

## Find Ye a Necromancer

by Mia Sundby

Have you ever fallen in love with someone who is dead? Readers will tear out their still-beating hearts and claim, whilst they bleed out, that it belongs to character created from thin air by a stranger. They will claim to be in love with characters who have never, and will never, be real.

My love is not like that. My beloved was *real*. Is real. Her name was Olena Durin. She was born seven hundred and thirty-three years ago. She died seven hundred years ago. Olena was strong and beautiful and brilliant, leading her people to greatness from a dark age which had plagued them; nearly a century of turmoil, of in-fighting and poverty. And she was the one to bring them out of it --she was a bright and brilliant leader.

I first read about her a little over a year ago, in a history book I borrowed from the city's archives. I was only supposed to be doing some research on the region's medical history. All I wanted to know was what herbs and tinctures and techniques were being used, yet I came away with so much more. My hand slipped on the thin parchment papers, landing on a page I can still see if I close my eyes. I see it so clearly that I could describe it inch by illuminated inch.

It was *her* page.

It was faded, though I could see that once someone had taken a great deal of time to hand-write each word, illuminate the borders and I could even see the indentations from whatever materials they had been using to measure the sharp angles of their work. It was beautiful. The beauty of the page held my attention, but the words captured it; I was in the middle before I knew I had begun.

Olena Durin.

The name turned over in my mind. First with curiosity, then fascination as I scoured for more books about her over the coming weeks. Then admiration as I devoured more texts on her great --and short-- life.

Her end had come, as I learned, in battle. After she had helped build the southern city of Khaldim --a haven for her people after so many years trapped in narrow passes in deep caverns--, she left to join the ranks of soldiers on a battlefield. It was not an important one as far as history is concerned. It was so unimportant, in fact, that there was no name given to it. Not officially. If you dig into the records on Onela Durin's death, the most you can find is that the battle took place in 1032, somewhere near the Eastern border of Dalladhur.

Useless.

*Never mind useless*, I thought as I lay in bed one night, thinking as I so often did at that time, about Onela, *It is a great and insufferable offence, to die in a battle unnamed and unmentioned.*

*It is an offence to Onela.*

The obsession gripped me, and I knew that I and I alone would make sure that Onela was not remembered thusly.

Now, looking back on it all, I can see that I was lonely. Some might even say desperate. At the time, all I could think was that I was in love. I was in love with a woman who had died seven hundred years ago, and it *wasn't fair*. She had done such great things, yet she had died with barely a footnote in history. It wasn't right. She had deserved more.

In that moment I was sure of one thing: I would give Onela a second chance.

I would bring her back.

All I needed now was to find a necromancer.