

Bliss

by Jake Barnes

He couldn't stop pining for the fjords. Good riddance to bad rubbish, his friends said. He mourned. Didn't it make him a wee bit happy that she had found her bliss? Not one iota. He beat on the wall. He cried himself to sleep. Then he got drunk and stayed that way. Friends rode to the rescue and drove him to a rehab in the valley.

When he got out of sick bay, they moved him into a room with three other alkies. A kid, a tree trimmer, and a Catholic priest. They called the priest Father Chaos. The tree trimmer knew the ropes. He had been there before. Twice.

Jake moaned, "Why me?" Buster the tree trimmer shrugged. "Why not?" he said. Jake had to admit it was a good question.

It was the priest who saved his bacon. Jake complained that he couldn't buy this God stuff. "You don't have to believe in my god," the priest said. He told him to find a God of his own. A light bulb flashed in Jake's head. "Of course!" he thought.

When he got home he wrote his ex a letter and wished her nothing but health, happiness, and all good things. Immediately the weight lifted from his shoulders. The Blue Bird of Happiness flew down from Heaven and perched on his head.

One day not long after he got home his ex wife called. She asked how he was, and he said fine. He asked how she was, and she said fine. Then he asked how Prince Charming was, and she said, "Don't start."

