

~ Burnt Offerings ~

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by [Spiced_Wine](#)

Summary

Leaning that in Sören's world, Tindómion, Maglor's son was burned as a witch, Vanimóré, Edenel and Coldagnir go back to Iceland in the 1600's to change the past.

Notes

This is an AU based on Chapter 23 of Verhalen's 'Chains of Eternity'.

<https://archiveofourown.org/works/18070109/chapters/44243137>

Here Sören learns that one of his ancestors was burned as a witch.

Quote"

[6:47 PM] Dagnýr: Tindri Magnússon married, had a son named Finn Tindsson - we'll get back to him in just a bit. Well... there's a bit of a story about Tindri. He was said to have long, unusual hair literally described in the records as "bronze", silver eyes, and was "as tall and strong as a giant". Which, you know, Scandinavians run tall, but this was apparently tall even by Scandi standards. He was described as a "strange, proud" man, "of noble bearing".

[6:50 PM] Dagnýr: So the story goes that there was some outbreak of something or other, and a lot of people in the village were sick, and Tindri was one of the few who was not sick. His wife's family was quite ill, and they didn't really approve of her marrying this big weird Norwegian guy, and Tindri went over there as a gesture of good faith, to take care of them through their illness.

[6:52 PM] Dagnýr: They recovered, but then the mother-in-law repaid him by going to the

Church and claiming that Tindri had healed them with witchcraft. That he'd "glowed silver" and spoke in a "foreign tongue". And of course back in those days, you couldn't say shit like that without the Church having to investigate.

[6:53 PM] Dagnýr: It was common for the Church to make the accused strip and search their body for weird birthmarks or whatever, something that would prove they were in league with the devil. They found no blemishes, but they found...

[6:54 PM] Dagnýr: ...pointy ears.

[6:54 PM] Dagnýr: Tindri Magnússon was burned for witchcraft.

- Inspired by [Chains Of Eternity](#) by [verhalen](#)

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Vanimórë, came Coldagnir's voice. We need to meet, to talk, now. Edenel too.

Very well.

Not here, the Halls.

That urgent?

Yes.

They stood before the Portal. Coladagnir said, 'Iceland, the 1600's, Svalbarðseyri area.'

Vanimórë reached out, played his fingers across the sparkling surface. 'Couldst thou possibly try being a little less cryptic?' The landscape of Northern Iceland coalesced, but a far more ancient one, in human terms.

'Magrét told me of a conversation she had on the family chat server last night.' Coldagnir's eyes burned like solar flares as he turned his head. 'Knowest thou where the Elven blood in Sören and his family come from? Dag has been looking into it. He is thinking along the line of "Ancient Alines".'

'Yes, go on.'

'Tindómion.'

Vanimöré swung to face him. 'What?' Edenel, silent until now, blazed cold and alert beside him. 'What of Tindómion?'

'Maglor sired Tindómion in that world also. He saw him long ago, at the time of the Last Alliance,

but Tindómion vanished, grieving for Gil-galad. Maglor has not seen him since then.’

Tindómion. A large, neatly-kept farmstead swept close, as if they hung above it on wings. A man stepped out of the door, and Edenel hissed. The glamour he wove about him was like a heat-haze on a hot day, but they saw through it to the reality: Flaunting bronze hair, eyes silver as starlight, the same sculpted lines of face that Maglor, that Fëanor bore, the same pride, the arrogant carriage that kings might have copied. And, like Maglor, there was grief, agelong and undimmed at the back of those eyes.

‘From a prince of the House of Fëanor, Knight-companion of Gil-galad, to this,’ Edenel murmured. ‘Even with the glamour, he must have stood out like a bonfire in the snow.’

‘So he did,’ Coldagnir said hardly. ‘He married, but his wife’s family were wary of him. He was too different, coming out of nowhere, with that hair, those eyes, and some wealth. Then a disease swept the land. Many people were ill, unable to tend their homesteads, their animals, and a lot of them died. Tindómion, naturally, was not one of them.’

‘He helped his wife’s family, who recovered. His mother-in-law went to the church to tell them he had healed them while glowing with a silver light, speaking in a *foreign tongue*.’

Vanimórë swore. ‘Go on,’ he said grimly.

‘And so, Tindómion was searched by the church, for signs of witch marks.’

‘They would find none,’ Edenel said, as one who knew (as did Vanimórë). ‘He has skin like milk.’

‘And Elven ears,’ Coldagnir flashed. ‘He was burned at the stake for witchcraft.’

The silence exploded like a bubble bursting: *heatragedenail*.

‘Maglor was drawn to Iceland was he not, where his son’s ashes were scattered. And through Tindómion Elven blood was introduced into the line of which came Sören and his family; the blood came full circle.’

‘Dost thou see why I do not want to use my power?’ Vanimórë blazed at them. ‘Because it is too tempting to end all this...this...*bullshit!* This is Manwë’s doing, the sour old bastard, wanting, needing submission, hating all who dare to rip off his mask, holding up chastity and obedience above all, and death to all those who do not bend the knee and grovel.’

‘Perhaps thou *shouldst* end all that bullshit.’ Edenel’s eyes burned white as snow under a full moon. ‘I will not suffer this, Vanimórë, not Tindómion.’

‘This is why I wanted thee both here,’ Coldagnir said. ‘Vanimórë, we know thou must enter Earth with much of thy power left behind, but Edenel and I need not, though the glamour takes more energy, has to be more...dense, but we could do something, release him, ensure he is not burned.’

Vanimórë steepled his fingers, then scowled as he recollected it was one of his father’s mannerisms. He was shaking, a deep vibration of fury that made the Portal snap and spark. ‘Someone has to burn,’ he said. ‘It is in the records. I suppose there are no helpful natural disasters we might use for cover?’

‘None at that time,’ Coldagnir said tightly.

‘A pity, but I am sure we can do *something*. Let me think. Yes, we will need a few things. Give me a moment.’

He asked them to stay in the green garden, and walked through the palace. Immense as it was, it did not take him long to find Tindómion, strolling with his father. It was almost a shock, coming from Iceland to see them together, as they should be, as they were, identical but for the colour of their hair, straight shoulders touching. Maglor said something and Tindómion half-turned to lay a hand on his father's breast. They stopped walking, eyes meeting, silver fire into silver and the Fëanorion fire sparked across the gap like lightning. A call and Tindómion's head turned to Gil-galad and Fingolfin walking down a flight of shallow steps. They were dressed similarly in deep sapphire and black, their eyes star-blue, as alike as Maglor and Tindómion in their cut-crystal beauty, their bearing. *The arc of Fire*. So intertwined, so complex, so fated that it could never be untangled.

Their reactions were the same, the heat of it almost visible across the space that separated them, a flaring desire that met and matched as Fingolfin and Gil-galad strode to meet them. There was an inevitability to it, in every universe, every possible reality, the blood of Fingolfin and the blood of Fëanor would always come together. Unlike mere companions, or relatives, they closed on one another like predators, formed a complex tight knot of glittering sexual tension. They touched without reason, except the greatest reason. Tindómion said something into Gil-galad's ear, so near that his lips grazed the delicate shell, and Fingolfin looked at both he and Maglor as if he would devour them alive and knew that they would likewise devour him. And then, without fanfare, Fëanor entered the garden, and it became a backdrop for him. All its beauty, the foam of bright flowers, the marble fountains, the trees, were merely a frame for his glory. Immediately every eye turned toward him, yet the others lost none of their own magnificence, challenging, burning. *Fire touching fire*.

Fëanor walked into their midst as if he owned them — and they owned him — the diamond eyes filled with light and brilliance, white teeth flashing a smile. Watching them, Vanimórë was conscious of a wild anger. How could any paltry Mortal cringing under the fear of hellfire even *think* to lay a hand on something so far above them. But Manwë's hate for the house of Fëanor was as deep as the Outer Sea. If one of that bloodline wandered within reach, *of course* he would destroy it. In the Iceland of the 1600's, with the church supreme and superstition rife, he would use religion and fear as his pawn.

So be it.

OooOooO

Even in Iceland, the difference in the air was striking. This was an older world before the Industrial Revolution; no tang of the pollution that infected modern-day Earth. The land itself looked rougher, wilder, the only roads dirt tracks, frozen or mired according to the season.

They stepped through the natural arch of the rock known as the ‘Church’, onto the tumbled lava-field. Although a tourist attraction hundreds of years later, it was regarded in more superstitious times as a gateway to the Netherworld, a place where the devil lurked, and was avoided. Vanimórë smiled grimly at that thought. Not quite, but close.

They would go as beggars, not uncommon at this time, and the glamour lay thick as paint over their features and height, even showing unruly beards seething with lice, torn trows, feet wrapped in rags.

Tindómion had been taken as a heretic, but since the village only had a small lock-up mainly used for theft or drunkenness, and no-one wanted him in their house, he had been placed within the church itself — as if the holiness of the building might bleach out some of his devilry before he was burned. The church was a turf structure, in the Icelandic style, with a small cross surmounting the door.

It was not quite dark when they arrived, April drawing on toward the white nights of summer. The village was still awake, and Vanimórë could see, in the small square, the pyre had already been built. Four big men appointed by the priest stood outside the church, and villagers whispered in huddles.

They want a fire, Vanimórë said to Coldagnir. Let us give them some fire.

Coldagnir’s smile was full of teeth and anger. He melted away, vanished completely. Only Edenel and Vanimórë saw the running flame, low to the ground.

Most of the houses in the village were, like the church, built of turf, and there was little fear of any normal fire doing much damage. Coldagnir’s fire, when brought to bear, was hot enough to melt through the core of the planet.

Flames raced along the roofs, jumping from one to another. Once the alarm went up, villagers milled, sleepy eyes blown wide into shocked wakefulness. They expected it to burn out. It did not. Cinders floated up into the dawn sky.

It was nothing for Vanimórë to become involved in the concerted effort to put out the fires and one man, perhaps the headman, had the wit to begin organising bucket-chains, but only when the cry went up that the priest’s house had caught alight did the guards become involved. The priest himself, a gaunt man with a fanatical face, wrapped in rich furs, could be heard shouting, demanding more aid. He ran toward the church.

‘The witch,’ he cried. ‘The witch brings this upon you! This is the Devil’s fire.’

The shout went up, as Vanimórë, who had now stationed himself at the rear of the building, knew it would. The pack started baying, the bestial howl of fear and vengeance.

A flame poured down from the roof, concentrated and burned a perfect circle in through the sod and grass back wall. It slipped down to the earth and rose up. For a moment, Coldagnir showed his true self, a being of fire, then he drew the glamour down.

Vanimórë and Edenel stepped into the dark room. It smelled of dead incense, snuffed candles, earth, and was almost dark. That was no barrier to their sight.

Tindómion had been shackled, the chains wrapped around the only thing considered strong enough to hold him: the stone altar. Vanimórë suffered a shock at seeing him like this when not long ago he had watched him walking in the Timeless Halls in all his fierce and shining beauty. His simple clothes were stained and ripped, his flood of hair had come loose from its braid, but he looked stern and unbowed. He knew well enough, thought Vanimórë, what waited for him with the coming day. His eyes widened in the gloom as Edenel and Vanimórë came forward, lifting his hand in a warning to be silent. Taking the shackles, he snapped them, let them fall. Tindómion's wrists were still circled by metal, but he was free.

'Tindómion,' he said. 'Come.'

He asked no questions. He came.

'Take him,' Vanimórë said. 'To Dimmuborgir. I will see thee soon. There is just one thing I have to do.'

'Whom art thou?' Tindómion asked in Sindarin.

'An acquaintance of thy father's,' Vanimórë smiled at him. 'And so are they. Trust them.'

'My family —'

'Thou hast none here, Tindómion Istelion Maglorion.' His smile faded. 'Only death awaits thee, and thou knowest it. And thy part here is done. Now,' he set a hand on the straight shoulder. 'Go.'

Tindómion looked back before he melted into the dark, now just another man, almost a beggar or a panicking villager if any were to see. The smoke came down between them.

Vanimórë took a deep breath, walked back into the church. He wrapped the broken chains around his wrist.

That was where they found him when they came, their guttural cries choking on the blowing smoke and their own fear when they saw that he was loose, that the back wall was burned through. But it was Tindómion they saw, not Vanimórë, and him that they blamed. With the priest coughing, throat raw, intoning prayers that were supposed to be merciful but were in fact commands to his hoary, pitiless God to destroy this evil among them, they dragged him to the pyre. He was spat on, kicked, struck, gaping faces screamed at him. Compared to Angband, even Barad-dûr it was nothing; and the villagers took on the aspect of orcs themselves, as vile and as violent.

He strained against the impulse to break free, to kill. Even with most of his power left behind in the Timeless Halls, it would not be hard. But they needed a body, the ashes to scatter. A victim.

A past.

A future.

There was no-one to pray to, and so he did not. He had given up prayer a long time ago, and so he let them bind him to the stake. More and more fuel was piled around his feet, until it reached to the knees.

'Repent, witch,' shrieked the priest. 'And let the fire cleanse you before the judgement of God.' He raised a skinny fist, broke into another racking cough.

Do not think that the witch will not haunt thy dreams forever, because I assure thee that he will.

Burning brands were thrust into the tinder. The weather had been dry and they caught quickly, adding more smoke to the thickening smog in the air. Sparks struck his face. He was terrified, he admitted, but he had known terror before. It would be agonising beyond what he could endure, but he had known agony before too, and sooner or later, it would be over.

The faces of the villagers wavered through the smoke, the leaping fire. Heat touched his boots, warm at first, then hotter, crisping the leather. Reflexively, he tried to move, but his feet were bound. Fear came up in his throat. His heart thundered in his chest. He thought of Tindómion running free as the smoke began to sear his lungs. Some people were lucky enough to suffocate before the fire killed them.

It was the pain that had destroyed his body, so that he could go *Outside*, to save the elves from Ungoliant, the pain of his own self-destruction, burrowing into his flesh, deeper, deeper, deeper. Then it passed beyond pain. His hair was alight, burning, his brows, lashes, leather hardening, flaking off his skin like a discarded husk, skin crisping...

And he screamed, because he could do no other. They said that witches cried for aid on the pyre, turning back to god. It had not helped them, and there was no help here but for himself, and he could not, would not, use what power he had to escape.

And so...
He burned alive.

Somewhere, he thought, minds turned toward him, near and further away, as he screamed again, sucked in a breath. He thought he saw, in the flames, Coldagnir's fiery eyes weeping.

And then, he forgot what he was. He forgot everything.

There was a moment of impossible agony, the heart of it, the silence that one came to at the end. The last reach, the last barrier before death. No breath. Nothing. A frozen moment. And then, as if a light was turned off, it was gone.

Far from the village, and running like light, they stopped as one.

Edenel never wept, but now his eyes blurred with tears. 'Oh, Hells. Hells. He was never going to come back.'

'No.' Coldagnir burned up in the gloaming. His voice took on an diapason roar like the sun's furnace. 'No, he was never going to come back. Ah, *Vanimörë*.'

He melted into fire, raced across the ground, back to the village, and sped into the fire. For a moment he saw Vanimörë's face stretched in an unbearable scream, lovely hair burned away, skin singeing, the cornea of his eyes cracking — then he launched himself into Vanimörë's open mouth and *down*, blasting the heart, burning out the lungs. Instant death. The inferno roared up as if fed with oil, reaching high into the sky, illuminating the faces that watched. Some in horror, some in sick exultation, hands clasped, prayers on their lips.

The violet eyes went wide. Then his head dropped. His body went limp in his bindings. He was, mercifully, blessedly gone.

OooOooO

‘Who was he?’ Tindómion demanded. The sudden flare of the pyre was visible even here. ‘And, ‘Why? *Why* would he do this for me?’

Edenel turned to him. ‘His name is Vanimórë, and he did it because — it is what he does. He loves thee and thy family, Tindómion.’

A great shudder dropped Tindómion to his knees. He raised his head to the sky, tears on his cheeks.

‘I do not know him! To make such a sacrifice — and I *have no family*.’

‘Thou hast, and thou wilt find them in time.’ Edenel dropped a hand on his shoulder, even as Coldagnir returned, a fire charring the grass in his wake. ‘But it is not safe for an Elf in these times, in this land. Eventually, the witch burnings will cease, but until then, thou must disappear.’

Coldagnir’s tears looked like lava flow on his cheeks.

‘He is gone,’ he said, his voice twisted. ‘I wanted to burn that village and everyone in it to the ground. But he would not have wanted that. He said he wanted thy son, and his to live, Tindómion.’

‘My son...’ Tindómion rose slowly, a look of longing on his face. Then his face hardened as he pushed it away.

‘He will survive and make his own life, but he will reject thee, I am sorry, out of fear of burning. But thy family must have roots here, for the future.’

‘I understand nothing of this,’ Tindómion told him, steadying himself, face a mask now, marble, the look of a warrior who has watched those he love, die. ‘And neither of thee are entirely Quendi, art thou? Thou,’ he looked at Coldagnir. ‘Not at all. And yet,’ his eyes turned to Edenel. ‘There is something familiar about thee, him, too... Vanimórë?’ He stared toward the village, and then the mask shattered and he cried, ‘I owe him my life, and I do not even know him!’

‘Yes,’ Edenel agreed, through a closed throat. ‘Thou doth owe him thy life. Now come and live it.’

OooOooO

‘Dimmuborgir,’ Tindómion murmured as they approached it. ‘Yes, this place — sometimes I felt as if I could walk into the past from here. I was tempted to try, although suspicion would have fallen on me had anyone seen me here. The local people hold it in fear. And with reason.’ His mouth was a firm scroll, and there were still tear stains on his face. During their journey he had kept looking behind him. They all had, Hoping beyond hope.

‘Not the past,’ Coldagnir said. ‘The future.’

‘What?’

They walked through the rock formations, the early sun throwing the strange volcanic shapes into sharp relief.

‘There are places on this world,’ Coldagnir continued. ‘Ancient places like this that act as portals, doorways between one place and another and, sometimes, one time and another. It is how we came here. Some are man made, tumuli, stone circles. Others are natural, like Dimmuborgir.’

‘Where dost thou come from?’ Tindómion suddenly stopped dead. His face was drained into whiteness. ‘Valinor? I have no truck with the Valar.’

‘No more do we,’ Edenel said. ‘Whom dost thou think wants thee dead, Tindómion, but Manwë, taking the guise of the Herbrew and Christian God? The burning times were of his making, and his alone. A way of regaining some of his lost power. No, we are from another...world, like this one, but...imagine two roads running across the land, almost side by side, and yet both separate. And both of them are worlds. We have crossed the land between those roads.’

Tindómion stared at him, pushed his hands into his hair. ‘Art thou even Elven?’

‘I am the twin of Finwë,’ Edenel told him. ‘I woke beside him in Cuiviénen, and but for chance, I would be the father of Fëanor and Fingolfin, and kin to thee.’

Tindómion’s breath went in, held; silver eyes mapped Edenel’s face. ‘Yes,’ slowly. ‘Yes, thou doth look a little like my father. The resemblance is there. Thy hair and thine eyes are different, but thy face...Where is he?’ With a sudden sharp pain as if knifed in the gut. ‘Dost thou know?’

‘In this world he lives, though far from here.’ Coldagnir’s expression, that had seemed carved out of opalescent stone, softened a little. ‘But we wish to give thee the chance to — one day — meet with him again. A storm is coming, Tindómion, as yet it is far in the future, but it will shake this world.’

‘And one day, the shining dead shall walk again.’ Edenel said. ‘I promise thee that.’ He drew from his tunic a brooch set with diamonds: a miniature of the emblem of Gil-galad. Gil-galad had been curious about the request but given it willingly enough. Tindómion closed his hand about it, closed his eyes. ‘Thou knowest what this is? Gil. *Gil*. where didst thou get this?’

‘Another time, another place, but what it is, is a promise. It is *hope*.’

They walked again, and the sun rose higher, warm for April. A falcon swept overhead. Tindómion was silent as they approached the great natural arch in the rock. The air seemed to quiver with heat haze.

‘Vanimórë said to give thee this.’ Edenel stopped, shed his glamour completely and Tindómion gazed at him as though supping from a well that was filled with clear water after being dry a thousand years. His face quivered. He looked at Coldagnir, whose face was radiant as the sun. And as terrible.

Both of them unclipped small bags from their waists. Edenel opened one and a cascade of the finest diamonds filled his palm. Coldagnir’s showed rubies and emeralds. They re-tied the bags and handed them to him, drew forth rolled up pieces of thick paper.

‘Bank notes, for where thou art going. Money, but in the form of paper. The jewels should be easy enough to exchange for currency.’

Again Tindómion looked back toward the village he had left behind, the people whom had feared him, had him dragged before a pitiless, superstitious, frightened clergy, and the mercy of a merciless god.

‘Why?’ he asked again. ‘Why wouldst thou do this for me, and why would *he* die for me? How does he know me and my family?’ It was clear that he was speaking of the Fëanorions, that he had already made himself discard this life in Iceland, his wife, his son.

‘On that other road, in that other world, he knows thee,’ Edanel said gently. ‘How could he see thee die, Last Star of the House of Fëanor?’

Tindómion’s glamour failed him and at last, he stood before them as himself, skin like hoarfrost, eyes silver as polished steel, bronze hair a rich storm that fell to his thighs. A look of eagles, a prince among Elves. Bard. Warrior. Fëanorion to the bone.

‘My mother called me that.’ He sounded as if he could not get enough air. ‘And Gil..Gil-galad...after Celebrimbór was gone. How canst thou—’ He fought with himself but his eyes were hungry to *know*. ‘Very well, very well, thou couldn’t not have known that, but thou doth.’

‘We know, and know thou this: The Doom can be broken, the Flame light the darkness again, the Song sing its own Fate.’ Edanel drew his brow down to kiss it. ‘And the mighty dead return.’ His voice echoed among the rocks. Tindómion’s eyes *burned*.

‘And do not grieve or feel guilt for Vanimórë.’ Coldagnir said gently. ‘Although I do, and Edanel does. He is more than a god, and although here, he can be killed, he cannot be unmade. And it was his choice, never dismiss it as whimsy.’

‘I do not. But I wish...I wish I could have—’

‘Vanimórë follows his own inclinations, and I think thou wilt meet him again.’ He laid his hand flat over Tindómion’s heart. ‘He believed thou wert worth it, and he was right.’

‘Thou art saying he is truly not dead? Dost thou mean as some kind of houseless spirit, or—’

‘No, I do not mean that.’ He glanced at Edanel. ‘I mean that he can remake his own form.’

‘I thank thee for that. I wish—’ He bowed his head. ‘He gave me a life. But since Gil-galad’s death, and since last saw my father,’ he said, ‘there has been no life. I have only haunted the shadows. I have only survived. It was not living.’

‘Maglor lives,’ Coldagnir said, and Tindómion’s eyes fixed on him with a palpable weight. ‘And thou didst survive because thou wouldst not give up hope. One day wilt meet thy father, and perhaps thou shouldst come back here, when the world is a little more civilised or at least most are not burned if they are...different. Come.’ A vision passed between them of an Iceland in the future, a young man, a lovely face under a coronal of curls, walking down the street. Coldagnir raised a smile out of the burning rage. But none of it was Tindómion’s fault.

‘So,’ Tindómion eyed the rock arch. ‘We will enter there and emerge elsewhere? Where?’

The air was alive as they entered, tuned to a high thrumming note that meant both space and time were being bent, here. Dimmoborgir faded. They looked out onto a bustling city.

‘London,’ Coldagnir said. ‘1887. The capital city of the British empire in those times. If a man has wealth, he can make his way there easily. They believe themselves civilised. They are not, of course.’ He shrugged, ‘But at least thou wilt not be arrested for heresy.’ He shot a look at Edanel who nodded and both of them closed around him. Coldagnir’s hands settled like wings on the back of his head, Edanel’s cupped his face. He looked deep into those eyes, the twin to Maglor’s, then

kissed him, a fierce, brief kiss. 'Take the knowledge passed to us from Vanimóre, Tindómion Maglorion Fëanorion, of this new time, and make a life for thyself. Go.'

In the village, spirals of smoke went up into the clear air as, at last, the pyre died, the body blackened, and long dead.

And the priest and village celebrated the burning of a witch.

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