

Memories

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Kapitel 1: My old home

Where did I live? Give me some time to visualize it... it has been a long time ago. I lived in an old mixed forest, which was light and friendly. In the beginning you can touch the black and white bark of the many silver birches and few dark scot pines surrounded by golden meadows swaying in the warm wind. There was a small trail which lead to the older parts of the forest, its core where there were more and more... oaks! Walking on the soft forest floor, which was covered in old and dry brown leaves and acorns you could sometimes catch a glimpse of some red squirrels running and hiding their treasures.

If you go further you would finally come to the oldest part with the tallest oaks which had an exceptional huge diameter, big enough for houses. Yes, I lived in trees. You wouldn't see my house, if you didn't know where to look at, because the biggest branches and greenest leaves would hide it. My house was built by my ancestors and it was built with wood, dark oak logs and wood shingles which forbade the hotness of the dry summer and the coldness of the white winter to come into the rooms which where many, because my house was sitting in one, but many trees and bridges looking like branches connected it parts. I could invite many guests proving bedrooms and two big kitchens.

If there was a storm my house would rock back and forth which can be frightening at first, but it's a solid house. If you looked out of the windows you would see the green foliage in spring, and the blackest branches and twigs covered by frost and snow. Sometimes you could see the silhouettes of big ravens sitting in the trees and waiting for some food.

You had to climb on the branches or had to use a silver rope-ladder to reach my house. If you wanted to transport huge stuff like chests of food and barrels filled with fruit juice (and wine perhaps) you needed block and tackle, but we had also our secrets cellars vaults in the earth hidden by leaves and old grey and green foundlings overgrown with moss.

The rooms were cozy and filled with books, because I love books. And if it's not a book you would find parchments and paper one my big desk, which was my favorite place. There I would sit and read and write and draw. My chair was comfortable although it was made of blackened metal and red (and soft) velvet. Even more comfortable were my big red armchair and my even bigger bed with it many pillows and thick blankets. When you wake up in the morning you can hear the singing of blackbirds and the common chaffinches and the chirping of the passerines.

There was a colorful coverlet which my mother made. She had although chosen the paintings hanging on the walls which surprisingly didn't show landscapes with meadows and woods, but the green and blue sea and white and green shores. We love the open rushing sea, but hide in the calm and fragrant woods. (At the sea there was a great forest, too, but it looked bizarre and ghostly, because the wind made the grow in strange ways.)

The kitchen was big enough for five persons. There you could chat, bake bread, make butter, cook a hot stew or chop vegetables or fruits for a refreshing salad. There was always a bouquet of flowers or twigs from the woods and meadows standing on the table. We had a room where we would dry herbs and fruits for tea and another room

for cheese. We ate in the dining room which had many windows for the light to come into the room. The table was long and heavy and had drawers under the table board. In the drawers were stored the cutlery, but also dices and cards, because we used the tables for playing games, too.

There weren't rooms build onto other rooms, but we had short stairs which lead you to rooms who were build higher in the treetop. There was one chamber called the moon room. You could look out of the windows to follow the moon riding through the night or gazing at the blue stars in the black sky. There was a little (but safe) balcony, too. If you extinguished the light of the candles and oil lamps you were able to see even more stars.

Kapitel 2: To The Sea – Or: Which way should we chose this century?

As I told you in my last letter I lived in a deep forest in the trees. Maybe you remember that I mentioned paintings of the sea. That's where my journey took me several times in my life, or our journey I should say, because I usually travelled with my beloved partner.

There has always been a desire burning in my heart which would never let me forgive the sea. It had been the place where I had met my husband and where his kin lived, my own family once had come over the sea to the shores of Middle Earth.

It was a long way from the green treetops of my home to the white shores in the west, to Eryn Vorn. My homeland lays in the south of Eryn Lasgalen near the East Bight. Our family would look for our houses which went usually smoothly, but we needed a year for preparations. We sent and received lots of letters, making sure everyone knows when to expect us and asking for news. We sometimes asked the merchants who travelled to and from Erebor about the quality of the paths. World is always busy and it's always useful to know where orcs and trolls were roaming or where you could expect a homely place.

We renewed our traveling clothes and boots. We also sharpened our knives and swords and made arrows for bows. I never liked the bows, my fingers are made for art, not war... my husband was a fine archer, though, and he shot birds and other animals we could eat. I rather liked my small ax I bought at Dale, but he would give me an odd look. "Dwarven stuff!" - "An axe can be useful, too", I used to answer, "I don't intend to actually kill somebody with it." Fortunately, we seldom travelled alone, and if we were the two of us, we chose peaceful times for our journey.

We went to the Elven King asking him kindly for strong horses. He never said no, but he always gave us a task. Sometimes we brought wine and other goods, like books, instruments or jewelry, to the elves we met. That's why he not only gave us horses, but also a wagon. Sometimes we had to report to him what's going on in the lands outside of our forest. Sometimes we had to fetch other things for him.

For many years we went south, passing an old fortress. Then we crossed the mighty Anduin, where we met a group of Elves who lead us to Lothorien. We really liked those Elves, because they appreciated trees as much as we do. Caras Galadhon was indeed the most impressive way of living within nature we know. Our houses were just cottages and our trees young and small compared to that silver city with huge mallorn-trees. We walked on the naked earth, they had white streets and silver fountains. Our trees would lose their leaves in late autumn and were naked in winter, the flowers dying, the meadows sleeping, until spring came back, but their trees were forever golden and green and there were always white flowers growing in the meadows. We would stay there for two weeks or three, meeting friends, talking and strolling. Sometimes we would bring a message from King to Queen. Seeing Lady Galadriel was always quiet interesting, but also pretty intense. She was wise and beautiful, with piercing eyes.

Leaving Lorien behind we had to walk through *Hithaeglir*, the Misty Mountains, as you call it. We didn't like that part, because the mountains were cold and grey and dangerous, although we heard that there was a mysterious lake showing the night-sky. We hurried through the south of *Hadhodrond* following sweet *Glanduin*, we didn't look back, until we reached the plain. We would follow Glanduin's course until we had to go in a southward direction, because we wanted to avoid the Nin-in-Eilph. Although the flight of the swans were a delightful event, its marshes were too inscrutable, water everywhere! Although there was a time when we would see little humans (or were they even humans?) living there. After that we crossed Gwathló, which is called Greyflood in your language, using the fort at Tharbad. There we would rest and watch the swans and white wagtails.

When the orcs became bolder we had to walk other roads. We would either use the Old Forest Road starting from the Woodland Realm, passing the Wilderland and the Old Ford. We marched until we reached Imladris, which was different from Lorien. They lived in houses build on earth. It was very comfortable and the Elves residing there were very educated, noble and kind. We would stay very long, listening to stories and history, but our desire would become unbearable, because the First Homeley House was a constant reminder of the cold North, far far away from our destiny. We rode alongside the Bruinen, until we reached Tharbad again.

In other years we decided to explore the southern roads which proved to be even more wicked and unsafe. We chose to pass Sîr Angren, but that meant a voyage through Rohan, where grim and fierce humans lived. They didn't attack us, but they weren't as pleasant as our kin. And it meant a long journey through the Wold, which was barren. Once we became very curious and visited the edge of Fangorn. This was most memorable, because we have never seen a forest so old and strange. Those were the first trees which doesn't evoke a feeling of home and safety, no, they made us rather wary. I admit, my husband was even frightened. He walked along the edge and touched bark and root and shook his head. Camping in the shadows of the forrest we became childish and giggly, neither of us wanted to confess our worries. This was a silly night indeed.

Crossing Sîr Angren the sight of Enedwaith made us upset. We heard that there once had grown an old forest, but it wasn't there anymore. Men, an almost forgotten folk, had lumbered the trees, later the War of our kin against Sauron had burnt the last of the trees. Later there raged a plague. Although Eryn Vorn was part of that old forest, it never woke our grief as Enedwaith did. Maybe it was because of all the Men and the strange dwellers there who made us uncomfortable, while walking through the fen was difficult. On the other hand, fens can be pretty and rich of colors, red and gold and warm brown, if you visit them in summertime. We found strange and beautiful flowers there. There is beauty even in abandoned and hostile regions.

Reaching Tharbad or Gwathló was usually the time which lifted our spirits, because we knew it was a nice region there and we had an actual two ways to walk on. The first and preferred one was the Greenway which was a detour., but a lovely one We loved the green grass, the hedges and bushes, we ate sour apples, sweet pears and red cherries from the wild trees. We listened to the song of the birds and watched the

deers and rabbits play. Then we would ride alongside of the Baranduin to Eryn Vorn. The second way led us across Minhiriath, the land between Gwathló and Barandiun. There, too, lived Men who were even wilder than the others, following foreign and rough costumes. And again, the landscape showed us the scars of war.

Catching the glimpse of Eryn Vorn we euphorically greeted the dark pine trees, warped from the wind, the heralds of the sea. We could already scent the salt of the sea before we heard the crushing and rushing of the waves, the song of the sea and old times.

There it was! Warm and white sand tickling our feet, cold and blue water welcoming us home. We dove into the ocean and swam, cooling us down. Our family would laugh in delight and throw a party at our arrival, with lots of music and food and bonfires. This was the moment where my husband and I would look into each other's eyes. We didn't say a word, but we knew: The journey has been long and hard, and the return wouldn't be easier, but we never travel in vain. And there will be a time when we will take a boat to travel to Mithlond for our final and expected journey.