

I calmly stride my way through the Great Forge,
Calm only through familiarity,
For that name deserved, a mighty cavern
Carved out of mountain side itself that stretched
Taller than Colossus could bare extend,
And from the heights great heated buckets poured
Molten metals in to the lakes of fire,
Where Dwarf and Gnome toiled throughout day and night,
The noise, the heat, no virgin eyes ever
Could be but awed, nor virgin ears ignore
Cacophony produced therein, neither
Could I be sure senses would long adapt,
Though external I looked unaffected
Inside my body raced, but couldn't tell
With certainty if environment were
The cause, or perhaps message delivered
Exciting mind and blood, my visit here
Transitory, a stepping stone helping me
To get to she, a particular Elf,
Arranged to meet for special adventure.
With gryphon master seen and passage bought
I climb upon the winged beast of burden,
Then flying through the hollowed mountain,
'Till the heat contrast with cold as over
Massive Dwarf statue heralding the gates
Of Ironforge, the capital of Dwarfs,
Turning, climbing, surmounting the icy peak
Moments before within, descending then
Forever down, 'till snow is left behind
For the marshy grasses of Menethil,
Where in that harbour landing I dismount.
No sooner have my feet touched the ground do I
Recognise the beauty that had drawn me

To the harbour on this day, I too noticed,
Making her way across to where I stand.

Good day, my dear Cirini, I begin,
It's good to see you're well, as you can see
I got your note, am here to come along
And escort you on your bold campaign to
Visit Thunder Bluff, Tauren capital,
I might remark on inherent dangers
Involved in such a trip, but shall refrain,
Not coming here to make you change your mind.

Good day to you, Cirini did reply,
You are right to suppose my mind is set,
I long to go and hope to find Tauren
Both strong and kind, though mortal enemies
The Horde are said to be, I can't believe,
I won't believe, that every one's the same,
And compassion truly meant overcomes
These silly feuds, but you make no mistake
To presuppose this journey's hazardous,
I'm thankful for your company, your help,
From the bottom of my heart, no better
Can I think of to be my chaperone.
Nor could I, as Cirini spoke, think of
Any other with whom I'd rather be
On this endeavour, or not, truth be told.
I spied the merchant ship soon to head to
Theramore, the first stop on the voyage,
Was ready setting sail, so hurried down
The pier to jump aboard the ship in time,
Bade farewell to the Eastern Continent.
On the Great Sea, with time to spare, briefly
Excusing myself, I repair to my
Cabin wherein I undergo transform

From rugged adventurer to dapper
Gentleman; well, I hoped my dinner suit
Would bring about that change, more nervous now
Than when I faced the demons I had tamed,
Though life and death did not balance over
Outcome sought today, more precious was the
Unique jewel, remaining just out of reach.
Emerging, no sign of fair Cirini
I see, 'till from behind a voice beckons,
And turning, there before me Cirini
Dressed in blue and red, accentuating
Her shapely figure, elegantly curved,
Melting me unto the sea, forgetting
Any words that could suitably describe.

That dress looks wonderful on you, I blurt,
Before the compliment returned, feeling
My face redden, sincerity I heard,
We walked along the deck, body trembling
As though a magic spell so powerful
Had me in its thrall, mesmerising me,
As salty breeze blew breathlessly behind,
We looked ahead, I hoping time could stop,
Capture, preserve the perfect moment now,
But even then land-ho was called, return,
Revert again for dangerous paths ahead,
Though my wish was heard and that moment stored,
A perfect memory, and disembarked
I still could see my dearest Cirini.
And there we found ourselves in Theramore,
Midday sun impressing slight urgency
On the distance left to run, so onward
Through the marshland, westward our general aim,
Keeping feet dry and free from mud, avoids

The possible attacks from natural beasts,
Though a crocolisk long between its meals
Seems attracted strong as another here,
Approaches angelic Elf, jaws open,
Preparing to rend flesh, but Cirini,
Alert, easily evades, draws twin blades,
Raining cascades of whirling, swirling, blurred
Annihilation, then stillness, nothing
Dares to move, two figures continue on.
Only one more beast encountered upon
That marshy road, a Tauren did approach,
With journey's end in mind, I reconcile
Prejudices, extend a friendly hail,
Receiving back but a low, sneering growl,
Cirini clearly unimpressed, as I,
Though understanding one won't represent
The whole, not judging this a bad portent,
Remaining optimistic, on we go.
Behind we leave the marsh, replace it with
Drier, sandy land, bathed in vibrant reds,
That signifies entrance to The Barrens,
Horde land proper, though vast, not populous,
Near trivial to pass on to Mulgore,
Home of Tauren and holding Thunder Bluff,
Where green and verdant land supplants, contrasts
The dusty drought and landscape waterlogged,
The journey now pleasant, instilling hope,
Though destination's way ahead unclear.

I think it's north, conjectures Cirini,
So at this fork we should perhaps turn right,
Though sign-posted I cannot decipher
The glyphs that make the language in this land,
And even if I may recognise some

Words or two of speech it's maybe not the
Wisest move to ask random passers-by
For if a hostile welcome does await
I would prefer to turn up unannounced.
Hence right we turn after the fork is reached,
And before long prescient assumption
Substantiated, authenticated,
The road under our feet becomes more worn,
Well-used, as though a thousand feet did pass
Each day, a sign our journey's end approached
And soon the Tauren city would present
Itself to its unwelcome guests like a
Dragon to a sacrificial virgin.
Around the corner, beyond the jutting
Mountain did we pass, expecting city
Sights and sounds to grab us in their thrall but
Just a second mountain, as sheer as the
One just rounded, a pair to the first that
Now stood tall and imposing to our side
Was all that greeted us. But movement up,
Where movement unexpected, caught my eye
Which turned to see a bridge of rope and wood
Linking mountain in twine, a natural
Form connected not by natural means, did
Rock and sway in the breeze that pushed stronger
At that height, and my gaze now drawn to each
End where further structures made by man
Were now seen, atop those dreadful plateaux.
But man-made was not quite right, for nothing
Made by man had these designs, the totems,
Screens and odd patterns were alien to
Elf and man alike, shivers crossed my spine,
As I felt the distance to the comfort

Of home, Cirini seeming strangely calm
Her hopes and dreams so close to her, mine too,
Yet still not in my grasp, I entreat her

My dear Cirini, would you please allow
A simple request, that to hear you speak
Your native tongue, Darnassun flowing forth
For this my selfish joy to hear you sing.
And pausing at this uncommon request,
Countenance shifting as words were recalled
Cirini more peaceful came and spoke soft
A poem delightful, though were the words
A blessing from her heart or extended
Elven greeting I could not determine,
Thus nor can be recalled, though their effect
Was mighty on my senses, lifting me,
Delightingly, and mesmerising me.

Your words are as music to my senses,
Your voice penetrates and soothes, relaxes,
Even now in this time of such great stress
Whereupon I no more fear where I am.

Kind sir, Cirini replied, your praise is
Great and surely undeserved, my language
Is unpracticed, rough, I speak Common as
My normal tongue as I have since a child,
My Darnassun must seem quite harsh to Elves,
That to you it's musical makes me smile
And I will gladly sing to you again
Whenever you request, but let us not
Forget just where we are, for though I feel
As strong in your presence as you are mine
We stand before the mighty Thunder Bluff,
Where I hope we can enter peacefully
In spite of animosity between

Tauren and Alliance, so take this strength
And hold it close, remember how it feels.
And with these words we once more turned towards
The way ahead, closer, ever closer
To the sheer rock face marking city's edge,
Where movement gains attention as we see
A lift, the transport up the rock to grant
Entrance proper to our goal; one last look,
Blessed innocence, and we board to rise
To who knows what welcome we will receive.
Drawn upwards, powerless now to retreat,
Our nerves ought to complain, to shout aloud
The folly of entering the foe's lair,
But even if Cirini did not have
Her hope so strong, no I Cirini near,
The hushed calm of our altitude that showed
Landscape for miles around, the lush, green land
Thriving with animals and floral song
Did innervate, rejuvenate hopes of
A welcome kind, for how could those who hold
Dominion over landscape so benign
Be therefore hostile to an Elf whose race
Keeps nature close to heart, like kindred souls
Should they not meet, a common bond to grow?
Our ascent halts, we turn to see Tauren
Bustle in the street, my heart forgetting
With this dread sight the thought seconds ago
As mild panic begins to trickle through,
Alighting then, with the environment
Cirini melds to be as a shadow,
With no like defence it's luck that prevents
Tauren eyes from spotting me, invader
In their midst, as the lift behind descends,

So now escape removed, senses heighten
Ready to react, Cirini's too, I feel,
As then we spot the guard, his head turning,
Snout sniffing, snarling, sensing something's not
As it is meant to be, moves from his post
To face Cirini, dwarfing Elf and
Seemingly eclipsing sun, that massive
Bulk of body mass, brawny, muscular,
This imposing, awesome figure makes clear
The fascination held, now we find if
Sentiment will be reciprocated,
Eyes narrow, brow furrowed, an axe is drawn,
Held in both huge hands, muscles tense tight,
Hold the weapon I could not even lift,
He strides unhampered towards Cirini,
And as he calls out in guttural grunts
A call to arms his axe is swung to strike
Down upon fairest Elf before my eyes,
Before my flesh reacts my mind's working,
Cursing guard with agony, corrupting,
Draining, but he resists, ignoring me,
As still he hits poor Cirini, dodging,
Parries, reflexes quick, and counter-strikes
Flurry in, but just scratch the Tauren's skin
As mighty axe, blow-by-blow, weakens she
I swore to defend, still cannot distract
The fearsome guard, as two more Tauren join
The fray, spied from city street, engage me,
Block me from Cirini's sight, striking me,
Disrupting spells, feeling life force fading
I surge, a push through enemies to charge
The guard, but too late am I, one last blow
Evades Cirini's dodge, a lifeless shell

Slumps to the ground, lies still, Cirini gone.
Cirini gone, I have failed my promise
To keep her safe, and though instinct deflects
Attacks my spirit sinks, sensing my fate,
A voice I hear, familiar, saying

Run, Faust, run, you cannot win against these
Enemies so numerous, nor aid me
Lest you turn, fear not for me, my spirit
Remains strong, but no more I hear as the
Fatal strike now plunging deep within my
Body weak, legs crumpling, the world fading.
Silence, rising, looking down, my body
Seen from eyes unknown, disconcerting yet
Oddly peaceful to see oneself lie still,
And, looking up, Cirini, a wisp floats
By her, though no features does it possess
I swear a smile benevolent I see,
Before disconnect, wrenching me away
to some place unknown, how far, and why?
Sorrow take hold once more, no sense I feel,
Headstones surround, am I to rest in peace
With knowledge of my failure, or to rot,
Decay as punishment, my atonement
Eternal for my sad calamity.

No, there comes a ghostly voice, your fate is
Not to be decided here, another
Chance is yours to save your friend of whom you're
Rightly fond, you did your best, pure of heart,
Against enemies too strong, whilst searching for
An answer that I think you now have found.
Then voice was given ghostly form, appeared
A lady, winged, her features quite serene,
Dressed all in white, her gaze met mine direct,

Speaking to me, though words just heard not said,
Now go, return to where you fell, from there
I shall imbue life in to you once more,
Your friend you can then help, as destiny
Demands, then silence again, left alone,
Those words I take with me, running through this
Nether world to locate Thunder Bluff
Where my ravaged body lay, and though but
Mere feet away, too far from Cirini.
No beasts I saw along this trip, nor man,
Or Tauren, too, a world deserted I
Was passing through, no peace to find herein,
As even with no sign of life, of those
Who'd struck me down, the view of Thunder Bluff
Again did make my apparition quake
As I ascended as I had before,
Though no precious gem beside, I wondered
When I reached the height what there might I find,
Our bodies, came the answer, not moved from
Where they fell, incorporeal to me
From this other plane, and Cirini's wisp
Still remained, somehow warming this form
Impervious to heat, and then I knew
That I could do just as the spirit said.
Approaching now my lifeless corpse I sensed
Some foreign hand reach in to me and ask
Do you want to live again, positive
Came my reply, no hesitation mine,
Whereupon some power strong coursed through me
Now complete, vigour returned, flesh made whole,
I could see, sense and touch, so knelt down by
Fair Cirini, placing my hand on hers,
'Twas warmth I felt, not lifeless flesh assumed,

Similar spirit having touched her too,
As now her eyes did open, Cirini
Looking up to see reflection of her
Passion, the man who vowed to lead her safe
And from this dreadful place, a tear fell down
Cirini's cheek, though dry her eyes appeared,
A gentle hand feeling the tear as though
For the first time, before I helped her up
To find, recall, we were but yards from death's
Fatal review, and quick and quiet retraced
Our steps, the lift, sensing our need, ready
To take us down, escort us to the ground,
From there we ran, eschewed the road, to
Where we'd not be seen, and rested weary bones.

My apologies, to my friend I told,
After a short delay, I did not keep
That promise made to see you free from harm,
Instead attacked and nearly deadly so,
My protection was a sham, though I tried,
My dear Cirini, I tried, you must believe
I never could abandon you in such
A time of need, though the Tauren guard was
Stronger than I had anticipated,
An error in my judgement teaching me
That from this moment forth when I'm with you
No foe will be underestimated.

Silly man, Cirini replied, smiling
With warmth she spoke, you could no more protect
Yourself than me in Thunder Bluff, for you,
As I, did fall under the mighty blows,
Do not concern yourself so with wrongful
Accusations of broken promises
When here we sit, the two of us, alive,

If recovering, your promise I
Consider kept, though even that misplaced
As I should make apologies to you
For what has passed today, though on deaf ears
I know they would fall, for we understand
That journey here would never have been done
Any other way; besides, don't treat me
Like I cannot handle trouble myself,
In many situations worse than this
Have I escaped, or stayed and battled, fought
My way back home before, don't blame yourself
For anything, I am truly grateful
For your help in coming here, and though my dream
Of Tauren strong to hold me in his arms
Has not come true, nor likely ever will,
I've discovered more than strength of body,
That of will, determination, now I
Know where I want to be, though now instead
We'd better start our long journey towards
Your native shore. With that dear Cirini
Stood and offered me her hand, reaching out
To meet her, rose, the twinkle in her eyes,
Her smile, all mingled with the words she spoke,
No greater calm within my heart had I
Ever felt before, and stayed with me as
Cirini turned, heading back, begins
The journey home, but with a start there came
A sudden halt as danger sensed ahead,
A Tauren, lone, but still a latent threat,
 He's young, I say, not fully grown, to us
He is no danger, still we ought not show
Ourselves lest he calls for help, unaware
We're not automatic foe, just as those

His senior are brought up taught to hate
The races of Alliance so may he
Be bred. Cirini too shared this concern,
I fear you may be right, the Tauren were
Downright rude, impolite, unaccepting
Of differences, and started battle with
Smallest provocation, yet still exists
Vestige of hope that young will make the change,
Deny the dogma of their race, decide
With their own minds which friends to make and why,
And one day peace will be the ruler here.
We watched the Tauren innocent until
No more he could be seen, and clear the path
Became for us to travel further on.
No more resistance did we encounter
To the border of Mulgore, where beyond
Red mountains push from arid, dusty land,
The Barrens lay before us once again.
Relative safety gained from large expanse
We slow slightly, a chance to look around,
See the mountains almost glow with sunlight
Setting low, merging, mixing oranges,
Reds to set the land ablaze, we decide
To climb a flame, appreciate the view
From where we dream to touch the sun, capture
Its warmth, its fire, though now I burn with more
Intensity than even sun sustains,
For as we finish climbing, settle down
Upon a peak, Cirini sits, brushing
Casually against my arm, it matters
Not how far from home, nor numerous beasts
We left below that threatened to attack,
And neither that we're in Horde land, danger

All around; all that matters, Cirini,
Is I am here with you, and as you speak
I listen keen to understand you more,
Whilst watching sly the shapes that make your smile,
 I don't know why, I like it here, even
Though brought up in forest I always felt
Too enclosed, the trees all 'round not giving
Room to breathe, it seemed, and while the colours
Green and brown were calming, promoted peace,
Tranquillity, the energy in these
Reds abounds, infusing me, reviving
My spirit wholeheartedly, and so far
Can we see from here I feel, a little
Paradoxically, closer to nature
Than when it can be touched, I don't suppose
I come across quite like most other Elves,
Quiescent in The Barrens, in no rush
To get home, though saying that I find this
Heat become quite overbearing, my throat
Is parched, we should move on, I think I read
Your mind, so let's get back to Menethil
And drink to our successful trip, a toast
We both deserve, impish grin playing its
Way across her lips at this, it was then
I knew I'd follow her whatever the
Suggestion, destination Orgrimmar,
Or Undercity, undead capital,
I would be right by her side, though simple
Drinks in Menethil would be kinder to
My nerves, and so south passed through The Barrens,
Then east to Theramore, and passage on
Another ship, we're safely home once more,
There to the inn we make our way, walking

along the promenade, I moved closer,
Took Cirini's hand, held it soft, and though
A blush produced, no argument nor move
Away did come and tender touch was shared,
Fondness grown communicated, but when
we made it to the inn, drinks obtained, that
No two seats together could there be seen
Carried the pair of us outside, where on
Some grass, under a tree, half shade, half sun,
We sat and drank and shared more of the tales
Adventuring, and little secrets too,
Till time once more caught up with us, the day
Not long enough, Cirini, sadly, had
To part, and I as well, reluctantly,
Though not before a promise made that soon
We'd meet again, and with that Cirini
Did stand, she turned and walked towards her home,
I could not help but watch how gracefully
She moved, there came a sigh, and realised
That I had been the source, Cirini stopped,
Turned around to blow a loving kiss for
Me to catch before going on her way.
That kiss I caught, held it tight, even now
And for as long as I have strength enough
To keep it close, a little souvenir
Of all that makes her my dear Cirini.