

Saltwater Truth

Posted originally on the [Archive of Our Own](http://archiveofourown.org/works/13013925) at <http://archiveofourown.org/works/13013925>.

Rating:	General Audiences
Archive Warning:	No Archive Warnings Apply
Category:	M/M
Fandom:	The Lord of the Rings - J. R. R. Tolkien
Relationship:	Elladan/Elrohir (Tolkien)
Additional Tags:	Twincest
Language:	English
Stats:	Published: 2017-12-14 Words: 670 Chapters: 1/1

Saltwater Truth

by [thegreatpumpkin](#)

Summary

I've written a million beginnings for these boys, probably. Have the gentlest and least angsty one I've ever written.

Notes

I asked for a prompt, belegsghost asked for swimming or sailing + fluff. What could I do but oblige?

The sea is another thing entirely; with its foaming, crashing waves and salt-smell and clarity right down to the sandy floor, it barely seems kin to the ponds and rivers they grew up with. Still, there's a kind of rightness about it, a resonant hum in Elladan's bones when they're near it. It feels like a perfectly balanced sword, a perfectly tailored jacket. A meal where he's eaten enough to be absolutely satisfied, but not a bit over-full.

The day is overcast but warm. Elladan drowzes on the low rocky outcrop that overlooks the beach, wrapped in a cloak and nothing else, the salt drying on his skin. He watches his brother in the water below, leaping headfirst into the breaking waves like a salmon fighting its way upstream, laughing and sputtering like he is a child all over again.

He can watch as he likes. There is no one anywhere near but the two of them; it was sheer luck that brought them to such a hospitable beach in all the hundreds of leagues of uninhabited coastline. Or maybe something more—the same pull that made them decide, both at the same time, to detour from their planned route to see the ocean. They are alone in a way that they usually only can be in the deeps of the wilds, the darkest hush of the forest.

Well, not alone. Together.

He feels such a terrific fondness, watching Elrohir shake the water from his hair and wipe his salt-rimmed eyes only to do it all over again. It feels...safe to be fond here, he thinks, as if he can be honest with his heart in such a place. Elrohir would say he's always honest, with his face if not his words—it's true he's a poor liar—but there's a difference between *telling the truth* and *being honest*.

He shrugs off the cloak and rises, picking his way carefully down to the sand. The first time he'd gone in, the cold of the water was a shock, but now the surf lapping his feet is only pleasantly cool. Elladan wades in deeper. He's in up to his ribcage before Elrohir spots him; with a grin, he pushes back his sodden braids and comes to meet Elladan halfway.

You're smiling like you have a secret. The feeling of rightness, the resonance, increases at the warmth that is Elrohir's voice in his mind.

I do.

Is it one I already know?

A moment ago, perched high on the rocks, he would have said no. But here, up close, Elrohir is looking at him in a way that makes him wonder, leaning close in a way that may be more than the waves pushing him.

Elladan thought he would be afraid. He isn't. *If you already know, why would I tell it to you?*

Elrohir grins at him as if they both know the answer. *Some things have to be said aloud to be properly true.*

Elladan is, perhaps, a little giddy from the salt air. "All these years of devotion, and it only counts as true if I say the words?"

Elrohir smiles his warm, laughing little smirk—the one, Elladan realizes now, that's reserved for him only—and shifts nearer than the waves give him any plausible deniability for. "I suppose there *might* be some deeds that would speak as loudly."

I don't see why you're the arbiter of truth, Elladan grumbles playfully—but silently, so that he can catch Elrohir's face between his palms and draw their lips together.

To give you the excuse for this, Elrohir says slyly, and wraps his arms around Elladan, curling his toes in the sand.

They stay that way for minutes and minutes, until a greater wave breaks over them both, leaving them coughing and laughing. Elladan knows they will end the day with noses and eyes burning, crackling with salt, clothing full of sand that will take a week to shake loose—and knows, also, that nothing could make him happier.

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