.

[she frowns]

**Luthien:**

I don't understand why they left the bridge and the gates intact, if nothing else. I know that the ones we use are wood, but still, can't you pull down stonework with enough horses? Or dig under it, or something?

**Archer:**

You weren't there, your Highness. There was -- wasn't time for that.

**Celebrimbor:** [curious]

What about the Master Word? Or was there not one used there? And hence it left standing? That would explain why no counterattack was ever mounted.

[uncomfortable silence]

**Gwindor:** [embarrassed & rushed]

Anyhow that would have been the first thing to have been changed.

**Luthien:**

But still, even if they have changed things about the defenses, they can't have changed all, right? There

must be posterns, or, or, ledges in the rock that you know about, or what about for the water to go through? Aren't there conduits going into the castle from underground? You wouldn't want to have to go out for water while under attack. Wouldn't it be easier to make a culvert under the surface than try to drill down farther for a well?

[more silence]

I mean, I know I don't really know what I'm talking about, but I'm trying to look at it rationally. It almost seems as if you've got this idea of Sauron as invincible and of the castle as impenetrable, and so you're not even able to think of ways around it.

**Finduilas:** [undertone, grabbing her arm and very severely]  
Luthien. This is hardly the proper time nor place to bring that up.

**Luthien:**

Well, if I'd ever been able to talk to your father today, I would have asked him instead.

**Finduilas:** [outraged]

Holy Stars! Have you no sense of propriety whatsoever? Don't you dare persecute him about the Fortress, he doesn't need any more stress and that's the most tactless thing you could say or do--

**Gwindor:** [tersely]

--Faelivrin. Stop making a scene. You're behaving worse than anyone right now.

**Finduilas:**

Do not tell me what to do--!

**Luthien:**

Instead of fighting with each other, shouldn't we be fighting with the Enemy? Is there anyone here who disagrees with that?

[turns, holding out her hands]

Surely all of us, together, cannot be daunted so easily? Don't tell me that the best and brightest of Nargothrond can't with all the resources here manage to overcome the confusion of your leaderless state and recover our people -- and the advantage in the War! -- by concerted effort?

**Musician:** [blurting it out & instantly regretting it]  
But they wouldn't be allowed back in any case.

**Luthien:** [whirls]  
What do you mean?

[everyone tries to avoid looking at her -- or each other,  
which complicates things]

**Guilin:** [finally]  
No one taken by the forces of Morgoth is permitted to  
return to any of our Cities, Highness.

**Luthien:**  
Why ever not?

**Courier:**  
Well -- of course -- the Enemy's power -- to  
permanently turn people into agents of his side--  
  
[rallying]

Surely even you in Doriath know about that--

**Luthien:**  
We've heard about it, yes -- but what barbaric custom  
is this, and when did it start?

**Guilin:**  
Not custom, Highness, but the Law -- yet one more  
consequence of the War, made in response to unhappy  
discoveries too often repeated.

**Luthien:**  
But he's your ruler!

**Guilin:**  
Not even Kings may be above their own decrees --  
among our Kindred, at least.

**Luthien:** [horrified]  
You mean Finrod wouldn't let prisoners-of-war come  
back?

**Celebrimbor:** [grave]  
He had to; he had no choice.

[she gives him a severe Look]

--No legitimate choice, being ruler. Personal liking  
or distaste come not into it, my lady, -- only the

good of all.

[pause]

**Luthien:**

That's terrible.

**Celebrimbor:**

War is terrible. But the rest of us do not have the advantage of an impenetrable barrier surrounding our domains.

[Luthien puts her hands to her temples, shaking her head]

**Luthien:**

--But what about your uncle?

**Celebrimbor:**

--My uncle?

**Luthien:**

Yes, Maglor, the one who was captured and had his hand cut off.

**Celebrimbor:**

That wasn't Maglor, that was Maedhros--

**Lord:**

And he wasn't maimed by the Enemy -- it was during the res--

**Luthien:** [agitated]

--That -- that isn't important, none of it, it -- that -- but he was caught and kept in Angband for months, right? That was the story we heard. You said none of you allowed prisoners to come back to your holdings.

**Celebrimbor:**

He -- he wasn't brainwashed, only punished.

**Luthien:**

How do you know?

**Celebrimbor:**

He -- couldn't have been. You would realize that if you met him.

**Luthien:**

You don't know that, though, for certain, if the only



way you've found out before is when they turn out to be working for the Enemy, and that's why you've had to make a preemptive decision. You're just hoping you're right.

**Lord:**

But he's -- he was the High King, and the head of our House.

[Luthien raises an eyebrow, says nothing]

**Finduilas:**

You don't understand--

**Luthien:** [fierce]

What don't I understand? Explain it to me. Explain why you're willing to hide behind this rule of yours to justify not trying to save your own King, your own family and friends, and pretend that they don't exist any more! My cause is personal, nothing to do with my country's good one way or the other, but yours is both. Do you really believe that it's the better course, that it's even permissible -- not just for you, but for Finrod, to leave Nogrod leaderless, I can't believe that anyone would seriously think that, law or no law.

[waits]

**Bard:**

Nothing is that simple, your Highness--

**Luthien:**

You all seem to think it is. So tell me.

**Finduilas:** [answering almost in spite of herself]

It isn't that -- easy, you've no idea, you're not Noldor, you can't understand it and you don't want to--

**Luthien:**

Because your father wants the throne for himself? I've heard that rumour.

**Finduilas:**

No! That's not--

[breaks off]

**Luthien:**

I doubted it rather, myself. What then? You're afraid of going to war again, and you've deluded yourselves into thinking that you can hide from it altogether here? We can't even do that in Doriath.

**Lord:** [stiffly]

No one who's spent her entire life hiding behind a maze should put the name of coward to another.

**Gwindor:** [half-aside, ironic]

Not entire.

**Luthien:**

I want to know -- Who's in charge here?

**Bard:** [wildly]

You can't ask that, Your Highness--

**Luthien:**

Why not?

**Celebrimbor:** [into resulting silence]

Because then they'd have to answer.

**Guilin:** [severe]

My lord, that is unseemly -- such mockery is unfitting the times--

[Celebrimbor bows, doesn't say anything]

**Luthien:** [fierce]

What, sir, would better fit these times? You hold the rank of Counsellor -- what counsel of rescue have you given, what cunning plans to save your dear lord and mine are underway, what forces of arms are readied, what spies sent forth to get the lie of the Enemy's lands before setting forth?

**Guilin:**

Highness, it is only to be expected that your idealism and inexperience would make simple all matters of state--

**Luthien:** [with a cutting gesture of her hand]

None. I know. I've guessed it.

[she wheels, looking around at them all.]

**Finduilas:** [pleading]  
. . . Cousin . . .

**Luthien:** [voice shaking but not weak]  
--There is a darkness that fills this City for all the brightness of your illuminations and no torch, no lamp, no flame you can light will serve to brighten it while your Sun is gone from here -- you stay underground, where Elves were never made to stay, and the cloud of our Enemy's will darkens your minds without wind and light to disperse it, and you paint the sacred stars on your ceilings but you can't hear them, you're deaf and blind because Finrod was your vision, your senses, and without him you're lost -- can't you see it, can't you break free for an instant and think, act, do what has to be done?!

[she pauses for breath, panting, and waits for response. No one will meet her eyes.]

--Doomed. All of us.

[looks around, with an expression of extreme concentration, remembers and fixes on one of the doors to the outside halls. Curtseying to Lord Guilin, but without any polite words of excuse, Luthien turns and sweeps out of the apartments. The strained silence persists.]

**Gwindor:** [awkwardly, aside to Finduilas]  
Should I go after her?

**Finduilas:** [tightly]  
--And then what? You won't get any thanks from her more than I have. Don't worry -- she'll just press someone into guiding her around again.

[tossing her head with an exasperated noise]

I knew it was a mistake from the beginning. It's all very well for my father to talk, when all he does is hide from her.

**Gwindor:**  
What's worse -- empty gestures, or nothing at all?

**Celebrimbor:** [ironic]  
Or deception and interference -- surely worse than either, wouldn't you say?

[Gwindor's expression locks down]

Well, if I can't say it, who can?

**Guilin:** [low voice]

My lord, it would probably be for the best were you to depart now.

**Celebrimbor:** [not angry]

At once, sir, but I can do better than that: I'll remove hence with any of our people that are present and leave you in such peace as remains -- though, regrettably, nothing but a most limited removal. Gwin, I expect I'll see you at the pels?

[Gwindor nods stiffly]

Until then. My lords -- my lady--

[bows to the three of them. To the guests:]

Gentles of my House, let us retire to our own devices, and not burden our hosts' graciousness further this evening. --Though phrased as a request, you'll note that was not a suggestion. I'd rather not be obliged to imitate my seniors' style, but if I must, I certainly shall. --Shall we?

[gesturing to the assembled visitors, gathering up the ones from the following of Feanor. Over his shoulder:]

By the by, you do realize that Her Highness is entirely correct--? We are, in fact, all Doomed.

[The remaining company react silently to this parting shot in a frozen tableau.]

## SCENE XIX

**Gower:**

--Conspiracy's full measure, half-unveiled,  
hath yet to be revealed; yet now assailed,  
shall out, to light -- yet to what avail?

[Luthien is going quickly down a long spiral case, not stairs, but a very wide shallow ramp with an ornate railing that opens onto each floor.]

**Luthien:**

I know we came up this way, and it was three -- no four -- no it was three floors up, so that means this

next one will be the landing, and then I'll just find another side door and hang on to Orodreth like a burr until he gives in.

[goes into the hallway -- but it's a circular gallery, going around the width of the spiral]

This isn't right -- but I know I counted it right -- this is like the Labyrinth at home, it doesn't make sense, I don't believe it -- Oh -- Maps!

[The walls are painted with huge fully-rendered terrain shots in realistic color, divided by ornamental borders and with the lettering artistically integrated into the topography.]

Seven rivers -- that's got to be Ossiriand -- yep, there's the name, so that's Amon Erebor, and that's Aros, and there's Esgalduin -- Oh, that has to be Hirilorn! Star and water, that's a lot of detail -- so where did I come?

[she starts walking slowly around the perimeter, looking at the maps]

Ah, right, there's Amon Rudh. So south from that . . . And that has to be the Gates -- Here we are -- unfortunately! so somewhere in here's where I was caught. I knew it was a long way, but it looks much longer here. So how far is it to the Fortress?

[steps back to look up]

Oh.

[flatly]

I hope this is not to scale.

[looks around]

Perhaps there's a more accurate one . . . ?

[moves a little farther around the curve]

That doesn't look so bad . . . Oh. That's got to be the ocean. I guess it is to scale after all.

[runs her hands over her face -- when she looks up, realizes that there are other people in the gallery as well.]

I'm sorry -- I didn't mean to disturb you, I didn't know there was anyone here. I was looking for the Regent's quarters, but I think I got off on the wrong floor.

[The others don't say anything. They look surprised and worried, at first, before recognizing her. The conspiratorial group consists of the Sage who tried to accost Luthien earlier in the Hall of Hours, and her companions there: a Scribe, the Royal Guard who refused to go, and likewise a Ranger.]

I beg your pardon. Is something the matter?

**Guard:** [bowing formally]  
Your Highness.

**Sage:** [not at all formal]  
--Is something the matter, she asks! How nice to be so carefree as to be able to enjoy one's self at festive gatherings!

**Luthien:**  
What are you talking about?

**Sage:** [caustic]  
Of course, what else should one expect, from someone who thinks so highly of herself as to demand a Silmaril for her dowry!

**Luthien:**  
What?! I never asked for the cursed thing -- I had nothing to do with that!

**Sage:** [gesturing disdainfully at Luthien's dress]  
Of course not. You never sent anyone on a fatal quest, never started up the Curse again, never blithely accepted the ill-gotten gifts from those hands your thoughtlessness played into, forgetting the people you've destroyed by it -- oh no--!

**Luthien:**  
What are you talking about? I came here to get help for Beren, and I'm still trying to get the help I was promised, and some kind of interference from the Enemy seems to be stopping the people in charge from actually doing anything.

**Scribe:** [astounded]  
You really don't know?

**Luthien:** [exasperated, runs her hand through her hair, scattering pins and jewels]

How do I know? What is it that I'm supposed to know?

**Sage:**

She doesn't. She's no idea.

[flings up her hands]

**Luthien:** [tight smile]

"She" is also losing her temper.

**Sage:**

You really pretend that you've no idea of the devastation you've caused, that you're really that naive as to believe everything you're told? That you've no notion whatsoever of the catastrophe you and your mortal boy have brought to our realm?

**Luthien:**

Did I ever say I believe "everything" I'm told? You're the first people willing to do anything besides offer me platitudes and meaningless comforts -- but if all you're going to do is make cutting-yet-incomprehensible remarks and melodramatic gestures, I really haven't the time to waste.

[turns to go]

**Sage:**

Princess Luthien!

[she looks back over her shoulder]

You said you knew it when the Beoring was captured.

[Luthien nods, her expression closed. Tautly:]

--What's happened to them?

**Luthien:**

I don't know. I can't scry, I'm not a Seer, I only know that Sauron has Beren because my mother said so, and how she knew that I don't know, and all I knew was that I felt like I've been told being shot feels like, that I was suddenly more frightened than before the First Battle, and it wouldn't go away.

[looks at them for a long moment]

--You know them. They're your family, your friends, your loved ones and what are you doing here instead of moving all Ea to help me get a task force out and underway--

[whirling and stalking down on them as her voice rises]

What, for Nienna's sake, do you know that you're not telling me? How can I work with nothing but lies and silence to spin?

[They stare back at her, guiltily. The Sage looks away, as does the Guard]

**Scribe:** [whispering]  
Your Highness--

**Luthien:** [through clenched teeth]  
Tell. Me.

**Sage:** [savagely]  
Civil war, that's what. Your fiance started the trouble with your insane demand.

[the Guard starts to say something and stops]

**Luthien:**  
Not mine, my father's, and this does not look like a place that's seen fighting, so what are you talking about?

**Sage:**  
The sons of Feanor threatened it. And the King's honor wouldn't let him back out of this damned quest of yours. And so, thanks to you, those wretches have taken everything that King Felagund made and we've lost the best of our champions to your selfishness.

**Luthien:** [icy]  
There's more, isn't there? Why didn't you put a stop to it? This is your City, your Kingdom, and you just let them take it away from you? They're two Elves, even if they are great warriors -- what can two do against thousands?

**Ranger:**  
They invoked the Oath.

**Luthien:**  
Oh yes, the famous Oath. The one that makes any means



justifiable. So what? Let them. Then lock them up.

**Guard:** [desperately]  
You don't un--

[stops at her Look]

They have a large number of supporters here, and --  
there's already been one Kinslaying, your Highness.

**Luthien:**  
Then if you're not of that number -- what are you  
still doing here? If you're on Finrod's side, why  
aren't you with him? Where are the rest of you --  
there must be others -- and why didn't you go too?

**Scribe:**  
To Angband . . . ?

[trails off]

**Luthien:** [snorting]  
And yet -- you'll blame me, blame Beren, blame your  
King, blame your friends -- all before you blame  
those whose fault it is -- my bloody-minded cousins  
-- and yourselves.

[pause]

**Sage:** [quietly]  
You don't seem at all surprised.

**Luthien:**  
Surprised? At being betrayed and waylaid by my  
relatives? What in Arda's surprising about that? --Or  
that the sons of Feanor are just as bad as ever the  
rumours painted them way back when? Not that either.

[narrowing her eyes]

--So I take it that means it isn't, in fact, a public  
service on my part and an act of gratitude that I  
allow you tech people to keep my cloak.

**Sage:** [checking in surprise]  
We don't have it.

**Luthien:**  
Who's got it, if you're not working on it?

**Scribe:**

Lord Curufin. That's what my cousin, who's married to one of their Healers, said. No one can handle it, you know. They've given up trying to figure out how it works: whenever anyone touches it it makes them all sleepy and stupid.

**Luthien:**

Stupider, you mean. How can they think to rule a country they neither know nor care anything about? A throne's more than a fancy chair, to put here or there or forget about when you've something else to amuse yourself with. All they've done is destroy Finrod's power; they've done nothing to consolidate their own.

**Sage:**

On the contrary -- your Highness -- I would say that they have succeeded quite well at that.

**Luthien:**

No, they've not. It's only that no one cares enough to do anything about them, because you're all insane.

**Scribe:**

No, you don't understand the circumstances--

**Luthien:** [tossing her head]

Yes, so everyone keeps saying. I suppose I could have said, "because you're all cowards," but that would have been redundant.

**Guard:** [angry]

Your Highness, that word is unacceptable--

**Luthien:**

But true--

**Sage:** [impatiently]

Quiet. The fact remains, Princess Luthien, that you are here, and the lords of Aglon-and-Himlad are here, and they are in power and you are not, and rumor has it they mean to use you as a pawn against your father, and what are you going to do about it?

**Luthien:**

Go find Beren.

**Sage:**

How? By yourself?

**Luthien:**

If I must. Which increasingly seems to be the case.

**Sage:**

You'll be killed. Or captured.

**Luthien:**

Possibly.

**Sage:**

Not possibly -- certainly.

**Luthien:**

Then your Foresight's better than mine. I'm only mostly sure it's hopeless. But I'm still going to try.

[she glares at them one by one]

Or you could come with me. We would have a better chance that way, right? It would be less hopeless. You--

[to the Sage]

--could get me my cape, and I could hide our activities from observation, the Enemy's -- and the enemies', and--

[to the Scribe]

you can get hold of the plans of the Fortress and any information in the archives about Sauron, about his weaknesses and whatever else might be relevant, while you two can get us gear and provisions and horses, and make yourselves useful if we end up having to fight. Though I hope we don't. I'm thinking I could disguise myself as a slave -- everyone keeps telling me I look like one as it is -- and sneak inside, but we really, really need good maps for that--

**Ranger:** [shaking his head in dismay]

Your Highness -- you can't -- seriously mean to go against the Abhorred One and his wolves by yourself.

**Luthien:**

If you come with me then it won't be by myself, will it?

**Guard:**

But if -- if even His Majesty couldn't do it -- what chance have any of us?

**Luthien:**

Then at least we will have failed trying to accomplish something. Can you live with yourself, not having done that? --I can't.

[pause]

**Sage:** [slowly]

If we meet you at your apartments it will be obvious that something is afoot and we will be prevented.

**Luthien:**

Where's a better place for it? Here? I can wait here.

**Guard:**

No, someone could come through at any time. That's why we come here, because it can look like a chance encounter on the causeway.

**Luthien:**

Somewhere near an outside door? Then we would be right there to go at once.

**Scribe:** [shaking head]

That would be too obvious.

**Luthien:**

Well, it can't be anywhere too far, because I'll get lost and have to ask directions. --Which would be rather unhelpful.

**Ranger:**

What about the Hall of Morning? It would be very hard to get lost going there, and no one will be there for almost two bells.

**Sage:**

Ah. That's a good idea. An excellent idea.

**Luthien:**

? ? ?

**Sage:**

It's right at the very top of the ramp. The gallery ceiling is a system of prisms and reflectors so that sunlight from the hills over us comes down through

the crystals and illuminates the chambers. There's nothing to see at night, though, so it's deserted.

**Luthien:**

Very well. But be quick about it. We need as much time as possible, so that we can make as much time as we can before we're discovered. I don't know how well I'll be able to conceal us in broad daylight.

**Scribe:**

Are you certain you'll be able to extend the working to all of us?

**Luthien:**

Yes. --Well, reasonably certain.

**Sage:**

That does not inspire much confidence, your Highness.

**Luthien:** [shrugs]

I'm sorry for being so honest. Subterfuge doesn't come naturally to me, I have to work hard at it. Would you rather I tricked you into helping me? I'll try that, if you'd prefer.

**Sage:** [shaking her head]

I confess you're far from what I'd expected.

**Luthien:**

My parents would undoubtedly agree with you there.

[giving them all a stern Look]

Do not fail us. I will be waiting for you.

[the conspirators part ways, leaving the Hall of Maps, some down the ramp, some up -- Luthien continues upwards to the top story]

## SCENE XX.i [no dialogue]

[Luthien's apartments. Huan gets up from beside the bed with the impatient heave of a bored dog and starts to go down the hallway, but stops in the solar and whines in distress, furrowing his brows, and circles around the room. He moves towards the outer door again, but can't bring himself to disobey and flops down in front of the fireplace, ears drooping, to wait for her.]

## SCENE XX.ii

**Gower:**

--Hope doth flame brightly, yet  
absent further fuel, like straw outburneth swift,  
to let  
dark despair return, as the sun forever  
shall be set--

[The Hall of Morning. It's very dim -- only a bit of discreet artificial illumination, with some scattered white light coming through the prisms overhead from the not-quite-full moon. Luthien is pacing, arms tightly folded around her, but stops as the camera nears and sits down heavily on a bench with a tense expression.]

**Luthien:** [decidedly, gloomy]

--Not coming.

[she shivers]

That leaves me one option. Of course that only makes it more hopeless than before . . . But then, that isn't really so, is it? It always was hopeless -- I was just wrong about it. As usual.

[shivers again, rubbing her arms]

Well, if I can't get my cape back, I can take whatever I need in exchange. It's worth at least a horse and some heavy clothes, I should think.

[shaking her head]

By rights I could take anything I wanted, for the purpose of rescue, but I've no idea what besides my cape would help. --Well, Finduilas' dress won't, that's for certain.

[Starts to pull hers out of the sleeves, but stops when she hears something outside. Stands up at once, looking alert]

**Curufin:**

No, I really don't think we should send to any of the others until it's all--

[breaks off]

--Who's there?

**Luthien:**

I am.

[The sons of Feanor come the rest of the way around the curve of the ramp and stop when they see her, very surprised]

**Curufin:** [surreptitiously taking his hand off of his knife]  
Your Highness? What are you doing here all alone in the dark?

**Celegorm:**

Are you lost?

**Luthien:** [hiding her disappointment]

Thinking, my lords. I like to do that, sometimes, up high. --One might ask the same of you--?

**Celegorm:** [ignoring her question]

I'm glad to see you've taken my advice and gotten some decent clothes for yourself. Much better.

**Luthien:**

There was an affair tonight that Finduilas talked me into going to. Hence all this.

**Celegorm:**

Well, good for you! Good to get out and enjoy yourself.

[looks around for anyone else]

--But surely they didn't throw you out, what?

**Luthien:**

No -- there were too many people there and it got rather overwhelming.

**Curufin:**

Was my son there, did you notice?

**Luthien:**

He was still there when I left, but I've no idea if he's there now, my lord.

**Curufin:**

Hmph.

**Luthien:**

My lord, I've been looking to ask you for -- for a long time, now: do you know when I will be able to get my cape back?

[Throughout the following exchanges she watches them both closely for any sign of guile]

**Curufin:** [shrugging apologetically]

I'm afraid it's rather out of my hands at the moment, though I assure you I'll certainly check on the progress of the researchers for you. --But you don't really need it, anyway, correct?

**Luthien:**

Whether I need it or not is irrelevant: it's mine.

**Curufin:** [carefully, as to a child]

I don't believe that anyone has challenged that, your Highness.

**Luthien:**

But no one seems to know who's got it, or where it is, and it's extremely valuable to me, at least.

**Curufin:**

Nargothrond is a very large place, with a great number of people in it.

**Luthien:**

So I have noticed. How is that relevant?

**Curufin:**

I meant, my lady, that these things take time.

**Luthien:**

Ah.

[glances around, worried and torn]

Well, my lords, I suppose you would prefer to have the peace and quiet to yourselves, for your own conversation, so I'll bid you good evening and return to my own apartments now.

**Celegorm:**

Oh no, you can't go gettin' lost again -- we'll take you that way and make sure you're home safely.



**Luthien:** [defensive]

I'm not lost, I just don't know where everything is. --No one's ever taken me through it all and explained how it connects up, or drawn out maps for me. I remember some of the plans that Finrod showed us, but those weren't complete and changes have been made since then.

**Curufin:**

A lamentable oversight, I'm sure -- one of our people would be able to remember it all from the first, and so we forget that it might not be that easy for an outsider, and fail in our duty.

**Luthien:** [aside]

What a backhanded insult!

[aloud]

But I don't want to be an inconvenience to you . . .

**Curufin:**

Not at all, my lady.

[bows]

**Luthien:** [doubtfully]

Well, if it isn't any trouble--

**Celegorm:**

Good! That's settled.

[takes her arm and leads her down the circular causeway]

Impressive place, what? But you need to see it properly in the morning. Perhaps you'd like to come up and see it tomorrow?

[Curufin looks around suspiciously one more time to make sure no one else is about]

**Curufin:** [catching up to them]

Of course it's nothing to compare with Formenos, but for Middle-earth Nargothrond isn't bad at all. --Not that it couldn't stand improvement.

**Luthien:**

That's true of most things, though, isn't it?

[aside]

And this is one that could have gone far worse.  
There's still a chance.

[aloud]

So would you be so kind as to show me how the layout of the City goes? And perhaps I'll even be able to remember it, with your capable instruction? Then I'll be able to feel a bit more at home here.

**Celegorm:**

Well, this, right here's the southernmost vertical shaft that goes all the way through all the levels--

**Curufin:**

No, there's one more farther south than this, you're forgetting about.

**Celegorm:**

But that's only an air-shaft, Cur, not a proper access . . .

[they go out of sight, the sons of Feanor correcting each other. No one arrives to rendezvous with Luthien as the scene fades to darkness]

## SCENE XXI

**Gower:**

Small waves and winds may mark a passing gust,  
soon o'er;  
--or signify the coming of a gale-wind's flood  
and roar--

[The Regent's office. Orodreth is standing with hands clasped behind his back, listening to Gwindor, and looking at a painting over the fireplace showing a seascape with sunset castle (which is probably Barad Nimras, not imaginary view.)]

**Orodreth:**

So she knows.

**Gwindor:**

I'm afraid so, sir.

**Orodreth:**

Well. In a way, it's a relief, I must confess. --Do

you know what she means to do?

**Gwindor:**

I -- couldn't say.

**Orodreth:**

I'm not asking you to betray any confidences.

**Gwindor:**

Truly, sir, I don't. I -- my guess is that she would take independent action, again. But I don't think it would be feasible, because of their orders, and their partisans among the Guard--

[hopeful]

--unless you were to intervene, sir.

**Orodreth:**

You know I can't do that.

**Gwindor:** [lightly]

You know, this time they didn't even have to raise a hand to profit by others' work. Well, if guile and coercion are what it takes to rule, along with ruthlessness, then they're as fit to be sovereigns as the Enemy himself.

[Orodreth gives him a sidelong glance, and he reddens]

Sorry, sir -- I meant no disrespect.

**Orodreth:**

You did. But that's all right.

[sighs]

Whatever one may truly say about a somewhat casual and proprietary attitude evinced towards their own followers, it's true that during the chaos of the battle their primary concern was to effect the safe retreat of the greatest number of their people, with little regard for the salvage of property and possession.

[musing]

--Of course if your attitude towards property is that you can always acquire more of it from someone else, so long as you have a sword, then that isn't perhaps

so creditable after all . . .

[turns to face Gwindor]

Stay attentive. Let me know what you hear, both what's reported and -- what isn't.

**Gwindor:**

Yes, my lord. --There's far more of the latter than the former, I'm afraid.

**Orodreth:**

Do your best. It isn't your fault that you're resented -- I had to put someone in charge, Gwin, and I'm sorry it was you.

**Gwindor:**

It isn't that, sir -- not only that. It's also that there are things I don't know to ask, or that I'm expected to understand, that Intelligence doesn't even think to tell me because I should already know. --Quite apart from the fact that no one trusts anyone else these days.

**Orodreth:** [grim smile]

How can they, when we cannot even trust ourselves?

[Gwindor bows and leaves, wearing a frown pretty much permanent now]

## SCENE XXII

**Gower:**

Masking disappointment with cheerful mien,  
Tinuviel pursues gleam of hope half-seen.

[The Great Solar. Luthien -- back to her usual outfit -- comes in with Huan, to the not-surprising lull in conversation. Although she has the red gown folded up in a parcel in her hands, she keeps glancing around even after she's spotted Finduilas, playing with a couple of other luthenists. No luck, however -- though there is a suspicious flurry by one of the farther doors, as if someone has just dashed out upon spotting her.]

**Luthien:** [brightly]

Here's your dress, cousin. Thank you for the loan.  
Oh, and I clipped all the hair ornaments I could find

into the neck of the shift. I'm afraid some of them must have come out.

**Finduilas:** [wary]

Just -- put it there, please. On that hassock.

[pause]

You could have had someone bring it to our House, you know.

**Luthien:**

Oh. You're right, I could have. Should I do that instead?

**Finduilas:** [rolling her eyes]

It doesn't matter now. Just -- just leave it there, I'll take care of it.

[pause]

I can't believe you didn't wear the shoes.

**Luthien:**

They didn't fit.

**Finduilas:**

And you didn't say anything?

**Luthien:** [shrugs]

It didn't matter, with a floor length skirt.

--Besides, then I'd have been even taller.

[another pause, awkward for Finduilas at least, expectant for Luthien]

**Finduilas:** [finally]

Where are you going?

**Luthien:**

Just right here, by that clock thing.

**Finduilas:**

It isn't working -- he's got it apart again.

**Luthien:** [bland]

Oh, is that why he's got all those bits of crystal and wire on the floor around it? --Come on, milord, let's go thank Lord Celebrimbor for the fountain.

[She tugs Huan's collar and they cross over to the

Chronometer; Finduilas, chagrined, tries to ignore her, but keeps on paying attention even while she's playing. Luthien and Huan come up and sit beside Celebrimbor, flanking him -- he looks up and gives her a questioning look but doesn't open conversation]

**Luthien:** [low conversational tone]

Thank you for setting that up for me. It's helped.  
If I said that I thought I was being followed today, what would you say to that?

**Celebrimbor:**

That you were being paranoid--

[her expression darkens]

--but not necessarily incorrect.

[Luthien nods slowly]

**Luthien:**

I don't suppose you can tell me who. Or why.

**Celebrimbor:** [scanning the crowd, shakes his head]

--Too many possibilities.

[she looks disappointed but not surprised]

**Luthien:**

I need to ask you something -- about last night. This one you can answer.

[Celebrimbor nods warily in encouragement]

What did you mean by a "master-word"? Is it like a key? Something to close or open the gates?

**Celebrimbor:**

The Master Word . . . it's not a "word" of course, but a Word in the larger sense, a saying of power and binding words -- or rather, in this case, of unbinding. A key, all right, but not merely to the gates of a place. I've never seen one used -- never actually heard of one being employed, save in miniature for experimentation, but -- in theory -- it works by reversal, taking the energies of place that are trapped within each stone, indeed any object raised up and set in place, and using that very power to force the stones and structural elements apart . . .

[rapt in speculative imagination]

It should -- as I was taught -- unbind every stone one from the other, in the order of their setting, last to first, so that the structure is unfolded, outwards, opening slowly like an enormous flower, like a rose or a water lily, or more like a snowfall, perhaps, if a snowfall were like a fountain of stone . . . I'd love to see it, it would be spectacular beyond description. --But a great waste and a shame, of course.

[this last does not sound quite as sincere as what preceded it]

**Luthien**

Is there a Master Word for Nargothrond?

**Celebrimbor:** [understanding perfectly what she's getting at] Not that way. Nargothrond is built upon a natural system of caverns, not built up from the ground. Maker's Words would have been used -- indeed, are, as work still goes on -- to aid in the process, but it is principally cosmetic, or at least not integral, to the city's foundation.

**Luthien:**

But not all of it is carved in one piece: I know that there are hallways that are not at all natural, and which aren't merely facings. Even the gate pillars are partly added to the living rock.

**Celebrimbor:** [shaking head, not unsympathetically]

It wouldn't work. The Gates are their own Working entirely. All that invoking a Maker's Word here would accomplish would be massive destruction and damage, but no outside access, I'm almost entirely certain.

**Luthien:**

Maker's Words -- but what about the Master Word?

**Celebrimbor:**

Even if there was one, and even if you had it, you couldn't use it. It would require an almost unimaginable amount of power to enforce it. It isn't a matter of merely invoking it, but of Unworking, -- you don't have to understand how it works, according to the theory, but you have to will it, without any hesitation or distraction, and it does

help to know what you're doing as well. I would be very reluctant to attempt such a thing, on such a scale.

**Luthien:**

But the Master Word would open the Gates as well? It opens everything within its compass, you said. And if it took infinite power to wield it, there would be no point to it, would there, so while it shouldn't be easy, for obvious reasons, it shouldn't be impossible either . . . ?

**Celebrimbor:**

Yes. But it's no good. Assuming that there is one, because this was never intended to be a garrison at all, only two people would know it, so far as I know, and I'm neither of them. Not that either of us two would ever countenance such a deed, of course . . .

**Luthien:**

Who? Finrod of course, and . . . Orodreth? Being Regent?

**Celebrimbor:**

So indeed would I assume.

[Finduilas, catching the relevant word in the conversation, sets her lute down and comes over]

**Luthien:** [intense]

I need to get out of here.

**Finduilas:**

--What about my father?

**Luthien:** [innocent]

I was just remarking that he's the Regent.

**Finduilas:**

Everybody knows. People are going to think you really are crazy, Luthien.

**Luthien:** [raises her hands]

It isn't as though I can do anything about that.

[gets up]

**Finduilas:**

What are you doing now?



**Luthien:** [mildly]

Going for a walk along the ways Lord Curufin and his brother mapped out for me so that I don't get lost again. Hopefully. But I've got Huan, so I can just follow him back if I do.

[To Celebrimbor, who is frowning over some of the Chronometer's figures]

--Don't worry about getting it exactly right and finishing it. It's more like the world if you don't.

[she drifts off again, followed by the Hound. Celebrimbor frowns]

**Celebrimbor:**

How did she know that was what I was thinking? I never mentioned the design to her at all.

**Finduilas:** [shaking her head]

Well. Mortals say madness and prophecy go together. Perhaps it's true.

[they look at each other, both daring the other to say something about prior events. Both decline, however]

## SCENE XXIII.i

**Gower:**

--Striving to ordain in plots and scheming dark,  
both strong and subtle eke shall miss their mark--

[The royal apartments -- Celegorm is trying out several different bows and equipment cases. Curufin is reading.]

**Celegorm:** [dissatisfied]

Eh, I think I like my own better. This one's too long, this one's not springy enough, and the grip's all wrong for me on the other one. Which is a real pity, because it's got a simply beautiful case -- but it wouldn't do to break up the set. --Maybe I'll keep the quiver though; I really do like the closures on it, and it hangs well.

**Curufin:**

You talking to me or yourself, Cel?

**Celegorm:**

Oh, both. --Too bad it's so wet out, I'd like to go for a ride but no chance of raising a decent chase, what?

**Curufin:** [absently]

Probably. Why don't you go and work on cheering up Her Highness some more? You seemed to get along well with her last night. She actually smiled a few times that I saw.

**Celegorm:**

Yes. --But I'm worried about her, wandering like that. Sometimes she seems all there, and sometimes she really doesn't. I mean, what's to stop her from taking off in another crazy fit? Apparently she made some kind of scene at Finduilas' party, embarrassed herself and went off in a tizzy, though I didn't hear exactly what it was all in aid of.

**Curufin:**

Well, I doubt that there's much in the way of elegant manners in Thingol's backwoods palace. It wouldn't be hard to make a social gaffe, even if she was paying attention.

**Celegorm:** [frowning more]

And then -- and she would have been all right, if no one had stopped her, because Huan was with her -- but she was drifting around the water-gates, and had no clear idea of what she was doing down there when the guards asked her. I shudder to think what might've become of her, if she'd slipped out and Huan hadn't been along to bring her back!

**Curufin:** [sighing]

Yes, I heard. It's taken care of -- I spoke to the staff and arranged that she's to be accompanied at all times about the City. Honor guard, you know. She is a Princess, after all, and should be treated with all due respect. No need to worry about our little bird taking flight into the forest again.

**Celegorm:**

You don't suppose--

[A knocking at the outer door. Irritably:]

--What now?

**Attendant:**

Sirs, someone from the Regent's office is here with  
-- a request . . . ?

[Orodreth's Aide comes in and tries to hand Celegorm  
several sheets of parchment; the elder son of Feanor,  
weighing quivers, gestures to give it to the younger,  
which the Aide does, with every sign of distaste]

**Aide:**

Milords. My master requests that you peruse these and  
return the answers to him as promptly as you possibly  
can without sacrificng accuracy. Both accuracy and  
speed are of the utmost importance. Good day.

[With the shallowest bow possible he leaves; Curufin  
looks at the pages and snorts]

**Curufin:**

--Is this some kind of joke? He demands "The amount  
of resources consumed by your Household for the past  
three winters, with projected use for this coming  
season, as itemized on the accompanying lists, titled  
and ruled for your convenience" --Does the fool have  
nothing better to do than harrass us with paperwork?

[He crumples them up and flings them into the fireplace.]

What were you saying, there?

**Celegorm:** [shakes his head]

Nothing. Just -- silly notion. Never mind. Hey, d'you  
think if I kept this quiver you could make a matching  
bowcase to go with it?

**SCENE XXIII.ii**

[Luthien's chamber. She is washing her face in the  
fountain, and is still crying a little. Huan is watching  
her with his head on one side ]

**Luthien:**

I suppose that was stupid of me. I should have  
guessed there'd be sentries on duty even at the  
river, even if it is inside the City -- it's still  
a gate. I'm going to have to think this through more  
carefully.

[suddenly struck]

--I shouldn't have involved you, either. I didn't even think of that -- but you have to obey your master, don't you? This is just as bad as it was at home. Only he wouldn't kill you for helping me, would he? You're immortal, aren't you? That's what he said when he was telling me all about you. Except for the Prophecy.

**Huan:** [whining]  
[thumps tail twice]

**Luthien:**  
But you didn't bark at the guards or anything when I was trying to find the controls for the wicket. Thank you.

[shaking her head]

I wonder how long it will be, before I really do go crazy here? Not long, I'm betting.

[sighs]

All right, starting from scratch -- what have I got to work with now?

#### SCENE XXIV

**Gower:**  
None hath guessed how, desperate, Tinuviel should try  
E'en without her work of power, from Nargothrond  
to fly--

[The royal apartments -- Curufin is working with a largish device on the central table, something made of polished metal that is hinged in many different ways and seemes to be composed equally of flat plates and curved bars -- it looks a little like vines growing over a pile of sheer-plane rock, in its current folded state.  
Celegorm enters; his brother only nods absently at him.]

**Celegorm:** [abrupt]  
We have to do something else. She nearly walked out of here. Seems I was wrong.

**Curufin:** [suddenly attentive]  
What about the guards?

**Celegorm:**

She called them in to look at her fireplace, said it was smokin' and could they see if the system was jammed up -- and while they were working it over she walked out right behind them.

**Curufin:** [ominously]

I'll have their names for that -- how could they be so unobservant, they're guards, dammit!

**Celegorm:** [shrugs, half-admiringly]

They swore that she was standing there right next to them, making admiring noises all the while. Turns out it was jammed -- only she'd done it herself -- bent it all up so it took a third of a bell to fix it. By that point she was already down in the stables, where she'd manage to convince everyone that she was just another kid looking after the horses -- only reason it didn't work is that the horses didn't recognize her and got all jumpy.

**Curufin:** [looking at the closed, locked casket on a small table by itself]

And no one saw her in the halls?

**Celegorm:**

Oh, they saw her all right -- they just had this idea that she was "someone who was supposed to be there doing something" no matter where she was. So -- question is -- what are we going to do about it? Just a bunch of little illusions, and a few folded baffles -- kids' tricks -- but all together it adds up to -- no bird in our hands. Nearly.

**Curufin:** [tapping his lips]

If she can work that kind of game upon that many people, sequentially and at once, then we need something that cannot be fooled. I wouldn't rely on any kind of a mechanical lock at all -- too easy to fox, and too easy to make it look fixed -- and I wouldn't rely on any lock alone, but in conjunction with a redoubled guard, I would think that a name-boundary set for her only should do the trick. You want to do it, or shall I?

**Celegorm:**

No, that's all right, I thought that's what you'd say but I wanted your input first. I'll go take care of it right now. --What is that?

**Curufin:**

I don't know . . . yet. Where is she? It might be awkward -- if you had to explain.

**Celegorm:** [smiles broadly]

I sicced her on Orodreth -- you know how he can't stop talking when he gets nervous. I figure they're good for another bell at least.

**Curufin:** [looking up in alarm]

You're not worried about what he might say to her?

**Celegorm:** [snorts]

Him? He's not going to say anything that will make his job any harder. And the more nervous he is the less he actually says in all those words. I'm not worried -- you think he wants to explain his role in the affair to her?

**Curufin:** [relaxing]

True. --Aha -- that's how that goes--

[unfolds the device into a huge openwork array]

--But what is it?

**Celegorm:**

Daft!

[shaking his head, he hurries off to set up the security system on Luthien's apartments]

## SCENE XXV.i

**Gower:**

--'Gainst Time's all-consuming power, pleads  
Beauty in vain; likewise fair Justice, where the seeds  
of rivalry in rank Discontent hath flowered, and needs  
must go begging --  
finding Law and Rule but broken reeds.

[The Regent's office. Orodreth is seated behind his desk, looking rather at bay himself, but not saying anything.]

Luthien is standing in front of him, arms akimbo, frowning; Huan is standing with her, looking a bit at a loss; he circles halfway around and lies down in front of the fireplace, muzzle on paws]

**Luthien:**

You've been avoiding me, cousin.

[He raises his eyebrows but doesn't bother denying it.]

--All that wierd formality and distant behavior, when I arrived, as if you'd never gone on hikes with us or spent the night dancing at Menegroth, and I thought you were just worried, and not knowing how to act in your new role, and trying to be proper about it -- But then I recognized it. I might have sooner, if you'd not hid from me so well, but eventually I remembered where I'd seen it before.

[narrowed Look]

In everyone who was ordered to look after my wants and needs whilst I was under house-arrest. It's guilt. Not quite as bad as Daeron's, but -- very near to it.

[sharply]

Why?

[he doesn't answer -- she leans over the desk, fiercely:]

--Level with me, Orodreth.

[He gives a sudden nervous laugh, and she glares at him]

**Orodreth:** [apologetic]

I'm sorry. It's just so -- so very unexpected, to hear mortal expressions like that, coming out of your mouth. Please forgive my levity.

**Luthien:** [severe]

There is nothing remotely amusing about our situation.

**Orodreth:** [completely somber]

No.

[she looks at him expectantly, but he keeps looking at her without saying anything]

**Luthien:** [sighing, runs her hand through her hair]

--Shall I spin this tale for you, then, and warp it

too, I dare say, and leave the gaps and doublings for you to fix instead? It might be faster, at this rate.  
--Not that time matters to you, of course.

**Orodreth:** [upset]  
--Luthien--

**Luthien:** [ignoring the interruption]  
The only question is, where do I start? How long ago shall I begin? Don't worry, I'm not going to start at the Song -- but I do wonder how far back your part in this strain goes, and was it a trio, or merely a resting measure? If it was the former, they seem to have written your part out rather definitely as well--

[He understands what she's getting at and looks shocked, shaking his head in denial]

So you weren't part of it in advance. Not knowingly, at least. --That's something.

[Finally she takes the chair placed for her, not as a supplicant but as if she were conducting the interview by rights. With her head on one side, slowly (not hesitantly though):]

I think -- this discord begins in the Sudden Flame, then -- but only as the resumption of a theme long played. I remember a dinner-table story -- as should you, since you told it -- about swords being drawn on family members way before Morgoth resumed his old tune. --How long in any case, would it have been, would you like to bet, before one or another began to rehearse the burden of "We are the eldest, it should all be ours"--?

[pause]

And once again many voices joined in the chorus -- but how many, or how few, were raised against them this time?

[Orodreth looks away -- but has to meet her eyes again. Huan, on the floor, keeps looking anxiously from one to the other of them, not taking his head off of his paws.]



## SCENE XXV.ii [no dialogue]

[The halls outside the royal apartments: the Sage is reading in an alcove far down the corridor, but at just enough of an angle to allow visibility of the doors from where she's sitting. Nervously she takes a small casket out of her sleeve, as if checking to make sure it's still there, and then tucks it into the stack of books on her lap. After a moment she takes it out and puts it back into her sleeve again.]

[Curufin leaves the chambers with a small entourage; the Sage gets up and slowly approaches the door after they're out of sight. We see her engaging in a conversation with the guards at the door, explaining something about the manuscripts, and they gesture her to bring them inside -- but she hesitates, and after a brief pause hands them over instead and takes off.]

[Out of sight around the hallway she stops suddenly and slams back against the wall, eyes closed, biting her lip and clenching her hands -- she takes the box out, looks back over her shoulder, torn -- and puts it away again.]

## SCENE XXV.iii

[The Regent's office. Luthien is pacing again, her arms folded, and halts leaning against the mantelpiece as the scene opens. Orodreth is looking at her anxiously]

**Luthien:**

Well. That was worse than I expected. --Which I should have expected. What's the best way to get into the castle unobserved? Are there any secret tunnels through those caves along the cliffs? Or is that too obvious? Probably.

**Orodreth:**

I'm afraid I don't understand what you're getting at.

**Luthien:**

If I can't get proper help, if you won't go openly against the Fortress, then I've got to try to infiltrate by stealth and trick my way in to get the keys to the dungeons. Since that was your base of operations, I'm assuming you know all the ins and outs of it, and I need to know everything I can so as

to minimize the likelihood of actually getting caught while I'm pretending to be a prisoner there.

**Orodreth:** [aghast]

You're -- Luthien, you're insane.

**Luthien:**

No, just desperate. There's a difference.

**Orodreth:** [horrified laughter]

You -- no, you're not being rational. You cannot just trick your way in and walk through the Enemy's defenses as though you were -- were--

**Luthien:** [raising an eyebrow]

Bluffing my way through here? Through Doriath?

**Orodreth:** [rallying]

Walking through a place you already know, to some degree, where everything is somewhat familiar, at least, as opposed to a completely-unknown territory full of vigilant hostile soldiery and protected by very-real Enemy magic, without any sort of defenses to assist you? It isn't possible.

**Luthien:**

You could help me get my working back.

**Orodreth:**

Frankly, the mere fact that you're talking about trying to challenge Sauron on your own is enough to guarantee that I would never countenance returning your cloak to you, if I could be sure that that would be enough to dissuade you from this folly.

**Luthien:** [flinging up her hands]

Obviously it would make it much easier. But if I don't have it -- well, if I hadn't had to make it to escape, then I wouldn't have it now either, and I wouldn't know about it so I wouldn't miss it, and I'd still have to do the same thing. So it doesn't really make any difference, unless I let it, I'd say.

[The Regent looks bemused at this rapid assessment. Huan whines quietly.]

**Orodreth:**

Luthien. Believe me. I wish I could have your--

Luthien: [interrupts]

--Don't say "naive"--

[brief pause]

Orodreth:

--optimism. But there is nothing -- nothing -- about this plan of yours that warrants it. If it can even be called a plan. You're assuming that you will be able to even think clearly and react accordingly when you get there, and you're not taking into account at all the debilitating effects of the Necromancer's aura. It -- it generates a kind of solid, physical, terror that replaces the air itself around him.

Luthien:

Well, obviously it's going to be frightening going into hostile territory. That only stands to reason.

Orodreth:

This is entirely another matter. It -- it is as far beyond ordinary, rational apprehension of danger as that is beyond the mild concern one might feel that bad weather might spoil a planned festival. It -- Can you imagine a sound as loud as the Valaroma, which instead of making your heart leap, fills you with the same sort of awe and agitation but with horror, not gladness? Or a wind that fills you with utter nausea, as if it came from a battlefield, but there's neither sound nor smell, only the feeling of a black cloud full of spikes surrounding you, on all sides, wherever you turn? --That's what Sauron's power is like, and nothing like it at all -- for that's nothing but paltry, empty words -- as little to do with the real thing as saying the word "ice" should have--

[silence]

Luthien: [earnest]

I live with that every single day. Every night, every hour, every heartbeat, that's the way it is, exactly what you're describing. I simply have to get up and keep going. Otherwise I'd be curled in a corner somewhere, shaking. But I can't let myself -- I have to keep hoping. --And trying.

Orodreth: [aside]

The courage of ignorance . . . I, too, possessed that, once--

**Luthien:**

Besides, it isn't as though I'm completely oblivious, the way you make out. I did pay attention when Beren was telling me about his War. Sauron isn't completely invincible, Beren got him once, and tricked his minions until he had to give up.

**Orodreth:** [bemused]

That -- isn't -- what I'd understood of it--

**Luthien:** [impatient gesture]

He had to bring in massive numbers of troops and start burning down all of Dorthonion. That isn't invincible, omniscient power, that's just brute force; he couldn't win fairly. So -- he has weaknesses. The trick is using them. And finding them, of course.

[silence. Orodreth sighs.]

--Can you order my escorts to -- be conveniently distracted? Or are they all partisans of the Feanorions?

**Orodreth:** [shaking his head]

Some are, some not. Regardless of which I cannot give such an order, implicitly or otherwise. Whatsoever direct action I should take, should inevitably be reported upon. The consequences -- I cannot accept them. I have to protect what I can.

**Luthien:** [snorts]

They really have you outnumbered, don't they? Just the two of them, against all of Nargothrond, saying "War!" and it might as well be the whole horde of Angband, the way you don't dare stand up to them.

**Orodreth:** [grim]

--Not just two. And you weren't at Alqualonde. You weren't at the Breaking of the Leaguer. You do not know what you are talking about, Luthien. War is not something from a song or a story.

[silence]

**Luthien:**

What do you recommend? That I close my heart and soul and mind to truth and pretend I never knew otherwise? Let Beren die, let his name disappear from the world and live in the frivolity of the moment the way my

parents want me to -- in spite of my loss -- the way you seem to be able to do?

Orodreth: [agonized]  
Luthien--

Luthien:  
Because I can't. I will not stop, not having come so far, not if it kills me, or worse. With help or without.

Orodreth:  
What are you going to undertake to do now?

Luthien: [shakes head]  
No. Better for both of us if you don't ask that.

Orodreth: [formal again]  
I am most terribly sorry I can't help you, my lady--

Luthien: [brittle smile]  
So am I.

[she gathers up her mantle around her, defiantly, and sweeps past the desk towards the door -- then stops, and looks back at him with a baffled, pitying expression]

--What was it?

[as he looks blank]

How did he fail you? --Was it because of Angrod and Aegnor? Did you blame him for sending them up there, or was it something else in the War?

Orodreth: [pale]  
I -- I don't understand what you're trying to convey--

[she shakes her head with a wry expression]

Luthien:  
Yes, you do. Or you'd not try to deny it.

[long pause. Orodreth lowers his eyes]

Orodreth: [whispering]  
You're an only child, cousin. You haven't the experience to -- to understand -- what it was like -- being the last in the family -- and then 'Tariel, bracketed between those two, only ever known as someone else's brother -- with nothing deliberate in it at

all, only that none could help following them, doing what they suggested, wanting to be noticed by them, and not noticing one at all -- and not being able to help the same, either--

**Luthien:** [sad]

No? --Are you sure you weren't one of the ones who listened to Melkor before he was Morgoth, too?

**Orodreth:**

--Ah--

[his defiance falls apart and he puts his head down on his hands, stricken. Luthien looks at him for a few seconds in frustration; then sits on the edge of the desk, rubbing his shoulders, her expression sympathetic]

**Luthien:**

I'm sorry, Orodreth, I really am. --But I can't do anything for your pain, and I can't grant you pardon, because you won't heed my advice, and there's no other way out of this. No one is going to come rescue us this time. No army out of Ossiriand, no Sun out of the West -- we're it.

[she stands and goes out, leaving him there, while Huan hastily scrambles up and trots out after her]

## SCENE XXVI

**Gower:**

--Hot-wielded in needful time, words  
may cross purposes no less than swords--

[Luthien's suite -- she is sitting on the floor looking up at Huan and talking to him, and does not apparently notice when Finduilas walks in behind her, having tapped a few times on the open panel but not gotten an answer]

**Luthien:**

So then I told him that I could accept that that was how he felt, but I couldn't really see where he was coming from at all, and that since he couldn't explain it any better himself he could hardly expect me to understand it either. And then I asked him -- again -- why he didn't just come up and say something to us, or to me, privately, even, and what was up with the lurking off in the distance and watching us

from hillsides like some kind of spy, and he got all twitchy again. --At that point I just gave up because it was clear that I wasn't going to get an answer because he didn't have one, and that my guess was as good as his.

[sighs]

Which so far as I can tell comes down to a combination of pride and embarrassment -- though actually that's the same thing, really -- too proud to admit that he hadn't been able to see me as a grown-up and a person in my own right, not just "Elu and Melian's little girl," until someone else from outside had first, and then too embarrassed to admit that he'd spied on us--

[biting]

and so logically he just kept doing it, and moping about hoping someone would notice and solve his problem for him. --Which happened--

**Finduilas:** [worried]

Luthien, what are you doing?

**Luthien:** [looking up but not getting up]

Explaining about Daeron to Huan.

**Finduilas:** [remaining standing]

--Why?

**Luthien:**

Because he wanted to know.

**Finduilas:**

But -- he's a Hound!

**Luthien:** [narrow look]

If you really think he's just a dog, and no more, then you're blinder than I thought.

**Finduilas:**

Well, obviously he's different -- but he's still an animal, Luthien.

**Luthien:** [staring hard]

That's funny, I don't see anything wrong with your eyes.

**Finduilas:** [ignoring this]

If you need to talk to someone, there are people here who can help you. I'm here.

**Luthien:**

But I don't want to talk to you. If I have to talk to anyone in this horrible place, I'd rather talk to Huan.

**Finduilas:** [exasperated]

Luthien, this is not a horrible place. You make it sound like Angband or Dungortheb!

**Luthien:**

Even if I didn't need to save Beren I couldn't stay here. It's making me physically ill.

**Finduilas:** [patient but strained]

No, you're making yourself sick with your unreasonable behavior.

**Luthien:**

I need to get out of here. I'm suffocating! I've never been underground this long in my life!

**Finduilas:** [a bit patronizing]

Oh, you wouldn't really rather be outside in the cold and the wet. It's practically Winter.

**Luthien:**

Before I was brought here I'd been living in trees for the past month. hey're much better when you can get out of them, by the way. And my cape works perfectly well at keeping the rain off me. --I really don't understand why you expect me to be grateful for being kept in a beautiful prison rather than a gloomy one. At least in a dungeon there's no pretense of hospitality, and no one expects anything of the prisoner but escape!

**Finduilas:** [sighs]

You're not a prisoner--

**Luthien:** [interrupting]

No? Then I can go? All right then, let's--

**Finduilas:**

Don't be tiresome -- you know that's impossible. You can't just leave--



**Luthien:** [interrupting]

That would, I'd say, be the exact definition of a prisoner.

**Finduilas:** [reaching down to touch her shoulder]

It's for your own good -- we're simply concerned for your safety, cousin.

[Luthien impatiently shakes her off]

**Luthien:** [very slowly and forcefully.]

I've heard that one before.

**Finduilas:**

Well, it's true, you--

**Luthien:** [interrupting]

Cousin, if your fiance was taken prisoner by the Enemy and you knew it, would you just stay here making bowls and earrings in your studio? Or would you take your torches and your chemicals and your iron rods and do whatever you could with what you had?

[Finduilas laughs nervously]

Well?

**Finduilas:**

Don't be silly, Luthien.

**Luthien:**

Silly? You mean you wouldn't?

**Finduilas:**

Not that it could ever happen, but -- what could I do? I couldn't just go traipsing across the wilds singlehandedly to attack the Enemy, that's absurd--

[longish pause]

**Luthien:**

You know something? I'm going to make myself very unpopular with you by saying this, but -- I don't think you really love him. Because if you did, you wouldn't be able to imagine that possibility without getting upset. And there wouldn't be any question in your mind about the necessity of doing whatever it takes to save him.

[Finduilas gives a short laugh, shaking her head in dismay]

**Luthien:** [relenting]

Look, I'm not trying to hurt your feelings, just to get you to think--

**Finduilas:**

Oh, I'm not upset. Everyone goes through stages of romantic idealism and juvenile fixation in their lives. Eventually one grows out of it, though.

[Luthien gives her a Look]

**Luthien:**

Finduilas -- I'm older than your parents.

**Finduilas:** [kindly]

Yes, but you don't act like it.

**Luthien:**

. . . !

**Huan:**

[whines]

**Finduilas:**

--Besides, it could never happen, anyway.

**Luthien:**

Oh, that's a principle to run your life on! "It can't happen so I won't worry about it" --? Wasn't that what they used to tell your High King about Morgoth breaking through the siege? Your uncles complained about that to my parents lots of times, how nobody listened to them -- especially your precious "Lords of Nargothrond" here -- and unfortunately, they were right, weren't they?

[pause]

**Finduilas:**

I can't believe you're so callous.

**Luthien:**

Oh! Honestly! Just go away, I can't take this any more. If my time's going to be wasted in prison, I shouldn't have to put up with being treated like an idiot on top of it.

**Finduilas:** [sighing]

Can I bring you anything else? More books? Some music?

**Luthien:** [deadpan]

How about a pick-axe?

[The Regent's daughter gives her a sympathetic look and leaves.]

**Luthien:** [shouting]

Shut the door behind you, please!

[aside]

If I'm a prisoner, let's not pretend otherwise, all right?

**Huan:** [getting up and pacing]

[several short whines]

**Luthien:** [shaking her head, amazed]

I just don't get it. What's wrong with her? --But -- well, I suppose -- I mean, given that everyone in her family did that, just up and walked out on each other, not knowing if or when they'd ever be coming back -- perhaps it doesn't seem irrational to her. I wish I hadn't been too polite to ask Galadriel about it, after. I mean, it might not be any of my business, strictly speaking -- but then we are family after all, so on another level it is. I'm beginning to think that all the Noldor are crazy. --Or maybe it's just everyone who left Aman.

**Huan:**

[short loud bark]

**Luthien:**

I'm sorry. I didn't mean to hurt your feelings either. But I'm not used to things that make absolutely no sense at all.

[jumps to her feet and runs to the door]

I have to get out of here!

[she flings wide the hallway entrance and shouts at the Guards:]

What in Morgoth's name is wrong with you people?

[She tries to slip past them but they stop her, gently but firmly, and lead her back into the parlor. She yells after them as they close the outer door again, panting:]

Damn you to Angband! Let me go!

[As soon as the door is shut she stops looking distraught and helpless -- though still crazed. Feral grin:]

--That'll put them off their guard for now.

[She gathers up her mantle and starts knotting fruit and biscuits from the bowls on the table into the corners before going over to the door. To Huan, whispering:]

--You won't tell anyone, will you?

**Huan:** [worried look]  
[thumps tail, twice]

**Luthien:** [touching the door, sings very slowly]  
*I love my love and well he knows--  
I love the ground whereon he goes  
and if my love I no more should see  
my life would quickly fade away--*

[opens the door quietly and walks out without any fuss]

## SCENE XXVII

**Gower:**

--Her fears full-formed,  
the captive guest of welcome well-outworn  
herself would free, her hopes stillborn--

[The Armories. Celegorm is coming back from the practice area, grinning broadly, helm under his arm, while various warriors give him wary and/or dirty looks. All are a bit disheveled. Curufin shoves through in the opposite direction, grabs his brother, and drags him behind a rack of spears.]

**Curufin:** [urgent whisper]  
You're not going to believe this--

**Celegorm:** [hand jumping to swordhilt]  
--They came back?!

Curufin:

No. She got out again.

Celegorm:

I swear I worked it properly!

Curufin:

I know you did. --Don't worry. The main security system stopped her, at the Gates -- not the guards, though. They didn't notice her until the alarms started up -- seems she isn't any good at guessing passwords -- and then they brought her back inside to her rooms.

Celegorm:

So how did she do it?

Curufin: [grimly]

Apparently -- by whatever rules govern the rules of Arda -- an aftername given by a human is just as good as any other. --I wouldn't have thought of that either.

Celegorm:

So . . . she just . . . walked right through it?

Curufin:

Didn't even realize it was there, apparently. Didn't stop her at all.

Celegorm: [frowning]

I don't like that. Mortals shouldn't be able to have anything to do with power.

Curufin:

I agree. One more oversight on the part of the gods for the list. But -- one good thing's come of it, now everyone realizes that she's -- eccentric -- trying to run out barefoot and coatless with no provisions into the woods at this time of year. So I didn't even have to look responsible for suggesting that she be -- politely -- restrained; someone else already suggested it to the Master of Defensive Illusions and he took care of it. I removed all trace of your working before he got there, by the way.

Celegorm: [apprehensive]

Do you think she'll be angry about it?

**Curufin:** [shrugs]

Probably. But not at you. What I wonder is if she'll say anything, or pretend she hasn't noticed it. Given her family's pride I'm guessing the latter. --Hey, want to go a few rounds? I could do with the exercise.

**Celegorm:**

Sure -- I'm not tired at all. This was child's play.

[They come out into the floor and Curufin starts taking down practice gear.]

**Celegorm:** [to bystanders]

Anyone else up for some more bruises? No takers?  
Oh well--

**Curufin:**

Oh, you don't want to fight children, you want real competition!

[They head off towards the pells; the native Nargothronders scowl after them]

**First Warrior:**

Someone needs to flatten that lout.

**Second Warrior:**

Which one?

**First Warrior:**

--Both of them.

**Third Warrior:**

You up for it?

[Bitter looks all round]

## SCENE XXVIII

**Gower:**

Not for the first time nor the last, recalling  
words hard-spoken,  
Tinuviel rueth yet again the fact of them  
unwitting broken,  
ne'er to trust repose in kindred souls,  
whose loyalty's but token--

[In the solar of her private wing, Luthien looks at the

artificial Northern "window" and leans on the stone frame as if it really overlooked a landscape.]

**Luthien:** [hardly more than a whisper]  
[sings]

*The trees they do grow high  
And the leaves they do grow green  
Many is the time my true love I've seen  
Many an hour I've watched him all alone  
--He's young but he's daily growing*

[She sighs, dispiritedly tracing the carved ornament with her forefinger. Behind her Celebrimbor enters the solar and watches her in silence; sensing his entrance, she gives no sign of awareness.]

Oh, what's the use? I can't sing underground, where's no air, no light, no wind or stars to give me voice. And even if I could -- I set so much of my power into my Work, heart and soul and song and love -- it's as much myself as these my hands are now. I could not go far from it, or far without it, or do much after if I did, I'm afraid.

[After a moment she begins to sing again:]

*Father, dear father, you've done me great wrong--  
You've married me to a great lord's son --  
I am twice twelve and he is but fourteen!  
--He's young but he's daily growing*

*Daughter, dear daughter, I've done you no wrong  
I've married you to a noble lord's son --  
When he's grown, he'll make a lord to wait upon  
--He's young but he's daily growing*

*One day as I was lookin' o'er my father's castle wall  
I spied all the boys a-playing at the ball  
My own true love was the flower of 'em all  
--He's young but he's daily growing*

*At the age of fifteen he was a married man  
At the age of sixteen the father of a son  
At the age of seventeen his grave it was green  
And death had put an end to his growing--*

[speaking without looking around to Celebrimbor]

That isn't how it was, of course. Quite the opposite,

in fact. But there's something in their story that calls to my heart. I don't even know if they were real people: it might have happened long ago in the Forgotten East, but mortals often tell stories that are about no one real, and yet they seem to be about everyone. I've learned so many, many stories about mortal Men that are nothing like what our sages believe.

[caustic]

--When will the host of Nargothrond be ready to set forth?

**Celebrimbor:**

I cannot say.

**Luthien:**

Then why did you bother to answer my message, if you haven't any news?

**Celebrimbor:**

I only wanted to tell you -- that you should not let your hopes soar too high -- lest the fall be too much for you.

**Luthien:**

You could come with me. You could help us. You're good at technical stuff, everyone says: you could figure out how to get past the security systems. I've never done anything like that.

**Celebrimbor:**

But you escaped from Doriath, in a rather . . . complicated and . . . technically involved way, I understand?

**Luthien:**

That was just talking people into doing what I wanted, people who don't stop to think about what you're asking, or why, or know they shouldn't be obstructing you in the first place. The rest was easy.

**Celebrimbor:** [pained smile]

--As you're doing to me at this moment, my lady.  
Congratulations: it nearly worked.

**Luthien:**

But I'm asking you -- as a friend -- or one who could be a friend--



**Celebrimbor:**

I'm afraid, Your Highness, if you're looking for friendship -- you will not find it here in Nargothrond. Not now.

**Luthien:** [slowly, chillingly]

Then it is true -- that there is something dark in Nargothrond, something biting at its roots, draining out the Light from its soul. I've felt it, but told myself it was just my own fears, and the oppressiveness of the hills over us.

**Celebrimbor:**

My lady--

**Luthien:**

Don't "my lady" me!

**Celebrimbor:**

I can't -- my father, my uncle, they would--

**Luthien:**

Join us.

**Celebrimbor:**

But duty to my kin--

**Luthien:** [savagely]

--What's "kin"? What's the word worth, if it doesn't mean friend first? What does it add, to friendship? I have no kin.

**Celebrimbor:**

You don't understand -- it's the Curse, the Doom, it cannot be denied--

**Luthien:**

I deny it. I will not give my beloved and my friend to an undeserved fate, because you ex-Valinoreans are fools, and the Sons of Feanor mad, wicked, and beyond all help. --Choose, Lord Celebrimbor, choose -- before it's too late.

[He goes out again, silently; she bows her head against the stone mural]

## SCENE XXIX

**Gower:**

--Her simple efforts foiled to fly,  
the Princess-prisoner turns to guile;  
Simplicity she feigns, maintains, sly  
allowing all to judge her fool this while . . .

[In the antechamber. Luthien is seated at the table, with Celegorm across from her. Huan is drowsing beside his master's chair, his head on his outstretched forelegs. Luthien wears an expression of somewhat strained politeness, but she would be polite to Morgoth himself if it might get her out of here. Not knowing her moods, perhaps, Celegorm does not seem to notice the strained atmosphere at first.]

**Celegorm:**

So we thought to find wolves on that day as well, but instead we found something amazing. --Guess what it was.

**Luthien:**

A boar?

[Celegorm shakes his head]

A bear?

[Celegorm again shakes head in negative]

A wild ox?

[Again the negative response. He is smiling guilelessly.]

I give up.

**Celegorm:**

A deer.

**Luthien:**

But aren't there many deer hereabouts? Why is that amazing?

**Celegorm:**

It was a white one. Don't see too many of those -- wolves get 'em all first, because they show up like a star in the dark woods.

**Luthien:**

And did you catch the white hart?

**Celegorm:**

Doe. It was a "white doe, white as snow, shining bright as she did go--"

[as if to say: See? I can give you poetry too...]

Led our hounds and horses a merry dance, she did.

**Luthien:** [not liking where this seems to be going]

Poor thing!

[deciding to play along for the sake of information/  
confirmation]

Did you catch her?

**Celegorm:**

Mm . . . not yet.

She still is wild for to hold, though I think she could be tamed.

**Luthien:**

What will you do when you catch her?

**Celegorm:**

Why eat her, of course! --Only joking, dear lady, I would never harm such a rare and lovely beast, but keep her safe in a walled garden filled with every manner of flower and tree she could long for, where no wild animals could ever come near to injure her.

**Luthien:**

But she is a wild creature too, is she not?

**Celegorm:**

Only because she hasn't met a worthy master. Her nature is far too gentle for the wolf-haunted wilderness and the harsh winters of the world beyond.

**Luthien:** [frowning decidedly]

I don't think that wild animals should be trapped and held. My mother's nightingales are never caged.

**Celegorm:** [looking at her with sad eyes]

You don't seem to be amused by my company. I am crushed, positively crushed.

**Luthien:** [apologetic]

My lord, the hour grows late, and I grow weary -- of waiting.

[before he can make too much of her last words, she adds in a piqued tone, and much lighter:]

--Besides, you laughed at me about that -- that bug, the other night.

**Celegorm:** [smiling indulgently at her]

Oh, but you've got to admit it was funny.

**Luthien:**

It was in my clothes, and it was not funny at all.

**Celegorm:**

Well, at least I killed it for you.

**Luthien:**

I didn't want it killed, I just wanted it off me.

**Celegorm:**

I don't see how you can be so scared of a little beetle -- well, all right, not so little -- but still, there have to have been beetles in Doriath. Whatever did you do, traveling through the forest? Trees are full of 'em, don't you know?

**Luthien:**

I'm not scared of them, I just don't like their claws and feet and the pointy armor on them and the oily way they move. They make me think of how I imagine Glaurung, or those monsters that roamed around in the Outer Darkness before the Sun. And I'm always afraid their legs will pull off when I try to get them loose. Anyway, I expect them outside -- not indoors, in a place supposed to be impenetrable by invasion!

[brief pause]

Beren never makes fun of me about beetles. He just moves them someplace else, usually before I notice them. --At least that's what he thinks, and I let him go on thinking that I haven't noticed. He's very kind.

**Celegorm:** [his smile unchanging, and his voice still pleasant]

You know, I don't really want to hear about

Barahirion any more.

**Luthien:** [in the same manner]

You know, I'd rather gathered that.

**Celegorm:**

So where does that leave us?

**Luthien:**

With nothing more to talk about, my lord.

**Celegorm:**

Oh, I'm sure we can find something. Your eyes -- your lips -- your hair--

[He reaches out and takes her hand as he speaks. He does not hurt her, but his grip is fast.]

**Luthien:** [tersely]

My hand, my lord--

**Celegorm:**

--is lovely.

[lifts and kisses her fingers]

**Luthien:** [pulling back to no avail]

Let go.

**Celegorm:** [earnestly]

Let me first convince you that you deserve no less than the best, and will be satisfied with no inferior thing, by disclosing to you the currents of my heart--

**Luthien:**

--Lord Celegorm, let go of me!

**Celegorm:** [smiling widely]

Say "please."

**Luthien:** [through her teeth]

Let. Go!

**Celegorm:** [pulls her closer, so that she must rise from her seat and lean towards him]

You don't really want that, you know you don't--

[Luthien braces her left hand on the table edge, puts her foot on the arm of his chair and kicks hard, sending him over backwards with a crash. When he involuntarily lets go of her in reaction she flings herself spinning

across the table with the momentum and braces herself to fling that over at him too. She may not be a match for a warrior who spends his free time hunting big game, but her arboreal upbringing and art haven't left her a lightweight either.]

**Celegorm:** [panting, grinning, a mad light in his eyes]  
--Not a shy nightingale at all, but a falcon she is! Foot me, will you? You'll pay for that strike, milady, with a softer touch. Ah, but you'll fly to my hand soon enough--

[He moves toward her, and she moves sideways along the table, keeping maximum distance between them]

**Luthien:**  
Stay back!

**Celegorm:**  
Else what?

[A huge grey wave crashes between him and the table, knocking him backwards. Huan half-turns, blocking all access to Luthien, his fangs bared.]

**Huan:** [loud snarling growl]  
! ! !

**Celegorm:**  
Huan!?!

**Huan:**  
[series of short, imperative barks]

**Celegorm:**  
Down, I say! Down!!!

**Huan:**  
[drawn-out growl, ending in a sharp, reproachful bark]

[He continues to block his master's efforts to flank him. It is a standoff, as Celegorm is unwilling to go hand-to-teeth with a dog the size of a horse.]

**Luthien:** [her voice a bit ragged, but cold and tearless]  
Lord Celegorm, you will leave now, and not return until you have learned better than to assail a guest in her own chambers.

[Celegorm stands still, his face growing ashen, his

breathing growing unsteady with something like fear now.]

**Celegorm:** [shaken at his own bad behavior and loss of control]  
Y-your Highness, please underst--

**Luthien:**  
--Go.

[There is no relenting or uncertainty in her expression. The Noldor lord accepts his dismissal, turning his anger on his dog instead of himself.]

**Celegorm:** [savagely]  
Huan. --Heel.

[Huan drops down to an alert crouch between Luthien and Celegorm. He is clearly not going anywhere just now -- but just as clearly able to go anywhere fast if he needs to]

**Celegorm:**  
You treacherous Hound!

**Huan:**  
[angry bark]

**Celegorm:**  
You'll follow anyone who gives you sweetmeats, you wolf-at-heart!

**Luthien:**  
Please. Leave. Now.

[Celegorm cannot think of anything else to say. As he stalks out, Huan rises and trots over to push the door all the way shut with his nose. Safely shielded behind it, Luthien at last dares to give in to stress and sinks down to the tiles, shaking. Huan returns and sits beside her, and she hugs him, leaning against the Hound's massive shoulder, crying into his coat.]

### SCENE XXX

**Gower:**  
Conscience belated in full weight returning as  
of boulders,  
Lord Celegorm seeks to shift this burden from  
his shoulders--

[The royal apartments. Curufin is rummaging through

chests and caskets, having covered the table with boxes and their contents. Opening yet another he takes out a handful of gold chains and links, and jingles them before tossing them casually into a pile with other ingots and piecemetal. Celegorm enters looking distraught, shuts the door hard behind him]

**Curufin:**

What's wrong?

**Celegorm:** [looking around warily]

Is this place secured?

**Curufin**

Of course -- always. What's the matter?

**Celegorm:**

I went to visit the Princess again.

**Curufin:**

Things didn't go well?

**Celegorm:**

I've ruined it. I -- I don't know what came over me -- I've ruined everything.

**Curufin:**

You didn't tell her!?!

**Celegorm:**

I didn't need to, she'd already guessed. I -- I frightened her, Cur. I rushed her -- rushed at her, not like I was a person but like some damned unreasoning brute of a two-year-old colt just turned loose with the herd--

**Curufin:** [dryly]

And did you get your jaw kicked in for it?

**Celegorm:**

Close enough. Now she won't even let me apologize to her.

[wildly]

I don't understand! I'm Eldar -- not some animal, or Man hardly better than animal -- how could I be overcome, how could my reason be overthrown by passion in such a -- a counter-productive way? Because things were going so well -- she really seemed pleased to



see me, to talk to me, --right up until I terrified her!

**Curufin:** [musing]

Well, there's always 'Brim -- I think he's intoxicated with her, too. . . perhaps we should steer that way, eh? I don't think he's ever done anything incautious in his life--

**Celegorm:**

No! --No, I think we should stick with our original plan.

**Curufin:** [dawning realization]

You've fallen for her. Hah!

[Celegorm scowls at him]

**Curufin:** [frowning]

She can't really prefer Survival Boy to you, can she? Obviously old Shadows is right and she's under a spell. But who could put a spell on one of the Kindred? Even if she is a Dark Elf. Could he have been an Enemy agent after all . . . ?

**Celegorm:** [uncomfortable with this self-deception now]

She's hardly that -- and he's as shallow and obvious as they come. That's not Morgoth's style at all in turning double-agents. He's not twisted, just insane.

**Curufin:**

Are you really in love with her? Not just the illusion going out of control and the act taking on its own reality? I mean, I know all the advantages and reasons -- I thought of them myself -- but she's hardly the equal of one of us, regardless of the almost-blasphemous lineage she claims.

**Celegorm:**

Act? The act was -- that it was ever an act. How can I begin to describe what it is about her -- that queenly way of going and the flashing look in her eyes when she gets angry -- she -- she glows almost, like silver hot in the mold, and she stands there in that ratty old dress of hers with her hair chopped off like a slave's, and -- laugh not, but I tell you it's as though one of Them stood there, as though Varda walked in disguise, standing an arm's length away. --And yet she seems so approachable, with that

cute little half-skip in her walk and that quaint old-fashioned accent of hers . . . Don't tell me you're unaffected by it, little brother! Everyone watches her -- no one can help it!

**Curufin:** [shrugs]

She's aesthetic enough -- or would be if she took care of herself -- and the kingdom she will inherit should any, ah, tragic accident befall Elwe is more than charm enough for anyone. But the fact that you feel this way obviously means that you're meant for each other. "Soul mates" and all that.

**Celegorm:** [sarcastic]

Only she doesn't know it, somehow--

**Curufin:**

She hasn't thought about it carefully. I'm sure that once I've talked things over with her and forced her to look at facts, to think carefully about the realities -- the impossibilities -- of her obsession, then she will realize how flattered, and and how honored, she is, and ought to be, that you've stooped to notice her. You know that I can make anyone see reason, you mustn't worry that I can't deal with this, too. Now -- sit down and tell me what happened, exactly, so I know what I have to work with . . .

### SCENE XXXI

**Gower:**

Friendless, imprisoned, fearful and distraught,  
Tinuviel awaits in golden cage she knows not what,  
--yet not all forsaken, though her own folk heed  
her naught:

one still heeds her, attends her, still supports  
her cause,  
both lesser and greater than his lord, wrestling  
with the laws  
that set Duty against Duty, for Elf, for Mortal,  
for those with paws--

[Luthien is pacing back and forth still, running her hands along the carvings on the walls, while Huan lies down in the hallway connecting the solar with the private chambers, watching her alertly with mournful eyes.]

**Guard:**

My lady, the Lord of Aglon-and-Himlad is here to speak to you.

**Luthien:** [very curt]

Which one?

**Guard:**

Er -- Lord Curufin.

**Luthien:**

Show him in.

[Curufin enters, indicating dismissively that the attendant should close the doors behind him. He looks closely at Luthien, appraising her state-of-mind. Note: Curufin never raises his voice throughout the following exchange.]

**Luthien:** [before Curufin has a chance to speak]

--You may tell your brother, my lord, that I will accept his apology only with the tangible mark of his penitence -- that is to say, when he returns my cloak to me. And the best horse in your stables, in reparation.

**Curufin:** [innocent]

I beg your pardon? Your Highness, I fear I haven't the least notion of what you're speaking about.

**Luthien:**

You mean you're not here to bring his apologies, since I forbade him my presence in his own person? Or perhaps you haven't heard--?

**Curufin:**

I am here on my brother's behalf, yes, -- but I'm afraid you're mistaken as to the nature of my visit. I am here to approach you with formal notice of my brother's suit as claimant to your hand in marriage.

[Luthien stares at him in total shock]

I steadfastly urge you to accept him, without hesitation, as a proposal which will do you honor and increase your estate in Middle-earth, bestowing upon you and your family not only rank and prosperity and widened realm, but a connection with the highest House of the noblest race of the Eldar, -- a fair exchange, for your fair self, your Highness.

[long pause]

**Luthien:** [slowly and emphatically]

I am betrothed to Beren. I will never love another.

--Why is this so hard to understand? Is my accent too strange? I understand your Sindarin perfectly well -- and Beren understands me, even though his dialect is far different from ours. --Or is everyone in Nargothrond just deaf?

**Curufin:** [just as slowly and emphatically]

Beren is dead. --Deal with it.

**Luthien:** [alight]

No! I would know it, if he were.

**Curufin:**

Are you so sure of that?

**Luthien:**

--Would you know if the Sun were struck out of the sky? Even here, even in this buried place where I cannot feel her, I would know. The same way I'd know it, if he was no more beneath the Stars -- Arda being dark and lifeless would tell me!

**Curufin:** [shaking his head]

Such the romantic, Lady Luthien -- though it is charming indeed. But you are old enough to put aside such childish fancies and face facts, and the facts are thus: Barahirion is no fit mate for such as you, nor will you in any case ever set eyes on him again. Better, then, to take what is available to you, and freely offered, and to your great advantage, and put your mortal folly from your mind -- end this war of yours with your parents, and make in your own person peace between our estranged Houses, and enjoy the rewards of your rationality.

**Luthien:**

If you have no wish to hazard yourself in rescue of my true love nor your kin, my lord, and don't care to strike at our common foe in deepest insult possible -- then let me go on my way as I've been asking, and I'll do it myself. You have no right to keep me here, and you know it.

**Curufin:**

What, without your hair-cloak even?

**Luthien:**

If I must, though I would rather not.

**Curufin:** [patronizing, extreme "grown-up to little girl" singsong]

And what will you do when you get there?

**Luthien:**

Whatever I have to. For myself, I fear nothing.

**Curufin:** [wry smile]

Did you know my cousin Aredhel?

**Luthien:** [thrown by the change of subject]

No -- she's Turgon and Fingon's sister, right? Didn't they go off somewhere on their own, she and Turgon and the Kindred at Nevrast, and drop out of sight completely? That's what we'd heard.

**Curufin:**

Almost completely. Some whiles back she came to visit us at Aglon, and stayed a few seasons, but unfortunately we were visiting our brother Caranthir in his province and missed her. We discovered when we came back and found her gone, that she had decided to go exploring and looking for unclaimed territory of her own -- somewhere still perhaps within the whole of Beleriand that your father lays claim to, but beyond the area he actually administers -- and from which his Rangers had prohibited her party's crossing. Now she was an Elf-maid warrior-trained and used to long riding and hard travel, not to say a Noldor lady of high degree, so you would think her far better equipped to journey safely through the wild lands than a Gray-elven girl sheltered in the artificial confines of Doriath, -- would you not?

**Luthien:**

I would guess so -- I've heard a fair bit about the Crossing of the Ice from our cousins over the course of their stays with us, and it's nothing I can even begin to imagine -- though I suppose when one has no other alternative, one can manage almost anything. Or else die trying, of course.

**Curufin:** [briefly checked]

Quite so. --As a matter of fact, she made it through that part of the country north of you where Ungoliant once stayed -- I believe you are at least generally

familiar with its hazards? -- totally alone, since her warrior escort was lost in the web of illusions over the land and she could not find them, and in their honor refused to give up the mission they had died upon, before reaching our domain. So you need not guess at it. And she still disappeared without a trace, for years of the Sun, until one day we discovered that she'd been taken in marriage by Eol of Nan-Elmoth--

**Luthien:**

Eol? My father's cousin the crazy hermit?

**Curufin:**

The same. And when I say "taken" I mean just that. My agents spotted her flying cross-country at top speed with a single squire, who we later learned to be her son, because her husband showed up not long after absolutely furious and demanding that we help him track her down. I sent him packing, needless to say -- but nobody knows what happened to them. --Unless you've heard?

[pot::kettle suspicion mode]

Perhaps you know all of this already and you're just letting me talk -- perhaps you knew it all along, and even more of the story, and perhaps the ending? --My lady.

**Luthien:**

No. That's isn't me.

[loudly unspoken -- "That's you--"]

Eol never had anything to do with us if he could possibly avoid it, which was basically all the time. We finally got a rumour through the Wandering Folk that he'd up and left without a trace, and we never heard word to the contrary. I hadn't even heard that he had started a family. He never had anything to do with the Kindred except for a few hired hands to help him with his forge -- the only people I ever heard he chose to associate with were the Dwarves, because of their shared hobbies.

**Curufin:** [stung into momentary distraction]

Metals-technology is not a hobby -- not like the performing arts. It's extremely useful, not to mention

being a sign of civilization and culture.

**Luthien:** [shrugs]

As you please.

[frowns]

--Why was she traveling, anyway?

**Curufin:** [haughtily]

We of Aman are not obliged to answer to anyone for our comings and goings.

**Luthien:**

I just wondered because it seems like the kind of thing one would need a good reason to do, if they'd gone to such trouble to disappear, and perhaps she had some important messages for the High King or something like that, but I'd think they would have said so to our Border Guard in that case, and my father isn't -- except this once -- completely unreasonable.

[gesturing emphatically]

In fact -- being Noldor aristocracy with all that you've impressed me that that entails -- how could she have been kept a prisoner against her will for all those years? Wouldn't that be as unlikely as cousin Galadriel being held hostage? Especially by Eol-the-hermit, who really is a "Dark-elf," and awfully close to the Dark side as well, given that he cursed the lease payment for Nan Elmoth. At least that's what my mother thinks.

[with a challenging look, dropping all masks of courtesy]

--Actually, I'm surprised you didn't get along with him just fine.

[Curufin gives her a sharp glance but does not rise to the bait.]

He acted as though it was a mortal insult for us to request some payment in return for having complete and exclusive title to a very extensive section of Beleriand, and what he came up with was practically an insult in itself -- even before we looked at it closely. One sword, for deed in perpetuity, I ask you, and then to say that we should be flattered

because it was one-of-a-kind. Which it wasn't, it turned out, because he'd made another from the same bit of thunderbolt-iron for himself. So given the similiarity of your attitudes towards Doriath, I'd expect you to make common cause rather than fight.

**Curufin:** [smiling]

Whatever your opinion, or your family's opinion, of us -- certain facts remain, Princess of Doriath. Your father's laws do not extend here, nor can he protect you past his domain. Beren is not here to defend you -- from what you have said, he cannot even defend himself. In a short while -- short by any measure that our people use -- he will, for all intents and purposes, no longer exist. You have gone wandering alone in the wilds like a stray lamb, and like a stray lamb you are prey for whatever wolfish beast should chance upon you. It would be the part of wisdom to reckon with facts, your Highness, and to accept the realities of your present situation.

[grimly serious]

Remember the story of my cousin -- the true story, and consider your chances, set against hers. You Dark-elves haven't our resistance to the dark, after all.

**Luthien:**

I never thought of us like that. I always felt that my mother brought Aman with her wherever she was.

**Curufin:**

What a delightful notion. But do you really think you're the equal of any of us? Now that you're outside her protection?

**Luthien:** [defiantly]

I am not without all resources myself, my lord!

**Curufin:** [tilting his head back to look sarcastically at her]

Indeed. Then might I ask why you haven't left already? --I think we both know very well that such scant power as you had you have no longer, and cannot Work again. The reality is -- that you are one and we are many, and you have no recourse but to accept that fact. Or, perhaps, not to accept it -- but learn the truth of it all the same.

[silence]



It could be worse: Nargothrond is a rich realm, and shall be richer yet under proper governance, and you will lack for nothing here -- and my brother is overwhelmed by your radiant beauty, and honors you as highly as any Noldor maid, and will let no harm come to you . . . and he is even among the Foremost accounted handsome, and his prowess in the field unmatched, and his temper most gracious so none do cross him. You could do far worse, my lady.

**Luthien:** [speaking very fast and nervously, her eyes fixed on Curufin]

There is a story of Marach out of the Forgotten Days, my lord, in which a mortal lady was born under a Doom to be the most beautiful of all her age, and so she was promised to a mighty sovereign from before the hour of her birth, and held in a lonely place where none might see her before she was of an age to be given to him, as was the custom in those days of the East, but a hunter whose Doom it was to find her came singing upon the house where she was held in secret and she heard his song and fled with him, and his brothers defended them, and there was great war as was foretold in the lady's Doom--

[weighting the next words particularly]

--but at last they were betrayed to their deaths by a lesser lord whom they had trusted, and the lady was taken by the lesser lord to be his slave, and then to win favor with the great king the lesser lord made gift of her to his master, but when they rode to meet the mighty sovereign's emissaries, the lesser lord mocked her, and cast all her weakness in her face, and as he laughed she laughed at him in turn, and faded as mortals fade -- that is to say, she cast herself down from the high place of the mountain where they rode into the stones, and her body was broken, and she died, and so escaped her Doom to find her love again.

[as though discussing textual variations in a symposium]

We do not know if it be true, or if the mighty sovereign and the lesser lord be truly Morgoth Bauglir and Sauron his servant, and the lady a sacrifice to the Dark Ones as dim rumor has it, but it is a very old story, my lord, and one that is often told,

though it is sad to tell.

**Curufin:** [sounding mildly confused]

I beg your pardon, Your Highness, but why do you relate this lamentable chronicle of mortal woes? Were we not speaking of the state of Beleriand's polity and future prosperity?

**Luthien:**

I am not sure of what you were speaking, my lord.

**Curufin:** [smiling]

Of the folly of such a fair one as you venturing the wilds, and risking your life, your health, your happiness and peace amid rough places and rougher folk.

[He steps closer, not touching her, but backing her up towards the wall, and blocking her with his hands set against the wall on either side when she tries to dodge past him. Angry but cold, she folds her arms and stares back at him, unimpressed.]

Barahirion might worship you as a goddess too high for anything save veneration and abject obedience -- but not all mortals are so . . . docile, so . . . easily enspelled. Easterling chieftains like the ones in your story will not consider either your race or your noble blood as grounds for fear in their dealings with you; nor will Orcs, wolves, --Balrogs, or soul-destroying Undead phantoms regard you as anything other than -- tasty.

[He leans close to speak softly in her ear, weighting each word dramatically]

You really . . . should . . . consider . . . your options . . . very, very carefully. Your Highness.

**Luthien:** [pale but calm]

If you're trying to intimidate me, my lord, rest assured -- I am intimidated. If you're not trying to intimidate me -- or rather, whether you are or are not -- you should stop right now.

**Curufin:** [tipping her chin up to make her look at him in a less-haughty way]

Because you don't like it?

**Luthien:**

Because Huan doesn't like it.

[Behind Curufin's ear there is a loud growl.]

You should really learn some manners, Lord Curufin. It's sad that four and a half centuries' experience here hasn't taught you the courtesy of a Mortal. One tends to think that what mere living hasn't managed to convey, yet might be learned in a very sharp lesson -- rather quickly, I dare say.

[Curufin looks slowly over his shoulder, confirming the hostile situation]

**Curufin:** [trying the masterful approach]

Down, boy! Down--

**Luthien:**

Huan, would you be so kind as to show milord to the door? And through it as well?

[Huan shoves between them and edges over enough to stagger Curufin backwards; Luthien gives him a grateful pat on the withers before he moves in and starts herding Curufin with irresistible force out into the hallway]

I'm sorry, my rustic Doriath accent must have confused him -- did I say "show" or "shove," milord?

**Curufin:** [patronizing]

Your Highness, I hope that you will carefully consider, in cool rationality and mature calculation, what we have discussed -- rather than placing your faith in dumb brutes of uncertain loyalty.

**Luthien:** [defiantly]

Only my relatives' loyalty has ever been in doubt, Lord Curufin . . . of Nargothrond.

**Huan:** [blocking the opening, looks at Luthien and barks]

Yes, Huan, please close the door as well.

[She waits until Curufin can't see her before sagging back against the wall -- but only for an instant, before she pulls herself together and resumes frantically, if uselessly, pacing the rooms, checking the ventilators and chimneys again to prove to herself that she hasn't overlooked any avenue of escape. Huan follows her, hovering, with a worried expression.]

## SCENE XXXII

**Gower:**

--Hence, and spurnéd hither, Lord Curufin soon  
hath proved  
that Elves, no less than Men, hold well the power  
to self-delude . . .

[The royal apartments -- Celebrimbór is here, as well as Celegorm, who keeps giving his nephew wary, hostile looks. The younger Elf is calmly perusing a notebook, while his uncle paces; there is the air of a recently concluded argument and momentary truce about the room. Curufin enters, looking a bit as though he has a bad taste in his mouth.]

**Celegorm:** [nervously]  
So?

**Curufin:**

It's a start -- progress was made. I'm sure she'll see reason, once she's been left to think it over in peace and quiet for a bit.

[pause]

You didn't say anything about -- Huan.

[silence -- he looks sharply at his brother]

Did you know he's defected?

[Celegorm makes a gloomy noise]

He menaced me, you know.

[His brother does not answer]

--You too, eh?

**Celebrimbór:** [turning a page of the book he's reading]  
Perhaps the fact that two who could be said to represent the Powers most closely on this shore are dead set against you might just perchance to indicate something.

**Curufin:** [rounding on him]  
What?

**Celebrimbor:** [wilfully misunderstanding]

Oh, I'm not completely certain, but something along the lines of -- this is a very bad, bad idea--

**Curufin:**

This is for your benefit, boy, don't forget -- your fortunes are as much at stake as the rest of our House, and you stand to gain no less by consolidation of our resources and the realms of the Eldar in Middle-earth.

**Celebrimbor:** [vague smile]

My benefit? I had all the benefits I required before your -- rebellion.

**Celegorm:** [hotly]

--Look, you ungrateful whelp, you can just betake yourself to the kennels if you're too good for--

**Curufin:** [icy]

Oh, I know very well that you can be bought like that damned Hound with gifts and flattery: that fool cousin of ours gave you unlimited workspace and raved over every least thing you made as though he'd made it himself, and you lapped it all up -- never thinking about how it looked to his credit, having a Feanorian artist at his beck and call--

**Celebrimbor:** [disgusted]

You really do see everything through your own unique, bent prism, don't you, Father?

[he makes a marginal note in his book, shaking his head slightly]

**Curufin:**

You're part of this family, and you're just as bound by the Oath as your uncles and I are. Do not forget it.

**Celebrimbor:** [ironic smile]

Am I? I suppose I am, at that.

[gets up to leave]

**Curufin:** [suspicious look]

Where are you going?

**Celebrimbor:**

I've got a class to teach in half an hour -- I need

to get ready for it.

**Curufin:** [meaningfully]

I do trust that that is all you are planning on doing?

**Celebrimbor:** [bitter]

Don't worry -- I can no more stand to think of her Highness wandering barefoot and helpless in the wilds than you can.

[as he goes to leave the suite Celegorm gets in his way and blocks him, giving him a glower and making him go around, in a little dominance display, calling after him scornfully:]

**Celegorm:**

--Whelp!

**Curufin:** [pouring drinks for them both]

Don't let him get to you. I don't know -- this younger generation. They don't have our nerve. I'd almost prefer it if he'd defy me, you know. At least that would be something. He's just too much like his mother, all pious disapproval and no willingness to do anything. --Here.

[hands his brother the glass; they share a look of mutual support and frustration]

**Celegorm:**

Someday -- they'll be lining up to apologize to us. All of 'em.

**Curufin:**

Here's to then!

[They toss back the liquor in toast.]

**Celegorm:**

So . . . what do we do now?

**Curufin:** [smiling]

You -- do whatever you like. I've an idea of mine to follow up on.

### SCENE XXXIII

**Gower:**

Subtlety well-practised surer may, like water  
under stone,  
unset secure foundations than shall be easily  
o'erthrown  
by merest force, with but misdoubt--

[A conservatory, so to speak, with sculpture gardens in beds of indoor plants and lots of water. Finduilas and her fiancé are there, having made up, sitting next to a pond feeding fish. Curufin enters on the farther side and begins walking along the paths, apparently oblivious or unconcerned by their presence. Gwindor notices him and begins to get angry.]

**Gwindor:** [quietly]

Come on, Faelivrin, let's go.

**Finduilas:** [normal voice]

We only just got here, Gwin, what are you talking about?

[he glances significantly over at Curufin]

**Gwindor:**

It's getting crowded.

**Finduilas:** [quiet too]

You can't change things by refusing to accept them.  
Or by letting yourself be controlled through your reactions.

**Gwindor:**

I can determine my own circumstances.

**Finduilas:**

Well, so can I.

**Gwindor:**

I'm going to the pels. --Won't you come along? and inspire me?

[she shrugs, looking frustrated]

**Finduilas:**

I don't like the Armory. It's loud and it smells of oil and there's nothing for me to do there.

[he raises an eyebrow]

Well, except watch you.

**Gwindor:**

I always come to all your musical affairs.

**Finduilas:** [tiredly]

But it bores me, Gwin.

[pause -- smaller voice:]

And I don't like seeing you get hit.

[Gwindor's expression changes from annoyed to indulgent. He gives her a quick kiss and picks up his cloak, managing to combine slinging it over his shoulder with the bow of courtesy to the Son of Feanor, thus spoiling the effect of the gesture entirely. Curufin however only returns it without seeming to notice the slight. After the other lord has left the cavern he strolls over to where Finduilas is tossing crumbs to the goldfish rather more emphatically than necessary.]

**Finduilas:** [sharply]

Don't say anything.

**Curufin:**

About what?

[Finduilas gives him a Look, but his expression is as innocent as his voice. She still watches him suspiciously. Putting one foot on the bench he leans over, frowning at the surface of the pool for a moment, before speaking, guaranteeing her attention.]

I wanted to talk to you about our cousin of Doriath.

[her face becomes even more wary]

--Have you noticed signs of increasing instability in her behaviour?

[quickly]

I -- I know you're loyal, and I know you care about her, and I'm not asking you to betray any confidences. I'm only remarking on what I've noticed, and others . . . and wondering if your concern for her shall not outweigh your distaste for me. Because



-- regardless -- we are both committed to the good of our families and our people, and both matters are united in the person and problem of her Highness, and your greater closeness to her may well give you the information, and the ability, that is needed to assist her.

[Finduilas looks troubled]

You do grant that she's in need of help, don't you?

[shedoesn't exactly nod agreement, but her silence answers]

Have you -- found a -- certain wildness, a lack of touch with reality, in her speech lately? I -- I have to ask, because I've just come from talking with the Princess myself, and . . . she doesn't seem to be speaking the same language as the rest of us at all. --And I'm not making asinine jokes about her accent.

[Finduilas sighs heavily, shakes her head]

**Finduilas:** [ironic emphasis]

Where to begin?

[As the camera pulls back, Curufin takes a seat on the bench without any sign of offense from the Regent's daughter, who is declaiming with animated gestures.]

#### SCENE XXXIV

**Gower:**

Contending with her fair cousin's soft disdain,  
Tinuviel strives to prove, as doth complain,  
that Elf no less than Man in that domain  
may smile and smile, and yet a villain remain--

[Luthien's apartments. Finduilas is sitting in one of the chairs of the solar, looking sympathetic-yet-sceptical as Luthien strides up and down in front of her, gesticulating as she speaks]

**Luthien:**

And then he says, not outright, but just as clearly as if he had, that they'll never let me go--!

**Finduilas:** [frowning]

Do you think you could sit down perhaps?

**Luthien:** [stops & stares]

? ? ?

**Finduilas:**

Or at least stop walking back and forth? It's very distracting.

**Luthien:**

Finduilas! Celegorm would not let me go, told me I'd not only like it but wanted it, and his brother instead of apologizing for him, told me to be grateful for the attention. --Are you sure they're not possessed? Maybe they got caught after the Battle and nobody's realized they've been brainwashed. But -- no -- I'm sure Finrod would have seen it right off. I guess they're just evil without any assistance from Morgoth.

**Finduilas:**

Oh, I'm sure you must have misunderstood. They're highborn as well as High-Elven -- they wouldn't do such things.

**Luthien:** [incredulous]

You're not listening to me again. You're just ignoring everything inconvenient and unpleasant -- as usual. Don't you hear what I'm saying? Or am I not real to you, either? Because I'm not one of you exalted Noldor? Do you see us native Middle-earth people as somewhere above trees, and perhaps above animals, but not necessarily, depending on whether they're your animals or not? Because that's what I'm getting from you.

**Finduilas:**

How can you say such things! You really, really have no--

[breaks off at a loss for the right word]

**Luthien:**

--Shame? Respect? Manners? No. I have wisdom. Which is not a comforting or easy or light burden at all. Now, let's get this straight: your cousins have menaced me with the threat of being forced to become Celegorm's bride, willing or not -- with that my sole choice. If

that happens, there will be bloodshed -- and lots of it. You cannot imagine how much will follow. If my father was upset enough to threaten any of us with death who would help me escape from Doriath to join Beren, he will not stop at disapproving words when he finds that the sons of Feanor are now his sons-in-law. You've never seen him go to war. I have. He hasn't needed to for a very long time but he hasn't forgotten how. Trust me.

[brief pause]

**Finduilas:** [sharply]

Well, that would rather put an end to his superiority about kinslaying, wouldn't it? He would hardly be able to look down on the Feanor clan after that.

**Luthien:**

I rather suspect he would consider it poetic justice. Regardless -- the only thing Beren ever did to my father was have the misfortune of attracting my attention and affections. He never killed any of his family or friends, never annexed any of our property with the threat of further invasion and the hint that we should consider ourselves lucky to keep what we had, never disdained to address him directly -- and my father was still angry enough to have him killed for his presumption in wishing to marry me, if I hadn't intervened.

[frowns thoughtfully]

--Though no doubt a good deal of that was the fact that he wasn't willing to get angry at me and had to take it out on the next-best target. Now -- add to everything else the fact that Lords Curufin and Celegorm have taken over Nargothrond and dispossessed your uncle, who's the only one of your lot who treats us with appropriate respect and despite everything has remained a close friend of my father's, which I fully admit is not always easy, and the rest of you don't seem to give a damn that he's almost certainly a prisoner of the Enemy and may be dead -- and ask yourself, why my father should balk at sending Captain Mablung in with everything he's got, to smash this place open like an anthill?

[pause]

**Finduilas:** [defensive-hostile]  
    . . . He couldn't, anyway.

**Luthien:** [bluntly]  
    Do you really want to stake everything on that? I've not seen anyone here to match our best. I'd not set any of your guards against Beleg Cuthalion -- nor would I pit them against Mablung, either, Noldor or not. I'm not very impressed at all, except for Huan -- Oh, but I forgot! all of your best Elves did go with your King. And Beren. I would be very afraid, if I were you.

**Finduilas:**  
    You don't understand.

**Luthien:**  
    I note you're not contradicting me -- not about any of it.

**Finduilas:** [rises]  
    I can't talk to you when you're being like this. Please try to understand -- we're only concerned for you, for your well-being. We're not trying to make you miserable, we're trying to help you.

**Luthien:** [earnestly]  
    Finduilas, have you ever had an original thought in your life?

[Finduilas sighs and shakes her head, going towards the door]

**Luthien:**  
    Finduilas!

[the other Elf-princess stops and waits]

    If it were Gwin -- would you sit here and pretend you didn't know?

[With a look of sisterly exasperation, Finduilas leaves. Luthien resumes pacing. After a few turns she stops, snaps her fingers, and goes to get the basket of embroidery supplies. With the small scissors she cuts out a hank of hair from one side and quickly begins knotting the short strands around the door handle, humming quietly as she does so:]

*Had I the gold in yonder mountain  
where gold and silver is there for countin'  
I could not count for thought of thee --  
mine eyes so full, I could not see*

*I love my father, I love my mother,  
I love my sister, I love my brother,  
I love my friends and relatives too --  
I'll forsake them all, and go with you*

--Huan? Would you come here, please?

[She cuts some of the longer hairs from his coat and ties them into her Working.]

*Come all ye fair and tender maidens  
take a warning how you court young men:  
They're like a star on a summer's evening  
first they'll appear and then they're gone*

*If I'd of known before I courted  
that love it was such a killing thing  
I'd of locked my heart in a silver casket  
and pinned it shut with a silver pin--*

[At the last she sticks an embroidery needle into the knots, almost like the pin of a latch. She tries the door, and as she expects can open it but cannot pass through from her side.]

Crazy, is it? I'll give them crazy--

[loudly down the hallway:]

What ho guards! Make haste!

[They come warily up, remembering the last time she pulled something on them.]

**Guard:**

Yes, your Highness?

**Luthien:** [thinks for a moment]

I don't like the firewood that's been given me. Take it away and bring me better. This is . . . much too noisy--

**Guards:** [dubious looks at each other]

Er, yes, of course, my lady--

[One of them approaches to come in, the other remaining to obstruct the doorway. The first guard finds that he cannot come within two paces of the threshold, as though a high wind (or a force field) were driving him back.]

**Luthien:**

Good.

[She closes the door, indicates that Huan should try it, and watches wistfully as he paws open the panel and goes through, and then comes back into the suite. Luthien nods in satisfaction at this test of her Work, and slams the door very loudly. Oblivious to -- or rather unconcerned with -- the growing disturbance in the hallways outside, she goes to the northern wall of her solar and springs up to stand on the bench in front of the stone "window" on that side, resting her right hand on the surface of the carved horizon:]

*What hills, what hills are those, my love?  
those hills so dark and low?  
--Those are the hills of hell, my love,  
where you and I must go--*

#### SCENE XXXV

**Gower:**

Small, soft, and weak the feathered singer seems,  
yet let not one forget  
far-ranging flights'cross the wide world, above  
the winds, nor yet  
the strength to stand the weather out, in storms,  
nor withal be overset--

[The outside of Luthien's apartments, leading into the solar, where the Sons of Feanor are just coming up the hallway with two of the door guards in tow.]

**Curufin:**

--What do you mean, it won't open?

**First Guard:**

No, milord, it will open -- it's just that no one can go through it.

**Second Guard:**

--Except for Huan.

[Celegorm glares at him]

Sorry, sir, but it's true.

[They demonstrate by opening the door to the solar.]

**Celegorm:**

So what's the problem?

[Without waiting for an answer he strides forward -- and encounters the same resistance effect that they hit before.]

? ? ?

**Curufin:** [frowning]

Hmph.

[Luthien enters and sits down for a moment in the chair, then gets up and lays more splitwood on the fire before going back to work, apparently laying out the colors of embroidery silk that have been provided her for comparison across the table.]

What nonsense is this, Your Highness?

[she does not answer, just keeps working]

**Curufin:** [sharply]

My lady Luthien!

[again no response]

Luthien!

**Second Guard:**

Er -- that doesn't work, milord.

[Curufin gives him a daunting glare]

**Curufin:**

And what does?

[Embarrassed, the Guard beats loudly on the door panel, making a very undignified racket -- it gets worse, too, since she doesn't respond at once]

**Guard:** [trying to act as though he's not yelling at royalty]

Hey! Hey, you!

[Obviously anyone going by in the halls outside will not

be able to ignore this. Luthien gets up and walks to the door, slowly, as though there were nothing unusual about any of it.]

**Luthien:** [glancing around]

Were you looking for someone, my lords?

**Curufin:** [sarcastic]

Ah, yes -- for the Princess of Doriath, Thingol's daughter, one Luthien.

**Luthien:** [serenely]

There is no one here who answers to that name, my lord.

**Celegorm:**

You're standing right there, you crazy girl!

**Luthien:** [calm]

That is true. I am standing here.

**Curufin:** [sighing]

Your Highness.

[Luthien looks around the solar]

Damn! What game are you playing, my lady?

**Luthien:**

Oh, I am not playing. Not at all, my lords.

**Curufin:** [suspicious]

Who are you, then?

**Luthien:**

I am -- she that Beren loves.

**Curufin:**

You can't expect anyone to call you that!

**Luthien:**

Then call me by my right name.

[pause -- the brothers look at each other]

**Curufin:** [sourly]

Luthien -- Tinuviel.

**Luthien:**

Yes?



[pause]

**Celegorm:**

What -- what's this nonsense with the doors?

**Luthien:**

Surely you can explain that as well as I can -- or if not, your brother certainly should be able to.

[Celegorm is overcome with confusion]

**Curufin:**

Oh, now, let us be honest -- I have it on the noblest authority that you've no objection to being caught and held--

**Luthien:** [shaking her head, sighing]

Finduilas. I suppose she didn't tell you -- or perhaps you're not any better at listening than your elder brother -- that unlike either of you, Beren asked me, and never held me against my will or spoke me disrespectfully or made demand or gave command but was always patient and grateful of my presence--

[she breaks off; behind Curufin's back Celegorm winces and looks away]

**Curufin:** [ironic]

Sounds more like a tame dog than any proper lord, eh, brother?

**Luthien:** [recovering]

You're very brave to mock him when he's far from you.

**Curufin:**

You can't do this forever, you know.

**Luthien:**

I certainly should not need to.

**Curufin:**

You'll give it up in a bit, you'll get bored and regret this, believe me.

**Luthien:** [shrugs]

Well, we'll find out, won't we?

**Celegorm:** [desperately]

Luthien!

[She turns away and walks back to the table and sits down. As she goes back to what she was doing the camera reveals that she is copying the map from the round gallery, with different colors of thread for different geographical features, pinning them into the tabletop as she goes. Huan comes out of the private rooms, and seeing the Sons of Feanor, raises his hackles, growling in a low voice.]

**Celegorm:** [shouting]

Huan!!!

[Luthien uses one pin as a compass and plots out a radius, folds the thread and compares it to other distances, shaking her head with a bitter expression. Curufin grabs his brother by the arm and hauls him away.]

### SCENE XXXVI

**Gower:**

The thing demanded, it may hap, may haply prove  
to be

Not all that deemed it, of good fortune -- yet  
too late to see . . .

[Orodreth's private chambers -- he is occupied with something that looks a bit like six abacuses fitted together three-dimensionally and several sets of writing tablets, and not looking at all happy about it: this is not the kind of task that is sufficiently enjoyable in itself to be worth anything as a distraction from care. An attendant enters the room, very apologetically]

**Orodreth:** [abruptly]

Did you find them?

**Attendent:**

Er -- no, sir, not yet, unfortunately.

**Orodreth:**

Doesn't anyone know where the original records were kept? It has to have been written down somewhere -- it can't all have been only in Edrahil's memory, can it? So where are the scrips and tallies?

[he is angry enough to break the unwritten rule against speaking of the Exiles, and not to notice his aide's discomfort, or to care.]

**Attendant:**

Highness, we're still looking -- but the Lords  
Celegorm and Curufin are here to see you. About --  
about that business . . .

**Orodreth:**

What do they expect me to do about it? Grinding Ice,  
am I to be given no peace nor place of my own to do  
this work? How are we to keep them furnished with  
lights if I don't know how many we have, do they  
think?

**Attendant:**

I'm sorry -- but they do insist . . . they won't take  
"no" for an answer.

**Orodreth:**

Have they ever? Let them come.

[He leans back in his chair, sighing, and flicks scorn-  
fully at one of the markers on the abacus, shaking his  
head. His assistant returns with the brothers and goes to  
the side of his master's chair, defensive]

**Orodreth:** [bleakly bland]

I understand that the Princess Luthien has locked  
herself in her suite of apartments from the inside,  
as you've locked her into them from without, and that  
the Hound Huan is the only individual she will permit  
free entry to, and that he permits no one entry with  
him. Is there in fact a state of siege obtaining in  
my sister's quarters, or am I misinformed?

**Curufin:** [huffy and a bit defensive]

Well, it's not a siege, exactly -- the suite has all  
the amenities, including water, and she still allows  
room service to bring her meals, and we're not  
starving her or anything, of course!

**Celegorm:** [muttering to himself]

No, she just eats almost nothing and won't talk--

**Orodreth:** [grim smile]

Ah. So it's a Leaguer.

[long, long silence]

I'm sure you'll continue to keep me as well appraised  
of the situation. Do feel free to go on wasting my  
time, though, since you always do. Or did you want

something from me besides approval and moral support this time?

**Celegorm:**

Orodreth--

**Orodreth:**

Cousin, stop right there. If you want my job, then as I've told you, show you know what it entails and start doing some work. I don't think you have a jot of a clue as to what is involved in it, and how much needs to be done. The former Steward seems to have found it easier to keep track of everything the old-fashioned way, evidently due to the fact that the people he assigned the task kept deciding to reorganize everything by some new-devised system of their own, which they then abandoned through boredom halfway through.

[flings his stylus down on the table]

You wonder why I'm not the same cheerful soul I used to be? Really? Why I'm not grateful for this honor, this sudden ascension to power? Because I am aware of what power entails. You want one small, negligible example of what I'm contending with? Apart from the personality clashes, and the fact that my daughter's future father-in-law is one of the people I'm going to have to rail at over this mess? There are only half the year's lighting requirements in stock -- as far as we can tell. So I ought to go and set people quickly to making up the difference, which means taking them off other tasks and diverting a great deal of resources. But I can't believe that, because my predecessor was nothing if not thorough and I cannot accept that either Lord Edrahil or my brother would have allowed things to get to such a state, and that means that they're somewhere, only due to the Sindarin-style record keeping no one here is certain where!

[full rant mode]

I know you think that I'm dull, the way you think that everyone who merely supports your lifestyle of leisure and doesn't participate in it is dull -- but you know, you know what's going to be really dull around here is if we don't have enough lighting this winter -- and that is just the beginning! I've got

schedules missing for every storehouse in the City. Do you see these tables? Do you see these figures? This is what I'm having to reconstruct, while you play at being Orome or fiddle around making knick-knacks with my brother's tools -- or kidnap native royalty for your perverse amusement.

[gripping the edge of the desk to keep from throwing something]

I am trying to keep this City alive -- and I am so far out of my depth I can't see shore. I thought it could be little different from managing a garrison -- evidently, however, I was much mistaken. What are you here for, anyhow? You've told me to leave your House's personal affairs alone -- surely you're not coming to me now to ask me to interfere, are you?

[pause]

Just what, in any case, could you possibly expect me to do?

**Curufin:**

You could tell her you'll have the surrounding walls taken down--

**Orodreth:** [standing up]

Starless Night of the Gloomweaver! You are not meddling with the structural supports of the City, and if I so much as hear a whisper of covert demolitions and walls being touched -- there will be a Kinslaying on this side of the family, I promise you. You really have no notion at all, do you, of what you're dealing with? This isn't Tirion, dammit, the rules of architecture you studied at home don't mean a thing when you're working with natural formations of integral stone, the stresses and counterweights and bracings--! You don't know which walls are supporting and which aren't, and you haven't spent Great Years studying them -- or studied with those who have instead. Touch the walls, and you touch Nargothrond, and then -- our understanding is at an end.

**Curufin:** [warningly]

And what exactly do you think would happen then?

**Orodreth:** [smiling through his teeth]  
Very expensive damages all round.

**Curufin:** [back to light tone]  
You're beginning to sound like your great-uncle, you know.

**Orodreth:**  
I'm beginning to understand my great-uncle much better these days. Now please leave me to my lofty role as Regent, unless you'd like to be working in the dark come Sun-return. Solve your own self-created problems for once.

[Orodreth goes back to comparing tallies and tablets, scratching off duplicate entries, and ignoring the brothers. Disgruntled, the Sons of Feanor leave, saying as they pass through into the outer hallway, loudly:]

**Celegorm:**  
Pathetic.

**Curufin:**  
--Pathetic to think we're related to him.

**Celegorm.**  
That too.

## SCENE XXXVII

**Gower:**  
When will is set, on course far-fixed, howsoever rash  
it be,  
no Power that reigns may check, of Earth, of under,  
or amid the Sea--

[The brothers, not happy, enter, still discussing from outside in the halls]

**Celegorm:**  
Do you think that things really are that bad as he says?

**Curufin:** [headshake]  
No, he's just being melodramatic again. It can hardly be more work to run than a couple of provinces, after all. And that certainly never took such full-time investment as he's claiming.

[nastily]

--Unless, perhaps, it does -- for him.

**Celegorm:**

So what are we going to do? This is -- ridiculous. And it's not the way I wanted it at all . . . This stupid business with her refusing to answer to her real name now -- we didn't even tell Orodreth about that.

[grimaces]

"Leaguer"--!

**Curufin:**

We could break through it if we wanted to, of course.

[Celegorm slumps down in his favorite chair]

**Celegorm:** [glum]

No. It's a lost cause. Even if she would listen to me, she's so locked herself into this melodramatic pose of hers that she has to defend and believe what she says, her pride won't let her do otherwise.

[jumps up abruptly and folds his arms, scowling at the fire]

Damn! but you can tell she's Thingol's daughter, no question.

**Curufin:** [thoughtfully]

No, I don't think that's it . . . I think she's more reasonable than Elwe, when it comes down to it. All right -- say she has some mystical bond of telepathy, from her mother's side perhaps, and she really can sense Barahirion halfway across Middle-earth. Well, then -- she'll know when he's dead. All we have to do is -- wait.

**Celegorm:**

What good would that do? She's being so bloody stubborn I'd not be surprised if she means to wait to the end of Arda--

**Curufin:** [grinning]

Uh-uh.

[Celegorm frowns at him]

--Mortal.

**Celegorm:** [delighted realization]

Oh! Right! I'd forgot all about that -- he won't be there, he can't, and she'll just have to Face Facts then, won't she? Hah! --How long do you think it will take? I don't fancy, what, another fifty years of this namecalling and moping and making outrageous Scenes--

**Curufin:**

--Fifty? You're joking. As a prisoner of the Enemy? You've seen what slavery does to the Kindred -- I'd be shocked if it was even a year. And then -- it'll be up to you to console her.

**Celegorm:** [residual sanity intervening]

Do you think I've really a chance? Or will I just be blamed for it?

**Curufin:** [shaking head]

No, once she's free of whatever bizarre mental influence such an unnatural betrothal has created, I'm sure she'll be grateful -- though she'll never admit it: she does have Elu's pride, I grant you. She won't want anyone to remember her embarrassing foray into madness, most like.

**Celegorm:**

And . . . Huan?

[gloomily angry]

--I still can't believe that he turned on me. He saved my life at the Sudden Flame, remember that? It's really strange that a mortal would prove more loyal than a Hound of Valinor . . .

**Curufin:**

How can he object, when she has no objections?

[pats his brother reassuringly on the shoulder]

And needless to say, with you to distract her she'll have no reason to think about it all. Tell you what -- I'm so confident I'll go ahead and start on the maquettes for the rings, hmm? Something to symbolize both Houses, the most elegant things you can imagine, and of course she'll be overwhelmed, never having seen the like here.



**Celegorm:**

--Sublime, meaningful, exquisitely-crafted and  
staggeringly beautiful?

**Curufin:**

--You got it. Now why don't you go off for a ride  
while the weather's still clear and clear the cobwebs  
from your soul, and by the time you get back I'll  
have the rough drafts ready for you to look at.  
Sounds good?

**Celeborn:** [smiles]

Sounds like an excellent plan. --See you in a bit.

[He leaves. Curufin goes to the reorganized shelves and  
starts getting down items for sculpting, humming a simple  
melody as he does -- then checks, as he realizes what  
tune it is -- "Ten Thousand Miles", stuck in his head. He  
snorts, and goes on working in silence.]

#### SCENE XXXVIII [no dialogue]

[The great solar, in the alcove near the fountain]

[Celebrimbor, surrounded by acolytes, suddenly gets up  
and walks away from the circle without explanation -- all  
stare after him, and share perplexed looks when he does  
not return to the session.]

#### SCENE XXXIX

**Gower:**

Captive and disarmed, the Dancer of Doriath yet  
concedeth not defeat--  
lacking her Work, still she holdeth, wieldeth will  
and power to entreat--

[Luthien's suite. She is sitting on the floor with her  
feet on one of the jambs of the open door, her back  
against the other, talking loudly though no one can be  
seen except Huan, whom she is not addressing, though he  
is lying next to her with his head on her lap as she  
brushes him.]

**Luthien:**

--So first they started trouble all up and down Aman,

and then there was the business with nobody getting to see the Silmarils because Feanor was trying to punish you for not appreciating him, and then there was the Night of Darkness and the Kinslaying and then you got abandoned on the other side by him and his sons and then you had to cross the Helcaraxe on foot which is personally the most insane thing I ever heard of but I heard that you lot insisted, and you wouldn't have made it over without my cousins going with you and looking after you and so of course! when the Sons of Feanor move in and start doing the same old thing, bullying and shoving and insisting on getting all their own way, you think they're just wonderful, and you give them everything that Finrod worked to give you and you pretend that it was that way all along. Oh yeah, that makes lots of sense!

[yelling:]

--You can hide around the corner, but I still know you're there!

[nomal voice:]

It's easier to say -- the girl from Doriath is crazy, than to say -- We're faithless traitors.

[There is a sound of muffled exclamation and movement from down the hall, as though someone started to respond and then stopped -- or maybe was stopped.]

--Perhaps I'm not being fair. Maybe you were with the House of Feanor all along and only came here as guests yourselves, and that's why they put you here to watch me and why you think you can't pay heed to my rights. But you're just wrong, if that's the case. You can't claim that you get to ignore the obligations that bind even the gods themselves, of justice and honesty and hospitality and not standing by in idleness as someone else does something wrong and pretending you don't know and aren't involved -- all in the name of honour. How is that "honorable"? Why don't you explain it to me, being just a poor simple Dark-elf out of the woods and all?

[shouts:]

I know you can hear me!

[There is no answer. Shakes her head. Warningly:]

All right, then.

[sings:]

*There were three ra'ens sat on a tree  
and they were black as they might be  
Said one of them unto his mate--  
Where shall we our breakfast take?*

*--In yonder greening field,  
there lies a Knight slain under his shield.  
--His hawks they do so fiercely fly,  
there's nary a fowl does come him nigh--*

*His hounds they lie down at his feet--  
His hounds they lie down at his feet--  
His hounds they lie down at his feet  
so well they do their master keep!*

**Huan:** [interrupting her]  
[loud sharp barks]

**Luthien:** [kissing the top of his head]  
--Yes, you're a good dog too.

[singing:]

*Then there came a fallow doe,  
as great with young as she might go --  
She took him up upon her back  
and carried him beside the loch*

*She buried him in morning-time  
and she was dead ere evensong-time--*

**Huan:**  
[more barking, louder]

**Luthien:**  
I know, I know -- I know it's no good, but I have to try. I don't know if they really don't care, or if there really is a spell like Celebrimbor said, or if this is some kind of madness or poison from living too long underground. --And it doesn't really matter, whatever it is. I mean, they did all leave their families back in Aman, so maybe they can't understand what I feel for Beren--

[sings to herself:]

*Oh the leaves they will wither  
--Roots will decay  
And the beauty of a young maid  
will soon fade away--  
Oh, will soon fade away--*

**Huan:**

[small, nonstop whines]

## SCENE LX

**Gower:**

In these days of order overset, of Misrule's rule,  
the City's lawful lord is reckoned only fool.

[The Regent's Office. Gwindor is standing much less truculently (but if possible more worried) before Orodreth's desk. The Regent looks exhausted and grim -- or angry but in control of it, perhaps.]

**Orodreth:**

What have you discovered?

**Gwindor:**

Aside from the fact that Curufin's so paranoid that half the time he hardly seems to trust himself -- which, added to the usual overconfidence and assumption of cowed awe at the aura of the family name, manifests itself in some rather erratic behavior patterns?

**Orodreth:** [sharply]

I was referring specifically to the question of this reported -- marriage alliance -- purposed between the Lady Luthien and Lord Celebrimbor.

**Gwindor:** [chastened]

Yes, sir. --According to fairly reliable sources, the Lords of Aglon-and-Himlad did send messengers east, under the pretext of assigning liaison staff to the watchtowers. However, there is no way to ascertain that they were sending to Doriath, and not to their brothers, although there are suggestive indications from various overheard cryptic remarks and careless talk among their Household.

Orodreth:

And--?

Gwindor:

To put it bluntly, sir, I don't think that her Highness of Doriath is insane.

Orodreth:

No.

[pause]

Gwindor:

Sir, what are we going to do?

Orodreth:

For the present -- nothing, but observe.

Gwindor: [outraged]

Nothing?

Orodreth: [dry]

At the present instant, her Highness -- and Huan -- have the situation in hand. Unless you believe that you and your following can do a better job of defending her than the Hound of Valinor?

[pause]

For the present, you will maintain your staff's unobtrusive presence among her guards, monitoring the situation constantly and reporting to me, unless the situation changes, and not until then.

Gwindor:

And if that should happen?

Orodreth:

Then -- I will be compelled to take action.

[long silence -- Gwindor looks hopeful]

I would prefer to trust that it will not come to that, that sanity will reassert itself over the grandiose ambitions of our -- guests, and that affairs will shortly return to such normality of state as formerly obtained.

Gwindor:

Do you really believe that your cousins will behave

with either reason or good will? --Sir.

[The Regent reaches over to flick a bead on the abacus-construct, with a lopsided smile]

**Orodreth:** [ironic]

No, my lord. Hence your orders.

[Gwindor bows and strides out; Orodreth remains staring into the distance for a moment before turning back to his paperwork with a sigh.]

## SCENE XLI

**Gower:**

Like a lasting storm, the world's travail  
about Tinuviel doth whirl, her peace assail  
and all that's hers of rightful honours owed  
whir away, as fallen leaves along the road.

[Celegorm is standing outside the door of Luthien's solar, still dressed in his outdoor gear, fresh from the hunt. Huan is couchant inside, like a sheepdog just waiting to hear "Coom by," and Luthien is standing behind him, though one has to assume that it's her because she has her blue mantle wrapped all the way around her and pulled so far forward that her face cannot be seen, rather like one of the famous Mourners statues on the Duke of Burgundy's tomb. The effect is extremely creepy. The elder son of Feanor doesn't seem to notice: when the scene opens he's talking away quite cheerfully.]

**Celegorm:**

. . . And then you'll be queen of greater Beleriand,  
forever and ever, and we'll have the grandest times  
together, go anywhere in the country without worrying  
about wolves or worse, and I'll have the Silmarils  
set for you to wear and no one in Arda will compare  
with you, you'll be like Varda herself and we'll make  
Middle-earth better than Aman ever was, I promise.  
I'll give you the whole world, and you'll never be  
unhappy or afraid or hungry again. What do you say to  
that, hey?

[she does not answer]

Come on, Luthien, don't pretend you're deaf, it just  
makes you look the proper fool!

**Luthien:** [sings]

*A North Country maid to the City had stray'd  
although with her nature it did not agree  
O she wept and she cried and most bitterly she sighed  
--I would I were home in the North Country--*

[Celegorm tenses, but no mysterious compulsion kicks in  
and he smiles]

*--Oh the oak and the ash and the bonnie ivy tree,  
They flourish at home in my own country--*

**Celegorm:**

It won't work, I'm not one of your weak-minded Grey Kindred. Listen, Luthien, you know you're being outrageous and stubborn and everyone thinks you're a silly girl and half-crazy on top of that. Now I understand it's hard to admit you're wrong -- I wouldn't like to do it -- but please just -- be reasonable, would you, and look at the facts. First, there's the prestige. Can't get away from that.

[Throughout this exchange, Luthien continues answering his rhetoric with verses of "North Country Maid," while Celegorm carries on as if she hadn't replied.]

**Luthien:**

*But still I do see that a husband I might wed,  
if I to the City my mind I would tame--*

**Celegorm:**

And going with that, the cachet of House Feanor, there's the tangible benefits. What could he offer you? An empty title, the ownership of a little snippet of mountainous lands held completely by the Enemy, and no likelihood of ever gettin' it back, what with no army, no people, and no luck. Now, granted, we've suffered some setbacks, but my family still holds large strategic areas of Endor and massive resources, completely apart from Narog.

**Luthien:**

*But I'll only have a lad that is North Country bred,  
or I will not marry but stay as I am--*

**Celegorm:**

And then, when we unite your people and ours, we'll form an alliance that will finally be able to coordinate properly and tackle the problem of the

North in a rational manner, not all this nonsense of independent commands and whatnot.

**Luthien:**

*--Oh the oak and the ash and the bonnie ivy tree,  
They flourish at home in my own country--*

**Celegorm:**

So there's the common good aspect all covered, and then there's you to think of, you can't really be happy traipsing about in rags and working yourself into a fret, going off your feed -- you really want looking-after, and I will make sure that everything you could possibly desire is yours.

**Luthien:**

*A maiden I am and a maid I'll remain,  
until the North Country once more I do see--*

**Celegorm:**

And finally, not to be arrogant about it or anything, but -- who else is there who matches up, just on a personal basis? I mean, we complement each other perfectly, and not just in looks -- you've got courage, too, and the strength almost of the Noldor. There's no two ways about it. It's meant to be.

**Luthien:**

*For here in this place I'll never see the face  
of him that is meant my love for to be--*

**Celegorm:** [tolerantly]

Oh, you're not still sore at me for gettin' a bit forward the other day, are you, Princess?

**Luthien:**

*--Oh the oak and the ash and the bonnie ivy tree,*

**Celegorm:** [tolerantly]

You know I didn't mean anything by it, you know perfectly well I wouldn't ever do anything -- improper -- to you.

**Luthien:**

*They flourish--*

[breaks off at once: when she speaks it is in a very stern and austere manner, without any hesitation or emotion, as one speaking in full royal authority -- or, possibly, even higher.]



You yourself did not know what you would have done, Celegorm son of Feanor, so do not try to unsay the past with untruths. I am only speaking to you now that I may appeal to whatever is left of your true nature. Release me and give me what I demand, and you may avoid full-out war with my House, and mitigate the greater Curse that grows with every treason you commit.

**Celegorm:**

But I can't -- you don't understand, just -- please, give me a chance--

**Luthien:**

You lied to me. You don't get a second chance.

**Celegorm:** [hotly]

I didn't lie to you!

**Luthien:**

Worse, then -- you deliberately used the truth to deceive me. How can you even call yourself one of us, then, if you misuse the gift of speech so?

**Celegorm:** [defensive]

But one isn't obliged to tell everything to everyone -- it's perfectly all right to keep secrets, from strangers, or to mislead the Enemy.

**Luthien:**

So I am an enemy. Thank you for stating that plainly.

**Celegorm:**

--That wasn't what I meant, dammit--

**Luthien:**

It's far too late for stranger, and clearly you are not my friend.

**Celegorm:** [winningly]

I could be, if you'd let me.

**Luthien:** [sings]

*The hart he loves the high wood,  
The hare he loves the hill,  
The knight loves well his bright sword--  
The lady loves her will.*

**Celegorm:** [cajoling]

Come on, Luthien, don't sulk and carry on in this --

this ridiculous fashion, hiding yourself like some kind of freak--

**Luthien:**

You look at me and you do not see me, Celegorm Turcofin Feanorion, because you have never seen me as I am -- only as a rough stone to be polished and made fit for your tastes.

**Celegorm:**

I see . . . a beautiful Elf who deserves far better than a backwoods reserve, who deserves the finest things that civilization can give her, who deserves to be protected from fell things, not exposed to every risk and danger in Middle-earth -- and at the same time to be celebrated throughout the land, not hidden away like a dusty mathom in a storeroom!

**Luthien:** [passionate for the first time]

That's what I mean! You refuse to understand that I am Sindar, that I belong to this land, to these woods, that they are real and powerful and not some worthless wastelands fit only to serve as a place for you to go hunting in, and that we have built a civilization in them that may not be the same as yours but is no less its equal! You don't know me, you cannot know me, you've never seen me in my own dominion, in my own home -- you never risked life and limb following the forest's call to find me--

**Celegorm:** [interrupting her]

--Well, not much of a chance of that, what with your father's Ban on us!

**Luthien:** [half angry, half exasperated pity]

Before that. You could have come directly to Doriath and paid your respects to my parents like the Finarfinions. You could have done us homage, and learned from us, and not alienated half the country with your arrogance.

[reluctant but honest as always:]

And -- you would have met me. And perhaps -- perhaps things might have gone otherwise, between -- all of us.

[pause]

**Celegorm:**

And what would have happened, when Sha -- when your father found out about the unpleasantness back in Aman?

**Luthien:** [shrugs]

Who can say? It would have been different from what did happen. Wisdom can say no more than that, ever. But you chose a different path, and a different self, and now -- it's too late.

**Celegorm:**

But it isn't too late. That's what I'm trying to tell you.

**Luthien:**

It was too late before you set eyes on me. It was too late -- the instant you betrayed your Kindred a second time, and Beren with them. It was too late long before I entered the Gates of Nargothrond. I would tear down this whole City, if I could, to escape from here.

**Celegorm:** [indulgently]

Silly girl, that's what the Enemy would do. Whose side are you on, anyway?

**Luthien:**

Beren's. And anyone else who's with us.

**Celegorm:** [cold -- the true iron showing through for the first time]

Beren's a goner. Your future lies with me. With us, not that rabble of half-Noldor and humans and illiterates who refused the Call that's let Beleriand go to wrack and ruin.

**Luthien:**

You will never win me, body or soul. My heart is with Beren, not here, even as I hold his, and you can't divide us, Celegorm Turcofin!

**Celegorm:** [grinning]

Don't you get it? For someone who prides herself on being so clever you're being awfully dense, Luthien. He's mortal. All we've got to do is wait.

[silence]

**Huan:**

[Low deep growl]

**Luthien:** [distant and oracular]

--That is why I could not touch you. Your outward form is still fair, but there is nothing left of Eldar within. Refuse the Call? You cannot even hear it!

**Celegorm:** [confident]

It'll just be a little while, and then you'll be free of this spell, this madness that's got hold of you, and everything will be fine. --You'll see. --And you, dog, are going to have to work to get back into my good graces. You missed a really excellent chase today, you know.

[He turns and goes off, whistling. She remains there, standing perfectly still like a statue, while Huan looks up at her panting, until finally he gets off the floor and starts nudging her to try to get her to move.]

## SCENE LXI.ii

[The Hall of Morning: the late afternoon sunlight barely makes its way down the prisms of the roof to the gallery, giving it a strange subdued and reddish light. Despite the sunset hour there are several people gathered there -- our seldom-seen (but sometimes glimpsed) not-quite-conspirators, or most of them. The Sage is standing, with a nervous air, and the Scribe has just risen from the bench across from the one where the Ranger is still seated; the Guard is nowhere to be seen.]

**Scribe:**

Did you succeed?

**Sage:** [shakes her head]

I -- the security was too tight. I couldn't get in.

[pause. They look at each other, and the Sage looks away.]

**Scribe:**

You didn't make the attempt. After all the work I went to making the duplicate--

**Ranger:**

--You didn't even try?

**Sage:** [ugly tone]

--How many horses did you secure for us?

[he shuts up]

**Scribe:**

What could they have done, if they'd caught you making the switch? Complain to the Regent? I told you I should have handled it--

**Sage:**

What you said, may I remind you, was that you were too closely connected through your cousin's consort and you'd be immediately associated with any loss--

**Scribe:** [nonplussed]

Well. Anyway, that's neither here nor there.

[rallying]

What were you afraid of? The public humiliation? Surely you don't think they could actually do anything to you?

**Sage:**

No, it isn't as though they've has ever killed or injured another of the Kindred -- what a ridiculous notion!

**Scribe:** [hurt]

You needn't be so sarcastic.

[They both look around for their missing fourth associate; the Ranger shakes his head.]

**Ranger:**

She was right . . . we're worse cowards than either of the sons of Feanor.

[No one disagrees with him; the light continues to dim on the malcontents of Nargothrond]

## SCENE LXII

**Gower:**

--Though memory a monument outlasting even hardest stone  
eternal may endure, recollection of what once was known  
is sharpest goad: a path of thorns ever freshly sown--

[Luthien is sitting on the side of her bed, still with  
the shawl wrapped around her like a long veil, looking at  
Huan, who is lying in front of her with his chin on her  
knees. All the doors of the suite are opened, facing  
towards the main door, which is closed.]

**Luthien:**

It's hopeless. I can't dig my way out of here with  
embroidery needles, I can't work stone, I can't even  
command hearts now without access to my Power -- I've  
exhausted every scrap of possibility and I can't see  
any way out of here but divine intervention at this  
point. But the best I've ever been able to get has  
been divine nonintervention -- and that made no  
difference whatsoever, to my thinking, except to spare  
my mother one miserable scene out of more than I can  
count. They're going to die, and I'll never see Beren  
again, and I can't live without him. I've done my  
best -- and that's no consolation whatsoever.

**Huan:**

[short distressed whines]

**Luthien:** [taking his face in her hands]

I'm not blaming you. It wasn't your fault, and I  
can't begin to tell how grateful I've been for your  
friendship. I just don't know what to do, and -- I  
can't bear the waiting--

[she breaks off, her teeth clenched, breathing hard as  
she tries not to cry]

**Finduilas:** [calling through the door]

--Luthien? Luthien, you can't lock yourself in there  
and not see anyone -- it's not healthy! We're trying  
to help you. Luthien!

**Luthien:** [grimly ferocious]

That's not my name.

**Finduilas:** [exasperated]

Luthien! I'm not going to call you "Nightingale."

**Luthien:**

What do you want -- Sparkly?

**Finduilas:** [resigned]

Tinuviel. You've got to talk to someone.

**Huan:**

[single bark]

**Finduilas:**

And Huan doesn't count!

**Luthien:**

Go away, Finduilas, I don't want to talk to anyone --  
I'm too upset to do anything but cry, or sleep.

[laughs quietly. To herself:]

Only this time -- it's true.

[after a few moments she sings very softly:]

*My love said to me--  
My mother won't mind  
and my father won't slight you  
for your lack of kind--  
Then she stepped away from me  
and this she did say  
--It will not be long, love,  
till our wedding day--*

[as the verse ends she shakes her head, smiling bitterly and crying at the same time. She lies back on the bed and curls up on her side, sheltering her head with her arms and does not move. The lights of the City dim in accordance with the hours of darkness outside. Huan gets up and pads out of the room and out of the apartments, surprisingly quiet for such a huge creature.]

### SCENE XLIII

**Gower:**

--'Gainst the rising tide of fate some strive  
to stem the flood with sticks, with sand: as well  
with straws--  
no more than such their efforts shall give pause.

[Orodreth's Household apartments -- in the Regent's

private office, his two nearest and dearest are gathered around, Finduilas on a low hassock by the fireplace and Gwindor standing behind her, gently rubbing her shoulders. Orodreth looks at them with an expression tired and sad but fond; the young people keep looking, inevitably, up to the desk behind him where a second mega-abacus has joined the first, and there is a shape suspiciously like that of a third on the floor behind it in the shadows of the ornamentally-pierced lantern hanging overhead.]

**Orodreth:**

Were you able to do anything for her? Convey our concern for her? Would she talk to you at all?

**Finduilas:** [shaking her head]

She still won't answer to any name but the one he gave her, either. You have to call her Tinuviel or she doesn't listen. She doesn't listen anyway, though . . . I don't understand why she can't compromise . . .

[the others stare at her, bemused. Defensive:]

--What?

**Orodreth:** [very dry]

What, exactly, would a compromise look like, under these circumstances?

[pause]

Between going and staying there isn't much of a third route, is there?

**Finduilas:** [exasperated]

Father. I meant, in principle--

**Orodreth:** [sighs]

I'm sorry, my dear. It's been a long couple of bells--

**Finduilas:**

You look so tired . . . Can't you get someone to help you with all of this?

**Orodreth:**

I'm afraid that's the problem, not the solution to it.

**Finduilas:**

I meant . . . us . . . ?



**Orodreth:**

No, thank you anyway. But I couldn't explain what I've got going on here in any way that would easily make sense to you -- I barely grasp it all myself, and it would just confuse matters worse if I tried to pass it over right now. It's like your glasswork, when it's still soft enough to work with -- if you tried to show me what you were doing with it and let me take it on, it would be ruined before I'd grasped the situation. --But I do appreciate you offering.

[Finduilas nods, sadly]

**Gwindor:** [profoundly apologetic]

Sir -- I -- I'm so very sorry. I -- my father -- he, well, he hasn't been the same -- since my brother . . .

**Orodreth:**

It -- Gwindor, I'm the last to blame anyone for what his relatives did -- or didn't -- do. There's more than enough blame to go around right now.

**Finduilas:** [almost whispering]

She -- she compares him to the Trees, Father. That can't be right, that can't be allowable, can it? What would they say, what would the Powers say to that--?

[Orodreth does not answer -- he has covered his face with his hand, turning his head away]

**Gwindor:**

Sir -- what else could you have done?

**Orodreth:**

That is what we said after Minas Tirith, is it not? Now -- I do not know.

**Gwindor:** [thinking aloud]

But -- there must be something -- someone -- someone else -- thus official deniability -- could defy them, could help -- her . . .

**Orodreth:**

Do you dare? Will you go, then, down to her door and order aside the guards and take horse and ride with her to the Bridge of Sirion and challenge the Master of Wolves there, like a knight in one of her mortal songs? What do you think will happen to you, then? --But do it, if you dare: how can I forbid you, any

more than give command?

[long pause. Gwindor frowning, as though to speak several times -- his expression becomes anguished and his posture shifts subtly -- he knows he cannot do it. Abruptly he turns, knocking a small table aside impatiently with his foot as he strides towards the doors]

**Finduilas:** [panicky]

Gwin -- where are you going?

**Gwindor:** [bitter sarcasm]

To train in the defense of the City -- is that not my duty?

[Breathing hard, he goes quickly from the apartments. Finduilas half-rising to follow him, sits down again.]

**Orodreth:**

Should you -- do you need to go talk to him?

[she shakes her head, definitely]

**Finduilas:**

It wouldn't do any good right now. It's better just to ignore it and let him work it through. You know how moody and impulsive he is sometimes.

[Orodreth nods]

Is it really that bad? Surely we'd have noticed, wouldn't we, if things were really so disorganized? I never encountered any sign of anything like that . . .

[she sounds a bit incredulous, a defensive response.]

**Orodreth:**

And what did you do if you couldn't find something, some needful bit of information or necessary item?

**Finduilas:** [shrugs, not seeing where this is going]

I asked Gwin if he'd seen it.

**Orodreth:**

And if he hadn't?

**Finduilas:**

Then we asked around.

**Orodreth:**

And if no one knew where it was?

**Finduilas:**

We--

[her voice goes very quiet]

--We asked Edrahil.

**Orodreth:** [nods]

That is, evidently, what we all did. It's an excellent system, going directly to someone who knows precisely what it is you need and where to find it, instead of wasting time trying to sort through far more information than you need or know how relates or have time to study. Unfortunately -- it's predicated on being able to ask that person, and when that is not possible then the system simply does not exist. Which is why I am endeavoring to reconstruct it from such small and contradictory fragments of information as I have been able to lay hands on.

**Finduilas:**

But -- wasn't anything written down?

**Orodreth:** [shaking his head, gestures sweepingly around the room]

Oh, lots! That's the other half of the problem. Look at all of it, only the visible portion of the floe, and think about what could be buried inside. There's a surfeit of information there, and I can only assimilate so much of it, so quickly. And I keep discovering things that -- had I known earlier -- might have caused me to decide other than I have done. For example--

[he picks up a large notebook with a well-worn tooled leather cover and lots of small pieces of parchment attached to the pages inside]

I didn't realize, until I found this, that Finrod kept condensed notes on every single conversation relating to the governing of the state, no matter how minor an issue it might seem. This is a great help -- or would be -- if it wasn't in chronological order. So my only option has been to begin at the most recent date and work through backwards, trying to make all the connections myself, since I don't know when anything that might prove helpful happened.

[points across to the half-unpacked chests and shelving]

--There are many, many more volumes like this.

[shaking his head]

Some of them have yet other manuscripts bound into them. Fortunately, some of the entries have a sort of indexing, a note referring back to previous relevant conversations and the dates, so I've not been working at totally blind random. But I might as well.

[he opens to a bookmarked folio]

You might remember that I put Lord Telemnar in charge of the Borders, thinking that as he was originally of the High King's following, and distant kin to Fingon's mother's family, that would avoid any of the problems involved in choosing someone from either our side or theirs.

**Finduilas:** [nodding]

It made a good deal of sense . . .

**Orodreth:** [wry]

Well. Only yesterday did I encounter this set of entries concerning the former Lieutenant, whose abilities did not, apparently, reflect his age or seniority in terms of time-in-grade and signally failed to endear him with his superior. The pith of the discussion is summed up in the lines:

"Recommended: Can we give him back? Suppose not. Oh well. Allow several more seasons to grow out of it; if he doesn't, shunt to Armory desk where arrogant nitpicking rulemindedness won't hurt anyone." The note appended to this is only two words: "Agree, sadly."

[flips back to a later folio]

Now, here, in another entry, I have the summary of a report concerning a lad from one of the local villages, saying "Recommended: Instead of fifth citation for above-and-beyond, why not promotion? Five past coincidence, indicates either extremely good or extremely lucky; in either case, valuable asset for commander. Interviewed: Everything said borne out, yet still uncertain of own authority and shy of contradicting superiors. Counter-recommendation: Allow a few more years getting used to idea of giving orders to elders, then give own command." If I had found that before I promoted Telemnar . . .

[pause]

. . . it still wouldn't have done any good.

**Finduilas:** [whispering]

Because -- because he went with them . . .

[Orodreth nods, tosses the notebook aside and leans back, sighing; she is still uncertain.]

But it doesn't seem possible that so few individuals could make such an enormous difference to a -- a whole Kingdom!

**Orodreth:**

It doesn't seem so -- but like water, one takes such people for granted, until they're no longer present. The same few individuals who possessed the fortitude requisite to withstand the temptations of fear and sloth alike in adherence to their duty now prove -- not entirely surprisingly -- to have been the same who took upon themselves additional duties, and to set aside their own self-will and goals and recreations to see those duties through to completion. --And we who are left muddle along half-blindly, trying to recover from the ruinous darkness we have brought upon ourselves, but unwilling to dare the necessary fire--

**Finduilas:**

That's almost what Luthien . . .

[trails off]

**Orodreth:** [attentive]

What did she say?

**Finduilas:**

She says there's a cloud over the City, but it's in Nargothrond instead of outside. She thinks it comes from living underground . . .

**Orodreth:**

I'm not surprised she can feel it. But it doesn't come from the caves themselves. It began when we betrayed him.

**Finduilas:**

Please -- don't, father. It -- it wasn't like Alqualonde.

**Orodreth:**

The fact that it was a bloodless coup doesn't make it any less of one, nor does the fact that we said nothing against it change the fact that -- we said nothing. Finding no one at your back where you counted on reinforcements can be quite equally as bad as finding enemies. No, we chose not to fight, and with that we chose the consequences, Sight unseen.

**Finduilas:**

But what would it have done? Except give the sons of Feanor control over us completely, and openly? That wouldn't have been good, would it?

**Orodreth:**

If I had stood beside him then -- even I, who fled my post and left everything our brothers died to save for ruin -- if even such a coward as I could do that, -- who can tell who might have followed? -- what might have followed? I cannot.

**Finduilas:** [strained]

You're not a coward, father.

**Orodreth:**

That day -- I was. And worse. --And so Lord Beren goes in my place, at my brother's side, and bears my duty and my fate, and I have fled to safety, once again, abandoning all. And I tell myself that it is better than the blood of Alqualonde on our floors and walls, and it may well be true, and is no comfort at all. And I tell myself that Finrod forgave me in that hour, seeing that I could do no else, and know it is the truth, and that is worst--

**Finduilas:**

But it was for the greatest good--

**Orodreth:**

The greatest good? To send our foremost off undefended, the one of all of us who alone knows everything that there is to know about the Realm, about its defenses, its workings, of all the myriad connections between this kingdom and the other Noldor domains, the strengths and weaknesses of each of us, into danger, and as we now know, captivity?

**Finduilas:**

I don't understand.

**Orodreth:**

There is nothing about Beleriand, about the War, even after the end of the Siege, that Finrod does not have critical information concerning the which, the Enemy could never acquire elsewhere and singly. It is not just our safety alone that is at risk, however selfishly our first concerns may center there.

[silence]

**Finduilas:**

But -- why then haven't they thought of that? Why hasn't it occurred to Lord Curufin, at least?

[aside]

Or to us . . .

**Orodreth:** [shrugs]

I don't know if it's the madness of the Oath at work, or some residual sanity preventing them from so much self-deception.

**Finduilas:**

--Or Luthien's cloud?

[increasing agitation]

No one else seems to have realized it either. If -- he--

[she can't say it]

**Orodreth:**

--Breaks?

**Finduilas:**

--won't we be under attack -- here?

[her father shakes his head]

Why? Why not? What do you mean?

**Orodreth:**

He can't. He doesn't know how. When he's losing -- he doesn't change the rules, he changes the game. Not like 'Tariel, going about it with brute force until whatever's in the way breaks or moves, willy-nilly--

[absolute certainty]

He won't betray us.

**Finduilas:**

Do you think -- do you think he might escape . . . ?

**Orodreth:**

I don't know. No one ever has. But if it were anyone--

[he breaks off]

**Finduilas:** [frowning]

But . . .

**Orodreth:** [guessing her train of thought]

No, of course I would not prevent them from returning, though I doubt that even the gods could say what would come as a result. But in any case -- I think -- he would almost certainly leave us to our own devices, to continue on the path we have chosen -- just as we were let before.

**Finduilas:** [slowly]

This is what he said -- this is what he saw -- to Aunt 'Tariel, isn't it?

**Orodreth:**

I am afraid so. If Nargothrond is annexed by the House of Feanor, then what, indeed, remains of the realm he built?

**Finduilas:** [shaking her head]

--Is there any way that things could have turned out differently?

[pause]

**Orodreth:** [flat]

We should never have let the Feanorions into Nargothrond.

**Finduilas:**

But -- we couldn't turn them away. He said that himself -- what else could we have done?

**Orodreth:**

It would have been better to give them Minas Tirith and let them hold that province.

**Finduilas:**

But that was yours!



**Orodreth:** [shrugging]

Perhaps they would have done better than I, perhaps not. --Certainly, no worse. But the idea of uniting their strength with ours was a foolish one -- the alloy not stronger at all but flawed and brittle, weakening all of us. Yet--

[opens his hands]

I would not make the suggestion, though it was but the rational decision, being too proud, too weak, to give up what I held, and Finrod could not suggest it where I would not, could not betray me nor belittle me before the world -- and thus -- thus left himself open to such betrayal in turn, relying on whom he must, trusting us to return that trust, and -- we have all broken beneath that weight of responsibility, fallen, under that freedom, and now -- I think perhaps we are doomed to betray each other and ourselves, over and again, until not one of us has not forsaken the other--

**Finduilas:** [distressed]

--I shan't betray you, Father!

**Orodreth:**

I'm sorry, child. I didn't mean that you would. I'm -- I'm just talking. Dark thoughts, night thoughts. It's always night here, truly; she's right about that. --As well.

[quietly]

Do you remember when you were young, and you'd say the stairs were too tall for you to climb going up to the house in Tirion?

[she nods, wary]

How you'd sit down and refuse to move, and Finrod would pick you up and put you on his shoulders and run you up them with you screeching like a peacock all the way, and then pretend he'd forgotten about you while you laughed the whole time that you were taller than we, to your mother and myself?

[Finduilas hides her face in her hands]

When I was as little as that, he'd carry me like that as well. And the rest of us too, before I was

born, and my sister . . . We pestered him until any normal soul would have lost patience six times over, but he never got angry with us for invading his study or touching his things, and when we nagged him to show us how to make things he never grew tired of teaching, or impatient if any of us grew bored, and ran off. I'd . . . almost forgotten those days; what I didn't realize was . . . that he'd never stopped.

**Finduilas:** [almost whispering]

If -- if we -- if the Ban is ever lifted, and we go back home -- what will you say to him?

**Orodreth:** [not harsh, smiling a little]

You mean, "If we die?"

[She does not answer, just looks at him. Calmly:]

The only thing possible -- the one thing I did not say.

[Finduilas stares at him, not understanding]

--Thank you.

[Miserably his daughter flings herself at him, holding onto him for comfort as much as to give it; he holds her close but will not say anything to console her.]

#### SCENE LXIV.i [no dialogue]

[Levels of Nargothrond between Luthien's rooms and the royal suite]

[Huan slinks through the hallways, head and tail low but not dragging -- this is guilty-but-determined-dog mode. He keeps to the smaller corridors and byways, ducking through accidental passageways formed by the natural shapes of the rock when possible, skulking along out of sight of people occupied in conversation, music-making, dancing and various diverse arts.]

#### SCENE LXIV.ii [no dialogue]

[The Armories of Nargothrond.]

[Gwindor stalks through, grabbing a helm and shield from

the racks as he goes by, people moving out of his way as they notice his expression. He does not take armor, only a hefty two-hand practice broadsword. He storms his way into the training areas, warriors vacating the area before him as if swept aside by the shock of a bow-wave. The training area itself is set up as a ravine near High Faroth, with deep rocky gorges rising on one side and the dense green of the forest all around and overhead.]

[Celebrimbor is here, hacking at a far more realistic and active quintain than mortals have ever succeeded in making. As he dispatches the Orc-simulacrum, Gwindor taps him on the shoulder and dodges the automatic counter-stroke. Panting, Celebrimbor gives him a questioning look. Gwindor raises his sword in salute, raising his eyebrows. Celebrimbor nods; they face each other and square off.]

[The forest ravine blurs around them, to be replaced by a smouldering field under a red-clouded sky, its tumbled surface mercifully blackened into indistinguishable charcoal, in places lava-flows still slowly rolling and cracking open to reveal molten insides, mountains on two sides of them in the distance and a forest-fire on the slopes of one of them. On this brutal terrain the two Elven-lords go at each other mercilessly, taking and receiving punishment without effort to evade the blows.]

#### SCENE LXIV.iii

**Gower:**

Pride goeth gaily, astride on charger tall,  
headlong rushing, recking of never a fall--

[In the royal apartments, the Sons of Fëanor are bent over a workbench on which a dramatic lighting assembly constructed of angled and movable reflectors positionable so as to obviate cast-shadow problems has been placed. Curufin has been busy for some while, and is showing off the results of his work to his elder brother.

**Celegorm:** [gesturing at the array of reflectors]  
So you finally got that all figured out?

**Curufin:** [nods]

I thought it was rather daftly overdone, but once you get the hang of it, it really makes a tremendous

difference in terms of enhancing the levels of relief.

**Celegorm:**

Are the different colored waxes just to help distinguish the separate design elements, or are you going to work them in different colors of metal as well?

**Curufin:**

Ye-es.

**Celegorm:**

Ah. Gold for the flames, silver for the leaves.  
--Very apt.

**Curufin:** [smiles]

Neat, eh? I thought so.

**Celegorm:**

I also approve the placement of the dual bands of flames around the inner single band of leaves. Very, ah, symmetrical.

[Curufin grins sleekly: they are in perfect understanding.]

Now, what do you think about . . .

[as they discuss design possibilities, Huan creeps in behind them and pads silently across the chamber in the deep shadows cast by the glare of the reflector. The other hounds look up at him, and respectfully put their heads down or return to gnawing.]

[Huan goes into the inner rooms and takes down the casket containing Luthien's cape in his jaws. He crushes it very slowly, but there is still some noise.]

**Curufin:**

What was that?

[The hounds on the hearth wag their tails and one of them makes a loud toothscrape-grinding noise of the spine-chilling sort.]

**Celegorm:**

Just the dogs chewing. --Could you fit a sunburst in the middle of mine, do you think? Or would that be too much?

[Huan lays down the shattered box from which CGI darkness

is beginning to spill like ink in water, and paws it apart. As he stoops again to pick up the cloak, the light seems to dim slightly, as though twilight from outside were falling, though that is impossible. He pads out with it in his jaws, and as it trails past the other dogs lay their heads down and close their eyes, and the Sons of Feanor slide forward onto the worktable as though they'd been very tired for a very long time.]

#### SCENE LXIV.iv [no dialogue]

[The hallways near the throne room and the great solar]

[Huan glides through again, a cloud of shadow and haze drifting around him from his muzzle. Darkness like twilight follows him, spreading out in a widening tide, and everyone it touches goes into a trance, caught in pleasant dreams and memories, oblivious of the Hound passing, whether they fall asleep actually or not. The twilight continues to pool slowly through the City and drift down its halls, carrying with it a faint sound of night breeze in leaves, running water, crickets, owls, & nightingales.]

#### SCENE LXIV.v [no dialogue]

[Luthien's bedroom]

[Huan enters, and the drifting cape fills the entire room with nightfall -- Luthien sits bolt upright, shocked awake by the change of atmosphere, looking around wild-eyed and dazed. For a moment she looks at the Hound and doesn't recognize him or understand. He drops the cloak on the floor next to her couch, and Luthien gasps. She springs to her feet and snatches it up, clenching it in her arms fiercely. Then she hugs Huan, tears running down her cheeks, and kneels before him, attentive.]

#### SCENE LXIV.vi [no dialogue]

[The main corridors of Nargothrond]

[The tide of Eveningspell flows down the stairs and ramps, spilling like water into lower levels of the City, even as it ascends like drifting smoke to the levels higher]

#### SCENE LXIV.vii [no dialogue]

[Luthien's bedroom]

[Luthien stands up very straight, her chest heaving, her eyes wild. With a sudden gesture she flings out the cloak in her arms, so that it carries wide all around her, and spins it back over her shoulders. Huan drops down couchant before her and she pounces onto his back rather like a kitten, and bares her teeth in a snarl-smile. He stands up and she pats his shoulder as though he were a horse needing reassurance.]

[They go through the apartments at a careful walk -- when they reach the door Luthien leans over as though opening a gate from horseback and takes out the needle, tossing it behind her. Huan pushes the doors open and they walk through as though there were nothing to hold them back. The camera follows them past the ensorcelled hall-guards, who doze or gaze past them without noticing them at all.]

#### SCENE LXIV.viii [no dialogue]

[In the Armories]

[The Spell trickles down and pools over the flagstones past the ranks of weapons and barding and helms towards the training area.]

#### SCENE LXIV.ix [no dialogue]

[The Gates of Nargothrond.]

[Luthien and Huan pace softly through them onto the terrace, unseen by the entranced guards. Evening pours through the pillars of the threefold gate behind them to merge with the true nightfall outside. Huan halts for a moment, sniffing the wind, then looks back over his shoulder, anxious, and whines. Luthien bends over and whispers into ear, petting his neck and he turns back to the trail. He wags his tail once, as if in reassurance, and then springs forward at a run now that they are free of the power of the City. The darkness of the cape follows behind them, hiding his gray coat entirely from view in the moonlight.]

#### SCENE LXIV.x [no dialogue]

[The great solar, near the fountain]

[The twilight-like shading of the ambient light evaporates, like diluted ink, as the Carillon unfolds and runs through its sequence unobserved.]

#### SCENE LXIV.xi [no dialogue]

[The training area of the Armories]

[Celebrimbor standing with blank eyes -- wakes up and looks at the sword in his hand, frowns. Gwindor, also standing with his arm hanging by his side, starts and stares around, then looks up towards the ceiling, frowning at the direction. They exchange looks of dire alarm -- then turn and run through the armory as one hastening up the stairs to split off in different directions at the landing.]

#### SCENE LXIV.xii [no dialogue]

[Sirion River Valley]

[High angle -- full moon shining down a long stretch of the river northward. Silhouette of towers just to be seen on horizon between mountains and forest.]

#### SCENE LXIV.xiii [no dialogue]

[The royal apartments.]

[Asleep on the worktable, Curufin stirs, lifts his head groggily and looks around blinking. Something is stuck to his face, and he fumbles it off -- the wax model for one of the wedding rings, crushed and melted by the heat of his skin. As he grimaces, a confusion in his expression that is on the verge of turning into worry, a pounding on the door causes the hounds on the hearth to waken, leap up and start barking. This makes Celegorm spring bolt upright, tipping his chair over sideways and causing him to, if not exactly trip, still collide with the table rather hard and involuntarily. Recovering, he rushes over

and flings the doors open -- revealing one of their Household, wearing a look of Doom, outside . . .]

## SCENE LXV

**Gower:**

Shattered now, at the tolling of the hours,  
fadeth the sweet tranquility of Lorien  
cast upon the City's folk, the scent of flowers,  
the dreamlike peace and dreaming then--

[Luthien's apartments. The door stands open, the guards stand about in defensive clusters trying not to look at all responsible for anything. A few poke through the back rooms of the suite as though she might possibly be hiding somewhere, they just missed her somehow. Celebrimbor is sitting on the bench beneath the North-facing window that Luthien used to haunt. Disheveled and rather bloody in his combat togs, he looks at the hilt of his sword musingly, tracing out alternate designs for it with his fingers as he waits for the inevitable entrance of his family -- now happening.]

**Curufin:** [white-hot rage]

--What do you mean, "The door was open and she was gone"? That just can't be--

[sees his son]

What are you doing here? Is -- this your doing? If it is, so help me--

**Celebrimbor:** [pleasantly]

--Who? I'd be interested in hearing who the patron of Kinslayers is, Father -- though I think I know already.

**Celegorm:** [breaking in]

What happened? Where is she?

[His nephew laughs wildly and hilariously]

--Dammit, answer me, you little punk!

**Celebrimbor:**

It seems -- that your nightingale has flown. The rooms were thus when I awoke downstairs at the pels.



**Celegorm:**

She can't have gotten far -- get the horses saddled  
and we'll track her--

**Celebrimbor:**

Do you really think you'll catch up now, Uncle? It's  
been more than a bell now.

**Celegorm:**

What, is she going to fly? She's got no horse, you  
idiot.

**Celebrimbor:**

--Do you think she needs one?

[they look at him like he's insane]

Oh come now -- you don't see Huan about, either, do  
you?

**Curufin:** [scornful]

He's a Hound, not a horse, 'Brim.

**Celebrimbor:**

--Who happens to be as big as one, and faster than  
any courser we've owned. A horse would just slow them  
down, I expect.

[silence]

**Celegorm:** [doubtful]

He wouldn't stoop to being ridden . . . she wouldn't  
dare, surely.

**Celebrimbor:** [deadpan]

He's her friend and she loves him and trusts him with  
some justification. It's plainly inconceivable.

**Curufin:**

--Leave the room.

**Celebrimbor:**

No, thanks, I think I'll stay here for the time  
being.

**Curufin:**

Be careful of defying me, boy.

**Celebrimbor:** [grimaces]

Unfortunately, I am . . .

[enter Orodreth with entourage, foremost his daughter and her fiancé, the latter standing protectively next to her, still carrying his sword as well.]

**Orodreth:**

My lords. This is -- a surprise, I gather?

[wary Looks all round the Feanorians]

So -- your Leaguer has been breached, I take it.  
--Once again, putting trust in the strength of pales without to hold within a determined and unmeasured force has proven to be -- ah, inadvisable. It seems The Beoring was right, after all, as to the repetitive nature of strategy and offense.

**Celegorm:**

[inarticulate growling noise]

**Orodreth:** [glancing around the room, as though sniffing the air]

Very impressive. Entirely constructive in its nature, too. What an amazing use of Healing principles to unblock barriers as well as to foil observation. And strangely self-maintaining, too, to linger so long afterwards -- What, didn't you know what her Working could do, my lords? You had it to study long enough.

[pause]

What extraordinary forbearance, as well. I really -- well, unfortunately I can imagine only too well what my sister might inflict on those who had served her the same way. It would be . . . memorable. --Quite unforgettable, I should say.

[The Sons of Feanor stand shoulder to shoulder, scowling at the Regent's party, the rest of the people in the room standing between them in uncertain alignment except for Celebrimbor smiling mockingly at his folks from the sidelines, one hand on his updrawn knee, one on the hilt of his sword, where he leans back on the bench.]

**Celegorm:**

Did you know she could do this?

**Orodreth:**

No more than you.

**Curufin:** [turning on the rhetoric]

You're remarkably blasé about all this, cousin. Has it not occurred to you that the Lady Luthien is presently hastening to destruction, alone and helpless, while we stand here deliberating technicalities of Art?

**Orodreth:**

Hardly helpless, by the look of it, nor -- where is Huan, by the by? -- I should guess alone. She can hardly do any worse than has been done so far.

**Curufin:** [icy]

You may think this but touches our Household -- but I would remind you, Lord Steward of Nargothrond, that she -- they -- must go with certain knowledge of this City's location and the ways back to it, which now must all be trebly obscured and guarded, and still the jeopardy will not be entirely removed!

[The Prince Regent only stares at him, arms folded, with a slight, one-sided smile]

**Orodreth:**

It is, as the mortal saying has it, far late in the day to be thinking of that.

[pause]

What will come, will come. What has already happened, has happened. Nothing of your will, nor of mine, can change either in the slightest. All we can do is wait, and be ready. --My lords.

[In the middle of another angry glare Celegorm's eyes suddenly widen -- he has remembered something else.]

**Celegorm:** [aside to Curufin]

--The letter!

**Curufin:**

. . .

[Shocked realization followed by mutual dismay]

**Curufin:** [recovering, sneering]

Well, my lord Steward, such passivity is only to be expected of you. My brother and I, however, are not content with that, and we at least will set ourselves to such countermeasures, defenses, and contingency plans as our combined wits and the resources of our

House can concoct. I trust you'll not object, seeing as our end is the good of the City?

[The Regent shakes his head, smiling faintly]

Are you coming with us, son?

[Celebrimbör shakes his head.]

--Stay with these losers, then -- but don't expect me to take you back without a full apology. I promise you, you'll soon think better of your stupidity!

[turns to go, barely under control. Aside:]

--I'm going to kill her, I swear--

[Stalks out, followed by Celegorm. Some of the guards follow them, some start to, then stop guiltily, others look at each other, the Regent and his assistants, the floor. As Finduilas takes hold of his hand, Orodreth looks anxious, afraid to hope, yet unable to help it.]

Gower:

--Now for the nonce, for little while  
Nargothrond yet remains in habits false-secure,  
choosing to refuse the fearful intimations that rile  
the surface of the current, Time's stream a lure  
illusory, that seemeth ever same and changeless,  
and yet is ever other, ever changes, ever bears  
burdens small and great within its mirrored dress;  
But the Doom, their Doom, is already loosed  
and sweepeth down within the sky-reflecting flood  
like to a baulk of timber to shatter the unwary used  
to calms, driven 'gainst water-gates on tide of blood,  
it comes, and all effort to stave off shall turn

but to a hastening--

Of this unknowing, too, but too well aware  
of fate general and dark, for her heart doth spurn  
its confines like rush of wings, the Nightingale  
no more

on Narog's selfish shores doth bide -- freed  
of her soft confines by love unmarred of greed,  
Northward she hurtles like a driving storm to fare,  
horseless and needless, fleet Huan her faithful steed,  
swift as swans' flight or the forces of the air  
launched from steam-catapult in the van of war.

For herself no thought of harm, no terror,  
no more than long-doomed Huan ever of the fate

anciently set upon him, that "wolf more great  
than ever walked the world" shall be the bearer  
of his destruction, nor the King her kin,  
whose words self-spoken centuries past  
work to their full completing now at last--

Tinuviel upon the trail doth fly: behind the din,  
the hue-and-cry, mattering naught beside the path  
she follows to its dread sentinel of stone, more dark  
in cruelty and power than twisted shade of Delduath.  
--Like unto fire-arrow loosed against its mark,  
--like the fast falcon falling in fell dive,  
--like to a star that shoots across the vale,  
her soul and self she sets complete to strive  
'gainst Morgoth's haughty servant, though mail  
nor bow nor sword nor helm hath she,  
nor aught of gear of war, or the grim travail  
in years of Leaguer to learn their ways -- only free  
the given heart to raise in challenge high,  
her sword her song, her shield of main-wrought dreams.  
Pitiful to wield, and her only choice to go, it seems  
from prison to prison, and there as thrall to live,  
or die  
even as her love, far from the fair woodlands where  
they met.

--Forward her face like adamant is set  
and backwards looks she never--

**INTERACT**

**Dramatis Personae & Cast, in order of appearance**

[this is how I'd cast them -- you're free to supply your own actors, of course.]

**The Human Bard Gower (appearing courtesy of The Rose Theatre)**

Derek Jacobi (appearing courtesy Henry V)

**Orodreth, Prince of Nargothrond**

Hugh Grant (appearing courtesy Sense and Sensibility)

**Gwindor, a Lord of Nargothrond**

Ioan Gruffydd (appearing courtesy A&E's Horatio Hornblower series)

**Finduilas, Princess of Nargothrond, daughter of Orodreth**

Gelsey Kirkland (appearing courtesy the Baryshnikov Nutcracker telecast)

**Celegorm, Son of Feanor**

James Marsters in suave, charming, and gentlemanly mode (courtesy Mutant Enemy)

**Curufin, Son of Feanor**

James Marsters in sly, caustic and vicious mode (likewise)

**Celebrimbor, Son of Curufin**

Alexis Denisof (appearing courtesy Mutant Enemy)

**Huan of Valinor**

Special guest appearance as Himself

**Elu Thingol, King of Doriath**

Jeremy Irons (appearing courtesy Brideshead Revisited)

**Mablung, Captain of Doriath**

Ronald Colman (appearing courtesy The Prisoner of Zenda)

**Beleg Cuthalion, Elven Ranger**

David Niven (appearing courtesy The Prisoner of Zenda)

**Orc Commander, Angband Garrison**

Anthony Simcoe (appearing courtesy Farscape)

**Orc Tracker, Angband Garrison**

Peter Postlethwaite (appearing courtesy Treasure Island)

**Morgoth, Dark Lord**

Tony Jay (voice courtesy King's Quest, EverQuest)

**Sundry Nargothronders, Warriors of Doriath, & Evil Minions**

**Gower:**

Now let your searching fancy far  
across wooded hill and vale  
follow upon the track left after  
like to the storm wind's ragged trail  
of shattered trunk and fallen rafter  
where roil and ruin stir and swirl  
in the wake of three -- but three, alone  
whose deeds, like gods', should hurl  
down lord and land, Power from throne,  
setting at naught all long-made schemes  
of foe and friend alike, all dreams  
of conquest, of defense, all surety--  
Deeds of renown, fearful purity  
of intent beyond any sound constraint,  
whether of reason or of reasoned dread,  
requiring no conjecture to make faint  
the heart where memory in's stead  
sufficient proves; recalling these,  
the darting course across Beleriand  
that ever northward runs, let please  
thysself to turn imagining to stand  
witness to havoc wrought like rising gale--  
increas'd consternation in the minds  
that none might formerly assail,  
and hear the echoes of those winds  
that shake the solid roots of rule,  
the hallways mighty of the courts  
most high--

[Nargothrond: one of the hallways along the throne room leading to the side entrances -- Orodreth is striding along at high speed, Gwindor trailing along in his wake. He flings open the doors and storms through, his expression one of absolute intensity, talking as he goes:]

**Orodreth:**

I want you to summon everyone in the City, not stopping to discuss why, and at once. Assemble them here within the quarter-hour. Set the perimeter here first of all. Make sure my daughter's guards are on full alert. And don't talk to your father, either. No discussions until I make my statement. Is that understood?

**Gwindor:** [wide-eyed]

--Ah, Sir, when you say "everyone," you don't mean--



**Orodreth:**

--Everyone. Awake, asleep, working, playing, loving -- get them up, get them out and get them in here if you have to drag them by the hair, my lord. Every last person in Nargothrond.

**Gwindor:** [breathlessly]

Y--yes, Si--

[he breaks off, it's settling in]

--Sire.

[They share a long, bleak look. Gwindor swallows.]

Yes, your Majesty.

[He hurries off. Orodreth lets out a long sigh and walks more slowly up to the dais, still more slowly up it and to the throne. On the topmost step he goes down on one knee and bows his head.]

**Orodreth:** [softly]

I will do my best. --And it will never be enough.

[cut to the now wide-open main doors of the Throne Room from without, tracking the Sons of Feanor and their entourage as they enter the now-filled and utterly silent audience hall, with an armed escort, not of their own providing. They halt in front of the throne, before which Orodreth stands, holding the crown in his hands. Celegorm gives Orodreth a vicious Look; Curufin looks around and smiles nonchalantly. You can't tell if they know or not, from the way they're acting -- but Curufin does have his hand on the hilt of Angcris.

**Curufin:**

Oh, come on now, was all this fuss necessary?

[he gestures around at the grim-faced guards]

You know we don't just come when you whistle, my lord Regent!

[Orodreth does not speak; Curufin shrugs]

Well, now you've got us here, why don't you say something, Sir Steward? What do you want, eh?

Orodreth: [deliberately]

Not Steward.

[silence -- he raises the crown and places it on his head]

--King.

[The Sons of Feanor exchange glances, and then lock stares with Orodreth -- who stares them down.]

And I want nothing from you. Your tally is up again,  
-- Kinslayers.

[The Feanorian supporters exchange looks of dismay and subtly, but distinctly, start drawing away from their lords. Now Orodreth seats himself on the throne. When the brothers start to try to interrupt him he just keeps talking over them.]

You will not, however, make me into one. My people want you butchered. If it is not unanimous, there are at least no audible dissenting voices. But I am not you. Be grateful for that, if you have it in you to be grateful for anything. And I rule here. --Be grateful for that as well. Luthien, called Tinuviel, has won -- there is no Tol Sirion any more. And my brother has triumphed as well, for Beren Barahirion still lives. Witnesses here have attested both. And Huan has returned. Your bags are being packed -- and checked for valuables -- as we speak.

[he gestures round at the silent, shocked crowd of Nargothronders]

Whoever wishes to go with you may do so. I don't care where you go, so long as you're out of the realm by sunset. --Don't ever cross the border again, or you will be treated as enemies and shot on sight. At which point it will be on your own heads, being forewarned and far from helpless. There is neither shelter nor friendship for you or your brothers, anywhere in Narog, henceforth. Please try to remember that.

[pause -- the Sons of Feanor look around and see that their retainers are relegating them to the "unlucky and cursed" category too.]

**Curufin:** [smiling through his teeth]  
Oh, we will. We most definitely will.

[spots Celebrimbor in the crowd]

You going to remember your family duty at last, boy?

**Celebrimbor:**

I don't have any immediate family in Middle-earth.  
So I'm doing the best I can with the nearest I have  
left. --Does that answer your question, milord?

[Curufin shakes his head in an expression of contempt.  
Celegorm, face flushed with growing rage, goes as if to  
step up on the dais and accost Orodreth, and is met with  
the barred spears of the Guard. Speechless, he too turns  
away after his brother. Out of the shadows Huan rises and  
goes after Celegorm, head and tail low.]

**Celegorm:**

Ha, so now you come skulking back to me, you traitor!  
A little late to be remembering your duty--

[Huan follows them sadly, the escort respectfully parting  
for him, not jostling him like the Sons of Feanor.]

**Orodreth:** [raising his voice to the guards]

Enough! Remember my commands: do not shame my brother  
with discourteous action!

[chastened, the escort snaps to professional dispassion  
and escorts the Sons of Feanor out the doors without  
further rough handling. The King reaches up with a bitter  
smile to adjust the unfamiliar weight of the crown, and  
his daughter puts her hand on his shoulder, moving closer  
to the throne]

**Finduilas:** [softly -- she has clearly been crying recently]  
--What will become of her now? Of -- them?

**Orodreth:**

Only they can choose that, child. --It isn't Luthien  
Tinuviel I worry for, but The Beoring.

[she looks at him uncertainly; he stares off at the  
vaulting.]

For now he, too, has left the Island behind him.  
--May the Powers send him better rest than mine has  
been these years.

[she takes his hand rather desperately in her own, as he whispers:]

The question is -- what will become of us now . . . ?

**Gower:**

--most ancient--

[Southwestern Doriath: an armed camp, in the greenwood, Thingol in full armor coming from his command tent with Captain Mablung as Beleg enters the clearing, accompanied by a small crowd of warriors, in camo and looking absolutely grim.]

**Beleg:**

--You want the report in public, or privately first, Sir?

**Thingol:** [sardonic]

Might as well give it right here and now -- we've done everything else as a public show, why stop now?

[Beleg gives a short nod, goes on]

**Beleg:**

The good news is, you don't have to worry about the Sons of Feanor showing up to dinner and drinks. Luthien suborned one of their agents and broke out on her own.

**Mablung:** [not-quite aside, innocent look]

Again . . .

[Beleg catches his eye, shakes his head]

**Beleg:**

There's more. And worse.

**Thingol:**

Say on.

**Beleg:**

She will not come home again. She's thrown her lot in with him for good, and no one knows where they've gone. No sign or word of Master Daeron. And--

[he starts to speak and stops abruptly]

**Thingol:**

Don't try to spare me, Strongbow. --Or soften the blow.

**Beleg:**

--Orodreth is King in Nargothrond.

[Thingol closes his eyes, turning his face away.]

I'm so very sorry--

**Thingol:** [holding up his hand to stop him]

--I guessed that was the burden of your message. It does not make it any easier. --Are there details?

**Beleg:**

There are.

**Thingol:** [not asking]

They're bad.

**Beleg:**

They're very bad.

[pause]

**Thingol:**

Captain Strongbow, could I ask you to keep them until we get home again? I'm not ready to deal with so much news right now, for such a long ride back. And that way you will only have to tell it once.

**Beleg:**

No trouble, Sir.

**Mablung:** [quietly]

Sire, what do we do now?

**Thingol:** [eerie calm]

--We go home. We go back to work. --What else can we do? She clearly does not need our help any more, nor, apparently, ever did. --And if she does, we have no hope of finding her, to be of any use. No: we will return, and see if our Lady will consent to advise me again, now that I am willing to listen, or if that is lost to us too.

**Mablung:** [diffidently]

At least he's not a Kinslayer, Sir. You said so yourself, remember . . .

**Thingol:** [ice]

He might as well be. Don't speak of him again in my hearing. We will never see her again. --Or at least, not as long as he lives. Perhaps she'll come back to us after. Until then -- my daughter might as well be dead, thanks to him.

**Mablung:**

You don't think -- he seemed a decent sort -- that he'll bring her back home, after she's calmed down and gotten over her temper?

**Thingol:**

If he does, I'll kill him, and I'm sure he knows that perfectly well.

[grimaces]

--Unless you think he's actually going to hold up his end of the bargain and come back with a Silmaril in hand--?

[he slams his fist against the trunk of the nearest tree and sighs bitterly. After a moment -- to Beleg:]

Thank you for undertaking this mission, Strongbow; I'm glad you're back safely. Mablung, can you make sure that everything is struck properly and that we're ready to start back as soon as possible?

[Mablung nods]

Thank you.

[Thingol ducks back into his tent and closes the flap behind him. Mablung exchanges looks and brief hand-signals with several of the troops standing round and they go off to get things underway. Beleg sinks down to sit against another tree, rubbing his hand over his eyes. Mablung kneels down beside him, looking concerned]

**Mablung:**

You all right, old chap? You look pretty beat -- nobody winged you, did they? --Not to be insulting or anything.

**Beleg:** [shaking his head]

I am beat -- not physically, though.

[pause. looking up at Mablung, bleakly]

--Place is a ruddy mess.

**Mablung:**

Us? Or them?

[Beleg nods]

I know. --I know.

[pats the other officer sympathetically on the shoulder]

Well--

[sighs deeply]

--"back to work--"

[he rises and goes off to assist in the packing, while Beleg folds his arms and leans his head against the tree, closing his eyes.]

**Gower:**

--and the lowest low--

[Angband -- the great hall. Behind a column of appalling design and construction, two Orcs are carrying on a muttered conversation]

**Commander:**

--All right, give! Is it true the Eagles took Fangs away to eat him?

**Tracker:**

Nobody knows! He's just gone, like the spies. The downdraft blew away any tracks that might have been left around the entrance, and then farther out the stinking wolfpacks went charging all the way out over the Plain, so even casting around's been a waste of our time.

**Commander:**

Hah! So much for "superior wolf senses"--! Pack of slobbering idiots. They should never have taken my crew off the Gate.

**Tracker:**

So what exactly happened? Anyone figure it out?

**Commander:**

As far as we can tell, old Sauron wasn't telling the truth -- not the whole of it, anyway -- in his

reports to HQ. Big surprise there, of course. Yes, there was a batch of spies disguised as us that he caught sneaking through his territory. Yes, that Dog was involved. But the kicker is -- get this -- his whole cursed defense system was blown through, apart, and away, not by the stinking Hound, not by the warriors, but by that Elf-chick he's been trying to snag for the past eight-nine years, you know, the one whose supposed to be some kind of demi-demi-goddess or something. She was the one who did it all, and our prize Sorcerer, I'm-so-scary, everyone-trembles-at-my-name -- he somehow forgets to put this little fact in his little reports.

**Tracker:** [growls]

You mean all those spot-checks of IDs that we've been having, and the random interrogations, the flay-one-in-every-hundred and all, that's all been wasted?

**Commander:**

You surprised?

[snorts]

Come on, were you spawned yesterday? If you don't think there's just as much screw-up-and-cover-up at the top as down the lines, you need to start thinking. --And she was the one who just traipsed in here, la la la, "Oh my, is this Angband? I had a fight with my parents and ran away from home and I'm looking for a job," playing all stupid and naive, and -- The Boss buys it. Hook, chain, and thumbscrew. Never occurs to him to ask why this Princess just walks in -- how she got through the desert, where she got the wings, and why in the name of the Void she would come here of all Middle-earth. Or -- who else might be with her. Huh. And they call us stupid!

**Tracker:**

So then what happened? And weren't they in disguise too? I heard it was two of them, or maybe three. Wasn't the Hound disguised as a warg or something?

**Commander:**

Nobody's sure. But yeah, she came in pretending to be one of Sauron's little delivery-girls from the old fort, and a bunch of people say there was a wolf with her, which is interesting, 'cause usually those freaks can't stand each other, and a few of the lads say it



was even Old Long-Tail. Which would be really interesting, 'cause that was in the reports that he was dead, and if it was the Hound disguised as Fangs' sire, and Ugly didn't even know the difference, well, all I'm saying is it's a shame Fangs disappeared, so we can't interrogate him.

**Tracker:** [regretfully]

Aw, yeah--

**Commander:**

All we know is, somebody got hurt at the Gate, 'cause there was a fair puddle of blood there, but there weren't any bodies left. And nobody knows what all happened after the lights went out. Except maybe The Boss, and He ain't telling. When the Elf-chick started singing, everybody went nighty-night -- even The Boss, I guess. --Hey, didja know that Balrogs snore? Kinda sounds like bubbling mud.

[provides helpful imitation; both Orcs snicker]

When I woke up, me and some of the lads was first, and there we saw it -- the Iron Crown, right in the middle of the floor, with this broken knife next to it, and only two of the curséd jewels left -- and you know some idiot just has to go and cut his fingers off saying "This doesn't look sharp enough to cut through metal" and his yelling gets the wolves going and that was when we realized that The Boss Himself was -- had been -- asleep too, cause He jumps up going "--Whuh? Eh? Where is she?!" and kinda looking around squiggle-eyed like He was completely stinking drunk after a good looting spree, ya know?

[leans closer, conspiratorial whisper]

So then He gets a look at the stuff on the floor, and then -- get this -- He actually feels on top of His head to make sure it ain't still there! And then -- He sees the blood on His hand from the broken-off bit where it hit Him, and starts screaming so loud spit's comin' out of His mouth, completely loses it -- I tell ya, nobody's heard anything like it since that sore loser stuck Him in the foot after we won. Remember that?

**Tracker:**

Arr! Yeah -- somebody's gotta do a cadence on this.  
Y'know, have the drum-beat for the crown falls off  
His head--

**Commander:**

Huh huh huh -- "Thump!"

[sfx - the amusement is interrupted by a sudden fiery  
CRACK as a Balrog-whip snaps at them, knocking them  
out of sight beyond the column. The shadow over there  
deepens--]

**Morgoth:** [slowly and ominously]

--So. You vermin think it's funny, do you?

**Gower:**

--Fuel

cast anew upon the coals of war; reports  
gaining in stature as they lose in truth  
--yet in truth still less, than simple fact  
plainly told, of odds impossible, forsooth,  
yet accomplished, hazards dared and met, act  
and choice, folly indeed, yet shall one say  
greater than that first folly, striving again  
to break the Iron Lord's iron hold, --nor slay  
Kindred in the doing?

What followed then  
all know, have heard the legends, tales  
sung or half-recounted, how the stolen gem  
retaken was, and then again by sharper tooth  
than any e'er forged by hand or hammer, cut  
with the hand that held it, neither ruth  
nor reason to restrain, ere jaws shut  
in capture vain, that availeth not taker  
nor Master of the same, deadly prize  
that giveth aye power, but withal pain,  
scorching the vessel caught with lies  
and promises of glory, wrought by strain  
of Song unholy to guard rebellion's home,  
mightiest of all that ever was, or shall  
on this sad earth mad-ranting roam.

Those who had seen the hopeless Quest assigned,  
the mocking promise made, the vaunting boast  
returned, as deemed, in vain, anon did find  
that never word lightly-uttered did dearer cost,  
when Carcharoth the Red-Jawed -- the dreadful Thirst

whose panting desire nothing in life alleving  
that inburnt stone should ever inflame anew -- burst  
the bonds unbroken of great Melian's long weaving  
against all beings dark and fell, being both Light  
and Darkness blent together, two workings of Powers  
earthly and divine: living, Undead, ancient melded  
might

newly fashioned into unholy whole, from the towers  
of Angband where long were held--

In those sad hours of shadow's tyranny,  
in weary shame and hangdog penury,  
return the rescued two -- yet now are three,  
with Huan beside, faithful unforsaking,  
knowing not what to find, yet thinking never  
to meet the strong amaze, the outcry making  
hope as of prophetic sign, the crowds ever  
growing in much-garrisoned Menegroth, where  
all needs must gather from the unsure shelter  
of Doriath, seeking defense against a fear  
forgotten for so long a year.

Of revelation,  
vaunt of the Quest accomplished, yet undone,  
of fatal mystery unfolded, of admiration won  
yet half-unwilling, yet wholly given;  
of the great Hunt upon the borders riven  
of the enchanted wood, of the foe driven  
by furious hatred and tormenting inward fire  
--the tale was told, and told will be in Ages hence;  
as too the last: how Beren took Doom still higher  
upon himself, ceding his life in the King's defense,  
handless to stand battle between his hand's thief  
and his love's father, though hopeless contest  
it should be, and the Deed in ending bring but grief  
to Thingol, that Man despised should prove best  
of friends -- too late, alas! the learning,  
the victory sore tainted with bitter rue  
that mortality win but Death in's earning.  
Nor him alone, before or after, for then too  
Huan at last went to his foretold fate, laid  
dying at slayer's side, and Luthien the Nightingale  
died of heart's breaking like a mortal maid  
in an old song half-forgotten, a foolish tale.  
They judged the file ended, the archive closed.  
--They erred.

## AFTERNOTES

## ACT III — Tinúviel at Bay: A Caccia of Beleriand

A *caccia* is a hunting song, related to the modern words “catch” in both senses, the verb and the song, and so appropriate in multiple ways — first there is the story’s theme of following, followed by the trapping and holding of the heroine, and second the medieval (perhaps older) use of “the hunt” as a metaphor for pursuit in love — and hence thirdly as a play on the Lays of Beleriand. “At bay” of course refers to a game animal held encircled by the hounds which summon the huntsmen to finish the job, and by extension refers to anyone forced to a confrontation largely one-sided. (I almost feel like I’m cheating, in writing this act — essentially I’m just riffing straight off the Lay of Leithian fragments, whence come such insights as Luthien’s altered time-sensibilities and lots of illuminating dialogue...)

As Act II had several purposes and points of focus, Beren’s character, the Oath and the Silmarils, the unfolding of the War against Morgoth, and the relationship between the Noldor and the Edain, so too Act III. It is Luthien’s turn, and part of that is the exploration of the Return of the Noldor as it affected those born in Middle-earth: instead of contrasting the situations of Elf and Man, I attempt to contrast the differences between the native and emigree Elven cultures. In both acts, as throughout *The Script*, I also endeavor to make clear the connections with Third Age events and persons. Any such apparent references to *LOTR* are, in fact, intentional, just as before.

There are two ways of considering the character of Lúthien — I’m tempted to be flippant and say: one is to read the texts, the other isn’t — but that isn’t terribly helpful, so I’ll try to clarify. The first, and to my mind oddly) most common way I’ve encountered is to assume that she is no different from the “traditional” fairy tale princess (who is in fact not traditional at all) coming to us courtesy of Disney and Co., ignorant, naive, and just waiting for some chap to say “Let me show you the world”, so to speak.

The other way, which may seem a bit simplistic (at first at least) is to assume that when Aragorn calls his many-times great-grandmother “wise” in his ballad, he’s merely speaking plain truth. After all, he’s met at least two people who knew her personally and had ample opportunity to converse with them — the Lady and Lord of the Golden Wood, as well as who knows how many remain of Doriath’s refugees in their company.

You can assume that someone older than most of the Returnees, growing

up in not only one of the great cultural centers of Middle-earth, but the cultural center for most of that time, as much a crossroads and confluence of different ethnic groups as Rome, and under continual siege for, again, most of that time, is completely oblivious to the harsher realities of life (despite being both a trained healer and a trained mage in an embattled capital) and incapable of making rational decisions — but I’m not sure why anyone would.

So — what does one discover when one looks at the relevant texts? And further, into the archives and chronicles of Middle-earth? The answer is, surprisingly perhaps, someone rather scary. Not because of her intrinsic, inherited power — but because of her uncompromising principles and force of will (which long predate the self-discovery of her abilities as the most powerful telepath ever to walk Middle-earth — and that includes Melian), and the fact that she doesn’t just do things randomly and without forethought.

So that when she does make a decision, you have a better chance of turning aside a tidal wave than stopping Tinúviel. The only thing more intimidating than a wild-eyed idealist is — a cool-headed, logical, dispassionate idealist, wouldn’t you say? And when that icy rationalism is combined with passion, the result is absolutely terrifying.

Everything in here derives either from a comprehensive reading of the *Silmarillion*, and a consideration of the connections and implications, or from the *Lay of Leithian* fragments found in *The History of Middle-earth: The Lays of Beleriand*. Relevant quotes will of course be supplied along the way. (Occasionally I have also had recourse to the oldest form of the story, the “Tale of Tinúviel” from *HOME: The Book of Lost Tales*, vol. I, for insights and images, when helpful.)

Again I have made the usage of dialogue reflect background, to some extent, and Luthien speaks with a less formal idiom to reflect the changing and much-influenced Sindarin culture of Doriath as opposed to the more static, and archaic society of the Returnees from Aman. The website **Ardalambion** [ <http://www.uib.no/people/hnohf/> ] has an amusing essay on how language becomes simpler and faster when you’re fighting Orcs and all...

I’ve used, and will use throughout, ballads mostly from the Anglo-Appalachian tradition to represent the songs of Dorthonion — partly because they have so many apt quotations and applications, partly because I know them best, having grown up hearing them, and partly because they

fit, for me, with the “hick” aspect of Dorthonion, Beren’s remote back-country accent which so annoyed and horrified Elu Thingol, which I had deduced before I actually discovered that in *HOME* there’s a reference to that fact. That Lúthien has not sung until it becomes necessary to her escape, combined with the ideological decision to learn the Bëorings’ ancient language as a rejection of her own family’s rejection of them, is my motivation for having her employ the folksongs of the Edain, common across Hithlum as well as Dorthonion, which would be in the then-Common Tongue of Sindarin as spoken in the North.

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*This symbol indicates a WAV file embedded in the document, and may be clicked to play a verse of the melody.*

---

Luthien’s appearance comes straight from the *Lay of Leithian* fragment 1, as do the rest of the quotes in this act unless otherwise noted:

Far from her home, forwandered, pale,  
she flitted ghostlike through the vale;  
ever her heart bade her up and on,  
but her limbs were worn, her eyes were wan...  
...down she let slip her shadowy cloak,  
and there she stood in silver and white.  
Her starry jewels twinkled bright  
in the risen sun like morning dew;  
the lilies gold on mantle blue  
gleamed and glistened...

This is clearly the same overgarment she wore the previous winter when Beren saw her dancing in the ice, compared in *LLI* to the Northern Lights overhead:

Her mantle blue with jewels white  
caught all the rays of frosted light.  
She shone with cold and wintry flame...

and which is also described earlier in *LLI*, Canto 1:

Her robe was blue as summer skies,  
but grey as evening were here eyes;  
'twas sewn with golden lilies fair,  
but dark as shadow was her hair.

For her ragged and barefoot state further textual evidence is found in Canto X, where she is described as “worn, unshod, roofless and restless.”

## Scene I.

“In Nargothrond the torches flared  
and feast and music were prepared.  
Luthien feasted not but wept.  
Her ways were trammelled; closely kept  
she might not fly. Her magic cloak  
was hidden, nor did answer find  
her eager questions. Out of mind,  
it seemed, were those afar that pined  
in anguish and in dungeons blind  
in prison and in misery.  
Too late she knew their treachery.  
It was not hid in Nargothrond  
that Fëanor’s sons held her in bond  
who Beren heeded not, and who  
had little cause to wrest from Thu  
the king they loved not and whose quest  
old vows of hatred in their breast  
had roused from sleep. Orodreth knew  
the purpose dark they would pursue:  
King Felagund to leave to die,  
and with King Thingol’s blood ally  
the house of Fëanor by force  
or treaty. But to stay their course  
he had no power, for all his folk  
the brothers had yet beneath their yoke,  
and all yet listened to their word.  
Orodreth’s counsel no man heard;  
their shame they crushed, and would not heed  
the tale of Felagund’s dire need.”

Taking this as my theme and inspiration for the understanding of Lúthien’s own sojourn in Nargothrond, I’ve built on the very gothic themes of this canto to make a dark mystery story of the unfolding revelations of the situation, past and present. I don’t think I’m going out unwarrantedly, though, in this — it isn’t specified how long it took for that which “was not hid” to become completely clear, and the indication that Nargothrond is in severe denial creates for me an atmosphere of extreme surreality in which the one sane person appears, inevitably, mad.



***Ten Thousand Miles*** Folk song popular in both Britain and North America with a large number of variations, learned from the version sung by Joan Baez on the namesake Vanguard album.



## Scene II.

Curufin spake: "Good brother mine,  
I like it not. What dark design  
doth this portend? These evil things,  
we swift must end their wnderings!  
And more, 'twould please my heart full well  
to hunt a while and wolves to fell."  
And then he leaned and whispered low  
that Orodreth was a dullard slow;  
long time it was since the king had gone,  
and rumour or tidings came there none.  
"At least thy profit it would be  
to know whether dead he is or free;  
to gather thy men and thy array.  
'I go to hunt' then thou wilt say  
and men will think that Narog's good  
ever thou heedest. But in the wood  
things may be learned; and if by grace  
by some blind fortune he retrace  
his footsteps mad, and if he bear  
a Silmaril — I need declare  
no more in words; but one by right  
is thine (and ours), the jewel of light;  
another may be won—a throne.  
The eldest blood our house doth own."

It's clear that they do care for popular opinion, and that equally, they care nothing for the truth...

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As far as Orodreth's characterization, that too derives from the *Lay* fragments as much as from consideration of the entire history of House Finarfin as told in the *Silmarillion*, but the source texts must wait upon the proper time for their presentation.

## Scene III.

Yes, the Sons of Fëanor did in Canonical fact pretend to be merely "Lords of Nargothrond" as well as acting like it was all news to them, that they'd never heard the name Beren before; qv. *LLI*, Canto VIII. (In other words, Lúthien isn't a fool, she didn't not know that they were hereditary enemies of her House and prattle away to them cluelessly. She just didn't recognize them as the Sons of Fëanor — not like there are tabloids and publicity shots in Middle-earth, after all.) It's my assumption that they would have

used the less-familiar mother names of Aman naming convention, and have constructed for them the Sindarin forms used here.

“...O lady fair, wherefore in toil  
and lonely journey dost thou go?  
What tidings dread of war and woe  
In Doriath have betid? Come tell!  
For fortune thee hath guided well;  
friends thou hast found,” said Celegorm,  
and gazed upon her elvish form.  
In his heart him thought her tale unsaid  
he knew in part, but naught she read  
of guile upon his smiling face.  
“Who are ye then, the lordly chase  
that follow in this perilous wood?”  
she asked; and answer seeming good  
they gave. “Thy servants, lady sweet,  
Lords of Nargothrond...”  
    ...Sign nor word  
the brothers gave that aught they heard  
that touched them near...

## Scene IV.

This scene, of the seduction of Finduilas to the aid of Curufin’s plotting, has a dual purpose: to illustrate Curufin’s skill with words and half-truths, how the Sons of Fëanor hold sway without need for violence, as per *LL1*,

    ...for all his folk  
the brothers had yet beneath their yoke,  
and all yet listened to their word,

and to set the stage as well for the upcoming scenes between Luthien and Finduilas.

I have tried not to be too unfair to Finduilas throughout — though we know that she will abandon Gwindor for Túrin, she is more than a stock “fickle woman” in the originals, and so I have, while using her as a foil for Luthien, tried to draw her as someone not particularly recollected, very conventional without understanding or caring for the philosophical principles behind the conventions, and much attached (as are many of the Returnees who suffered through the Helcaraxë, q.v. Gondolin, not only poor Salgant) to comforts and “the good life,” though not as the Socratics understood it. She holds positions and views like wax — that is to say, in

perfect detail until replaced by another, stronger impression, hard yet brittle until softened for a new stamp. —She is, sadly, a composite of many real characters I have known in my life.

## Scene V.

Of Huan's crisis of conscience in *LLI*:

Ahead leaped Huan day and night,  
and ever looking back his thought  
was troubled. What his master sought,  
and why he rode not like the fire,  
why Curufin looked with hot desire  
on Luthien, he pondered deep,  
and felt some evil shadow creep  
of ancient curse o'er Elvenesse.  
His heart was torn for the distress  
of Beren bold, and Luthien dear,  
and Felagund who knew no fear...

It's interesting — to me at least — how Beren's gifts and abilities so closely mirror Celegorm's. Oromë, after all, is the Lord of the Hunt, the Vala most fiercely devoted, historically, to hunting Morgoth's fell creatures and minions, and the one who taught Celegorm the language of beasts as well as giving Huan to him. Beren, however, not only hasn't had it quite so easy — I would say that besides coming by his gifts the harder way, he's also been doing Oromë's work far more seriously for longer instead of the rather dilettantish way Celegorm's been going about the work of monster-slaying. —Even before any other ethical challenges presented themselves. (And yes, I do include House Fëanor's performance in the Leaguer in that description.)

For this reason (as well as reasons of style, character distinction, and humour) I've given Celegorm the idiom of the "huntin', shootin', fishin' " aristocrat of British literary tradition, the sort of chap who in Jane Austen's delightful parodies of popular romance is willing to break off his engagement when he discovers that the day set for the wedding is also the first day of "the Season."

---

As I cannot come up with a single instance of a Teler or Sindar historical figure who uses the Noldor conventions of mother- and father-names, but only a single personal name and an *epesse*, or aftername — and in some instances only aftername seems to be employed — it's my conjecture that

the use of two personal names in childhood is a convention developed in Valinor. This may be a mistaken impression, but I haven't found any notes to contradict it. Luthien's comment on the rationale is, of course, sheerest speculation on my part.

## Scene VI.

This should have been easy, since I'm only reworking *LL1*, cantos III-V in the first person, essentially, combined with the putting of the worst possible construction on the events of those cantos, to reconstruct the sorts of messy, unpleasant and endless conversations we are told that Lúthien had with her family before they gave up on her and took the avoidant route. It actually turned out to be rather brutal to write, because it is so easy to put the worst possible construction on their romance, and so the challenge was to write something emotionally trying to the characters without being too unpleasant on the reader. Hopefully I've succeeded at it, and so far the responses have been positive, so I'm pretty satisfied with this part now.

---

**Orc-raids targetted at Lúthien** — this is true (q.v. Canto VII) though I'm assuming for the sake of the story that this has been de-emphasized for well-meant reasons, until such time as it might be useful in turning her to the path of prudence and away from the insanity, as her family sees it, of planning to go looking for Beren on her own. In fact, it's a critical plot point, and one of several ways in which the *Lay of Leithian* manages to weave archetypal myth and folklore elements in with the most unromanticized, unromantic of war/espionage tropes in a merge that still continues to amaze me. The fact of information lacks, lags, and gaps on both sides leading to confusion and catastrophe is something all too familiar to those familiar with the real military, and not Hollywood's rendering of it — that is after all why it's called "Normal" as well as having an acronym...

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In the oldest rescension, the musician Daeron [also spelled Dairon] is her older brother. In *HOME* he has become the renowned polymath genius of Middle-earth, whose invention of the *cirth* (runes) and association with Elu Thingol goes back to at least the time of Lúthien's birth. Hence I see it as rather a *Little Dorritt* situation — except that unlike Little Dorritt, Lúthien wasn't drooping about hoping he'd finally, eventually, someday notice that she was All Grown Up and waiting there for him to realize it. She has a life, and the last thing she's waiting for is someone to come take care of her.

Snow White she isn't, nor Dierdre of the Sorrows (though there are closer parallels to Dierdre than to Snow White in her story, by far.)

This does a very good job of explaining Daeron's bizarre behavior — because there is no way that Daeron can be considered anything but neurotic, as I have Luthien point out. If all this past millenium and almost-a-half he's seen her as "little" Lúthien — and this is not only plausible, but common, not simply to older friends, but to parents as well, the inability to recognize that children do grow up and don't stay three-year-olds — then to suddenly realize that she is indeed an adult, not merely intellectually but having it inescapably presented to him, is going to be jarring, to say the least. And in that jarring, he too gets his "first sight" of her — which doesn't happen until he sees her, as it were, through Beren's eyes.

Because the people who have grown up with her, all her life, don't see her until circumstances are drastically changed. (This includes her parents, most definitely.) They are incapable of perceiving her true strength and potential power, because they take her for granted as their little girl. (There is also the complicated, and oft-missed, fact that in the Arda Mythos, "beauty" is among other things a metaphor for moral strength, the reasons for which are made rather clear in the essay "On Fairy-tales." This is not of course sufficient and complete: the ways in which this is used and abused within the histories provide ample warrant for the Canonical necessity of trusting one's feelings as well... But this is a topic probably outside the scope of these Notes.)

So add to Daeron's cognitive dissonance not only the fact that now he realizes that Lúthien is an adult, is not a child, and is not only old enough to fall in love, and has done so, but that she is desirable as an adult, and desired — and that he didn't notice at all, and does now, and at the same time has the image of her as child and practically younger relative, and you have the combination calculated to send even the most intellectual and rationally-governed of Elves (or Men) round the bend. Mix of shame/embarrassment over feeling that these feelings have to be inappropriate, self-reproach over lost opportunity, conviction that "Hey! I should have dibs! I've known her longer!" and back to the inappropriateness and forfeited opportunities, plus the automatic older-relative-protective mode, and realization that that isn't appropriate for him, her being a competent adult, either—

—Way easier just to blame the interloper for it all. (Which I suppose is better

than blaming Lúthien, but not much more rational.)

Further warrant for this interpretation is found in *LLI* in the fact that the issue at court is that Beren is a stranger in Doriath (not supposed to happen) and worse yet, of a class entirely forbidden (this was always the case, even in the oldest version of the story, where instead of being Mortal he was a Noldor lord displaced in the War and the grievance against him was the hereditary association with the Kinslaying) and the fact of Daeron's subsequent shame: there's no self-righteousness after he gets caught, he's morbidly guilty right from the start, even though he keeps hoping throughout the Throne Room Scene (guiltily) that Beren will be executed. Doesn't stop him from doing it again, out of (ahem) the best of motives — or from being ashamed yet again — the old saying about the path paved with good intentions seems to be illustrated here in hellish detail.

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**“a tender goddess”** — homage to P.G. Wodehouse, of course. The favorite descriptive phrase of Bingo Little, known for sudden, frequent, complicated and embarrassing crushes that entangle all his acquaintances as well.

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By Middle-earth standards, Lúthien is a fully-qualified paramedic, with ample opportunities for honing her skills. Things were pretty messy in Beleriand for quite some time before the Return, (*Silm.*, “Of the Sindar”) and in *LLI* it's stated that being able to do this is just one of the ordinary domestic skills of an Elven-lady of Doriath — not unlike that of a medieval Lady, who also couldn't simply dial the ambulance service. Lúthien has advantages of inherited power as well as incentive, but this should give pause to those who would dismiss either her or all Wood-elf maidens as dainty and decorative, but no more. Unless you're up to (as I've remarked elsewhere in another venue) crawling out of the wreck of a kidnapping attempt to negotiate a truce with the hostage takers, and when the truce breaks down, shrugging off attempted murder to deal with one's partner's downing and performing field surgery to remove large-caliber ammunition in a wilderness situation. I've never had to do anything like it, stitches make me personally a bit ill and though I'd certainly do my best if I had to, just the thought of trying to get a broad-head arrow out of someone makes me go green. (I'd be a bit better at using the Angcris as a machete to make a shelter, and I sort of know how to start a fire with flint and steel and build it so it doesn't smother out. But I wouldn't want to depend on my survival skills if I didn't have to, either.)

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**blackbirds** — in Britain, the equivalent of the American mockingbird —

though the one that sang outside my window mornings in the brief time I sojourned in Wimbledon had a song so clearly melodic in the Ionian mode that it was several days before I was sure it was a bird, not the postman whistling. Instantly, when I realized its source was the grackle-sized bird in the tree out front, I realized that all the poems that talk about blackbirds were not in the slightest exaggeration. If I were a composer I would set that melody into a composition — I can whistle it to this day; Dvorzak might have used it in another morning-song.

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The *LL1* story from Canto III about Melian's hair... the two don't necessarily rule each other out — life, and the self-edited versions of it we tell ourselves, and our friends and relatives, are often rather complicated. How relevant is the story of Melian and Thingol to the story of Lúthien and Beren? Is this something I'm constructing that isn't meant to be read this way? Well, several cantos of the Lay begin with historical references to something else in the Arda Mythos. We have, in addition, the Oath of Fëanor, Maedhros on Thangorodrim, the Siege of Angband, the Dagor Bragollach (including Fingolfin's Ride and the Fen of Serech), the Valar Oromë, and would have had Morgoth's theft of the Silmarils had the Lay been completed. Every single other invocation has a direct bearing on the subsequent events which immediately follow as well as on the backstory and conditions surrounding the action as a whole. So, no, I'm not stringing together fancies here unintended by Tolkien.

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**"Swarn"** is a real Green-elven [Nandor] word, thanks again to Ardalambion, and it does mean obdurate, intransigent, and just plain mule-stubborn, without any connotations of darkness or evil involved; probably pronounced with a hint of a "ch" in the initial consonant cluster as it descends from the primitive form *squarno*. It's my guess that the Laiquendi would have applied it to the Returnees. (With a word like that just given away, how could I pass it up? I've been waiting for a chance to use it for a long time.)

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Thanks to loyal beta NovusSibyl for the line "he just wanted to be sure" which came up in a plot-mulling session, (and who is also responsible for the much-lauded casting of James Marsters as the Brothers Fëanorion.)

## Scene VII.

**"horn-mad"** — i.e., crazy as a mad bull, used in *The Comedy of Errors*, where Adriana of the much-tried patience mistakes it for an accusation of

retributory infidelity against her Antipholus by the unfortunate Dromio of Ephesus.

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This is my hubristic effort at recreating in part a letter Canonically known to have been so awful that it not only incited the mobilization of Doriath, but actually made Lúthien's father think somewhat (note, only somewhat) better of Beren, as in — All of the Sons of Fëanor for sons in-law (however many of them are actually still alive at this point) is definitely worse. They really have no clue what they almost bring upon themselves. (There's an AU that boggles the mind.)

Curufin's empire-building ambitions, the Canonical motive of consolidating all Elven-realms under one House Fëanor rule before going after the Silmarils, combined with his rising paranoia and the willingness to destroy anyone who thwarts him, bear to my mind suspicious resemblance to Someone Else's behavior in Arda...

This is how I reconcile the earlier version, written before it was established that Curufin was Celebrimbor's father, with the latter, where it says that Curufin looked "with hot desire" on Lúthien as well, which although it could make for an interesting dramatic rivalry/rift between the brothers, doesn't work that way in either the older or the latter Canon, so alas I can't warrant doing it — thus Celegorm desires Lúthien for her beauty and attractiveness, Curufin as a political pawn and key to power. Neither one of them sees her as a person in her own right, and both of them have incredible self-esteem issues tied up in getting what they want. Achilles has nothing on the Sons of Fëanor.

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**"go critical"** — this is not really an anachronism, despite appearances; in foundry-casting of elaborate sculptures with many deep undercuts and small extensions, it's necessary to force the metal to sort of explode out into the farthest reaches of the mold, so that you don't have to make patches and weld them on, which is less stable. The famous Renaissance artist Benvenuto Cellino in his *Autobiography* describes getting up from having the 'flu to supervise the casting of the giant Perseus with the Gorgon's Head, and having to sacrifice all his silverware to push the molten alloy to the critical point where it would boil over and fill the entire mold, except for a small part on one of the feet, which he'd already expected he'd have to fix. (This is, by the way, the same statue that features so prominently in Lois McMaster Bujold's excellent Renaissance Italian fantasy *The Spirit Ring*.)



## Scene VIII.

Gower is, of course, referring to Banquo's appearance in *Macbeth*.

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As with most things, I don't see Celebrimbor's subsequent rebellion against his House and deliberate alignment with Orodreth related in *Silm.* as coming out of the blue — events, like cars, don't just “come out of nowhere.” Hence I have chosen to illustrate his conflicted struggling between moral duty and the easier way of doing nothing. (There are — of course — ulterior motives of story and reference as well, which shall become clearer in subsequent exchanges.)

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The story of the heraldic device of Finarfin is my own devising, but the notion of apotropaic serpents (er, sorry, that is to say, protective & beneficial — too many archeology books at an impressionable age) is both Egyptian and Indo-European, and elegant metalwork snakes, both jewelry and freestanding sculptures, can be found in Graeco-Roman art, as well as the royal emblems of the pharaonic tradition. (Serpents are also associated with the oracular in both traditions.) And wreaths of flowers, worn by the lords and ladies of the ancient world, may be seen in murals of festivals from Amarna and elsewhere. The explicit connection of the implicit relationship between ancient High-Elven (and later, Númenórean) cultures and Egyptian/Near Eastern civilizations is found in *Letters*, bearing out the subtler indications given in *ROTK* and *Silmarillion*. I don't know that this is the association behind the emblem, of course, but since it's nowhere explained, and very mysterious, I thought I'd venture a history for the enigma.

As far as how, in Primary World history, real heraldic devices came to be chosen — many are much odder than this. Puns abound (William of Islip, whose escutcheon bore an eyeball and a shouting man falling out of a tree, “eye” + “slip” = “I slip!”) along with instances of people taking insults and turning them to their own interpretation, as well as the more common adoptions of mythic or conventional symbology — but how in the days before myth and symbol had become tradition? One historical instance of a totemic animal being chosen after witnessing an incident which was taken as oracular exists in the story of the pioneering settlers of Tenochtitlan, presently known as Mexico City: the emblem of the hawk battling the snake which has endured for millenia.

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**subtlety:** an elaborate dessert, often representing something else (like a gingerbread castle or marzipan fruit.)

## Scene IX.

“poison” — a reference to *Hamlet*. More than one kind can be administered by ear — this was, after all, Morgoth’s favorite ploy, to start rumours, make insinuations, raise doubts, and then let them grow and run wild on their own. After all, one can always find evidence for one’s suspicions...

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More illustration of the mess that has to have been made of Nargothrond’s social structure — and a reminder that there were significant fault lines underlying long before Beren’s arrival, owing to the presence of a huge contingent of Fëanorian partisans arriving in the wake of the Dagor Bragollach... and the shock to morale and society of the battle itself, which would have been the largest single loss of life since the Return, quite apart from it ending in defeat and a barest stalemate/retrenchment scenario.

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I don’t know what art form Finduilas would have favored — blown and worked glass is my own assignment — but it’s important to remember that all Elves were artists, that centuries of life allow for even more exploration of talents than we can achieve (and some of us manage to cover a wide range, though few reach the level of a da Vinci) and so the popular idea of the idle, untalented and utterly boring lady of high degree is no more accurate for Middle-earth than it is for our earth’s Middle Ages. And the symbolism seemed apt as well...

(As a side note, I highly recommend that everyone read the works of Frances and Joseph Gies, historians who make medieval Europe come to life with authentic quotes and often darkly-hilarious details. *Life in a Medieval City*, for example, brings us the image of an angry Abbess leading her retainers in a local war against papal demolition crews, while *Life in a Medieval Village* provides coroners’ reports to demonstrate why Alcohol and Crossbows Don’t Mix.)

## Scene X.

*tafl*, or “table” (also known as “king’s table” and “king-stone” (*cynningstan*) after the key piece) is the Scandinavian board game similar to chess, but offering an interesting challenge. The form of it I have used here is the Finnish version called “*tablut*,” which uses an 8 - 16 ratio instead of the more common 12-24, and thus allows for such a use as I have made of the common gameboard setup. The source for the rules and layout of the game I found here [<http://www.vikinganswerlady.com/games.htm>] with citations from

early texts and archeological references; the applicability is, I hope, obvious.

I am perhaps taking some artistic liberties here in assigning Primary World board games to Arda, as I cannot immediately recall or provide any citations regarding either chess or draughts (checkers) in Middle-earth (the apparent citation, of “amber chessmen” in the endnotes in LB is not in fact by JRRT, but a suggested, unused, stanza by C.S. Lewis, so I don’t accept it). But as such games of strategy and skill are common in the epic tradition and throughout the world as well as across the ages, I feel warranted in using the device here, upon the assumption that someone in Beleriand would surely have devised some such game, especially with the artistic opportunities that the pieces provide, and that other peoples would have mucked about with the game and made their own versions.

(Given their long-standing occupation with both warfare and artistry, it’s entirely possible that such a game would have been invented by the Dwarves first — though that would probably pique certain factions of the Eldar no end!) One may simply assume that as with the Red Book of Westmarch, the Middle-earth game has been “translated” into an equivalent form here...

As for the rationale behind the rules of *tablut*, that is my own, but I think it plausible, though I will stand corrected if any Scadians have better information and/or combat experience, of course. The use of chess in both life and literature as an opportunity for political and romantic metaphors is well attested. (Plus there’s just something apropos about using a Lapp form of the game, given that Tolkien was so inspired by the Kalevala as to learn Finnish in order to be able to read it in the original!)

Battles for incredibly high stakes — not only property, but spouses, and even one’s self, abound in Indo-European folklore — unfortunate addicts to the ancient Irish version called “fidchel” occasionally made the mistake of playing for keeps against wizards and ended up trapped in animal form as well.

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**red and white** — modern readers may not be aware — as I was not prior to reading a Sayers novel involving an antique chess set — that in ancient times the traditional colors were white (stone or bone or walrus ivory, as in the Lewis chessmen) and dark red, which is an easily obtainable color from iron oxide, permanent, non-fading, and unlike black allows finely carved details to be easily seen. (A graph showing the positioning of *tafl* pieces is given at the end of these endnotes, if anyone wishes to learn the

game for themselves using two sets of pieces and one board. Experimentation has shown that the rules can be figured out and mastered by amateur chess players inside of an hour.)

## Scene XI.

**“our mothers”** — neither Fëanor’s wife Nerdanel nor Celebrimbor’s wife approved of the Return, and chose to remain behind in Aman. We know that there was a long history of trouble between Curufin’s parents, but the details of his own marriage as far as I know were never written down.

I intend here to pay homage to Primary World history in the developing storyline of *The Geste* here — how it evolved might be surprising to some, both what changed and what did not, and I don’t pretend to either have all the elements, or to understand how they all fit together chronologically and artistically, though I do understand many of the reasons for inclusion and rejection, the various artistic tensions and narrative demands warring over the final plotline.

One significant element is the entire creation of Nargothrond, which exists, in great measure, and as it eventually is revealed, not only because of Turin’s destiny. From a fall-back secondary base camp dating from the breaking of the Leaguer it becomes a great and ancient City — and Finrod becomes its King and founder — because Beren must go there.

By the time of the writing of *LLI* circa 1926, it is established that Orodreth was not the original ruler, but the third and youngest brother of the King (this is when Finarfin was named Finrod, and it had not been established yet that “Felagund” was an aftername, and before Galadriel was known to be their sister) and that the Sons of Fëanor are guests (in fact DPs and refugees) of their cousins.

However, in some of the earlier summary outlines, Celegorm was the original founder and rightful King of Nargothrond, who had become indebted to Beren’s father, and so the conflict was both more and less complex: the Oath binding him from whole-hearted assistance, he nevertheless sends a warband with Beren; and following their capture, when he takes Lúthien prisoner it is less cynical, more pathetic: he explains that he has already sent his troops with Beren and cannot send more, and though he does hope that Lúthien will turn to him instead, he eventually lets her go when she appeals to his conscience.

So the sense that he still retained some better nature that could be appealed to, which was not necessarily overridden by either passion or the Oath, I have chosen to allow in the shading-in of Lúthien's captivity in Nargothrond.

## Scene XII.

*Hamlet* also provides us with the line “A hit, a very palpable hit” — and an example of a friendship betrayed.

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“invisibility cloak” — there are many forms of invisibility — sleight of hand, the ability to go unnoticed in various circumstances, camouflage — and being able to put watchers and attackers into a dreaming trance would certainly also qualify. Are there disquieting parallels to the One Ring inherent here in the story of Lúthien's “tarnkappe” that I'm trying to emphasize here? You bet. (No more so, of course, than to that other famous fairy-tale trope, the story of Tattercloak and the variants, where being a ragged and unkempt eccentric conveys a certain amount of invisibility on the heroine at court — with the signal difference that Luthien doesn't have any animals killed to make her cape.)

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**Doriath** — although the specifics of Green-elven and Grey-elven cultural borrowings and differences are my interpretation, this building of Doriath's atmosphere is straight extrapolation and often straight lifting, from the source texts. (Remember that Túrin's name is cleared of Murder One in the Saeros incident when Mablung finds a witness? Who just happens to be a loner of a young lady who hangs out in trees?) The rich ethnic composition, dense politics and layered history are all set out in *Silm*. I've just tried, again, to shade in the sketches. As for any perceived similarities between the Wood-elves and tribal American life — I've always found it difficult to understand how so few others seem to notice this.

Even before I found JRRT's own statement that, after Scandinavian stories of dragons and battles, his favorite books as a kid were stories of North American Indians, since they had almost everything he wanted in them — primeval forests, bows and arrows, and other, ancient, languages — it was obvious to me, at least, right in *LOTR*. (Just like the illuminating similarities — and differences — between the Rangers of Ithilian and the inhabitants of Sherwood Forest in *TT*.)

And are the parallels with Third Age Lothlórien either unwarranted or accidental? —I at least don't think so, in either case...

**Denethor** — the first known to bear this name was the King of the Green-elves of Ossiriand, who came though severely outmatched to the rescue of Doriath before Melian closed it to invaders, and was killed by the Orcish army together with his heirs and household in the battle before Thingol could join up with him. Subsequently some of the Lindir chose to stay in Doriath, while others returned to Ossiriand, where they refused, for reasons unspecified, to choose another leader, and for obvious reasons never went to open war again. Most of the Third Age names of the Dúnedain are Elvish in origin, though not all.

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**“war-orphan”** — this is my conjecture regarding the fact that Beleg (and Mablung too, for that matter) only use afternames. (Remember, the *Silm.*, being translated into English from Quenya, gives the Sindarin name and the Quenya meaning after in English, as with Legolas Greenleaf in *LOTR*.) In *LHH* Beleg is called “the hunter of the hidden people,” and “the son of the wilderness who wist no sire.”

Now in mortal terms that could as well be an implication of bastardy — yet given the standard permanence and honesty of Elven affections, that really makes no sense. However, the highly unsettled state of affairs in Beleriand during the centuries before Melian and Thingol were able to consolidate and lay the Girdle about Doriath resulted in many displaced families and casualties. I don’t think it’s a stretch to consider Beleg as a foundling and survivor from some early catastrophe — and that would also be reason for a close personal identification with the fatherless Turin in later years.

Another possibility — there are always other possibilities — is that for prudential reasons the native Elves of Beleriand only used a common name in public, given the magical controls possible through names, just as the Dwarves did. But my remark on legitimacy still holds, either way.

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**Brethil** — Just to help keep the chronology straight: two years after the Dagor Bragollach wound up, more or less, in early Spring (although it had a definite opening there was never a clear end to the offensive), is when Orodreth, who was in charge of the garrison at Minas Tirith, abandoned it before Sauron’s invading forces, retreating back to Nargothrond. This had a cascade effect all across northern Beleriand, some of which has been outlined in Act II. This was another consequence, related in *Silm.* as well.

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**“summer-snow”** — literal translation of a Quenya word, “lairelossë,” which is the name of a kind of tree. (Thanks to Ardalambion once again.)

“mutant boar” — in *LL1* it’s told how the Outlaws of Dorthonion were harrassed by Morgoth over the years, before Gorlim’s betrayal,

...and wolf and boar  
with spells of madness filled he sent  
to slay them as in the woods they went...

I don’t think it’s an unwarranted assumption that similarly “enhanced” wildlife might have been sent out against other disputed borders as disposable drones.

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**Losgar** — the location where Fëanor burned the beached ships, leaving the rest of the Noldor to their own devices — which if not solely responsible for the catastrophe of the Grinding Ice, since certainly Finarfin and a significant element did choose to return and apologize for the rebellion, was at least a huge and necessary factor.

This was forgiven, at least on the surface, by the followers of Fingolfin and Finrod, at the Feast of Reconciliation which transpired after Fingon’s rescue of Maedhros from Angband — but Curufin was ringleader in backing up his father, and Celegorm, unlike Maedhros, didn’t either object or try to dissuade him from burning the Teler flotilla.

## Scene XIII.

Gower here invokes T. S. Eliot’s 1935 play *Murder in the Cathedral*, where many trenchant observations on the nature of power may be summed up in the following quote—

“King, emperor, bishop, baron, king:  
Uncertain mastery of melting armies,  
War, plague, and revolution,  
New conspiracies, broken pacts;  
To be master or servant within an hour,  
This is the course of temporal power.”

—a rather eye-opening thing to encounter as a teenager trying to understand the facts, foundations, and myths of authority in the Primary World, requiring a lot of mental wrestling with concepts rather contrary to popular assumptions.

The company that rides to the Nirnaeth Arnoediad under Gwindor’s command in the name of the House of Finarfin, does so against Orodreth’s will.

Everything starts somewhere...

## Scene XIV.

For the use of music for accompaniment of moods as well as their alteration in Shakespeare, see *Twelfth Night*, Act I Scene 1:

### DUKE ORSINO:

If music be the food of love, play on;  
Give me excess of it, that, surfeiting,  
The appetite may sicken, and so die.  
That strain again! it had a dying fall:  
O, it came o'er my ear like the sweet sound,  
That breathes upon a bank of violets,  
Stealing and giving odour! Enough; no more:  
'Tis not so sweet now as it was before.

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I've known a few "mouthy" hand-holders. It's kind of sweet...and kind of messily inconvenient. One so hates to hurt their feelings.

---

"your City" — ObRef to "when in Rome," of course. —One actually does have to do as the Romans when in Rome, to a certain extent, no matter how against the grain and one's upbringing it goes. (Then of course, state-side again, one has to unlearn such potentially dangerous Roman traits as crossing traffic with glorious abandon whilst disregarding the perpetually-red crossing lights, tossing one's trash onto the pavement because there are no visible barrels beneath the trash, shoving through to the counter instead of waiting for a queue to form, expecting to find nice homey inexpensive places to stay, expecting to be able to buy excellent coffee and decent fast food at any hour pretty much anywhere for reasonable prices, etc.)

## Scene XV.

"adage" — another *Macbeth* ObRef...a play much concerned with loyalty and its reverses.

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Celegorm seems like the sort of person to me who would deal with emotional stress by activity, not introspective thought.

---

The hounds do answer to Huan. The chain-of-command is thus made somewhat complicated, and has serious metaphysical underpinnings, but becomes all too practical later on in the story.



## Scene XVI.

“gild the gold day lily” — Gower’s epigram refers to the collapsed quote taken from *King John*, Act IV.ii, which is known in the phrase “gilding the lily”, but in the original goes “as well gild refined gold, paint the lily” — and refers to the addition of a second royal title upon a first by conquest and/or marriage. The play dealing with the matter of France and England, the symbolic lilies in which form such a theme throughout the play would in any case have been gold, the heraldic fleur-de-lys of the ancien regime. (Shakespeare’s predilection for queenly brunettes found most prominently, but not only, in the Sonnets, makes the contrasts and parallels still more apt.)

---

**white roses** — these have strong sentimental importance for the lovers, q.v. the Notes to Act II, Scene III. Probably should be envisioned as small, coin-sized, possibly single-petaled, much like the roses of heraldry — and much more fragrant than modern long-stemmed roses; driving through the wooded countryside not far from here I smelled an amazing breeze of rose-perfume, looked around for a large garden set back from the road — and found only a single large bush of quarter-sized (franc-sized) pale-pink dog roses growing wild in the trees.

---

Beren’s objection in *HOME* centers on Doriathrin Sindarin being so much lovelier a language, he can’t fathom why she wants to learn his.

---

## Scene XVII.

“ceremony” — ObRef to *Henry V*, of course. (Act IV, scene I — “thou idol ceremony” — a very appropriate passage in all ways.)

---

This scene is foreshadowing and reference to the information in *Unfinished Tales* that Celebrimbor, in addition to helping to build the Gates of Khazad-dum and forging the Three Rings of Elven power, was tragically enamored of Galadriel in the Second Age.

I see a spiritual kinship in art as well as troubled idealism laying the path — instead of falling for the lady’s picture, as is common in old romances, more likely for one of the Eldar to fall for her painting instead. (I’m also assuming, for the Script chronology, that he was born at Formenos, after Fëanor’s exile, and thus never got to know his older cousin of House Finarfin, either before the Return or after when they moved to the east while she remained in Doriath. —But this is pure fanon of my own devising.)

## Scene XVIII.

“auguries” — ObRef to Sonnet 107, which opens:

“Not mine own fears, nor the prophetic soul  
of the wide world dreaming on things to come,  
can yet the lease of my true love control,  
supposed as forfeit to a confined doom...”

---

I wanted this scene to convey a certain air of “Powhattan’s daughter in London,” the sense of a “barbarian princess” both fascinatingly exotic and at the same time unconsciously patronized. It seemed to me likely that a great part of her mystique would be her role as Melian’s daughter, and that people would be extremely curious about her parents’ relationship; while the outré nature of her escape would also have a certain fascination and gossip-worthiness. The trick of course is making it plausibly outrageous without complete caricature; the most appalling rudeness (and the most entertaining from outside) is that which is committed completely obliviously.

As far as Lúthien’s defensiveness in regards to her homeland, I’ve derived that from the ambiguity of her own words and feelings in the Lay:

“My heart is glad when the fair trees  
far off uprising grey it sees  
of Doriath inviolate.  
Yet Doriath my heart did hate,  
and Doriath my feet forsook,  
my home, my kin. I would not look  
on grass nor leaf there evermore  
without thee by me...”

as well as from the fact that it would be pretty hard not to have absorbed the same attitudes as her father across four hundred years and more of being snubbed and/or verbally threatened by two of the three Houses of the Returnees.

The superior attitude of the “Easterners” and to a lesser extent the original citizens of Nargothrond is inspired largely by Fëanor’s words to Olwë:

“Yet you were glad to receive our aid when you came at last to these shores, faint-hearted loiterers, and wellnigh empty-handed. In huts on the beaches would you be dwelling still, had not the Noldor carved out your haven and toiled upon your walls.”

—*Silm.*, “Of the Flight of the Noldor”

I also wanted to carry a bit of the historical contrasts with the “Home Front” inevitably seen in any war — life goes on, oddly, and people don’t worry and mourn all the time, if they aren’t actually under siege. I modeled the atmosphere partly on the decades of WWI reading I’ve done, fact & fiction, modern and contemporary, and partly on the Second World War, as depicted in the classic film *The Cruel Sea*. Back again to the verse:

In Nargothrond the torches flared  
and feast and music were prepared.  
    ...Out of mind,  
it seemed, were those afar that pined  
in anguish and in dungeons blind  
in prison and in misery.

---

**“Especially after we saved you...”** — The subsequent conversation refers to both Dagor-nuin-Giliath, (*Silm.*, Ch. 13, “Of the Return of the Noldor”) and on Lúthien’s part, the First Battle of Beleriand (*Silm.*, Ch. 10, “Of the Sindar.”) This was the one which took place centuries before the Return and resulted in the creation of Doriath and massive political reorganization sub-continent wide. It didn’t get a memorable name like “Under Stars” or “The Glorious” or “Sudden Flame” or “Countless Tears,” presumably because it was the first, as with the Great War; possibly because of cultural differences between Sindar and Noldor. (Any similarities to occasionally-heard Primary World statements which might indicate a dig at certain of my compatriots’ attitudes are, of course, purely intentional.)

---

**“language”** — The initial pack-your-bags-and-get-out-of-my-sight reaction from Thingol on learning of the fact that his relatives had not had the nerve or the consideration to tell him about the Kinslaying and the Exile feels very much like the genuine emotional reaction that would follow such revelations.

For a somewhat-comparable scenario, imagine discovering that the charming colleague from the overseas office was, in fact, a political terrorist himself personally responsible for several car bombings, and that a trusted friend hadn’t told you this, on the grounds of mutual friendship and the fact that, well, that was all in the past, he’d put it all behind him and didn’t engage in such activities any more. One might well be too angry for civil conversation, for the moment.

The subsequent injunction against the use of Quenya in Beleriand, however, has more the feel of a deliberate and considered measure, opportunely

taken. One cannot think that the defender of the Sindar would have been overjoyed at seeing their ways and cultures lost and overwhelmed in the tide of the invaders, any more than he liked the thought of them being dispossessed from their hereditary lands. (I do not, however, have any hard proof of this conjecture.)

Now King Thingol welcomed not with a full heart the coming of so many princes in might out of the West, eager for new realms...[He] hearkened to the words of Angrod; and ere he went he said to him: "Thus shall you speak for me to those that sent you. In Hithlum the Noldor have leave to dwell, and in the highlands of Dorthonion, and in the lands east of Doriath that are empty and wild; but elsewhere there are many of my people, and I would not have them restrained of their freedom, still less ousted from their homes. Beware therefore how you princes of the West bear yourselves; for I am the Lord of Beleriand, and all who seek to dwell there shall hear my word..."

—*Silmarillion*, "Of the Return of the Noldor"

(It was in response to Angrod's delivery of this message that Caranthir Fëanorion publicly referred to Thingol as a "Dark-elf," which attitude I've chosen to see as coloring all the following of Fëanor, and not obliterated by a mere decade of contact with the Nargothronders.)

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**"enhancement"** —Did Lúthien know what she was doing in her unprecedented project? Going by the text, one has to say yes, whatever the Noldor expert might have thought. Canto V of *LLI* describes this process in great detail, which in part is excerpted here:

Now Lúthien doth her counsel shape;  
and Melian's daughter of deep lore  
knew many things, yea, magics more  
than then or now know elven-maids...

...A magic song to Men unknown  
she sang, and singing then the wine  
with water mingled three times nine'  
and as in golden jar they lay  
she sang a song of growth and day;  
and as they lay in silver white  
another song she sang, of night  
and darkness without end, of height  
uplifted to the stars, and flight  
and freedom. And all names of things  
tallest and longest on earth she sings:  
the locks of the Longbeard dwarves; the tale  
of Draugluin the werewolf pale;

the body of Glómund the great snake;  
the vast upsoaring peaks that quake  
above the fires in Angband's gloom;  
the chain Angainor that ere Doom  
for Morgoth shall by Gods be wrought  
of steel and torment. Names she sought  
and sang of Glend the sword of Nan;  
of Gilim the giant of Eruman;  
and last and longest named she then  
the endless hair of Uinen  
the Lady of the Sea, that lies  
through all the waters under skies.  
Then did she lave her head and sing  
a theme of sleep and slumbering,  
profound and fathomless and dark...

Note that some pretty strong stuff is invoked there, and not all of it “nice.” (Glómund is an earlier form of Glaurung, by the by.) The principle of “sympathetic magic” is that similar things are metaphysically connected and may be substituted for, or invoked, to affect each other.

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**bindweed** — wild form of morning-glory, with white flowers. For some reason it thrives along railroad tracks — you can see it growing along the lines into London.

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**“bowstrings”** — this is an homage to the Icelandic saga of *Burnt Njal*, well worth reading, in which this practice is a crucial plot point.

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**prisoners-of-war** — this countermeasure to Morgoth's practice of subverting captives' will with delayed commands, cited earlier in the Script (and dating back even to the earliest version in “The Tale of Tinúviel”) is spoken of as preceding this time-period — which means that indeed, Finrod would have been responsible for such decisions. If that gives the reader pause — it should. Both military commanders and heads of state have to make harsh decisions which they would prefer not to, and which will not be popular: it takes more than niceness to build and administer the largest single territory in the Known World.

But ever the Noldor feared most the treachery of those of their own kin, who had been thralls in Angband, for Morgoth used some of these for his evil purposes, and feigning to give them liberty sent them abroad, but their wills were chained to his, and they strayed only to come back to him again. Therefore if any of his captives escaped in truth, and returned to their own people, they had little welcome, and wandered alone and desperate.

—*Silmarillion*, “Of the Ruin of Beleriand”

## Scene XIX.

**The Hall of Maps** is based on a real place that I found in Rome. It's part of the Vatican Museums/Library complex and is incredibly cool — no other word for it, I'm afraid. They go all the way up to the ceiling, they're divided with ornate gold borders, so that when you walk in you're not sure if they're tapestries or not — except that tapestries don't have that intense cerulean blue and jade green to them. The semi-topographical nature with the realistic color makes it much more like a fly-over shot than a conventional map — which I find more useful than the artificially-colored and ruled maps that used to predominate atlases. And the place-names are lettered in gold... I don't remember how old it is, but it's at least two centuries, and possible quite a few more. (And I want one of my own — but I don't own this building, so I can't make one...)

---

There should be a distinct Helen of Troy atmosphere in this scene: despite the fact that it was at least as much Paris' fault, and subsequently his father the King, and their counsellors who chose to back the Prince and not the law, it was Helen who got all the blame from the people of Troy for their downfall. (This was a topic for discussion and debate through classical times as well as returning again through the present.)

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**Amon Ereb** — a hill in southeast Beleriand, site of the concluding action of the First Battle of Beleriand mentioned in the preceding scene.

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**Amon Rûdh** —the “bald hill”, landmark to the north of Nargothrond; later the site of Turin's headquarters.. I'm assuming that Luthien would have followed along the general course of Esgalduin as the most direct as well as the simplest way of staying on track, which would have brought her out of the forest not far from this hill (though this is not necessarily the route she took at all — she could have taken a more southerly trail.)

---

“for Nienna's sake” — as Nienna is the embodiment of pity, I don't think this is an entirely unwarranted invocation.

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## Scene XX.

“**straw out-burneth**” — Gower makes a deliberate contrast to the seventh poem of the sequence “The Passionate Pilgrim,” in which complaint is made of the lady's fickle love, burning as bright and as quickly consumed as dry grass.

“up high” — a reference to Luthien’s preferred place for solitary meditation, *LLI*, Canto V:

“A tree she climbed, till the bright air  
above the woods her dark hair blew,  
and straining afar her eyes could view  
the outline grey and faint and low  
of dizzy towers where the clouds go,  
the southern faces mounting sheer  
in rocky pinnacle...”

## Scene XXI.

**Barad Nimras** — this is the fortress that Finrod built on the south coast of Beleriand to guard against the possibility of Enemy attack by sea; which did not however take place. I threw this in as a reminder first of Valinor and the West, and secondly of how much their power has been diminished and their dominion hemmed in since the Bragollach, and doubly so since the loss of Tol Sirion.

---

Lord Gwindor’s projected involvement with the government of Nargothrond doesn’t come out of nowhere. He is engaged to Orodreth’s daughter, which under ordinary circumstances usually indicates some level of familiarity, particularly given the small-town atmosphere and long acquaintance of the Returnees; he is also of high rank, with a reputation for military valour well predating the Nirnaeth. He has enough authority to override Orodreth and lead his own command to the League of Maedhros against orders. All this indicates to me that he was no mere brainless cavalier or court butterfly, but someone with deep connections and functions in the realm, despite his impulsive and passionate nature. I see him as rather the Harry Hotspur of Narog, a fierce ideallist, — and one of those described in *LLI* thus:

And even such as were most true  
to Felagund his oath did rue,  
and thought with terror and despair  
of seeking Morgoth in his lair  
with force or guile...

Moreover, it seems plausible that in such desperate times, the Regent would rely most heavily on those closest to him, and put such responsibilities and authority as he still controlled into trusted hands — all of which would contribute to the ongoing meltdown of Nargothrond with subsequent

developments.

The entire sequence of the sortie at Thangorodrim took on added impact for me when I put it together with the Geste: Gwindor has an extremely personal stake after his brother is made example of by the enemy, but for the rest of his company to take part with the same demented berserker rage in the assault on the Gates speaks to me not only of vengeance but of atonement as well: —*This time*—

It also is strongly indicative to me of later events in the *Silmarillion*, most particularly his dying words to Turin, but also the latter's ascendance in Orodreth's affections and counsels — and Finduilas'. Turin can be seen as Gwindor's doppelgänger. Consider: Gwindor returns from captivity in bad enough shape to seem as an elderly mortal, while the son of Morwen the Elven-bright, tall, black-haired, raised among Elves, and an implacable warrior against Morgoth, has to have seemed almost Gwindor himself come back from the past. Thus the royal house can't help but fall for him, and so the Noldor lord can't hate him, despite Túrin co-opting his life and the destruction caused by his rashness: *"As you were, I once was, and as I am shall you become."*

## Scene XXII.

The discussion between Lúthien and Celebrimbor is not only intended to introduce and foreshadow the battle for the "spoken keys" of Tol Sirion, but as a quiet reminder that Fëanor's grandson was not only responsible for making the three Elven-rings and inadvertently aiding Sauron's rise through the creation of the One, but also assisted with the fashioning of the Gates of Khazad-dûm on the Hollin side.

## Scene XXIII.

**"miss the mark"** — Hopefully it's obvious — but not too blatant for the irony value — that more is going on with Celegorm's testing of bows than merely the obnoxiousness of the brothers unscrupulously making free of Finrod's belongings.

---

**"taken care of"** — Here we have at last the explicit manifestation of the lines

Her ways were trammelled; closely kept  
she might not fly...



## Scene XXIV.

This sequence is another homage to the original premise that she would leave with Huan, but without her cape, requiring subterfuge and infiltration instead of direct action to lure out and overpower the foe. Also, though without access to it her powers were greatly diminished, still her knowledge and essential skills wouldn't have been forgotten. The preceding verse indicates to me at least that she did try to escape, if she had to be thwarted and prevented — which is only logical, considering previous events.

## Scene XXV.i

Gower's speech is a reference to Sonnet 65, which opens:

“Since brass, nor stone, nor earth, nor boundless sea,  
but sad mortality o'ersways their power,  
how with this rage shall beauty hold a plea,  
whose action is no stronger than a flower?”

---

**“spin this tale...and warp it too”** — as noted earlier, people tend to use metaphors familiar to them from their own life experience. It also, together with the cut about time, serves as a reminder of how much Luthien's perspective has changed from her fellow Eldar: the three days it took her to make her gear seemed “long.”

---

**“How long”** — Is it really plausible that the most arrogant and acquisitive and contentions of the sons of Fëanor would be permanently content to live on as “poor relations” of their youngest cousins, no matter how lavishly treated — any more than it's likely they wouldn't have already been resentful of the fact that the largest Noldor kingdom in Middle-earth wasn't theirs? Frankly, I don't think so for an instant. It was only a matter of time: Beren just happened to be the catalyst.

## Scene XXV.ii

Structurally, I needed a way to get the whole tale retold without spending unnecessary (for the audience) screen time on the retelling. Hence the cut; however this also serves the purpose of reinforcing the dual facts of the ambiguousness of the citizenry of Nargothrond, to be strongly in the forefront later, and of the complications and messiness surrounding the House of Finwë in Aman, though that should hardly be necessary...

## Scene XXV.iii

...and equally, this scene recalls the long duration of the connection between the families of Orodreth and Luthien.

---

**“the Necromancer’s aura”** — The atmosphere of horror which facilitated Sauron’s taking of the fortress is described in the *Silmarillion* in terms nearly identical to the scenario of the Lord of the Nazgûl’s assault on the second Minas Tirith at the end of the Third Age. Coincidence? I highly doubt it. One might remember as well that two factors seem able to counter the Black Breath, as recounted in *ROTK*: the first is divine origin, the second already being so used to functioning under depression as to be essentially immunized to further assaults. Lúthien shares to a degree in both.

---

**“listened to Melkor”** — I don’t think that Morgoth necessarily tempted him, because the poisoned atmosphere of rivalry leading up to the slaying of the Trees would have been more than enough to encourage envy, though it’s certainly possible — but I think the fact that once again, their elders’ sins are being played out, would have hit Orodreth hard, once it was pointed out to him.

## Scene XXVI.

**sickening indoors** — this belief is the reason for the elaborate and difficult scheme Thingol and his counselors concocted regarding the house in Hírilorn, as described in *LLI*, Canto V:

...In angry love and half in fear  
Thingol took counsel his most dear  
to guard and keep. He would not bind  
in caverns deep and intertwined  
sweet Lúthien, his lovely maid,  
who robbed of air must wane and fade,  
who ever must look upon the sky  
and see the sun and moon go by.

---

Readers have correctly noted herein (yet more) sinister foreshadowing of the future of Nargothrond.

---

**“It can’t happen”** — Yes, the Sons of Fëanor were, according to *Silm.* (“Of the Ruin of Beleriand and the Fall of Fingolfin”) the least interested of the Noldor leaders in taking the war to the Enemy. This is a point worthy of

some consideration, in my opinion. After all, they did have the most, potentially, to gain, both in terms of recovering stolen property and of revenge.

---



***Black Is The Color Of My True Love's Hair*** Appalachian song of Irish or English derivation, learned from the version as sung by Joan Baez on the Vanguard record *In Concert 1*, where this verse follows the stanza:

*Black, black, black is the color of my true love's hair,  
His face is something wondrous fair,  
The purest eyes and the bravest hands,  
—I love the ground whereon he stands*

(Another version, speaking of a female beloved, has the refrain, “—*She of the wondrous hair.*”)

## Scene XXVII.

**Name magic** — in Primary World lore, it's been used to control and bind, hence the use of secret names as well as masks for protection against hostile supernatural forces in shamanic traditions. Power can be held over someone by the fact of knowing an identity without any magical control as well, as in the case of espionage agents, or as described in “Narn i Hîn Húrin” (*Unfinished Tales*) when Nienor defiantly and catastrophically reveals herself to the dragon. Hence the secrecy with which Aragorn conceals himself, until ready to challenge Sauron with his presence.

Another use of what might be termed “name magic,” is in self-definition and revelation. In Arda this is manifested in the “names of insight” or prophetic mother-names given among the Noldor, and in the “afternames” which are chosen or conferred throughout one's life, such as the many names of Strider. In the Primary World we only fortuitously encounter names which afterwards seem to have been given prophetically, though we do choose names that are meaningful and inspiring for our children. However, the giving and/or taking of names of usage is a huge part of growing up, and the rejecting of nicknames, alteration of spellings, using of middle names, and return to old forms all can be ideological and deliberate processes of self-identification.

The theme of identity, both as part of a family, and as a self standing apart from one's family, is also one of the many constant themes found in Middle-earth. All of these factors being active in Lúthien's situation, it seems

plausible that she might very well make an issue of being recognized as she chooses to be, by her enemies-and-relations, and be just as adamant about it as her father was on the matter of Quenya.

## Scene XXVIII.

Gower is referring to the vow Lúthien gave her father when Thingol tried to get her to promise not to run away:

He sent for Lúthien, and said:  
“O maiden fair, what hath thee led  
to ponder madness and despair  
to wander to ruin, and to fare  
from Doriath against my will,  
stealing like a wild thing men would kill  
into the emptiness outside?”  
“The wisdom, father,” she replied;  
nor would she promise to forget  
nor would she vow for love or threat  
her folly to forsake and meek  
in Doriath her father’s will to seek.  
This only vowed she, if go she must,  
that none but herself would she now trust,  
no folk of her father’s would persuade  
to break his will or lend her aid;  
if go she must, she would go alone  
and friendless dare the walls of stone.

In angry love and half in fear  
Thingol took counsel his most dear  
to guard and keep...



***The Trees They Do Grow High*** English ballad said to be inspired by a true story which took place as I recall in the 1400s, as sung by Joan Baez on the Vanguard recording *Joan Baez 2*.

## Scene XXIX.

ObRef to the famous poem by Sir Thomas Wyatt, which I think fits rather well:

Whoso list to hunt, I know where is an hind,  
But as for me, *hélas*, I may no more.  
The vain travail hath wearied me so sore,  
I am of them that farthest cometh behind.

Yet may I by no means my wearied mind  
Draw from the deer, but as she fleeth afore  
Fainting I follow. I leave off therefore,  
Sithens in a net I seek to hold the wind.  
Who list her hunt, I put him out of doubt,  
As well as I may spend his time in vain.  
And graven with diamonds in letters plain  
There is written, her fair neck round about:  
*Noli me tangere*, for Caesar's I am,  
And wild for to hold, though I seem tame.

---

**bugs** — Luthien's twitchiness about beetles comes from the oldest resension, "The Tale of Tinúviel." There it's noted as a personal quirk of hers, in addition to disliking spiders (as evoking Ungoliant) like every normal Elf — while, however, unlike many humans, being a normal Elf she is perfectly fine with such other bugs as moths, which tend to be attracted to her. I've kept that because I thought it rather a charming weakness in one willing to confront Dark Lords, albeit not one I myself have (though it would seem to be shared by *LOTR* film actor Bernard Hill, as per his vivid description in interview of the Fell Beasts as resembling airborne stag beetles!)

On the other hand, it's impossible to imagine the same person who both felt sorry for Carcaroth and faced him down being either reduced to complete incompetent hysterics or demanding immediate squishing of the same...

## Scene XXX.

**"jaw kicked in"** — in the wild, this happens to bad-mannered stallions who ignore both rejection signals and warnings. Fatalities resulting from a broken jaw have been documented among mustangs.

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## Celegorm —infatuation, implausible, or inescapable?

There's something of a fashionable trend to dismiss Lúthien as nothing more than a pretty face, and Tolkien by extension for writing characters who fall in love with mere beauty. Let us leave aside the fact that this requires ignoring a personality that, as written, for sheer stubbornness easily rivals Fëanor, to which add the combination of ingenuity, technical smarts and sheer nerve to follow through. —There's simply no getting around the fact that when the sons of Fëanor came upon Lúthien in the woods, she was not looking at her best, not after first roughing it for weeks and then having just been chased furiously through the woods "like a

butterfly” by a hungry bird (*LL1*). It wasn’t the beauty of a fashion-model impeccably painted and groomed for a photo-shoot, nor even of a Grace Kelley or Jackie Kennedy or Princess Diana at a state affair, that left the brothers dumbstruck. Like Yeats’ description of a dangerously-beautiful lady as “Pallas Athena in a railway station,” or the traditions surrounding Cleopatra, the most compelling beauty is that sort which is not merely symmetry and conventional prettiness — may indeed break all the conventions of the same — but which is informed by a dynamic personality and spiritual vibrance.

It is this — this *charisma*, technically termed — which Lúthien possesses in spades; and this being Arda, where myth is history, there are further meta-physical dimensions. She has a supernatural aura which manifests itself not only visibly in her physical appearance, but in her talents as well. (Before dismissing her singing ability, one ought to consider well what song means in the *Silmarillion*. Mock singing, —and one disses the universe itself.) From her divine parentage comes a link into the primal forces of Creation, and from her earthly parentage the Elven unity with nature that gives an entirely different kind of power and comprehension.

It isn’t that she’s “only half-Maia,” but rather that she combines both sets of qualities into something different — and more powerful — than either. (The question of whether or not Melian realized her own destiny was not simply to protect, but to raise up a peaceful weapon, so to speak, in the person of her daughter, and set her free to follow a like path — and willfully (if passively) turned away from this duty, is one which can never be answered conclusively, but is worthy of much consideration.)

So on the one hand Celegorm, meeting Lúthien, who manifests the Light of Valinor untainted by Rebellion and Downfall, can’t help but be as drawn as Beren, or Huan, or, in turn, Morgoth. Mortal, Elf, Principality or Power — everyone wants Lúthien. The question is, whether they see her as a treasure to be kept, acquired, confiscated and locked up — or as a person whose free companionship, under whatever circumstances and at whatever costs, is the real prize. (Any parallels which may be drawn or discerned with certain jewels of divine and Elvish origin can scarcely be coincidental.)

## Scene XXXI.

Aside from foreshadowing future events, the introduction of the Gondolin

connection, and the Black Sword, serves not only to reinforce how the past carries through all actions, at all times, but also as reminder of the eternal historian's problem of who knew what when, and whence. Receiving history in prefabricated lumps neatly edited into narrative, we tend to forget that on the one hand, this is not how it happened, and on the other, it is not how it is learned. The inchoate mass of happening is ongoing and not organized into compartments, however the outlines and chapters in schoolbooks might make it seem. It is important to bear in mind that the *Silmarillion*, being a chronicle of imaginary history, is just that — compiled after the fact by several chroniclers from many varied sources after the fact, attempting to put events into perspective and track down origins and prior influences which would not have been apparent at the time to those living them scattered across the country.

Trying to figure out what information would have been available to which persons at which times and by what means is one of the challenges of the diligent student of the past — but it can be a most rewarding one, filled with unexpected delights as well as disappointing revelations. For an example — not entirely unrelated to this present project — there is no single complete manuscript of the *Iliad* existing from ancient times: the oldest complete copy of it is medieval. Hence we do not have the same *Iliad* that Alexander supposedly carried around at all times and read before going to sleep each night, either in the particular physical copy or in the substance of the text, let alone “the *Iliad* of Homer.”

Yet before one dismisses the extant *Iliad* as invalid it's crucial to consider the many fragments themselves, the known provenance and history of the epic — and the fact that it's quoted and referenced in scores of existing pop-culture works from antiquity, from political debates to fanfiction parodies of the myths and epics, and these all shed light on the validity of the Venetus manuscript. And that's where it gets fun, tracking down things like these. —At least, I think so.

(Obviously, the “who knew what when whence” question is a driving concern (or should be) for the fanfiction author as well.)

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The “very old story” of Neesha the Hunter & the Mournful Maiden half-remembered from beyond the Blue Mountains which Lúthien recounts is the story — slightly modified — of Dierdre and the Sons of Uisneach from the Red Branch Cycle of Irish legend. Its inclusion is in part an homage to Yeats, whose immeasurable service in bringing fantasy and folklore and the

Celtic mythos to popular culture must be eternally acknowledged with gratitude. (Those familiar with the Cycle will doubtless have perceived the relevance to future events recounted in *Silm.* as well: how kingdoms fell and alliances collapsed as a result of the treason against the lovers.)

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Even with the change of which brother is obsessed with Lúthien, it still seems quite plausible that Huan might have had occasion to bare his teeth at Curufin as well:

Nought said Huan; but Curufin  
thereafter never near might win  
to Lúthien, nor touch that maid,  
but shrank from Huan's fangs afraid...

### Scene XXXII.

**“Hence and spurnéd hither”** — in other words, kicked out. Gower's elegant phrasing comes from *The Comedy of Errors*, where a luckless lackey compares himself to a football as he's sent back and forth with unwelcome messages.

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Celebrimbor, unlike the rest of his family and most of the following of House Fëanor, does in fact break free of the Oath to follow his own destiny. I've chosen to mirror the future loyalty-triangle of Denethor-Faramir-Mithrandir as part of the explanation of why Curufin's son broke with his father, the problem of parental possessiveness which refuses to give affirmation, yet resents a child seeking that affirmation elsewhere. —It may also be part of the explanation of later, fatal, vulnerabilities in Eriador.

### Scene XXXIII.

If there are echoes in this scene not only of Morgoth's original subversion of the Eldar in Aman but also Sauron's many subsequent manipulations of the folk of Middle-earth through the ages — there should be.

### Scene XXXIV.

**“smile and smile”** — Gower invokes Hamlet's words (Act I.v) on learning that his uncle murdered his father, declaring that “one may smile and smile and yet be a villain.”



“bloodshed” — I’m assuming that Lúthien does, generally, have a pretty good idea of her parents and the way they think and will react, with the usual blind spots that we all have about situations we are too close to — and this is exactly what happens, almost.

---

A free John Donne reference for good measure:

Death, be not proud, though some have called thee  
Mighty and dreadful, for thou art not so;  
For those, whom thou think’st thou dost overthrow,  
Die not, poor Death, nor yet canst thou kill me.  
From rest and sleep, which but thy picture be,  
Much pleasure, then from thee much more must flow,  
And soonest our best men with thee do go,  
Rest of their bones, and soul’s delivery.  
Thou’rt slave to Fate, chance, kings, and desperate men,  
And dost with poison, war, and sickness dwell,  
And poppy, or charms can make us sleep as well,  
And better than thy stroke; why swell’st thou then ?  
One short sleep past, we wake eternally,  
And Death shall be no more; Death, thou shalt die.

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***The Queen of Hearts*** (second & third verses) This song goes back at least to the late 1600s, being mentioned in Samuel Pepys’ diary. As learned from the version sung by Joan Baez on the Vanguard record *In Concert 2*.

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***Come All Ye Fair And Tender Maidens*** (first & second verses) As learned from the version sung by Joan Baez on the Vanguard record *Live at Newport*.

---

“crazy” — in Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*, the Prince feigns madness to lull his enemy into confidence that he has no suspicions (in the original Danish legend, he does so in order that his uncle will not kill him as a potential threat.) Using adversarial overconfidence, feints, and apparently mad plans against their enemies is something that all the successful heroes in Middle-earth do, and not just Lúthien — q.v. “The Council of Elrond,” and the assault on the Black Gates, in *LOTR*, for just a few examples.

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***House Carpenter*** (last verse) This story of a demon lover luring a young woman away from home and family, while in the original version not workable for First Age Middle-earth without much modification (which I have not bothered to attempt for the present) due to its maritime

theme, would nevertheless have resonated strongly in its essential plot with the inhabitants of Doriath, irony surely not missed by Lúthien. Child Ballad #243, learned from the version as sung by Joan Baez on the Vanguard recording *Live In Concert*; arrangement used courtesy of Melanie Ebener. [<http://www.stud.uni-wuppertal.de/~ya0090/music/irish/index.htm>]

## Scene XXXVI.

“Sindarin-style record keeping” — among the several things going on in this scene is the intention of emphasizing what gaps of knowledge may result from the loss of oral traditions, based directly on statements made in the *Silmarillion*:

“Of the long years of peace that followed after the coming of Denethor there is little tale. In those days, it is said, Daeron the Minstrel, chief lore-master of the kingdom of Thingol, devised his Runes; and the Naugrim that came to Thingol learned them, and were well-pleased with the device, esteeming Daeron’s skill higher than did the Sindar, his own people. By the Naugrim the Cirth were taken east over the mountains and passed into the knowledge of many peoples, but they were little used by the Sindar for the keeping of records, until the days of the War, and much that was held in memory perished in the ruins of Doriath.”

—*Silmarillion*, “Of the Sindar”

## Scene XXXVII.

“Leaguer” is actually a very accurate analogy of the situation, given the way it turns out.

---

Huan was a battle-hound as well as a hunting dog, and in *LLI*, Canto VIII we are told:

Alone of hounds of the Land of Light  
when sons of Fëanor took to flight  
and came into the North, he stayed  
beside his master. Every raid  
and every foray wild he shared,  
and into mortal battle dared.  
Often he saved his Noldor lord  
from Orc and wolf and leaping sword...

Ergo he must have been actively involved on that mid-winter night when

the Pass of Aglon was forced and the brothers with their followers (and their guest and cousin Orodreth) were compelled to evacuate Himlad — presumably down the same unpleasant road along the northern edge of Doriath followed in past centuries by the Haladin and Aredhel (since if they'd been able to go around the southern marches, there's no obvious reason for them not to have joined up with Caranthir and the twins down at Ramdal by Amon Ereb across from Ossiriand.) Huan would no doubt have been a tremendous asset in keeping off giant spiders and other sorcerously-mutated creatures.

## Scene XXXIX.

In one of the outlines where Lúthien and Huan go off without her cape, the Nargothronders return it to her via Huan after he returns with the liberated captives, out of shame and guilt. This says to me that a lot of people were aware on some level of the situation as it was playing out. Moreover it's said in *LL1* that “Huan alone” was never enchanted by Lúthien's power, either deliberately or otherwise, which also indicates to me that she tried with the people of the City, (as is only to be expected.)



***There Were Three Ra'ens*** (slightly altered to fit Middle-earth circumstances) ballad arranged and published by Thomas Ravenscroft in 1611 and possibly written by him as well. Originally learned from the version as sung by iirc Burl Ives on an old LP recording *Folksongs for Children*.



***Once I Knew A Pretty Girl*** (last verse) This Appalachian ballad is used with intentional irony, since the rest of the song is about a fickle girl who sends her sweetheart away, but later changes her mind again, to which the rejected lover says, “No thanks.” Learned from the version as sung by Joan Baez on the Vanguard recording *Joan Baez 2*.

## Scene XL.

“**Lord of Misrule**” — Gower refers to the custom of appointing a Master of Ceremonies responsible for arranging all the holiday entertainments and revels during Yuletide at the courts and larger organizations of late medieval England, whose authority over such matters as music selection, pageants, party themes, charades, drama productions and banquets was real, and who held court and was given homage as part of the game.

## Scene XLI.

“lasting storm” — the imagery of this speech of Gower’s is derived from the lament of Marina, Princess of Tyre, whose plight in *Pericles* has some points in common with Lúthien’s situation.



**Mourners on the tomb** — draped statues, known as *pleurants*, or “weepers,” sometimes seen on late medieval tombs. These are from the series carved for the sarcophagus of the Duke of Burgundy, Philip the Bold, by the Flemish sculptor Claus Sluter (1350-1406), more famous for his work “The Well of Moses.”



**North Country Maid** (as sung; slightly altered for Middle-earth) An old broadside ballad I learned originally by ear, and only the first verse; when I decided to adapt it and see if there were other verses I found it even more appropriate than I had at first thought.

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**The Hart Round** This tune comes from a very old songbook I used to have, which was published in the first decades of the last century, where it was described as an old English round, but I know no more of its provenance than that.

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Some of this (and all of Lúthien’s disputes with her Noldor kin) comes from the conflict between Amroth and Nimrodel, described in *Unfinished Tales*, where it is stated that

...she would not wed with him. She loved him indeed, for he was beautiful even for one of the Eldar, and valiant and wise; but she was of the Silvan Elves, and regretted the incoming of the Elves from the West, who (as she said) brought wars and destroyed the peace of old. She would speak only the Silvan tongue, even after it had fallen into disuse among the folk of Lórien, and she dwelt alone beside the falls of the river Nimrodel to which she gave her name.

I have ventured to presume that the outspoken and self-assured Grey-elven lady to some degree resembled her predecessor, and have thus dared to ascribe her opinions to Lúthien as well.

Could there have been something between Lúthien and Celegorm, if he’d bothered to show up and make himself agreeable four-hundred-odd years earlier? I doubt it not. He’s brave and handsome and charming with all the legendary family charisma. The tragedy of House Fëanor is that they all

had so much potential for good, and threw it away with both hands, and having done so did at least as much damage to Middle-earth in the long run as Morgoth and his armies. What would have happened if the sons of Fëanor, post-Kinslaying, had nevertheless been at least civil to the rulers of Doriath, and what would have happened if Celegorm had married Lúthien, and then the murders had been revealed? Well, there's an AU for the imagining.

—But he didn't, and continued to demean the Teleri and pursue the path of arrogance and greed, and so the last trace of divine favour leaves his House with the gift of his patron, and passes to his rival.

In the final encounter between Lúthien and the sons of Fëanor, she doesn't even acknowledge their existence — which is saying something considering that Celegorm's just tried to run Beren over and through and Curufin has flung her across his saddle-bow in their foiled kidnapping attempt. The way she cuts them dead is staggering; the equation with Orcs is found there too. Essentially, they don't exist for her now — they aren't even worthy of her anger. I wanted to indicate some kind of final closure which would make any further communication both irrelevant and impossible, as well as to suggest what could finally have pushed Huan over the edge into acting against the master for whose sake he had accepted the Doom of the Noldor, alone of all the other Hounds of Oromë's gift.

## Scene XLII.

“monuments” — ObRef to several Sonnets, where the themes of love, mortality, Time and memory are woven together, most particularly numbers 55,

Not marble, nor the gilded monuments  
of princes shall outlive this powerful rhyme,  
but you shall shine more bright in these contents  
than unswept stone, besmear'd with sluttish time,  
when wasteful war shall statues overturn...

and 64,

When I have seen by Time's fell hand defaced  
the rich proud cost of outworn buried age;  
when sometime lofty towers I see down-razed,  
and brass eternal slave to mortal rage;  
when I have seen the hungry ocean gain  
advantage on the kingdom of the shore...

as well as 81,

...from hence your memory death cannot take,  
although in me each part will be forgotten.  
Your name from hence immortal life shall have,  
though I, once gone, to all the world must die:  
the earth can yield me but a common grave,  
when you entombéd in men's eyes shall lie.  
Your monument shall be my gentle verse,  
which eyes not yet created shall o'er-read,  
and tongues to be your being shall rehearse,  
when all the breathers of this world are dead...

and the conclusion of 107,

And thou in this shall find thy monument,  
when tyrants' tombs and crests of brass are spent.

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**“this time it's true”** — that was the excuse Lúthien gave to everyone when they got worried about her not communicating during the three days she was otherwise occupied:

And now was her labour but begun:  
long was she spinning, long she spun;  
and though with elvish skill she wrought  
long was her weaving. If men sought  
to call her, crying from below,  
“Nothing I need,” she answered, “go!  
I would keep my bed, and only sleep  
I now desire, who waking weep.”

These are, by-the-by, two of the most common and distinctive symptoms of depression.



***She Moved Through The Fair*** (first verse) A tragic love story of the “ghostly bride” class from the British Isles.

## Scene XLIII.

Not merely angst, I hope, but conveying the reality (Primary World as well as Arda) that the events which have significant impact on history are not all measurable in simple cause-and-effect equations, but follow more complex patterns of interaction whose terms may never be fully definable. Reducing the causes history to an either-or debate which is cast as exclu-

sively either strong individuals or broad societal forces ignores the fact that society is made of nothing but individuals, and the small decisions made each day for good or ill by said individuals is what builds up to movements, disasters, wars, reclamation projects, and the like. The top-down impact of authority figures on morale and a society's tenor is matched from beneath by countless examples of behavior and leadership on lesser scale, neither of which are separable from the other. The grand gestures and major events rest on a foundation of very minute actions and choices.

It is this reality which is behind the sense that fate can descend on a civilization for the deeds of its leaders, not unjustly, but because by action or inaction the group chooses to allow and approve those deeds, as played out in the ancient tragedies of *Oedipus* and *Antigone*.

---

**Telemnar** — I needed a masculine High-elven name and chose this one for the feckless Lieutenant based on the fact that many of the names of the Kings of Gondor are both Quenya and historical, and that Telemnar ("silver-flame") unlike some has no specific connotations of role or allegiance or craft (i.e., Arciryas = "shiplord") and isn't similar enough to any other names to occasion confusion. No maligning of any actual First Age Telemnar, if he existed, is intended by it.

## Scene XLIV.i

The depiction of Lúthien's Working in action is, of course, entirely gapfilling: the *Lay* cuts from Huan's bringing her the cape to the engagement at Tol Sirion, and the actual escape is left to our imagination, as is his retrieval of the spell-cloak. But I have derived it from the earlier escape which is recounted in detail in Canto V:

Of cloudy hair  
she wove a web like misty air  
of moonless night, and thereof made  
a robe as fluttering-dark as shade  
beneath great trees, a magic dress  
that all was drenched with drowsiness,  
enchanted with a mightier spell  
than Melian's raiment in that dell  
wherein of yore did Thingol roam  
beneath the dark and starry dome  
that hung above the dawning world.  
and now this robe she round her furled  
and veiled her garments shimmering white;

her mantle blue with jewels bright  
like crystal stars, the lilies gold,  
were wrapped and hid; and down there rolled  
dim dreams and faint oblivious sleep  
falling about her, to softly creep  
through all the air. Then swift she takes  
the threads unused; of these she makes  
a slender rope of twisted strands  
yet long and stout, and with her hands  
she makes it fast unto the shaft  
of Hirilorn. Now, all her craft  
and labour ended, looks she forth  
from her little window facing North.

Already the sunlight in the trees  
is drooping red, and dusk she sees  
come softly along the ground below,  
and now she murmurs soft and slow.  
Now chanting clearer down she cast  
her long hair, till it reached at last  
from her window to the darkling ground.  
Men far beneath her heard the sound;  
but the slumbrous strand now swung and swayed  
above her guards. Their talking stayed,  
the listened to her voice and fell  
suddenly beneath a binding spell.

as well as from the fairy-tale that provides (like Rapunzel) a “negative inspiration” for this theme in the Geste — the image of the Castle being overwhelmed with enchanted sleep not to imprison the Princess, but in this case to ensure her escape. Stretching the parallel? Consider these earlier lines:

Again she spake: “Now go, I pray,  
to Melian the queen, and say:  
‘thy daughter many a weary hour  
slow passing watches in her bower;  
a spinning wheel she begs thee send.’ “

and after commissioning her loom from Daeron,

...This Daeron did and asked her then,  
“O Lúthien, O Lúthien,  
What wilt thou weave? What wilt thou spin?”  
“A marvellous thread, and wind therein  
a potent magic, and a spell  
I will weave within my web that hell



nor all the powers of Dread shall break.”  
Then Dairon wondered, but he spake  
no word to Thingol, though his heart  
feared the dark purpose of her art.

(It almost seems as though she’s giving him one last chance to redeem himself, by this vague answer — not enough information that anything could really be made of it, and no specific statement of plan — daring him not to betray her one more time, in such a way that outraged innocence could retort with perfect honesty, “Yeah, I told him I was going to see if it was possible to weave a protection spell into cloth — is there something wrong with that? Is counting leaves the only thing I’m allowed to do now?”)

---

The “take back the night” theme which is resumed at the conclusion of *LOTR* is particularly strong in *Leithian*: the assertion that not even darkness is originally or rightfully under the control of evil, and is being reclaimed like a stolen territory by the just authority of the Powers through Melian and her daughter. Lúthien, in fact, does “own the night” — making Morgoth’s defeat all that more ironic.

## XLIV.ii

This setting is, I fervently hope, immediately recognizable as Ard-galen at the Dagor Bragollach, which forms the subject of many lines throughout the *Lay of Leithian*: introduction of such past history into the story is by no means my own invention. Here is the opening of *LL1*, Canto XI:

Once wide and smooth a plain was spread,  
where King Fingolfin proudly led  
his silver armies on the green,  
his horses white, his lances keen;  
his helmets tall of steel were hewn,  
his shields were shining as the moon.  
here trumpets sang both long and loud,  
and challenge rang unto the cloud  
that lay on Morgoth’s northern tower,  
while Morgoth waited for his hour.

Rivers of fire at dead of night  
in winter lying cold and white  
upon the plain burst forth, and high  
the red was mirrored in the sky.  
From Hithlum’s walls they saw the fire,  
the steam and smoke in spire on spire

leap up, till in confusion vast  
the stars were choked...

One of the points of this cut-scene is to serve as a reminder that Celebrimbor too is a warrior no less than an artist, who will eventually be overcome and destroyed by the same adversary they are presently refusing to face. (*Unfinished Tales*.)

### Scene XLIV.iii

Huan's authority over the other hounds is revealed in Canto X, when after the final irreparable breach caused by the assassination attempt on Lúthien,

"Thereafter never hound was whelped  
Would follow horn of Celegorm  
or Curufin."

### Scene XLV.

More gapfilling — but there had to be considerable consternation, recrimination and embarrassment following the discovery. I've just tried to envision it plausibly and in character.

The presence of Celebrimbor in this scene is not only intended as foreshadowing of his break with the House of Fëanor, but also of much later events. As outlined in *UT*, he and his own followers become involved with the dominion of Galadriel and Celeborn in Eriador during the Second Age, in which under the sway of the disguised Sauron they rebel against the authority of the Lord and Lady. I've tried to reinforce the fact that despite internal conflicts Curufin's son is proud and decisive, with strengths that can be turned against him, but not passive or without critical facilities — a very typical Noldor, all in all.

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**Gower's epilogue:** No, the equation of Lúthien with Fingolfin in his duel with Morgoth isn't mine. I made the éowyn - Eärnur - Fingolfin linkage on my own, but I rather had to be hit over the head with this one before I began to suspect it: after all, the story of the King's duel with Morgoth only occupies a prominent place in two Cantos! But this was verified in a remark I encountered in, I believe, *The Shaping of Middle Earth*, where it is noted that Elven sages long debated which of the two was most valiant, going up

against the Lord of Fetters. (After all, Lúthien not only went in unarmed, she acknowledged her name to the Enemy! But countered to this was the fact that she was, after all, half-Maia, and Fingolfin only a Noldor warrior, after all. So it was adjudged to be a draw.) Thus I think it's equally valid to make the comparison between one legendary hero riding up alone to the gates of the fortress, and the other.

(Yet another parallel is the arrival of the Eagles following the contest of wills: the fact that the Eagles got there in time to actually save them — thanks to Huan — is yet more validation of my argument that the single-most critical factor in taking on Dark Lords is reliable backup.)

I also wanted to point up the fact that Lúthien was never under any self-deceiving illusions that she was (at least by any outward measure) the ideal person for the job — simply the only one willing to take it on.

Lúthien wept not for very pain,  
and when he ceased she spoke again:  
“My friend, I have a need for friends,  
as he who a long dark journey wends,  
and fears the road, yet dare not turn  
and look back where the candles burn  
in windows he has left. The night  
in front, he doubts to find the light  
that far beyond the hills he seeks”  
And thus of Melian's words she speaks,  
and of her doom and her desire  
to climb the mountains, and the fire  
and ruin of the Northern realm  
to dare, a maiden without helm  
or sword, or strength of hardy limb,  
where magic founders and grows dim...

Part of the phrasing in this speech was inspired by Sonnet 60:

Like as the waves make to the pebbled shore,  
so do our minutes hasten to their end,  
each changing place with that which goes before,  
in sequent toil all forwards do contend...

along with the aesthetic device used elsewhere by Shakespeare of building a rhythm of consecutive similar phrases, as in Sonnets 66 (*“Tired with all these, for restful death I cry,—”*) and 91 (*“Some glory in their birth, some in their skill”*) to rise to a crescendo of themes followed by counterpoint.

## The Songs:

I know it's a cardinal rule of fanfiction not to create "songfics" for many good and sound reasons; I also couldn't write this Act any other way. Hopefully the "authentic" nature of the ballads employed and their application made up for breaking this rule not once, but eleven times, on the principle that if one is going to do so, let it be on a grand scale.

Editorial decisions were made after the fact — that is, I didn't sit down and think, "I need verses, which ones can I appropriately use?" but rather, while listening or singing throughout the day, would observe, "Wow, that fits far too well — but 'London' in the second line just doesn't work." Hence the first verse of *Queen of Hearts* was dropped partly because it wasn't as evocative in the story — but even were that not the case, would still have been ruled out due to the intrinsic reference to card games, which I at least cannot justify in First Age Middle-earth. ("To the Queen of Hearts is the Ace of Sorrows...").

Lesley Nelson's site **The Contemplator** [<http://www.contemplator.com/>] has a great deal of information about the traditional ballads of the British Isles and North America. I find the midi files rather over-orchestrated and too heavy on the piano, obscuring the tunes, but at least it gives a gist of the melodies.

This German site, **20,000 Volkslieder** [<http://ingeb.org/folksong.html>], has a lot of traditional songs, though without the provenances and background information, but the midi files, when available, are less overworked.

The **Digital Tradition** collection [[www.mudcat.org](http://www.mudcat.org)] has huge numbers of tunes, many with midi files and sheet music, but the provenances are iffy and there's little-to-no background information. The midi files, however, are usually clean and uncluttered. (I prefer this mirror site, [<http://sniff.numachi.com/~rickheit/dtrad/>] as easier to load.

The **Internet Renaissance Band** [[www.csupomona.edu/~jcclark/emusic/index.html](http://www.csupomona.edu/~jcclark/emusic/index.html)] doesn't have as many ballads, of course, but the arrangements are excellent and any of the midi files here will give an excellent idea of the richness of pre-classical music and introduction to the world of Early Music at no cost. "Elslein, liebes Elslein" is a particularly fine one, and were I not limiting myself to English songs for practical reasons (I'm not confident of being able to make a singable translation of anything) I would have found

a way to use this in the Script somehow: “*So sein zwei tiefe Wasser wohl zwischen dir und mir—*” There lie two deep Waters, parting thee and me—

**abc** is a music language which can be used in a variety of computer applications, some of which are freeware, others shareware — but I myself use it most as a shorthand for jotting down melodies without music paper. It uses only basic ASCII characters and is extremely flexible — and you can actually sight-read it! Learn all about it at the page of Chris Walshaw, the inventor. [<http://www.gre.ac.uk/~c.walshaw/abc/>] I used it to transcribe from ear those melodies I could not find already worked up.

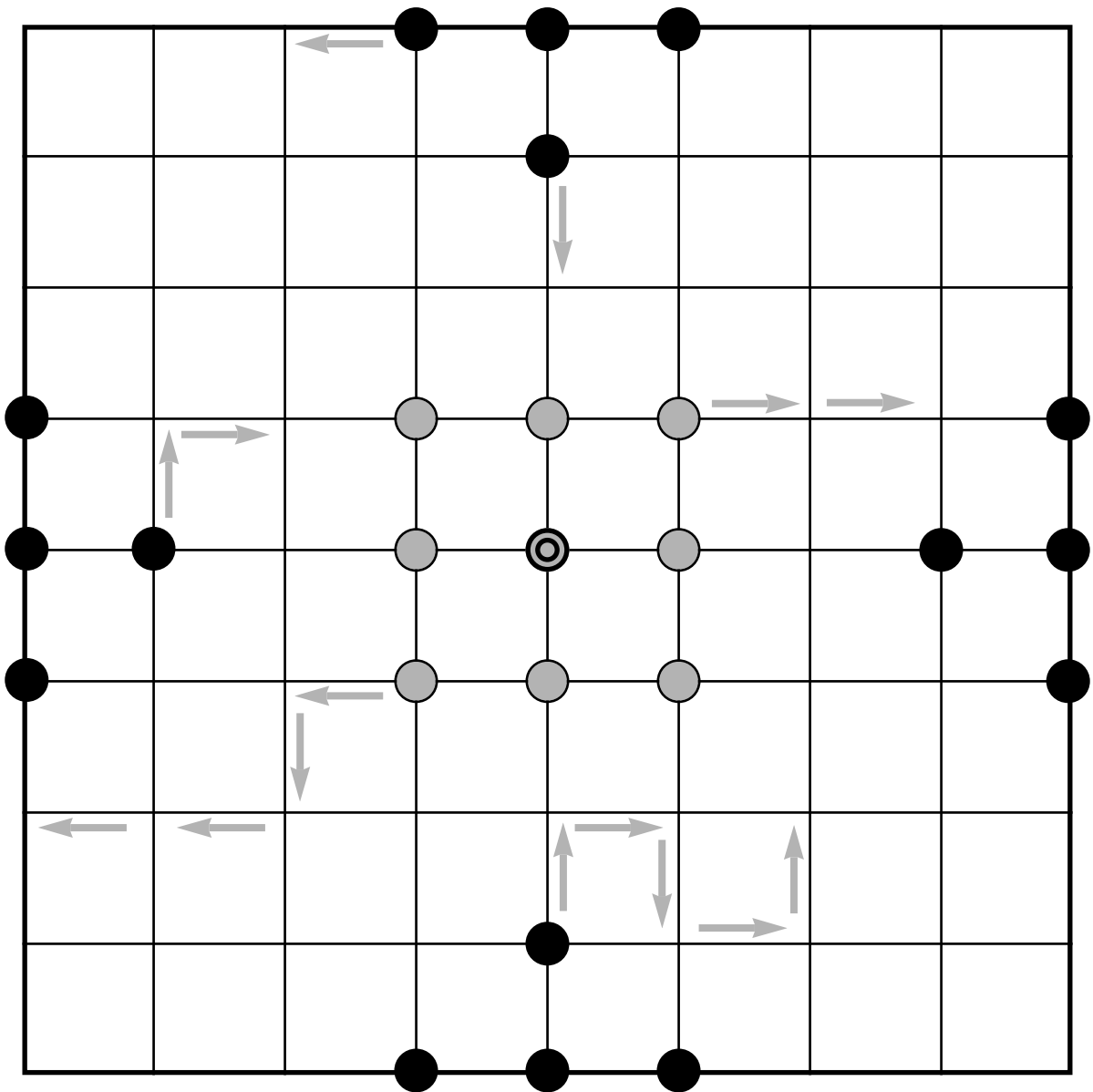
Finally, I cannot recommend the old recordings by **Joan Baez** highly enough. It isn’t simply that they are historical artifacts of the beginnings of the reclamation of traditional music in recent decades — they are spectacular renderings of the old songs, cleanly and clearly performed. (The one danger is that they will likely make you impatient of sloppy vocalists with indistinct articulation and poor quality-control.) Growing up hearing these around the house helped to create mental linkages between “real life” and the mythopoeic that are not without a great deal of responsibility for what you are currently reading — her versions highlight the story of the ballads and the drama that is created through the combination of simple dialogue and stock imagery.

## Frontspiece:

The setting, and the window-like murals I’ve devised, are intentionally evocative of the betrayal scene in *LLI*, where Luthien climbs one of the tallest trees in Doriath to look at the distant mountains of the north, while Daeron has gone directly to her father after assuring her that he will help her in her aim. Also note the Eagles in the distance — a deliberate reference to future events, and not just there to fill such blank space.

Lúthien’s costume is taken straight from the description of her escape in *LLI*, Canto V, and modeled in part on the illustrations of Sir Lawrence Alma-Tadema; Finduilas’ gown has overtones of the Art-Nouveau Medieval styles inspired by William Morris’ Arts and Crafts movement (and everyone knows such dresses are held up by magic.)

The fact that Lúthien’s haircut hides her ears is not accidental, either, any more than the invocations of Lothlórien in the visual design of the set.



### How to play Kingstone at home with one board, two chess or checker sets

Pieces move in any direction along the gridlines. We found that the game was easier if we limited moves to one square, but traditionally you can go any open distance with your pieces. You cannot jump or push the other piece out of the way; you must go around or take in tandem with a sword-brother. The king's side moves first. The king does not engage in combat. To capture the king, all four points must be blocked by attackers; pawns may be taken by two opponents. Remember that your pawns can move between two opponents, but if flanked, they are taken, similar to

Pente this way.) If you have one clear avenue ("Path") this is similar to "Check" in reverse; if two open routes to the edge of the board exist, this is the equivalent of Checkmate: it means victory for the defenders ("Field") because there's no way for the attacking side to block both at once. Larger boards with more squares allow for a more complicated game using more pieces on both sides. Artisans could have a lot of fun making their own *tafl* boards and game pieces; Sculpey might work as well as the more traditional materials of wood, stone, bone and metal.

# INTERACT

There are two (perhaps three) reasons for dealing with the main actions of the Geste in this roundabout fashion. The first, most basic one is simply that there's no way (for me at least) to do it, that the contrast between the subject matter and the tone is too great.

Part of this, and possibly a separate reason in its own right, is the difficulty noted by The Professor in "On Fairy-stories" intrinsic in converting fantasy to drama. Logically, it would seem that this difficulty would forbid the existence of the Script itself; but in fact there is very little that is fantasy, strictly speaking, about it. Aside from Huan's presence, the special effects are minimal, and mostly peripheral — could be largely done away with with very little rewriting and recasting into narrative chorus. It is character-driven drama, and the parts of it that are fantastic and not mundane, derive (or should) from the dialogue itself, and the images that those words invoke in the imagination of the audience.

Little more disbelief should require suspension, either by work of stagecraft or by (heaven forfend) the audience, than in presenting a production of *The Misanthrope* or *The Cocktail Party*, were the Script somehow to be put on. By far the greatest part of the budget would be devoted to the sets instead of the effects; and even those could be sketchily evoked by a skilled production team, as I have seen done with an excellent student production of the *Winter's Tale*.

But that would not be possible, attempting to dramatize the several battles at Tol-in-Gaurhoth, or the Anfauglith with its transformation scenes, or the wizards' duel between Morgoth and Lúthien, or the Eagles, or the Hunting of the Wolf — those episodes are the imagery, and unless story-boarded, simply cannot be presented in a scripted format. And so like Shakespeare in *Henry V*, I leave it to the combined skill of the Narrator and the audience's imagination to make "this glassy square" the contested places of Beleriand, whether the struggles be magical or mundane.

Finally — the ultimate reason for the Script's existence is to bring out that which is hidden, and thus illustrating the ramifications of the Geste, and the widening repercussions of the waves created by it, seems to me the most appropriate way of treating these episodes.

## Nargothrond:

This is the center of my characterization of Orodreth — this scene as drawn in both of the Lay fragments, each version of which has its own dramatic delights. Again, I feel rather badly, since I can't compare with the originals, which I'm simply translating out here with minimal invention: all the work is essentially done for me, I'm just filling in the gaps.

Very simply, Orodreth has to be the same person who on the one hand didn't argue strongly on his brother's behalf and who lost an undamaged command to the Enemy...yet who for centuries held a castle which was not simply a remote garrison but the capital of a province which controlled the only north-south corridor in Western Beleriand, through which all friendly traffic for much of the First Age was compelled to travel (the alternative being going across Ard-galen, down through Aglon, south through the east side of the subcontinent, then west along Doriath's southern borders to the seacoast, or the reverse — not very practical at all), who enjoyed a friendly relationship with the traitors prior to the coup, — and who, when presented a second time with the alternative of passive non-resistance to the status quo and cathartic violence, held against both strong influences with these words:

“The kingdom now  
is mine alone. I will allow.  
no spilling of kindred blood by kin,”

when

“Let us slay these faithless lords untrue!”  
the fickle folk now loudly cried  
with Felagund who would not ride.

In the second fragmentary version of the Lay, this scene is even more fully developed:

To Nargothrond no more he came  
but thither swiftly ran the fame  
of their dead king and his great deed,  
how Lúthien the Isle had freed:  
the Werewolf Lord was overthrown,  
and broken were his towers of stone.  
For many now came home at last  
who long ago to shadow passed;  
and like a shadow had returned



Huan the hound, though scant he earned  
of praise or thanks from Celegorm.  
here now arose a growing storm,  
a clamour of many voices loud,  
and folk whom Curufin had cowed  
and their own king had help denied,  
in shame and anger now they cried:  
“Come! Slay these faithless lords untrue!  
Why lurk they here? What will they do,  
but bring Finarfin’s kin to naught,  
treacherous cuckoo-guests unsought?  
Away with them” But wise and slow  
Orodreth spoke: “Beware, lest woe  
and wickedness to worse ye bring!  
Finrod is fallen. I am king.  
But even as he would speak, I now  
command you. I will not allow  
in Nargothrond the ancient curse  
from evil unto evil worse  
to work. With tears for Finrod weep  
repentant! Swords for Morgoth keep!  
No kindred blood shall here be shed.  
Yet here shall neither rest nor bread  
the brethren find who set at naught  
Finarfin’s house. Let them be sought,  
unharméd to stand before me! Go!  
The courtesy of Finrod show!”

In scorn stood Celegorm, unbowed,  
with glance of fire in anger proud  
and menacing; but at his side  
smiling and silent, wary-eyed,  
was Curufin, with hand on haft  
of his long knife. And then he laughed,  
and “Well?” said he. “Why didst thou call  
for us, Sir Steward? In thy hall  
we are not wont to stand. Come, speak,  
if aught of us thou has to seek!”

Cold words Orodreth answered slow:  
“Before the king ye stand. But know,  
of you he seeks for naught. His will  
ye come to answer, and to fulfil.  
Be gone forever, ere the day  
shall fall into the sea! Your way  
shall never lead you hither more,  
nor any son of Fëanor;  
of love no more shall there be bond

between your house and Nargothrond!”

“We will remember it,” they said,  
and turned upon their heels, and sped,  
saddled their horses, trussed their gear,  
and went with hound and bow and spear,  
alone; for none of all the folk  
would follow them. No word they spoke  
but sounded horns, and rode away  
like wind at end of stormy day.

I hardly had to do anything. It’s all there in the original, and a little consideration of the geopolitics and alternatives, (along with first- and second-hand experience of sibling and group dynamics) unfolds the whole messy interpersonal aspect of the setup of the situation, leading stage by stage inescapably yet not with absolute inevitability to the prophesied Doom.

## Doriath:

This scene, like the next, I had to build, and not merely re-present in modern unrhymed form; but the scene itself is merely gapfilling. The outlines of the unwritten cantos in *LB* describe the “meanwhiles” in Doriath, the sorrow at the flight of Lúthien, how *“Thingol’s heart was hardened against Beren despite words of Melian,”* and relate how during the unsuccessful search for Lúthien, Daeron splits off from the rest of the seekers and disappears, with only rumors left through history of him wandering far in the East, where his flute might yet be heard.

Celegorm’s embassy shows up, and the letter, and the ambassadors, are so obnoxious, stating that *“Beren and Felagund are dead, that Celegorm will make himself king of Narog, and while telling him that Lúthien is safe in Nargothrond and treating for her hand, hints that she will not return,”* and also warning him against troubling the matter of the Silmarils, that *“Thingol is wroth — and is moved to think better of Beren, while yet blaming for the woes that followed his coming to Doriath, and most for loss of Dairon.”* And so he prepares an army to invade Nargothrond.

Subsequently, however, things get even more complicated. *“Melian says she would forbid this evil war of Elf with Elf, but that never shall Thingol cross blade with Celegorm.”*

The army sets out, but before they get too far they hit another invading Orc-host, sent out by Sauron in hopes of catching Lúthien, as the rumors of

her wandering have reached the Enemy. Thingol's forces are victorious, and the King slays the Orc-chieftain himself, fighting with Mablung at his side.

(It is not clear whether it was the leader of the first Orc-raid, as in the completed portion, or the second raider captain, who was to be finally named Boldog, as in the outline; I'm going by the former, as that's the only instance where the enemy commander's name is relevant. I'm also going with the assumption that there were two raids, and that these were but the latest of many attempts on Doriath, not only on the basis of the *LL* fragments but also of the Lay of the Children of Húrin, where it is said of Sauron,

Thû who was thronéd	asthane most mighty
neath Morgoth Bauglir;	whom that mighty one bade
“Go ravage the realm	of the robber Thingol,
and mar the magic	of Melian the Queen.”

I also find it logical that these would be chronic attempts over the First Age, but significantly stepped up in the past decade following the breaking of the Leaguer and most particularly the acquisition of the Gaurhoth as forward regional command.)

...Though victorious Thingol is filled with still more disquiet at Morgoth's hunt for Lúthien. Beleg goes forth from the camp on Doriath's borders and journeys, unseen by the archers, to Narog. He brings tidings of the flight of Lúthien, the rescue of Beren, and the exile of Celegorm and Curufin.

This sentence is what I've expanded into the second scenelet of the Enteract — though much of the matter of it has indeed been made present already in Act III through Lúthien's warnings regarding the likelihood of such actions. It shows a far greater level of maturity, both in terms of strategy and restraint, than was shown by the Noldor under Fingon at Alqualondë, despite outrageous provocation — exactly what one would expect of a successful leader with many embattled centuries of experience — as well as the quality and loyalty of his people.

There's no sense that there is anything terribly exceptional (aside from the fact that it would likely be impossible for any one else in Beleriand) about Beleg ghosting into the heart of potentially-hostile territory and staying long enough to hear all relevant facts so that Thingol will be informed enough to act as prudently as possible: he's “the chief of his scouts,” it's simply his job.

Even though the Lay does not set out the familial connections between the

House of Finwë and the sovereign of Doriath (which may well not have been fully defined at the time of its inception) the outlines make it clear that it is both offenses, and not merely that against Lúthien, nor the personal insult of it, which put Elu quite literally up in arms. *“He is roused to wrath by the hints of the letter that Celegorm will leave Felagund to die, and will usurp the throne of Nargothrond,”* and there is an intimation of weregild in the demand for “recompense,” in addition to material support in efforts to locate Lúthien, that was later sent to Maedhros et al as Thingol’s considered response to the news.

This is quite in keeping with the ancient views of kinship whereby siblings’ children were (in ideal at least) considered to be no different from one’s own; q.v. Théoden’s adoption of his niece and nephew in *LOTR*. Plainly the friendly relations between the two Elf-kings, revealed in detail in *Silm.*, (where after the revelation of the Kinslaying has blown over, as Thingol said it would, Finrod not only has his friendship, but the ability to persuade him against his inclinations and better judgement in the matter of the Haladin) are background, even as the Kinslaying, from the earliest development of Nargothrond as a City proper.

The increased demoralization of Doriath, which began with Daeron’s revelation and the assigning of the Quest, and Lúthien’s subsequent contagious despair, is inevitable, given the succession of losses and bad news; it also is in keeping with the interconnection of leadership and populace, and the complicit responsibility for bad decisions and consequent Fate in the ancient worldview.

Finally, Thingol’s closing words are not incompatible with the statement in the outlines that *“He renews his vow to imprison Beren for ever if he does not return with a Silmaril, though Melian warns him that he knows not what he says,”* in harking back to the earlier part of the Lay, when his first inclination is to execute Beren, and only the reluctant recollection of his promise prevents him. It is also in line with the ancient patterns of bad decisions progressively interfering with the ability to heed or perceive divine warnings, despite all best intentions, seen equally throughout the *Silmarillion* as the works of Aeschylus.

So while the specifics of the dialogue are my own devising, the substance and the scenario are entirely canonical.

## Angband:

This third is the most conjectured, but no less necessary or grounded in canon. It is noted in *HOME* (I think it's in *Shaping of Middle-earth*) that Morgoth was mocked behind his back by the Orcs after his loss, and given the caustic and sullen attitude of the rank-and-file in *LOTR* towards Sauron, it isn't much of a stretch, I think, to guess how it would have sounded. It's also possible thus to reconcile the apparently contradictory statements in *Silm.* that no songs were made about Fingolfin's Fall on either side, with the *Lay's* that "Orcs would after laughing tell" of the Duel, the answer being, —only when there was no chance of him overhearing! Dark Lords tend not to be the sort of easy-going commanders willing to turn an indulgent eye to such things as "morale checks" or the ribald songs that even Julius Caesar tolerated from his armies.

As for the substance of the griping — there's no guesswork about that at all. It's horribly yet hilariously clear that Sauron didn't make anything like a full, free, and frank disclosure of the circumstances surrounding the loss of his command. What he left out, and what he did say, can be reconstructed from the events that followed and the words of the *Lay*:

Then his heart with doubt and wrath was burned:  
new tidings of dismay he learned,  
how Thû was o'erthrown and his strong isle  
broken and plundered, how with guile  
his foes now guile beset; and spies  
he feared, till each Orc to his eyes  
was half suspect. Still ever down  
the aisléd forests came renown  
of Huan baying, hound of war  
that Gods unleashed in Valinor.

Then Morgoth of Huan's fate bethought  
long-rumoured, and in dark he wrought.  
Fierce hunger-haunted packs he had  
that in wolvis form and flesh were clad,  
but demon spirits dire did hold...  
From these a whelp he chose and fed  
with his own hand on bodies dead,  
on fairest flesh of Elves and Men,  
till huge he grew and in his den  
no more could creep, but by the chair  
of Morgoth's self would lie and glare  
nor suffer Balrog, Orc, nor beast  
to touch him...

There deep enchantment on him fell,  
the anguish and the power of hell;  
more great and terrible he became  
with fire-red eyes and jaws aflame...

Him Carcharoth, the Red Maw name  
the songs of Elves. Not yet he came  
disastrous, ravening, from the gates  
of Angband. There he sleepless waits  
where those great portals threatening loom...  
and none may walk, nor creep, nor glide,  
nor thrust with power his menace past  
to enter Morgoth's dungeons vast.

So, the reports — sent from a safe distance by airborne courier — clearly contained no mention whatsoever of Lúthien, and quite possibly none of Beren, but plenty about disguised Noldor warrior-mages, and most of all about Huan. After all, which sounds better?

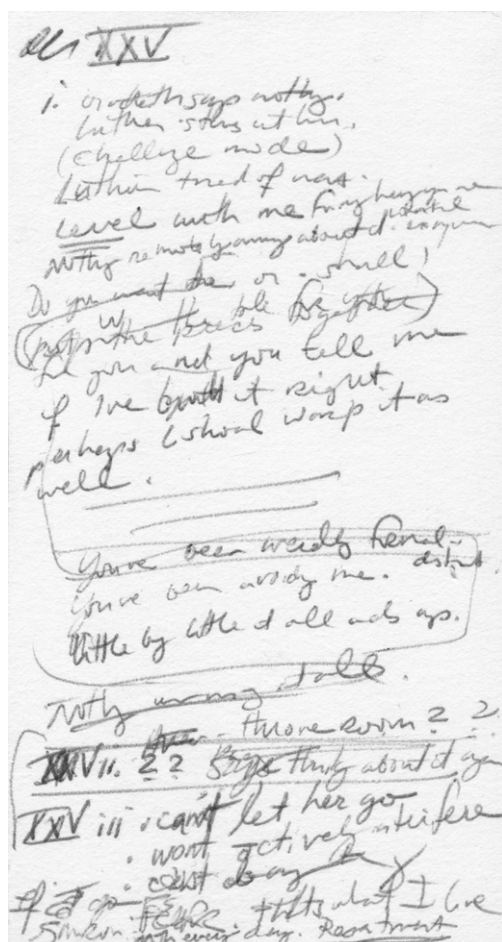
We apprehended a dozen hostiles attempting to infiltrate the DMZ disguised as our troops, and following routine processing discovered that the mission was comprised of not only one of the four top enemy commanders-in-chief but also that rebel human we thought had been napalmed a year ago. Subsequently the Valinorean Wolfkiller arrived on scene in company with Target Number Two and the two of them proceeded to sucker all my elite guard into an ambush and forced me to surrender at fang-point, following which she used the information I had to give her to buy my life to demolish the base. We haven't yet determined if the two events were in any way connected, or what the adversaries' rationale for the attacks was. Please furnish more troops and a new HQ.

or

An elite enemy strike team led by the CIC of Nargothrond, disguised as one of our own units, and supported by the Valinorean Wolfkiller, made a stealth assault in an effort to retake the fortress. We took heavy casualties and although I swiftly detected their presence, successfully negated their mind-control attempts and survived personal combat on both physical and magical levels, I was unable to maintain control of the

area and was forced to take steps that ensured the complete destruction of the base, thereby denying it to our adversaries. Unfortunately none of the Noldor unit survived for interrogation, but we are reviewing the after-action data and scrutinizing it to determine the rationale and timing of the attack. I am presently reorganizing my remaining forces in a secure location and will personally report to you as soon as I have avenged my honor and made the enemy pay for this.

The second summary is a whole lot more plausible-sounding, in every sense, and in Primary World terms as well, as anyone with any close experience of actual (non-Hollywood) military matters will aver. It's amazing what can be finessed in reports in terms like "routine replacements" or "inadvertent contact" — though the consequences, if and when the facts get out, can be far more unpleasant than owning up in the first place.



Actual-size scan of Act III working copy, ball-point on heavy card stock. It isn't all that illegible. (Yes, some of it's worse.)

And this coverup worked both for and against Morgoth, as it turned out, because nobody outside Angband had any idea that Carcaroth had been rapidly force-grown as a fail-safe defense against the Hound of Valinor, which made for an extremely nasty surprise when discovered — but Morgoth had no idea that the most dangerous part of the equation was in fact that scared, unarmed, 1300-something Elven singer he'd been trying so long to acquire for personal as well as political reasons. Another example of the danger in getting what you've wished for...