

The Legend of Laeriel and Bordwin

A long, long time ago, when the age of men had just shortly dawned upon Ambar, lived an elven maid by the name of Laeriel, which in half-tongue means “daughter of summer”. She was as beautiful as the morning light and as gentle as the summer rain. As a child of the house of Aerin, she lived with her kin on that land that was then a protectorate of the house, and today is known under the name of Selbion.

While other elves from the family viewed the humans, who had only been on the face of Ambar for such a short time, with suspicion, but Laeriel was open in mind and spirit. For hours she sat on a small hill near her family’s dwelling, half hidden by the shadows of the forest’s last trees and watched the small village in the valley below. So curious were the ways of the men and women, yet so lovable to her, who felt more and more drawn to them with each day, each month, each year that passed.

Then one day, when spring had just begun to carefully paint the branches, a human was to be brought to trial before the highest priestess of the protectorate. The elven guards had caught him near the sanctuary. They said he had desecrated the place.

The man was trembling with fear. While most of the humans of the village knew about the elven family, only few had seen an elf in their whole life. Again and again, he asserted his innocence. Spluttered and stammered that he did not mean any harm, that he did get carried away while roaming the woods, that he had just searched for some quiet and had suddenly found himself facing the bare arrowtips of the guardians. The priestess just observed him, her eyes frozen. That was when Laeriel stepped forward and raised her voice.

“He tells the truth. No harm has ever come from him to us. His name is Bordwin. He is a ranger of the humans, protecting their village from foes like our guardians do. He often strolls around at the edge of the forest, always thoughtful, always careful, never oblivious to Thialle’s creation around him. Let him be. Let him go.”

Bordwin raised his eyes to meet those of the beautiful creature who had so courageously spoken out for him. “How?”, he whispered. Albeit he had never seen her before and did not know why she could tell his name and so much about him, he felt drawn to her. Laeriel smiled. Then she continued: “For many years, I have watched the humans. I have how they live. I have seen how they celebrate and how they mourn. I have seen their joys and their needs. And I have seen the grand ones among them. Bordwin is one of them. He respects all beings. He is brave and good-hearted and stands up for those in need. Responsible for all defence, he is one of the leaders of the village. Even though we did not speak before, he has earned my trust by many of his actions. I beg you, my family. I beg you, my honored lady. Show mercy and let him go.”

And with those words, Laeriel sank to her knees beside Bordwin.

And the eldar, surprised and impressed by the words of the maiden from their midst, did as Laeriel requested. Bordwin was accompanied back to the brink of the forest and there let go, after he had promised never to near the sanctuary again.

Shortly after those happenings, for the first time, Laeriel descended to the village. For long, she had been contented with watching. But now, she ardently desired to feel for herself, what she had so long observed. Only with great protest, her family granted her the wish of going, but Laeriel’s mind was set and nothing could hold her back, so she went.

As she descended from the hill that had been her vantage point for so long, business in the whole village stopped and in awe the people stared at the young elf in her dress the colour of young roses, with hair like ripe corn and eyes bright as a clear summer’s day.

It was Bordwin’s house Laeriel chose as her home, because her heart had been moved by the human in a way she did not think possible before. Love before had been nothing more for her than a word in the stories she had heard as a child, in the stories about Ithildin and Sivintâr and the great Valyari, but now, she did not know why, she understood.

The elf had fallen in love with the man. And the man had fallen in love, with the elf, who with her brave words, had saved his life.

For many years, they lived together in peace. At first, the villages had been almost as suspicious towards the elf as her family had been towards them, but as humans are, they quickly adapted to her and eventually accepted her as a part of the village.

And when other elves arrived to take over the watch of the sanctuary and her family decided to return to the silver fortress, Laeriel stayed with her husband.

And so, time passed. But while summers turned into winters, into autumns and springs, while the village went on its business, while men and women worked, and lived, and died, and children were born, Laeriel more and more felt that even though she lived them and among them, she never was a part of them.

And even Bordwin aged by her side, but she did not look a day older than as she had when she descended from the hill, like a blossom that was not made to wither.

For a long time, Laeriel had savoured the days that passed, and had enjoyed the new knowledge time had brought, but now, she began to dread every single morning, every single night. For she had realised that nothing would last forever and that the dreams, she had built her life on Ambar upon had not been the dreams she was meant to dream.

And Laeriel began to fade. She could not stand the thought of losing Bordwin, of seeing him leave for Lodoor's halls and having to stay on Ambar forever without him. She dreaded the loneliness.

And Bordwin, who had never ceased to love her with all his soul and all his heart, saw that if he wanted to keep his love, he would have to let her go.

It was autumn and the leaves in the forest were slowly beginning to glow in the most beautiful red and gold, when Bordwin decided the time had come. For many weeks now, Laeriel had become weaker and weaker, pressed down by the weight of her worries. And even though it broke his heart, he held her hand and kissed her lips for one last time as they stood at the edge of the forest, and then he stood and watched as she vanished between the trees.

And autumn turned to winter and winter to spring, and Bordwin, the ranger, the village leader, the man, who had been loved by an elf and loved her in return, stood on his hill, and looked out for his love, never giving up the hope that she might return one day.

Ages have passed since then, but the legends say that he still stands, and waits. And when Laeriel returns one day, his skin, withered and cold, will warm again, and the man and the elven maid will rejoined for eternity.