

The Renewed Dawning – The Story of Elrashah, Unicorn of the Heart of Evendarr  
Recounted by Lilaiethyn Raenelindor Aeravinyiel, Daughter of Quentari

The story of Elrashah begins at the founding of the Kingdom of Evendarr. His story was lost for centuries, but now it is to be retold by all who would understand and cherish the power of hope and redemption.

Hundreds of years ago, five great families of men joined in alliance to form a new kingdom. Wisely, the leaders of the Five sought the blessings and approval of three ancient Unicorns who protected the lands upon which the new kingdom would be built. The First of the Unicorns was Elrashah, he of the Bright Dawning; the Second was Siangreth, the one of Autumn's Promise; the Third was Kelren, the one of Restful Shadow.

The Unicorns gave their blessings in an ancient pact with the leaders of this new kingdom that their groves would ever be protected, that they may choose their guardians without intercession, and that the fledgling kingdom would hold a purpose purer than that of greed. From this pact, the Code of Chivalry was born.

That the Kingdom of Evendarr may prosper, the Three Unicorns of the Heart gave a mystical gift to each of the five founding families. To Huntington, the Three granted the opportunity to hold and keep the Light of Knowledge so that Evendarr would learn and grow. To Bartholomew, the Unicorns granted the nobles of Evendarr the strength to resist all outside conquerors; this strength came from a bond with the land itself. To Endarr, they granted the gift of inspired leadership, that the Five Founding Families would always be cherished as the sovereigns of their people. To Monay, the Unicorns gifted the Ceremony of the True Oath, a ceremony which has been since lost to time, but which continues to echo in the pledges of loyalty spoken by vassal and liege. And to Buttons, the Three promised that the kingdom would be fertile and with the ever-continuing generations of children, Evendarr would be immortal.

With the blessings of Elrashah, Siangreth, and Kelren, the kingdom matured. For several generations after the Founding, children were brought to the groves' of the Three, and their gifts to the people of Evendarr were recounted in story and song.

Then slowly, for reasons unknown to us, the Unicorns faded from the memory and histories of the peoples of Evendarr. The Three's names were lost and the origin of the gifts forgotten. Their groves were no longer visited with the laughter and delight of children. Although the Unicorns were creatures of beauty, purity, and goodness, in their loneliness grew a tiny seed of resentment and bitterness. Weakened by that small shadow within their hearts, they became vulnerable to corruption.

Six-hundred and six years after Evendarr's bright beginning, in the first weeks of autumn, when the nights again grew longer than the days, an evil who wears many faces hunted the Unicorns. The Three's guardians were slain and unable to resurrect. Undefended and alone, Elrashah, Siangreth, and Kelren were subdued and shackled.

In secret, the evil one brought the Unicorns to a distant land of great corruption to be transformed into powerful creatures of Undeath. Through the deep magics wielded by the evil one, the Unicorns' true names were stripped from them and their hearts became blackened and cold in their enslavement. The First was renamed Blinding Purpose, the Second was refashioned as Winter's Chill, and the Third was twisted into Enveloping Dread. The Three were made to serve the will of their pale-handed master. The Black Unicorns then returned to Evendarr and for many months they sought new guardians as corrupt of being as they.

But not all hope was lost. A younger sister to the three elder Unicorns had sensed the evil as it was being worked upon them, and called out to Elrashah with magics borne upon the wind. In being reminded his true name, Elrashah retained a shard of his former purity within him.

Winter thawed to spring, and spring matured into summer. In the days proceeding autumn's return, a lord among the Five Families learned of the Unicorns' corruption. He granted the Three's sister and her companions a way into Elrashah's grove so that they may learn the secrets to restoring him. Among the companions of the Three's sister was her pledged guardian, squires and knights of Evendarr, and other trusted warriors, wizards, and healers who came from distant kingdoms and peoples.

A day passed and the night grew long in hours. By the power of mysterious magics, the companions were transported into the inky black corridors of the First's heart. They did battle with the corruption that sheltered there and cleared the way for his purification.

The next morning, close to the height of day, another of the Three's brethren came to the companions and spoke of a dying Kirin, a creature of the great purity of light and flame. The last of the essence of the Kirin was needed to weaken the great necromantic powers the Black Unicorn of Blinding Purpose wielded. The Kirin's light would cause the First to remember his former self.

The brother of the Three brought the companions to an island far beyond the western shores of Avalon to find the failing Kirin. He warned them to treat the creature with respect. What the companions found was not the Kirin, but two of the Kirin's servants who had come to witness the creature's death. By way of honorable duel and diplomacy, the essence of the Eastern Sun was entrusted to one of the companions, a healer from Quentari. The guardians of the Kirin spoke of a symbol that must be fashioned and imbued with the power of the Eastern Sun to be carried into battle against the corrupted First.

Upon returning from the distant isle, the healer crafted a banner of white cloth, ribbon, bright dyes, and wood gifted from the surrounding forest. She also created a chant to sing during the upcoming battle:

The dark eclipsed by the rays of the sun  
The dawn is rising, the dark is done

The time was now at hand to summon the Black Unicorn of Blinding Purpose. In the hour before the First's shadow fell upon them, the younger sister of the Three addressed the dozens of her assembled allies upon the porch of the local tavern. Elrashah had fallen because he had believed himself and the gifts of the Three Unicorns' forgotten. His rescuers would fight the First and his undead servants, and when his strength waned and his necromantic magics were sapped, they would subdue him and speak with him. Not only was it to be his younger sister and her companions who would remind him of his true form, but all must come forward and offer words of hope and renewal to him.

As the afternoon lengthened into the start of evening, those who had once been Elrashah's allies summoned the Black Unicorn to the field of battle. He came with undead who did not shrink from daylight. As soon as the abominations were cut down by blade and spell, the First summoned yet more. Although the nobles and adventurers were flanked on all sides by the undead, the banner of the Eastern Sun did not fall.

The tide of the fight favored the living, and the First fell to the earth. Although the First was protected with vengeful magics and his form of undeath was ever-renewing, his heart was opened again to hear the oaths and pledges of his rescuers. Many pledged to share Elrashah's story among their clans and peoples, most especially within the schools of the young. Festival days were declared in his name; songs would be written and performed; his purified image would be found in noble heraldry.

Upon hearing these pledges and oaths of deep caring and concern, the First found the strength to cast off his enslavement to his pale-handed master. All the undead who once fought beside him crumbled to dust. Before the last vestiges of his corrupt form dissipated, Elrashah vowed to return that night to thank all who had redeemed him.

Elrashah walks among us, renewed as the Unicorn of the Bright Dawning.

So that Elrashah may never again be enthralled, he must be remembered. The gifts he and his Brethren gave to the Kingdom of Evendarr must be cherished. His story must be part of our own, so that in the face of the greatest darkness, we never lose hope.