



WORLD
WARCRAFT

A Moment in Verse

by Madeleine Roux

It was bitterly cold upon the water: the surface of it smooth as glass, rippling only along the edges of the boat. Lor'themar Theron had insisted on coming by the sea, by the old way. He wanted to absorb it all, not teleported instantly to the gates of Suramar City but seeing it as it was meant to be seen. And there it was, shimmering domes unfolding slowly above a still, blue lake, the tall crystalline towers looming like mountains sculpted by ancient gods. *Gods*, he mused, with a delicate touch and graceful sensibility—for though Suramar City had stood for ten thousand years and more, it looked fragile enough to shatter at a mere tremor.

They passed the imposing central hub of Astravar Harbor, floating toward the Moonlit Landing where lush purple ferns unfurled like welcome banners and pale violet flowers bobbed beneath a canopy of blossoming sapphire branches. The boat cut across the looming shadow of the Nighthold on toward the empty docks below the landing.

First Arcanist Thalyssra had invited him to come, the invitation so long-standing he had simply run out of excuses to forestall the visit. It was not lack of want that kept him away, but the endless demands made upon his time. As leader of the sin'dorei and member of the newly formed Horde council, his time was split between the concerns of Silvermoon City and pressing requests from Orgrimmar. Lor'themar felt split in two, and neither half his own. This visit—this indulgence—did not belong to either half, but rather floated somewhere in the middle, in the corner of his heart where his own interests lay withered and all but forgotten. Though he occasionally took the liberty of a quiet afternoon to read, those moments brought precious little rest. He often found himself abandoning his book in favor of his journal, poems and snatches of verse springing to mind, many of them returning to the same topic again and again: his potently beautiful dusk lily.

It felt suddenly ridiculous, to be gliding along in that little boat, a single nightborne oarsman rowing them toward the foot of the great city—he did not belong there. This time did not belong to him; it belonged to his people, and to the Horde.

Lor'themar glanced over his shoulder, back the way they had come. A fog had closed in as if to trap him, as if to say: *Too late, your path is chosen.* The oarsman shot him a questioning glance, but Lor'themar said nothing, gazing over the elf's white hair at the quaint silver lanterns glowing on the docks. He was not going into battle, yet his chest ached with a familiar tension—he knew well that anticipation and fear were kin, sometimes impossible to tell apart. Like that tricky duo, he carried only two things on his person: his sword on his belt, hanging at his left side, and a small, worn leather-bound journal in his right hand. That heady mixture of anticipation and fear had made his hands grow slick, and now the pages beneath the leather had gone clammy with his nervousness.

He shivered, pulling the thick, crimson cloak embroidered with gold suns closer about his shoulders, watching his breath puff across the closing distance between bow and landing. Then the boat slowed, gliding past a pair of elegant cranes that watched them go by without a ruffled feather, impervious to the cold and to the intrusion.

“Steady yourself,” the oarsman warned, and then the boat nosed against the dock. The nightborne reached for the nearest post, holding them in place while Lor'themar disembarked.

“Thank you for safe passage,” Lor'themar told him, and the oarsman inclined his head once, smiling, and then pushed away, slicing back into the perfect, lily-dusted waters.

“At last you have arrived.”

Lor'themar whirled, caught off-guard, finding First Arcanist Thalyssra had not sent a page to escort him but rather had come herself. She stood observing him from the stairs leading up to the Moonlit Landing. Her voice carried easily across the water as she stood as still and perfect and lavender as the birds bathing calmly behind him.

He bowed slightly at the waist and then strode the short distance from the end of the dock to the dizzying set of steps leading up to the Gilded Market, its bustle slowed with night coming on. The tightness in his chest had not eased, and it only increased as he closed the gap between them.

Thalyssra's smile widened at his approach, a slender purple hand appearing from inside her rune-etched cape. No longer wearing her more warlike robes of state, she had dressed for the chill in the air in sumptuous, touchable velvet—no doubt imbued with a warmth spell—a simple crystal diadem atop her crown of silvery-white braids.

When Lor'themar accepted her hand, it was cool and dry, the light shifting of her cloak sending a hint of her lilac perfume to torment him.

“I hardly believe my eyes,” she said with a light laugh as Lor'themar tucked her hand under his smoothly and took her arm. They turned toward the city together and began the ascent.

“You might have given me longer to prepare, Regent Lord. I had to call back six disgruntled poets from their expeditions. They harangued me for hours. Fortunately, not in verse.”

“My apologies,” he replied in his deep baritone. “As you might imagine, it was not easy to escape my responsibilities in Silvermoon, particularly on business of such a . . . personal nature.”

Thalysra waved him off. There were those damned lilacs again. It was going to make him dizzy. “Do not apologize, please. A bit of strife is good for them; they need something to write poems about, after all. And how is Quel’Thalas? If I close my eyes, I can still picture the winding paths through the red and gold wood, the leaves swirling against my feet on a wood smoke wind . . .”

“Such poetry already, my lady, I have come ill-prepared for our contest,” Lor’themar chuckled. Yet he appreciated every word. Even the thought of Silvermoon City and its golden spires gave him a pang. “My absence will be felt and resented, I am sure, but when I left there were no fires in urgent need of extinguishing.”

That wasn’t exactly true. Both Halduron Brightwing and Rommath had taken an unusual interest in his journey to Suramar. The words, “Go, you love-addled buffoon, or I will strangle you myself” might even have left Rommath’s lips before Lor’themar departed.

They took the stairs one by one, the lowland chill of the harbor dropping away slightly as they climbed. Pearlescent railings outlined the path to the city proper, where well-armed and armored nightborne patrolled the emptying markets.

“Resent? Nonsense.” Thalysra nudged him and Lor’themar clung to his journal more tightly. “You are staying but two days!”

“A rare luxury for me. The demands from Orgrimmar alone are—”

“Lor’themar . . .” She squeezed his forearm through his cloak, and perhaps felt the tension that gripped him from head to foot. “This is not how I mean to go on.” The nightborne stopped and stepped back, facing him. Her diamond-bright eyes glittered in the early evening gloom, even more arresting in the dark. Lor’themar struggled to meet her gaze, wary that a lecture might be coming on. But she held his hand gently and did not let him look away. “Let your worries drop away, if only for these two days. This . . . This is but a moment, a moment out of time. The sorrows and concerns that fill your head? Let them be stones and drop them in the water. You may scoop them up as you glide away, but for these precious days they reside buried in the sand, yes?”

He grinned. Even just the words spoken in her low and soothing voice were a spell that briefly banished the worries circling in his head.

The cursed pain in his chest did not abate, but he knew it would not until she was gone from his sight again.

“Very well,” Lor’themar told her. “This is our moment out of time.”

“I will hold you to that,” Thalyssra cautioned, tilting her head down.

“Then I shall make it a promise, my lady. One I will not break.”

“Excellent.” Her arm nested in his again, and they continued their journey through the market. “For I would have you fit of mind and spirit for our competition. I will thrash you, of course, but only on fair grounds.”

Lor’themar smirked. “My lady is confident in her tall, tall tower, I see. How much more dramatic than the fall will be.”

“You are already rhyming!” she teased, dissolving into laughter. “And so poorly, too. This will be triflingly easy, Regent Lord. A pity you came so far to be trounced without real effort.”

“Then you recalled those poets from their travels for nothing,” Lor’themar said, shrugging.

“Oh, not for nothing,” she assured him as they passed by twisting braziers lit with purple fire that illuminated them both. “Not for nothing, Lor’themar. For this moment. For us.”



A modest but keen audience awaited them in the Midnight Court. Thalyssra had not exaggerated—a half dozen wizened faces stared in ready silence, their lips pursed preemptively with judgment. Those were the poets, Lor’themar concluded, and among them sat a few friendlier faces, all of them *shal’dorei*. Some of those faces were flushed from the arcwine poured liberally by circulating servants. What had begun as a private wager between the two of them in Nazjatar had apparently become a full-fledged spectacle. Lor’themar took it as a compliment—Thalyssra must have been confident in his skills, or else this would make for poor sport in public.

“Then we are to begin,” he muttered. “And so unceremoniously.”

“Ah but you will be wined and dined when the evening’s entertainment has concluded. It is not often we entertain leaders from abroad,” Thalyssra explained, escorting Lor’themar to the gathering. “So I hope you can understand their eagerness. Such events are galvanizing, you see, they lend legitimacy to our newly liberated city. I have no doubt tonight’s festivities will be put down in song and verse—and will not soon be forgotten.”

“Then I shall endeavor not to disappoint,” Lor’themar said. He meant it as a jest, but inside he was quivering. The friendly poetry competition between he and the First Arcanist felt like a private thing, an inside joke, proof that their bond was growing. He had not expected it to suddenly involve an audience, and one that looked middling receptive at best.

“No, no, let it not be too terribly serious for us, dear Lor’themar,” she urged, snatching two goblets of arcwine as a servant wandered by. With a wide smile, she offered him the second cup.

He sipped cautiously, aware of the wine’s potency. The first taste of it was as electric as the light shining in the First Arcanist’s eyes.

“A moment ago, you were sheer bravado, my lady,” Lor’themar reminded her. The gathered audience took their seats, leaning over to whisper giddily between them while he and Thalyssra still stood before them. “Having second thoughts?”

“Never,” she clinked her glass lightly against his. “But I find it is so much better to lose gracefully. I look forward indeed to observing how you handle it.”

Lor’themar quelled his cutting remark by taking another drink from his cup. A servant appeared from the shadows around the court, bringing with him a wooden podium. The chairs had been arranged under a domed pavilion with a dark plum-colored roof, a soaring and slender statue rising behind their audience. The soft water whispers of Suramar Bay washing against the court was joined by a harp and singer drifting down from one of countless towers above. From his vantage, he could glance back toward the market and see rows and rows of domes like the one they stood beneath, each shining and magenta, like perfect droplets of wine spilled on a marble slab.

After the podium was arranged, Thalyssra joined him there and turned to face their audiences. Or rather, their judges.

Lor’themar shifted in place, more accustomed to giving rousing speeches before a battle than holding up his personal poetry to strangers for scrutiny.

“Fair poets and citizens of Suramar: I bid you all welcome and good evening,” Thalyssra called out, raising her goblet. Others went up in response. “We have an honored guest with us this evening! A ranger, a leader, a sin’dorei of enduring bravery and commitment to his people. But in this warrior’s chest beats a poet’s heart, and he is here among us this evening to share the tastes and passions of far off Quel’Thalas. I trust you will receive him graciously and listen well while he regales us. As he is our guest, he has the honor of speaking first.”

His good eye twitched, but he plastered on a smile and bowed as the assembled *shal'dorei* clapped politely, many upon their wrists. They appeared keenly interested in him, studying closely this *sin'dorei* stranger their leader had invited to Suramar with such fanfare.

“And what a pleasure it is to be in this city of ancient wonder and tradition, graced with the presence of venerable artists and thinkers,” Lor'themar said, watching Thalyssra melt into the shadows of the pavilion. Though she stood in darkness, he could see only her.

“I only lament that I waited so long to accept the First Arcanist's kind invitation,” he finished. Clearing his throat, Lor'themar extricated the little journal from the deep folds of his cloak. On the boat ride over, he had ample time to consider his choice. A sober political piece seemed right given the audience. He doubted the old poets of Suramar were interested in the more personal, sentimental pieces he had been writing lately, when thoughts of a beautiful First Arcanist crept unbidden into his head.

“A poem in the tradition of Silvermoon,” Lor'themar announced, to murmurings of interest. “This is a sonnet I have titled, ‘The Adder.’”

Pressing his palm to the journal to keep it flat and legible, Lor'themar spared one last glance at Thalyssra, who encouraged him with a subtle nod. He adjusted his cloak, took a deep breath, and began.

“Consider the adder, its poison weak,
No threat to the strong, fangs and bite mere show,
Its colors kingly raiment, yet it seeks
Prey in the shadows and dark places, low—
So when it strikes the victim deep in woe—
A wounded soul or body near to death—
The poison comes on wings of swift sorrow.
Behold now, the coy adder's truest theft—
Of the small, and tired, the young, the bereft.
A moment's weakness the end of the bold,
The impossible arrow, unkindly deft
And fletched like the snake, in crimson and gold.
So beware the humble little adder,
Lest it bite you when it cruelly matters.”

“Thank you,” Lor’themar said in closing, to the building applause of the poets and nobles seated before him. Thalyssra emerged from the shadowy portico, tapping her fingers on her wrist to show her appreciation. It was a subdued response, but Lor’themar was not in the habit of sharing his poems publicly, and he would take their politeness over stunned, disgusted silence.

“Marvelously done,” she told him as they passed, and she took his place at the podium. “And I shall speak extemporaneously, as we have done here in the Midnight Court for thousands of years, as so many have done before me and as so many will do after—moved to verse by the spirit of the moment.”

The moment. Lor’themar leaned against the nearest column, enjoying the purple brazier light wash over Thalyssra as her words drew delighted gasps from the audience. The moment. Their moment out of time. He was impressed that she chose to improvise, but then he knew that she was an extraordinary woman.

Thalyssra lifted her delicate, pointed chin toward the heavens and opened her arms wide, as if receiving the full embrace of the darkening evening and the coming starlight. He found himself leaning forward, just like the other poets and onlookers, drawn toward her. Rapt.

“The whole night sees us,
wretched, beautiful,
beneath those untold, unblinking eyes
we dance, we drink
we give body to the watchful heavens.
Becoming hands and feet,
Becoming.
Here I am—take my fingers to grasp the goblet,
Take my lips to breathe your first air.
Take my feet and learn to twirl and fall—
Tumble and I shall catch you,
Laugh and I shall laugh with you,
Until all of our shining eyes are stars,
And we see each other—one cosmos;
One heart.”

The silence after Thalyssra finished felt galvanizing in its completeness, as if he and all the others there in the Court saw with the same eyes and breathed with the same lungs, as her poem compelled them to do. They were moved to applause as one, too. Lor'themar was already standing, but the audience joined him, leaping to their feet. For his part, he was not concerned with the quality of the poetry, but with the depth of feeling in the recitation. He might have known she would make such an entrancing performer. The First Arcanist was luminous on a bad day and incandescent on a good one. But there, soaked in starlight and caught up in a poetic trance, she shamed the White Lady herself.

“Magnificent!” a poet sitting to his right cried out, snatching the word from Lor'themar's mind. The poet's silver hair fell in a perfect sheet down his back, and he wore a large glittering amethyst around his neck. His robes rustled softly as he joined First Arcanist Thalyssra at the podium, giving her a deep bow with open arms.

“You are all so kind,” she murmured, touching the fingertips of her right hand to her throat.

“My assistant Glandren took down every word,” the poet gestured for that assistant to come forward, and a younger nightborne boy meekly scuttled toward the podium. “Ah! There is Glandren. I did not want to miss a single intonation, First Arcanist. I have so many questions about your piece, as I am sure we all do! More wine must be fetched, of course, but then we may begin our discussion . . .”

Lor'themar stifled a groan.

“I think not,” Thalyssra said gently, laying her hand on the poet's forearm. “Why not break for a light meal first, Rerdyn? Our guest must be famished. You may ask him as many questions as you like once he is fed and more at his ease.”

“O-Of course,” Rerdyn bowed again, snagging Glandren by the sleeve and tugging him away, back toward the rows of chairs. “We are at your command, First Arcanist.”

But Rerdyn shot a cold glance in Lor'themar's direction, as if he alone were responsible for this lapse in decorum. It did not bother him overmuch—he would much prefer to talk poetry with the First Arcanist in private. The opinions of dusty old poets didn't matter to him, but hers mattered greatly.

“Then it is decided. We shall reconvene in, say, two hours?” Thalyssra said more generally to those assembled. A few looked crestfallen at the thought of waiting so long, but she breezed by their sour faces, swooping in to take Lor'themar by the arm and escort him away. Only the servant offering wine followed, trailing behind them at a discreet distance.

“You read my mind,” Lor’themar told her with a chuckle as they wandered away from the Court, skirting around one of its rounded towers, following a path that led to a set of narrow stairs. “A timely intervention.”

“They mean well,” she sighed. “And I do value their thoughts; they are some of our brightest artistic minds. But Rerdyn in particular is . . . well, he has a tendency to ramble. I can much better withstand his speeches after a fortifying supper.”

At the top of the winding stair, a small terrace awaited. There they found a round table with two chairs, as well as a light course of poached nightpears and pickled sandpiper eggs to whet the appetite. The servant hovered, waiting until Lor’themar had helped the First Arcanist to her chair before dutifully filling their cups and disappearing back down the stairs.

For a moment, Lor’themar simply sat quietly, drinking in the view of the harbor, listening to the idle harp player above take up their song again. When he closed his eyes, he felt warm and at peace, a sensation that shocked his eyes back open. He had almost lost the prickle of anxious tension always locking his back into place, but no, there it was, as familiar as a rude, old friend.

“Is something the matter, Lor’themar?” she asked, watching him, her eyes sparkling above the rim of her cup.

“Just remembering your orders, First Arcanist,” Lor’themar said. “Reality intruded for an instant, but I will banish it.”

Thalyssra gave a pretty laugh. “See that you do. And see that you dispense with this unnecessary formality, Lor’themar. You must call me Thalyssra. Now, before the poets have their fun interrogating you, I should like a turn.”

“I am at your mercy.”

Her eyes glowed brighter at that. “Your poem . . . Would I be correct in assuming it is about the failures of Kael’tas Sunstrider?”

“Indeed,” Lor’themar nodded and tried a bit of soft, wine-poached pear. He shifted in his chair. Was this not supposed to be an evening of joy? Now his mood was beginning to turn dark.

“Your thoughts linger in the past then . . .”

“He is lately much on my mind,” Lor’themar admitted. “And the treachery our people faced when we were already at our weakest. Not just our people but the personal treachery . . . *I* trusted him. Curse it all, I followed him and believed him, and I would have seen our people blighted by fel energy because that was what he asked of me.”

Thalyssra made a soft sound of acknowledgement. “Such wounds are slow to heal.”

“A poisoned wound takes all the longer,” Lor’themar continued. “And reopens eagerly in uncertain times. How could I not return to such memories? I cannot help but see the similarities. The Horde’s armies are depleted, our treasuries emptied, our resources stretched thin. A blow to us now would . . . Well, I am sure you can easily imagine the outcome.” He pinched the bridge of his nose and shook his head. “And there I go, back to our grim reality.”

Thalyssra’s smile dimmed but did not fade away entirely. Pulling back her velvet sleeve, she reached across the table for his hand. Lor’themar regarded her slender fingers for a moment before pressing his palm to hers, finding that the moment he did, those dark thoughts scattered, as if her mere touch were a lantern, warding off the shadows. “I had hoped my poem would stir something in you, but I think you missed its meaning entirely. Alas, I shall have Rerdyn burn all his copies.”

“What? You mustn’t, not because of any failure of mine—”

“You did not fail,” she said quickly, squeezing his hand. “Please do not look so downcast.”

Lor’themar frowned, puzzled. “No, of course. I am fine. A little confused, perhaps, but fine.”

“*Fine*,” she spat the word out and shivered. Then she withdrew, and at once he missed her calming warmth. Thalyssra leaned away in her chair, letting her head fall back, exposing the fine architecture of her neck, her pale tattoos glowing brighter as she closed her eyes and breathed deeply. “You did not fail, Lor’themar. I spoke what was in my heart before you all tonight to show you the vanishing, precious joy we can have. War has come, war will come again. There are uncertain times, yes, but I am old enough to have watched my people rise and fall and rise once more, and I myself have withered like the winter tree before blossoming anew. In all that time and chaos, I knew sorrow and elation, but I was never fine. I submerged myself completely in the pain and in the pleasure.”

He took a sip of wine, but it did not numb him the way he expected. It was as Thalyssra desired; her words stirred something in him. “It is a paltry word, I suppose. Fine. Not a word for poetry—”

“Or for life,” she finished for him. She leaned toward him again and nodded, grinning. “Dear Lor’themar, I have watched you wear the heavy mantle of your people and sink beneath it, almost pushed into the ground. Those failures of your prince are not yours, and you must not feel them as if they were your own.”

Lor’themar stared at her, chilled as if naked. Behind the walls of Silvermoon he felt at home and safe, but also unseen, as if the city could swallow him up and make him invisible to the ghouls that haunted his dreams and his waking hours. But here he found no such walls to protect him. To hide him.

“It is no simple thing, to shake off the betrayals my people and I have known.” *That I have known.* “It will take time. A long, long time.”

Thalyssra’s brows rose slowly up her forehead. “How long?”

“One cannot rush healing or forgiveness.”

When she reached for his hand again, he almost didn’t take hers—but that would be petty, and he did long for her touch again. Lor’themar closed his eyes as their fingers entwined. “More talk of wounds. Are you healing,” she asked softly, “Or daily cutting open those poisoned wounds, because they are familiar, not comfortable but *yours.*”

Lor’themar flinched. Her thumb soothed across the top of his hand, rubbing over and over again, as if trying to make an indent on a wishing stone. He remembered the moment of his prince’s betrayal well. In less than a blink, he saw again the undead marching on his folk, heard the vicious gossip of those who had always doubted Kael’tas and who mocked Lor’themar’s loyalty. Almost nightly, horrid visions of the Sunwell being polluted by the Void after he allowed Alleria Windrunner near it tormented him.

But he knew the woman holding his hand had endured as much as he had, perhaps more, yet still a smile leapt readily to her face. And here she sat, counseling him toward something he doubted he even deserved.

“Those wounds are familiar, yes, and mine,” Lor’themar admitted. “I have so little that is my own now. Remove them from me and what do I possess? Nothing.”

“Not nothing, Lor’themar,” Thalyssra murmured. “Open your eyes. Tell me what you see.”

His eyes were already open, but perhaps not in the way she wanted. So Lor’themar looked again, harder, seeing the woman across from him, radiant and patient, and wondered if he would ever be *fine* again.

“We have danced around it so long,” he said with a dry laugh. “I did not know . . .”

“Yes, you did. Yes, you do.”

Lor’themar felt suddenly sheepish and found it hard to meet her eye. Yet she stared back at him boldly, and he forced himself to do the same.

The affect was instant.

He stood, still holding Thalyssra’s hand, ready to have more than his troubles, his sorrows, and his memories; ready to do as she had—to submerge himself in pain, or more pressingly, pleasure.

The messenger chose that moment to arrive, tearing up the stairs and skidding to a stop not four feet from where Lor’themar stood. In Suramar’s livery, a fresh-faced young shal’dorei lad, out of

breath and perspiring, tumbled out onto the terrace. Their waiter returned, too, a step or two behind the messenger, fumbling out apology after apology for the intrusion.

“M-Message for you, Regent Lord, I am afraid it is urgent. You are needed at once in Orgimmar—” At last the messenger had the wisdom to sense the mood, his pale eyes flicking between Lor’themar and Thalyssra, then descending on an audible gulp to where they held hands.

“I . . . will be going.”

“Yes, you will,” Lor’themar sighed. “I will return at once.” He paused, glancing at the First Arcanist before correcting himself, “I will return when I am able.”

“Of course, Regent Lord. Forgive the intrusion, Regent Lord. My mistake, Regen—”

“By the grace of the Sunwell be gone.”

Thalyssra laughed at his outburst, standing and closing the distance between them while the waiter furiously yanked the boy away, no trace of the messenger remaining save for a drop of sweat on the floor.

“Now,” Lor’themar shook his head, joining her with an exasperated chuckle. “Where were we?”

“I will not keep you long,” she said, tucking herself into the warm crook of his left arm. Her free hand came to rest on his chest, and Lor’themar felt his heart rise to meet it. “Unless this was a clever ploy to escape the poets and that messenger was your plan all along . . .”

“And be forced to leave your side prematurely?” he lowered his chin. “The mere suggestion wounds me, First Arcanist, but we are not talking of wounds any longer.”

“What were we speaking of?” she urged, so close that her warm breath bloomed across his chin.

Lor’themar took a deep breath, steadying himself. “Of knowing.”

“Indeed,” she whispered. The silken white plumes of her eyelashes dipped, and then she glanced up at him and her gaze met his, and Lor’themar wondered how he had so long denied himself this chance.

For once she seemed at a loss for words: no more teasing or provoking, no more prodding, and Lor’themar seized the silence. He thought of her poem, the words lingering in his mind even if she did not want them to last but a moment.

Here I am—take my fingers to grasp the goblet,

Take my lips to breathe your first air.

Take my lips. Lor’themar intended to, realizing that the poem might have been meant solely for him, a call to action that he would gladly answer. His lips did not have far to travel, but even that small distance left him breathless with wanting. A hundred doubts descended to taunt him, but

Lor'themar shrugged them off—there could be pain and rejection and difficulty that followed, but in that moment—*their* moment—she wanted him and that was enough to sustain him.

Lor'themar did not resist the urge to be closer to her, he did not resist anything that came next—not the slight hitch of anticipation in her breath, or the brief quarrel of who would bend their head which way. His lips met hers, where wine and poetry lingered, and he felt, without hesitation, that he belonged there. Thalyssra's fingers touched his chin, holding him, and the whole of Suramar went still and silent for them, for their moment.

He did not let go; the world outside their kiss could wait.

The end.

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