

To Sleep, Per- chance to Dream

written by Calle Dybedahl

A drabble for Twinkledru's random_hundreds community on LiveJournal. At least it started out as a drabble, but it grew a bit longer. It probably doesn't make all that much sense if you haven't seen the end of the fifth season and the start of the sixth season of *Buffy* (up to, roughly, *Once More, With Feeling*). And possibly not even then.

Featured fandoms: Lord of the Rings, Buffy the Vampire Slayer

Featured pairings: Buffy/Galadriel

A.S.S Story codes: ff

Story rating: PG

They called the city Alqualonde, and Buffy loved watching the sun rise and paint its white palaces with golden light. Waking up when the eastern sky started to pale, she'd extricate herself from Galadriel's embrace and go out on their marble-clad terrace to stand there and watch, as naked as the day she was born. Sometimes, as the light traveled down the elegant spires of the city, she would take one of her lover's slender swords, and with it she would dance the dance of death that used to be her life.

"Do you like the blade, my beautiful?" Galadriel said one such morning as Buffy finished her dance, polished steel stretched towards the deep blue sky, catching the first rays of sun to reach the terrace. "It is yours, if you do."

"Oh, I can't," she said, easing off to her normal stance and lowering the sword. "I mean, I sure like it and all, but it's, like, fabulously made and it must've cost more than I spent on clothes in my entire *life*, so it's really too much."

Galadriel stepped out onto the terrace, her inhumanly slender body catching the sun and almost making Buffy lose her breath with sheer preternatural beauty.

"I made it," she said. "Now I give it to you."

"You *made* this?! Get real! Not that I don't believe you, but this is serious craftsmanship. Craftswomanship. Whatever. It takes a lifetime of practice to get this goo..."

Her voice trailed off as the meaning of her words reached her brain.

"Oh," she said. "Right. You've had thousands of those. So I guess spending two or three on making a sword is no biggie for you."

Galadriel laid her arms on Buffy's shoulders and kissed her gently on the forehead.

"When I made it, I thought it flawed," she said. "It is too thick, too heavy for me. But now I see that my hands knew more than my head, and that it is perfect for you who were yet to come. Its thickness and heft matches your muscular body so well, my stocky little lover."

Buffy smiled. "Thank you," she said. A mischievous glint appeared in her eye. "But you have to let me repay you at least a little."

"I have to?"

Buffy slowly ran the fingers of her left hand up the inside of Galadriel's thigh. "Oh yeah. You do," she said.

"Again?" Galadriel asked. "It is but hours since we last made love."

"Well, there's got to be an upside to the whole mortality thing."

The elven princess' laugh rang like silver bells. "Far be it from me to deny you your nature, little one," she said. "Do your desires allow us time to reach the bed, or at least the bench by the wall?"

Buffy grinned. "Start walking and see how far you get," she said.

If she liked sunset over Alqualonde less than sunrise, it was not because it was any less beautiful. As dusk fell, lanterns began to glow and bathed the city in many-coloured fire, starting down in the harbor by the white swan-shaped ships and ending in the spires where eagles lived. The elves sang and danced and ate and drank and loved, and Buffy had stopped wondering where the food and drink came from. This was paradise. Or at least *a* paradise. She was not the only human here, but all the others were Slayers past their expiration dates, just like her. She'd briefly met some of them, but since all they

had in common was past pain, they tended to stay apart. There were more than enough elves around for them not to feel alone. Although not all of them had managed to snag themselves a princess, as Buffy had.

"Have you lived here long?" Buffy asked, as they returned to their home after a day of sailing.

"By your measure, a very long time. By mine, a very brief one."

She had great difficulty getting her head around Galadriel's age. Sure, Angel and Spike had been way older than herself, but the elf was in entirely different league. She was not just much older, she was thousands of times older. When she was born, Buffy's *species* didn't exist. It kept surprising her that they could even communicate, much less get along.

"I must seem very young and naive to you."

"You are new and fresh to me. Never before have I met one such as you. You are unique. You are a source of wonder."

"I bet you say that to all the girls."

The scent of night-blooming flowers lay heavy over the terrace. From far below came the sound of harps and singing, an old ballad telling of wars and woe and loves lost. Lanterns of gold and silver spread their soft light, turning night into magical dusk.

Galadriel sat down on the marble bench by the wall. "Come," she said. "Sit here with me."

Buffy sat down on the sun-warmed stones next to the bench, putting her head in Galadriel's lap and closing her eyes.

Galadriel's fingers trailed through her hair. "Are you tired, my dear?" she asked.

"A bit."

"So sleep."

"Mmm, I don't want to move from here."

"So stay."

Buffy smiled. "I like it here," she said. "It's peaceful. No fear. No doubt. Just peace."

"Sssh. Sleep."

Buffy put her arms around Galadriel's waist, held her close.

"Sing to me?" she said.

Galadriel sang. In a language older than mankind, older than sun and moon, she sang of peace, of rest and of blissful sleep in a lover's embrace. Galadriel sang, and Buffy slept as only a lifetime of exhaustion can make you sleep.

All day Galadriel had felt forces gathering around the human girl. They were not forces she knew. They were something from the new world, the world of humankind that she had long ago left behind. Still, she could feel what they were trying to do. She could feel them grow stronger, as the preparations of the witch guiding them grew closer to fruition.

As the night grew older she wove magic into her song, magic that spoke sleep to her lover. Now and then Buffy would mumble and shift, as dreams flew through her mind. But she didn't wake. Galadriel made sure of that.

She sat still, fingers still playing with the girl's blonde hair, as the forces calling the Slayer back to the land of the living grew stronger. A few more hours remained, but what were they in a span like hers? She could sit like this for weeks or months, if need be.

Not waking Buffy, this night of all nights, was need enough. To give her lover one last night of perfect rest. As the head resting in her lap grew lighter and less substantial, she closed her eyes and cast her memory back to the days of the Two Trees, to the days when the song she was singing had been composed. She sang, and she remembered, as the weight and warmth of Buffy slowly went away.

Eventually, alone, she rose and fetched the sword that lay beside the bed they had shared. Pointing it at the sliver of sun just breaking the horizon, she began to dance.