My Own Beren

by Evening Nightshade [archived by HASA_Archivist]

Summary

Arwen muses over her destiny as the likeness of Luthien.

Notes

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The sweet scent of Midsummer fills my lungs. The gardens are laden with the most beautiful flora this side of Valinor, save perhaps the blessed Golden Woods. I sink to a marble bench in Ada and Amme's private gardens, content to simply admire the beauty that surrounds me. It is dusk, and the powder blue sky is flecked with streaks of blood red and golden orange.

Dinner was many hours ago, and it is late, perhaps past midnight. But fatigue does not plague me. My parents and brothers have already retired, as have most of the inhabitants of Imladris. It is I alone who bears witness to the majesty of the sunset, allowing myself to become lost in my thoughts.

My eyes slip shut as a melody escapes my lips, a song that has been sung since time immemorial...

"The leaves were long, the grass was green;"
The hemlock-umbels tall and fair,
And in the glade a light was seen;
Of stars in shadow shimmering;
Tinuviel was dancing there;
To music of a pipe unseen;
And light of stars was in her hair;
And in her raiment glistening…"

I do not know why, but recently, the tale of my ancestress Luthien has been at the forefront of my mind. She and her beloved Beren, my mortal ancestor, have filled my every thought. Recently, many have commented that I bear the "likeness of Luthien." While I am extremely honoured to considered equal in beauty to the fairest Elf-maiden to ever grace Middle Earth with her presence, a disquiet has risen in my heart.

Will my resemblance to Tinuviel mean that I share her fate?

Like all maidens, I dream of love, dream of capturing the heart of my own Beren. What will he be like - perhaps an elf of Imladris, one of Elladan and Elrohir's friends? Or could he be a Woodland elf, like Legolas? I laugh, remembering the games the Prince of Mirkwood and I used to play whenever our fathers met for their annual council - I was always the beautiful princess locked in a Keep guarded by a ferocious dragon. All my previous rescuers had been roasted alive. (Legolas' idea, not mine. As a boy, he was obsessed with monsters and gore - actually, he still is.) Then, when I had lost all hope, a dashing knight would ride into the courtyard, slay the vile dragon and carry me off to his kingdom, where we would marry, and live happily ever after until the end of Arda.

I shake my head, but the daydream refuses to go away. In all fairness, it is not an uncommon dream. After all, what maiden does not envision being rescued by a handsome warrior - although personally, I prefer to think that I do not need rescuing. Despite Amme and Ada's protests, I have learned a great deal about fighting from Legolas and my brothers. In that respect, my dream is folly. But what would this world be like if dreams were prohibited?

What will my true love be like? Golden hair that glitters in the sun or sleek locks darker than midnight? But, essentially, appearance is not what one should base love around. It should be about tenderness and devotion, about friendship and trust. I can only wish that my love bears these qualities.

Then, comes the voice in my mind that refuses to go away: what if he is mortal?

Would I really be able to bind myself to a Man, knowing that one day, Mandos would part us forever? Could I even love him with the knowledge that the claws of mortality would tear our love asunder? Yet, I am of the line of Peredhil, the Half-Elven, descended from Luthien Tinuviel and Idril Celebrindal, two elf-maiden who lost their hearts to mortal Men. Will I be the next maiden to walk that same path?

One day, when my people chose to forsake the lands of Middle Earth and sail to Valinor and the Undying Lands, a choice will be laid before me: to remain an ageless, immortal elf and spend an eternity in blissful tranquillity, away from the pains of the mortal world, or to become mortal, living a brief, passionate existence before the flame of my candle is cruelly snuffed out by death. Should my heart give itself to a mortal, would I find the strength to chose the latter?

I shake my head; I should not trouble myself with such thoughts at this point in time. Absently, I pluck a flower from the grass and twirl it in my fingers, relishing in the beauty. My thoughts have kept me occupied for quite some time. The sun has almost vanished, covering the world in a few brief hours of darkness. Perhaps I should go indoors, for a chill breeze is beginning to build,
thrashing my dark locks into my face.

I slip into the House, humming the Lay of Luthien. Although it late, the prospect of returning to my chamber does not interest me. My handmaidens are probably wondering where in Middle Earth I am, especially at this hour - if they are even still awake. What speculations are forming in their minds - perhaps they think that I am meeting someone. Do I have a secret lover? I chuckle at the thought. No, I am not that type of person.

Perhaps I will go to the library. At this hour, it should be deserted, and I would like nothing better than to lay on my favourite couch with a book until dawn. Or maybe I could visit Ada and Amme's private summer house, and practice a tune on my lute? It is isolated, so I will not disturb any sleepers. Decisions, decisions.

However, I am distracted as I turn a corner, and stare at the mural that adorns the wall. The bewitching elf-maiden, dark hair billowing in the breeze, arms raced in a dancer-like posture, seems to stare at me. Blinking, I look away. Luthien may be little more than a painting upon the wall of my home, but I feel something pierce my very soul when her eyes meet mine. Perhaps, this is my ancestress’ way of sending me a message that transcends even the Circles of the World.

She is telling me that our fates are intertwined; somewhere in Middle Earth, although not necessarily in this century, or even millennia, my own Beren is waiting for my love.

Suddenly, I feel the urge to lie down, Swallowing, I shakily climb the marble staircase that leads to my chamber, scarcely aware of what is happening around me. Perhaps I am tired, and thinking incoherent thoughts. Yes, that is the most sensible reason. I lay down upon my bed and allow my eyes to slip shut.

Yet even in dreams, I fall into the arms of I my own Beren.

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