

Chapters of Daedeleon: Prelude to Deicide, Alestara's Bastia

Chains rattled as a line of dirty and tired bodies hurry through the forest. Iron cuffs around each of the wrists of the various people in the line, their clothes all torn their hair a tangled mess and they smelled of filth. The group moved as silently as they could weaving in and out of trees as the forest became denser, the sounds of their angered pursuers could be heard close behind. A male voice called out, "there over here!"

The pace of the chained group hastened, scrambling through brush that cut their skin, and sharp branches that poked at their bare feet. "ah'es kashi aplori!" a woman screams as she falls face first into the dirt dragging down the others forcing the group to stop, panicked they yanked her to her feet and continued running. Very few of them spoke the same language, having been stolen from different lands communication was almost impossible.

Suddenly, the chained slaves broke into an open field, a stunning clearing with grass that swayed in the breeze. A mysterious tranquility was in the air that didn't seem to fit with the rest of the forest. For a moment the slaves forgot they were running. Slowing the walked to the middle of the clearing the slaves looked up in amazement, before them stood a large arch. None of them had seen it before, none of them know what it was for, yet they stood in awe at the structure. It stood twenty feet tall at its highest point, made of a smooth black stone. Symbols were chiseled into the stone in a language none of them could identify.

The first slaver breaks into the opening from the thick brush and calls into the woods behind him laughing "There here! hehehe" The man cracks his knuckles and approaches the chained slaves as they turned in fear and huddled against the archway. It didn't take long before a second man appeared with a group of armed men behind him. They surrounded the defenseless slaves, moving in slowly the leader stepped up to the first slave in the chain, gripping her chin tightly he glared for a moment before throwing the woman to the ground. She crawled away and began to weep as he ran his hand through his dirty, shaggy brown hair and wiped the sweat from his brow "They've cost us too much time and money already" he grumbles obviously tired and in a foul mood "Just get rid of them."

The slaves cowered, although none of them spoke the language of the slavers the understood the tone of his voice and saw the men approach with weapons drawn. Chained, and on the ground the slaves stood no chance. The slavers made quick work of the defenseless men and women. Their deaths were quick and their chains removed to be used again, the bodies were left on the ground, bleeding onto the grass. The bandits cleaned their weapons and left to find their way back to the trade route, not wanting to waste any time finding new merchandise.

Night fell and the moon's castes a soft light on the clearing causing the grass to shimmer. The grass tainted by the spilled blood shrank and died. Fireflies gathered, dancing in the field as the gateway seemed to glow, absorbing the dull moonlight. No animal stirred among the grass and corpses as the archway began to give off a light of its own. A figure stepped through the archway, feminine and feline, she wore nothing. Instead the goddess' tall, endowed body was covered in a layer of black, soft fur. Her paws stepped onto the grass as her sharp honey colored eyes adjusted to the low light and a tail flicked behind her. Kneeling she runs her fingertips through the grass, feeling something wet she brings her fingertips before her face, rubbing them together she looks up to see the bodies sprawled across her glade.

Alestara hisses showing razor sharp teeth she bounds over to the first body, grabbing it by the

Comment [G1]: "hurried"

Comment [G2]: Too many "the", consider getting rid of one or two somehow.

Comment [G3]: A semi-colon would be better, as the two clauses are related yet separate.

Comment [G4]: "torn, their" since this is a list.

Comment [G5]: Not needed.

Comment [G6]: Verb tense.

Comment [G7]: Good place for a new sentence.

Comment [G8]: Again, a semi-colon is suggested, as these are two different yet related thoughts.

Comment [G9]: "Slowing as they"?

Comment [G10]: Connect the amazement with what they see. The comma here separates this moment.

Comment [G11]: Verb tense.

Comment [G12]: Verb tense.

Comment [G13]: Don't forget the space between 'laughing' and the dialogue. Also don't forget the period at the end of the quote. 'There' should be 'they're' and "hehehe" is not appropriate here. Describing it as laughing should be sufficient.

Comment [G14]: Verb tense.

Comment [G15]: This is a tiny bit confusing. The man appears, but so does a group behind him? A better way would be to say "soon followed by" or something to that effect.

Comment [G16]: I think that these should be separate sentences. "moving in slowly" introduces the action, which in this case shouldn't come in the middle.

Comment [G17]: Another great spot for a semi-colon.

Comment [G18]: Not needed.

Comment [G19]: Given that you wrote "their deaths were quick," it would be appropriate and consistent to say "their chains were removed."

Comment [G20]: This doesn't seem to belong, as it has not been brought up before. Does it refer to the need for more slaves to replace the dead? If so, you should try to make it a little more obvious, perhaps through dialogue.

Comment [G21]: If there is more than one moon, it just needs to read "moons." Regardless, cast is singular.

Comment [G22]: Semi-colon.

Comment [G23]: To kind of set this up as a little special (or what have you) is to use a comma. "instead, the..."

Comment [G24]: A tail or her tail?

Comment [G25]: This is a huge sentence which I think could be broken up. You are trying to shove too many thoughts into a sentence.

Comment [G26]: Verb tense.

Comment [G27]: Verb tense.

arm she lifts the limp body for examination. “Who has ruined my glade!?” she screams looking over the corpse, her expression changing immediately from anger to sorrow as she sees the bruises on the ankles and wrist. “You were caged?” she asks rhetorically looking at the other dead bodies, stricken with grief. “If there is something I will not allow, it is being caged, not here!” she walks to check the other bodies “this will not do.”

Alestara moved the bodies, laying them in a circle she wept over the lost freedom of the humans. Each tear cried Alestara placed on her fingertips, and blessed one of the bodies. “You will know freedom, this sacred place is one I will not allow blood to defile, return and take my image you will be free here as my children” she whispers to the last body.

Her catlike ears twitched as she stood to reflect a moment. Her eyes still watered from the sadness of the situation, she stared up at the moon and began to sing:

“Calling to the skies, the queen of the wilds,
where plants and animals grow.
These lives were taken, now my children,
of the wilds they will know.
Alestara of the forest, and these my Bastia,
they shall learn what wilds are.
But forever this tragedy you'll remember forever.
The loss of freedom leaves a scar.”

With those words she returns through the archway, the fireflies began to dance around the bodies in the circle and the grass shivered as the life force was drawn into the bodies. Simultaneously their bodies healed and began to change, their legs became digitigrade. Fur of different patterns grew from their bodies, some plain black, others with stripes, one or two resembled snow leopards and other wild cats. Their eyes shifted become catlike and tails extended from their backs. Teeth sharpened and from their fingers grew retractable claws and once round pupils became slits.

The once slaves upon waking began their new lives, forming more of a tribal structure they moved deep into the woods. Although fierce hunters, the race of Bastia themselves are peaceful with each other but very unwelcoming to strangers. Like the cats they resemble the Bastia can vary from being very serious one moment, and playful the next. It is rare however for Bastia to reveal such a playful and relaxed side to anyone who is not of their family. The greatest taboo to a Bastia is slavery. For this reason, slaves will often run to the woods seeking the Bastia for protection, anyone caught poaching, or transporting slaves are attacked immediately.

First, I wanted to say that I believe that I wrongly corrected a few things in your past stories. “its’ denotes possession. “It’s” denotes the contraction ‘it+is’ or other similar words. I apologize for this mistake as it can be hard to keep the two straight. Another great and interesting story Jeff! I love how it starts out a bit mysterious and eventually focuses in on what is really going on. Verb tense, as always, is a big thing to watch out for. Another thing that I have picked up on throughout your stories is that you seem to have a need to cram everything plus a kitchen sink into your sentences. This only adds to confusion and awkwardness – clarity is always your friend. Don’t worry about trying for complex sentences or thoughts, you will have plenty of opportunity for them in all of the right places; they alone aren’t the hallmark of good writing. Just focus more on communicating what it is you want your readers to know and experience – you have all of the power here! I’d also like to see more here at the end. It kind of feels like you got bored/tired/etc and

Comment [G28]: Since we already know that it is a body, you can choose to say “grabbing it by the arm for examination.” You can also divide this sentence to better show that she lifts it. As it is, the sentence is too wordy.

Comment [G29]: Verb tense.

Comment [G30]: Verb tense.

Comment [G31]: This is inferred since we as readers know that no one else is around. If you feel the need to, you can state that she said it aloud.

Comment [G32]: I am beginning to gather that this field is important to her. Really set this apart for your reader and give this its own sentence.

Comment [G33]: This is a good opportunity to show her actions. You can clarify and describe here: is she pacing? Is she distraught? Or is she in fact just saying these things as we see them here: saying one thing then walking to another body?

Comment [G34]: “she wept...” doesn’t seem to fit here. Consider restructuring the sentence to show what she is doing when.

Comment [G35]: A little awkward. It takes a few passes to understand just what you are saying here.

Comment [G36]: Give each statement its own space, as I can gather that they are each important.

Comment [G37]: Does she say these things only to the last body, or to all of them as she finishes this part of her ritual?

Comment [G38]: Is she stopping for a moment to reflect on something, or is she stopping to reflect about a particular moment?

Comment [G39]: In poetry/verse, generally the first word of each line is capitalized, even if it is the middle of a sentence.

Comment [G40]: Verb tense.

Comment [G41]: Since we know that this is all about the bodies, you don’t need to restate it.

Comment [G42]: Plural, since there is more than one leg being described and changed.

Comment [G43]: Great place for a semi-colon.

Comment [G44]: ‘became.’ I would suggest placing either a comma or semi-colon here.

Comment [G45]: I would put this in the list with the other eye attributes that are changing.

Comment [G46]: Remember verb tense. Also this sentence doesn’t make a lot of sense structurally, which gets in the way of reading it.

Comment [G47]: This is a great place to expand a little. I gather that the former slaves turned into the Bastia, though being a little more obvious wouldn’t hurt. Also, take the time to really re-work this paragraph a bit more – it is still a bit awkward. Expand and edit, then leave it for a few days and do it all again.

decided to end it. Just give it time, and it will come to you.

