

Women's Work By Scribblesinink

The baby's cries dissolve into contented murmurs as soon as Teyla picks him up from his crib and starts rocking him, cooing nonsensical words.

"He is beautiful." Suppressing a pang of longing, Éowyn smiles at the other woman.

Teyla glances up from her son. For the first time since Éowyn met her, Teyla's expression is unguarded, the last of the wariness and caution gone from her eyes. "Thank you." She beams the way any mother will at praise of her children. "His name is Torren." After a moment's hesitation, she adds, "Would you like to hold him?"

Éowyn takes the offer as further proof that Teyla no longer sees her as a threat, and a rush of gratitude brings tears to her eyes. She blinks them away.

"I would be honoured." She holds out her hands, shaking back the cuffs of her wide sleeves, and Teyla places the baby in the crook of her elbow. He stares up at her with big, trusting eyes, and Éowyn's heart swells.

"Do you have any children?"

Éowyn drags her gaze away from the baby to meet Teyla's questioning look. "Aye. I have a son, like you." She does not add how much she misses him, or her husband, or that she feels terribly alone in this strange city of towering spires and flickering lights and doors that move of their own volition. Yet she should not complain: the people are welcoming, if cautious, and she is free to wander the halls, even if none lead back home.

Teyla's features soften, and Éowyn realizes her unspoken words have been heard nonetheless. "I shall make us some tea," Teyla offers, and Éowyn nods before looking down at the small bundle in her arms again.

The baby—Torren—gurgles and blows a spit bubble. Éowyn chuckles, bending her head a little closer and crooning an Elvish lullaby that the Queen taught her. It always sent Elboron to sleep peacefully, and she finds that Torren is no different: before she has finished the song, his eyes have fluttered shut.

She hands him back to his mother.

"There must be magic in that song." Teyla returns her son to his crib; while his face twitches, he does not wake. "It was beautiful."

Éowyn wanders the room while Teyla continues to prepare the promised tea. Leaning against the wall beside the door are two thin rods, their wood dark and smooth with use. They remind her a little of practice swords, and she wonders what their purpose is. She turns back to her hostess. "Are you proficient with a blade?"

Teyla blinks at the unexpected change of subject. "If need be. But swords are more Ronon's domain. Why do you ask?"

Éowyn indicates the sticks with a nod. "I thought...."

"Ah, I see. No, those are Bantos sticks." Teyla pours hot water into a pot and a sweet fragrance drifts up from it. "My people use them in hand-to-hand combat."

The term itself means nothing to Éowyn, but she understands anyway. "I was a Shieldmaiden, once," she confesses, a little wistfully.

Teyla carries a tray with the pot and two cups, and places it on a low table. She gestures for Éowyn to take a seat. "You were a warrior?"

Éowyn squares her shoulders, feeling a little defensive, even though the other woman's tone holds no judgment. "Aye. Yet I had to dress like a man to join in the battle!"

Teyla's eyes widen in surprise and Éowyn sighs. How can she explain? It is so different here: she has seen the uniformed women work alongside men, even command them.

"Here, our tea is ready." Teyla offers her one of the cups, steam wafting from it. "You will have to tell me all about it." An amused little smile plays around her lips and she pauses a moment. "And if you like, perhaps I could some day show you how to wield the rods?"

Éowyn accepts the cup. "I would like that, very much." Abruptly, she feels closer to this woman than she has to anyone since the day she arrived.

She no longer feels quite so alone.

Disclaimer: this story is based on the Sci-Fi Channel/Cooper-Wright Productions/MGM Television series *Stargate Atlantis* and the works of J.R.R. Tolkien. It was written for entertainment only; the author does not profit from it nor was any infringement of copyright intended. Please do not redistribute elsewhere without the author's consent.