

Varjo



By:

J.M. Batista
J. Rodríguez

J.R. Campos
E. Ulloa

Varja

*"Brawls and bickering I bring the gods
their ale I shall mix with evil."*

-Loki Lokasenna: 3

Chapter I

There was complete darkness, not a single sound but a soft hum. A spark showed at my weak eyes, blinding me. I fell into the darkness, falling deeper into a pit. Suddenly there were swords clashing, still blinded. I was guided by my senses. I began to feel the hard ground. There I was, lying in the fire being unburnt. A sharp smell of blood and hot iron. Screams of death and triumph overwhelmed my ears. Men crying for they saw their deaths coming. Monstrous unknown screams arose, foreseeing that death had come. A black shape appeared in front of my weakened eyes. I could not see who or what was there. It offered me his hand. I took it, and my legs began waking, so I could stand up, with a surprising force. It pulled me up, almost ripping my useless arm off. There it was the unknown aide to me. The shadow vanished in a blink. There I saw nothing but darkness once again. I heard a scream and instinctively turned around. A white horse imbrued in blood passed through me like an elfish arrow. I closed my eyes and waited for the hit. But I felt nothing but a ticklish touch at my solar plexus. There I realized I was there, but my self was not.

I just stood there, watching the bodies with glassy eyes, hearing the clashing of steel against wooden shields. The view was chaotic. A fine warrior, with long blond hair, a braided beard, wearing a well-crafted steel plated armor with a heavy chainmail covering his shoulders and arms. He seemed to be at least seven feet tall. He was fighting against unimaginable, almost fantastic but scary creatures. He was outnumbered, but still he stood bravely against all. I admired his bravery and his exotic fight style. His sword dripping bold, black drops of what may have been monster blood. An enormous humanlike creature swinging a club smashed half the creatures that attacked the warrior.

I began running in fear. The grass was burnt and warm. Hiding behind a big rock, there was a small creature that my father used to call a dwarf. Their race was known for being naïve but yet smart. They were as tall a man's leg, ugly, robust and vigorous. Also known to be the most skilled smiths and crafters in all Yggdrasil. His armor was as black as night. A double sided battle axe with a beautifully carved inscription that I could not read or understand was being swung by him wildly at the beasts crawling from behind the rock.

Running behind me I could see a huge spider as big as a boar, mounted by a grayish small humanlike figure. In that moment I recall the tales Ulfrick told me about these horrendous monsters. The tale talked about them and their battle against dwarfs in the deep caves of Mótsognir. He said that they were elves cursed by the gods because of their desire of being greater than the rulers of Asgard. The punish assigned by the gods was to send them from Alfheim the land of light elves to Svartálfaheim, the land of dark elves (named in that way after them) with the aspect of horrible creatures called goblins.

There was an outstanding silhouette being darkened by the bright sun behind them. He had a long but strangely shaped sword. The sword was bright dark. It seemed to be made out of a crystal or rock. He swung it against another human while riding a horse as dark as his sword, surprised by his brutality and agility. Mesmerized by the half torso torn apart from its owner. I saw him riding almost dramatically behind the

dawn to encounter a knight. He inspired familiarity almost mirroring myself. He was in companion of the warrior I saw before, fighting those creatures. In that moment the dark knight engage in battle with them on foot. Their fighting skills where similar even though they were enemies. He was outnumbered but still the fight was even. The battle kept raging being more and more intense with every slash of their swords, in blink the companions knees touched the ground and later also his head was lying beside him covered in blood. In that moment both stop fighting and the brave warrior raised his sword with fury, rampaging against the dark knight.

Eru woke up screaming with his eyes full of tears, feeling scared with agonizing pain in his heart for he felt empathy at the brave knight. "It was a just a nightmare." Eru said. He began walking towards his mother's chamber. A breeze cold air made him shiver. Knocking at her door he had no answer because the moon was still on the sky, and lighting softly the hallway he went back to bed but he did not managed to sleep again.

The sun came in at his window shinning against his back dripping sweat after this scary night, everything seemed so real in his dream, everything but his presence in the field because he felt he was there and was not there at the same time. It almost felt as a prophecy of the future. "May Odin take care for us" he prayed while walking to the table as his stomach rumbled with hunger. In that moment his father arrived with some fresh vegetables and a deer hanging from his shoulder.

-Agh! I missed the meat- his father said.

-It was a harsh winter- he said

-Harsh? You should've been thirty years ago when the village was flooded with thick white snow, destroying our crops and killing all the animals we could hunt. Ha! And you thought this was harsh!

Ragnar, his father, enjoyed telling him stories about his youth and mocking of his childish ingenuity. He told him tales about the gods, dwarfs, elves and everything he knew about the nine worlds of yggdrasil. Also he taught him about hunting and how to be a lumberjack. Rarely did he talk about his times of warrior when he wielded a sword and rode a horse, but those were dark times.

-Eat fast! today you are wielding a sword- his father said

-I'll look for my training sword

-Forget about it, today you are using steel real steel.

They began walking by the main road of the village, he did not know where his father was guiding him. At the distance he saw an abandoned hut. When he got closer to the hut he noticed it was not a hut but a barn. They walked around the barn and he saw something odd, there was no door or entrance. His father told to take a step back, and with a kick he broke the wood and a secret door fell and hit the ground with a dry sound. He moved some barrels and a bunch of hay that was near the corner and a hidden trapdoor showed, he took the key from his neck and carefully opened the lock. In the interior of the trapdoor a stash was found, with the same key he opened it.

-Is that your sword, the one you told me you had lost years ago?

-Aye! This is Dörlas, the sword that saved the young warrior that I was lots of times-

-Dörlas? Why is that?

-ya'll see, Dörlas was a dear friend of mine, he saved mine *arse* two or more times- he said with a sad laugh

-How is it that I hadn't heard of him?

-Oh Dörlas! A good friend of mine you where, I hope your soul rest in Vallhalla wielding your sword once again until the ragnarok.

-What happened to him?

-Just know he left me a great responsibility, arsh! Too much talking lets train!


He softly threw the sword toward his chest, as soon as he took it he felt it was as heavy as smith's mace, he tumbled and almost fell. He took the sword with two hands and raised it. Ragnar smacked his left hand with the blunt of his sword, leaving it red and palpitating.

-One hand! Be a man and raise it! - He ordered him

Years passed and the training grew harder, his father became cruel at training, telling him that he would never be a real warrior if he didn't endure the cruelty, that it was necessary for the war, also he taught him how to win a fight when outnumbered, how to take advantage of his surroundings and mostly how to use the force of his foe against itself.

He became the best swordsman in the village overcoming his own father, and so he began training on his own, but never forgetting his father's tuition. He felt no need any more to be under his parent's roof. He went to the abandoned barn, he fixed and cleaned it, and so he lived there for a year or two.

Chapter II

 In a cold winter night he felt lonely and missed his dear mom, so he rode to his father's cabin, with his sword on his back, as always. The night was pitch dark, so he calmly rode to the hut where he had spent his childhood. He took a quick glare to the side and saw in the bushes a shadow... intrigued by the image he slowed the pace to halt. And stared firmly at the woods and concluded it was just his imagination. A fast pair of horsemen rushed past him, he did not paid much attention to them. When he was arriving to his parents' house he heard strange noises.

When he was reaching his father's lands he rushed his horse with strength for he was worried, at his arrival to the cabin he tried to open the door but it was locked. He unveiled the sword and with strength he knocked the door down, with concern and bravery. He found everything destroyed at the floor; he rushed himself toward his parent's chamber and found his father laying on the ground dying with an arrow in his chest.

-Fast! Help your mother- his father said

Running, he entered the kitchen where his mother was about to be raped. With his sword he cut across his chest like a hot knife cutting through snow, the murderer of his father saw the scene and ran in fear; he was about to chaise him but his father called him.

-Is she fine- Ragnar asked

-yes father she is safe, don't worry you will be okay

-go my son, look for Gegwendall the wise! He will guide you!

-don't leave me!

- look for him where the rainbow falls, at the east! Go Eru your journey must begin for you have a promising future.

As death took over his father, leaving his body cold and in rest, his mom brought Ragnar's old sword for the myth told that when a warrior died with a sword in his hand went to Valhalla, the land of the honorable men where they feasted, battled and waited anxiously the privilege to fight at the Ragnarok, the final battle between the different realms of the yggdrasil.

As a true norseman he should give his father a honorable funeral or journey toward his destiny, at the next day Eru and Adissa, his mother, traveled to a sacred river named after Iduna, the goddess of youth. Ragnar's body was carried in a burial ship pulled by Ragnar's horse in a tumbriel.

They traveled one day and one night. At the reach of the river they placed the boat in it, praying for his soul to save. When the burial ship was half mile away, Eru fired an arrow in fire and lighted the boat. They cried for the soul of his father to go to the Valhalla. Between his teary he stared at the boat in fire fading away with the current. He was about to turn away but he felt something calling him from the distance, he stared once again at the burial ship and saw in the flames, a shadow... Scared like a

toddler, he closed his eyes. When he opened them, his father's body was not there, but the shadow's hand was now stretched.

He took his mother by the shoulders trying to comfort her. They mounted and rode back to the cabin with sadness in their hearts. Thinking about the shadow inviting him to follow the course of the river. He cleared his mind from those thoughts for they made him shiver and confuse. The day rapidly turned into night and Máni showed behind the clouds of winter, so they camped in a field by the main road. The next day they packed and left, the same road they took towards the village. When they got home Eru was decided to look for Gegwendall's guidance.

-Mother I need to leave to the east to fulfill my father's desire. Eru said

-Don't leave me, I need your help today more than ever

-I must go, you will be fine. With a pain in my heart I leave you, but also with hope for the journey I have to seek.

-Go my son, seek your destiny, but you ought to come back. If your destiny is not to return, may you die with a sword in your hand.

With torment in his heart he rode to the old barn which was now his house, he packed a group of pelts for him to sleep, his lumber's axe, food for at least two weeks, his hunting bow and his weapons. He put his leather armor on, veiled his sword and fastly he galloped towards the east, to the land of Gegwendall the wise.

He followed the rising sun for it would always rise at the east. When the moon showed, he rode for two hours or more until his horse was sweaty and weak. He camped by the road. Eating his apples and looking for a prey to hunt. At the sun rise he mounted and took the road. This he did for a whole week. The whole road was lonely. Not a single soul was there.

After two more days of riding to the east, he saw a column of smoke. Intrigued by the smoke he dove into the deep woods. There he found a dying fire, followed by the voice of a man begging for mercy. Eru ran to the source of the voice, and found a man being attacked and robbed by five armed men. The man was encircled by the assailants. He swung an axe to the air trying to defend himself but he was outnumbered.

I silently stalked the assailants unveiled my bow and shot to the torso of the bandit. The one besides him surprised turned around and the man hit his nape. The biggest assailant tried to stab the man but he dodged the attack and punched the assailant making him fall. I ran towards a bandit and stabbed him with my sword. Slashing towards another bandit our weapons clashed but I kicked his leg and he fell. The stranger and I menaced the last two bandits. They asked for mercy, but something pushed me to pierce his flesh in a bloody delight.

The stranger decided to give another opportunity to the bandit. While he was running I took my bow and instinctively with an arrow crossed his neck.

-Why!? The stranger said

-He was a loose end.

Chapter III

*E*ru was gathering his arrows and looting their bodies looking for something worthy. He was about to leave the deep woods when the stranger said

- Hey! Who are you?
- Im Eru son of Ragnar
- Where are you going?
- Does it matter?

You'll see I have nowhere to go and they slayed my horse.

- I saw the horses of those bandits out there, take one and if you want you can come with me. But I assure it won't be an easy road.
- Aye I'll follow you. By the way, my name is Bëor from the lands of Sindarin.
- Go for the horse I'll wait for you here.

Eru and Bëor took the road towards the east in search for Gegwendall the Wise.

- Where are we heading? Said Bëor
- To the east, where the bridge to the land of the gods falls, in search of Gegwendall.
- Gegwendall, the one who hears it all? I've heard the legends of him, it is said that he once visited my village.
- I know nothing, but my father's last words where to search for him.
- What happened to your father?
- He was murdered some weeks ago, by some rat's arse. Eru said with despise
- Aye, but how?
- And what are those legends you are telling me?- Eru asked stonewalling his question-
- It is said that he was not born but he has always been there. Some said that he defeated two powerful dragons and all kind of different creatures.
- And why he went to your village?
- The legend says an evil spirit was haunting the village. Killing our sheep and destroying our crops. And so Gegwendall came and conjured our village. There was a burning sun during two months the villagers thought it worse the problem and so they angered against the great wise. They tied him to the biggest tree in the woods and left him in oblivion. In the sacred Day of solstice when sol shined most brightly the village was cured from their illness. They went to release the wise from the chains and also to thank him for he had vanquished the evil spirit that destroyed their crops. When they looked for him he had vanished with the tree along him.

A thunder crashed.

- We should hasten our pace for I sense a storm coming, a huge one.

That night the storm arose, they hardly found a cave by the road. The horses where scared, and with difficulty the managed to get the horses in. They left the horses and searched for provisions, but found none. The days became long and bone aching because of the cold. Hunger attacked them. They didn't know when they had eaten for the last time. They had forgotten about their horses, but suddenly Eru had the idea to

eat their horses for they would starve to death if they didn't eat. When they went for their horses they saw just their meatless bones clean. Beör desperately grabbed the bones, broke them with a stone and drank the marrow inside them. It was disgusting but felt so reviving.

The entrance to the cave had been blocked since days ago, there was no way for anything to enter and eat their horses. Intrigued and desperate they searched once again the whole cave, but found nothing. Eru took guard for half of the night while Beör slept, they shifted but Eru did not sleep he was frightened he would not wake up. Eru saw a weird shadow pass on the right. He quickly stood up and unveiled his sword. Beör asked him what happened but Eru just silenced with a soft "shh". He signaled him to follow. They walked deeper into the cave and heard a weird sound. He could not see where this sound was coming from. But he followed it to its source, a plain rock wall, there was something weird on the rock in the bottom of the wall and when he stepped on the soft rock, he heard an echo through it.

Beör got on his knees and began digging. After some rocks a close-fitting tunnel appeared, but crawling they were able to pass through. Eru ordered Beör to recover their belongings while he took a walk in the other side of the tunnel. Beör came back quickly and crawled to the other side of the tunnel. They searched the cave and found lots of metallic or shiny objects. There was something or someone with them, something they had not seen. Suddenly they heard a loud noise and hid behind a rock. Eru and Beör were hungry and weak. They saw a giant humanlike beast covered up in thick hair, and four arms. They waited behind the rock for the beast to leave. Eru and Beör looked at each other and nodded. With the last strength they had and with a battle scream they ran towards the beast. Eru attacked the beast's back and Beör his legs. With a guttural scream of pain the beast fell to the ground but their legs weakened and they fell along with the beast.

Beör woke up with hunger. He took the dagger that he carried and skinned the beast. With his fat he lighted a fire and cooked his meat. Beör feasted as he had never in his life. Eru woke to the smell fresh meat being cooked and saw his partner cooking the beast's liver.

-I made you breakfast. Beör said with a laugh

-Meat! Sweet meat! Eru said anxiously

He stood up and quickly sat near the fire to eat his fresh piece of liver that was as big as his whole arm.

The guardian of the bridge to Asgard, Heimdall, heard their bravery and was pleased by the death of the foe; Heimdall looked for Thor the god of storms and asked him to stop the storm. Thor the great stopped the storm. All these conversation was heard by Gegwendall, Heimdall's son. Gegwendall ordered Galadriel his pupil and companion to search for them in the road of the west. Also he ordered him to take two of his best horses, Musta Varjo the darkest of the horses known to be a shadow in tales, and Äarendil the most strong and resistant horse but not as fast.

After two days Galadriel found Eru and Beör on the road and excited he shouted their names. Eru and Beör prepared themselves to attack but after observing again the warrior they saw his shiny and powerful armor and his big and mighty sword.

Galadriel was mounting a white horse. The brightest horse that Eru and Beor had ever seen.

-Thanks to the gods that I have found you! I've been looking for you for the last two days.

-Who are you powerful warrior?

-I am Galadriel son of Galador sent by Gandalf the wise

Chapter IV

They arrived at the sunset of the third day the place was high in the mountains. The rainbow to Asgard had been seen by all of them except Eru and he could not understand why. They traveled through the deep forest until they reach a place full of colorful flowers and the tallest trees in Midgard, maybe in all the Yggdrassil. There was a great temple made of wood and stone. It was guarded by two dire wolves. They just sat in each side of the temple's doors, watching to the front without any expression at all. There was a lake with the most colorful ducks they had ever seen, and two great outstanding swans with silvery feathers. Beör saw a giant tree with beautiful green leaves and climbing plants along its trunk, covering the rusty chains that their village had used to punish the wise Gegwendall.

In the temple halls, there where some sort of objects that seemed to be relics. From different parts of Midgard but maybe from Asgard too.

-Come follow me. Gegwendall will be glad with your presence. Galadriel said

-Aye but what are all those things? Eru asked

-Those are trophies from Gegwendall's adventures and victories, that black crystal sword once belonged to a king, the dark king of Osgiliath, Mithrandir. He used his evil power in an attempt of destroying Riverwood, a castle of peace. Now that castle is in ruin full of bandits and rats. It is one of the most valuable trophies for Gegwendall.

They followed Galadriel to a chamber where Gegwendall was resting.

-Gegwendall, my lord here they are. I've found them! Galadriel said

-Great Galadriel once more you have triumphed.

-Greetings Eru son of Dörlas and Beör son of Benethor I've been waiting for your arrival

Dörlas is the name of my sword not of my father. Eru taught

-Aye it is your sword but also it carries the name the one that was once your father, the brave Dörlas, an old friend of mine and also a great companion.

-Dorlās was not my father. Eru said confused

-Yes it was, and that's why you are here. When we were young in one of our adventures in the north of Asgard he fought for the last time. We were looking for the treasure of a creature called Morgoroth but in those times we were stupid, we should have never accessed the land of gods. It was a dark day; the creature was in his temple in the deepest of the forest. We did defeat the creature, but the gods where not pleased by our actions. They send to us a creature called Suthur. That creature had no mercy with us. We tried to fight against it, but it was strong and every attempt of us against him was a waste of strength for he was the greatest creature I had ever seen. We fought for hours with no success. Dörlas gathered his last strength and ran towards the beast, but the Suthur stroke Dörlas with his fire sword. Worried I ran towards the lying body of Dörlas and the last things that his strength allowed to do were to give me the sword that is now on your back and a script telling me what to do with his belongings. I closed his eyes and escaped the temple. After these the gods never let me approach Asgard again. But now you are here Eru as your father wanted to be.

Go! And rest, be my guests. Your days in the cave were not the best for you. - Gegwendall said

-Come follow me I will take you to your chambers. - Said Galadriel

“I was there again in darkness. The light arose, the creatures running. The clashing of swords, the screams of pain and agony appeared. I felt that I had already been there but something in me felt different. Once again the brave warrior fighting and the white horse imbrued in blood, the arrow passing through me. The dwarf and the gobbling mounting the big spider. Everything was there, but once again I could not feel myself there.

Lying in the ground I was. The black shape appeared once again. It offered his hand to me, I took it. I recovered my strength and I could stand up. Suddenly I hear a scream but not a normal scream”.

-What happened!? Asked Beör

-Nothing it's just a nightmare

-A nightmare? That seemed to be more than a nightmare. Once in the cave the same happened. What have you seen?

-It is not of your incumbency. Eru said while moving fast towards Gegwendall's chamber.

-I know why you are here Eru. - said Gegwendall.

-Those nightmares that torment you are no coincidence.-said Gegwendall

-What is happening to me? It is the same dream over and over again?

-Those Eru are visions, visions of the future or the past or even the present.

-How can I stop them?

-You can't. It is matter of gods they decide when and what you see.

-You must go ahead and fight for what you think is the right thing to do.

Eru and Beör stayed two months training and learning about the art of killing. They learn almost everything that was possible for them to know. The art of crafting and smiting, everything they needed to survive and how to be eloquent, necessary for the success in times of darkness. Something was happening with Eru the torment of his visions didn't let him do anything. He was getting weak and seemed tired. Eru remained liked that being weak and unwell.

It was in the night when another of the visions happened but this time the black shadow named itself while offering his hand. When Eru took the shadow's hand everything turned black. He woke up normally, he recovered his strength and he felt stronger than ever. He moved through the halls of the temple he took the black crystal sword and with it he entered the chamber where the old Gegwendall was resting. With the sword savagely he stabbed his back and decapitated the cold lying body. Eru took Musta Varjo, his horse, and ordered him to gallop.

Galadriel and Beör heard the noise and worried they ran towards Gegwendall's chamber and when they found the dead body covered in blood they ran to their horses in search of Eru but he didn't leave marks. They searched for him for two months with no success.

The years passed and nothing was known of Eru. Only memories were left in Galadriel and Beör's mind.