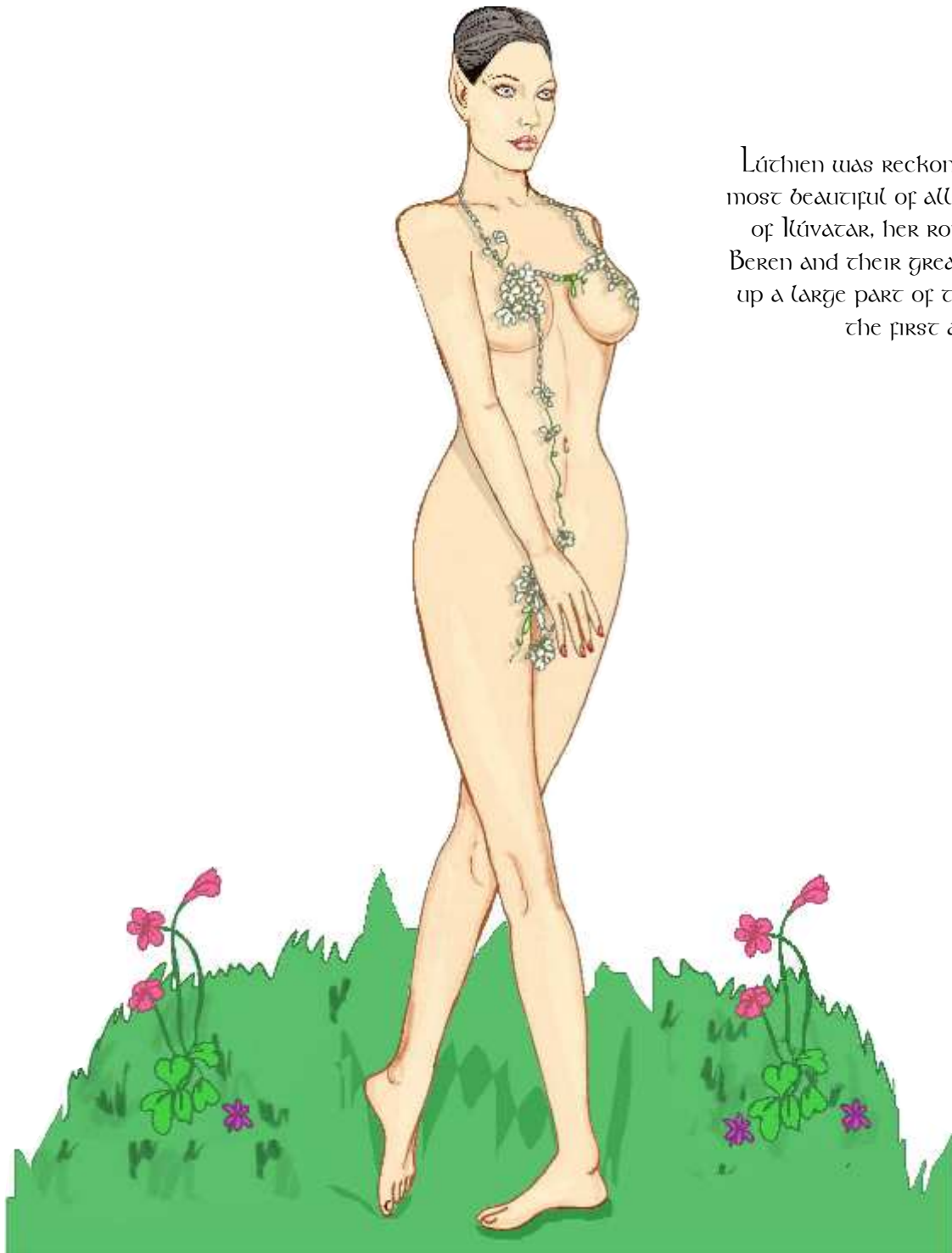


Lúthien Tinúviel



Lúthien was reckoned to be the most beautiful of all the Children of Ilúvatar, her romance with Beren and their great deeds make up a large part of the stories of the first age

"The leaves were long, the grass was green,
The hemlock-umbels tall and fair,
And in the glade a light was seen
Of stars in shadow shimmering.
Tinúviel was dancing there
To music of a pipe unseen,
And light of stars was in her hair,
And in her raiment glimmering.

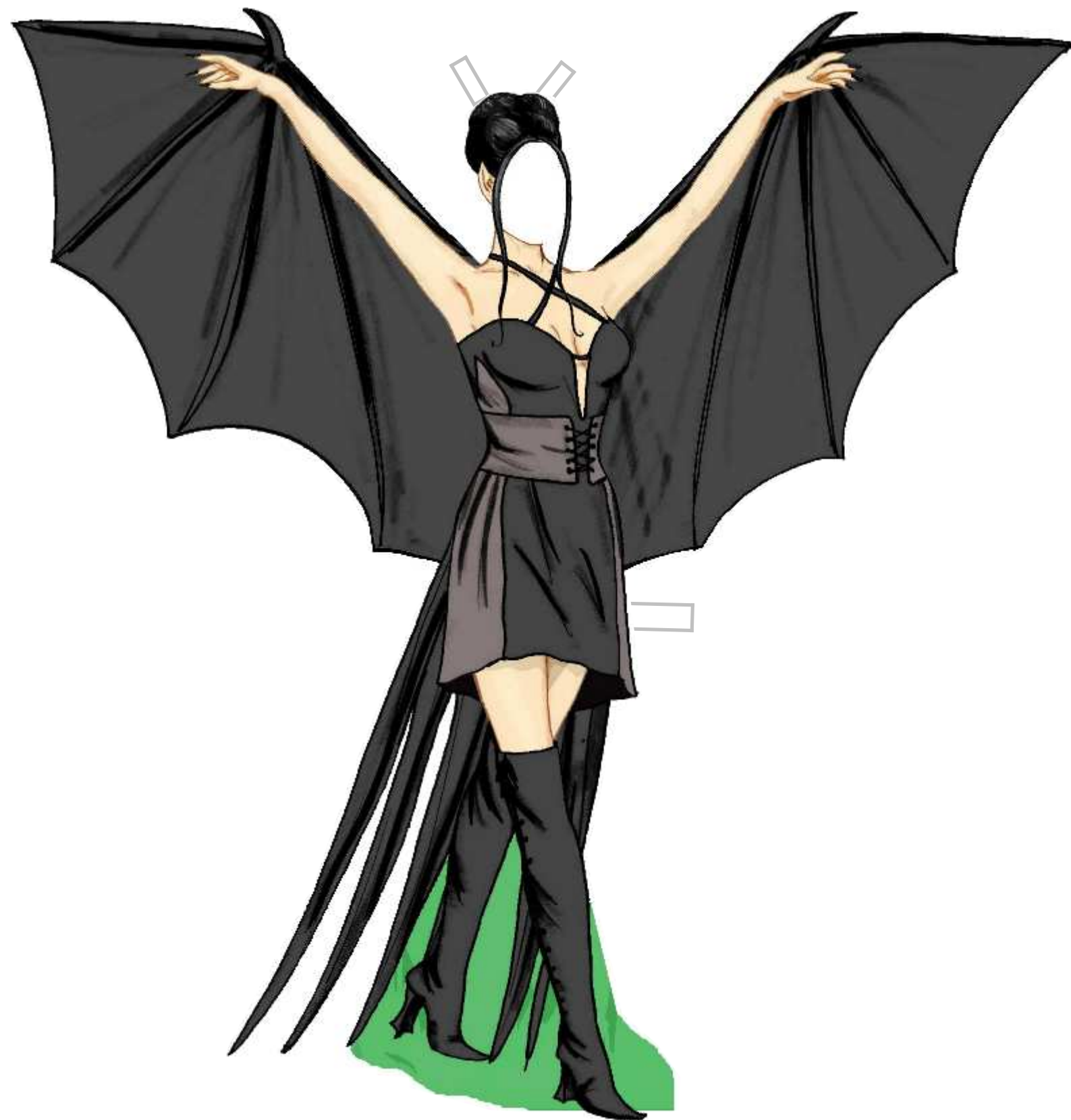


Blue was her raiment as the unclouded heaven, but her eyes were grey as the starlit evening; her mantle was sewn with golden flowers, but her hair was dark as the shadows of twilight. As the light upon the leaves of trees, as the voice of clear waters, as the stars above the mists of the world, such was her glory and her loveliness; and in her face was a shining light.

It is told in the Lay of Leithian how she escaped from the house in Híriorn; for she put forth her arts of enchantment, and caused her hair to grow to great length, and of it she wove a dark robe that wrapped her beauty like a shadow, and it was laden with a spell of sleep. Of the strands that remained she twined a rope, and she let it down from her window; and as the end swayed above the guards that sat beneath the house they fell into a deep slumber. Then Lúthien climbed from her prison, and shrouded in her shadowy cloak she escaped from all eyes, and vanished out of Doriath.



...Huan turned aside therefore at Sauron's isle, as they ran northward again, and he took thence the ghastly wolf-hame of Draugluin, and Lúthien the bat-fell of Thuringwethil. She was the messenger of Sauron, and was wont to fly in vampire's form to Angband; and her greatfingered wings were barbed at each joint's end with and iron claw. Clad in these dreadful garments Huan and Lúthien ran through Taur-nu-Fuin, and all things fled before them...



Lúthien was stripped of her disguise by the will of Morgoth, and he bent his gaze upon her. She was not daunted by his eyes; and she named her own name, and offered her service to sing before him, after the manner of a minstrel. Then Morgoth looking upon her beauty conceived in his thought an evil lust, and a design more dark than any that had yet come into his heart since he fled from Valinor. Thus he was beguiled by his own malice, for he watched her, leaving her free for awhile, and taking secret pleasure in his thought. Then suddenly she eluded his sight, and out of the shadows began a song of such surpassing loveliness, and of such blinding power, that he listened perforce; and a blindness came upon him, as his eyes roamed to and fro, seeking her.



All his court were cast down in slumber, and all the fires faded and were quenched; but the Sîmarils in the crown on Morgoth's head blazed forth suddenly with a radiance of white flame; and the burden of that crown and of the jewels bowed down his head, as though the world were set upon it, laden with a weight of care, of fear, and of desire, that even the will of Morgoth could not support. Then Lúthien catching up her winged robe sprang into the air, and her voice came dropping down like rain into pools, profound and dark. She cast her cloak before his eyes, and set upon him a dream, dark as the outer Void where once he walked alone.

...Then Beren gazed in wonder on the selfsame jewel of Fëanor that he had cut from Morgoth's iron crown, now shining set amid gold and gems by the cunning of the Dwarves; and he washed it clean of blood in the waters of the river. And when all was finished the treasure of Doriath was drowned in the River Ascar, and from that time the river was named anew, Rachlóriel, the Goldenbed; but Beren took the Nauglamír and returned to Tol Galen. Little did it ease the grief of Lúthien to learn that the Lord of Nogrod was slain and many Dwarves beside; but it is said and sung that Lúthien wearing that necklace and that immortal jewel was the vision of greatest beauty and glory that has ever been outside the realm of Valinor; and for a little while the Land of the Dead that Live became like a vision of the land of the Valar, and no place has been since so fair, so fruitful, or so filled with light...



...Long did Dior gaze upon the Silmaril, which his father and mother had brought beyond hope out of the terror of Morgoth; and his grief was great that death had come upon them so soon. But the wise have said that the Silmaril hastened their end; for the flame of the beauty of Lúthien as she wore it was too bright for mortal lands...