

The background of the cover is a rich, textured illustration. It depicts a dense forest floor with a variety of yellow and green flowers, some with blue and purple accents. A bright blue light source, possibly a firefly or a small magical light, is visible in the center-left. A yellow butterfly is perched on a dark, textured rock or log in the lower right. The overall style is painterly and detailed.

KARLEIGH  
BONN

Tales of  
ELDELÓRIE

BOOK ONE

*Tales of*  
**ELDELÓRNE**

*Book One of a High Fantasy Trilogy*

*Written by*

**KARLEIGH BON**



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KDP

*This story is dedicated  
to those souls kept separated  
by time and circumstance.*

*And to Mom, for telling me  
I have a good imagination  
rather than crazy  
when she found me talking  
to the chickens at age nine.*

## LEND ADH ESTEL

Book one of, Tales of Eldelórne, sets the stage for the complete Eldelórne trilogy. Chapters one through six give you a peek into the life of *Thendiel Aran'eliad*, and bring the reader up to speed on how her sons came to be as it comes full circle and culminates in her leaving.

But this, first of three tomes on the subject, is not about Thendiel. It is about her sons, *Roevash* and *Eijlam*. We soon find ourselves entering the Fourth Age of Mankind where creatures of fantasy such as *Edhelath*, or *elves* as they are known in common tongue, do not trouble the minds of men except in the stuff of children's bedtime stories.

As our fairytale unwinds, a budding love begins and the past comes back with a vengeance. There are many layers to this account as the Arus of the undying lands of Ilmatar and the sons of Thendiel collide.

The following prologue is a soliloquy reflecting on the unraveling threads of Thendiel's life when she finds herself leaving the mortal realm as the next sun rises. Her heart-wrenching choices unwittingly break her family, sending her sons on very different paths.

The mortal and immortal realms will be faced with circumstances that set the clock ticking down. Can Roevash and Eijlam put aside their differences or will *long memory* prove they are doomed to repeat past transgressions?

Each weighty tome in this trilogy is a stand-alone edition, but you may want to investigate all three volumes of this ancient tapestry woven of song, light, and love. I hope you enjoy them all.

For your convenience, Elvish translations, a glossary *with spoilers*, author info, and even a table of contents are printed on the last pages of all the writings. Seriously, do not look if you hate spoilers, and with that said, let the story begin.

## ARAN'ELIAD

Branches like skeletal fingers thrust upward beyond the thin cover of green, their dry bones rattling madly against the low,

silvery clouds as if gasping for one last breath. A storm was threatening. The evening had grown dismal in the sharp breeze.

Thendiel Aran'eliad was there making her way through the tangle that had become the Illianheni gardens. This was to be her last visit. She came to say goodbye and offer what comfort she could.

Thendiel frowned, not willing to believe her eyes. The place where she spent many happy times in her youth stood eerie in the failing light. Giant moss-covered corpses of once-majestic sentinel trees hung in ponderous disarray, waiting for their final collapse.

Woeful songs of loss and death quietly trickled down the back of Thendiel's senses as she ran loving hands over crumbling bark and limb to ease the passing.

"I am with you," Thendiel gently assured. Her stinging nose stabbed until a wash of tears ran down her face. Her sorrow was as much for her own loss of time as theirs.

"Goodbye, my oldest and dearest friends," Thendiel whispered in the ancient way of trees.

"Too soon, all that is left of us are old poems." She softly wept as one by one, their voices went silent.

Illianheni had been the meeting place where the three elven kingdoms from the lands of Ainghaille had celebrated the seasons passing. Despite the creeping devastation, the thinning gardens still showed a few signs of the splendid majesty it once knew.

The glitter of a waterfall could be seen in the dimming light of dusk. It poured down as if the spout of a giant ewer hung from the upper precipice on the highest cliff to the east. Stately mallorn trees clustered together near its lower pool, towering a grand eighty feet in an array of mossy umbrellas.

The Mallorn were the last of the dark green that drew the eyes of the visitor. Thendiel was only an elfling when her king spoke here long ago near that very spot. So much had happened since those simpler times.

Thendiel sighed. The gardens had been long dwindling because the Edhelath were leaving these lands. Turning away, she walked toward the old, narrow footbridge that spanned the wide, flowing tributary of the Vodla River.

"Surely this cannot be the true plan of our *Arus in Ilmatar*, to abandon completely this mortal realm," she said, shaking her head at what felt to her like such an abrupt end.

In truth, it had been some time now since Thendiel had heard those first rumors that Edhelath were migrating back to their unfading lands to rest in the ever-twilight forests of Ilmatar.

She was shocked to find that *everyone*, even her dear friend Willow from the Ettenfalís kingdom, had departed without a word. Ettenfalís was discovered empty, its trees gone dormant. Soon afterward, the celebrations that once graced the Illianheni gardens stopped.

For some odd reason, the Autumwood Kingdom, which included Thendiel's home village of Eldelórne, clung to the mortal realm. She knew of a few elves that had migrated but not at the apparent rate of the other kingdoms. Or so, it also seemed to Thendiel. She scowled, unable to ponder such a mystery for long. She had her own pressing condition to deal with.

Thendiel's life had stretched unnaturally thin, and thus she herself was being forced to migrate or lose her existence entirely to the *true-death*. If such a thing happened, Thendiel's spirit would never reawaken, as is the way of Edhelath who find rest in their immortal lands.

Edhel are creatures of free spirit, and at the same time, clans live so closely connected to one another that the loss of one for an eternity was devastating. Such ruination of life is a concept that elves could never truly grasp. The thought of suffering true-death was cause for real fear.

Thendiel had felt the call. It started some time ago, just after the birth of her second son. She stubbornly willed herself to stay for the sake of her *younglings*. Her decision came with a cost.

She found herself in a constant struggle against a growing pain that tore at her both in spirit and mind. No elvenkin could resist the beckoning song of their gods for long.

"I hope Roevash and Eijlam can understand. This is *my fault* that I find myself so frail." Thendiel's brow had long furrowed into worried lines.

"*Never* was it right to *have to* tell them," she angrily snapped, shaking off the shame of lost moments.

"I do not have time for regrets now." Thendiel quickened her pace across the last span of bridge.

Thendiel's long silvery hair wrapped her in a ghostly shroud as the full moon glittered alive in an oval pool on the water below. Songs of night creatures waking up from the shadows danced and played across the water far below.

The sharp buzz of a fat June beetle tickled Thendiel's ear as it tumbled past in the moist, hot air. She almost smiled. She could not remember how long it had been since she last felt like smiling.

Stepping off the last wooden plank, Thendiel stopped and turned, savoring the scents and sounds that filled her homeland. She could not control the sting that welled in her eyes.

"I must be strong for the sake of them. Tomorrow the horses will carry me," Thendiel broke into heaving sobs, her long hair tangling over her face as she clung to the bridge support.

"I must *not* give up," she angrily cried.

"Where are the wizards when you need them!" Thendiel spat out the words, disappointed at such a glaring absence.

"Ellinduil vowed he would *not fail me*." Thendiel knew her king was sending his guard to carry her to Arus Ahto's ships. She only prayed she had not tarried too long in the asking.

Thendiel straightened herself. Exhaling a deep breath, she headed for home, instinctively putting a hand up by her heart, feeling the old amulet that always hung there. A bit of relief passed over her in finding it safe.

"At least this was not lost," she murmured as a cloud broke, dripping warm, wide, pattering drops, gouging pungent soil beneath the forest green. Wiping her face on a damp sleeve, Thendiel's feet skimmed over familiar stone on the path that led to Eldelórne.

*Thoughts of him brought Thendiel's mind to the past as she remembered her life in this place...*



# SACRED GARDENS

## *Chapter One*

The village of Eldelórne was made up of enormous trees whose branches wove into spectacular walkways and hanging gardens for the Edhelath who lived there. These elder-homes had many levels that magically opened to form rooms and smooth-flowing chambers.

Their honey-golden interiors softly glowed, radiating healing warmth, light, and affection for their edhel inhabitants. For as far back as long memory could provide, one tree, found in the very center of the community, had always been part of Thendiel's clan.

Along with the knowledge on how to unlock the magics of plants, Thendiel's mother, Esabel, had a strong empathic ability that allowed her to understand the subtle languages that flowed like song throughout the forest. All elves commune with nature, but even Thendiel's own father did not share the deeper way of a true empath.

Young Thendiel found she had her mother's gift. Early on, she could easily speak to her tree home and the small creatures that liked to climb in its branches. She practiced her connection by telling the great trees all her secrets as true friends would.

She found that each one had an unpronounceable yet knowable name that flowed deep in its life's blood. Ancient and all-knowing, the elder-trees of Eldelórne were a great, unmoving family with roots threaded deep in the lands of the Autumwood kingdom.

From youth to young adult, Thendiel had attended the many gatherings just across the river in the Illianheni gardens. The footbridge that connected the two places swayed in the sultry, warm air.

Flitting dragonflies skimmed over the water far below, their staccato wings humming songs of new life for all that noticed. Thendiel smiled at them as her footsteps led her across the bridge.

Today was the beginning of the spring festival. Edhelath from the kingdoms of Ettenfalis and Caras Eldarhon were busily setting up camps and getting ready to join in the celebration.

To everyone's delight, colorful blossoms of every shape and size filled the Illianheni garden to brimming. Flowers adorned cliff and hillside and even decorated piles of rock, all thanks to the hard work and talented hands of the Eldelórne tenders.

The great sentinel trees kept watch at the forest edges, keeping the boundaries of Illianheni safe. The very young played their games of hide and seek among the trees with no fear of harm. These gatherings were an important time for sharing ideas, sharing good food and wine, and lots of music and dancing.

Thendiel moved past the crowds in the direction of her favorite hideaway. Deep within a wide sleeve of her homespun tunic, she hid a small book of ancient poetry. The plan was to curl up against a warm tree while there was still enough daylight to read. She would join in the festivities later.

"Much later," Thendiel smiled to herself as she made her way past all the friendly, happy faces. Thendiel loved her solitude and her poetry book. The old language played across the pages like the songs of the forest, filling her mind with stories that she truly held dear.

Thendiel happened upon a young ranger near the water's edge. He had dark hair and startled blue eyes that shone like pale stars against the pool's reflection.

"Who are you," he quietly asked, using the language of the common tongue. He dared not move for fear this beautiful vision whom happened upon his meditations might vanish away.

"What is your name," he again asked.

The long-haired girl turned, looking for escape. The young man saw the tip of her ear and knew she did not understand his words.

"Mê dh'ovannen," he greeted her formally and her eyes riveted onto him curiously.

"No vêt i thîn," (*Nice evening*) he politely added and she seemed to relax a little, that is, until he stood up. His great height startled Thendiel into stepping back.

"Man i theled i cheniagir Edhellen," she demanded to know how and why such a strange large human spoke in the tongue of the forest clans.

The young man bowed showing respect as he introduced himself by name.

"My name is Marin," he gently spoke. "I am sorry my height and my tongue disturbs you but it is my birthright to be such as I am," he shrugged helplessly.

He looked so piteously to her Thendiel had to hide a smile.

"This is *my* place," she informed him with narrowing eyes, not giving up the battle for the privacy she had somehow already lost.

“I was not *aware* Edhel could own such things,” he replied with a kind smirk that made Thendiel blush.

“The belief is *truth*,” she awkwardly admitted, averting her eyes to the ground, her face blushed.

“I mean to say this is a favored, quiet place. I visit here alone, *to read*.” Thendiel fidgeted, feeling the need to apologize and explain herself. Marin noticed the book she now clutched to her bosom.

“May I,” he held out a hand.

Not really sure *what* to do with herself, Thendiel thought she need not seem so rude. In a gesture of trust, she carefully held her precious book out to him.

“It is lovely.” Marin’s fingers admired the beautiful leather tooling along the edge of the cover while his eyes studied her.

Thendiel stood curiously watching as the man casually sat down at the water’s edge and began to read a passage. She had only to hear his soothing low voice speak the ancient words, and her heart was stolen away.

“Bein dór-o galad,

Near-o i beleg lanthir tond Mallorn gal.

Ae glinn ar or, olwa voro-o emme linwe.

Padad in aer lond,

Vuin’amin, thui-ed nin tul.”

“This is a verse about *these* gardens,” Marin recognized much to Thendiel’s delight. She found herself grinning, daring to step closer to the handsome young man sitting cross-legged on the ground. Soon Thendiel was draped over Marin’s broad shoulder, pointing out mistakes in his use of the archaic language. Light as a bird, she was to him. He delighted at her intensity as she spoke.

Even after it was long past reading under the darkening sky, the couple found themselves laughing together as they shared stories. Marin leaned over and handed Thendiel her precious book. She had been so entranced that she had forgotten he was keeping it.

For a moment, their faces lingered close.

“Can you return before the sun sets on the morrow,” Marin anxiously whispered. Her lips parted as his breath tickled her ear.

As soft as a breeze, Thendiel kissed his cheek, welcoming his friendship. As she turned and vanished into the forest, Marin sat wondering if this had all been just a dream.

The military outpost where Marin came from was cleverly hidden beneath a stone quarry in the eastern foothills on the other side of the Illianheni gardens. The outpost had grown into a small garrison of elite fighting forces and their families. Their job was to stop all monstrosities who dared stray out of the Ajattara Fells. There had been too many reports of such sightings to be ignored. So, the Darjalian rangers kept their ever watchful eyes and readied blades fixed to the east.

Needless to say, Thendiel stubbornly refused to stop seeing the mortal human against her parents' council. Her golden-brown hair flowed around her in great waves as she ran across the bridge to meet with Marin.

The two walked hand in hand along the many stone paths in the garden, reciting songs and poems to escape the problems of the day. They found an endearing friendship that could never be broken. She was his beloved, and so was he hers. Constant in their desire to stay together, they spoke the vows to each other in front of witnesses. Thendiel made a home with Marin among his people.

The Rangers had their hands full most days with the goblins, trolls, and ogres that stalked the mountain paths and foothills to the east. The Darjalian folk had a healing place in their village where Thendiel helped care for the wounded and the sick. She shared with them her practices and knowledge of the rarer healing herbs found only in the local area. There was plenty to keep busy in a military outpost.

As Marin and Thendiel had feared, on the last day of the autumnal season, he was called away to fight in a war far to the north for a king that she did not know. Filled with sorrow, they lay down in their most favored place in the garden where the highest falls collected at its source. There among the sweet-smelling flowers, Marin and Thendiel spent their final hours together. Thendiel's cries mingled with the sound of the rushing waters as Marin held her tightly to his heart.

As dawn's light lingered at the edge of time, Marin could only gaze solemnly down at Thendiel for there were no more words to speak. Sharing the tenderest of kisses, he never wanted to let her go. Marin turned away with his duty and his regiment.

Thendiel watched as her beloved faded into the distance. Only when he was out of her sight did she lose all strength and fall down weeping. The other ranger's wives picked her up and helped her home.

"Ú-cheniadhír," Thendiel cried out as they set her in her bed.

“Death will take me, *this is too much*.” She was a pureblooded Edhel with an eternity to mourn. Thendiel fell into a deep, deathlike sleep. Elves call this *healing slumber*, but she slept alone and when she woke, Thendiel found she could not be cured of a broken heart.

There were so many more losses, many more sorrow-filled days as men filed away to war. Although it was not their fault, Thendiel found little comfort being among her husband's people. She grew restless. When the gardens turned colorless in the emptiness of the hibernal season, she decided to go back to her clan's home across the river in Eldelórne.

Thendiel's family home stood vacant upon her return. She was shocked when she realized that without word or warning, the song of Ilmatar had called both her parents away during her absence.

“*Nooooooo, Marin'amin, den ú ídhron abelas!* I do not *want* this sorrow,” Thendiel screamed at this final insult to her heart. Even her tree home could not comfort her. She collapsed to the cold ground, not ever wanting to wake again.

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Winter storms chilled the southern lands, covering sandy loam and everything that lay upon it in a thin web of motes and the grey of deep slumber.

Time seemed to stand still until the first green poked through the hoary blanket, blooming into the yellow and blue of the vernal sky. As the sun returned to the land, blossoms crowded around, filling senses with a heady sweetness and yearning.

Winter's shroud fell away as the sleeper carefully pulled herself to sitting. Her hand protectively investigated the bare skin of her abdomen. Thendiel's eyes opened to a quiet voice at the edge of a dream. It came from in-between places where only a mother can hear her unborn.

Surrounded by the soft press of flowering life, Thendiel found her body had changed. Misery of the past turned to joy upon realizing this was Marin's son. Thirst and hunger gnawed at Thendiel's insides. She rose with renewed hope and was no longer alone.

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In the days to come, Thendiel solemnly took up the family tradition of herbalism. The duties of the healing arts eased her mind as the work brought a feeling of normalcy to her life.

Being half-human, her unborn was larger than usual. Thendiel's girth swelled visibly as quickening came early. As far as anyone in the village knew, there had never been a mixing of edhel and human bloods, so none of what was witnessed was considered normal.

Thendiel was in the village marketplace when a flood broke from her body. In the absence of knowledge concerning human birth, the elves could only think to rush her to the privacy of her home. The realization that this was a birth, near approaching, came apparent to the more experienced *elders* as they laid Thendiel on her bed.

After long suffering, a kind not known among elves, the sound of a new life could be heard howling from Thendiel's home. Mother and newborn had miraculously survived under the scrutiny of the village.

Thendiel lay exhausted, basking in the curious sensations of new motherhood. Large blue starlit eyes gazed quietly up at his mother. In seeing his gaze, the pain of delivery was replaced by an undeniable bond of love.

The unborn had not revealed to Thendiel, in the usual way of *edhel*, his name. Thendiel thought that might be expected. She called him *Roevash*, after the stag prince of the wild hunt found in her most cherished poem.

Pangs of loneliness crept in as Thendiel snuggled her small half-*edhel* boy and wondered if his father would ever be allowed to return.

# EDHEL BORN

## *Chapter Two*

Bring the light, Roe,” Thendiel directed her young son. He picked the lantern carefully off the table with his right hand and brought it over to the hearth.

“Light the flame like this,” Thendiel took a small stick and, using the flame from the lantern, brought a tiny fire to light the edges of the kindling in the stone fireplace. It smelled of dry oak leaves and then of sweet fruitwoods that she had gathered that day along the beach. Thendiel said a silent prayer of passing to her tree home and felt the hum of appreciation.

“You must only use fallen wood and things found at the water’s edge in the hearth. Our friends would not appreciate us hacking them up to burn.”

“I understand,” Roevash stared sadly into the fire.

“What troubles you?” Thendiel reached over and gave her son a quick hug as she set the burning stick down.

“I got in a fight again,” he glanced down at a hand that hung hidden against his side. Thendiel sat down on her large rocking chair in silence and pulled her son onto her lap. Watching the flickering fire, she waited for his confession.

“Some elflings killed a sapling to build a fire. I heard it cry as they pulled it down. I tried to stop them...”

“And you could not,” she finished his thought with a sad exhale.

“Not every bloodline has the deep empathy for the trees as we do, Roe.” Her chin cradled the top of his head.

“I feel sorry for them,” Thendiel said in a low voice. “This proves their shallowness to the true songs of nature. Such carelessness spills out into offspring from generations. This is why the wisdom of our *Eldars* governs us.

These offenders will be given warning. I am sure of it.” She gently tapped a toe on the floor, and the big chair rocked.

“But I *wanted* to hurt them,” Roevash admitted.

“Those elflings will *not learn* from this.” She hugged her son tighter. “You would only fuel their bias against us and get yourself hurt. Let me see it,” said Thendiel tiredly as she waited for her son to show her his injury.

How she knew such things was a *shocking* mystery to Roevash. He placed his smaller hand in hers. His left hand's pointer finger had grown purple and swollen all the way to the back of his hand.

"Did I break it?" He started to cry but caught himself only to loudly sniff into his other sleeve instead.

"No, I do not see a break here. Though I imagine it hurts," she kissed the back of his hand.

"This is nothing a good night of healing sleep will not cure." She bundled Roevash up closer in her arms as she prepared to tell him a bedtime story. Thendiel recited a familiar tale of brave and noble men and elves as her son pressed his small face into her long golden-brown hair. It flowed down across his shoulders like a protective blanket.

"Ah, sleepyhead," Thendiel kissed her sleeping son gently on the forehead. She carried him to her room and lay him on the bed. With him secure in her arms, they fell into deep healing slumber.

Thendiel was aware of the bias among the Edhelath concerning her son's taller stature, darker hair, and complexion that he bore from his father's lineage. She tried to encourage Roevash to believe in his uniqueness as a gift and his strength. She was often disappointed with her village's small-mindedness.

Thendiel remembered how it felt to be excluded from games. As a young one, she watched from a distance, unable to keep up with the running laughter playing throughout the woods. Her family's tree was a comfort to her in those days as it is now for her half-elven boy.

Roevash never understood why the other young ones shied away or called him names. He learned how to scowl fiercely, giving them what they expected. He soon discovered he didn't have to use physical force because young elves who threw insulting words, more often than not, had no real strength to back them up.

He never asked about his mortal half because of the abuse he suffered for being different. In his child-mind, Roevash imagined that his mother was set upon by some unspeakable horror. He didn't want to be the living reminder of such a bad experience. So, for the sake of her, despite the occasional intolerant neighbor, Roevash tried very hard to be the best edhel that he could manage.

When Roe was old enough to help with the family's tradition of healing alchemy, his mother's smile was his guiding light. She



delighted in all of his accomplishments. She was the strength of his heart in a life of real conflict.

One day, as they were collecting herbs in the forest, Roevash heard strains of a strange music far off in the distance.

“What is that, mother?” The sound of it seemed to change the very air around them as it grew closer.

“We must go inside!” Thendiel hastily grabbed the basket. Taking her son by the hand, she bolted for their home.

“Keep us safe, beloved tree! Hide us from this mournful wind,” Thendiel prayed, frantically running her hands inside the doorway and along the walls.

The tree home answered. The place shook and moaned as glass in windows shattered because walls moved and slammed shut.

Thendiel and Roevash found themselves huddled against a broken stone hearth in total darkness.

+++

Glynnath song flowed out across the lands, proclaiming the death of Queen Rhianna. The song compelled the Edhelath to gather at their king’s side. Like bees who have been out in the glades too long, Edhel swarmed toward the Autumwood palace after hearing the song of their sovereign’s illness and loss. Sorrow of this magnitude was felt to the very core.

At the grand palace, King Ellinduil had been found collapsed and grieving unto death. Unbeknownst to all, the king and his queen shared the bond of Yri. Elves who have made such an affirmation of love with one another come to share the same heart, bonded in life and death. The death of one *always* results in the death of the other. King Ellinduil was swept into unending depths of agony with the sudden loss of his beloved Rhianna.

Not truly understanding the hopelessness of the king's torment, healers, Eldars, and advisors gathered. His son and daughter tended their father’s bedside. They would not only lose their father; the kingdom would lose all the grieving Edhel who had come to the palace if he could not be revived from this illness. They only managed to slow his decline as everyone with abilities worked to find a cure.

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“What is a mournful wind?” Roevash was frightened by his mother’s frantic words.

“Someone important,” Thendiel gasped between words.

“It seems our queen has died. We cannot be caught up in this.” Thendiel tried to take a deep breath and relax.

The tree seemed to be doing a fine job in shielding them. Thendiel's fear was more about herself being a pureblooded Edhelath. She was afraid she would be compelled to leave her son if she found herself getting drawn into the magics of such music.

"Why are some more influenced than others?" Roevash was confused. He didn't feel any compulsion to go anywhere.

"It probably has something to do with a level of, or lack of, empathic talent. I really am not sure," Thendiel mumbled out loud as she picked up the basket she had unceremoniously dumped by the door in her panic.

"We have touched on this subject before," she ushered Roevash toward the kitchen to put away the herbs they had gathered and try to explain.

"Perhaps we should speak of it over a bowl of soup." Thendiel suggested to a hearty nodding from Roevash. Doing normal tasks was all Thendiel could think of in attempting to calm them both from what had just happened.

+++

Despite all her efforts to remain unnoticed for her son's sake, Thendiel could not escape her reputation as a healer. Eventually, she was ordered to go to the Autumwood palace when all others had failed to help their king.

Sympathetic magic, divining, use of herbs, and charms were all commonly accepted practices among the Edhel. There were other ways, darker paths which ordinary folk feared and shied away from. It was rumored that Thendiel was instructed in such ancient, forgotten arts.

When she was an elfling, a wizard had appeared in their midst and had taken an interest in her. Some folks always remember that particular autumn festival of *Yavanni Elenea*, where the blue-robed stranger spoke to Thendiel and her parents. When asked about her involvement, Thendiel never admitted an apprenticeship with a master wizard but she also never denied it.

Her family's healing skills were welcome in the village, but neighbors held a bias in the back of their minds concerning Thendiel and the suspect choices she made in her life.

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Roevash watched his mother gather up her long cloak and a few select potions, readying herself for the journey north.

Thendiel absently put her hand over her heart to make sure her amulet was still around her neck as she bent down and gently kissed her son on his cheek. It was the first time they would be apart since

his birth, but there was no ignoring a summons sent directly from the king's magistrate.

Feeling the depths of her son's sadness, Thendiel knelt down and hugged his small frame one last time.

"Stay safe, and *no fighting*," Thendiel firmly said as an afterthought.

"I am not expecting to be gone long." She sighed, her hand unsuccessfully straightening out a rumpled left sleeve of Roe's tunic.

"I will only stay long enough to help the king in his suffering. I will be returning before you know it," Thendiel tried to reassure her son with another warm smile.

Roevash wanted to smile, but there was nothing to do about it. He could not help the foreboding feeling of loss that washed over him as he stood alone watching his mother walk the stone path that led her away from their home.

# THE KING'S HEART

## *Chapter Three*

King Ellinduil's clan once lived in oceans, navigating their lives by the stars. At the end of the Second Age, the *Age of the Dragon*, actions orchestrated by Surmanos set his father's household running for their lives. A young prince at the time, Ellinduil was thought to have been captured on a shore too close to the edge of his father's kingdom.

Under duress and with no hope of finding Ellinduil alive, his ousted father, King Alphas, along with his mother, Queen Analia, and sister, Celaine, were forced to abandon their search for him and flee. The family made their way far across the land into a strange forested place. There they eventually found sanctuary.

It came in the form of a small shelter woven among ancient sentient trees deep within the bowels of the Autumwood forest. Ellinduil's sister was the first to sense the voices. The trees whispered of their desire to be harmonized with this new Edhelath. King Alphas and his queen were more than happy to agree to their wishes.

It was because of men's wars throughout the First and Second Ages that scattered the sylvan Edhel. They fought to survive for so long that they all but had forgotten their birthright of magics and the language of trees.

The Autumwood kingdom was born under Alphas and Analia's influence, as the trees formed themselves into a grand palace. From then on, this living refuge had a calming effect on wild Edhel and soon became home to many.

The sylvan folk soon came to rely on Alphas and Analia's guidance and wisdom. The couple were crowned within the forest clans who named them their king and queen. By the time Ellinduil had found his way inland to the Autumwood kingdom, the place was in a state of distress and mourning. The beloved ruling family had died only days before at the hands of the *kinslayer*.

Ellinduil bore the crown that his father had forged before him. Now much older and wiser, he gathered the power of starlight to protect his new kingdom.

The violence of the past had taken his home and now his family, and for these reasons, Ellinduil fervently kept his queen and these lands safely hidden from both Edhel and humankind.

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With King Ellinduil's failing health, his magics were slowly seeping away, leaving his lands and those who lived there unprotected. What remained of the king's enchantments radiated like a fog throughout the forest. Glimpses of armor could be seen as the king's faithful guard patrolled among the trees.

The thinning mist drifted away as Thendiel walked forward into it. Something skittered along the cool shadow of the underbrush, but Thendiel's mind was on the king's guard.

Two of the old guard that once knew Thendiel's father recognized her and solemnly ushered her to a hidden opening that led through a grove of huge sentinel trees. As she made her way, the forest opened to reveal an expansive bridleway that looked as though it was more for presentation than practical use. It was easily wide enough for two carriages abreast.

The straight road spanned the last one hundred lengths to the palace gate. It was made up of polished agate of a light coloration that came to a structure set into a grand bed of blue flowers. There was no river to be found that would demand such a bridge be built in this place. Thendiel marveled at intricate vine patterns carved on low side rails as she slowly walked while running a palm along the length of it.

She wondered how many hands it took to create such a thing. Ornate and beautifully kept, the bridge itself looked as though it were hewn from a single piece of ivory quartz.

Thendiel noticed three odd creatures nibbling at flower blossoms. The dark bluish-grey one stretched itself tall as if to salute. Thendiel smirked.

"The wizards have decided to join me in this after all," she murmured as she quickly moved on.

The purpose of the bridleway came clear as Thendiel descended the far side of the bridge, her arrival illuminated by the stone's reflected light. She smiled at the cleverness of her king in using nature over magics, bringing her mind back to the seriousness of this visit. Thendiel frowned as she continued unhindered toward a tall green door.

From the gate's ornate center peak, the entry looked split all the way down the middle. As Thendiel neared the grand height, it creaked and groaned open. The gatekeepers politely bowed in welcome as she crossed the darkened threshold, her eyes adjusting to the dim light of the cavernous interior of the palace entryway. Once inside, the guards ushered her directly to the ailing king.

As she entered the bedroom chamber, the king's council of closest advisers and family suddenly surrounded her. They had gathered to

watch this simple, *sylvan healer* attempt a cure. Thendiel trembled as she pulled off her cloak and set her things aside. There were no wizards in sight to help her.

Thendiel took a deep breath and turned her focus on the one who lay death-like on the pillows. All eyes riveted to her as she drew near. She saw a vision of a heart as it drifted away through the veil of the king's fading life.

"His queen has met with the true death," Thendiel said at the sight of it. Some of the officials gasped. Their distain was not lost on Thendiel. She knew rumors traveled, only growing worse for it.

"The king and queen are Yri," she quickly added, changing the tone in the room.

With a determined look in her eyes, Thendiel gently began to sing a simple magic. She was determined to remind the king of the life he still had with his son and daughter. Filled with grief and fear, everyone moved in closer. They held small hope that Thendiel might be able to reach their king's dying ears.

Ellinduil's unmoving face continued to drain of life. Thendiel knew she had to hold on to him before he was too far gone. In the realization of what little time was left to him, she quickly sat on the bed next to her king. Taking up Ellinduil's hand, she wove their fingers into a firm grip that would not be broken.

Closing her eyes, Thendiel let her mind fill with words she had learned long ago as an elfling. It was a power older than time itself that she now dared bring into existence. An invisible force surrounded Thendiel with a bright glow as the strains of her voice increased in willful demand, carving her intentions into the very air itself.

In the moments that followed, a death-like hush fell over those in attendance as they were frozen in their places. Thendiel's eyes burst wide, her body arching, her hair rising in shimmering waves. A golden sheen pressed outward, engulfing the entire room in its bubble. Thendiel paused at the silence within, waiting for the familiar muffled pop as what firmament reached out to her and grew heavy, signaling she and her king had entered into the spirit realm.

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Outside the king's chamber, the sound of hopeful prayer sung by Glynnath voices rose, flooding the palace and surrounding lands. Elves had gathered in solemn vigil, filling the palace throne room and beyond with candlelight and tears.

Roevash sat on his bed, his arms hanging through his open window. He looked out over the treetops. A slight breeze carried the sound of ethereal music out of the forest. The day was at an end, and the coolness of the evening made his cheeks ruddy. Roevash rubbed

his tired face with a small hand. Feeling a weary heaviness, he set his chin down on folded arms. Leaning his head against the windowsill, he listened to the strains of the music. A tear ran down his chin as Roevash fell asleep.

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Once crossed over into the spirit realm, Thendiel could clearly see the deep grief that troubled her king and why his agony persisted. Heart to heart, a ghostly remnant hovered over the prone body of the king. It clung to his chest, its arms tightly wrapped around his neck. Ellinduil's spirit wrenched against her queen's phantom. Only the fragile cage of the king's stubborn mortality held him back from joining her.

If Thendiel were to bring her king out of this realm alive, she would have to sever the sacred bond between these two beloved spirits. This would be difficult without committing the queen's spirit to true death.

Thendiel's magics reached out in tendrils of glittering warmth. The shimmering ribbons sliced deep into the root of two hearts that beat as one. Bit by bit, Thendiel's magics gently pressed between the couple.

Twining spirits cried out in the pain of such a terrible act, but Thendiel's song would not be denied. Her voice rang true with cutting precision. First, one hand and then the next, the queen's spirit loosened its grip. She flailed like sailcloth in the wind, only a thin umbilical-like cord between them. Thendiel took a deep breath and readied herself for the final cut when her head hummed with uninvited pressure. Swirling darkness seemingly out of nowhere loomed toward her, demanding all her attention.

At first, Thendiel thought the entity was the *Arus keepers*, come to usher away the spirit of the queen, but no, this thing that was fast approaching was too violent, too imposing. Thendiel had been sorely mistaken. She realized exactly how wrong she was as the torrential darkness unfolded into a gaping maw.

"No!" Thendiel angrily shouted. Her hand went out, holding at her fingertips the golden scintillation of a shield, but she alone was not strong enough to stop what was happening.

"Time, I need *more time*," Thendiel's mind screamed.

Nothing she knew could have prepared her for this thing they were being pulled into. She held a hope that the queen and king's spirits might escape, but where they would end up, she did not know.

"Away from here," was all Thendiel could concentrate on under the circumstances.

Though hope faded, she was now more determined than ever to protect her king and his queen for as long as she could. She kept her voice steady, but then the queen's spirit ripped away, disappearing into the unforgiving storm of the abyss.

"NO!" Burst from Thendiel's mouth, silencing her magics. She couldn't reach for her. There was no time. Pain and confusion were unmistakable on the queen's face as it swept away.

Wide-eyed, Thendiel turned back to Ellinduil, still sealed in her aching grasp. To her horror, the edges of his body began to erode. She and her king were sifting sand in the churning chaos. Sorrow filled Thendiel's heart as she realized her own approaching end and the failure of the ones who had promised to protect her.

As in a dream, a thread of silvery-white light snaked across all barriers through the churning darkness with only one purpose. Thendiel was fading fast in the agony of the storm when the shining bolt took her. It coiled itself around her writhing body, filling her with radiance; holding her firmly in its control.

A song tore out of Thendiel's lungs like the first ripe green buds bursting on the frozen branch. She was succor from sand, water from light. She was thrust forth, rippling new with life in a shimmering stream that would not be denied as it shattered, mingled, reformed...

The powerful wave carried Thendiel far from the chaos that had surrounded her. Cool stones beneath her feet hummed with tones of healing light. There on that landing, Thendiel lingered, basking in a calm presence that held her in its soft caress.

As senses ebbed back, Thendiel felt urged to move forward. She slowly led Ellinduil down the walkway. At the end of the path, there stood a pedestal made up of silvery water. It flowed steadily upward from its base. A ghostly heart hovered in the gushing liquid.

Realizing that she had freed him from the pain of his grief, Ellinduil could only watch in curious silence. Thendiel quietly let go, knowing what she must do next.

As if his eyes were opened for the first time, Ellinduil thought he had never seen anyone so beautiful as this one who held his beating heart in her hands. His eyes riveted to hers as she moved in close. With one almost imperceptible hesitation, Thendiel gazed upon her king face to face, and then gently pressed the heart's silvery light to his bare chest.

With an audible gasp, Ellinduil's heart melted into its proper place. His eyes shot wide as his lungs filled with breath.

The assembly woke from sleep as in that instant the golden bubble surrounding the king's bedchamber melted away. No longer holding



tightly to his hand, Thendiel collapsed to Ellinduil's bed completely drained of her senses.

The others looked on, murmuring at the healer's transformation. Her long golden-brown hair was now silvery-white, and her skin turned pale as frosted glass.

Unable to do anything more or less, King Ellinduil put his arms around Thendiel and pulled her body in close to himself, instinctively curling into a deep healing slumber as attendants looked on utterly stunned.

# GOING HOME

## *Chapter Four*

It is well known that King Ellinduil had survived many wars and had lived through at least two ages in the realms of both elves and men. In all his long memory, he had never met one so strong-willed in the art of magics as this healer who had given him back his heart.

Ellinduil rested his face against a loose fist as he sat scowling at the lingering flames in the hearth. Everything rumored and known about the *great elven king* was true. He was legendary enough to have killed named dragons. He brought the stubborn Noeglath Kingdom quaking to their knees through words and insight others did not possess. The great king Ellinduil was a living witness to unfathomable evil and yet, when it was ever possible, peace reigned in his wake.

Ellinduil was a seer of long sight. He was wise beyond telling. He loved his queen and his family. Queen Rhianna, the love of his life, *suffered* what should have been *true—death*. They were spirit and *heart-bonded in the sacred unbreakable Yri*.

In a crazed frenzy, an insensate king pulled himself up out of his deathbed to the protests of Eldar who were wiser than he in that moment. King Ellinduil had to see for *himself*. He *had to* consult the seer orb.

The magical crystal did not always reveal what he wished to know, but he propelled himself to it, his desire for clarity *beyond* telling. The orb gave him truth on that day. He knew now, without doubt, his beloved Rhianna slept in peace where immortal Edhelath rested in the safe, ever-twilight of the *Undome Taurë*.

"It is unheard of," Ellinduil mumbled, mulling over again in his mind what he knew. The Undome Taurë of Ilmatar is a place of immortal sleep where only the spirit is allowed to go. It is jealously guarded by the Arus of Ilmatar.

"I was there *with you, my love!*" Pain fired through Ellinduil's senses, cutting into his thoughts. An involuntary groan burst from his throat.

An attendant silently fluttered a hand at another attendant, who ran for more firewood, thinking that was the king's complaint. Ellinduil pulled the blanket he wore tighter. It slid up over his shoulder with the help of someone's hand. He was cold. It was an unnatural cold.

He suffered from a deep chill that came from being marked by the true-death itself and having escaped such a fate. Ellinduil gently placed a shaking hand to his heart. Its beat rang strangely hollow, like a melody with the harmony cut out. *Rhianna was his heart!* That was the hardest part to bear in this whole matter.

A tear ran down a tired line on his face. In Ellinduil's mind, he was not sure whether his continued existence in this age was sound wisdom. His shoulders collapsed into his chest as he fought to stifle a sob. He had already lived *too many* long ages, but then his thoughts shifted to curiosity.

"*Thendiel*," he whispered. Somehow, he had learnt her name through the haze of those first days.

The vision of her holding the pulsing glow of his heart in her hands would be indelibly engraved in his long memory. Thendiel had gone into the sacred place of the Arus and brought him back!

With his last shred of strength, Ellinduil had grappled his seer orb's pedestal willing, no, *demanding* it show him something about his rescuer he could understand. *That* was just before he collapsed. Ellinduil remembered a flurry of attendants and angry Eldars hauling him back to his bedchamber to recover.

Thendiel was not simply *a healer*. He had gleaned that much. Where Thendiel was concerned, the seer orb showed him *no past, no future*, and yet here she was clearly a living subject of his kingdom. The impossibility of her existence puzzled in his mind.

"The entire kingdom would have been lost to oblivion but for the strength of Thendiel's song." Ellinduil moaned in sudden discomfort.

Memories of the ordeal were punctuated with waves of pain. He knew without a doubt none of this garble in his mind would be sorted until he was stronger.

A kind hand with a floral-scented cloth wiped away sweat that had beaded on his brow. Ellinduil's eyes glanced over at the attendant who was his son. He could only share a weak smile in this pallid condition.

Ellinduil watched another stoke wood into the hearth. He recognized his daughter. The warmth was welcome. He hugged the blanket closer to himself. It was unnatural to feel so cold in this hot summer climate. Ellinduil gritted his teeth to stop a shuddering spasm.

"So, beyond all reason, I am made to remain in this realm," the king conceded as he continued to convalesce, and Thendiel remained a mystery.

Thendiel woke in good health after sleeping in the arms of her king. Ellinduil had not fared as well, but that would be expected. Thendiel was quickly escorted away to a private room where a bath and a clean assortment of gowns were laid out for her choosing.

She was shocked when she found a stranger staring back at her from a mirror that was attached to the back edge of a small table that she found in her new accommodations.

"But, not quite a stranger," she thought as she slowly slid down into the vanity's matching chair and leaned in for another close inspection.

"Nothing hurts," Thendiel thought as she carefully studied her face. She accepted the changes as the penalty for using and maybe even slightly abusing the old magics.

"I prefer to think of it as stretching the rules," she said willfully.

She had done nothing in Ilmatar with bad intent.

"So, maybe this is only temporary," Thendiel made a guess.

Only the wizards could tell her for certain, and they were glaringly absent right now. A slight tap on the door-jam startled Thendiel from her thoughts.

"Please make plans to stay a while longer," the Elder healer pronounced. Thendiel did want to keep an eye on the king's progress, so she agreed. The Eldar had already turned and left the room, her outfit swishing loudly as she disappeared down the corridor. Thendiel stared at the empty place where the voice had so quickly come and gone and wondered what it was that she had agreed to?

She had to admit she had lost some ability to focus. Only time would tell if she had permanent damage after surviving such an arduous task.

Finally, the day came when Ellinduil felt strong enough to go outside for a short attended walk in the sunshine. He was delighted to find his rescuer was still in the palace. He requested that she accompany him. Ellinduil walked slowly with his cane while he gently wrapped Thendiel's hand over his arm. Careful not to make her feel as though she had to hold him up, Ellinduil placidly led Thendiel through the beautiful palace gardens.

"You truly shine brighter than the morning star," he said, regarding her with his piercing grey eyes.

They soon came to a spot where there was seating enough for two. Ellinduil motioned for Thendiel to rest as he sat down near her. There was no easy way to tell her what was on his mind, so he just began.

“While inside the stream of life, a vision was revealed to me.” He thoughtfully scowled down at the ground. That caught Thendiel’s attention.

“What are you trying to tell me,” she pressed.

“You are going to have a little one, a son,” he told her as gently as he could. Thendiel stiffened.

“But I fell into your bed only once, and it was innocent!” She tried to hide her shock. She did not know what else to say, having had no relations with anyone other than her Marin.

“He is not my son,” Ellinduil graciously smiled at Thendiel’s presumption. She blushed as an apology, realizing her mistake.

“This life you hold is born of Ilmatar.” His expression tilted to get his point across, but Thendiel wasn’t looking at him. She just stared at the ground, her mind reeling.

After meditating many long hours on what he remembered of their shared experience, and with some study in his larger library, Ellinduil’s thoughts concerning their ordeal could only end in one conclusion. In his wisdom, he had discovered the true nature of the light that had taken control of Thendiel. He spared her any further detail. While in the stream of life, Ellinduil had heard her unborn, and that was very real.

“Regardless of how it came to be, this life is precious,” Ellinduil tried to lighten the mood.

“Allow me to shelter you here in the palace,” he begged of her. Still stunned, Thendiel could not answer. As she slowly turned to him and their eyes met, Ellinduil came to realize his purpose for continuing in this life was somehow woven into her unborn son’s destiny. Breaking the silence that had grown between them, he continued.

“It would be my honor to foster *both* your sons. I would call them my own for your protection as well as the care of your eldest.” Ellinduil’s gaze never wavered as he lifted one of her delicate hands to his lips and softly kissed the back of it to seal his promise.

Not knowing what to do, she decided to allow herself to be content in her condition while considering his offer.

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Thendiel offered to read poetry to Ellinduil while he practiced walking with, and then shortly thereafter, without his cane. Every day they met in the gardens. The sound of her voice seemed to strengthen Ellinduil’s stride.

He greatly admired and respected Thendiel, but he was also well aware of the cruelty of rumors that would plague her life.

He would not give up so easily, but at the same time, he did not want these special moments marred by a persistent debate on the subject. As time passed and the king returned to full strength, he came to understand Thendiel's only wish was to go back to her home in Eldelórne.

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"She is a *marvelous*, stubborn elderhis," Ellinduil sputtered, shaking his head in frustration. He paced back and forth alone in his small, private library among his favorite books. It was a cozy, warm room that smelled of old leather and ink. Two comfortable chairs stood empty in front of a cold hearth.

He had offered to retrieve her son, Roevash, so she would not worry or feel pressed to leave, but no matter what Ellinduil suggested, he knew Thendiel would refuse. He could only smile at her willfulness.

"It is that strong *will* that revoked Ilmatar's claim on my life, *our life, Rhianna*," he tenderly said to the ghost that lingered in everything he touched.

"And thus she has kept my beloved alive, here." He put a hand to his chest where his heart still beat.

Ellinduil did not try to stop the tears that streamed down his face. He and his queen were separated in their immortality, but she was *still alive*, waiting for him in Ilmatar's rest. This had *never* happened before among the Yri bonded. It took time for him to come to terms with it, but he was now decidedly grateful to be alive.

"I can only guess, *beloved Rhianna*, how this will end for us now," he whispered as he hugged the dark-green leather-bound journal of their life together tightly in his arms.

One full cycle of the moon had passed since Thendiel brought Ellinduil back to the kingdom, and even longer was his convalescence. This was more time than she had expected to be gone from her son and her home. The arranged day finally came when Thendiel would leave. She solemnly gathered up her things.

They met in front of the king's throne in the great hall. It was the seat of authority when conflict arose in his kingdom. Today, King Ellinduil removed his crown and set it carefully aside on a pedestal as a symbol of true friendship.

For the sake of privacy, the attendants moved on to wait in the gallery beyond the open doors. Except for his most trusted guards that stood half-hidden and motionless along the walls, Ellinduil and Thendiel were alone.

Fully back to health, the king stood tall and handsome before her, his long, straight hair shining in strands of white platinum. Pale gray eyes betrayed a clan history of tall ships that once sailed high seas.

"I cannot change your mind then?" Ellinduil's expression told of his sorrow at her decision.

"I want you to take this as a remembrance of what we have shared." He showed her a ring that was made up of intricately woven strands of silver with a pale bluish stone mounted between two small, twinkling diamonds. An array of colors from blue to red within a milky glow of the larger cabochon danced like fire when light played through it.

"This jewel will prove our bond of trust and love to all who see it grace your hand." He placed the ring that was once worn by their beloved queen on the middle finger of Thendiel's left hand. He hoped its symbol would serve as some small protection in her life to come. Still holding her small hand in his, Ellinduil seemed unable to continue. The sadness of the moment lingered between them until he composed himself to go on.

Ellinduil then brought out a small crystal finial from his belt pocket that had the essence of one brilliant star captured inside. It shone even brighter as he placed it in the palm of Thendiel's hand. She gazed in amazement at the beaming clarity of the intense light. When he drew his fingers to the palm of her hand and touched the crystal, the light dimmed. They softly smiled at one another.

"These are the last relics of my kin who were *long ago* lost to me." Thendiel's eyes could see a hint of a lonely regret concerning his past and his clan.

The feelings continued to roll deeper through her as he kept going in a soft-spoken voice.

"The ring is a sea opal found only in the deepest parts of the ocean where my kinsfolk were born. We learned to harness the stars." He pointed at the finial. With another touch of his finger, he extinguished the light, his hand lingering over hers. Thendiel forced herself to stand quietly resolute in her decision despite the feelings melting away at her senses.

"These were used as beacons on our ships," Ellinduil continued in perfected eloquence.

"When oceans went silent with fog, this light would pierce even the thickest darkness. You and your sons will never be lost from my sight." He earnestly regarded her.

"Your eldest might appreciate this gift for my keeping his mother away for so long." With a slightly crooked smile, Ellinduil quietly chuckled.

Thendiel gazed up at her king, words left unspoken. Ellinduil stared back, unwilling to be the first to look away. She wanted to embrace him but instead graciously bowed, breaking the dreamlike trance that surrounded them.

"The path to my gate will be ever open to you, and yours," Ellinduil's voice sighed, giving in to Thendiel's will.

Taking up her king's hands with hers, Thendiel lovingly kissed each of Ellinduil's open palms. Cupping her smaller hands around his, she took a deep breath before letting him go. Ellinduil stood, hands still together where she had left them, his eyes showing small acceptance of this arrangement.

Thendiel did regret having to leave the great king and all he had to offer, but her heart told her she must go.

"I will let it be known to the ends of the three kingdoms the name of *Thendiel Aran'eliad*." The king formally bestowed upon her a second name. Thendiel reverently bowed low before her king, accepting the title. Sensing the meeting was to be concluded. The waiting magistrate sent her assigned escort forward into the throne room to collect Thendiel and be on their way.

"*You must never hesitate* to send word if you are in need," Ellinduil continued. "You need only to ask *anything*, and I shall give it." These were the last words spoken between them.

With a small nod, Thendiel Aran'eliad took one bowing step back and departed the Autumwood Palace and its beloved king in true friendship.

That evening, King Ellinduil sat quietly in his private library. The familiar back of his comfortable chair holding him steady. A matching chair sat vacant and alone, pushed against the far side of the fireplace. He still suffered pain, but it was no longer the pain of the body.

He smiled at the small book he held up between two long fingers. In one small gesture of kindness and profound sacrifice, Thendiel had taught him something.

"As long as memory *will* move to a new day, we can only pray our hearts find peace in all this," Ellinduil sighed with an ironic chuckle.

He reached over to the side table and poured a second glass of wine. Eyes closed, he silently counted the moments it took for the sound of the red liquid to nearly reach the rim of the glass.

He stared at it contemplatively before taking a sip. Thendiel and the names of her young ones would forever haunt his mind, and given enough time, maybe that vision of Thendiel holding his heart in her hands would fade, though Ellinduil sorely doubted that.



"I thank you, wise healer, my dear friend." He raised his glass to Thendiel, sipped, and then took another longer draught of wine before setting the goblet aside. Standing up, he walked over to the bookshelf. Ellinduil carefully placed the small book of poetry back where he had found it.

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*Edhelath praised and revered the name of Thendiel Aran'eliad, for being strong and clever enough to conduct their sovereign back to life. At least for a time...*

# DARK MOON AND SUN

## Chapter Five

Tinctures in a rainbow of colors, medicinal tea mixes, and such were wrapped, stacked, and carefully placed on shelves ready for delivery to those in need or the Eldelórne central market.

Roevash had indeed kept himself busy and out of trouble. He was shocked at the sight of his mother as she turned from saying goodbye to the king's guard. Mother and child flew into a warm embrace.

With her cheek pressed to the top of his head, Thendiel hugged her son as if she would never let him go. Her strange, long hair enveloped him, and he genuinely smiled for the first time since she had left. Roevash quickly stowed his mother's cloak as she greeted their home with a touch to the inside wall by the door.

"I am so glad to find you doing so well," Thendiel took a look around at her son's handiwork.

"You have grown even taller," she exclaimed, catching his eye as she inspected the knotted cord on a bundle of tea mixtures.

"These are all so well done." Thendiel swelled with pride as she put the small package back on the waiting shelf.

She was relieved to feel the essence of her tree home. A steady relay of all the news she missed in her absence trickled down the back of her senses.

The trees in Ellinduil's palace had been more reticent in their manner and way of speaking. Thendiel thought that might be because of the many lives that passed through the place every day.

She did learn that the sentient trees could send messages across the kingdom to one another. Thendiel's constant asking for updates concerning her son was quickly put to an abrupt halt after too many repetitious inquiries. They seemed to have a different focus and her concerns were not theirs.

"It is *so different* outside our cozy place. I truly have been gone far too long," Thendiel smiled wistfully, silently apologizing.

"What has happened to you?" The question drew his mother's thoughts back to the present.

Thendiel focused on her son's concerned face as they sat down on the cushions. She knew Roe would ask about her condition but it was nearly impossible to anticipate his mind at such a young age.

“I entered the realm of the Arus to save our king. It proved most difficult, more complicated than I thought it would be,” she simply answered.

“You are so *pale*, and your *hair*, does it hurt?” Roevash reached out and touched the side of his mother’s face with his hand.

Thendiel smiled at her son reassuringly.

“No, I feel the same as before.” It was a half-truth. Thendiel could not yet put into words how she felt about everything that had happened.

“The realm of Ilmatar Arus is so full of commotion.” She stopped talking. Not knowing how to easily explain her travels into another realm.

“Our family will be larger,” Thendiel happily diverted the subject.

Roevash's eyes grew huge with surprise and wonder.

“King Ellinduil has seen a vision of my future and he tells me I am going to have another son. You will soon have your very own brother,” she said in an uncomplicated way so he could understand.

Thendiel watched her son’s face hoping he would be happy with the news as it was. She didn’t want to explain *how*. That was still a puzzle to be mulled over when she had some quiet time. Roevash was not sure what *having a brother* would be like so he just quietly smiled at his mother.

That evening, when he was ready for sleep, Thendiel brought out the king’s gift from where it was stowed in her pocket. Roevash’s eyes shone star-like as he peered into the bluish light of the faceted crystal. Thendiel was reminded of her husband Marin’s eyes on the first day they met by the water. She softly smiled at his memory.

“Thank you, mother!” Roevash excitedly held up the tiny brilliance. He found he could turn the brightness down and even off with the touch of his finger. Which he proceeded to repeat several times until Thendiel put her hand on his in order to speak.

“The king tells me they used these onboard sailing ships so they could find each other in the fog. He tells me you will never be lost to his protective sight if you keep this with you,” she poked him on the nose as she said it.

“Like a charm for luck,” Roevash asked.

“Yes, for luck and maybe for not stubbing your toes in the dark,” she teased, reaching over to tickle him.

Thendiel watched her son’s smiling eyes and now understood the thing that so compelled her to return to this place. It was moments of

privacy like this with her home and family that she treasured most in her heart.

Thendiel's happiness brought thoughts of her unborn to mind. Ellinduil assured her this son was of Ilmatar, and she trusted him.

Her violent experience in the realm of the Arus quickly faded like a dream in the waking mind. She still could not fathom how it was possible.

"And now, there will be two," she tiredly sighed, shaking off the slivers of memory that taunted her without revealing their secrets.

Roevash's eyes had gone closed. Thendiel carefully removed the glowing finial from his sleeping hand and hung the little star just above him on a small hooked branch in the window's edge.

"There is a good place for it," Thendiel's touch had brought the light down to a dim glow. Thendiel gently kissed her sleeping Roevash on his brow. After one last look at his face, she turned and headed down the stairs, frowning at painful thoughts that threatened to flood her mind.

Long ago, after her own parents' disappearance, Thendiel had vowed *never* to put her son through such a thing. All she knew was this experience had almost done that exact thing.

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Carrying this unborn was completely different from Thendiel's previous birthing experience. Her belly didn't bulge or feel heavy. She could even say she felt lighter as the days wore on. The voice of her unborn grew strong in her dreams until one day at the edge of waking, he shared his name with her.

"Eijlam," Thendiel smiled as she put her hand to her belly.

"An unusual name," Thendiel mulled over the syllables as they spun around in her mind.

The, J, was a new concept. It was not part of Eldar language and so, must be of the Arus' making, Thendiel wondered. The name irritated the very oldest Eldars while younger generations had no trouble speaking it as naturally as though it were always there.

"I shall call my brother, E-J," Roevash announced one day, playing off the second letter as if it were a badge of honor. The trees in their joy spread the name all over the kingdom until word came to the great elven king in his palace.

Time was marked and calculated by the elderhis matron who was sent to Thendiel's home to assist with the birth. At first, Thendiel was annoyed at Ellinduil's presumption that she would require help, but then she was glad for it as her neighbors proved to be of little to no use in her situation.

Thendiel and Roevash continued working the family business. Daily walks communing with the trees eased Thendiel's mind as she and her son foraged for the many rare and common herbs they needed. By this time, the name of her unborn felt as natural as lemon tea on a sunny day. It was as if the name and its owner had always been there among them.

Eijlam was born silently, in the usual elven way. He was almost as small as the palm of his mother's hand. Mother and newborn glowed with the communion light of pureblood as Thendiel took him to her breast.

Roevash looked on in fascination at this new life that helplessly lay on one of his mother's pillows. He liked the way Eijlam tightly gripped the tip of his finger with strong, tiny hands. It was a game of pull away, poke, grab, pull away, poke, grab; it made the newborn squeal.

"It is unbelievable that I was ever this small once," Roevash delicately rubbed a finger across Eijlam's forehead and smiled at the soft, downy feel of his skin. Bright eyes watched from a tiny, smirked-up face. Roevash giggled at his little brother. Eijlam's arms flailed trying to glom onto the big hand and play that game again.

"You were never that small," Thendiel thought as she smiled at her eldest son. She was delighted to see Roevash's tenderness.

"Of course, he would be." She needn't have worried.

"His father was always gentle and so kind," she thought of Marin as she gazed lovingly at her family.

"It may be later that their kinship might prove more difficult," she reminded herself.

Thendiel thought about the way it was between other brothers she knew. Some grew to oppose one another, never to agree on anything. Others were so competitive that it caused injury. She prayed it would not be as such. She wanted her sons to grow to be friends.

"Remember, all we have in life is each other when all others fail," she had often reminded her sleepy Roevash at bedtime.

Silence had filled the room as her little ones calmed down to rest. She stroked a loose hair off Roevash's contented face as he lay down forehead to forehead with him.

"For now, we will have peace," Thendiel quietly sighed, drifting off. The family slept with the tiny newborn between them in a protective nest made up of their curled-up bodies.

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Thendiel's village seemed more tolerant of her these days. They weren't even bothered by the sight of her half-blood shadow as a sullen Roevash followed along in the market.

Maybe it was because Thendiel birthed what they considered a true-blooded son or maybe it was the ring she wore or her second name. Either way, a thin form of peace and acceptance surrounded Thendiel as others excitedly gathered to see her tiny newborn. Thendiel graciously ignored the whispers. She loved both her sons no matter the blood they carried.

Eijlam slept in a woven reed basket alongside Thendiel's deliveries. When the curious pressed too close, his big brother would glare with his most convincing warning face. The elders teased Roevash without a hint of distain in calling him the royal guard. Roevash just scowled, not understanding the joke.

Speculations were whispered as to whom the sire of the little one might be. Many swore he was King Ellinduil's son. They assumed Thendiel had to be bound to secrecy for she admitted nothing to the curious.

When Eijlam's hair grew in a shimmering pale gold, of course, King Ellinduil had to be the one. The hair could be easily explained, but the elfling's eyes could not.

Eijlam's large almond-shaped eyes were oddly two different colors. The right one was similar in blue to his brother's eyes, and the other on the left was pale golden brown like his mother's. That set off a whole new line of thought in the village scandal mill.

"Eyes like that are not natural," one would say.

"It must be the wizards doing," another tossed that fuel to the growing pyre that flamed interest among Thendiel's neighbors.

Though tiny and fragile at birth, Eijlam quickly grew strong and wiry as do all young elves. Roevash would carry his little brother clinging to his shoulders as they went outside. Eijlam was always smiling wildly in contrast to his big brother's serious demeanor. The locals seemed more helpful and even cordial.

The brothers did things all young ones did in a sylvan village. They climbed trees, ran, and played tag on the sandy beaches. They built forts and found things to bring home and eat. Sometimes they even caught a rabbit or found some bird eggs for their mother's pantry.

Thendiel noticed how Roe's confidence had grown as the two boldly went about the business of being normal siblings. A mother's heart was delighted. Her eldest son had spent way too much time

cooped up in their home, angry and unable to step out the door for fear he would have to face another conflict on his own.

“You have stolen my eye, and I am coming for it!” Roevash howled as Eijlam ran screeching past his mother and out the door. Roe quickly kissed his mother’s cheek and grabbed the last two apples off the table as he clamored after his little blond streak of a brother.

The two were inseparable and *always this* noisy. Thendiel smirked with a head shake. She went back to her task of grinding herbs in her large mortar and pestle. Roevash certainly didn’t look like he was missing out on anything, not anymore at least. Thendiel had heard that the other youths just stayed out of their way.

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Thendiel kissed her young ones goodnight and held them tightly as they curled up to sleep. A silent tear escaped her eye as she looked up into the pale, twinkling stars beyond her window. She felt these precious days were somehow numbered.

After the birth of Eijlam, Thendiel could sense the subtle harmonies of the twilight Arus slowly weaving its way into the strands of her life. At first, the mild anxiety she felt could be passed off as new motherhood.

Thendiel was raised to believe in the benevolent Arus of Ilmatar. Their call was meant to bring comfort to faded Edhelath worn by long age and contact with humans, but the creeping, unheard song grated against Thendiel’s life. She became irritated. She lost patience. Crawling through the edges of awareness, it slipped through the threshold between sleeping and waking, pouring its poison deep into Thendiel’s very core.

Returning to the silent twilight of the undome taurë was slowly beginning to feel like a beacon of relief to Thendiel’s senses. But then anger came.

“Am I to be hastened away from my younglings before they can even fend for themselves?” Thendiel wondered on a day of sudden clarity.

In the natural order of things, her life would be just beginning, but she did feel unnaturally aged. She tried many times to have this conversation with her sons, but it was hard to talk about something that you couldn’t quite find the words for. Subjecting young ones to worry and the grief of loss, that was the last thing a mother wished to do.

Regardless of Thendiel’s struggles, it was a peaceful time for her sons in a routine life in Eldelórne. Roevash and Eijlam grew sturdy and strong and soon were enrolled in their Eldar’s education center. There

they would learn all things concerning the Edhelath and many things about dragon, goblin, hiisi, noglim, and human cultures, along with what was known of the pantheon of Arus that influenced them now and ruled them in the afterlife.

The reciting of long memory, text writing, art, and music, archery, and athletics were all part of daily classes. Then one day, the young edhel were separated into similar age groups, which divided the students into elfling, younglings, youth, and adolescence. Roevash found that the sway against his human blood among the youths came back to haunt his life.

Eijlam was placed in the youngling class. He watched his brother grow distant and sullen. He tried to encourage Roe to be more positive, but a past life of anger and isolation shrouded his heart in disappointment as he watched his little brother seem to fit in where he could not.

Because many believed Eijlam to be King Ellinduil's offspring, curiosity made his classmates behave differently at first, but he was also Thendiel's son, and sadly, he was introduced to the ways of untruth and false friendship.

"Eijlam stop," Roevash grabbed the back of his brother's tunic and tore him off a fallen youth. He dragged Eijlam back from the insults the others hurled as they all scrambled to clear a wide path for the thundering, oversized half-elf.

"They are not worth your effort," Roevash said, hauling his thrashing brother away under his arm like a flailing sack of potatoes.

"Their narrow minds will not change because you bloody a nose." Roevash never appreciated his little brother getting caught up in fighting no matter what the cause.

"But they started it!" Eijlam protested as Roevash held tight.

"They *always* start it. Can you not get that through your thick head? You must stop listening to such vile words. Our mother would not be happy to hear of this, EJ," Roevash growled, knowing his brother was stubbornly not listening. His long strides had carried them far from the trouble and halfway home.

"Let me down!" Eijlam hit at Roevash's firm grip.

"Fine," Roevash slammed his scrawny brother to the ground so hard the air left his lungs. Stunned into silence, Eijlam lay in a heap covered in dirt, gasping for a breath.

"That will *shut it*." Roevash scowled as he stormed away.



“I was just trying to stand up *for you*,” croaked from Eijlam’s throat as he slowly writhed back to breathing. He pulled a stinging knee up to his face that was awash with muddy tears.

Eijlam did not understand the depths of his sibling's dark side or why Roevash turned his anger on him.

"Did he *want* me to feel sad?" EJ shook his head.

“That cannot be *-truth*. I will not believe such things of my own brother.” Eijlam frowned as he pulled himself off the ground to find his way home.

# HER FINAL HOUR

## *Chapter Six*

Faded in spirit and grieving the passings of Illianheni's great sentinels, Thendiel had walked the gardens and across the long wooden footbridge for the last time.

"Everything would be changed on the morrow. I cannot stop it," Thendiel wailed in anguish, clutching the top of the last bridge post for support. She wanted to lie down and give in, to stop the pain, but she couldn't let that happen even though the threads of Thendiel's life were pulled taut to breaking.

She was unraveling into Ilmatar's silent song to the place where she had trespassed so very long ago. She never had the strength to revisit Ilmatar, to find the wizards, to find the answers to her many questions. Thendiel would have to be satisfied with what little she understood.

The grinning maw would soon have her one way or another. She had hoped her life would not come to that end. Thendiel strengthened her resolve, that picture in her mind spurring her on. There were final preparations to make before morning's light.

Thin rain clattered through the branches, soaking the ground. Hastily wiping her face on the edge of a damp sleeve, Thendiel swung her long hair back over a shoulder as she stepped onto the stone path to Eldelórne. Moving quickly under the full moon, she hoped the cool rain would diminish the signs of weeping eyes.

The enormous tree home at the center of the village was dark except for the blue twinkling starlight Thendiel knew hung in Roevash's window at the top reaches of the branches. A slight smile crossed her lips thinking of the tiny blue beacon and the king who loved her.

Entering the doorway, Thendiel ran her hands along the smooth insides of her home. Usually, her touch signaled her arrival, but on this night, her message was telling of her final departure when the dawn broke over the land. The trees in their empathy sent back a wave of sadness almost drowning her with their many concerns.

"Nooo, please no," Thendiel cried out as she fell to her knees in the barrage. The elder tree quickly calmed, shielding Thendiel from the others. The whole village of Eldelórne now fully understood her desperately frail state.

"Ellinduil will finally get his way," Thendiel relayed her thoughts in tree-speak. She weakly smirked, remembering the concerned look on his face as she stubbornly denied his wishes.

"I will not be there with them." Deep sadness creased Thendiel's face.

Under the Autumwood kingdom, Eldelórne's sentinel trees called out to Ellinduil's palace, and the response came back with all haste. Riders were already dispatched. They would come for Thendiel at dawn. An emissary would gather her young ones that very evening.

"Ellinduil will keep them safe," Thendiel murmured to herself. She entreated the living home to help her young ones get through this as best it could. Her tree sent back its solemn promise, easing her troubled heart.

Looking around for the last time, Thendiel took off her precious amulet. She placed it in a small wooden box with her old journal. The glittering stone went dark as it lost contact with her body.

"Let them find this when they are older," Thendiel said.

The tree responded with quiet acknowledgment of her wishes. She placed her only treasures in the home's hidden cache.

The elder tree had witnessed this kind of leaving before. It would hold to its promises no matter how long it took because the Edhelath would always return.

Thendiel anxiously climbed the stairs to be with her young ones. She knew by now they would be sleeping. Roevash slept alone in his own room most times. He had grown so tall he easily could be mistaken for a half-grown human, though he was far from maturity as edhel grow.

She wished she had the chance to introduce him to her father's people, but the base where they lived was found abandoned. She did not know where darjal'n came from, save that it was far away to the North where she had no desire to travel. So, that was that. No words were spoken.

Thendiel's eyes narrowed as she sat watching Roevash peacefully sleep in the glow of his starlight.

"You are your father's son. I see his kind face in you." She breathed out a long sigh.

"*My little deer prince*, I pray you keep our small family safe." Thendiel felt a sting in her nose as rising tears turned it red again. She was comforted by the sound of steady breathing as her son slept.

"What stopped you from coming home, Marin'amin?" The unknowable question always haunted the back of Thendiel's mind.

"You would have loved him so fiercely, as I do." Thendiel bent down and kissed Marin's son on the forehead. She wearily turned away from Roevash to find her youngest son and to find some rest.

Eijlam lay curled up, half asleep in his mother's bed. His eyes easily saw her enter the room in the moonlight that shone through the window.

"Mother, you are crying." His quiet voice pierced the stillness of the chamber.

"The King is sending horses for me on the morrow," Thendiel tiredly said, laying down face to face with her youngling son. "Before the sun rises," she added.

"Horses?" He was confused.

"Eijlam," Thendiel gently whispered his name.

"I thought you would be in your room. I could not find you." She had paused, not sure how to explain. It would not be right to say all was well when clearly it was not.

"I am here," he said.

"I am glad you are," she answered.

Thendiel wished he was sleeping so he might have one last night of peace or maybe it was that she could no longer bear the weight of telling him everything that was wrong.

"Your innocence has always filled my heart with such gladness. I have found so much joy having you and your brother in my life." Thendiel let out a tiny sob but then cut it off. She was so tired of crying.

"Are you going far?" Eijlam's huge eyes regarded her, fear creeping into his gut.

"I have made arrangements to give you over to our king's care. Ellinduil will treat you as his own for the sake of me."

Eijlam's face froze at the thought of her leaving for so long that she had to send them away. He was too young to understand all that she had just told him.

"*Mother,*" was all Eijlam could say as he began to cry with her.

Thendiel bundled her young son tightly in her arms.

Her agony eased as invisible light shimmered around mother and son. The two fell tearfully asleep in a protective glow that took away his mother's pain.

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Roevash stubbornly refused to understand the plans Thendiel had set for them. He had figured out this all started when she came home

drained of color from the very place where she is now sending them. His anger was soon replaced with fear when he calmed enough to let himself sense her faded spirit. He wondered how it was possible his own mother had progressed to this point so unnoticed.

“You are too young.” Roevash embraced his mother in sorrow. He towered over her, having grown to an almost six-foot stature.

“Be wise, Roe.” She studied his face through haunted eyes.

“You know I must journey on to Ilmatar’s peace. This is the way of our kind.” Thendiel took her sea opal off and slipped it onto his hand.

Roevash cringed at her actions, not wanting her beautiful ring to become a symbol of her leaving.

“Tell me I will see you again,” he keened like a little one.

“Yes, Roe, you are Edhel, even though you may not always feel it. *You are my son.* You will always find your way to me.”

Roevash hung his head in shame at her words.

“Come on,” Thendiel touched his chin and turned his gaze to meet her own.

“This is not an ending,” she said in a soft, low voice.

Thendiel could not help but see the fiery boldness in Roevash’s nature that was so much like his Darjalian father, but it was too late for that conversation. Thendiel had always kept thoughts of her husband to herself. She wondered if that was a wise decision, but right now, she had run out of time.

“You know I will be waiting on the shores with all our kin singing boldly the song of my love for you.” Thendiel weakly smiled, letting her hand slowly drop. Every tarried moment could turn this long farewell into a tragedy.

“Do not *blame* your brother. For this was my doing and *my own choices* that have brought me to this.” Thendiel reached out for Eijlam to come to her. He had been hanging back. Roevash blushed in shame at his desire to point the blame.

“I do not mean to,” he said, but his inner voice was self-loathing. He would never have the quiet acceptance of his mother when faced with such a terrible decision.

Eijlam stood like stone staring out at the drifting fog that he knew would soon gather into a passageway and swallow up his mother. Thendiel knelt down and hugged her youngest son.

“I will try harder, mother,” was all Roevash could say through tears and growing frustration.

The time had come. Thendiel kissed both her beloved sons goodbye and then turned to leave. The king's attendants silently lifted Thendiel Aran'eliad onto a gray steed.

She would be brought to the realm of Ilmatar to rest in the undome taurë. When she woke in the lands of her ancestors, she would visit kin that had arrived before her.

Thendiel could return, but time is not the same, and the mortal realm would not be the same. She would not be the same. So, Thendiel resolved that this was not her end and that she would wait for them on the shores of Ilmatar. The line of edhel glowed a ghostly pallor in the morning mist as they guided Thendiel away through the mystical, dissolving fog.

"Do you not have anything to say for yourself?" Roevash's tear-stained face swung around, his voice hissing through locked rows of clenched teeth.

Eijlam stood wretchedly pale and small, still staring where the shadow of their mother had disappeared out of his sight.

Again, too loud, Roevash's voice echoed in his ears as Eijlam turned his face, his eyes locked on his brother's angry eyes. The sound of his own pounding heart crawled up into his ears, deafening the space around them. Roe saw only the deepest of shared grief in his little brother, but then, it was too late.

Slowed as in a dream, Eijlam blinked confused eyes. A flood of tears splashed down to the stone path. Eijlam pushed himself away from his brother's anger, not wanting to hear anymore why Roe said *this was all his fault*.

"I did not mean it," Roevash stretched out a hand, shamed by his harsh words. He watched in horror as his brother turned to run and vanished.

"No!" Roevash cried into the stark emptiness of thin air.

"What have I done!" In this moment of shock, his heart changed, and he wished he could take it all back. He wasn't angry with Eijlam; he was always only angry with himself. This was just his way of screwing up everything as usual.

Roevash tore his mother's ring off and threw it to the ground. Stunned and utterly alone, he fell to his knees, sobbing. All the years of taunting and fool's games he had put Eijlam through. He had somehow forgotten how to be his good brother. Roevash repented, but it was too late. Eijlam was gone somewhere, and he did not know where or how to find him.

In denial of what his eyes had witnessed, Roevash spent all that day desperately searching the surrounding forest but found naught but a sign of Eijlam.

“He just vanished before my eyes,” Roevash pondered, reliving the scene over and over.

“I have to look farther,” he suffered in his thoughts.

“Or I will have failed in my promise to our mother.” Roevash hung his head, blaming himself for all he had done and not done.

“Before I am gone from this realm, I would be known as true-hearted and not a monster in the eyes of my own brother,” Roevash vowed.

Soon, the murmurings and staring whispers of neighbors were more than Roevash could stand. He had lost both his brother and his mother on this day, and none that saw him could spare some semblance of comfort for his wretchedness.

Feeling desolate and alone, Roevash put his mother’s precious ring in a hidden place in his room. He took what little he would need in his belt and a shoulder pack.

Roevash set out from the safety of the hidden village of Eldelórne and all he had ever known into the vast, unfamiliar realm of men.

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*The king’s emissary arrived that evening and found Thendiel’s home closed in hibernating slumber and her young ones gone. The village Eldar told him of an incident as they had heard it and said that the eldest son had run away in shame. There seemed to be a lack of actual eyewitnesses that could tell him what really had happened on that day. All Ellinduil’s emissary could do was return to the palace with the bad news.*

**HERE ENDS THE EXCERPT.**

**TALES OF ELDELORNE:BOOK ONE IS 58 CHAPTERS LONG AND OVER  
142K WORDS.**

**THANK YOU FOR AUDITING MY WORK. ~K**

# ABOUT THE AUTHOR



*Karleigh Bon is author, artist, storyteller, voice actor, armchair philosopher, comedian, gamer-geek, award-winning songwriter, singer, survivor, friend of puppies, high fantasy fan-girl and author of the, "Tales of Eldelórne," trilogy and producer of the informative satire, "Aidan and Faith, Relationships with technology."*

I'm a computer geek, into software robotic programming, a role playing gamer, and a lifetime champion of old school journalism. I was born the third generation to newspaper people on both sides of my family, so I had ink spots smudged on my nose at a very young age. Following in the footsteps of family tradition I am publisher and producer of fun and informative podcasting.

Art, music, imagination and storytelling have always been a big part of my life, so, I am pleased to have this time now to write it all down. This first book of the Eldelórne trilogy is my debut into full size fantasy world building and novel writing. It certainly has been a journey of love. I hope you enjoy reading it as much as I enjoyed writing it. To those who have helped me throughout the years, a heartfelt thank you. Without you I could not have done it.

Galu a theithad vain! ~K

Blog: [karleighbon.com](http://karleighbon.com)

Tales of Eldelórne podcast

Aiden and Faith: Relationships with Technology podcast

Discord: Karleigh Bon's Kitchen



## BOOKS WRITTEN BY KARLEIGH BON

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## FIND MORE

Live reader and writer discussions including artworks, insights and tons of unbridled spoilers can be found on Discord: Karleigh Bon's Kitchen. The invite link can be found at the top of the author's blog at [karleighbon.com](http://karleighbon.com)

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