

Supernatural



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Title: **Supernatural**

Story Number: -

Rating: R

Pairing: Legolas/Eowyn

Summary: Evil comes to Eryn Carantaur

Author's note: Not a crossover, though inspired by the TV series *Supernatural!*

Disclaimers: **This story is rated R for horror.**

The main characters in this story were created by JRR Tolkien and brought to the screen by Peter Jackson. No offence is intended and no profit is being made by borrowing them for use in this story, which is intended as a transformative commentary on the original.

Written for the LiveJournal **plot without porn** ficathon.

Elvish

fëa ... spirit (plural *fëar*)

hröa ... body (plural *hröar*)

According to Tolkien, both Elves and Men are composed of spirit (*fëa*) and body (*hröa*), though the relationships between the two are different. In Elves, the *hröa* does not die unless the *fëa* leaves it (for example, because the elf is grievously injured and/or has lost the will to live). In Men, when the *hröa* dies of injury, sickness or age, the *fëa* has no choice but to leave it.

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Part 1: It comes upon the breeze

Summer had ended. A cool, damp breeze, blowing from the east, brought with it the strange scent of decay.

...

Returning home from Doro Lanthron one evening, Legolas was startled by a dark, birdlike shape that skittered across the road, just a few yards ahead.

He immediately dismounted and—bow in hand—followed it into the bracken but, *Where did it go?* he wondered.

The elf turned full-circle, scanning the Forest, the trail, the Forest again, then—spotting it flitting between the trees—set off in pursuit once more.

He caught up with it in a small clearing, far from the road, and—when it turned to face him—was surprised to see that it was, in fact, a *man*: smallish, dressed in black, and bent under a huge pack, which, together with his short, spindly legs, had given him his raven-like appearance.

Legolas nodded a cautious greeting.

The man swung the pack off his back and, with a few deft movements, opened it, unfolding its front and sides to display his wares.

A pedlar.

He spread his hands, inviting Legolas to take a look.

But there was something disturbing about this man—quite apart from his unprepossessing appearance, and his lack of the customary pedlar's dog—something...

The elf had no *sense* of him. He could hear no sound of him, could feel no warmth of his *fëa*. *Were it not for the fact that I can see him,* he thought, *I would never know that he existed.*

Then the pedlar beckoned again and, despite himself, Legolas glanced at his ingenious stall, his eyes passing quickly over shelves crammed with crystal bottles (no doubt holding perfumed oils); glass flasks (filled with potent liquors); carved wooden boxes inlaid with mother of pearl; gilded locket; tall horn goblets capped with silver; birds' skulls decked with ribbons; and...

A shell.

A beautiful, iridescent shell; long, and smooth, and spiralling in tighter and tighter curves...

Legolas stretched out a hand.

The pedlar smiled, and gestured, encouraging him to pick it up.

Legolas' fingers brushed the cold, hard nacre, and closed around it. He lifted the shell to his ear, and listened.

The sea! He could hear the sea!

And he closed his eyes, and listened harder—listened to the great tidal wave that was rushing towards him.

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Part 2: A shard of silver

The pedlar picked up the shell, and returned it to its place in his pack.

Then—swiftly—he searched the elf's body, removing his elegant white knives; taking the pouch from his waist, tipping its contents into his palm, and pocketing the coins; cutting the fastenings from his silken tunic and stowing them; finding the silver chain about his neck and ripping it free.

The pedlar paused and, frowning, held the chain up to the light. A fancy elven locket, shaped like a crystal shard, dangled at its end, and it seemed to him that the thing was speaking to him, *daring* him to open it.

He considered this for a moment, watching the afternoon sunlight glance off its polished facets.

Then he shoved it in his pocket.

A second search told him that the body was clean.

Reasonably satisfied with his haul, the pedlar took up one of his flasks, uncorked it and, throwing back his head, swallowed its contents.

Then he closed up his pack, tied it securely, heaved it onto his shoulders, and set off.

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Part 3: A woman's tears

"Legolas?"

Eowyn found him lying on his back in the long grass, looking—in the moonlight—like one of the statues she had seen upon the tombs in the House of the Stewards, his body deathly still, his skin marble-white, his eyes empty...

Frantic, she fell to her knees, examined him for signs of injury and, finding none, shook him. "Legolas?"

He did not stir.

She shook him harder.

Still, he did not wake.

She ripped open his tunic—scarcely noticing that its fastenings were already missing—and, laying her head upon his chest, she listened for his heart. "Oh, thank the gods!" she sobbed.

His heart was beating—slowly, softly—but *beating!*

She raised her head, and cried out, "Help! Please! *Somebody* help!" But there was no one close enough to hear her, except, "Arod," she shouted, "Arod, come to me; come for your master!"

Moments later, the horse was by her side.

"Find elves," she said. "Find elves, and bring them here."

...

When the border guards arrived, they found her—still listening to the beat of Legolas' heart—singing softly to him of the deeds of her ancestors. Two of them improvised a stretcher, and carried their Lord back to the city; their leader lifted Eowyn into his arms, and followed.

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Part 4: A living death

"Well?"

Haldir, formerly March Warden of Lorien, now the same of Eryn Carantaur, and one of the elves who had rescued the couple, pursued the healer across the room.

Master Dírendal poured some herb-infused water into a bowl, and carefully washed his hands. "I have examined both of them," he said, "*thoroughly*. Lady Eowyn is, I believe, simply exhausted with grief—"

"Thank the Valar," muttered Haldir.

"But Lord Legolas..." He dried his hands. "Lord Legolas is sleeping."

"Sleeping?"

"That is the only way to describe it. It seems that, in him, sleep has become a sickness—or sickness has become sleep."

The March Warden frowned. "How bad a sickness?"

"It is a condition I have never seen before."

"Bad, then," said Haldir.

"Yes, I believe so." The healer rolled down his sleeves. "It is as though his body were sleeping because his *fëa* is absent."

"But that..." Haldir grasped the healer's arm and pulled him out of Eowyn's earshot. "That would mean," he whispered, "that Legolas is *dead*."

"No," said Dírendal. "He is most certainly alive—as I said, he is sleeping. But just how long he can remain in this condition, I have no way of knowing."

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Part 5: The fatal journey

"She is over there."

Haldir pointed to the far corner of the Healing Room, which had been closed off with silken curtains. His companion—a small, stout, middle-aged woman with a kindly face—nodded. "I will do my best."

"Thank you."

Hentmirë reached for the curtain, hesitated, then asked, quietly, "Eowyn? May I come in?"

When there was no answer, she slowly lifted the corner, and peeped inside. "Oh, *Eowyn!*" She ducked under the silk and, pulling up a chair, sat down beside her friend. "How is he?"

Legolas was lying on his back with his arms folded across his chest. Hentmirë, who had watched over his double in the camp at Eryn Arnën, and knew how an elf looked when in healing sleep, could see that this was something very different, and very serious.

Her heart sank, but the little woman still had a job to do. "Eowyn," she said, trying to sound firm, "if you would like to go outside for a moment or two, and get some fresh air, or want a quick wash, and a change of clothes, I will be happy to sit with Legolas."

Eowyn seemed unaware of her.

"*Haldir,*" Hentmirë persisted, "is worried because, he says, you have not eaten *anything* since they brought you back here. You must keep your strength up, Eowyn, or,"—she closed her eyes, crossing her fingers behind her back—"when Legolas wakes up, you will be too tired to take care of him."

But Eowyn had not heard her stretch the truth.

"Well," said Hentmirë, desperately, "at least *rest* for a while. There are plenty of beds—"

"I cannot!"

Yes, thought Hentmirë. *I have broken through the shell!*

"I *cannot* leave him," cried Eowyn, hoarsely, "not for a moment. He needs me, Hentmirë. He needs me *here*, so that he can find his way back!"

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Part 6: The shard strikes home

"You have another patient, Master Dínenal," said Haldir, holding the door open.

Two border guards carried a sleeping elf into the Healing Room and carefully laid him on one of the beds; the March Warden dismissed them with a nod.

"We found him," he continued, "on the road to Pelargir. I have no idea how long he had been lying there." He sat down, heavily. "And there are reports of others," he added, quietly.

"Where?" Dínenal bent over the sleeping elf, and gently lifted each of his eyelids.

"Three between here and Doro Lanthron, two more on the Pelargir road."

"So, in a straight line, with Lord Legolas somewhere near the middle?"

Haldir frowned. "Yes, more or less."

The healer nodded. "I have been speaking to Lord Fingolfin—as you know, he is well-versed in human lore."

"And?"

"It seems that the humans believe this condition is not a disease, but an affliction."

"Meaning what?"

The healer sat down beside him. "Usually, when a disease spreads," he explained, "one person passes it to many, and each of the many passes it on to many more. If you were to trace the path the disease has taken, it would look like the branches of a vast tree. Do you see?"

Haldir nodded.

"But *this* condition is spreading in a straight line."

"So," said Haldir, "one person, travelling east to west across the colony, is giving it to people he meets on the way."

"Yes. But those people are not passing it on."

"Because it is not a disease."

"It is some other affliction."

"What is he doing to them?"

"I have no idea."

"Then I will follow the path," said Haldir, rising, "and find out."

"No!" Dínenal caught the March Warden's arm. "We know that contact with him is dangerous."

"Not as dangerous as *his* contact with *me* will be."

...

Since taking the Elven locket, the pedlar had grown used to ignoring its seductive call, but now—as he stuffed his latest victim's meagre wealth into his pocket, and his fingers brushed its cold edges—curiosity suddenly overcame him.

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He took it out and, with long, dexterous fingers, pressed its tiny catch.

The locket sprang open, and its contents were revealed.

The pedlar's cry was terrible—worse than the wail of stag, pierced through the heart by an arrow; worse than the screech of a fox, trapped within its mate—and he fell to the ground, clutching his breast.

It was many minutes before he was able to move. And, when he did, it was only to grope for his pack, find one of the crystal bottles, wrench out its stopper, and gulp down its contents.

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Part 7: The spirit takes flight

Coming into the Healing Room with a jar of fresh salve, Master Dínendal stopped short, set it down, and crossed to his patient. It took no more than a moment to confirm what he had instinctively known.

He laid the elf's hand back on his breast, and—after a brief prayer for the safe journey of his fëa—carefully covered his face.

As a healer, Dínendal had seen more of death than most elves, but the strange absence of spirit in one of the First Born still moved him profoundly. He sat down upon an empty bed and considered the course of his patient's decline. Now, he could see that—although apparently lifeless—until the elf's heart had stopped beating, his hröa had still held the vital spark. *The bond between hröa and fëa had been drawn to its limit, he thought, but had not been severed. Not until—*

"Master Dínendal," cried Eowyn, from behind the silken curtain. "Come quickly!"

Fearing the loss of another patient, the healer rushed to her side. To his relief, he could see immediately that Legolas' chest was still rising and falling—the elf was still alive.

"He had almost gone," said Eowyn, brushing a strand of hair from her husband's forehead. "But now he is coming back,"—she smiled up at the healer—"he is getting *better*."

Dínendal lifted Legolas' hand, and felt for a pulse. It was hard to find—slow, and faint—but, yes, it *was* stronger than it had been the last time he had taken it.

"We must carry him outside," said Eowyn. "Straight away."

"My Lady?"

"He wants to go back to the clearing—the clearing where we found him."

"He—*wants*?"

"I cannot explain how," said Eowyn, and she had already risen, and was pulling the quilt from the next bed, "but I *know* that his life depends upon it."

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Part 8: Something wicked...

The pedlar raised a hand to shield his eyes.

The elf was lying on the ground, exactly where he had fallen; the woman was sitting by his side.

She was wearing a dress of pearl grey velvet, with sleeves of vivid blue, and her hair fell over her smooth, pale shoulders like strands of the purest gold. She was his destiny—his *doom*, if the locket's whisper was to be believed.

But the locket was wrong.

He would take her, as he had taken all the rest, and—unlike the rest—he would *keep* her (in a blue crystal vial).

And he would take her hair, and weave it into a braid, to wear about his neck.

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Part 9: A cage cannot hold him

His world was smooth and dark and filled with sound—the crashing of waves and, rising above them, the clamour of *voices*, crying out in fear and pain.

Help me! they screamed.

Where am I?

What is happening to me?

Legolas closed his eyes and thought of Eowyn.

He shut out the shouts and the wails and the sudden shrieks of death, and remembered her love, her warmth, her smile.

And, when his voice joined all the rest, it was to call to *her*—to comfort her, and to tell her of his determination to return to her.

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Part 10: Better death than captivity

Eowyn's head jerked up. Legolas—his *spirit*—was close!

She scanned the trees, looking for his captor, spotted a strange, birdlike *thing* lurking—*watching* her—and reached for her sword.

"Set him free," she said, calmly.

The thing stepped out into the open.

It was small, and filled with malice; Eowyn gripped her weapon.

But the creature swung its great pack pack from its shoulders and, smiling, opened it, inviting her with a sweep of its hand to come closer, and view its wares.

Eowyn shook her head.

The thing edged nearer.

Eowyn watched it like a hawk.

It took another step, and then another.

Eowyn waited, tensely.

The thing dipped a hand into the clutter of knick-knacks, scooped out a tiny bottle—of sapphire crystal—and, removing the stopper, held it out to her.

Eowyn's concentration broke, for just a moment; she looked into the sparkling depths, clear and blue like the huge skies over Rohan, and she seemed to hear the bustle of the great Golden Hall at feast-time...

Her hand rose—

But Legolas' voice filled her head: "Be *careful*, melmenya!"

And, "No," she screamed, clumsily swinging her sword.

The creature reeled back, dropping its pack. Trinkets flew in all directions, and Eowyn's eye was inexplicably drawn to an iridescent shell, which sailed through the air, hit a stone, and smashed open.

...

Legolas sat bolt upright. "Melmenya!"

"Lassui?" Eowyn turned towards him—

"No, melmenya!" he cried. "Kill it! *Behead* it!"

Eowyn spun back.

The thing was still lying on the ground, its arms and legs flailing, and her warrior's heart faltered at the thought of striking an enemy already brought low.

But, breathing deeply, she steeled herself and, raising her sword, cleaved its head from its shoulders with a single blow.

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They burned the body.

Then, carefully, they gathered up all the bottles and the jars, the flasks and the drinking horns, the boxes and the birds' skulls, and laid them beside the stone that had set Legolas free.

"We must break them open, *melmenya*," he said, "and release the *fëar*."

"But..." Eowyn's fingers brushed lightly over the objects. "What will become of them, *Lassui*? They are all so far from their bodies... Suppose they cannot find their way back?"

"Then they will fly to the House of Mandos, *melmenya*,"—he smiled—"and I do not believe they will wait there long. Mandos will give them *new* bodies, and let them choose—whether to dwell in bliss in Valinor, or to return here, to Middle-earth." He took her hands and raised them to his lips. "We *must* do this, *melmenya*, for I promised them—we all promised each other—that none of us would rest until the others were free. Death, my darling; death before captivity. We swore it."

...

When it was done, Legolas helped Eowyn to her feet and, hand-in-hand, they walked slowly back to the city.

"Can you tell," asked Eowyn, softly, "what has happened to them?"

"Some, I think, are back in their bodies," Legolas replied.

"*Oh, thank the gods...*"

"But most are still with us, *melmenya*." He smiled at her as, frowning, she peered into the air around her. "They are giving you their heartfelt thanks before they set out on the happy journey home."

THE END