Promises Made

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D. Moonfire

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> To ensure strength of character and society, every citizen between the age of twenty and thirty must give five years of service to community and country.
>
> —Faunil da Disrobin, *The Perfect Country*

Despite being a brilliant summer afternoon, it was the darkest day of Majoril's life. She stood in the door frame of her cottage while watching her grandson checking his travel packs one last time.

"I'll be fine, Nana." Janir rubbed his palm over his recently shaved head. It was a precautionary measure, there was always a chance that the barracks would still have lice and bedbugs.

Fifty years ago, no one had told Majoril about the pests and she had found out the hard way. Her lips pressed into a tight line as the faded memories tried to well up from the depths of her past. Tears started to blur her eyes and she blinked them away.

Her grandson looked up and the smile froze on his face. He stood up and came over, carefully stepping over her tulips. "Nana, I'm going to be fine."

"I-I..." Her voice caught in her throat. She reached up and wrapped her aching arm around his shoulder and pulled him close. "I don't want to lose you too."

He had to lean over to bury his face against her shoulder. His arms wrapped around her, squeezing tightly. Despite the encouraging words, he knew there was a risk too. "Only five years. Five years and I'll be back. I promise."

Majoril started to cry. "Don't make that promise, boy. Not all of us have a home when we're done."

Her home didn't exist when she had gotten out of the army. The village had been destroyed in the Kormar-Gepaul border war and her home was now just a gutted foundation buried in the dirt. She spent ten years looking for family but couldn't find any before she finally settled down and had children.

He smiled, his eyes filled with the hope of a twenty year old. "I will because you're here. When I get out, I promise I'll return. No matter what river or mountain is ahead of me, I will come back."

Not trusting her ability to speak, she hugged him tightly until the wagon came to pick him up.

About D. Moonfire

D. Moonfire is the remarkable intersection of a computer nerd and a scientist. He inherited a desire for learning, endless curiosity, and a talent for being a polymath from both of his parents. Instead of focusing on a single genre, he writes stories and novels in many different settings ranging from fantasy to science fiction. He also throws in the occasional romance or forensics murder mystery to mix things up.

In addition to having a borderline unhealthy obsession with the written word, he is also a developer who loves to code as much as he loves writing.

He lives near Cedar Rapids, Iowa with his wife, numerous pet computers, and a pair of highly mobile things of the male variety.

You can see more work by D. Moonfire at his website at https://d.moonfire.us/. His fantasy world, Fedran, can be found at https://fedran.com/.

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Fedran

Fedran is a world caught on the cusp of two great ages.

For centuries, the Crystal Age shaped society through the exploration of magic. Every creature had the ability to affect the world using talents and spells. The only limitation was imagination, will, and the inescapable rules of resonance. But as society grew more civilized, magic became less reliable and weaker.

When an unexpected epiphany seemingly breaks the laws of resonance, everything changed. Artifacts no longer exploded when exposed to spells, but only if they were wrapped in cocoons of steel and brass. The humble fire rune becomes the fuel for new devices, ones powered by steam and pressure. These machines herald the birth of a new age, the Industrial Age.

Now, the powers of the old age struggle against the onslaught of new technologies and an alien way of approaching magic. Either the world will adapt or it will be washed away in the relentless march of innovation.

To explore the world of Fedran, check out https://fedran.com/. There you'll find stories, novels, character write-ups and more.

D. Moonfire

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