Beware the Sea

by Marta

Summary

Sea-longing takes many different forms.
Part I: An Elf of Alqualonde

The Sea pulls at my heart.

I can feel the sea-breeze in my hair, taste the salt-spray on my lips, see the dolphins jumping through the surf as I come home, my nets heavy with fish to feed my people, my hold bringing trade-goods from Tol Eressëa. It would be grand to sail again, to see what lies beyond these quays!

But ash catches in my throat, blackened stone imposes itself on memory unmarred. The ships are gone; my kin slain, my world reduced to rubble. What hope of future adventure?

And yet, the Sea still pulls at my heart.
I almost laugh at my heart's stirring. Do the Valar have a sense of humor after all? Father would scowl to know I think of them so, but there it is: I yearn to sail West.

There is no hope of redemption. I hear the hisses, see the venomous eyes I would face if ever I returned to the Undying Lands. Even if Ulmo himself should call me, how would I ever find peace there? Nay. I chose the spirit of fire long ago; it is too late to cleave to water.

Why, then, can I not leave this beach?

"Spirit of fire" is the meaning of the name "Fëanor".
I promised I would fight the sea's call, if she became my wife. I might become king over a seafaring people, but she would root me to the land. She was surely the source of all my happiness. How could I desire aught else, if sated in her love?

And I did stay for long years. I fought, truly I did! But part of my heart had long been given to another mistress; Erendis could not oust her rival.

It must have broken her heart to place the oiolairë on my ship's prow.
Part IV: Elrond

What could possibly drown out the din of the sea? Even the thousand waterfalls of Imladris seem helpless against it.

I have heard the ocean's roar often enough. After my brother told me he chose a mortal life, and sailed Westward, I stood on the beach watching Father cross the sky. Later years brought me back to Mithlond, when the sea carried away my wife also.

So I know the roar in my ears for what it is. I am weary of Arda's cares. The Sea calls me, and for all Vilya's power over water, I cannot master this urge.
Aragorn would lead us to the Mouths of Anduin and the Sea. Galadriel's warning echoed in my ears: she spoke my doom if ever I heard the gulls' cry. My heart trembled. But if Halbarad did not fear death, why should I? I am an elf, and we endure until Arda fails.

If only it was death that awaited me in the South! The birds' caws pierced me to the marrow, nearly driving me to madness. A song awoke in my soul more sorrowful than any I ever heard beneath Greenwood's eaves.

Would I never rest in the forest again?

Chapter End Notes

The last line is a reference to Galadriel's message to Legolas: If thou hearest the cry of the gull on the shore, / Thy heart shall then rest in the forest no more." ("The White Rider", The Two Towers)

(The title of this drabble series comes from the same quote.)
Part VI: Samwise

Seems like everyone's gone but me. Mister Frodo and Old Mister Bilbo are gone, gone, over the sea where I can't reach them. And Merry and Pippin... a greater Master and Thain the Shire's never had, to be sure, but they're busy with their own duties. Grandfathers have no need for old friends.

Even Rosie rests her head beneath the apple tree behind Bag End.

I promised Mister Frodo I wouldn't be torn in two. I tried to forget the waves' crash against the beach. But I wonder whether any ship waits at the Havens. The Sea still calls me.

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