

Chronicles of Ballidrous

Campaign Setting

Elesari's Bluff

Official Short Fiction



by James S. Austin

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By James S. Austin

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Medowynn looked to the horizon and hurried his steps along the overgrown path. His left knee ached from the autumn chill but did little to slow him down. Across the distant valley, the sun set below the hills, a yellow haze left in its wake, and the full moon rising opposite its position, as its counterweight in the heavens. He had hoped to make this trip earlier, but the blacksmith was late to reshod Mountain, and Mountain never gave him an easy time of it.

Two years have passed since Elesari's falling ill to the cough that swept through the small village. She was bedridden for two months before the fever took her from him. During that time, his days were devoted to caring for her every need. Even in the darkness that shrouded their home and his struggle with exhaustion, her small moments of clarity made the effort to suffer those sleepless nights worth it. Since then, Medowynn made it a point to visit her on the anniversary of her passing, as she was the brightest moment in his lackluster life.

Climbing the last steps leading up the bluff on which he laid her to rest, the sky lost the last rays of sunlight and the moon's silvery glow gently illuminated his destination as it hung over his shoulder. Cresting the rise, Medowynn stopped in astonishment. Tiny flecks of blue light swarmed over her grave, dancing in swirling circles and spirals. At that instant, the concerted waltz of incandescent sparks rose into the sky and disappeared into the night.

Making his way to the foot of her rocky bed, Medowynn noticed that frost dianthus sprang from between the shale rocks and had begun to bloom. His tired face lit into a smile. Their tiny pink petals reminded him of his wife's once healthy glow. A tear of both joy and pain fell.

Time passed as he sat on the hard surface the bluff had to offer, taking in the late air, and listening to the night's unfettered noises. He laid his head down on a patch of moss, looking at the face of the moon. The memories of Elesari passed through his thoughts and he reveled in the sense that she was there with him this night. He closed his eyes...

* * *

The hot and cramped room closed in on Medowynn's being. Elesari lay before him, covered in blankets and sweat beading on her feverish forehead. Her cracked lips parted, her bloodshot eyes begging for water to quench her unending thirst.

He frantically looked about for the water pitcher. The table next to the bed held a ceramic pitcher and mug. He took the pitcher by the handle and poured. Fine grains of sand fell into the empty mug, gradually filling to the top. *What?*

Medowynn went to leave the room to fill the pitcher at the well but the door resisted his pull. *Huh? Locked?* He pulled again with greater force. It would not budge to his astonishment.

"Please..." he breathed out in a sigh. "Open."

Elesari moved, and he was beside her again. "Meh..." her ragged words fell short.

"My love. I am here. As Always," he tried to acknowledge her. He laid his hand on her forehead, the heat was unbearable. The room was unbearable.

He wiped the falling sweat stinging his own eyes, blurring his vision as his sleeve swiped across. *Or was it tears?* Clearing what he could, out of the corner of his eye, he noticed a rat on the table. The mangy creature's nose twitched, and it stared back with glowing red eyes.

He swatted at it with the back of his hand to scare the rat off. The ruddy thing jumped and fled under the bed.

"Nooooo..." he cried. Fear of it crawling around underneath his Elesari brought on a panic. Medowynn fell to the floor, desperately looking for the intruder. Nothing. He looked up in exasperation and found it clinging to the wall, near the ceiling's edge.

He stood and glanced around the room for anything to throw at the vile creature. This interloper. The world was spinning around him. His heart pounded in his chest. He was alone and helpless.

"Meh..." Elesari murmured. He leaned in close, listening with full purpose. "It hurts so much. Water..." her feeble voice but a whimper.

He turned again to the door, pulling on the handle with all his might. Nothing. Medowynn kicked repeatedly at its base in frustration. "I have failed you, Elesari," as he fell to his knees sobbing.

In his fading strength, huddled within himself on the floor, the door opened. Looking up through his wet eyes, a bright silvery-blue visage filled the doorway. It was Elesari.

"But, I don't understand," his will fading.

* * *

Medowynn shot right up as a shadow of emptiness and night pulled away from his body as if his own shadow meant to leave him. All his fears ebbed with its departure as the frail wisps receded into nothing. The last thing to disappear was a pair of red eyes that still held an unrelenting hunger in their depths.

He was back on the bluff.

Above his wife's grave hung the same glowing figure. He could almost make out her features and her loving smile. He reached up, hoping to touch her once again...

...and the figure collapsed into tiny pin lights, swirling about. They pirouetted into the sky then cascaded down in a rainfall, to then once again disappear into the night sky.

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