

## Legacy

By Nicolo De Guzman

It is high noon in the Elvish kingdom of Il'da and all the king's men are gathered in the throne room of the Grand Palace. "Is this how they repay me for everything I've done?" The King stood briskly. Fa'er looked to his king and said, "If they knew what's good for them, they'd offer their lives for you my liege. I would."

"I never doubted your loyalty Fa'er. It's these lackeys I'm not so sure of." Said the King Fe'os shooting a glance at his closest advisers.

Lu'an, one of the king's confidants replied negatively, "We would never turn our backs on you. Not on our life sire! All your gifts and grand acts of generosity are irreplaceable!"

"So certain of yourself are you? My beloved queen may think otherwise on account of your loyalty." said the king.

"Beloved, it is only proper that we take precautions in these perilous times." Reminded the queen, Im'os. "Right you are love and there is nothing I would deem more important of protecting than you and our family." and with that the king followed a kiss with his queen.

In Mutin Palace, the rebellion assembles. "Fi'os, are you sure about this plan of yours?" said Ju're. "I was his captain of the guard, of course I'm sure of this." responded Fi'os. "It's just that the king still has tricks up his sleeve. Remember that the assassination of the underdog, the one whom the people love so much, is largely blamed on him. What more for the assurance of our safety?" said Ju're. "We are not doing this to live Ju're! We're doing this to free our dying kingdom at the hands of that self-absorbed Fe'os. He has been the Elven king for long enough! It is time for a change of leadership." retorted Fi'os. "Replaced by whom? You?" asked Ju're. "If that is the people's will" then Fi'os left Ju're in the hallway to attend the war room



"Shh. Not so loud."

"Why mama? This is it. Our chance to avenge papa!" retorted the son. "You do not know these men. Are you truly sure of their intentions?"

"Why of course mama. They even sought the help of our bishop to rally the faithful against his rule."



conference.

In the fields, a mother eats dinner with her son. "Mama, have you heard? Fi'os and the rebellion are gaining support! All my friends are planning to enlist for the cause as well."

"Then you best stay out of it." the mother responded. "But mama, isn't this what we have been waiting for? A chance to get back at that dragon of a king we have?"

"My son, ever one is capable of doing anything to seek power."

"But these are good men mama. They only seek to dethrone Fe'os and nothing more."

"You're naive. Do you really think the throne would last empty for long? People would clamor for a new king!" Three raps on the door disrupted the conversation. "It's too late mama. I've joined them." The farmer's son went to the door and revealed two lightly armed men. Both bowed to the son and mother.

"Good evening sir, ma'am."

"Good evening to you as well. What brings you here at so late an hour?" asked the mother. "Mother, these are the men I've told you about. They've come to escort me to Palace Mutin." "Right you are lad. It is beginning sooner than you think." said one of the men. "First your father, now you are leaving me?"

"Ma'am, rest assured, your son is safe with us." The mother stood up and placed her hand on her son's shoulder. Her son turned to her and reassured her, "Mama, I will be safe I promise. This is for papa and for our kingdom."

"I don't think there's anything to stop you from leaving. All I could wish for is that you remember your limits. Do not push yourself when you don't need to."

"I'll remember that mama. I love you and goodbye."

Farewell my son." The mother looked at her son one last time as the two men escorted him away.

Fi'os is delivering his speech at Palace Mutin. "It is time my friends to put our plan into action. The reverend father has answered our call and rallied the faithful just outside the castle walls. Their peaceful revolution must not be done in vain. Now is our part, the part of the iron stroke to finally put an end to this accursed reign. Today, we march for the castle! To me!" The faithful called by the bishop have convinced some of the king's men to turn against him and to aid in his overthrow. At this pivotal moment, the true face of the rebellion came headed by Fi'os and his men storming the castle. After little resistance, the band reached the throne room. "Fe'os, by the little mercy I have left in me, abdicate the throne!" shouted Fe'os. "You! Of all



the men I have trusted...such treachery disgusts me. Of all people, my captain of the guard!" cried Fe'os. "You do not deserve loyalty. I have seen the error of my ways and they point to you as my most grievous mistake. Never again shall I serve one such as you!" retorted Fi'os. The guards left to protect Fe'os rushed towards the band of rebels and fought desperately alongside their commander Fa'er. "Coward!" shouted Fi'os. The king ran hesitatingly with his family and looked back a last time with scorn at the rebellious group. The skirmish is done and among the dead counted their commander Fa'er. Fi'os and his men emerged victorious. "It is done! We have ousted the long reigning dictator. Long live the new kingdom!" declared Fi'os.

Among the weary rebels was the peasant's son. On the floor of the throne room he saw the crown that once sat on the previous king.

"Boy, what is that you have in your hands?" asked Fi'os.

"A crown sir." replied the boy.

"Bring it here." The boy gave it to Fi'os and wore it.

"It suits me does it not?" Fi'os asked. At once the boy's heart plummeted but despite that, decided to respond cordially.

"Yes, yes it does sir" and smiled.

"Not quite. Not yet." said Fi'os. "I still need the people to tell me that. If there is one thing I learned from all this is that the right of being a king is not a one-time affair. It must be maintained." said Fi'os.

"Yes. Yes of course sir." said the boy. Fi'os then took the crown from his head and simply held it in his hand. The faithful, along with the bishop, went to see what transpired in the throne room. Almost everyone was there provided that the room could contain them.

"The reign of that dictator is over! All the evil he's done has come to an end. All the loved one's we've lost have been avenged and our kingdom is redeemed. What is left now is a leader to once again point us to the right direction." acclaimed Fi'os.

"Fi'os! You should be king!" shouted a multitude of the crowd.

"Yes. A fine king you'll be indeed and one who has not forgotten the faithful." seconded the bishop.

"It is not my place to be king. I am but a warrior in service of justice." responded Fi'os as turned his gaze away from the crowd.

"And that is precisely what we need. One who appreciates true justice as is demonstrated by your actions." responded the crowd.

"Nevertheless, we shall not follow the old rule that only those of royal blood can succeed the throne. From this day forth, we shall hold elections and vote for the leader most suited for the task." replied Fi'os.

"You indeed are both strong and wise Fi'os. If you insist, then we shall hold elections." said the crowd.

"To all who wish to lead, step up and be recognized." said Fi'os. A total of three persons came forward and declared their will to become the next leader. After which, the gathering was interrupted by some rebel soldiers.

"Sir, these men are identified as close friends of the deposed king. What shall we do with them?" said one of the guards.

"They will be banished unless they swear to support the next leader of this kingdom." said Fi'os.

"Yes please" said Lu'an. We have seen the madness that the previous king has done. We promise to swear loyalty to whoever the new king is."

"Not a king, a leader" said Fi'os.



Two weeks after the deposition, the peasant's son returned to her mother.

"Mama, I'm back! Have you heard of the good news? We'll have a new leader soon!"

"Yes my child I'm glad to see you here with me again."

"I'm also happy to see you again mama but aren't you happier about the news I brought you?" "I've been hearing of these campaigns going around town, knocking on doors to ask for support of these different candidates. What troubles me is the fact that so far, the people see only one eligible candidate, Fi'os."

"For all this time I've been supporting him as well mama but not out of belief in what he stands for but because of this." After the boy showed the pouch of gold to his mother, she slaps her son across the face.

"You would exchange your conviction for a sum of money?"

"But mama, this would help us climb out of this miserable peasant life. Fi'os even said more of this would come if I convinced more of the people to vote for him."

"The only thing miserable here is that you've decided to take bribes! You told me you were doing this to avenge your father but what you're doing right now is the opposite."

"but mama..."

"No more. If I cannot convince you to change your decision, so be it but I will not let you force me to vote for that Fi'os!"

Days passed and each part of the kingdom began to fill with campaigns. Each day, these campaigns grew more intoxicating. A day in one of these campaigns marked a turn for the worse.

"One of the candidates has died. How can this be? Who is guilty of this crime?" asked one of the people gathered in the town square.

"It must be Fi'os. He's the only one capable of doing such a thing." said another.

"Impossible. He is a hero. He can do no such thing. He saved us from Fe'os". As Fi'os approached the stage escorted by his armed men, everyone fell silent.

"My dear fellow men, these recent events have equally saddened me. One candidate fell ill and is now bed-ridden, the other withdrew and the last one just recently passed away. I have tried to console the first two and urged them to continue in their campaigns but alas, none of them wanted to continue. Therefore it is only for the last candidate that I could do something. I shall avenge his death by seeking justice once more in finding the culprit and in his name, win the election in his stead." The speech was interrupted as one of the people in the crowd shouted "of course you're sure to win, only one more person is running against you!" In reply, Fi'os said "I believe in the will of the people and even though there are only two of us left,



you are all wise enough to choose the best leader between us two." As he ended his speech, the friends of the previous king, now close allies of Fi'os, gave some gold coins and food rations to the people. One of those close allies, Lu'an said "Vote for Fi'os. The one and only leader for our kingdom!"

The peasant's son upon returning home from the campaign of Fi'os passed by a roaring crowd in the town nearby. He saw the other candidate, a woman, making her campaign speech. Surprisingly enough, there were as many people in her campaign as in the one by Fi'os.

"Hello mama. I'm home."

"Have you come back from your bribed campaign for Fi'os?"

"Yes...but I can't help but notice there's something wrong with him these days. In fact, it's a feeling I've had ever since I've been with him during the siege and I think he's up to something," replied the boy. "Now you've come to your senses." responded the mother. "Mama, would you happen to know of the other candidate? She was campaigning in the nearby village."

"Oh yes. Now that's what I call a real candidate. She's true, yet politically knowledgeable and humble, yet assertive. Of course let's not forget she's a woman for a change."

"I asked because I've been following her campaigns as well but without Fi'os knowing. She seems truthful to say honestly and people trust her as well to be a good leader of the village she came from."

"Then switch to her side my son. It is clear as day that she is the better candidate than that Fi'os. He's an opportunist and he's no different than Fe'os, the mad king."

"But mama, he keeps on giving me money for campaigning for him."

"You do know I don't even use that money you're bringing home? I'd prefer honest work to accepting bribes any day; as would your papa."

The time of election is nearing and the campaigns have reached full swing. "Who are these people taking over our businesses?" said one of the small group of people in front of a famous craftshop. "One of them has bought this shop already and my own shop is being bought as well by these same group of people! Who are they anyway?" One of the people responded. "They're the lackeys of the previous king and they're now teaming up with Fi'os. They're even campaigning for him in their stores. Look at the banners outside this craftshop." The banners hung outside some of the shops where a portrait of Fi'os clenching his fist was there. The other person responded "This Fi'os is really getting to my nerves. If Fi'os wins, it's like we'll have a mad king all over again and plunge us back to the dark ages! Perhaps the woman candidate is a better choice." Another person responded "No way. I'm getting free food and some gold coins from Fi'os. I'm voting for him all the way."

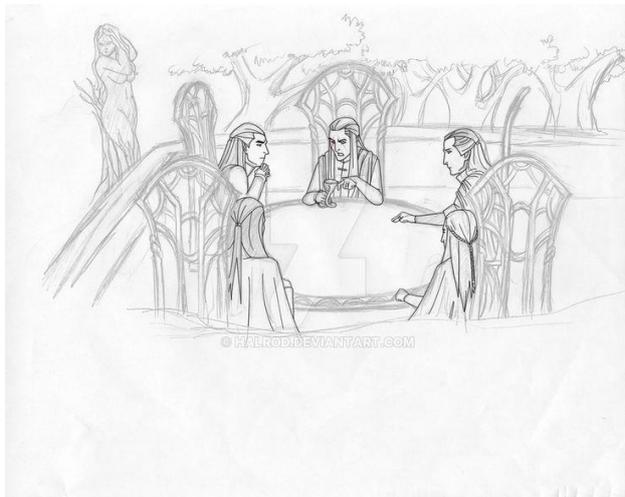
"Suit yourself. To each his own I guess." The conversation was cut off by one of the guards patrolling the line of shops. "No loitering here!" One of the bystanders responded "What? We've always been here. What's changed?"

"This is now property of Lu'an." said one of the guards. "Excuse me? This is my shop! What right do you have in saying that?" One of the guards showed a certificate of ownership for the shop and proceeded to



evicting the owner. “You can’t do this! This is mine!” shouted the owner. One of the guards kicked the owner and announced “From this day forth, the whole row of shops in this village is property of Lu’an!” The same occurrences happened in other villages and farms, each belonging to a different ally of Fi’os. Accompanying each takeover of businesses and farms were there stationing of guards to protect these privately owned properties. As these close allies of Fi’os took over more property, more income was also generated for his campaign.

In Palace Mutin, Fi’os meets with his allies. “We need to redouble our efforts.” said Fi’os. “I already warned you about this. Choosing a leader would be a difficult choice for the people” said Ju’re. “No matter Ju’re, I am still confident the people would vote for me; especially since these new friends of mine are providing



money for my campaigns and I provide the protection through my private army.” responded Fi’os. “It is actually a wonder that you’ve retained the loyalty of these once rebel troops.” Remarked Ju’re. “Charisma goes a long way my friend and it’s one characteristic my opponent lacks. Having disposed of the other candidates, she won’t stand a chance. She won’t get in the way between me and that throne.” To this, Lu’an remarked, “That woman however has gained numerous supporters as well. She may pose a problem to us.” Fi’os

directed his gaze to all his allies “Just make sure to do your part. As for the people, they will never forget my heroism as I deposed the mad king. Once this all goes through, all of us will reap what the people sowed and together, we’ll stay in power for an indefinite period of time.” Everyone looks at each other and laughs contentedly.

Election Day has come and each had to cast a black stone for Fi’os or a white stone for the other candidate. The main town square within the walls of the castle were filled by the voting population. Each one cast their votes until the last voter, the peasant boy, was his turn. “Will I see this through and cast the vote for Fi’os? The rewards for me would be plenty and I would ask for no more. Or will I cast the vote for the other candidate, for her? What was her name again? She is trusted by the people; not popular like Fi’os but true. She is so common, as common as any folk back in the village. She is the better candidate but not as unforgettable as Fi’os. Is it really about popularity then or a genuine person even my mother would look up to?” After much thought he cast his vote.

The votes are now being counted. Both candidates agree that each team should cross-check each other’s vote counting to promote transparency. Fi’os along with his team are confident on an imminent victory due to much of their control over the businesses and private armies throughout the kingdom. As the counting progressed however, votes for both teams were almost the same. “What is happening Ju’re! Why is she so close to my votes? Are you sure the other team is counting their votes correctly?” asked Fi’os

angrily. “Yes I’m sure. Ever since we agreed that both teams should cross-check the counting of votes, I’ve been observing the process as well and it’s all correct.” responded Ju’re. “Is there no way then to add to my votes?” asked Fi’os worriedly. “Even if I wanted to, we can’t. Given the many voters supporting the other candidate, they’d surely go after us if we decide to cheat!” answered Ju’re. “Fine! Then my voters will speak for me!” answered Fi’os boastfully.

As all the votes were counted, the time has come to announce the victor. The main vote counter, accompanied by both teams proclaimed “After having counted all votes, we have discovered that there is an odd number of voters. Both candidates’ votes were separated only by a strand of hair...” Among the crowd gathered in the main town center, the mother softly spoke to her



son “I hope you chose well.” The prime vote counter continued “...and only one vote made all the difference.” The son replied to her mother “I made all the difference with one vote to change the course of this kingdom.”

“And it is one that will define the lives of countless of people.” the mother answered back.

“Don’t worry mother. I believe I chose well.”

“And the victor is...”

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\*This is a work of fiction. Any names used in the story that depict real persons during the time of martial law—living or deceased—are used only for the purposes of artistic creativity.

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