Seamless Universe

Battle Lines Are Drawn

A Contemporary Fantasy

BY
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Dedicated to:



from whom our family learned to stretch our wings, and that anything is possible

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PART ONE The Feud

~ Chapter 1 ~

"Colt," Bret caught his brother's attention, incredulity causing a grimace to shadow his handsome features. "Where are all the raptors?"

A shrug. "Don't ask for trouble. Let's just do our job and get out of here."

Bret and Colt along with four others of their Tureg fey anxiously searched the blue sky for signs of condors. Or hawks, or fish eagles. Any kind of raptor on the hunt for a tasty mouthful of fey.

The Tureg fey were as small as yellow jacket hornets and hardly visible suspended in flight five inches above the oily ocean surface. They were far away from any land mass. Birds of prey had sharp eyes, though. The oil was a heavy mirror on the surface of the ocean and reflected the sky and the clouds. The Tureg could see themselves in it, as well as watch for flying predators. They knew that to touch this mirror was to come away slicked over with a heavy gloss, suffocating to the skin, just as it would be for the underwater flora and fauna if they couldn't fix this. What a dirty mission.

They were here to take care of this problem, but they had to keep safe, too. Their bright wings shone blue green. That was indeed colorful, just like the languid swirl of color that slowly rose above their heads. Handsome, and dangerous.

"Will you stop that!" Colt cast a frown toward Bret.

"What are you talking about?" Bret's surprised expression now intensified his bright good looks. His dark eyebrows lifted dramatically, contrasting with his light hair and hazel eyes.

"You kicked my left wing - again."

"I did not."

"Yes, you did!"

"Hey, get out of my way!"

The other Tureg were used to this bickering and ignored the brothers. All six of the fey morphed larger so their larger wings could generate a stronger wind to direct the clogging murky oil into a manageable blob. Predators could hide in the swells, making the need for a posted sentry mandatory. Zac did that duty today, but they all were on the lookout. Bret and Colt had heard the words, Dive, Dive, many times before but not out here. So far. Bret's ingrained raptor sensor was in overdrive. Even seagulls could be a problem for the fey.

This particular disaster had been put into motion millennia ago. Deep wells of trapped primeval oil had found a way to seep up through the ocean crust heaving with its full strength until a fissure cracked wide open and violent. The flood of viscous crude covered a huge ocean surface nearly horizon to horizon. And more was still to spew. Yet it was a flood that would be contained once the rock and detritus deep on the ocean floor were manipulated to close up. The Tureg could handle that.

The seamless universe gave, and the seamless universe took away. How Bret wished that all such problems in the garden could be so easily solved. Bret and Colt along with Jarret and Brant made their way down through the water while Zac and Vincent began the surface task of oil containment. Along the way they encountered few sea creatures among the statuesque columns of ocean depth chimney rock and towering seaweed. Good, they'd be well advised to avoid this part of the endless sea for the time being. It was deep here, nearly two miles down, but it wasn't hard to spot the enormous gush of oil. Their Tureg healing power was all they needed to manipulate the gusher to close up. Slowly the vast hole became smaller and smaller. The gush became a trickle. Colt told Bret he'd stay with Jarret and Brant until it was finished.

Half the crisis was solved, and now the surface of the ocean needed attention. Bret wound his way back to the air, and surveyed what Zac and Vincent had already accomplished. The few white shreddy clouds overhead speckled a brilliant cerulean sky. Just the color Tureg prized and it was a reminder that their mission was to keep the entire garden safe. Not only the water mass, but the land mass, too. So many missions, too little time to do it all. Back to the task at hand.

Taking positions equi-distant around the edges of the spill, the three Tureg batted their hyper-charged wings against the spreading oil until it shrank down to a more manageable blob. Bret conferred with Zac and together they flew off to awaken beetles hibernating in the tidal flats' sloggy sand and water, faraway at the edge of the land mass. Bret and Zac led them like a crusading navy to the oil. The chemistry in their bodies provided a filtering system that cleansed the water surface. The Tureg looked on in amazement as dark little iridescent beetles chomped and churned. Slowly the oily sludge thinned until there were only slight blooms of oil here and there that reflected rainbows, as they do in oil slicks on roads. The beetles swarmed back into hibernation to await the next fey call.

"That looks as good as it's going to get. Pretty much like the last time we were here. Still, I wonder where the raptors are?" asked Zac. Zac was Bret's best friend, and together they looked out for each other out in the vast garden.

"I don't know, but like Colt said, let's not ask for trouble."

One rift in the precarious ecology of the garden was healed. From the very beginning of the seamless universe Tureg mission was to rectify the problems the act of creation had produced in the garden. Immense pressures in the ocean crust and in the land erupted now and then into earthquakes, into tsunamis, into all kinds of trouble. Many slight manipulations were needed like this one, day in and day out.

It was clear they had done all they could do, and it really did look pretty good. Colt and his taskforce could handle the ocean floor while the two other Tureg flew toward home. Bret decided that since one job was finished he'd go off and take care of another mission, a rescue of a totally different nature.



Bret left the endless sea and approached land. He watched for condors and vultures. The sky was clear. Ever since he'd grown from a changeling into full grown fey his raptor sensor worked very well. His fey father Selat said his was the best he'd ever known about. His mother Sulpicett too was amazed at her son's ability. It was an exceptional gift from the original creative spirit.

As Bret flew through the countryside he thanked the seamless universe for his strong wings. Like others in the Tureg they were composed of antrei, the glass-like panes similar to a cathedral's rose point window. It was natural in the Tureg fey for coloration to run to different shades of blue and green. Mixed in subtly when the sun shone on him were flashes of red and yellow, spikes of warm coloration that subtly balanced out the cool color spectrum. He reverted to his small yellow jacket size and flew the great distance quickly.

The red brick hospital lay sprawled before him with ambulances parked close in on the west side parking lot. He'd been here before. To the east, Bret noticed the fast running river with large schools of fish heading upstream. He could tell it was a strong salmon run, although he was not here to note the fauna balances. Otherwise he'd have to go in search of brown bears. Predator-prey mission. So many missions, so little time to do it all. Bret headed for the hospital.

Once inside he flew down the familiar wide white halls in his even smaller sized no-see-um wisp form and looked for the maternity ward. A mix of emotions began to stir as he contemplated the scenes that awaited him. On one hand, he felt clear satisfaction that ephemeral rescue was the Tureg gift to people. On the other hand, foreboding because of the heightened emotions in maternity wards, still worse in the sub-basements of hospitals where those bereft of life were taken. Tureg were able to cope with the surge of human grief that the death of an infant caused. For grieving parents still at the hospital it was very difficult. Live-born infants could look forward to a long life on the vast and generous human scale. The doors to the happy families were open, rooms fragrant with flowers, laughter and song springing in the air. He spotted a closed door

that had a picture of a rose on it. This was a sign there were grieving people inside. He took a deep breath and looked back at the hallway he'd just flown.

Bret spotted the cleaning cart a bit further down the hall. That's it! He became a human by instantaneous morphing, this time a cleaning man with his supplies. He didn't have to do that, but it was easier than waiting for someone to open the door. Depending on available props he could transform himself into any camouflage. He was glad for this one since he could go about his business with little notice. He opened the door, walked in and softly said he was going to pick up the trash from the few containers in the room.

It was a large birthing room with the mother in a bed in the middle. The air surrounding the bed was a palpable veil of pale yellow. Right away he saw this might be a good day for the fey, while a tragedy for the people. Bret knew that the two parents cradling their infants did not see the faint trace of red, blue and yellow colors slowly swirling above the small heads. How could they know that from their own shoulders spiraled the colors of grayish green entwined with rose pink? The parents would not feel the soft touch of spring breezes he felt on his face. These signs meant that these infants, with their souls safely back with the original creative spirit, could have a chance at an existence as a changeling. Ephemeral hopes were strong.

Swirling primary colors meant that the ephemerals were as vigorous as any he'd rescued. Not only that. Also streaming in the color swirls were shifting numerals that switched from exquisite equations totaling the sum of the seamless universe to simple sums. He knew that only he in the room could hear the slight buzzing sound emanating from the infants. Colors, numbers, and the sense of touch

were within his Tureg perception. The additional buzzing confirmed it was exactly what he looked for in his rounds at hospital after hospital.

He waited back in a corner, picking up things now and then, eyes downward, giving the family their privacy. A few quiet nurses came in and out speaking softly to the mother who lay on the bed with her small daughter in her arms and a basket at her side. The basket looked like a small cradle and the baby girl looked asleep in her tiny pink hat, her body covered by a crocheted blanket. Mother's arms surrounded her child, gently holding her, gazing with love. Grandparents sat in their nearby chairs comforting as best they could with their presence. Their faces were resigned and stoic.

The father sat at the edge of the bed and rocked his other daughter in his arms, singing to her, talking to her. She was covered in a pink blanket, she had her own crocheted hat, and her basket lay on the counter behind him. The room contained large pieces of equipment. On the walls were gold-framed pictures of flowers and babies held by smiling moms and dads. For these people they must have been sad reminders of their loss.

How many times had Bret witnessed this? The infants had passed through rigor mortis and the family could play with their flexible fingers remarking how the fingers are long, like mom's, perhaps she will play the piano. The eyebrows are arched like dad's, wouldn't she be a clear thinker. Parents would speak in past tense, present tense, mixing it up with the future, sweetly chattering to their babies in an attempt to provide a lifetime of wisdom into the few days allotted them to hold their small bodies.

Bret knew their grief would encompass a time and parceling out of its own. The hospital kept the infants so parents could call for them until they were ready to let them go. This was a hospital policy aimed at helping parents grieve. Sometimes it was days or even a week that they wanted to hold them before the final goodbye. Either way, the heavy pale yellow veil of sorrow hung on the shoulders of any bereaved family for the rest of their lives. It grew less heavy as time healed small parts of this bitter wound.

If they only knew, Bret thought, it might give them some comfort. Time and again the fey had affirmed not to reveal the gift the original creative spirit had given the seamless universe. These children were not destined for humanity and all of its joys. As changelings, though, they would take on another purpose.

Bret stayed in the back of the room and waited. He made a mental note and would look in on the parents once he transported the ephemerals to the Tureg nursery. And after the mother and father had returned to their home in the garden, as is the way of the seamless universe.

It was time. The mother's face twisted, tears trailed down from her beautiful blue eyes, and she put her daughter into the basket and let the nurse take her away. The father did the same with their other daughter. Both mother and father dropped into each other's arms.

The nurse walked away. She carried the two baskets easily since they were so small. Bret left to follow the nurse as she traversed hall after hall down elevators to the sub-basement floor. Along the way he quickly stepped into a closet, stored the cleaning cart, morphed into his tiny fey form and caught up to the nurse. Finally, they arrived at the cold room. The nurse placed the infants on a gurney and left. Now there was a vigorous swirl of blue, yellow and scarlet hanging above each of them, a very strong showing. The small

jewels of intensity that were their ephemerals were firmly intact. They promised to make outstanding changelings.

Normally he rescued one at a time because any ephemerals left behind would make their way back to the original creative spirit, just like the soul had. The Tureg could not possibly rescue all ephemerals but these two both exhibited such intense colorations he decided not to separate them. The choice was up to him. The parents would never know. They'd have their infants to mourn and the fey would have their ephemerals. There were two beds waiting in the Tureg nursery deep in the cavern underneath the blue indigo bush by the sea.

Milkweed pod beds stood waiting to bestow ephemerals with life again, purposeful in the flash of color known as fey.