Manu Qualme

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Summary

Apparently an oath and the act of making love is all that is really needed to be spiritually married to another elf. So what does that mean, when Aragorn is Legolas’ ex-lover, and now wishes to marry Arwen? Legolas is forced to act.

Notes

Author’s Note: I started this in 2003. I’m just glad I finally finished it.
Disclaimer: Legolas and Aragorn are not mine. They are J. R. R. Tolkien’s and in some part Peter Jackson’s. Any inconsistencies with their works, be they the books or the movies, is my mistake, and I encourage input. This story is far fetched and completely un-Tolkien. It was a thought that wouldn’t leave me alone. No money is made from this venture.

Additional notes at the end.

See the end of the work for more notes
Chapter 1

Legolas watched the proceedings with a mild detachment that was very unlike him. He was the elf of the fellowship. The one who was always watching, always alert, and ready to fight at a moments notice. He was supposed to be ever-watchful, always listening to everything going on around him. But today he watched silently, not focusing on anyone else as Aragorn received his crown from Gandalf. He was aware of Aragorn’s soft voice singing a beautiful melody, but he only managed to react when Aragorn began his progression through the waiting crowd, the crown of Gondor on his head for the first time. Aragorn stopped in front of him, taking in the silver circlet resting in his hair, and the royal tunic he wore. Aragorn smiled, and using his left hand, clasped Legolas’ shoulder. Legolas mimicked the action.

“Hannon Le,” Aragorn whispered. Legolas smiled, and nodded his head, his heart breaking inside his chest. He forced himself to step to the side, knowing the inevitable was about to happen, that there was nothing he could do to stop it.

He watched as Aragorn’s face lit up with an inner light at the first sight of Arwen Undomiel. She looked beautiful as she always did. Aragorn approached her, hesitance visible in his shaking hands. Legolas watched as his ex-lover kissed his future bride, and knew what he had to do. Backing slowly away, he made his way through the crowd. He quickened his pace, ripping the metal from his head, he ran to Arod, who waited as if expecting him at the bottom of the stairs.

“Legolas!” The gruff voice of Gimli, gave Legolas a moment of hesitation. He looked back at Gimli, looking at the dwarf with such pain in his expression, that he saw his friend visibly flinch away from his gaze. Legolas leapt up onto his faithful friend, needing no saddle or harness, he urged the horse forward and was soon galloping through the mostly emptied streets, most of its citizens and soldiers already at the top most level of the white city, rejoicing in the return of the king. He spared no thought for how Arod had freed himself for the stables, or how the steed had made his way unnoticed and without direction all the way to the top most level of the Citadel. He rode swiftly, turning down each level with little effort, and out through the broken gates. He rode on and on, needing to get away from the city for a time.

He would return hours later, and seeking out the new king, he would go to him one last time. He needed to know, before he acted.

Aragorn was alone in his new chambers, pacing back and forth as if racked with anxiety. Legolas had made his way past the royal guards with little to no effort. Something would have to be done about that and sooner rather than later. Anyone could have just waltzed right in on an unsuspecting King.

“Aragorn, or should I say King Elessar?” Legolas spoke quietly from his place in the doorway, bowing his head in respect for his friend’s new title.

“Aragorn?” Aragorn gasped spinning around. He looked surprised but strangely relieved to see Legolas standing there. “Where have you been? Gimli said you took off immediately following the coronation. We’ve all been worried sick about you all evening. The hobbits want to spend time with us before they return home.”

“I went for a ride. I needed to get out of the crowd. It was a bit overwhelming just then,” Legolas lied, thankful for his natural elven stiffness. In their long and varied relationship, Aragorn had never managed to read his emotions if he didn’t want them read. Aragorn deflated somewhat.
“I’m glad you came to see me upon returning. I’m not used to you taking off in such a sudden and abrupt manner. Come and sit with me a while. I wish to talk to my most trusted of friends.”

Legolas didn’t hesitate but a moment before closing the door behind himself, and following Aragorn to the sitting area off the main chamber. Two armchairs sat at opposite sides of the roaring fireplace.

Aragorn sat down in one, and seemed to relax easily into its curved back. Legolas took in his worn and tired face. He looked so old sitting there, as if he hadn’t slept in ten years. It was almost enough to change Legolas’ mind about the coming confrontation, almost, but not quite. He sat down opposite of the king. This needed to be said.

“Aragorn, we must talk about your upcoming wedding,” he spoke softly. Aragorn’s smile at Legolas’ words made the elf’s heart ache worse in his chest.

“Yes, isn’t it wonderful? Finally after all of these years, I will marry my Arwen. While I wish I could truly have Elrond’s blessing, I will take what I can get. I do worry about her, Legolas. She has given up her immortality to be with me. The grace of the Valar leaves her more and more each day. I worry that I will lose her much too soon. I do not deserve such love and devotion from one such as she,” Aragorn spoke.

“You should know by now that the heart does not lie. If Arwen loves you as she seems to than she has little choice but to continue loving you, and to be by your side always,” Legolas replied. ‘As I do.’ went unspoken. “She could no sooner sail west that you could parade around as a Hobbit convincingly.” He relished the hearty laugh he earned with his words. “But we really must talk, Aragorn. I need to ask you something.” The tone of his voice must have shown Aragorn the seriousness of the situation, as the man stopped laughing, and slowly frowned.

“You can ask me anything, Legolas. You know I shall answer, even if only to tell you I am unsure of the correct response.”

“I know, Aragorn,” Legolas whispered, standing from the chair. Walking to the window, he looked to the South, where Mordor stood, the light of Mt. Doom dying with each moment, as the molten rock settled and cooled once more. “I do not wish to cause you further strife or pain, but we must have this discussion, or there will be consequences that cannot be foreseen, even by the wisest of elves,” he spoke quietly. He felt Aragorn’s hesitant approach.

“What ails you my friend? What causes such sadness in your heart? What forces you to turn away from me?” Aragorn asked. Legolas closed his eyes and turned to Aragorn once more.

“My love for you causes me grief, Aragorn. It causes me pain because I know my affection is not returned in the way I wish it to be. It burdens me to know you marry Arwen in the morn, and that nothing I can say, can alter this future which you so yearn to occupy. And so I find myself asking you, did you ever love me, as you love her now? Was I foolish to believe your declarations, your promises of eternal love? Does my heart betray me now, in holding on to something that should never have happened? Give me my answers, so that I can have my peace.” Aragorn was silent and still as he processed these quietly spoken confessions.

“I thought you had moved beyond this, Legolas. I thought you understood. Why do you torment yourself with such thoughts? My heart belongs to Arwen. She is my future. She is my life. I want Arwen. I love her. My feelings for you are irrelevant. I am meant to be her husband. She is meant to be my wife, my queen. I loved you for a time, but my feelings for Arwen are more. They are deeper, purer, and much more real, than the love I had for you. She has had my heart since the moment I laid eyes on her, and nothing is going to change that. I marry her in the morning, whether you wish it to be so or not. Why can’t being my friend be enough for you?” Aragorn
asked. Legolas felt the proverbial knife in his heart twist another quarter turn at these words. But something else was there as well, anger and a new vile bitterness, which he fought to suppress with all of his might.

“If Arwen met a man tomorrow, Aragorn, and fell madly passionately in love with him, so in love with this person, that her feelings for you were instantly vanquished, would your heart stop singing for her? Simply because it was hopeless?” he asked. He watched regret spring up in Aragorn’s face. Legolas offered a smile, one that he hoped didn’t show this new bitter feeling. “Thank you for being so honest. I have my answers. Forgive me for not attending your wedding in the morrow. I fear my heart cannot take it.” He turned quickly and was to the door before Aragorn had gathered himself enough to speak.

“Legolas, I…” But the king of men was cut off.

“You might want to talk to the captain of your personal guard. It was frighteningly easy getting in to see you unnoticed. Good bye, Aragorn,” he said quietly, before disappearing from view. Aragorn was left to slump uneasily into the now decidedly uncomfortable armchair. His head coming to rest cradled in rough warriors hands. Legolas fled on swift silent feet back to the stables. He knew his fate now. There was no other choice to be made.
Arod had rested for well over an hour, and sensing his rider’s torment, was anxiously stamping at the hay littering his stall. Legolas reached out with one long fingered hand, and stroked the top of the beautiful steeds head. The hand was nuzzled in an effort to comfort and console. Legolas smiled, and retrieving his long knives, bow and quiver, from the corner of the stall, mounted the horse. Arod moved forward without being prodded into action. They traveled at a much more sedate and measured pace as they left Minas Tirith. They rode with a leisure that allowed Legolas time to think.

His actions this night were for the good of Aragorn. Legolas’ life since meeting the human, when said human was only the young age of 17, and been dedicated to Aragorn’s happiness. It had been folly to fall in love with someone so young. Even by human standards Estel, as he had been called then, had still been inexperienced. Being raised by Elrond, Lord of Imladris, had given the boy a grace and strength that had drawn Legolas in as a moth to a flame. Legolas had burned for the boy, in a way he never had in over 2000 years living in Middle-Earth. Legolas had been frightened by his desire for someone so young. But Estel had felt the same, and they had been drawn to each other in ways that were not easily ignored. For three years they had loved and been loved by each other. For three years Legolas had called Estel lover, had loved him with all that he was, and for three years he had thought Estel had understood. The first night they spent in each others bed was the night they had pledged themselves to each other. Legolas had thought Estel knew what his words and actions had meant. Apparently he hadn’t.

Elven tradition and law had certain ideas of what constituted a marriage. And elven tradition also said that the love of two people when consummated and sworn too in a certain fashion was more binding than a formal ceremony was. The act of joining their bodies was in fact the governing factor. Estel had unknowingly married an Elf, who by all laws was his husband for all eternity. It had become horribly clear to Legolas that his young mate didn’t understand this, when Arwen had returned to Imladris after having been in Lorien for a great long time. The awe and love Estel had shown toward the beautiful princess, had chilled Legolas’ heart. They had only recently learned of Estel’s true lineage as heir to the throne of Gondor, and to suddenly be faced with this new terror, had pained Legolas greatly.

Aragorn, as he was newly called, had begun to pull away from his elven lover, as his feelings for Arwen Undomiel had blossomed. Legolas had been pushed aside, and nearly out of his lover’s life completely.

Legolas had waited for over 60 years for his lover to return to him. For Aragorn to love him as he was loved by Legolas. It hadn’t happened. And now there could be no more procrastination. Aragorn was marrying Arwen early the next morning, and Legolas had to act swiftly. He urged Arod to go faster. Legolas wanted to be deep in the woods of Ithilien as soon as possible. He had something important he had to do.

They rode for hours in near silence with only the soft sound of the horses breathing, and the crunch of large hooves trampling the ground disturbing the quiet. When they came to a clear stream Legolas bade Arod to halt. Dismounting with less grace than usual, Legolas took a moment to praise his faithful horse.

“Hannon Le, Arod. Hannon Le;” he whispered quietly, smoothing grateful hands down the horses long neck, and shoulders. Arod snorted, stepping closer to him. “I free you now, Arod. Roam as you wish. Return to Rohan, the land of your birth, or to Minas Tirith. I doubt very much Gimli
would willingly ride any other. Do as you are want to do.” Arod moved closer at the words. “I’m not leaving this place, Arod. My need for transport is no longer. Please, Arod. Go now,” Legolas pleaded. Arod snorted again but stepped hesitantly away from him and turned going back the way they had come.

Legolas watched him go, and only when he could no longer hear the horses hoof beats, did he let the sorrow he felt show in his face. He turned to the stream, and kneeling down, dipped his hands into the water. It was cold, very cold, but clean, and the chill did not bother Legolas. He cupped his hands, and filling them splashed water up over his face. He opened his eyes, feeling the warmth of tears trailing down his cheeks. He sighed. He closed his eyes again, reaching down and clutching the soft ground in his hands. He fiste the grass and the mud, and lifted his head to look at the stars.

A vision came to him unbidded, of his father’s face, twisted in anguish. It would hurt Thranduil, to learn of his only son’s death, but Legolas felt he had no other choice in the matter. This was his only course of action. He shook his head, dispersing the imagined sight of his strong and hard father weeping as a child from his mind. He retrieved his elven long knives from their holster on his back, and lay them out before him on the earth. They gleamed in the moonlight, curved blades strikingly bright against the green grass.

Legolas sat back on his knees, his hands going to the strap across his chest, and then to the silver tunic he wore. He folded the beautiful fabric. It was a sign of his status in the world of the elves. It showed him to be a prince of his people, and though it was not enough to stop him from doing what he felt he must, he respected his position enough to not sully it with his coming actions. His crown lay in a box in the room he shared with Gimli, where he had placed it upon returning from his earlier excursion from Minas Tirith. His fingers went to his hair, and with the ease of practice he began to remove each intricate braid he had placed there the previous morning. They too were a symbol of stature. When he had completed these tasks, he retrieved his knives from the ground before him, and then readied himself.

Legolas was so focused on his own breathing, that he did not hear the muttered curses and heavy footsteps, lumbering toward him. Raising the knives in to the air, he closed his eyes and blocked silent tears from escaping. He plunged the blades downward, arching them perfectly to hit every vital organ. He wanted his death to be quick, and as painless as possible.

“Legolas! NO!”

Hearing the growled shout, Legolas opened his eyes and looked to his right. Gimli stood there, eyes wide with shock. Legolas let out a low moan, and fell backward to the ground. Gimli was at his side in but a moment.

“Legolas, you stupid, stupid elf!” the dwarf whispered, catching Legolas’ head in rough hands. Legolas’ breath hissed in his chest, he had punctured both lungs rather cleanly. Wide blue eyes stared up at Gimli, filled with both fear and pain. More pain than Gimli had ever witnessed in elven eyes before.

“Why, Legolas? Why would you do such a foolish thing?” Tears spilled from Legolas’ eyes at the pain he could hear in Gimli’s voice.

“I am sorry, Gimli.” he whispered. “I never meant for you...” but his words stopped as his breathing grew more strained. He was dying, he knew. “Mellon?” he muttered. Gimli took his hand in his own, and Legolas smiled. “Elf-Friend” he whispered, his throat tightening, his chest seizing. He felt his eyes flutter closed. “I am sorry.”

“Legolas!” Gimli cried, touching the pale, cool face of his dearest friend. Legolas did not respond,
Legolas opened his eyes again. He was lying on cold stone, and felt no pain now. He picked up his head and looked around him. He was in a large, open stone hall, all the walls made of a well-shined black marble. He saw no one else around him, and could see no doors at either end. He pulled himself to his feet hesitantly, looking around in wonder. The Halls of Mandos. The ceiling was tall and Legolas wondered if you could hear a single person's breathing resounding off the walls if they did so loud enough. It was only then that he realized that he himself wasn’t breathing, and that he could no longer feel the blood rushing through his veins. He looked at his hands in disbelief, when a deep voice startled him.

“Legolas Greenleaf, you foolish stupid child.” Legolas turned quickly to the tall figure standing before him. The age and power of the being standing there left no doubt in his mind who this person was. He quickly dropped to his knees, hands pressed to his chest, head bowed.

“Forgive me, Lord Namo. I did not realize...” Legolas pleaded.

“Be quiet! If you should be apologizing for anything it is your unforgivable actions as of late. Do you know the penalty for taking one’s own life?” Legolas nodded his head weakly, and shrank away from the condemnation in the Vala’s voice. Legolas wept quietly but did not plea for forgiveness again, nor for the Vala to show him mercy. “You do not ask for kindness. You do not regret your decision?” the voice was speculative now. A hand curled around Legolas’ chin, lifting his beautiful face into view.

“I regret my actions were necessary, but I do not wish I had made another decision. There was no other choice. I had to do what I did. For the pain it will cause those that cared for me, I weep, and for the disappointment one of the Valar feels toward me do I feel ashamed.” Legolas replied.

“Then, why did you do this to yourself? Your time had not come. You were never supposed to grace these Halls of Waiting with your presence.” Legolas closed his eyes in deep anguish. The Lord of the Hall nodded, his face saddened. “For Him. You love him greatly. So much so, that you would live out eternity in torment so that he could find his happiness. For love and for pain you took your own light away from Middle-Earth.” The hand cupped the side of Legolas’ face. “That decision was not yours to make, little-one. Your fate was decided millennia ago, long before you were even born unto the world. There is no place for you here, I’m afraid.” He watched panic rise in the elf’s eyes. “You came here for a purpose. And that which you seek shall I grant to you. Your marriage will be dissolved if you still wish it to be so.” Legolas took a moment, and the Vala could see the pain and heartache blossom in the young Eldar’s soul.

“I wish for Aragorn to be free to marry whom he truly loves. He wishes to marry Arwen Undomiel, and I do not wish to stand in his way. I had hoped he would one day return my love, but if it is not to be, then I ask you to sever this tie between us, so that he can have who his heart chooses at his side.” Legolas watched the sadness deepen in the Vala’s face.

“So be it. Your union is dissolved. He is free to marry whom he chooses, as are you. Though I know you never shall.” Legolas slumped at the words, the weight of Aragorn’s future lifting from his shoulders.

“Thank you, my Lord. That is all I could ask of you before you punish me as you see fit,” he said quietly. Namo smiled a small smile.

“You will hate your penance, Legolas. And for that I am sorry, but there is no other way for you to complete your destiny. I only wish you wouldn’t have to carry that which you will. For you
have broken our most sacred of laws. You will not spend eternity living in torment and pain, but instead will spend eternity walking amidst the living, suffering the pain of a never-ending broken heart. You will live a long life, Legolas, suffering from a heartache that cannot send you to my halls. You will remain in Middle-Earth until your Aragorn is no more, and only then will you be allowed to find some small measure of peace in the shores of Valinor. You have work to do, and little time to do it.” Legolas looked up at him with fear, and pain plain in his expression, before nodding his acceptance, there was nothing else he could do. One did not argue with Mandos.

“As you wish, my lord,” he whispered.

“I do not wish it, Greenleaf. Your actions have determined your fate. Your own heart has caused you your current and future grief. Now it is time to return to the land of the living, you have things to do,” and Legolas heard no more.
Gimli sat still with Legolas’ blond head resting in his lap. He had removed the long knives from Legolas’ chest, and with tears wetting his beard had used his own jerkin and river water to wash the blood from Legolas’ hands and chest.

His friend was dead, and he wept his mourning. He was pained by this news, and wished only to have his friend back alive and well. He wiped at the thick blood with gentle movements, not wanting to disturb the quiet of the glen.

He rested Legolas’ arms at his sides, and sat back to watch the fading stars move overhead. It would be dawn soon, he knew, and it pained him to realize, Legolas would not be alive to see it.

It surprised him then, when the body lying before him gave a great heave, and with a gasp collapsed lungs filling with predawn air. Blue eyes widened suddenly and Legolas sat bolt upright in front of him.

“By the Gods!” Gimli gasped, pulling backward, heart thumping wildly in his chest. Legolas drew in deep gulps of air, as the life returned to his limbs. His chest burned, and touching it, he realized his wounds had mostly healed. They burned all the way down, and it hurt to breathe, but he lived. Hearing the surprised muttering behind him, he turned to see Gimli sitting there, what was visible of his face was as pale as it had ever been.

“Gimli?” he asked, voice rough. His hands settled in the blood soaked grass under him. He looked down at the red once more staining his hands, and suddenly remembered his last moments before his life had left him. He looked back at his friend with great sorrow in his expression. “Oh, Gimli, I am so very sorry,” he whispered. Gimli did not respond with words, but had soon lunged forward to hug the elf with all of his strength. Legolas did not have the heart to push the tighter than pleasant arms away, instead he used what strength he had to hug the dwarf back. Neither of them would move for quite some time.

Gimli wanted to question the elf on why he had done such a selfish and horrible thing, but feared the response. Legolas had much to think about. They sat side by side, on the bank of the river, watching the sun rise in the east. Legolas closed his eyes and thought of Aragorn. An ache rose in him, the likes of which he had never felt before. Suddenly he understood Mandos’ sorrow. He knew this great pain would only grow over time, and that no matter what, he would never be free of it. It was his burden to bear. However, he would carry it if it meant Aragorn would not hate him, that his love could be happy in this life. But just for a moment we wished for Mandos Halls again, this time purely for selfish reasons. It hurt to know he would only be rejected again. He pushed at the pain clouding his senses, and tried to focus on other things.

He dug his hands into the earth on either side of him, urged the wind to blow through his long unbound hair. The water in the stream seemed to reach up to him, as if sensing his distress. The grass tickled his palms, the cold water licked at his bare toes. And he found some small measure of peace, surrounded by nature. It pushed the pain to a more manageable level. He released the elements around him and let himself fall back to the ground behind him. Gimli watched a bit wide-eyed as Legolas stared up at the lightening sky.

“You can talk to me, Elf. I shall not share your secrets. The trust of our friendship shall never be
broken,” Gimli offered. Legolas turned his weary head to look at the dwarf.

“Do not fear, Gimli. Tonight’s actions shall not be repeated. I was rejected from Mandos’ Halls and I have been warned not to do such a thing again. There is no place for me there. I will reside in Arda for quite a time longer, before sailing west to Valinor. Only there, will I find a bit of the peace I long for,” Legolas said quietly. They sat in silence as the sun broke the crest of the horizon. “A new dawn, a new day. This is the morning of a new life, Gimli. For many of the inhabitants of Middle-Earth. Myself included,” Legolas mused.

“Yes, Aragorn marries Arwen in a few short hours. Do you not wish to attend the ceremony?” Gimli asked. He watched intently, as the agony burst over Legolas’ expression. Understanding began to dawn in the dwarf’s mind. “It is Aragorn, he causes you such grief. It is him that caused you such heartache as to take your own life;” he whispered. Legolas didn’t look at him. He stared instead at the sun as it hid behind several faraway clouds.

“Aye. Aragorn is the bearer of much of my weariness. But it is my own fault that I needed such drastic action. Aragorn should not be held responsible. He did not understand... He still doesn’t.” Legolas explained.

“Help me to understand. Tell me your sorrow. Let me help you to bear this burden.” Gimli’s concern caused Legolas to reconsider his self-imposed silence. He sat up, and drawing his legs up under him turned to look at his friend.

“If I tell you, Mater Dwarf, you must never tell another living soul. It will be our secret, and our secret alone, for no one else in all of Middle-Earth knows the complete truth. Not Gandalf, nor the Lady Galadriel, nor Arwen, not even Aragorn himself.” Gimli thought only a moment before nodding his assent.

“Not a word to anyone about any of it,” the dwarf promised.

“I’m trusting you friend, with my greatest and most guarded secret. Do you understand?” he asked. Again Gimli agreed. “Seventy years ago, on a trip to Rivendell, acting as Messenger from Mirkwood, I met a young human man, who was living in Imladris as foster son to Lord Elrond. I was drawn to him, as he was to me. And shortly after meeting him, I found myself falling in love with him. We spent a great deal of time together, under the trees and waterfalls of the Valley. I cared a great deal for him, and believed him when he professed a great undying love for me in return. We spent three years together as lovers. I thought he understood what it is he had promised, but he did not.” Legolas shook his head and looked at Gimli with desperation. “Elven custom is that when you profess love and eternal devotion, and then join your body with another, you have bonded your souls for eternity. Seventy years ago, Gimli, Aragorn son of Arathorn became my husband and mate in every way that should have mattered. And just after our third year together, we learned of his lineage and therefore his destiny. It was that very same day that Arwen Undomiel returned to Rivendell. It only took one glimpse of her beauty and he was lost to me...” Legolas paused then, hand pressed to his chest in great pain. He took shaky breaths, and pulled his hand back to see his life blood staining the pale digits. Gimli moved closer, and pressed his once again wet jerkin to the newly opened wound on Legolas’ chest. Legolas lay back on the ground again, and taking deep breaths continued with his tale.

“I’ve waited these many years, in the never ending hope that he would realize, that he would have a change of heart. That Arwen would reject him as her father so hoped she would. But it has all been in vain, for this day he marries her, and leaves me behind forever.”

“But he cannot marry her. Not if he is married to you. Legolas, you must tell him, now before it is too late.” Gimli protested. Legolas shook his head.
“That was one of the purposes of my foolish actions last night, Gimli. Only in death can a marriage be ended. I took my own life, the night before they were to be wed, in the hope of freeing him from his unwanted marriage, so that he would never have to know the truth. He can marry whomever he chooses now, Gimli, and his past relationship with me will have no bearing on it’s worth. He is free to take Arwen as his queen. Mandos granted me that much before sending me back to my life,” he explained. He choked on a week sob, as his heart broke further.

“What ails you now, Elf?” Gimli asked, pressing the cloth more firmly to stop the bleeding.

“My heart is broken Gimli, at his rejection, and at the loss of his love.” Legolas closed his eyes, trying to slow his breathing down.

“But that is dangerous! Only by battle, or a broken heart can an Elf lose their life,” Gimli whispered harshly. Legolas smiled weakly.

“I told you, dwarf. Mandos has rejected me from his halls. Even a broken heart is not enough to end my life. I will live with my grief, until Aragorn’s passing. And only then will I be allowed to sail from the Grey Havens,” Legolas explained. They sat in silence, as Gimli tried to process this new information.

“You have lived with this these many years and now must live with the knowledge of your future pain. What is it I can do to ease your suffering? How can I make your time in Middle-Earth more bearable?” he asked after a time. Legolas pushed the cloth from his wound, which had resealed itself once more. He sat up again.

“Continue to be my faithful friend, and companion, and I will tell you my woes when they become too much to bear. You have been a most surprising and valuable friend, Gimli son of Gloin. I think I can survive the coming age with your friendship to rely on. Simply be the dwarf you have always been, and I think my life shall never be dull or boring,” Legolas answered.

“You can count on me, Master Elf,” Gimli replied. Legolas smiled brightly, the pain dimming in his chest at the friendship and affection he felt most acutely for his friend. They sat together beside the stream, until well past mid-day. Talking of what their joint future would hold.
Time passed slowly for Legolas, but at the same time it seemed to fly by. He traveled for a time, seeing the caves and mines of the world with Gimli. The dwarf indulged him by traveling to the forests of Middle-Earth as well. They became close friends and confidantes as they explored the Glittering Caves, and walked the uneven ways of Fangorn. After a time, they both felt to urge to make roots in their own way. Gimli brought his brethren to Rohan, to the Glittering Caves he had so loved, and set up a settlement there. Legolas felt a need to help the earth heal of the evil that had ravished it, and built his own elven realm in nearby Ithilien, which had born the brunt of much of Mordor’s vile touch. It was close enough to both Rohan and Gondor for his heart to bear. Gimli and he visited often, and were regularly seen in Gondor. Though it pained him to see Aragorn and Arwen so happy together as they ruled over Minas Tirith, Legolas could not keep away. Aragorn had been his friend for far too long for the elf to distance himself so completely.

They kept their visits short in Gondor. Only visiting long enough to work on their gifts to the kingdom and to see how their friend was faring. Legolas worked with Arwen in planting gardens in the city. It was so full of rock and old death that they wished to give life back to the people. Trees and grass could be found growing here and there. Birds and other animals, long distant had soon returned. Gimli commissioned the building of strong new doors to the entrance of the city to replace those shattered in the Battle of Pelennor Fields. Aragorn noticed Legolas’ new distance and mourned the loss of his close friendship, but could not deny his once-lover the distance he so obviously needed to recover. He could see the well-hidden heartache in Legolas’ eyes, but did not wish to make it worse by prying, and when Legolas didn’t seem to worsen as the years passed, he pushed the nagging worry away. If Legolas were dying of a broken heart the signs would be quite obvious for both Arwen and himself to see. He did not realize that Legolas’ heartache grew worse and worse, and that he had simply become more adept at hiding it.

The birth of Aragorn’s first child had nearly been Legolas’ undoing. He had seen it coming for a time and knew it was necessary, and that there was nothing he could do to stop it. Aragorn and Arwen were happy together, and after several long years as a married couple, they brought the first of 4 children into the world. Eldarion, first son, and heir to the throne had been born. As a friend of the King and Queen, and being of noble elven birth, it was expected of him to come and rejoice in their happiness with them. Living so nearby, made it impossible to refuse.

Gimli came to collect him, while on trek to Gondor himself.

He found Legolas tending a small garden of his own, hands dirty, and buried in the earth there.

“What are you doing, elf? I know you do not wish to go, but we must, and the sooner we get there the sooner we can leave. Do you not wish to meet the future King of Gondor?” Gimli asked.

Legolas offered him a small fragile smile.

“I am finishing up my gift to Aragorn’s heir. I must be careful with it or it shall die long before we get there. And to answer your unspoken question, Gimli, I will be just fine. I’ve made my peace with this child, and those that shall come after it. For there will be more than one.” Legolas stood from the flowerbed, and bundled a small green plant to his chest. He wrapped the small sprouting plant in elven cloth, and placed it gently in a travel pouch. Walking to a basin of water, he cleaned his hands and then, finally, turned to his friend.
“I’m ready when you are, Master Dwarf,” he smiled again. Gimli grunted and followed his close friend away from the garden to the stable where Arod stood as if waiting.

In less than an hour, they were on their way toward Gondor, to visit a newborn babe.

Legolas had dreamt of Eldarion. Long before news had reached Ithilien of the Queen’s pregnancy, Legolas had already seen the child, knew Aragorn and Arwen would have a son.

Legolas had never been very prone to visions. It was a rare gift among the elves. He’d only had a handful over his long life. The first had been to warn him of his mother’s impending death. He had been just past his majority, and had witnessed the sudden demise from hundreds of miles away, and with no way to stop it. The second had been of Aragorn. He had imagined a tall dark human, who would have the ability to take his breath away, just days before meeting a young Estel in Imladris. The third, he had experienced, just before taking his life, the image of his father weeping upon hearing the news of Legolas’s death. That one had luckily never come true.

This latest one had taken Legolas by surprise. It had ripped him from a waking dream. A small boy had run up to him and smiled Aragorn’s smile. He was perfect. Just what one would imagine the child of Arwen and Aragorn should be. He looked to be relatively young by human standards, 3 or 4 at the most. He was beautiful, and his eyes held all the gentleness and wisdom that Aragorn’s had held when he had been young. They were the eyes of one whose destiny it was to be a great and magnificent ruler someday. He had Aragorn’s eyes down to the shape and color.

There was no doubt in Legolas’ mind as to just who the boy was. He had had more than likely had the vision very soon after the boy had been conceived. He had planted the Olva-Oore very early the next day, knowing the plant took a full year at least to mature. It was two months later that the messenger had arrived spreading the joyous news. The Queen of Gondor was with child.

He’d had the whole year to get used to the idea. He’d needed it to accept this new pain, and to try and move past it. That however hadn’t prepared him for the sight of Big-Strong-Aragorn, cooing over a tiny baby boy. He was holding the child with such gentle and careful hands. Legolas had felt the wounds he still bore pulse harshly at the sight. He still managed a proper smile at the joy and awe in Aragorn’s face.

“Legolas! Gimli! Come. Come and meet my son!” he crowed from his seat by the fire. They were in the same private sitting room where Legolas had confronted Aragorn the night before his wedding.

The baby was almost two weeks old. His ears were more sloped and more delicately pointed than a human, but he had, as Legolas had seen, Aragorn’s grey eyes. They were just as deep and striking as his vision had showed them to be. A tuft of black brown hair sat on top of his small head. He was smaller than Legolas had thought he would be.

Gimli’s expression mirrored Aragorn’s own happiness, he was smiling widely, the sheen in his eyes showing his own pride and joy at the baby’s birth.

“Would you like to hold him?” Aragorn asked Gimli, who was nearer. Gimli nodded, and removing the thick leather gloves he wore most of the time, extended his arms for the child. He held him with as much gentleness and care as Aragorn himself had. The smile didn’t leave his face as he looked down at the baby. Legolas watched as Eldarion’s small hands closed tightly in Gimli’s coarse beard, and gave a tiny yank. Legolas let himself laugh out loud at the pained expression Gimli tried but failed to hide. The baby almost immediately let go of his hold on Gimli’s facial hair, and tried unsuccessfully to focus new eyes on the elf.
“That is why it is so dangerous for dwarves to have children, my friend,” Legolas teased.

“I’d like to see you try, elf, with all that pretty long hair hanging all over the place!” Gimli grumbled, moving closer and with great care handed over the baby. Legolas pushed his hair back over his shoulders, and accepted the tiny bundle. The child seemed so small and light in his arms. It made Legolas’ heart ache to hold him.

The baby made an unhappy face, his mouth puckering, eyes closing tightly, as if he could sense Legolas’ pain.

Legolas smiled at him and tried to push away the negative emotions. He felt genuine joy at seeing Eldarion alive and here, and tried to focus instead on that. He’d waited a year to meet him, and was truly happy for both Aragorn and Arwen, if a tad bit melancholy. The baby seemed to relax again, at the new shift in his mood.

Arwen chose that moment to enter the chamber. She looked remarkably well for having had a baby such a short time ago. She seemed to glow in her happiness.

“Be careful, Legolas. He’s a charmer, my son is. He’ll have you at his beck and call if you are not careful. I am afraid that with his pretty face, and his father’s charms he will be terribly spoiled before long,” she said, before greeting Aragorn with a smile and a kiss. Gimli bowed to her in his usual fashion and greeted her warmly.

Arwen then turned once more to Legolas. She gently lifted the baby from his arms. He kissed her gently on the cheek in greeting and then stood silently as his friends caught up all around him. No one commented on his lack of conversation.

There was a feast to be held that afternoon. It was a celebration that would last well into the night. The king now had an heir, and the people were rejoicing. This would be Eldarion’s first appearance before the full court. He hadn’t been seen but by a handful of people since being born. The celebration would start with the giving of gifts. Legolas couldn’t wait to see Arwen’s reaction to his particular present.

He watched from his place at the back of the hall, as Aragorn and Arwen entered with their newborn son. He then watched in mild amusement as each member of the court came forward with one lavish present after another. He and Gimli just observed, hoping to save their presents for last. When there was a pause, and it appeared no one else would come forward, Legolas nudged Gimli to go up. The dwarf gave him a disgruntled look.

“Why must I go first? Why not you? Have you not the bravery and courage to stand before a hall of humans? Too shy, pretty elf?” he muttered, knowing Legolas could hear him clearly. People in the surrounding area were beginning to whisper.

“If you will remember, Master Dwarf, my present must be presented outside of the Citadel. I wish to go last for obvious reasons,” Legolas explained, speaking softly, and bending closer to his good friend. The Dwarf gave him a peeved look before nodding, and still grumbling, stepped forward to bow before the King and Queen.

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“King Elessar, Queen Arwen, Young Prince Eldarion. It is my pleasure to present to you this gift, made of the finest of mithril and hand crafted for your son and heir.” With that Gimli opened a small flat box, and climbed the steps to where, Aragorn and Arwen sat. The baby rested in Arwen’s arms. “May I?” he asked. Whispers broke out amongst the crowd again.
“I trust you with my son’s life, Gimli. Of course you may approach.” Aragorn said, smiling at his friend’s formal demeanor. Gimli stepped closer and withdrew a small metal circlet, in the fashion that Elvish rulers were known to wear. It reminded Legolas vividly of his own, resting at that moment upon his head. Eldarion’s was much smaller, and was dotted with Green and white precious stones, and followed a winding nature inspired pattern along the front. Arwen grinned at the sight of it. She pulled back Eldarion’s blanket to expose the top and back of his small head. The crown fit him perfectly.

“Thank you, Gimli. It is truly a crown fitting a prince of man and elves.” Arwen said quietly. Legolas could practically see Gimli blushing already.

“It is beautiful, my friend. I only wish he could wear it longer. Babies grow so quickly. Your smiths have truly out done themselves this time,” Aragorn praised. Gimli grunted.

“I made it, Aragorn, not any of my men. I wanted to give something made by my own two hands for your firstborn, as I will for any children that shall follow. As for its size, it can be adjusted as he grows. Young Eldarion should be able to wear it until it is time for him to take his place in your steed. Let us pray that he shall not be forced to do so for a great great many years.” Aragorn laughed cheerily.

“I should hope not, Gimli. And I apologize if I offended you. It was not my intention to do so. It is truly a wonderful gift,” Aragorn apologized. Gimli laughed.

“And now, for the elf. I believe he is the last to present a gift. He was hoping it would be so,” Gimli said, moving to stand a few feet to the side of the throne. Legolas resisted the urge to smile at the dwarfs grumbling and instead stepped forward.

The walk seemed impossibly long. He stopped at the foot of the stairs, and dropped to one knee, bowed his head, after a moment he stood tall again, and smiled at them, gently. Gimli was right he did feel uncomfortable with all of these human eyes staring at him.

“Lord Aragorn, Lady Arwen. It is my pleasure to present this gift to you in honor of your son. However, I am afraid, it is not a gift that can be given in a hall made of stone,” he spoke. He watched Arwen’s eyes widen a fraction, as Aragorn grew confused.

“What is it you have brought my Son, Legolas?” he asked. Legolas looked instead at Arwen. He smiled widely. She gasped in shocked delight.

“Could it be, Legolas, that you need a garden?” she asked. Legolas bowed his head in answer. She laughed in wonder.

“I’m afraid so, My Lady. Unfortunately, only those of elvish decent can be with in the immediate vicinity, when I open my gift or it shall die,” he said quietly. Aragorn watched in further confusion, as Arwen stood from her seat, bringing his son with her, as she quickly descended the stairs.

“Come, My Lord,” she called to him happily.

“All will be explained my friend,” Legolas said to him softly. Aragorn nodded, and moved to follow his wife. Legolas watched the King’s private guard fall in around them as they left the hall. He heard the talking break out as soon as the door closed in around them, Gimli’s gruff growl calling for a little more decorum. Elladan and Elrohir, twin brothers of Arwen, had soon joined them on their walk to the Royal Gardens.
Chapter 5

Chapter by CupcakeGirlA

The guards stayed out of the garden as Legolas walked to find the perfect spot for his gift. As he searched he spoke to Aragorn.

“The gift I give to your son, Aragorn, is a tradition of the Elvish people. One close to the family, but not necessarily a relative, would give it to the child at the celebration of his or her birth. I give a gift of heritage, a gift of the elves, to one who is a rightful Lord of them. I give Olva-Oore. Plant of Emotions,” he explained. “They are very rare, and can only grow if nurtured by the loving hands of an elf, or those with elven blood. They had mostly died out with the diminishing population of Elves in Middle-Earth. But I found a small outcropping of them in their resting state in Ithilien,” he smiled as he found the perfect location. It was near some of the other elven plants they had brought to the city over the years. He found a spot with plenty of space around it, and where there would be plenty of exposure to both sun and moon light. Kneeling down, and nodding for the others to do so as well he began to dig at the earth with his bare hands. It gave way easily to his fingers as if it was eager for a new plant to feed.

Then carefully, he peeled away several layers of elven cloth to reveal a small sprig of a plant in a clump of soil. Depositing it in the hole, he planted it, gently pressing in the soil all around it. It looked a bit sickly sitting there all alone, in freshly turned earth. Arwen stood, handing Aragorn their son, and returned a moment later with a pitcher of clean clear water. Legolas accepted it from her gratefully, and poured it generously all around and over the small pant. The water seemed to sink into the soil in but a moment and the plant soon looked much healthier. He gave it more water, and then rinsed his hands of the earth clinging to them. He looked at Aragorn and smiled. Aragorn handed over the child only a tiny bit hesitantly.

Legolas held the child gently, and using his free hand began to unwrap him.

“I know you don’t want him dirty, with his young age, but it will only be for a few moments..” he said apologetically to Arwen. She only laughed and watched as, Legolas bared Eldarion’s small pink feet. Holding the baby in one arm, as to support his head, Legolas lowered him so that bare toes could touch the ground. The baby giggled in delight, and kicked at the earth. Legolas stilled the kicking and the small feet came to rest near the base of the plant. Legolas placed his own hand in the earth, and nodded to the others to do so as well. Aragorn looked unsure.

“Aragorn, you as well. You’ve enough elven blood in you to still count, and even if you didn’t, you are his father, as this Olva-Oore is meant for Eldarion, your human blood will not harm it,” he explained. “You are helping to give Eldarion strength. You are making him stronger and offering of yourself in order to protect him.” Aragorn added his hand to the dirt beside his wife’s. Legolas closed his eyes, and concentrated. They watched as the plant seemed to pulse before them. It grew before their very eyes, growing straight up in a slender, tree like stalk, it bloomed over their heads. Big blue colored blossoms sprouted over them, and small petals ruffled in the breeze.

Legolas opened his eyes, and smiled brightly at the plant before him. It was beautiful, and reminded him of a similar one that grew far away in a secluded garden in Mirkwood. His own was very large now, sprouting large dark blue blossom’s every spring and throughout the summer.

“See Little-One. You are very well loved,” he whispered, easing his hand from the ground, and withdrawing little toes as well. He cupped water from the pitcher, and carefully washed both of Eldarion’s feet and his own hand, before wrapping him up once more and waiting for the others to wash up. Aragorn looked in awe at the tree-like plant before him.
“Will it continue to grow?” he asked. Legolas nodded.

“As your son does. It will only die when he does. It will thrive until then. It shall need little care that the earth will not provide. Water during a dry spell, occasional visits from Eldarion, or yourselves in the winter, to help it cope with the death surrounding it, and it should do just fine.” he explained. Arwen smiled widely at him, and hugged him tightly.

“Thank you, Legolas. I can think of no more perfect gift for my child. I had yearned for one to give to him myself. I should have known you would think of it. But... however did you get it cultivated so quickly? And blue too, for a boy? I had expected yellow as is traditional for most givings. How did you know?” she asked. They all stood now. Legolas adjusted the baby in his arms.

“The Valar granted me a vision of your son, Arwen. Long before the news reached Ithilien, I had already seen him,” Legolas answered. He ignored the looks of his friends, as they studied him. “The feast will surely be under way by now. Should we not join the rest of your guests? Gimli was most upset he could not attend the ceremony. I hope you don’t mind, but I told him he could visit the garden later this evening. He was quite curious, though he’d never admit it. Dwarves, as you all know, have little interest in the folly of elvish traditions,” he watched smiles come over all of their faces before handing over the child to Aragorn.

The feast was still being organized when they returned. Legolas took his seat beside Gimli at a nearby table, and tried to calm his racing nerves. Gimli sent him questioning looks. Legolas only shook his head and tried to remain still. He was finding it increasingly difficult. That in itself was quite strange for Legolas. He could always be rather still when he wanted to be. Gimli kept a quiet watch over him for the remainder of the meal. When Legolas stood from his seat at the beginning of the nights dancing and entertainment, Gimli followed with out questioning.

He was led to one of the more secluded gardens. Legolas led him to the corner where he had planted Eldarion’s Olva-Oore. Gimli looked at it in wonder.

“It grew tall, Master Elf,” he commented. “And in such a short time...” he was whispering as if afraid his deep voice would damage it.

“Yes, Eldarion is much loved. He will grow strong and tall. I know he will be a great king someday, and a wonderful man like Aragorn is,” Legolas commented, stroking one long finger tip across a bright blue petal. He heard a snort of derision from Gimli at his comment. “Please do not start my friend. He cannot apologize when he knows nothing of the wrong. I survive,” he replied.

“But you are not happy,” Gimli whispered.

“I am content. That is all some of us will ever have, Gimli. I was lucky to have him as long as I did. I do not begrudge him his happiness. He is a good King, a good father to his son, and a good husband to his wife.” He watched as the happy blue of the flower seemed to darken to a sad sort of purple. He snatched his hand away.

“Well he wasn’t a good husband to you, Elf,” Gimli grunted in reply. They stood in silence looking at the elven plant, watching it shine in the moonlight. “He didn’t deserve you. You are a more loyal friend then I have ever had, Legolas.” Legolas smiled at the quiet declaration.

“Thank you, Master Dwarf. The past is gone. Let us not dwell on that which cannot be undone. We are here to celebrate the birth of our friend’s first child. We should not be discussing such matters tonight.”
“Rumor has it you knew of this child before the King and Queen did. Is that true?” Gimli asked.

“Yes,” was Legolas reply. “He will be beautiful as he grows older...” he trailed off, eyes going distant.

“And they will have more children?” Gimli asked quietly, his gruff voice quite soft now. Legolas didn’t answer for several minutes.

“Yes. Aragorn and Arwen will be greatly blessed. Several more children will be born to them,” he whispered, one hand pressing to his chest, his usually straight shoulders seeming to cave under a great weight. Gimli moved closer.

“I am sorry,” Gimli whispered, placing a steadying hand on Legolas’ arm. “We will speak of it no more. This day has been long. We can retire now. If you want, we can rest a while,” he offered. Legolas seemed to gain strength from his words, from his presence.

“Thank you, Gimli. But it will rouse suspicion if we do not return soon.” Legolas was standing as tall and straight as before. He turned to walk from the garden but stopped to look at his friend. “We will be leaving soon enough, don’t let my pain ruin your time here. Aragorn is your friend, Gimli, and you took a liking to Arwen well before finding out the truth of my past with him. Enjoy your stay here. Enjoy Eldarion. I will be alright,” Legolas offered. Gimli grunted in reply before grumbling past him, leading the way from the moonlit garden and back to the feast.
Chapter 6

It would be a peaceful and prosperous time for the royal family. Eldarion grew tall, and strong, just as Legolas had promised he would. He was joined over the years by three younger sisters whom he adored. He was a good big brother, and an even better son. He drew people to him as his parents always had. Eldarion was beautiful, and intelligent and there was no doubt that he took after both of his parents.

Legolas and Gimli continued their routine visits to the city, spending time with all of Aragorn’s children as they grew and prospered. Each time a new child was born Legolas had an Olva-Oore ready and waiting for them. He had not had but one more vision about the children. But this last one had been nothing but a view of himself kneeling in the royal garden. Planting a third pink flower, surrounded by a gathering of dark haired children, Arwen and Aragorn smiling behind them. Looking at the ages of the previous children, he was able to guess at the time that would pass between each birth. He let his instincts guide him.

Gimli and Legolas were both well loved by the Prince and Princesses who viewed them as favored Uncles. They celebrated and anticipated each visit the two made, and often pestered their parents to have a new ball or celebration that would attract them back to Minas Tirith for another long stay.

Gimli’s settlement in the Glittering Caves flourished as did Legolas’ home in Ithilien. The two still spent a good deal of their time together. Legolas turned to his friend unashamedly when the pain and longing for Aragorn became too much for him to bear alone. The pain increased as the years went by, but so did Legolas’ determination to cope with it, and to continue to make a life for himself and his people. His only hope was that the inevitable confrontation with Aragorn could be put off for as long as possible, for he knew that eventually Aragorn would discover what he had done, and why.

Legolas had been expecting the coming visit since the fateful trip he had taken to Minas Tirith for the celebration of Eldarion’s birth. So when a member of Ithilien’s guard came to him with the information that King Ellesar was coming, and that he was alone, Legolas felt his breath catch in his chest. A momentary panic came over him. He was not ready for this confrontation, not yet. Composing himself he nodded to the concerned elf.

“Allow him entrance to the wood. No one is to intercept him. He is coming to speak to me. Keep out of his way,” Legolas ordered. The elf was much younger than Legolas himself was, and obviously curious. He turned to go. “We require privacy…” Legolas said quietly. The elf turned to him and nodded again, before leaving. Legolas leaned back in his chair and tried to steady his breathing. He was half expecting Aragorn to burst into the room and start yelling. It was strange therefore when Aragorn seemed to hover hesitantly outside of Legolas’ open door. After several minutes of hesitation, Aragorn finally knocked on the door’s hardwood frame.

“Come in, Aragorn,” Legolas called. Aragorn stepped slowly inside. Legolas turned in his seat to face him, but continued to avert his eyes. “Please sit down, my friend.” He could not bring himself to look at Aragorn.

“Is that all that we are, Legolas?” Aragorn asked. He closed the door behind himself and sat down across from Legolas.

“We were once much more than friends. But all good things must come to an end.” Legolas
paused. “So, you’ve found out my little secret?” he whispered. He wanted Aragorn to be angry with him, he realized. It had to be better than this reserved quiet. But Aragorn had begun to mellow as he aged and refused to raise to the bait.

“Do not try to use such tactics to anger me. It is not necessary. I’m angry enough as it is. We are above such childishness, are we not?” Aragorn answered him. Legolas felt his face flush in humiliation. “How could you do this? How could you keep this from me? How many times have you lied to me?” Aragorn asked. Legolas found himself growing angry now, almost a hundred years of rejection rising to the surface.

“You act as if I have wronged you!” he cried.

“You have, Legolas!” Aragorn growled, his face hardening, his voice going cold. Legolas clutched the arm of his chair in pain at the words. He closed his eyes as Aragorn continued. “Do you not realize what you have done? My wife.. Arwen has left me. She has gone to Rivendell, even though it’s been abandoned. My children are illegitimate. When the court finds out… My son, my heir, will never be accepted by them as the rightful King.” Legolas looked at him in confusion.

“What are you talking about? Aragron you must go after her. Arwen is your wife. Your legal and binding mate. Your children are legitimate. Eldarion is rightful heir to the throne! Do you not understand?” he asked in desperation.

“That’s not possible, Legolas. We are married!” Aragorn answered.

“No, we aren’t. Not any longer,” Legolas replied. Aragorn shook his head.

“Elves have no such thing as divorce Legolas. You know this, as well as I do. We will be married forever.”

“But we aren’t! Do you really think I would have let you marry her if we were still bound?” Legolas asked. He watched Aragorn’s forehead crease with confusion. “I couldn’t… I couldn’t have you hating me Aragorn. I couldn’t let all of your dreams be lost because of what I knew you would consider a mistake. We should never have been together. Which is why I took care of it,” Legolas said quietly. Aragorn’s frown deepened.

“What do you mean you ‘took care of it’?” he asked, rising from his seat.

“I did what was necessary so that you could be free to marry Arwen. Only in Mandos’ halls may a marriage be nullified,” Legolas explained, feeling the pain flare in his chest at the confession. Aragorn was in front of him in a moment, yanking his arms up and away from him, checking each of his wrists in the fading sunlight. When he found no scars there, he looked at Legolas in a strange mixture of pain, anger, and fear. “I think it’s time for you to go now, Aragorn,” he whispered, as he pulled his hands wrists free of Aragorn’s grip.

The door opened behind them, and Gimli stood there, breathing heavily as if he had run to get there.

“Elf?” he grunted in question. Legolas shook his head and stepped around Aragorn, walking to Gimli’s side. He rested a hand briefly on the dwarf’s shoulder, before stepping around him.

“Goodbye, Aragorn. Go find your wife,” he whispered to the wall, before moving weakly from the room leaving man and dwarf staring at one another.

“So, you finally figured it out, eh Aragorn?” Gimli asked.
“You knew?” Aragorn asked in accusation.

“Who do you think found him after he did it?” Gimli asked. Aragorn slumped down into Legolas’ abandoned seat.

“How could he?” Aragorn asked.

“Why are you blaming all of this on Legolas? He told me the whole sordid story, Aragorn. I know how your relationship started, and I know how it ended. All he’s done these past 90 years was to love you in secret. All he’s done was to help you, to try and make you happy. He loves you and you don’t love him. He’s spent all this time watching you be in love with Arwen. Watching you court her and strive to be good enough for her, as you never did for him. He watched as you denied everything you had with him, betraying every promise you had ever made. You betrayed him long before he began deceiving you!” Gimli yelled. Aragorn shrank back in his seat. “You are the only lover he has ever had, Aragorn. He died for you! He bears a great pain all the time for breaking such a sacred law, and he is bound to this land for as long as you live and breathe.” Here Gimli paused. “You must speak to him again. He needs to try and heal. He cannot leave these shores until your passing. Perhaps now that you know, you can help make that time more bearable for him.” With those words Gimli left the room leaving Aragorn to sit and think in the dying light of the day.

Legolas was preparing for bed when the knock came. He stood and called for the visitor to enter, but found himself sitting abruptly again, when Aragorn entered his room.

“Aragorn?” he asked, suddenly self-conscious of his unbound hair, and dressing robe. Aragron stood hesitantly just inside the door frame, his face a mask of emotions. “I thought you would have left by now.” Aragorn stepped further inside and closed the door behind himself.

“I need to speak to you. I need to apologize.” Legolas watched Aragorn come closer, and hesitantly sit on the end of Legolas’ bed. “Legolas?” Legolas met Aragorn’s gaze, and saw sorrow and guilt there, as well as shame and heartache. “I am so very sorry,” Aragorn whispered, dropping his gaze. “I am sorry for the way our relationship ended, for the way I treated you afterward. For the pain I have caused you everyday since the day Estel became a part of my past.” He looked up again. “I loved you, Legolas. Part of me still does and always will. You fascinated me. You were the most beautiful creature I had ever laid eyes on. You were kind, and graceful, and talented, and so wonderful, and you became my best friend. I’m sorry if I let my adoration for you morph into something more. It was unfair to you, but know that I meant you no pain. I didn’t set out to betray you. I just…” Aragorn shook his head, looking down at his clasped hands.

“You just met Arwen,” Legolas finished. Aragorn looked up at him, his anguish clear in his features. “And she was even more beautiful, and even more kind. She was more graceful, and more talented, and more wonderful.” Legolas continued. Aragorn shook his head in protest, but Legolas continued. “And you loved her all the more. And she was a born Queen. All that you could ho… hope for,” Legolas stumbled pressing his hands to the wounds in his chest. Aragorn moved quickly to his side, pulling Legolas’ hands away from his body, the wounds bleeding anew, and showing through the fabric covering them. Aragorn scrambled to pull Legolas’ robe open to examine the marks, his breath catching in his throat as he saw the two perfect stab marks bracketing Legolas’ heart, still bleeding.

“Legolas?” Aragorn questioned. He tore at his tunic, moving to press the length of cloth to Legolas’ chest. His hands were intercepted by Legolas’, their grip strong on Aragorn’s wrists. He looked at Legolas in confusion.
“You will only make them worse,” Legolas whispered. He pushed away from Aragorn, pulling his robe closed, and applying pressure. Aragorn sat, watching as Legolas paced the room, taking calming deep breaths, his eyes closed in concentration. After a while Legolas stopped his pacing and turned to look at Aragorn.

“I know that your actions were not malicious. I know it was not your intention to break my heart, to cause me pain, but you did. And it has not eased, and it will not go away. I have sacrificed everything for you, Aragorn. There is nothing you can do that will correct this mess. The past cannot be undone, and to be honest with you, I’m not sure I would want to undo what was between us.” Legolas paused then.

“What would you have me do, Legolas? How can I make this pain more bearable? How can I lessen your suffering?” Aragorn asked. Legolas considered a moment before giving his reply.

“Allow me to visit, but do not pester me to stay. Allow me time with the children, and with yourself. If I walk out of a room with out giving you an excuse, ignore it. Give me space to grieve and to heal. Keep my secret, I do not want the children to know. Stop blaming me for continuing to feel for you what I have for the last century. When you find Arwen, tell her.” Legolas paused. “Tell her that I love her as a sister, and that I am sorry for the pain I have caused her. Tell her that I do not blame her, and that I hope she can forgive me.” Here Legolas paused. “Continue to be my friend, Aragorn. I hope that you do not push me away.”

Aragorn did just as Legolas requested of him. He found Arwen. He told her what Legolas had done for him, for them, and she returned with him to Minas Tirith. When they reached the city, she stopped her horse just outside the gates. Aragorn turned to her in confusion.

“Arwen?” he questioned. She smiled at him sadly. She looked to the South.

“I must go to him. I must make peace with Legolas. Return to the city. I will join you tomorrow.” She watched the understanding cross Aragorn’s face before turning her horse toward the road heading leading to Ithilien. Aragorn could do nothing but watch her go. Frowning he turned his horse back toward the gates of his city.

Arwen returned several days later, looking tired, melancholy, but also somehow calmly reassured. She came to Aragorn in their private chamber and hugged him tightly.

“We have hurt him, but we will endeavor to not do so again,” she explained. He nodded, pressing his forehead briefly to hers.

“I wish I could take his suffering away. Make him whole again. Give him the chance to be happy,” Aragorn offered. Arwen hummed.

“I know this. And now, so does Legolas. Unfortunately I fear that it is not possible to do these things. So we will do what we can.”

And they did. Legolas and Gimli were invited to the city as often as they always head been, only now when Legolas wrote, begging their leave due to a prior commitment, they refrained from sending a message asking him to reconsider. When Legolas came to visit it was always an open invitation to stay as long as he chose. And when he informed them after a few days that he had to return, they bid him a safe journey. During their visits to Minas Tirith both Gimli and Legolas enjoyed time with their old friends, and with the young Prince and Princesses, watching them learn and grow as time passed.

Eventually, many years after the end of the war and the defeat of Sauron, Aragorn died, and Eldarion was soon crowned in his stead. The grief that Arwen and Legolas shared at Aragorn’s
passing, was overwhelming. Arwen kissed her children goodbye and left the city to wander alone. Legolas however left Ithilien with Gimli in tow to sail from the Grey Havens.

“When we reach the sea, it will be hard to say goodbye to you, my friend,” Legolas told him as they rode. Gimli harrumphed, the gray of his beard catching the light in a way that the red never had.

“What makes you think I will be letting you say goodbye, silly elf,” Gimli replied. Legolas looked at him in confusion.

“Whatever do you mean, Gimli? Surely you know you cannot come with me,” Legolas explained. Gimli grumbled again.

“I do not trust you not to get lost at sea. I shall accompany you as far as I can. If I am rejected from stepping foot on Valinor’s shores than I shall watch until you are safely on dry land, and then return to my glittering palace in the caves of Rohan.”

Legolas watched him carefully, a slow smile, even more rare since the death of Aragorn, spread across his face.

“Be honest master dwarf. You wish only to catch a glimpse of the beautiful Galadriel once more,” he teased. Gimli turned away, the red tint on the tops of his cheeks giving him quickly away. Legolas’ laughter filled the forest trail for several minutes before fading away.

It was several hours before they spoke again.

“Elf, tell me truthfully, do you regret loving him?” Gimli asked, taking care not to say Aragorn’s name. Legolas thought a moment before replying.

“No. Not even for a day. Perhaps for a brief moment when the pain became so great I longed for Mandos, but even then it faded quickly, and I was glad for it,” Legolas explained.

“Glad?” Gimli asked, “for all the heartache loving him has caused you?” Legolas shook his head.

“Glad for all the joy it brought me. Loving Aragorn is the best and the worst thing I have ever done, Gimli. Being with him, however briefly, changed me in innumerable ways. I would not have joined the nine, if it had not happened. I would not have befriended you. My entire fate hinged on meeting him and loving him and losing him. And I am not so arrogant as to wish it all different. Relief is coming, and hopefully you will be by my side, even in this, our last adventure.” Gimli nodded.

“Aye, knowing you has certainly been one of those,” he replied. And this time when Legolas’ laugh rang out, it was joined by the deeper heartier laugh of his dwarven friend.

End Notes

This story is rated ‘PG-13’ for a somewhat graphic Character Death Scene. Giving a more detailed warning would take away from the story plot. If you can’t handle adult themes do not read this story. There will be no graphic sex scenes. Though the story does involve, (read – “centers around”) a homosexual relationship and should very much be considered a SLASH story.
I am in no way a Tolkien scholar. What I do know (or think I know) I have garnered from the movies, fanfiction, a small bit of research and one and ½ full readings of the trilogy. Any factual errors are my own.

This story was written based on a merge of film and book canon, and is my interpretation of what could have happened after ROTK (the film) ended.

I have used information acquired from the appendices of The Lord of the Rings and from several online resources, including Parma Endorion, by Michael Martinez. I found Chapters #’s 3 and 10 to be the most useful for my purposes. Unfortunately the website where I downloaded the book is no longer available online.

Some of the ideas behind this story were inspired by The Folly of Starlight Series by AC, and her wonderfully informative essays located here: http://www.ithilas.com/main.html I recommend “Puritanical Elves and ‘Morgoth’s Ring’”. Very informative.

I do not have a beta at this time. All spelling and grammar checking is done by me. If I’ve totally messed something over, please tell me.

Any ‘Americanisms’ are my fault. As I am not British and therefor am a pour judge of what exactly constitutes an ‘Americanism’ there’s really no hope for change. As I like to say... “English is English, even if it’s American.” I can only hope I can be forgiven.

I’ve tried to keep my Elvish to a minimum. Mostly because I absolutely incapable of learning a foreign language. I’m terrible with tense forms, and the different parts of grammar. I’ve never been able to learn a different language, and can barely claim to write English (American though it may be) properly. I can’t even explain the difference between a verb and an adjective.

What Elvish I have used, was pieced together from words found here: http://www.dragons-inn.org/Ifreann/Tynntangial/eng_elf.html

Title Explanation: Manu Qualme = Spirit Death or Soul Death
“manu” - spirit, departed
“qualme” - death, painful

Legolas’s Traditional Gift: Olva-Oore = Plant of Emotions
“oore” - heart (emotions)
“olva” - plant (living thing not self mobile)

I know very little about the Valar, Mandos Halls, the celebration of a child’s birth in Gondor, or among the elves. And I have never ever read about anything remotely similar to the flowering plant Legolas’ gifts to each of Aragorn and Arwen’s Children. It was a visual that came to me one night, that refused to leave.

Most of this fiction was conceived in a very similar way. I began dreaming this fiction the night I saw ROTK (12:01am Dec 17th, 2003) and have dreamt or visualized some aspect of this story every night for over a month. This story refused to die, and I so I give it to you.

Please enjoy. I know there is some stuff very wrong here. Any constructive criticism, pointers, or advice would be greatly appreciated.

And so I conclude the longest author’s note I have ever written. I applaud you if you got all the way through.
Thanks!

Please drop by the archive and comment to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!