

Mylakeila and the High Eyrie

Once upon a time, in a fair land called Arcolina, there lived a young Elf-maiden named Mylekeila along with her parents Andislee and Avida and her sister Jarilyn. Mylakeila was, by elf reckoning, still a child, although she had lived already about 21 human years. But, since she had paid attention to almost everything going on about her since she was born, she had learned a great deal about the world that JS, and a great deal about The One who made it. She knew the smells and sounds of forests and fields; the voices of wind and water; she knew the flights of the birds and the paths of the forest-dwellers; she knew storms and sunshine and stars. Most of all, she knew the great joy and privilege of caring – as all the faithful Elves do – for the wonderful world the One has created for Elves and Humans alike.

It may be that you did not realize that Elves still live among us, for they are few and live quietly in hidden places. Mylakeila's family, for instance, lived in a very snug house at the edge of a forest, but it was so skillfully built into the rocks and hidden by trees that it could not be seen unless you were very sharp-eyed. Mylakeila and Jarilyn's bed-chamber was a cozy cave off the main room where at nightfall they could light lamps and read elf-lore until the wicks burned low and they fell asleep dreaming of olden times. Mylakeila spent much of her time learning the lore and crafts of from long-ago. She was particularly fortunate to know both sets of her grandparents very well: in summers she would spend many of her days with Charislee and Alian, in whose house Avida had been born; in winter her mother's parents, Annasu and SwiftGill, arrived from the far north where ice and snow covered the land and the days were long and bitter cold.

While Mylakeila loved hearing her Grandmothers and Grandfathers stories, her favorite pastime was exploring the lands her father tended for The One, learning the paths and brooks, the secrets of each tree. And, she especially loved visiting the High Eyrie. This was a magical (well, elf-magic, at least) perch built high in the branches of an ancient tree still growing sturdily on a hillside high above the fields and farms that Mylakeila loved to explore. It was a special place for many reasons: first of all, from there, with her gift of far-sight, she could watch the ducks playing in the lake far down in the valley, the calves frolicking in the fields, and her friends, the farm dogs, hard at work – all so far away that only her elf-ears made it possible to hear their sounds. At night she could lie on her back and watch the stars march their courses across the heavens, and the moon in her dance with the Wanderers of the skies. But most of all it was special because she had found it on the Quest Grandpa Elf had set for her

on her 21'st birthday, and this somehow made it her very own even though she knew that other elf lads and maidens would go there in the years to come.

¶o one knows why it is that elves live so much longer than humans. Perhaps it is because they eat what The One provides in their fields and forests. Or perhaps it is because they keep their bodies strong and active. Who knows? But I think it is also because they live more *slowly*, in tune with the earth instead of at war with it. This does not mean that they move more slowly – oh my no! Jarilyn can pluck a butterfly out of the air and set it on a flower in a single wing-beat, and Mylakeila can climb into the High Eyrie more quickly than a dappled squirrel climbs a tree. No, no, no – elves can move very quickly indeed when the need arises. When I say that elves live more slowly, I mean that they do not rush through life impatient for the next moment. They do not fear that a pleasure unconsumed will be a pleasure forfeited, and so can enjoy every moment to its fullest. Why, I have seen human children cry and stamp their feet, afraid that they will miss the telling of a silly tale, when the real world in front of their face is full of wonders! Elf-children are much wiser. Mylakeila would spend hours in her Eyrie simply – watching.

¶t was a very good thing for one small human that she did. It so happened that one afternoon Mylakeila had been watching a small human-child playing in a farm-yard far away in the valley. He was a very cute human-child, almost certainly a little boy, and it amused Mylakeila to see him toddling around while his mother watched. After a time, she picked up her child and took him into the farm-house. Mylakeila was watching some birds doing acrobatics when suddenly she saw something moving in the farmhouse yard! It was the little boy running across the yard towards the creek that ran by the farm, and his mother was nowhere in sight! Mylakeila knew that, quick as she was, she could not run a mile to the farm to rescue the little boy before he reached the creek, nor could she shout loud enough to warn his mother. But she also knew she had friends that could help. Cupping her hands to her lips she lifted her head and cried in her loudest voice, “Ow-o-o-a-o-a-e-i-o-w-w-w Yip-Yip-Ark-Ow-a-a-yup!”

¶his is the best rendering into human-speech I can manage, but in wolf-language it means “On Guard! A pup is lost!” Did I forget to tell you that smart dogs understand Wolf-language, and many of them can speak it as well? Well, the dogs at the farm were very smart, and when they heard, even from so far away, Mylakeila's warning they immediately began looking for a lost pup, and one of them soon saw the little human “pup” toddling near the steep creek bank. Like a flash he ran to the child and began licking him so thoroughly that the little boy had to sit down and crawl back towards the house.

Meanwhile, Mylakeila had climbed down out of the High Eyrie and started running toward the farm. I believe I mentioned that Elves can move very quickly when they want to, and almost before the little boy had time to cry from being licked so thoroughly, she had streaked through the woods and fields and picked him up, thanking her good friend for his help. Then she carried the little child back up close to the house, where she planned to let him play while she watched from a hiding place until his Mother came to find him, as Mylakeila was sure she would. But just as she got to the house, the boy's Mother came running out of the door, frantic because she realized he had somehow gotten outside all by himself. When she saw Mylakeila standing there holding her baby she stopped short – relieved that her baby was safe, but also a little nervous because, well, the little girl (so she thought) holding him was quite *wild* looking. Then the “girl” spoke to her, “He played by yon water-brook”, she said. “The wolf stayed him, and I have brought him back to thee”. Of course, as far as Mylakeila was concerned, she had simply said, “He was playing by the creek, and the dog stopped him, and I brought him back”, but she couldn't help it if she had a slight accent when speaking human languages. Then she carefully handed the little boy to his mother and departed so swiftly that the mother was not sure at all whether she had even really been there.

As for Mylakeila, it was time for supper, so she ran more quickly than the deer runs back to her snug and cozy home at the edge of the woods, where her family – and especially her little sister Jarilyn – eagerly listened to her adventures at the High Eyrie.