

Gilthoniel's story

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Its is set in Middle Earth and starts around the time when the fellowship begins. Gilthoniel is the youngest sibling of Haldir of Lothlorien this story is about her life and her trying to cope with three older brothers.

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1 - Chapter 1

Chapter 1

Gilthoniel walked through the snowy forest of Lorien, with her bow in her hand and her arrows in her quiver. Her green cloak blended perfectly into the bushes as she darted in and out of the trees.

Gilthoniel was a striking young elf. She was only sixteen but she was already beautiful and many young elves and men fell in love with her as soon as she met her. She had long blue-black hair and snow-white skin. She was tall and elegant. If you looked at her, you wouldn't know what to look at first.

But most people, when they first meet her, look at her eyes. When she is happy they are a wonderful deep inky purple, framed by long, dark eyelashes. If someone were to look into her eyes, see the most beautiful of things, lilies in the summer, eagles in flight, the most wonderful gardens and light, sweet conversations. But when she is angry, or upset, they go a light hazel, almost yellowy-orange and bolts of lightning dance in her eyes. If you look into her eyes when she is angry, you would see dark places, arguments, criminals, murderers and blood. If she is extremely angry, the whole earth shakes, and storm clouds gather around her, lightning bolts zing off her in every direction the sky turns black.

Gilthoniel began running through the trees, darting behind bushes and dancing through the falling snowflakes. It felt so good to be out from beneath the eyes of her watchful brothers and leaping over bushes towards the sound of the running deer.

Suddenly, she came to a clearing, where she waited for her quarry, her breath misting in front of her face. She sat down in the snow with her cloak wrapped around her for warmth and tried to see through the fog that surrounded everything, barring her vision.

She heard a panting, and whirled around. Through the fog came a big white shape, the shape of a she-wolf. The wolf stopped and stifled the air. Gilthoniel immediately fitted an arrow into her bow and was about to shoot, but stopped. The wolf was limping badly, and howled in pain for its companions. Terror gripped her, and Gilthoniel drew the arrow in its bow and waited for the snarling hungry animals to step out of the mist.

But they didn't come, and the wounded she-wolf's eyes rolled into its head and it collapsed. Gilthoniel looked around once more for the other wolves and then ran over to where the poor creature lay.

She saw that it had several arrows driven into its side, and Gilthoniel quickly wrapped her cloak around the she-wolf. It was only then that Gilthoniel noticed that its fur was pure white, apart from its two front feet, which were gray and the fur stained red by the blood. Gilthoniel brushed the fur away from the wound and the she-wolf growled slightly as the fur that had stuck in matted clumps to the wounds was peeled away, but it was comforted by her presence, so it allowed her to touch it.

Gilthoniel shivered at the cold and huddled close to the she-wolf's warm body. There they sat for hours, the elf-girl and the she-wolf. Gilthoniel noticed that the wolf's breathing had become steady and felt her eyes droop. She remembered what her brothers had taught her, and refused to submit herself to sleep. She wrapped her arms around herself and struggled to keep her eyes open.

Her ears suddenly pricked up, and Gilthoniel noticed the wolf suddenly tense up. Gilthoniel knew why, she too heard the voices, calling her name. Through the fog came several elves, and Gilthoniel noticed that all three of her brothers were among them. They rushed to her and helped her to her feet, wrapping what felt like thousands of cloaks around her shoulders.

She noticed two of her brother's companions approaching the wolf and she called at them to stop.

‘Please, don't harm her, I saved her life and she saved mine. Bring her back to the city.’

The elves glanced fearfully at Haldir, Gilthoniel's oldest brother. He nodded, and the four of them carried the wolf between them back to the city.

Gilthoniel sighed in relief, for she knew no harm would come to the she-wolf whilst her brother's men were under strict instructions not to harm her. Relief turned to exhaustion as the cold gripped her and all thoughts left her as she collapsed in her brothers' arms.

Gilthoniel woke up warm in her bed and saw her brothers spread around her room. They looked up and she leaned against her pillow and Rumil, the youngest of the three brothers, took a couple more feather pillows from her cupboard and put them under her head to prop her up.

Gilthoniel yawned and stretched, like a cat, and then looked at Rumil. ‘How long have I been asleep?’

‘Three days,’ Rumil answered, taking hold of her hand and holding it in his. ‘We were all afraid for you.’

‘Gilthoniel,’ Haldir cut in sharply, walking across to them from where he had stood by the fire. ‘What did you think you were doing?’

‘Haldir,’ Orophin, the second oldest, said to save Gilthoniel from being told off. ‘Leave her be, Gilthoniel's tired and she must be hungry. Let Galadriel talk to her before you lecture her.’

‘Orophin, how is she ever going to learn if you keep taking her side every time she does something like this?’ Haldir retorted, his voice steadily rising.

‘How is she going to learn with you telling her off whenever she does anything?’ Orophin shouted.

‘Haldir, Orophin, please stop this!’ Gilthoniel screamed and jumped out of bed to run in between them, but was immediately overwhelmed by this and slumped on the floor. Both brothers stopped and ran to help her back to her bed and Rumil pulled the duvets over her.

`Would you like anything to eat?' Orophin asked, looking anxious.

`No, she needs more sleep?' Haldir said, elbowing him out of the way.

`Do you want another blanket, Gilthoniel?' Rumil said, coming and sitting by her bedside.

`Stop, stop, stop!' she yelled, and instantly all her brothers shut up and looked at her. `Please stop fighting over me! I'm all right and if I need anything I will ask. Please may I have a little to eat, some bread perhaps, but not much else. I would, however, like some time alone.' She paused, looking at all of her brothers, who hadn't seemed to take the hint. `By myself.'

Rumil quickly stood up and left, and Orophin followed to fetch some food. Only Haldir remained behind.

`I was extremely worried about you Gilthoniel, I was afraid I would lose you. Please, never scare me like that again. We didn't know where you were, and you hadn't left a note or anything. No one had seen you for hours and we all feared the worst.'

`I know, but I was bored and I heard the deer running through the forest and I knew that I would be able to chase one, so I went out. I took my bow and arrows with me, just in case there were any wolves nearby.' Gilthoniel said in her own defense. Suddenly something stirred in her memory. `Oh, how is she, by the way? The she-wolf, I mean.'

`She'll be fine. She woke up hungry yesterday, but didn't seem vicious. So we gave her food and water and let her sleep by the fire. Her cuts aren't fully healed yet, only Elrond can heal wounds like hers within three days, so she is bandaged up.'

`Can you bring her in here, I would like to have her company.' Gilthoniel said, and then rested her head against her pillow as Haldir went to fetch the she-wolf.

Orophin came in with a tray and put it down on the table next to her. He kissed her lightly on her forehead and left.

The door opened and Haldir came into the room, followed by the she-wolf, who trotted at his heels. He closed the door and the she-wolf jumped smoothly onto the bed, curling up in a ball by her feet.

Gilthoniel sighed and looked at her supper. Wearily, as if it was a duty that was expected of her, she began to eat. She didn't even notice what it was she was eating, and when she was finished she put the tray back on the table, slumped against the pillows and fell deeply asleep.

2 - Chapter 2

Chapter 2

The next day, when Gilthoniel went to her classes with Galadriel, she noticed her teacher was very nervous and seemed ill at ease. Galadriel always made Gilthoniel feel nervous, though she didn't know why.

`Now, my child,' Galadriel began, making Gilthoniel want to scream. Every lesson it's always "Now, my child" or "My dear girl" and Gilthoniel was sick of it. I'm 16! Gilthoniel felt like shouting at her. But she stayed silent. `Today we will be looking into the Mirror of Galadriel.'

Galadriel lead her over to the mirror and poured in the water. It's more like an enormous birdbath, thought Gilthoniel.

`Look into the mirror, my child,' Galadriel said and Gilthoniel, resisting the will to yell at her to shut up and to stuff her stupid lesson, looked into the mirror.

`This mirror shows things that were, things that are and things that yet may be. Now can you see anything?'

Gilthoniel felt herself go dizzy as she watched the water. They turned dark and was startled to see herself, not much older than she was then. She tried to look away but found it impossible. So she focused on the water and watched the image of herself.

She running through a forest, clutching her bow, as if desperate to get somewhere in time. She was wearing a pure white dress and had a bag on her shoulder. She ran, and ran, and ran, until she came to a stream. She saw herself run over a bridge across the stream, and into a small hut where a young elf lay. Several arrows had been fired into his chest, and his breathing was slow and painful. An elf woman sat at his bedside and turned when Gilthoniel walked in.

`What happened, Fëanor?'

`We were attacked by orcs. They came out of nowhere. Findiel had got out to get some wood and they shot him.'

`Are they still out there?'

`Yes, Rumil and Halibrien are holding them off, but I don't know how much longer their arrows will hold out.'

`Have you done anything to stop the bleeding?'

'No, we haven't. There was nothing to wrap them with. We brought him in here and put blankets on him and done everything possible to keep him warm, but he is falling in and out of consciousness every second,' Fëanor said.

'Fëanor,' Gilthoniel put her hand on the woman's shoulder. 'I will make sure he gets better.'

'I don't think there's much chance of him getting better, Gilthoniel, unless you use your forbidden magic.' Fëanor replied. Gilthoniel looked at her questionably and Fëanor blushed. 'He told me about Gandalf's blessing.'

Gilthoniel kneeled next to Findiel and began unpacking her things. She turned around and saw Fëanor standing looking anxiously at her husband. 'It's alright, I will help him, but maybe you should wait outside.'

Fëanor nodded and turned to go, then looked back around at Gilthoniel. 'He kept calling for you. I'm a healer, and my husband called for you to help him, I don't understand.'

'It's because of the forbidden magic. Gandalf said I wasn't to use it, except in great need. I think his need is great, don't you?'

'Yes.'

'Well then, can you please wait outside. I cannot do the magic with you there.' Gilthoniel said impatiently.

Fëanor turned on her heel and went outside. Gilthoniel unpacked what was left in her bag when Findiel spoke.

'Gilthoniel,' he said. 'Gilthoniel.'

'I'm here now,' she brushed his hair out of his dark blue eyes. 'I'll look after you.'

'Gilthoniel,' Findiel choked. 'I love you.'

'Findiel, be quiet!' Gilthoniel whirled around and was relieved to see that Fëanor wasn't there. 'You're married, and soon I will marry Galdor. We promised ourselves we would not fall in love with each other. Fëanor is my friend, I can't hurt her like that, and besides, I love Galdor.'

'Do you, Gilthoniel? Do you really love him? Because I don't think you do.' He said.

'Yes, I do, and there's nothing for you to make you worry and start confessing things.' Gilthoniel poured some pink liquid into a goblet of water. 'Drink this, it'll lessen the pain.'

He drank and braced himself for it a bitter taste, and was pleasantly surprised to find it was quite sweet.

Gilthoniel began taking the arrows out of Findiel's body, crying inside as more blood seeped out, covered the wounds with some lavender coloured liquid and then wrapped him tightly with some

make-shift bandages, made from ripped up white sheets.

'It doesn't hurt now,' Findiel said quietly.

'I put some potion on it to eliminate the pain,' Gilthoniel said, stroking his cheek.

'I feel cold.'

'I'll get you some blankets.'

'I don't mean like that.'

Gilthoniel started to worry and began pouring more potion out for him.

'It's too late for that now.' Findiel said. 'Gilthoniel.' He took her hand in both of his (spilling the potion whilst doing so) and kissed it. 'I love you.'

Gilthoniel's eyes turn light hazel and filled with tears, and she stopped refusing and started kissing him. He put his arms around her waist and kissed her neck. Then his arms went limp and his eyes rolled back into his head.

Gilthoniel rested her head on Findiel's breathless chest and closed her eyes and wept, not caring that his blood was soaking her hair and face. Eventually, she stood and walked out of the hut, Findiel's blood dripping from her hair onto her white dress and smeared across her face.

Fëanor looked up and gasped.

'I couldn't save him!' Gilthoniel let herself fall down onto the grassy riverbank. 'I wasn't strong enough to save him!'

She broke down into sobs and Fëanor came and put her arm around her.

'I wish I could have told him how much I loved him,' Fëanor said, silent tears pouring down her face.

Gilthoniel sat up and stared at her. This stupid woman. She was there when he died; she didn't know what his last words had been.

Fëanor looked into her eyes and saw that they were now dark hazel with rage and sorrow. Small sparks of lighting flew off her clothes and Fëanor etched away from her.

'So do I,' Gilthoniel whispered.

Gilthoniel picked up her bow and walked in the direction Rumil and Halibrien were firing their arrows. She fired an arrow, replaced it by another one, and fired again, and again, and again. She didn't care where they went; she just shot them at whatever moved.

Then it came, whizzing through the air, an orc had fired an arrow and it plunged into her chest. She took

a couple of steps backwards, and then fell.

Gilthorniel jumped and splashed the water, shattering the vision. She fell backwards, just like she'd done in her vision, panting heavily.

She'd just seen her own death. Gilthorniel gasped. Galadriel had shown her that vision, knowing that in it she was going to die, and she showed it to her?

'Why did you show that to me?' she demanded. 'You knew that I would die in that vision, and you should have shown it to me?'

'Gilthorniel, try to understand-'

'How can I understand, I will have that hanging over me for the rest of my life.'

'If you wish to forget, it can be so.'

Gilthorniel tried to steady her breathing, but she was too angry. 'What do you think?'

'You shall forget then, but Gilthorniel, if one knows the way one is going to die, they can change what will happen, if you just-'

'Shut up, don't talk to me. Don't say anything!'

Gilthorniel ran back to her chambers in the city and leaned against the door. She ran to her cupboard, threw on her cloak and grabbed her bow and arrows.

Elendil, the she-wolf, was lying on her bed, watching her with interest. 'Come, Elendil,' she called, and the she-wolf leaped off her bed and together they ran out of the city and into the forest.

Gilthorniel's ears were pounding, and her breath was catching in her throat as she ran through the snow. She knew she should stop, but she couldn't. She just kept running.

Soon she came to the same clearing she had found Elendil in, and she rested therein in the snow, her arm wrapped around the she-wolf. She sat there for a while, but then began to feel uneasy. Soon she heard voices, and hid behind a rather large bush.

Into the clearing came eight people. Two men, one of which was Aragorn, heir to the throne of Gondor, Boromir, son of the Steward of Gondor, and the next Steward in the line. Next came an elf, Legolas of the woodland realm, then a dwarf, Gimli, son of Gloin. Then there were four hobbits, but she didn't know which was which.

It was clear to her that these men were in some sort of trouble, and was about to step out of her hiding place when elves appeared from behind every tree, their arrows pointing at the strangers.

`The dwarf breathes so loudly we could have shot him in the dark!'

Oh no! It was Haldir and his cronies. She would be in big trouble if they caught her.

Elendil began to whimper, and Gilthoniel tried to shut her up so she could hear what was being said, but already Haldir had heard it. The next thing Gilthoniel knew was her brother had grabbed her arm and was dragging her from behind the bushes.

`Gilthoniel, what do you think you are doing here?'

`Let me go, Haldir, let me go!'

Then she heard a shout and saw that Elendil had bitten Haldir's arm and was sinking her teeth into it.

Gilthoniel twisted free and began to flee, but she ran headlong into Rumil and Orophin. She looked pleadingly up at them, but they shook their heads.

`It'll be less painful if you stay here to reap what you sow, than if you run away and have to face him later on.' Rumil whispered in her ear and began to lead her back to where Haldir was standing, his face red and his hand bleeding and staining the snow scarlet.

`Gilthoniel,' Haldir said dangerously quietly. `Please tell me what you're doing here again?'

`Erm, walking my wolf,' Gilthoniel said, bracing herself to be hit. Behind her, Aragorn chuckled.

`Haldir,' he said in elfish. `Leave her alone. She is young and clearly upset.' Then he turned to Gilthoniel. `Come here.'

Gilthoniel ran to him and hugged him. `Hello Elessar!' Gilthoniel whispered in elvish.

`Hello Gilthoniel, you have changed since I last saw you. Look at you, all grown up. When I last saw you, you were really little and were desperate to come and be a ranger with me.' Aragorn smiled at her.

`Am I allowed to come and be a ranger. It'll be better than staying here with Haldir in a mood.' At this, everyone smirked, except Haldir, whose face, if possible, turned even purpler.

`Not this time,' Aragorn said. `Maybe next time.'

`That's what you said last time. Promise me you'll take me next time!'

Aragorn laughed. `I'd rather not make promises at all than make promises I can't necessarily keep.' He studied her face. `Is something troubling you, Gilthoniel?'

Gilthoniel looked round at all the people standing around. `I'll tell you later.' She whispered in elvish.

As her brothers lead her away, Gilthoniel turned around and smiled at Aragorn. Ever since she'd been little, his visits were rare but enjoyable treats. He had become (yet another) brother to her and she'd

always enjoyed his company.

As she was being dragged away, Legolas' eyes and hers meet for a split second. Then he began to talk to Aragorn about something. Gilthoniel had never really spoken to Legolas, for he was Tinuviel's brother and, anyway, he was several thousand years older than her, literally.

3 - Chapter 3

Chapter 3

After what seemed like hours, Haldir finally left Gilthoniel alone, with the threat “If I ever have to come chasing through the forest again, you'll wish you'd never been born!”

Of course, Gilthoniel was not frightened. She merely lifted an eyebrow at him and then went to her cupboard to pick out her favourite dress. There was to be a ball later that evening, and anyway, they had visitors so Gilthoniel must present herself nicely or Galadriel would instantly turn evil and banish her (and when she turns evil, she goes an odd green colour and it's not pleasant to see that!!).

The door opened and Gilthoniel whipped around to see Tinuviel standing there. Gilthoniel ran over and hugged her friend.

‘What are you doing here?’ Gilthoniel laughed, knowing she was supposed to be in Mirkwood.

‘I couldn't let my dear brother come here on his own, and besides, I wanted to see my friend, if that's alright with you!’

‘Of course, but why didn't I see you before?’ Gilthoniel put her hands on her hips.

‘Because I couldn't risk you seeing me and putting us all in danger!’

Gilthoniel laughed, but then looked outside. It was getting dark and she needed to get ready.

‘Sorry, but I need to choose my dress and get changed. I'll see you down there.’

‘Oh no, I'm not coming. I just came to say hi, and now I must go otherwise I'll be late!’

‘Be late for what?’ Gilthoniel yelled after her, but Tinuviel was already gone, so Gilthoniel went back to choosing her dress.

She eventually chose pure white dress with a black sash tied around the waist. When she arrived, she was swamped with people saying “you look lovely tonight, my dear” and “you look exactly how your mother used to look”. Eventually the dispersed (and Gilthoniel didn't have to resort to using a metal spike!) and Gilthoniel could breath again.

Gilthoniel walked up to Galadriel and her eyes flashed hazel as she stood next to her. She knew she would never forgive her for what she had been shown.

‘Gilthoniel,’ Galadriel whispered. ‘I want you to enjoy yourself tonight. Everyone else is, and I want you to forget what I showed you today, but maybe you already have?’

This was true. As much as she tried, Gilthoniel could not remember what had been shown to her that day, except for the fact she had died in the vision, but she couldn't even remember how.

`Gilthoniel, I only wanted to prepare you for what lies ahead, try to understand this. Now, I see that several young men wish for you to company them in the next dance.'

Gilthoniel looked up and saw that indeed, a fair few men and elves were standing around, hoping to dance with her. Gilthoniel glanced at their faces and saw that among them were Aragorn, Boromir and Legolas. Gilthoniel stepped forward and offered Aragorn her hand.

`Care for a dance, Elessar?' Gilthoniel smiled as he mimed being overjoyed that she had offered to dance.

`Why, of course, he said, pretending to kiss her hand lovingly.

They walked into the middle of the dance floor and began to dance. Gilthoniel whispered into his ear what had happened in Galadriel's clearing.

`And you don't remember any of it?' Aragorn asked thoughtfully after she finished.

`No, nothing, except that in it I die, or do I? I'm not sure anymore.'

Aragorn didn't say anything to that. How could he? When the music stopped and everyone cheered he gave Gilthoniel a little smile. Then the musicians began again, but this time it was a slow, love filled song and Aragorn stepped away.

`I can not dance this one with you,' he said, looking upset. Gilthoniel knew he must have been thinking about Arwen Undómiel, the Evenstar and his one love. He began to walk away, then turned back and said `I will suggest to Lady Galadriel that you were extremely upset by what you saw and that perhaps next time she should try a more subtle approach to warning you of the future.'

He vanished into the crowd and Gilthoniel was left standing there all alone. She sighed, and then looked up to see Legolas standing where only a few moments ago Aragorn had been.

`May I have this dance?' Legolas asked, offering Gilthoniel his arm. Gilthoniel took it and together they waltzed around the room and everybody turned to watch the Elvin prince dance with the beautiful heiress. The room was silent save the music and the sound of the dancer's feet. Gilthoniel rested her head on Legolas' shoulder, allowing him to lead her around the room.

And then, all too soon, the music stopped, and the dance was over. Gilthoniel looked up at Legolas as if she was coming out of a daze. He smiled down at her, and then offered her his arm, which she accepted. Together, they walked out onto the balcony connected to the room. Gilthoniel looked back and saw Aragorn smiling at her. She smiled back, and then turned around to face Legolas.

He was gazing at her with a strange expression on his face. It was windy, and her hair flew wildly around, hiding her face. Legolas lifted his hand and pushed the hair out of her eyes.

`You are so beautiful, Gilthorniel,' he whispered, only loud enough for her to hear. She tried to return his stare, but his eyes forced her too look away.

He tilted her chin upwards to face him, and then kissed her. Gilthorniel was almost kissing him back when a felting memory as if a long forgotten dream flashed before her eyes, then she quickly pulled away.

`What's wrong?' Legolas asked, startled and confused.

`I'm sorry,' she whispered, tears beginning to pour down her cheeks. She tried so hard to remember the vision, to remember what happened. She knew there was a man she loved in it, and he died. But how, and why? Gilthorniel couldn't remember who he was. What if he was Legolas? Tinuviel would never forgive her if she loved her brother and he died. `Its just that...'

Legolas suddenly looked angry and looked away from her. `It's because I'm Tinuviel's brother, isn't it?'

`No, it's not that, I'm sorry, I don't understand myself, but...'

`But what, Gilthorniel, what? Are you afraid, because if that's it you don't have to be? Are you afraid?' Legolas walked over to her and put his hands on her waist. `Please, tell me.'

Gilthorniel looked up and Legolas could see her eyes had turned light hazel. Tears streamed silently down her cheeks and she whispered quietly `Yes, I am.'

`What of?'

Gilthorniel stared into his eyes, trying to see if he was testing her. But she saw only caring in his eyes so she replied `Love.'

And with that, she tore herself from his arms and ran back into the room. Back up the hallway, up the stairs, across the corridor and into her own bedroom, where she threw herself onto the bed and began to cry.

The door creaked open and someone came in and sat on her bed. She felt a hand on her shoulder and a calming voice saying `Tell me what happened.'

She looked up and Gilthorniel saw Aragorn smiling down at her. She sat up and tried to talk.

`I...he...I...'

But she couldn't do it. She threw her arms around Aragorn and cried onto his shoulder. He supported her, gently stroking her hair and whispering into her ear `calm down, it'll be alright.'

Eventually she calmed down enough to say shakily `I hate Galadriell!' and then she was off again.

Aragorn knew what she was talking about and made her lie down. He dried her eyes and only when she

had stopped crying did he ask `What do you remember?'

Gilthoniel swallowed. `I remember an elf. I don't remember his name or what he looked like, but I remember I loved him, and he died because of it. And tonight, Legolas took me out onto the balcony, and it was so beautiful and he was so lovely that when he kissed me, I allowed it. Then...'

`What, Legolas kissed you?'

`Yes, why?'

`He's Tinuviel's brother!'

`So?'

`Isn't that just a little bit strange?'

`A little, but now you've interrupted me. Where was I?'

`You allowed him to kiss you.'

`Oh yes. I felt warm and happy, but then I remembered that I had loved a man in my vision and he died, leading to me doing something awful. I then pulled away from Legolas because I thought that Legolas could have been the elf in my vision, couldn't he?'

`It's a possibility, yes.'

`If he was, that would mean he dies an untimely death. Anyway, I pulled away from him and he got angry because he thought it was because Tinuviel is one of my oldest and dearest friends. I tried to explain and he asked if I was afraid of something, and I said I was afraid of love. Then I ran away from him.'

Gilthoniel's purple eyes turned hazel again and filled with tears. She allowed Aragorn to wrapped a blanket around her and sit down in a nearby chair. Gilthoniel wrapped her arms around Elendil's neck and closed her eyes. She was asleep instantly.

Aragorn watched her for a few minutes then he got up and put a few more logs on the fire to keep her warm and went out to where Legolas waited.

`How is she?' Legolas asked anxiously, looking worried. Aragorn turned around and looked Legolas deep in the eye. Then he said in a hushed tone `Did you hear anything that was said between Gilthoniel and I?'

`A bit, but please, tell me, what is she afraid about?' Legolas pleaded, desperate to know.

`Well then, I hope you can brace yourself for what I will say next.'

`Of course I can, but tell me Aragorn, don't make me suffer any longer!'

Aragorn sighed, then mumbled quickly 'She is afraid to love,' and walked away.

Gilthoniel sat in a small, delicately furnished room, weaving. Galadriel said to her that she needed to say the spell of light over and over while she weaved and when she was finished, the woven cloth would glow.

Gilthoniel sat back and admired her effort. True, there were a few gaps and it wasn't glowing as brightly as Galadriel's was, but it was exceptional for a first attempt.

Soon after this Galadriel (or the wicked witch of the East as Gilthoniel now called her) followed by Aragorn and Legolas. Gilthoniel turned away from Legolas, for the two had not said anything to each other since the fateful night they had danced. Gilthoniel picked up her weaving and handed it to Galadriel, who looked strangely pleased.

'Very good, my child,' Gilthoniel shuddered at Galadriel's voice. 'Aragorn, say what you must, for I know you wish to be going.'

'Going?' Gilthoniel cried. 'But you only just got here!' 'You cannot leave so soon!'

'Gilthoniel, you must understand the great peril we put Frodo in by staying here. He is the Ring-bearer, and we must leave before it is too late.' Aragorn stepped forward and hugged her. Gilthoniel hugged him back but then looked up at him with pleading in her eyes.

'Can I come with you, please Elessar?' Gilthoniel begged.

Aragorn laughed at her and smoothed her hair away from her eyes. 'Not this time, we have a long journey ahead, and lots of danger is waiting for us when we get there. I cannot ensure you will come home.'

Gilthoniel was about to plead that she could fight but her eyes flicked over to Legolas and their eyes met. Her eyes became a dark hazel and she backed away from Aragorn.

'You're right.' She said, lowering herself into a nearby chair. 'I would only hold you up.'

Aragorn placed his hand on her shoulder and kissed her forehead. 'You would never hold us up, my dear.' Then he stepped away and stood beside Legolas. 'Be quick.' And with that Aragorn walked out of the door to join the rest of the Fellowship by the boats. Galadriel gave Gilthoniel back her weaving, then swept after Aragorn, closing the door behind her.

'Gilthoniel?' Legolas called from behind her. She stood up and gazed at him for a moment and then

walked over to him. She stood right in front of him, so close she was almost touching him. He bent down and kissed her bare shoulder. She stood still, staring ahead, not saying anything. He looked up and into her eyes. They were full of tears, not ready to spill, but only just managing to stay there.

'Gilthoniel, why did you run away from me that night?' Legolas whispered into her ear before kissing her cheek afterwards.

Gilthoniel looked down at her feet, not wanting to have to look into those piercing eyes. 'Galadriel showed me a vision where a man I love dies, and I didn't want that man to be you, so I will not fall in love with you.'

Legolas looked taken aback, and shook his head. 'No one dies because they are loved; they die because they are hated. Remember that, Gilthoniel.'

Gilthoniel looked up and into his face. 'I don't want you to go,' she whispered. 'You might never come back.'

Legolas laughed and Gilthoniel threw her arms around his neck. 'Please don't go, please?'

Legolas kissed her gently and then walked away. 'I will return, Gilthoniel. I promise.'

4 - Chapter 4

Chapter 4

Gilthoniel walked through the forest of Lorien. It was now spring, as all was beautiful and happy. Elendil bounded happily beside her, glad to be out in the fresh air once more.

Gilthoniel dance through the new flowers spring had brought, her head held high, singing. She spun in the patches of sunlight through the trees and leaped over small puddles where the thawed snow had not yet been soaked into the ground. She was so happy to be alive and so joyful to be finally allowed out. She spun faster and faster then fell down on the soft grass as dizziness overwhelmed her. Well, she would have landed on the soft grass, but someone caught her just before she could. She was hauled to her feet and, though she was extremely dizzy and the earth seemed to be rolling about under her feet, she could see the outline of a young elf supporting her.

She leaned against the trunk of the nearest tree and laughed. It felt so good to be outside in the warm spring air. She did not care that she had been dancing in front of this elf, she didn't care if he caught her to stop her falling because she was acting like a child, she was just glad that it was spring.

'Oh, Findiel, what are you doing here?' Gilthoniel giggled, her voice a little slurred from dizziness.

'Lady Gilthoniel, your brother Hald...'

'Wait a minute,' Gilthoniel said and sat down on the grass, leaning against the tree trunk and cradling her head in her hands. The headache had caught up with the dizziness and the pain was sensational. It felt like her head was being split open.

She shook her head to clear her mind and looked up at Findiel. 'Now, carry on,' she said airily, as if nothing had happened at all.

'Your brother Haldir requests you come to him immediately, my Lady,' Findiel offered her his hand and helped her to her feet. She called for Elendil and began to set off, stumbling on uneven ground but mostly back to normal. She was laughing and joking with Findiel, who had only recently come to Lorien. He had long dark hair and the brownest eyes imaginable. He was the kind of guy Gilthoniel felt she could talk to, unlike all those uptight men at Galadriel's court.

But Gilthoniel stopped laughing as they neared to city. Hundreds upon hundred of elves were lined up, making a clear path through the center of them for Gilthoniel to walk through. She stared amazed at them. What on earth are they doing here? was the first thing that entered Gilthoniel's mind as she walked down the middle of them. She could feel all their eyes on her and longed to speed up and run to where she could see her brothers standing at the end. She eventually got there and stood next to Haldir,

quite afraid.

`What's going on, Haldir?' she asked him, staring at them all. `What are they doing here?'

Haldir looked down at his sister and smiled. `Elrond has asked me to lead an army to Helm's Deep where there is going to be a war.'

Gilthorniel stared at him. `You're going away to fight?' she said, hardly daring to believe it.

`Yes, and you're going to go to Rivendell with Findiel and stay there until I come back.'

Gilthorniel glared at him. `Excuse me? What did you just say?'

`You are going to stay in the House of Elrond.'

`No I'm not, I'm coming to Helm's Deep too!'

Haldir drew his sister to the side. `You are going to Rivendell and that's it!'

Gilthorniel was bursting with rage. `That's not fair, I want to come. I can fight, I can fight better than you can.'

`Gilthorniel, please will you behave like a grown up' Haldir hissed.

`No! I don't see why you can go and I can't. Stop treating me like a child!' Gilthorniel screamed at him.

`I'm not treating you like a child, I'm treating you like a woman!' Haldir yelled and turned away from her. `You have to go to Rivendell where it's safe.'

Gilthorniel wiped tears of rage from her cheeks then went up to him and stared at him in the face.

`I hate you Haldir; you are not my brother any longer. I hate you!' she kicked him in the shin and raced up to her chambers. She pulled her clothes out of her wardrobe and began throwing her things around her room. Elendil jumped out the way of a flying mirror, which hit the wall behind her. She growled and snarled at Gilthorniel, showing the girl her fangs. Gilthorniel stopped in fear, never had Elendil done that to her before. Gilthorniel slumped down on the floor and cried. She could hear her brothers and the other elves setting off for Helm's Deep and she longed to be there with them. She curled up in a little ball and went to sleep.

She was running through a forest, clutching her bow, as if desperate to get somewhere in time. She was wearing a pure white dress and had a bag on her shoulder. She ran, and ran, and ran, until she came to a stream. She saw herself run over a bridge across the stream, and into a small hut where a young elf lay. Several arrows had been fired into his chest, and his breathing was slow and painful. An elf woman sat at his bedside and turned when Gilthorniel walked in.

'What happened, Fëanor?'

'We were attacked by orcs. They came out of nowhere. Findiel had got out to get some wood and they shot him.'

'Are they still out there?'

'Yes, Rumil and Halibrien are holding them off, but I don't know how much longer their arrows will hold out.'

'Have you done anything to stop the bleeding?'

'No, we haven't. There was nothing to wrap them with. We brought him in here and put blankets on him and done everything possible to keep him warm, but he is falling in and out of consciousness every second,' Fëanor said.

'Fëanor,' Gilthoniel put her hand on the woman's shoulder. I will make sure he gets better.

'I don't think there's much chance of him getting better, Gilthoniel, unless you use your forbidden magic.' Fëanor replied. Gilthoniel looked at her questionably and Fëanor blushed. 'He told me about Gandalf's blessing.'

Gilthoniel kneeled next to Findiel and began unpacking her things. She turned around and saw Fëanor standing looking anxiously at her husband. 'It's alright, I will help him, but maybe you should wait outside.'

Fëanor nodded and turned to go, then looked back around at Gilthoniel. 'He kept calling for you. I'm a healer, and my own husband called for you to help him. I don't understand.'

'It's because of the forbidden magic. Gandalf said I wasn't to use it, except in great need. I think his need is great, don't you?'

'Yes.'

'Well then, can you please wait outside. I cannot do the magic with you there.' Gilthoniel said impatiently.

Fëanor turned on her heel and went outside. Gilthoniel unpacked what was left in her bag when Findiel spoke.

'Gilthoniel,' he said. 'Gilthoniel.'

'I'm here now,' she brushed his hair out of his eyes. 'I'll look after you.'

'Gilthoniel,' Findiel in the mirror choked. 'I love you.'

Gilthoniel woke with a start, panting. Someone had been shaking her, and she looked up to see Findiel standing there, a bag in one hand and his other pressed against her face.

`Goddamn it, woman,' he said, rubbing his stinging cheek. `Why the hell did you slap me?'

`Did I?' Gilthoniel said, as if she was coming out of a daze. `I'm so sorry, I didn't mean to.'

`Yeah, well, I've packed your bags and we're ready to go.'

`Go where?'

`Rivendell, my Lady.'

Gilthoniel sat up and rubbed her eyes. What a strange dream. Almost like a she'd already seen it before. But she couldn't remember where.

She tried to remember her dream, but she couldn't. All she could see was black. She was sure she'd seen someone in it she knew, but she couldn't remember who.

`What did you say?' Findiel looked questionably at her.

`I didn't say anything, did I?'

`It's probably just my hearing then, my Lady.'

`Don't, please.'

`Don't what?'

`Don't call me that.'

`Call you what?'

Honestly, Gilthoniel thought, guys are so thick. `Don't call me My Lady. Its okay once or twice, but you try having people call you "My Lady" or "Your Highness" all day long. It does get quite tiresome. And, besides, I do have a name. If you are taking me to Rivendell then you must start calling me it, otherwise I shall abandon you in the middle of the night for the wargs, do you understand me?'

`Yes, Gilthoniel,' Findiel smiled at her and Gilthoniel felt much better, as if he just made her forget all about her stupid brother and her worries about her friends on the Fellowship. `Shall we go now?'

`Yes,' Gilthoniel gave him her hand and he helped her to her feet. She looked around her and saw that everything she'd thrown across the room had been put back in its original place.

Gilthoniel picked up one of her bags and called Elendil to her. She came quickly and Gilthoniel whispered in her ear `I'm going away for a while. You stay here, alright?'

Elendil whimpered but Gilthoniel gave her an icy stare and the she-wolf jumped onto her bed and lay down, closing her eyes.

Shall we be off now, Gilthoniel?' Findiel called from the doorway.

Gilthoniel patted Elendil on the muzzle then straightened up.

`Yes, I think that's a very good idea indeed.

5 - Chapter 5

Chapter 5

Gilthoniel mounted her horse; a bay mare called Arvedui and Findiel mounted his horse, a gray stallion called Windfola. Together they slowly rode away from the city. Gilthoniel looked back and blew a kiss towards her home, as she always did when she went away. Then she turned around and rode off into the night.

Gilthoniel said a prayer as they sped towards Rivendell. It went something like this:

'Oh Elbereth, hear what I say. I know that maybe it was my fault, but I do truly love Haldir, so please bring him, Rumil and Orophin safely home. Please? And let Aragorn be close to the end of his journey. I hope that he and Legolas are still alive. Give them a safe journey home, please.'

She stopped and thought for a moment, then added 'And please, when Legolas comes back, please can he not still love me. Thank you.'

Gilthoniel weary forced herself to stay awake as they galloped across middle earth. Everyday they stopped to eat and get some sleep, but they never rested long as Gilthoniel wanted to get to Rivendell quickly to see her friends. Also it was not as it used to be. Orcs hid in the shadows, always watching, ready to pounce. It was not safe to sleep at the same time, so Gilthoniel would sleep as Findiel watched. He never seemed keen to rest his head, though Gilthoniel forced him sometimes otherwise he would keel over.

When they eventually reached Rivendell, they were tired and weary. Gilthoniel handed Arvedui to a young elf at the stables, and then climbed a few flights of steps. She was now in a courtyard. She walked through one of the stone arches and came into a hall lit by brightly burning torches. Gilthoniel rounded a corner and saw Lord Elrond standing at the end waiting for her.

Gilthoniel quickly walked up to him and dropped her bags. She then curtsied and only looked up when he spoke to her.

'Ah, Lady Gilthoniel, what a rare gift it is for you to come here.' Elrond said in his deep, powerful voice.

'Thank you for allowing me to stay here, my Lord. I'm sorry that I won't be staying long, my brothers shall return soon.' Elrond frowned at this and closed his eyes and began to walk down the corridor. Gilthoniel picked up her bags and followed him. At the other end was a small but beautifully furnished room. Gilthoniel put her bags down and thanked Elrond for letting her stay again, then began to change her clothes. She put on a light pink dress and had a shiny silver circlet set in her hair. She did indeed look very beautiful, and when Findiel came to her room to take her to dinner, he gasped at her beauty

and when her eyes met with his, he felt himself falling for everything about her, her slim figure, big purple eyes, pale skin, dark hair, everything.

She smiled at the look upon his face and took his arm, walking with him to Elrond's hall. Inside there was Elladan and Elrohir, Elrond's two sons, Arwen Undómiel, the Evenstar and the eldest daughter of Elrond, Nimrodel and Tillyena, his youngest children and two of Gilthoniel's best friends and Galandiel, Tillyena's bodyguard.

Tillyena looked at Findiel in disgust and said `Honestly, Gilthoniel, what company you keep!'

Findiel glared at her and said `What do you mean?'

`Well, you're a wood elf, aren't you?'

Findiel said nothing, just stared at his plate and shrugged his shoulders. Gilthoniel put her arm around him and stared at Tillyena, appalled. She didn't know Tilly could be so harsh, so mean.

`What?' Tilly said, not knowing what she'd done. `He is though, isn't he?'

`Maybe you should have asked that first?' Gilthoniel hissed at her, then tilted Findiel's chin so he had to look at her. `Are you ok, what's wrong?'

Findiel glanced over at Tilly, who was looking at them, and shook his head. `Never mind' he said then looked back down at his plate.

Eventually the atmosphere brightened and everyone, except Findiel, who was extremely hurt, began talking about what was happening in the world.

`So, Haldir led a huge army to Helm's Deep?' Nimrodel asked, puzzled.

`Yes, why?'

`Is he actually capable of doing something like that?' Nimrodel asked. Gilthoniel looked reproachful, so Nimrodel quickly said `Well, you told me about the time when you asked him to go to fetch your hat and he came back with about a dozen howling cats. I just remembered that and thought that maybe it should be one of your other brothers, not Haldir.'

Gilthoniel muttered darkly under her breath `Should have been me, more like.'

`What did you say?' asked Arwen, who sat across the table from her.

`Did I say something? I don't think I did.'

Arwen looked puzzled, then went back to what she was saying to Elrond about Aragorn. Gilthoniel couldn't listen. Firstly, because it's called eavesdropping and secondly because every time she heard Arwen silly girly voice talk about "darling Aragorn" she burst into fits of laughter.

`So, Gilthoniel, have the Fellowship been your way yet?' Tillyena asked, looking very interested.

`Yes, they have actually. They stayed for quite a while too.'

Tillyena shuddered. `I would hate to have to stay in the same place as that disgusting wood elf for more than a minute, how did you manage?'

Gilthoniel's eyes fell. She'd almost forgotten about Legolas. Almost, but not quite. Suddenly bad memories filled her head and something itched at the back of her mind, a long forgotten memory, wanting to be looked at again. Gilthoniel knew her eyes were changing colour so she quickly looked down at her plate and began organizing her vegetables in size order on her plate.

Eventually dinner was over and Gilthoniel went with Nimrodel and Tilly into one of the beautiful gardens. There they sat, making flower chains and talking about guys.

`Ah, Galandiel is the best by far. There is no one for me except him and it will always be like that.' Tilly said dramatically.

`What about you, Nims?' Gilthoniel looked up from her chain at Nimrodel, who hadn't said very much.

`Nimrodel isn't going to get married,' Tilly teased. `No one wants to marry her, even if she did like guys.'

`What about you, Gilthoniel,' Nimrodel said, not really interested because she was concentrating on making a necklace out of pink lilies.

Gilthoniel blushed, remembering Legolas. Then, while she was thinking about every detail of him, an image of Findiel swam into her head. She blushed even deeper and said `Well, I don't know really. There is this one elf who I know likes me, but I really like someone else just as much.'

Tillyena giggled. `Gilthoniel's going to be one of those girls who have so many guys she can't keep track of them.'

Gilthoniel glared at her. `That's not true!' Gilthoniel stood and threw down the flower chain, her eyes turned hazel and tears of fury ran down her cheeks. She ran away from Nimrodel and Tillyena, back to her room in Rivendell and slammed the door.

6 - Chapter 6

Chapter 6

Gilthoniel had been staying in Rivendell for a while and was walking around the House of Elrond. She was wearing a white dress with red-brown shoulders and gold swirls just below this and it had a navy blue sash around the waist. In her hair was set a golden circlet. Amber stones hung from her ears and swayed as the wind blew through her hair.

A young elf came galloping up to her as she was sitting on a bench as far as possible away from anyone else, enjoying her own company. He rode a beautiful chestnut mare whose mane and tail were jet black.

`Lady Gilthoniel, I must speak with Elrond immediately, can you tell me where he is?' the elf said hurriedly.'

`I am here, what is it?' Elrond's voice came from behind them. Gilthoniel looked over her shoulder and saw Elrond standing watching him.

`Ah, my lord, you knew I was coming?' the elf exclaimed.

`I did.'

`So you know why I am here?'

`I do.'

`Well then, you know that I need to speak with you alone now.' The elf glanced meaningfully at Gilthoniel.

`Oh yes, Gilthoniel, please go back to the inside, and could you, Findiel, Tillyena and Nimrodel pack your bags?'

`Yes Lord Elrond.' Gilthoniel bowed to him and left. She found Tilly and Nimrodel making flower chains and passed on Elrond's message. She then went to her own room to pack. Findiel was sitting down writing in a book.

`What are you doing?' Findiel raised an eyebrow when he saw her putting her clothes in her bag.

`Packing,' Gilthoniel replied vaguely and proceeded to do so. `Oh, Elrond said you should too.'

Findiel sighed and closed his book. He went to his room and came back a minute later. `Elrond wants to

see you.' He said, poking his head round the door.

Gilthoniel went to Elrond's private room and closed the door.

`Gilthoniel, I'm afraid that Luthien brought me some bad news.' Elrond indicated for her to sit down and crouched down on the floor next to her chair. `I'm afraid the battle at Helm's Deep is over.'

`And is Aragorn okay? Is Legolas okay? What happened?' Gilthoniel's voice trembled.

`Aragorn is fine, Legolas is fine, the whole Fellowship is fine, it's just, well, your brother...'

`Haldir?' Gilthoniel's cried. `Orophin, Rumil, which one? What happened?'

`Haldir, he's...there's no easy way for me to say this...it's just...I'm so sorry, he's been killed.'

Gilthoniel stared at him, confused. How could this be true? She looked into Elrond's eyes and instantly knew he was speaking the truth.

She fled from the room and out of the building. She ran past Nimrodel and Tillyena and onto the bridge over the river. There she sat, her feet dipped in the water and screamed. She cried, tears of anger, rage and sorrow streaming down her face. She lifted her feet out of the cool water and rested her head on her knees, and wept.

She heard footsteps and the bridge behind her and turned around to see Findiel looking down at her. She looked into the blue water and felt even more tears roll down her cheeks.

Findiel sat down beside her and put his arm around her. Gilthoniel rested her head on his shoulder and whipped the tears from her eyes.

`He's dead, I can't believe it, he's dead.' Gilthoniel croaked, her throat sore from crying.

`I know it's difficult, but Haldir wouldn't want you to cry, would he?' Findiel said, stroking her hair.

Gilthoniel stood up and walked backwards and forwards along the bridge. She could stop thinking about their last conversation. `I regret now that my last words to him were words of anger.' Gilthoniel whispered, not daring to raise her voice any louder in case she began to cry again.

`No, don't blame yourself. I'm sure he forgave you before he died.' Findiel stood and wrapped his arms around her. `He'll be smiling at you now, wherever he is.'

Gilthoniel looked up at Findiel who smiled at her. He bent down and pulled a lily from the ground and gave it to her. He looked deep into her now amber eyes and stroked her cheek. `No matter where Haldir is, you will always be his sister, and he will always love you.'

Findiel turned and walked away, leaving Gilthoniel by the river, feeling trapped and without anyone to help her escape.

7 - Chapter 7

Chapter 7

Gilthoniel returned to Lorien two days later, with Findiel riding next to her and Nimrodel and Tillyena and their father a little further ahead. As they entered the Lorien forest she cantered through it, glad to be home. She dismounted Arvedui and handed her to the stable boy and took her bags. She patted Arvedui's back and then ran into the city. She burst through Galadriel's door and ran over to her.

'Gilthoniel?' Galadriel looked up, surprised, and returned the hug Gilthoniel was giving her. 'I didn't know you would be home so soon.'

'I needed to come home. After I heard about Haldir's death I decided I was no longer required to stay in Rivendell so I came home, bringing Elrond and his family with me.'

It was at that moment that Nimrodel and Tillyena walked through the door. Nimrodel ran over to her Grandmother and hugged her, but Tilly stood her ground. It was common knowledge that the two didn't get on at all well.

Celeborn came through the door and wrapped his arm around Tillyena. 'Hello granddad!' Tillyena said, hugging him back. Though she didn't get on well with Galadriel, Tilly adored Celeborn. He was so sweet to her, it was quite unusual really.

Gilthoniel decided they needed a family reunion and left so she didn't interrupt. She went up to her room and was immediately bowled over by Elendil, who was ecstatic to see she was finally home.

Gilthoniel sat down on her bed and hugged her knees. Orophin and Rumil would be coming home soon but Gilthoniel didn't think she could bear seeing them after what happened to Haldir.

Gilthoniel sat there for hours staring into space, her eyes filling with tears when she thought of her brother and the last thing she ever said to him. She knew that Findiel had been right and she shouldn't feel guilty, but that didn't stop a vision of Haldir's face, looking hurt as she told him she was no longer his brother, swimming into Gilthoniel's mind. She tried to push it to the back of her thoughts but it was like an itch, not wanting to be left alone.

Sometime Gilthoniel's thoughts turned into dreams and she could see Haldir charging into battle and being killed by orcs whilst Gilthoniel stood and watched. She also saw the little hobbit Frodo Baggins being slaughtered by the nazgûl and the ring of power being returned to the dark lord Sauron. She saw Aragorn and Legolas dying at the hands of Urak-hai and herself dying of a broken heart at the sight of Legolas' body.

Gilthoniel screamed and at the sound of her own voice awoke. She sat gasping, drenched in a cold sweat. She got up and went to the washroom where she dunked her head in a basin of cold water. She stood up right, letting the cool water drip down her neck and chilled her back. She looked at her reflection in the mirror and saw her eyes were light brown still. Gilthoniel dried her face on a towel and climbed back into her bed. But she could not go to sleep. She got up and put on a black dress and left her room. She stood outside letting the night air cool her still damp face and hair, which streamed out behind her like a black cloud. She closed her eyes and breathed in the familiar smells around her. She had missed Lorien, but it would never be the same.

Gilthoniel sat down and wrapped her arms around her legs. She rocked backwards and forwards and closed her eyes again.

Her life seemed so simple before and now it had all changed. She had grown up fast, too fast for her liking. She didn't want to have her brother's death hanging over her like a sinister cloud. She wanted to run and jump in the sunshine, but she knew that even that, like everything else, would never be the same.

Eventually Gilthoniel stood and went back inside. She knew she couldn't just sit around wishing she was only a few weeks younger and that Haldir was still alive. She went to the stables and saw Arvedui was as wide-awake as she was. She jumped into her stable and took one of the brushes off the wall and brushed Arvedui's mane. The mare swished her tail and pawed the ground as if she knew now was the time to stand still and do as she was told.

'What are you doing down here at this time of the night?' A voice demanded behind her. Gilthoniel looked over her shoulder and saw Rumil and Orophin standing behind her with their arms folded, their horses tossing their heads while they waited for a warm blanket and a good groom. Gilthoniel jumped over the stable fence and ran into her brothers' outstretched arms and wept on Rumil's shoulder. He patted her head and motioned to the stable boy to take his chestnut mare back to her stable. Then he and Orophin lead Gilthoniel to a room filled with people. They made their way from here to a chamber off the side of this room and away from everyone. Here they sat Gilthoniel down on a comfortable chair and sat down either side of her.

'I just wish I'd gotten to say goodbye,' Gilthoniel stared at her hands. Orophin wrapped his arm around her shoulders and let her rest her head on his shoulder.

'There is nothing you could have said or done to have prevented Haldir's death.' Orophin sighed. He took Gilthoniel's hand in his and stroked it. 'Haldir died in battle and that is what he wanted.'

Gilthoniel stood up and began to pace the room. She looked back at her brothers and suddenly she was struck by a horrible thought.

'Did you watch him die?' Gilthoniel tried to stop her voice from shaking but couldn't. She put her hands on her hips and stared at them.

'No, but Aragorn did.' Rumil said.

Gilthoniel looked shocked. She turned away from them and put her hand over her mouth. She calmed

down and turned to face her brothers again.

'Is Aragorn all right? And Legolas? Is he alright too?'

'Legolas and Aragorn are fine. They've gone back to Edoras and are staying with King Théoden for now.' Orophin said in a hushed voice, barely more than a whisper.

Gilthorniel nodded and left the room, unable to bear the sight of her brothers looking so lost and afraid. Gilthorniel put on her cloak and ran out into the chilly night air. She ran and sat on the banks of the river Nimrodel and, for the first time in her life, she felt completely, utterly alone.

8 - Chapter 8

Chapter 8

A few months later Frodo threw the ring of power into the fiery pits of Mount Doom and Gilthorniel, along with all the other elves, traveled to the White City to pay tribute to Aragorn, king of Gondor. Gilthorniel had never been to Gondor before and she was amazed by it. To her it was absolutely beautiful. She walked inside and walked through the many passageways to where the crowning was taking place. The elves from Rivendell and Mirkwood joined them and Legolas walked at Gilthorniel's side. When they arrived Gilthorniel smiled at Aragorn and looked behind her at a Gondor banner. The elf holding this was none other than Arwen Undómiel and when Aragorn saw her he swept her up into his arms and kissed her. Gilthorniel was remembering when Legolas had, not so long ago, none the same to her. She looked up at him and he smiled down at her and took her hand.

Aragorn and Arwen were married and Tillyena and Nimrodel were the bridesmaids. Everyone was happy and jolly and Gilthorniel felt instantly happy again. Her eyes were back to normal and there was a smile upon her face.

But Gilthorniel's thoughts kept switching back to her brother and she had to leave the room after a while, everyone was too jolly for her liking.

Gilthorniel watched the sun setting and smile coldly as the twilight wind breezed through her hair. It was so peaceful here, she wondered bitterly when it would end.

Legolas came out and touched her arm. Gilthorniel turned around and looked up into his eyes and turned away. She couldn't look at him. Everything was so perfect and he would ruin it if he insisted on talking about 'them'.

'Gilthorniel,' he began and Gilthorniel looked down at her feet. She knew what he was going to say, but she didn't want him to say it. 'Gilthorniel, I love you.'

Gilthorniel sighed and turned around to face him. She looked hard into his eyes and held his gaze until he was forced to look away. 'Do you Legolas? Do you really? Do you actually know what love is?'

Legolas flinched but stared back at her. 'Yes, I do know what love is, and I also know that I love you. Gilthorniel will you marry me?'

Gilthorniel stepped backwards. "Legolas, you say you love me, but do I love you? I'm not sure about that anymore. Before you were all I could think about, and now there's nothing where you used to be. I don't know if I love you and I don't know if I ever will, so please let me just sort out my life before you talk about marriage.'

Gilthorniel turned and walked away and she felt her heart breaking into a thousand pieces. She longed to be with him but she knew she couldn't. Not now. If only she could turn back time.

But she couldn't. She continued walking at a steady pace, ignoring Legolas' cries for her to come back. She could hear him running to catch her up and only stopped when he grabbed her arm.

'Gilthorniel, what's going on?' Legolas demanded. 'Tell me then I can correct it.'

'So you can bring Haldir back to life, can you? You can make me feel exactly the same way I used to about you? Can you do that, Legolas, can you?' Gilthorniel's voice was rising steadily and she turned away from him, knowing her eyes were filling with tears.

Legolas said nothing and Gilthorniel heard him going back to the festivities inside. Gilthorniel sat down, rested her head on her knees and began to cry.

'Do we cry that he is gone, or smile that he lived?' came a deep voice behind her. Gilthorniel turned round to see Gandalf towering over her.

She stood up and allowed Gandalf to wrap his arms around her. She cried into his shoulder and choked through her tears 'I'd do anything to bring him back.'

Gandalf looked at her surprised then said 'Follow me. You cannot bring Haldir back, but you can stop others meeting a similar fate.'

Gilthorniel rode back to Lorien the next day. She and her brothers had waved goodbye to the people of Gondor and their new king. Legolas kissed her goodbye but Gilthorniel did not return it. Over her shoulder was a small sack that Gandalf had given her. Gilthorniel had promised not to tell a single soul what was in it and not to use it unless it was an emergency.

They arrived back in Lorien and she went straight back up to her room to hide the sack. Elendil bounded happily about when she entered and Gilthorniel gave her the remainders of the wedding feast that Gilthorniel had relieved Aragorn of. She bent down and stroked the wolf's fur. When she stood Elendil jumped onto the bend and curled up as if to go to sleep. But her eye followed Gilthorniel around the room as if she expected more treats.

Gilthorniel looked out of her window at the bright sunny afternoon. She hated being cooped up inside, as you know, and she desperately needed to go out there now.

Gilthorniel whistled and Elendil jumped off the bed and padded towards her. Gilthorniel put on her clock, grabbed her bow and arrows and ran outside.

Gilthorniel and Elendil ran through the forest together as if without a care in the world. Gilthorniel wished this was so; she detested having her brother's face in her mind as if taunting her. She ran even faster in an attempt to block him out. Elendil caught up with her easily. Her tongue lolled out of her mouth as she

ran as if out of breath, but she ran with ease as if it wasn't tiring her at all.

Gilthoniel suddenly felt out of breath as she watched Elendil and she stopped by a nearby tree, panting. She stretched her arms and legs before she sat down against the tree and closed her eyes. Within minutes she was dreaming.

She picked up her bow and walked in the direction Rumil and Halibrien were firing their arrows. She fired an arrow, replaced it by another one, and fired again, and again, and again. She fired arrows at whatever moved, she did not care what that thing was, she just wanted it dead.

Suddenly, smack! An arrow had been shot and whizzed through the air. It hit Gilthoniel in the chest and she staggered backward. She tripped on a rock and fell down. Rumil ran over to her and dragged her back to Halibrien. Halibrien fires more arrows but there was no pint, all the orcs had gone. They'd run away, terrified of this girl elf with her bow and arrow and deadly precise aim.

Rumil bent over Gilthoniel and looked into her eyes. They slowly went from hazel to purple and she smiled.

Fëanor came running over and gasped at the sight of the blood spurting from her chest all over her white dress. Gilthoniel looked up at them all and almost laughed, but all that came out was a crocking noise before she couldn't crock anymore and coughing erupted from her throat. As she coughed, blood spurted out of her throat and splattered onto her dress, staining the little white left red

Rumil's eyes filled with tears as he watched his little sister slowly dying. She reached out a hand for his.

'Don't be sad,' Gilthoniel choked and coughed some more. She looked her brother deep in the eye and said 'I'll finally be with the man I love.'

Fëanor looked shocked and Gilthoniel attempted to laugh again. 'Yes Fëanor, it was me he wanted. He loved me, he told me just before he died. Not you. He never loved you.'

Fëanor's eyes filled with tears and she ran back into the hut. Gilthoniel smiled at her brother and Halibrien. 'I'll miss you. Come and see me soon.' She laughed again and the laugh turned into a coughing fit. More and more blood flowed out of her mouth and her coughing became worse. The sound of it was so terrifying, so sad, so disturbing the Rumil wanted to cover his ears rather than listen to it.

Suddenly, all was silent. Gilthoniel's eyes rolled back into her head and she ceased breathing. She was dead.

Gilthoniel woke up panting, gasping for breath. She got up and looked around her. The sun was setting and she knew that her brothers would be out looking for her. She stood and set off running back towards Lorien with Elendil by her side..

As she came closer to the city she noticed torches on either side. Rumil stood ten yards away, staring at her. When she reached him he put his arm around her shoulders and steered her inside. He led her up to her room where a beautifully tailored black lacy dress lay on her bed. She shooed Rumil from the room and put it on. She looked in the mirror at her reflection and couldn't believe that it was her staring back.

She let Rumil in again and he picked up a black veil that had been lying next to the dress. After fixing it in her hair he covered her face with it. Then he took her arm and led her back outside.

Together they walked down to the river Nimrodel and Gilthoniel saw why she was dress up. Lying on one of the little boats was Haldir's body, lifeless and pale. His body was surrounded by straw and hay to set alight. Gilthoniel walked up to the boat and took his hand. It was like ice. She dropped it and went to stand beside her brothers. Findiel came and stood beside her and she managed to give him a small smile before then turned to face Haldir. One by one elves went up to give him their final farewells. Findiel put his bow and arrow quiver beside him then backed away.

Then it was her turn. She, Rumil and Orophin walked up to stand beside him. Rumil and Orophin each put in one of their arrows and Gilthoniel took off the necklace around her neck, a beautiful one that Haldir had given her for her thirteenth birthday, with blue flowers and silver stars dangling from it. It wasn't her special necklace, but it was one of her favorites so she opened one of his hands and entwined the chain around his fingers, then closed his fist again. She also picked some lilies from the riverbank and put them in his other hand.

When she stepped back, several elves stepped forward and lit the straw. The whole boat was soon ablaze and they pushed it onto the river. As it floated away Gilthoniel watched it as it floated slowly down the river. It seem that it had finally dawned on her that she'd lost her brother forever.

9 - Chapter 9

Chapter 9

In the weeks that past after Haldir's death, not much was seen of the young elf-girl who once seemed to be everywhere at once. Sometimes glimpses could be caught of her, studying with Galadriel, running through the woods or in the stables with her horse. Whenever she was seen, she kept quiet and to herself, preferring her own company to others. But most of the time, she was nowhere to be seen by any, save one.

Findiel now never left Gilthoniel's side. She counted on him for support as he was with her when Haldir died and he had seen her at her best and her worst. Together, in a much-unused hall hidden in the maze of Lothlorien, they spent most of their time training. Gilthoniel insisted that she be train in the arts of warfare, so, if ever it was needed, she could be called to help in times of peril. She knew much already, as she had picked up skills from her brothers whilst they trained, but Findiel was a master at the art and taught Gilthoniel in her spare time.

Occasionally, however, Gilthoniel would look around her with bored eyes. She had grown up in Lorien, and knew all its secrets, and now she lusted for the world unknown to her. Long had she begged Aragorn to take her with him when he disappeared for months on end, and now was her chance. Nothing ever happen where she was and her mind was made up.

It was a hot afternoon during the summer and Gilthoniel was training with Findiel. He had first seen her as a student, now she was a worthy opponent. She had learnt how to read his every move and could swipe underneath his defense with ease.

They stood at opposite ends of the hall, still and silent. They listened to the sound of each others breathing, to see who would begin the fight. Gilthoniel quickened her breathing, as if she was about to lunge. Findiel took the bait and swung around to face her, to see she was still facing the other way, breathing steadily. Findiel lunged towards her but she heard his heavy footsteps on the wooden floorboards and turned to face him, parrying his oncoming attack. She swung her sword and they backed away, their eyes never leaving each other.

Gilthoniel raised her sword in front of her face and smiled. Findiel might think he is in charge, she thought, but I have more skill. She turned and walked away in slow, long treads, then stopped sharply, turning back around to face him.

He smirked, thinking of this as an invitation to attack, and ran full pelt across the room. Gilthoniel threw her sword up in the air, her eyes fixed on Findiel, listening to the sound of the sword. She put one step forward and caught the sword behind her with her right hand then brought it swinging out in front of her.

Findiel skidded to a halt, stopping short of the deadly blade. One more step, and the point of the sword would have pierced his throat. He looked angrily into Gilthoniel's eyes, knowing she was mocking him. He could knock her sword out of the way and attack, but that left her sword unguarded and she could dive to the right, or to the left, and cut at him. Or he could give up?

Gilthoniel laughed inside, knowing she'd won. It was clear in Findiel's eyes she had beaten him. She was doing that a lot more often nowadays.

Findiel breathed out deeply and stepped back. He turned and walked away. Gilthoniel crept up silently and put her hand over his mouth, her blade at his neck.

'Best out of three!' She whispered in his ear, then pushed him forward hard, making him fall to the floor, dropping his sword. He picked it up and stood up, enraged at being caught off guard, to see her smiling in a knowing way. She turned and he was about to attack when she looked over her shoulder and called over to him. 'Only this time, we shall do it blindfolded!'

He stared, flabbergast, as she produced two blindfolds from the corner of the room where her bows and arrows were. She threw one to Findiel and tied the other around her own eyes.

'Pick a spot in the room where you want to start,' She said calmly. 'Make sure you cannot see anything, otherwise you will be cheating and automatically the loser.'

Findiel laughed. He would place himself in a corner, as far away from where she stood now as possible. Then he would hear her approach and could attack.

'First blood spilt from the torso.' Gilthoniel said, making her way to the center of the hall. She knew what he would do, she could now read him like a book, and could tell he would place himself in the farthest corner. As she walked, she explained the rules, to drown out the sound of her steps. 'No peeking! Use whatever moves you can. No other weapons are allowed. If you are cut on the anywhere on your torso, you must say so immediately, even if the wound isn't deep. Remember, we want blood, not scratches. And if you cheat, you will suffer!'

He knew she was joking, but he was still a little scared. There had been many rumors about Gilthoniel, some that she possessed magic powers, others she enslaved men by her beauty and they became so in love with her, they would do anything for her. It was said that Legolas had once loved her as much, and had been driven mad by his love. Of course the bit about him going mad wasn't true, Findiel had seen Legolas recently and he was just the same as always. But he couldn't bear the thought of Legolas with Gilthoniel. As he thought about it, an image flashed in his mind. It was of Gilthoniel, the day she had heard the news of her brother's death. She looked frail and vulnerable, but beautiful at the same time. He remembered that feeling he had felt that day, the way he longed for her.

The feeling welled up inside him now and he felt the urge to take off his blindfold to see her, as if he would never see her again. But he couldn't because he was still in the game.

Maybe, he thought to himself, maybe I can sneak a peek, just for a second. He lifted his hand to his eyes, then stopped. No, he thought. I can't cheat on Gilthoniel, partly because I wouldn't get away with it.

He was still musing when her voice filled the room again. `Begin!' she shouted. She turned and faced in the opposite direction and lifted her sword in front of her face again.

There was silence. Neither of them moved a muscle. The only sound was their steady breathing. Whilst Findiel fought to keep his breathing steady, for Gilthoniel it came naturally. Slowly, she took one step backwards.

Findiel heard this movement and sprang. He stopped behind Gilthoniel, having lost her. She had stopped moving and stood deadly still, waiting for him.

As she changed her grip on her sword, he heard the movement of her robes and attacked. His sword sliced across her left shoulder and down her back, ripping her robes. Along her back, though neither of them could see it, was a long scratch. It wasn't deep enough to spill blood, so Gilthoniel was still in the game. She ran forward and stood on the opposite side of the room. She threw her sword again but this time she threw it backwards. She turned and followed it down the hall, first running. She sprang lightly onto one foot then began a cartwheel, which itself turned into a backwards somersault. She then jump high when she was a foot ahead of Findiel and, narrowly avoiding his sword, leapt over him. She landed deftly behind him and caught her sword as it fell. As Findiel wheeled round to face her, she turned on the tips of her toes and sliced her sword level with his stomach, brushing his skin.

Findiel put his hand to the place that her sword had touched him and felt the slow pulse of his blood trickling through the scratch. He pulled off his blindfold and looked at his wound. It was nothing serious, but it was still bleeding. He looked at Gilthoniel, who was stood still in front of him, with her blindfold still on.

`You won,' he gasped, amazed that she had beaten him.

`Not quite.' Gilthoniel turned slowly and stood with her back to him so he could see what she meant.

The scratch he had given her had opened as she vaulted over him. Her robes, red themselves, were now stain with blood. She looked back over her shoulder and pulled off her blindfold and examined her handiwork.

`Hmm, your's isn't that bad.' She laughed looking at his wound. `Is mine bad?'

He smirked. `Don't worry, you'll live.'

She laughed and went to pick up her bow and arrow. `Enough for today! Now, we must change. For we are having dinner with Galadriel and cannot turn up like this!'

Gilthoniel laughed again and returned to her room. She cleaned and bandaged her wound then went to find a dress. She picked out a pink one, which came down low over her shoulders, with long trailing sleeves. She put it on and whirled around. Elendil, the she-wolf, looked up from her place on Gilthoniel's bed. After studying the girl's image, she rested her head on her paws and contented herself to watch her mistress.

Gilthoniel looked at her reflection in the mirror, sighing deeply. She wished that Legolas did not still love

her; last time they had met he seemed unwilling to let her go. She had tried everything, but she couldn't make him stop loving her, and she couldn't force herself to love him in return.

Gilthoniel sat on a chair and hugged her knees. Elendil bounded off the bed and trotted over to her. Gilthoniel scratched her ears, then got up and went to her bedside table.

Out of the little draw on her bedside table she took a necklace. It was a pink orchid pendant on a fine silver chain. She put it around her neck and looked at her reflection. She looked like the same girl she had always been, tall, slim, elegant, with jet-black hair, dark purple eyes and graceful features. But she didn't feel her age at all. Not long ago her brothers and her had celebrated her 17th birthday. She could hardly believe she was only 17. She had been forced to do so much growing up in the past months.

She tore her eyes away from her stranger of a reflection and let them wander to her fighting robes. They were tattered, bloody and torn. She picked them up in disgust then threw them in a sack in the corner. Inside were so many other clothes that had been ruined in her fights with Findiel. Somehow, she never seemed to come back from a fight with him with all her clothes in one piece.

I will have to make some new ones, she sighed, then put on her dinner shoes. They were made from a golden material with a hard dark gold sole. At the toe they curved upwards and they fitted perfectly around her delicate feet.

Satisfied about her appearance she ran down to the hall she would be having dinner with Galadriel in. She arrived to see hundreds of people milling around. She dodged past as many as possible and waved away the others who wanted to tell her how beautiful she was. She eventually made it to where Galadriel was standing and stood next to her.

'Gilthoniel, something special is going to happen tonight and I want you to understand, it is all for you.' Galadriel whispered to her.

'Excuse me?' Gilthoniel said startled but Galadriel moved away and Gilthoniel was left standing on her own.

But not for long. The next time she looked up she could see so many young elves wishing she would dance with them. She ignored them and became all too aware that many eyes were upon her. Pretending that she wanted some fresh air, she went out onto the balcony to be alone.

She looked out into the forest, wishing she were elsewhere. Nothing ever happened in Lothlorien, as she knew already. All her friends were far away, doing things that she was forbidden to do. When Galadriel had asked Gilthoniel to succeed her, Gilthoniel didn't realize that this would take away her freedom.

She sighed and lifted her face into the wind. It lapped against her face and cooled her down. She breathed in deeply and was about to turn and leave when she felt a hand on her shoulder.

She looked around, and there stood Legolas. Gilthoniel turned round to face him and glare angrily at him.

'What are you doing here?' She hissed.

`Well, I missed you. I haven't seen you for a long time.' He smiled down at her. Her hair flicked up and covered her face but he lifted a hand to smooth it back. `Gilthoniel, do you love me?'

Gilthoniel looked away from him, desperate for someone to come to help her. But there was no one, so she was forced to face him. `What do you think?'

`I hope you do, but I really don't know. All I know is one minute you did love me, the next you ran away from me. What did I do to make you so upset?' Legolas took her hands in his, pleading with her. Gilthoniel wrenched them from him and walked away.

`There is someone else, isn't there?' Legolas leaned on the railing that ran around the balcony. `Tell me if there is.'

Gilthoniel looked back at him, then looked down at her feet. How could she tell him this?

`Gilthoniel, please.' He turned to face her again, holding her gaze. `Just tell me, please.'

Gilthoniel swallowed and turned away from him. `Yes, there is someone.' She muttered quietly, but not so quietly that he could not hear her.

`Who is he?' Legolas tried to remain calm but fury took hold of him. He lunged forward and seized Gilthoniel by the shoulders. He spun her round to face him and shook her. `Who is he?' He yelled at her.

She looked away from him, determined not to say anything. He stared at her in astonishment, then let go of one of her shoulders with one hand and slapped her fully on the side of her face.

Gilthoniel said nothing, only stared at him, her eyes full of fury. He let her go and staggered backwards. `I'm sorry, Gilthoniel.' He stammered. `I am so sorry, please, forgive me.'

Gilthoniel rubbed her cheek with one hand. It felt sore and hot. She just stared at him with accusing eyes, then turned to go. Before she disappeared back into the hall, she turned and spoke to him, one last time.

`Legolas, you are right; I did love you once, or thought I did, but only for a brief moment. After that, I felt nothing. I now have the right to love whoever I want and you do not need to know who. And Legolas, do not come back here expecting love or forgiveness, because you will not get it.'

With that, she turned on her heel and disappeared into the crowd.

10 - Chapter 10

Chapter 10

Gilthoniel found Galadriel in the crowned hall, sitting down at the table. She walked across and sat next to her, taking a sip of the wine in front of her.

`What has happened, my child?' Galadriel asked, giving Gilthoniel a sideways look.

`Legolas tried to force me to tell him who I love, then he slapped me, then he asked me to forgive him.' Gilthoniel told her, still shaking with fury.

`Well, why would he want you to tell him that?' Galadriel inquired.

`Because he is a freak and is obsessed with me.' Gilthoniel snarled, folding her arms and glaring at Galadriel.

`Never mind, you will forget about it in a minute.' Galadriel smile and stood up.

A horn blew from the other side of the room and all the guests took their seats. Food was brought in and soon everyone was eating the tasty cuisine. Gilthoniel took a sip of some delicious drink, which tasted a lot like honey water, and she felt all her anger with Legolas disappear. She knew what he had done was wrong and he had no right to shout at her like he did but did it matter?

Of course it matters, her brain reminded her, but she choose to ignore it and listened to the heart chatter and gossip.

Galadriel seemed to know what she was doing and leaned over to Gilthoniel. `Its isn't polite ton eavesdrop Gilthoniel.' She hissed in her ear.

`So?' Gilthoniel murmured, looking straight ahead, away from Galadriel. `Nobody cares about that when they listen to my conversations, so why shouldn't I listen to theirs?'

Galadriel was about to say something, but knew Gilthoniel would argue with it, so she shut her mouth.

`Why are we even having a feast now anyway?' Gilthoniel asked, turning to face her now. `We usually only celebrate like this on special occasions. What is special about tonight?'

Galadriel smiled at this. `You shall see, my child, you shall see.'

After the feast, Gilthoniel was led to a small chamber next to the banquet hall. Inside were a few chairs so Gilthoniel sat down. Galadriel, however, remained standing, as if there was someone else about to arrive.

`Galadriel?' Gilthoniel said. Galadriel turned to face her, a smile playing on her lips. `What is going on?'

`When your brothers arrive, you will see.' Galadriel smiled and turned back to face the door.

Gilthoniel sighed and leaned back in the chair. She was bored. Why did she have to wait for her brothers, they were always late. Why couldn't she find out now?

Gilthoniel couldn't think what it could be. It wasn't her birthday, and usually when she was going somewhere her brothers told her, but Galadriel never needed to be there.

Celeborn entered, followed by her brothers, and a dark haired elf she did not know. Findiel also entered, and Gilthoniel smiled at him, before standing to greet the stranger.

`Gilthoniel,' Galadriel pushed her forward. `I want you to meet Galdor. Galdor, this is Gilthoniel.'

`Hello.' Gilthoniel said, curtsying. Galdor took her hand in his and kissed it. `It is a pleasure to meet you.'

`The pleasure is mine,' Galdor said, gently kissing her hand. Gilthoniel smiled and looked over at Findiel. He made a face as if pretending to be sick, and Gilthoniel tried to force herself not to laugh.

`Gilthoniel, Galdor has traveled a long way to get here.' Galadriel said, hinting something in the way she said it.

`Oh, please, sit down.' Gilthoniel gestured to a chair and he sat down on it, still holding Gilthoniel's hand. She had no choice but to sit down next to him. She could see Findiel pretending to retch over Galdor's shoulder and strained to keep a straight face.

`Yes, I came from Mirkwood to be here.' He smiled at her, showing his pearly white teeth. Gilthoniel could feel her smile becoming very fixed.

Yes, Galdor came all the way here to be with you.' Galadriel prompted.

Gilthoniel was taken aback. `Well, how...nice.' Behind Galdor Findiel slapped his head with his hand. `I mean, how kind of you to come all the way here just to see me. My I inquire as to why?'

`Well, because I heard that the most beautiful elf in all the land live right here in Lothlorien, and I came to find out for myself if it was true.'

Findiel made the sound of being about to throw up, and everyone turned to face him and he had to quickly turn it into a cough. Gilthoniel felt as should too of her ribs had cracked from trying not to laugh.

`Well, maybe you shouldn't listen to fairy-tales, Galdor.' Gilthoniel said, bringing his attention back to her.

`Well, this fairy-tale was true.' He took hold of her hand in his, again, and Gilthoniel's smile faded a little.

`Oh, thank you.' She said and then turned to Galadriel for help.

`Maybe you two could take a day out riding tomorrow?' Rumil suggested and Gilthoniel glared at him, but Galdor beamed.

`Yes,' He said joyfully. `Yes, I think that is a splendid idea.'

Gilthoniel smiled again and stood up. Galdor stood too and took her hand and kissed it. Gilthoniel's smile wavered.

`Well then, I'll see you tomorrow.' Gilthoniel curtseyed and went out, followed by Findiel. When they were outside she hit him on the shoulder.

`What did you do that for, I almost died laughing!' Gilthoniel's eyes blazed with anger mixed with laughter.

Findiel laughed. `Well, he was a complete loser!'

`I know, but I was doing all I could to stop myself breaking out in hysterics. Oh, I have a stitch now!'

Findiel laughed again. `Well, you had better be going off to bed to be fresh for you ride with Galdor.'

`Yes, so should you. I am not going to be left alone with him!'

`No way! I don't want to go anywhere near him. I may just, accidentally of course, knock him of his horse, hold his head under the water of the river Nimrodel and hid his body in the trees.'

`Don't worry, I will make sure you don't kill him, but please, I don't want to be on my own with him!'

Findiel laughed and Gilthoniel said goodnight to him. She returned to her room, where Elendil was asleep on her bed. Gilthoniel changed into some nightclothes and climbed into bed. She fell asleep as soon as her head touched the pillow.

Gilthoniel's dream was not unfamiliar to her, she felt as if she had had it before, but couldn't remember where from. She could see herself, running through the forest, then coming to a hut, clutching her bow and arrows. She dropped them as she entered the hut, then spoke to a young elf woman. Lying on a bed inside the hut was an elf she recognized, with three arrows in his chest. Gilthoniel couldn't think who it was. She saw herself pouring water into a cup and making him drink it. He tried to hold her in his arms, but she wouldn't let him. After a while tears began to pour down her cheeks and she let him take her in his arms and kiss her, before he died. She saw herself stand up, and she immediately recognized the elf lying on the bed. It was Findiel. She also knew what was about to happen. She saw herself walk

out of the out and collapse on the ground. She picked herself up, taking her arrows and bows with her. Findiel's blood was streaming down her face and she took an arrow, fitted it into her bow and fired it. She took another, and another, and fired them anywhere, she wasn't even aiming. Soon, and arrow come towards her and buried itself in her chest. She fell over and Rumil and Halibrien ran towards her, dragging her back out of range from the enemy archers. She coughed, and blood gurgled out of her mouth. She smiled at her brother before letting her eyes roll back into her head and her head slumped against her neck. Rumil shook her and yelled out her name, but she was gone.

Gilthoniel sat up, gasping. She knew where she had seen that before. She knew it was going to happen. And she knew there was nothing she could do to stop it.

11 - Chapter 11

Chapter 11

The next day dawned, sunny and clear, and Gilthoniel wearily rode Arvedui with Galdor, who was astride his palomino mare on her right hand side. She listened to his talk and responded, as she knew she would be wanted to, not really putting her whole heart into it. She noticed that the less she talked, the more Galdor talked.

Either he is making up for my lack of talking, Gilthoniel thought, tuning out of his idle chatter for a bit, or whatever I say enralls him into talking even more.

Gilthoniel turned her head and looked back to where Findiel was. He wasn't very far back, but far enough to stop her talking to him, which is what Galdor wanted.

Findiel watched with disgust as Galdor talked about whatever came to his head. It seemed that talking was the only thing he ever did. At one stage, Gilthoniel had pointed this out, making Findiel laugh.

'Do you enjoy the sound of your own voice?' Gilthoniel asked when Galdor was just about to launch into a speech about nothing in particular. 'Or does silence make you irksome?'

Galdor blushed at this, and Gilthoniel called to Findiel 'The sun is too high in the sky for us to go further on, unless we wish to be burned to a cinder. Is there anywhere suitable to stop off and have luncheon?'

'Of course, my lady,' Findiel shouted back. 'There is a stream not to far from here, about 5 minutes if we walk.'

They agreed this was a good idea for them and the horses; it would stretch their legs and the horses were getting tired by the heat.

They led the horses to this stream in a place Gilthoniel couldn't remember ever seeing before. It was shaded here by the trees, and there were many plants there to make it give off a sort of eerie green glow. There were many small animals too, insects of all varieties, small lizards, birds in all the colours of the rainbow and little fish in the stream.

Findiel opened a saddlebag he had brought with them which had some luncheon inside it. Gilthoniel sat against a stream close to the stream and watched the fish dart in every direction, in a sort of pattern only they seemed to know, as if they were dancing. Gilthoniel wondered what it felt like to be one of those fish, and swim in the cool, clear waters of the stream. But she was snapped out of her wonderings by Galdor, who came and sat beside her, startling all the fish so they swam to the other side of the stream.

Gilthoniel did not say anything, but when Findiel caught her eye pretending to hang himself, she smiled in a way which showed she was enjoying his humour but it was too hot to laugh out loud.

Galdor began his chatter again and just when she thought she was going to say something to shut him up, she felt like she couldn't remember what she had wanted to say, her head was swimming and she had gone all light-headed. She closed her eyes and rolled over, right into the stream.

Findiel was dozing by a tree, made tired by the heat, when he heard a splash. He half opened his eyes and looked around him, Gilthoniel wasn't anywhere to be seen, and Galdor had stopped talking and was staring into the water. Findiel ran over to him, and looked in.

There was nothing to be seen. Literally, there was nothing there. The floor on the stream couldn't be seen, and the walls stretched down into darkness. Findiel looked around him, but he knew that the only thing to do, was what he really didn't want to do. He took off his belt, which his scabbard was hanging from and took a deep breath and dived into the water after Gilthoniel.

He kicked his legs so he was propelled downwards and he soon left the bank where Galdor was still staring into the water after him far behind. He swam down and down, knowing his breath was leaking from his body and knew he would have to find Gilthoniel soon. But he kept swimming, desperate to find her.

Soon, he reached the bottom, which seemed to curve away to the right. He followed it, amazed to find it sloping upwards. He felt his last breath leave him when his head broke the surface and he gazed around him, half afraid, half bewildered.

He was in a sort of underground cave. The walls were lit up by the light reflected from the water, the light which seemed to come from nowhere. He hauled himself out of the water and looked around. At his feet was Gilthoniel, curled up in a ball. She wasn't moving at all but he grabbed her wrist and was surprised to find a pulse. He was even more surprised to find she wasn't wet at all, as if she had never been in the stream. He felt his own clothes, skin and hair; he had also somehow dried of all the water that was on him, although the cave was cold and damp.

Gilthoniel stirred slightly and Findiel picked her up in his arms. She woke up and looked around her, frightened.

'Wh-where are we?' Gilthoniel stuttered. She drew herself close to Findiel, suddenly very cold.

'I don't know,' Findiel shook his head. He held her tightly in his arms as if to protect her from something. 'Let's have a look around.'

She nodded and he set her on the ground. Gilthoniel straightened up, shakily, and shivered. She looked around the cave, looking for any sign of an entrance or an exit. But the only clear one was the pool that they had arrived by. They wandered around the cave, which was surprisingly small and bright. Gilthoniel began to wonder who had made the cave, and for what purpose.

Findiel was clearly thinking the same thing as he was looking around, trying to see any telltale signs that someone had been here before they had. Then he saw something that made his insides churn.

Over to one side of the cave there was a large stone chest. Findiel approached it and pushed off the stone lid. Slowly, it moved. Findiel called Gilthoniel over to help him and together they heaved the lid off. They set it on the floor and looked inside. Findiel choked as he saw what was inside.

Inside was a young elf, who looked a lot like Findiel himself did; the same long dark hair, the same sharp features. Findiel picked up the stone lid and tried to replace it, but Gilthoniel stopped him. She looked down into the chest and saw him. It was as if Findiel were lying in that very chest, his eyes closed, no breath left in his body. With a quick look at him she leaned over the side of the chest and lifted up one of the elf's eyelids. His eyes, like Findiel's, were dark brown.

Gilthoniel stared at this young elf, then at Findiel. Then she asked him, her voice unsteady and shaky 'Is this your brother?'

Findiel nodded and Gilthoniel said no more. They put the lid on the chest again and turned away from the chest.

Together they swam back up to where Galdor was waiting for them. When they surfaced, Galdor reached down and pulled Gilthoniel out of the water, covering her in his cloak.

'Oh, Gilthoniel, are you all right? You were down there so long I feared the worst.'

Findiel cursed under his breath and was about to climb out of the water when a hand reached down and took hold of his. He looked up and saw Gilthoniel smiling at him and thanked her as she helped him out of the water and put his cloak around his shoulders.

They rode back in silence, this time Findiel was on Gilthoniel's right hand side, and Galdor on her left. Gilthoniel was stuck in her mind, thinking about Findiel's brother, down in the cave. She knew he probably wouldn't talk about it in front of Galdor, so she said nothing.

When they reached the sky again, Gilthoniel put Arvedui in her stable and set about grooming her. She brushed her mane and tail, threw a horse rug over her and got her some water. She also threw a hay bale into her stable and then made her way up to her chamber.

Gilthoniel changed out of her riding clothes into a purple dress and then she set out to find Findiel. She saw him talking to Fëanor about something. Fëanor was a healer and was a good friend of Gilthoniel. Gilthoniel felt a pang of jealousy as Fëanor laughed at something Findiel said but then she approached Findiel and poked him on his shoulder.

Findiel looked around at Gilthoniel and smiled. Gilthoniel greeted Fëanor but pulled Findiel away so she could talk to him.

'I want to know about your brother.' She said, before he opened his mouth. Then she continued in a whisper 'Please tell me. Remember, there are no secrets between us.'

Findiel sighed then he began. 'My brother was called Findegil and he was my twin. We were born in the Gray Havens and it is there my mother is still. We traveled with my father, who took us all over the world

with him. My father was a high elf who had taken to exploring the land. My mother was also a high elf, but her father sent her to the Gray Havens so she could have her children there.

“My brother and I hardly ever saw our mother. We spent so much time away seeing her was like coming back from a dream. But we always had things to tell her and never missed out spending time with her.

“One time we were away and Findegil and I were having a practice fight with our sword. Our father made sure we know how to fight in case we ever needed the skills. Findegil was better than me at everything though. He taught me swordsmanship and archery to my hearts content. When I began to creep up to his level, he would always put me down. I always tried though, so I could please my father.

“Findegil was better than me at fighting but I was my father's favourite. Findegil could never forgive me for that. He grew bitter and rarely ever practiced with me, and when he did, he was very competitive.

“Anyway, we were having one of our practice fights and for one everything was going well. He didn't shout and often corrected my stance, just like he used to. But when I made a mistake and I took advantage of it, he grew angry. He swung at me from side-to-side, really trying to hurt me. It stopped being a practice fight, and for me became a fight for my life. I tried to make him stop but every time he cut me, I could see he enjoyed having the upper hand and knew I had to do something to stop him. Behind him I saw a small pond. If I could get him to fall in I could go and get my father.

“I forced him backwards, taking advantage of his gloating to give him weakness. He stepped backwards and fell into the pond, I ran back to get my father but as I neared the house he yelled after me to come and fight him like a man. He was drenched with pond water and had pondweed in his hair but he didn't care. As he approached me, his eyes full of angry, I drew up my sword to stop him. He began to run towards me, his arms holding his sword above his head. I tried to stop him, but he kept running at me. I swerved around him and ran back to the pond. He came running towards me, tripped and fell into the pond.”

Findiel took a breath again, as if this next bit was very painful for him. “When Findegil didn't get up, I approached him with caution. I looked down into the pond and saw he was lying face down in the water, not moving. I grabbed his hand but he made no movement. I hauled him out of the water and saw he was dead.

“Someone behind me shouted, and I looked round to see my father striding towards me. He looked angrier than I had ever seen him before in my life. He grabbed me and pushed me to one side and took Findegil up in his arms and ran back to the house. I ran after him and saw him lay Findegil down on the table and heard the maids gasp at the sight of his body. My father wheeled round to look at me and grabbed my wrist and threw me to the floor.

““What did you do to him?” he yelled at me. “What did you do to your brother?”

“Then a maid stood before my father. “I saw what he did, Lord. He was fighting with his brother, and then he pushed him into the pond. Findegil tried to get up and run back to get help but he held his head in the water and drowned him.”

“I couldn't believe she was telling such a downright lie. I tried to defend myself and tell my father the

whole story, but he didn't want to hear it. He ignored me and told the maid to pack my things. After a while he did look at me, to tell me to leave and never come back.

'The maid brought my things and I ran from the house. I could see my father inside with Findegil's body, weeping. Then, I turned, and never looked back.'

12 - Chapter 12

Chapter 12

Gilthoniel lay in bed that night, thinking about what Findiel had told her. She couldn't believe that his own father had sent him away from home because a maid had said he had killed his brother. Findiel was one of the nicest people Gilthoniel knew, she couldn't believe that anyone who ever thought he killed someone.

Gilthoniel hoped to be able to talk to Findiel about what had happened, but, over the next couple of days, she was rarely left alone with Findiel. Galdor always wanted to go riding with her or to take a walk with her through the forest.

One bright sunny morning, and Gilthoniel had woken up meaning to go walking with Elendil. The she-wolf was now getting old, and whenever Gilthoniel had a chance she looked after her as best as she could.

She had just picked up her bow and arrows when there came a knock on her door. 'Come in.' Gilthoniel called, and beamed as it was Findiel who stepped into her room.

'Yes Findiel, what is it?' She said, somewhat distractedly, as she was prepared to leave.

'Lady Galadriel wishes to see you at once.'

'And what for, because if it is some stupid problem that Galadriel needs me to help with, tell her she should just make do without me.' Gilthoniel crossed her arms impatiently.

'She didn't tell me anything.'

'Fine, I'll go.' Gilthoniel knelt down beside Elendil and gazed into the she-wolf's eyes. 'I am so sorry,' she said, stroking her muzzle. 'Maybe tomorrow.'

Gilthoniel straightened up and followed Findiel to a dimly lit chamber. Galadriel was standing there, placidly with Galdor beside her. When Gilthoniel entered Galdor rushed forward to greet her.

'Gilthoniel,' Galadriel said. 'I am so glad you came. Galdor, please leave us.'

Galdor left Gilthoniel and Galadriel and Gilthoniel turned to face Galadriel, who looked very pleased about something.

'I have some good news, my child. Galdor has asked for your hand in marriage.'

Gilthoniel choked and coughed. Then she spluttered `What!

`Yes, he came just now and asked me.'

`But I don't want to marry Galdor.'

`You don't have a choice.'

`Why not?'

`Gilthoniel, do not annoy me!' Galadriel grabbed Gilthoniel by the shoulders. `Galdor has asked me to tell you that he will not stop until you are his bride, and I don't care if you don't like it. You will marry him, and that is it!

Galadriel let go of Gilthoniel and sighed. `At least give it a while to sink in, I am sure that you will love him dearly, when you realize it. Yes, think it over for a few days.'

Gilthoniel left the room and ran off to try and find Findiel. He had to be around somewhere.

He was. Gilthoniel found him sitting in the forest with Fëanor, laughing and joking about some rubbish. Gilthoniel was about to run over there when Fëanor did something that made Gilthoniel's blood boil.

Fëanor leaned over towards Findiel and kissed him. Gilthoniel seethed in anger and turned away, about to run off when Findiel called her name.

`Gilthoniel, come over here.'

Gilthoniel turned and tried to look happy and completely oblivious to what had just happened as she strode over to where they sat. Findiel jumped up as she approached and Fëanor, who always seemed to do what Findiel did now, stood up beside him.

`Congratulations Gilthoniel,' Fëanor said patronizingly.

`Congratulations about what?'

`The engagement.' Fëanor looked shocked, and put her arm around Findiel. `We heard you are going to get married to Galdor.'

`What, oh yes, that.' Gilthoniel said, trying to stop herself from ripping out Fëanor's Jugular vein.

`We have some good news too.' Findiel said proudly.

`We're getting married too!' Fëanor cried happily and Gilthoniel turned away from them and ran as fast as she could back toward Lórien.

Inside the room where Gilthoniel and Findiel usually practice together, Gilthoniel set up a target and practiced archery alone. She hadn't said anything to anyone since she had seen Fëanor and Findiel in the forest and didn't care. She was too angry to say anything. She simply fitted arrow after arrow into her bow and shoot them at the target, which now resembled a pincushion.

She had just fitted another arrow into her bow as the door behind her opened. Gilthoniel swung around and shoot the arrow at the door. Findiel stood stock still where he was; halfway through the door with an arrow embedded into the wall, millimeters away from his neck.

`Whoa, what was that for?' Findiel said, slowly approaching Gilthoniel as if afraid of her. She didn't say anything, just set down her bow and quiver of arrows and went to the sword rack on the wall. She took two swords and threw one at Findiel, who caught it at the handle.

`Gilthoniel, what is going on?' Findiel said, staring at the sword.

As before, Gilthoniel said nothing, just turned her back to him and took a deep breath, her usual fighting pose.

Findiel caught on and began to circle her. He knew her routine back-to-front, and knew this was going to be easy.

But suddenly, abandoning routine, Gilthoniel whipped round and ran towards Findiel, swinging her sword. He parried and pushed away from her, defending himself.

`What is going on Gilthoniel!' Why are you doing this?'

`You want to know why?' Gilthoniel yelled at him, before running towards him again. Again he parried, preferring to defend rather than attack. `Since when have you and Fëanor been together? Tell me that! And since when have I been engaged to Galdor?'

`Gilthoniel,' Findiel ducked at another attack. `Please stop it.'

Gilthoniel stopped and threw down her sword, taking several deep breaths. When her breathing returned to normal, she spoke again.

`I do not love Galdor, and I never will, so I will never marry him. And I know that you do not love Fëanor, no matter what you tell people.'

Findiel let his sword drop too and came towards Gilthoniel, now angry at what she said. `How do you know? I do like Fëanor, which shows how much you know.'

`But you don't love her, do you? You LIKE her, you don't LOVE her.' Gilthoniel said slowly, quietly, walking towards Findiel, who was trying not to look at her.

`Yes, I mean, no, I mean...!' Findiel cursed as Gilthoniel stopped right in front of him. `What do you mean you don't love Galdor?'

`I don't love him, how can I? I love someone else instead.' Gilthoniel looked right into his deep brown eyes and he gazed back into her purple ones. `I just haven't known I love him for a while.'

Findiel wet his lips before continuing. `Who?'

`You, Findiel. I love you.' Gilthoniel said before kissing him lightly on the lips. He put his arms around her waist and kissed her back, but then he pulled away from her.

`Gilthoniel, we can't do this.' Findiel said, backing away from her. `I am getting married, so are you, it is impossible for us to do this.'

Gilthoniel tried to stop him, but he had already run out of the room.

Findiel and Fëanor got married a couple of days later. Gilthoniel stood and watched the one she loved walk away with the one she hated. As she walked with her brothers back to Lórien she didn't say anything, but she was crying a river inside. Whenever she saw Findiel anymore, he was always with his wife. She could never train with him anymore, so she had to content herself with riverside walks with Elendil, to try and steady her wits.

A few days after the wedding, Gilthoniel went to Galdor's chambers. She knocked on the door and he answered, beaming happily as he led her inside.

`I would like you to know that I accept your marriage proposal, and wish to know when we should set the date for the wedding.' Gilthoniel said formally, trying as hard as she could to be polite.

Galdor smiled at her, and together they went to find Galadriel to tell her the "good" news. Galadriel was thrilled, and she and Galdor spent ages discussing wedding plans. Occasionally Gilthoniel nodded, and said yes or no, as she gazed out of the window, watching Findiel and Fëanor running around together as happy as can be. Gilthoniel knew that she could have been with Findiel right now, she wouldn't have been sitting where she was certainly, if she had only told Findiel before that she loved him. But she hadn't, and now she was paying the price.

13 - Chapter 13

Chapter 13

Gilthaniel was sitting with Galadriel one day, when the sun was shining through the trees, wishing she was dead. In two days she would be married to the one person she hated more than Fëanor, whilst the person she hated would be running around with Findiel. She needed something to happen quickly; otherwise she would have to kill herself.

She excused herself and retreated to her chambers, where Elendil lay on the bed, still, sick. Gilthaniel ran to her chest of drawers and took out a small bag. From this bag she removed a number of small bottles. From a little black bottle she poured some yellowy gold liquid into the she-wolf's mouth and stroked her throat. She knew how the she-wolf was feeling, it was as if there was a connection between them, as Gilthaniel grew more and more depressed, and Elendil's health grew worse. Gilthaniel knew that would have to get out of her marriage to Galdor some time, otherwise Elendil would die.

'What did you just do?' someone had been watching her from the door. Gilthaniel turned and saw Findiel leaning against the doorframe, his arms crossed over his chest.

Gilthaniel knew there was no point in lying to him, so she told him about the day at Minas Tirath, after Aragorn had been wed to Arwen, and Gandalf had given her this bag containing several potions, and had taught her how to use them. They were supposed to save people from death or help them recover from illness. This was the first time she had ever really used them, except on herself when she was unwell or had been out in the cold for too long.

'Please don't tell anyone Findiel. I know I can trust you with my secret. Gandalf told me to only use it for emergencies and for special needs. It is forbidden magic Findiel, and no one must hear about it.' Gilthaniel said after she had told him this. He nodded and left the room.

Gilthaniel knelt on the floor next to her bed scratching Elendil's ear. That was the first time she had spoken to Findiel for a long time, and she was glad that at least they could still be friends, as they couldn't be together. But Gilthaniel knew in her heart that being friends with Findiel would never be enough to her, and it would never be the same as being with him whenever she wanted.

Gilthaniel decided to stop moping like this, and got up and looked in the mirror. She knew that most people thought she looked beautiful, and was glad about this, and the fact that her beauty would last forever. She knew that right now, that was the only thing she had, apart from her darling Elendil, but she wouldn't have her anymore either.

Gilthaniel shook her head, forced everything out of her mind and opened her wardrobe. There was a new dress in there that she hadn't worn yet, her brother Orophin had given it to her not that long ago, it

was pure white and the most beautiful dress she had ever seen. She pulled it on and decided that if she was doomed to be with Galdor for the rest of her life, she should at least look beautiful for him.

In her hair she attached a dragonfly clip, keeping her hair out of her face as she sat down and got out her weave. She started weaving a piece of material and spinning into it some magic to make it glow. Eventually, she managed to get it glowing and set it onto her bedside table. She left Elendil in there, the faint light enough to illuminate the furniture dotted around Gilthoniel's chamber so if she got up she wouldn't knock into anything. Then Gilthoniel set off to find Galadriel.

As she was searching, Galdor came out of a chamber down the corridor Gilthoniel was walking down.

'Hello,' Gilthoniel smiled at him as he came towards her. She hoped he would notice that she had at least made an effort to look good for him, but no such luck. He grabbed her and said in a shaky voice. 'Gilthoniel, you have got to go and do something.'

'What?' Gilthoniel detected a hint of urgency in his voice and acted fast. 'What is it Galdor. Tell me what has happened. Now!'

'By the river Nimrodel, there is an emergency, someone is hurt, they sent for you.' Galdor said, as if in a state of shock.

'Who? Tell me who! Galdor! Tell me who is hurt!' Gilthoniel almost yelled at him.

'Findiel. It's Findiel. He has been shot by orcs. They need you now.' Galdor gasped and Gilthoniel ran from him, back to her chamber. She grabbed her little bag containing the potions and her bow and quiver of arrows and ran out of the as fast as she had come. Down to the stables she ran and jumped on Arvedui's back. She urged her horse into a gallop and together they hurtled towards the river Nimrodel.

Deep in the heart of the Lórien city, in Gilthoniel's chambers', the she-wolf lifted her head to the window and looking at the sky out side, took a deep breath and howled.

As she approached the river Nimrodel, Gilthoniel's heart was racing. If she didn't get there in time, what was going to happen? Could she actually save Findiel, or was it a completely lost cause? Gilthoniel didn't know the answer to these questions, and another question kept tugging at her thoughts. Had she seen this before?

Arvedui halted suddenly and Gilthoniel grabbed the saddle just in time otherwise she would have been flung over the mare's back into the wall of thorns; the reason Arvedui had halted. Gilthoniel climbed down from the saddle and ran up the thorns. She would have to cut through.

'Ah!' She yelled! This was going to take too much time, something she didn't have. She hunted around the thorns to search through a way through. Yes! She found an opening large enough for her, but not for Arvedui.

`Go back Arvedui, I have to go alone.' Gilthoniel went back to her and patted Arvedui's neck, for some reason this felt like the last goodbye between them.

As Arvedui turned and galloped back to Lórien, Gilthoniel squeezed herself through the hole in the wall of thorns. She got to the other side unscathed and her dress was still in one piece as she ran forward.

Gilthoniel breathed a sigh of relief; there was the river, and there was bridge over it. She ran over the bridge and into a small hut where a Findiel lay. Several arrows had been fired into his chest, and his breathing was slow and painful. An Fëanor sat at his bedside and turned when Gilthoniel walked in.

`What happened, Fëanor?'

`We were attacked by orcs. They came out of nowhere. Findiel had got out to get some wood and they shot him.'

`Are they still out there?'

`Yes, Rumil and Halibrien are holding them off, but I don't know how much longer their arrows will hold out.'

`Have you done anything to stop the bleeding?'

`No, we haven't. There was nothing to wrap them with. We brought him in here and put blankets on him and done everything possible to keep him warm, but he is falling in and out of consciousness every second,' Fëanor said.

`Fëanor,' Gilthoniel put her hand on the woman's shoulder. `I will make sure he gets better.'

`I don't think there's much chance of him getting better, Gilthoniel, unless you use your forbidden magic.' Fëanor replied. Gilthoniel looked at her questionably and Fëanor blushed. `He told me about Gandalf's blessing.'

Gilthoniel kneeled next to Findiel and began unpacking her things. She turned around and saw Fëanor standing looking anxiously at her husband. `It's alright, I will help him, but maybe you should wait outside.'

Fëanor nodded and turned to go, then looked back around at Gilthoniel. `He kept calling for you. I'm a healer, and my husband called for you to help him, I don't understand.'

`It's because of the forbidden magic. Gandalf said I wasn't to use it, except in great need. I think his need is great, don't you?'

`Yes.'

`Well then, can you please wait outside. I cannot do the magic with you there.' Gilthoniel said impatiently.

Fëanor turned on her heel and went outside. Gilthoniel unpacked what was left in her bag when Findiel spoke.

`Gilthoniel,' he said. `Gilthoniel.'

`I'm here now,' she brushed his hair out of his dark blue eyes. `I'll look after you.'

`Gilthoniel,' Findiel choked. `I love you.'

`Findiel, be quiet!' Gilthoniel whirled around and was relieved to see that Fëanor wasn't there. `You're married, and soon I will marry Galdor. We promised ourselves we would not fall in love with each other. Fëanor is my friend, I can't hurt her like that, and besides, I love Galdor.'

`Do you, Gilthoniel? Do you really love him? Because I don't think you do.' He said.

`Yes, I do, and there's nothing for you to make you worry and start confessing things.' Gilthoniel poured some pink liquid into a goblet of water. `Drink this, it'll lessen the pain.'

He drank and braced himself for it a bitter taste, and was pleasantly surprised to find it was quite sweet.

Gilthoniel began taking the arrows out of Findiel's body, crying inside as more blood seeped out, covered the wounds with some lavender coloured liquid and then wrapped him tightly with some make-shift bandages, made from ripped up white sheets.

`It doesn't hurt now,' Findiel said quietly.

`I put some potion on it to eliminate the pain,' Gilthoniel said, stroking his cheek.

`I feel cold.'

`I'll get you some blankets.'

`I don't mean like that.'

Gilthoniel started to worry and began pouring more potion out for him.

`It's too late for that now.' Findiel said. `Gilthoniel.' He took her hand in both of his (spilling the potion whilst doing so) and kissed it. `I love you.'

Gilthoniel's eyes turn light hazel and filled with tears, and she stopped refusing and started kissing him. He put his arms around her waist and kissed her neck. Then his arms went limp and his eyes rolled back into his head.

Gilthoniel rested her head on Findiel's breathless chest and closed her eyes and wept, not caring that his blood was soaking her hair and face. Eventually, she stood and walked out of the hut, Findiel's blood dripping from her hair onto her white dress and smeared across her face.

Fëanor looked up and gasped.

`I couldn't save him!' Gilthoniel let herself fall down onto the grassy riverbank. `I wasn't strong enough to save him!'

She broke down into sobs and Fëanor came and put her arm around her.

`I wish I could have told him how much I loved him,' Fëanor said, silent tears pouring down her face.

Gilthoniel sat up and stared at her. This stupid woman. She was there when he died; she didn't know what his last words had been.

Fëanor looked into her eyes and saw that they were now dark hazel with rage and sorrow. Small sparks of lightning flew off her clothes and Fëanor etched away from her.

`So do I,' Gilthoniel whispered.

Gilthoniel picked up her bow and walked in the direction Rumil and Halibrien were firing their arrows. She fired an arrow, replaced it by another one, and fired again, and again, and again. She didn't care where they went; she just shot them at whatever moved.

Then it came, whizzing through the air, an orc had fired an arrow and it plunged into her chest. She took a couple of steps backwards, and then fell. Rumil ran over to her and dragged her back to Halibrien. Halibrien fires more arrows but there was no point, all the orcs had gone. They'd run away, terrified of this girl elf with her bow and arrow and deadly precise aim.

Rumil bent over Gilthoniel and looked into her eyes. They slowly went from hazel to purple and she smiled.

Fëanor came running over and gasped at the sight of the blood spurting from her chest all over her white dress. Gilthoniel looked up at them all and almost laughed, but all that came out was a crocking noise before she couldn't crock anymore and coughing erupted from her throat. As she coughed, blood spurted out of her throat and splattered onto her dress, staining the little white left red.

Rumil's eyes filled with tears as he watched his little sister slowly dying. She reached out a hand for his.

`Don't be sad,' Gilthoniel choked and coughed some more. She looked her brother deep in the eye and said `I'll finally be with the man I love.'

Fëanor looked shocked and Gilthoniel attempted to laugh again. `Yes Fëanor, it was me he wanted. He loved me, he told me just before he died. Not you. He never loved you.'

Fëanor's eyes filled with tears and she ran back into the hut. Gilthoniel smiled at her brother and Halibrien. `I'll miss you. Come and see me soon.' She laughed again and the laugh turned into a coughing fit. More and more blood flowed out of her mouth and her coughing became worse. The sound of it was so terrifying, so sad, so disturbing the Rumil wanted to cover his ears rather than listen to it.

Suddenly, all was silent. Gilthoniel's eyes rolled back into her head and she ceased breathing. She was dead.

Far away, in Lórien, Elendil howled louder, as if she were in pain. Orophin ran to Gilthoniel's chamber and opened the door to see the she-wolf roll off the bed onto the floor. He ran to her side and saw blood spilling out of her mouth onto the floor. Elendil's eyes rolled back into her head, and the pain-filled, ever-suffering howl ceased.

Rumil threw his head back and screamed. He hugged Gilthoniel's body to his chest and bellowed like a wounded animal. He lifted Gilthoniel up in his arms and carried her across the bridge. He ran with her all the way back to Lórien, tears staining his cheeks, blood staining his clothes. He got to Lórien and yelled for help. Doors opened everywhere and people rushed out onto their balconies to the sad spectacle, and some people began to cry, and the sentries came and lifted Gilthoniel's lifeless body out of Rumil's arms and carried her through the city, to where Galadriel was waiting.

Tears fell down Galadriel's usually emotionless face as she saw the body of her successor, her heir, laid down before her. Moments later, Findiel's body, which had been carried back by Halibrien, was laid next to her. Seconds after that, the body of Elendil, the once proud she-wolf, was laid on Gilthoniel's other side. Rumil and Orophin stood side-by-side, speechless, overwhelmed with sadness, as they looked at their beautiful sister being carried off by the crowd.

Fëanor stared after Findiel's body, wishing he had told her about his love for Gilthoniel, and how he had never really loved her. Galdor stood next to her, and put an awkward arm around her shoulders. He had known deep down in his heart that Gilthoniel hadn't loved him, but his heart was breaking as he watched her body disappear through the crowds.

14 - Chapter 14 - Conclusion

Conclusion

Gilthoniel, Elendil and Findiel's bodies were placed all on the same small boat. People walked up and set gifts next to them. Rumil and Orophin had laid a crown of flowers on Gilthoniel's head and put a white rose in her hand.

Nimrodel, Tillyenna and Tinuviel put in their gifts and backed away from the river banks. Nimrodel had tears flowing down her cheeks, Tillyenna's head was resting on Galandiel's shoulder and Legolas' arm was wrapped around Tinuviel's shoulders. Legolas was crying inside as he thought of how Gilthoniel could have been his bride, but was also please that in the end she found someone she loved.

Galadriel had managed to track down Findiel's family, his father came down to see his son, sorry that he had turned him away, guilty he hadn't tried to find him, and happy to see him again. Findiel's father had brought some of Findiel's childhood toys and favourite items in the boat.

Rumil and Orophin, after they had laid flowers in the boat, stood beside Gilthoniel and Celeborn. Neither had anything to say to each other, after Haldir had died, Gilthoniel had been the only thing to keep them going. But no more. Each looked stretched, tired, as though they were too sad to go on.

A burning torch touched the straw surrounding them and the boat was pushed out into the river. As the boat went up in flames, either side of river archers fitted arrows into their bows and a cloud of arrows flew up into the air after them.

On the bank of the river, stood Arvedui the bay mare and Windfolá the gray stallion stood side-by-side. As the little boat went past, both reared up onto their back legs and neighed. They turned together and walked into the forest, never to be seen in Lórien again.

In the heart of the forest, the pack of wolves that Elendil used to be a part of, stopped and lifted their muzzles to the wind. They had been searching for her since they had been separated in the mist the day Gilthoniel had run away into the snow, but now they seemed to know that they would never see there lead she-wolf again, and howled their sad song to the night wind.