

THE REVOLUTION AND THE FOX

SNEAK PREVIEW

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CHAPTER ONE: THE EXPOSITION



Kip stomped into Emily’s office brandishing a small bound pamphlet, his fox’s ears flat back against his head, his tail all bristled out despite his efforts to control it. “Have you seen this?” he asked, and threw the pamphlet down on her desk.

Emily finished adding a column of numbers and then pushed the ledger aside to look at the pamphlet. ““The Softest Fur,”” she read from the cover. “Is this supposed to be you and me?”

“Yes.” Kip stared down as she flipped to the first page and read. “Abel brought it back from London. It’s—embarrassing.”

“Oh, I don’t know. ‘His claws traced the milky-white her breast.’ Apart from the hideous grammar, it’s actually not bad.” She set the pamphlet down and slid open one of the drawers of her desk. “Have you seen the one about me and Abigail Adams?”

Kip’s ears came back up as she handed him another pamphlet, smaller than the one he’d brought. “‘The Comfort of a Beast’? Am I in this too?”

“I think that’s meant to be ‘breast,’” Emily said. “My former husband gave it to me when he came to one of Abigail’s lectures.”

“Did he write it?” Kip searched the pamphlet for an author’s name but found none.

“Honestly, it’s too inventive for Thomas. Besides, whoever wrote it, I don’t think he’s seen a woman’s body ever. He has a very curious idea of where things are and how they work.” She picked up ‘The Softest Fur’ again. “Does this one have sorcery in it?”

“Yes,” Kip said. “But they have no idea how it works.” He gave her pamphlet back to her. “You may keep that one too, if you like.”

Emily slid both into the drawer and closed it. “I shouldn’t let it worry you. Thomas wanted me to be embarrassed and it quite took the wind from his sails when I accepted the thing cheerfully. It’s a sign of respect. Not everyone gets made into the subject of a penny dreadful, you know.”

“I’d rather they respect me another way.” Kip slumped into the chair on the other side of her desk. The warm breeze from the window brought scents of flowers from the peach trees that had given the town outside the school its name. Usually he enjoyed the sweet smell as a reminder of the territory owned by

Calatians, but today he was more than usually aware of how precarious their school and that territory were.

Emily pulled the ledger back toward her. “Did you come up here just to show me that? I’ve got several more pages of numbers before I can officially tell you that we’re in danger of running out of money.”

“I know that.” Kip craned his neck to look at the figures. “No, I came to tell you that Alice is expecting, so she won’t be coming with us to the Exposition of Sorcery.”

“Oh!” Emily brightened. “Congratulations. Are you nervous at all?”

He shook his head. “I’m anxious to get back to Amsterdam. I know not all the Calatians there like me, but—what?”

Emily was glaring at him. “I meant, are you nervous about her health, or about becoming a father?”

“Her health will be fine,” Kip said. “She’s eighteen and as healthy as can be. I do want to try to convince a healer to come teach at the school, which I hope to do at the Exposition. As for becoming a father...” He smiled tightly. “I will be the best father I can, but Abel will be there, and my father and mother, and Aran and Arabella, so Alice and I will have plenty of help.”

“Better you than me. This tedious work gives me a new respect for our disgraced Master Patris. I’d never be able to do it and then tend to an infant as well.”

“What, Malcolm wouldn’t help?”

Emily looked up over the rim of her spectacles. “My dear Irishman has many excellent qualities, but progressive ideas about the responsibilities of child care are sadly not among them.”

“I suppose nobody’s been reminding you every day about your duty to produce offspring.”

“No, Mother gave up on me when I ran off to become a sorcerer, which she equates with becoming a man.” Emily

tapped the ledger. “And if she could see me now, she would be even more convinced of that. Speaking of...we should discuss how we intend to approach nobles at Amsterdam, now we’re both going.”

Kip nodded. “Can we just tell them we need money to keep going?”

“Abigail says that it’s not wise to confess how much you need money. It puts them off.”

“How does one approach them, then?”

“You talk about how you’d like to do more for the students, but sadly, you haven’t got quite enough, and while you don’t need their money, it would certainly help. And unfortunately we will probably have to offer sorcery in exchange for money.”

“That doesn’t feel right.” Kip got up and swung his tail back and forth.

“What, selling sorcery for money? You did as much with Old John.”

“That was different.” He stopped and stared past Emily, as though they were in New Cambridge and he could see down the hill to the Founders Rest Inn. “I was doing work, little jobs, and John was giving me a place to live. What sorcery could I do that would be worth the amount we need? These moneyed people should be contributing because they want to invest in American sorcerers and help make us great.”

“They’ve got the New Cambridge school for that.” Emily made a face. “I guarantee you that Master Colonel Jackson, the great hero of the Revolutionary War, has no trouble getting his friends to contribute.”

Kip paced. “I asked Bryce again about money yesterday. He said that until we get a harvest this fall, we won’t have much money to spare, but after that the East Georgia government might be able to contribute a little.”

“That’ll help. But it doesn’t sound hopeful to keep us going.”

The fox shook his head. “And with no promises from our country, even though we helped end the war—”

“The position that East Georgia was our reward is a not unreasonable one.” Emily smiled.

“I know, I know.” Kip heaved a sigh and walked over to Emily’s window, looking out over the town of Peachtree. Already the memory of the village when he’d first come to visit his parents felt distant before the large, sprawling town below him. “The school went up quickly and we’re all established here, and I have to admit that it’s been more peaceful than I’d imagined possible.”

“Then don’t worry. Come with me to Amsterdam.”

He lowered his head, looking inward now. “Do you think Victor will be there?”

“It’s a place only for those who can do sorcery,” Emily said. “Of course he will find a way in. And so what if he is?”

“We haven’t heard anything about him in two years.”

“I know.”

“It’s Victor. I know he’s up to something.”

“Kip.”

The fox turned from the window. Emily had turned sympathetic eyes on him. “We all know who he is and what he is. Have the Pierces reported anything back from the Isle?”

“No,” he admitted.

“Until they do—”

“But they won’t see all the things going on at the college, only what calyxes are allowed—”

“I know.” She held up a hand. “We’ve been through this. They’re the best eyes we have right now.”

“At least they’re still speaking to me.”

Emily clucked. “Don’t worry about the Amsterdam Cala-

tians not liking you. They've acclimated. At least, Charles Cotton says he quite looks forward to seeing you again. Every time I see him, he can't stop talking about how luxurious his house is."

"It wasn't the housing," Kip said. "They missed their community. We took volunteers, but they have a small group to start with, just fifty, so there could only be four different species, and people had to leave their friends. Charles may be able to see the bigger picture, but to many people, they lost the life they knew."

"For a better one."

"It's not all about how nice your house is, it seems." Kip brought his ears up. "It's for the best, though, and that's something to remember."

"I still think you should go see them, but we can work out details later." Emily waved at her ledger. "Now, if you don't mind, I do need to finish this."

Kip leaned back against the window. "Malcolm's not going to the Exposition, is he? I don't mind sharing a room there with you if it would save the school some money. We've done it before."

She raised an eyebrow and pulled out the drawer from her desk, where the pamphlet he'd brought in still lay. "Have you forgotten this so quickly?"

"Oh." His ears flattened, and he shook his head. "You're right."

"Besides," she said, closing the drawer, "I rather suspect Alice will want some privacy even from me."

"Alice isn't going." Kip went on in the face of Emily's growing smile. "She's pregnant. She can't. What?"

"Oh," Emily said, "I was just wondering whether I could summon a demon to follow you home so I could watch you try to tell her that."



When Kip arrived back at the house he shared with Alice, Abel, Aran, and Arabella, he called Alice's name from the foyer just inside the front door. "In here," she replied from the main bedroom upstairs.

The house, newly built by Calatians from the town in the past year, followed an open floor plan for the warmer climate and its Calatian residents. The foyer led directly to the wide staircase, and to the left and right, large open doorways led to the dining room and parlor, respectively. Both the great oak table in the dining room and the plush blue chairs of the parlor sat silent to Kip's ears as he walked up the stairs and to the main bedroom.

When he walked in, she held up two gowns. "Which one do you think is better? I like the blue one because it's more comfortable, but the yellow one goes better with my fur and also I think it's more formal. Oh, but the blue one would look better under a purple robe."

"I like the blue one," Arabella announced from a chair beside the bed, swinging her legs and tail. I like patterns better than flowers."

"I do too, but the flowers are more elegant, and there are only a few of them." Alice weighed them and looked again at Kip.

He smiled and shook his head. "There's no point in asking you not to go, is there?"

"None."

"You're—"

He gestured at her midsection, but she cut him off before he could say it. "Yes, I am, and what of it? It'll be months still until that slows me down. After that, yes, there will be a long time where I won't be able to travel or go anywhere interesting.

But that time hasn't started yet, and I'm not about to allow it to start now."

Arabella frowned, looking between them. "What's going to slow you down?"

"Remember, you're going to have a new sister or brother?" Alice asked. They had talked, the three of them, about whether to call Alice's cub a "step-sibling," and Kip and Alice had both told Abel that they wanted their cubs to be considered full siblings to Aran and Arabella.

"Ohhh." Arabella put a paw over her own stomach. "It makes you slow?"

Kip walked over to the gowns and touched the yellow one. "When Aran was little and you carried him around, didn't you have to go slower? And be careful with him?"

Arabella looked back to Alice. "Oh, I see."

"I'm not carrying around anything like Aran's weight yet," Alice said, "and it's only a week in Amsterdam. Emily will send me right back if there's any trouble. Besides," she added, "there's more likely to be healers there than here."

"All right, all right." Kip smiled.

"Speaking of..." Alice paused. "Do you think you might ask one of the sorcerers there about your dream?"

"I'm done with that." He pulled the sleeve of the yellow gown up. "I like the pattern on this one better. Where's Abel? Have you told him we're going?"

"Not officially, but I'm sure he's worked it out."

"Daddy's out in the garden," Arabella said.

"Do you want time with him tonight?" Alice asked. "I don't mind. I'll be busy packing, and we'll be together over in Amsterdam."

"Thank you," Kip said. "I know it's out of turn, but I think so, if that's all right."

“It’s fine. Ara, darling, would you fetch my petticoats from the chest there?”

Down the stairs and behind them led Kip to the back door, which opened onto a wide porch. Beyond that lay the garden, only now starting to show results of the planting they’d done a month ago. Abel and Aran knelt in the dirt, pulling weeds from between the small shoots.

“Is that a weed?” Aran asked as Kip approached them.

“I don’t think so.” Abel examined it. “But we can wait until Mrs. Pole comes around tomorrow and we’ll ask her.” He saw Kip and stood, smiling, ears perked. “We’ll learn in another year,” he said, “and I wager Aran will be a better gardener than any of us.”

The nine-year-old cub wagged his tail and showed Kip the weeds he’d pulled. “That’s wonderful,” Kip said. “Our plants will grow tall and strong for sure.”

“And have lots of strawberries!” Aran said.

“The strawberries are over there.” Abel pointed. “They should be ready in another month or two.”

The cub clapped his paws, sending pieces of weed scattering over the ground. Kip laughed. “I hope they’re as good as the ones we got from Savannah last year.”

“They will be.” Aran touched his nose. “The plants smell sweet.”

“Go take a look at them.” Abel gave the cub a pat on the shoulders.

Aran needed no more encouragement; he ran along the garden to the shady patch of ground where the dark green strawberry plants spread their leaves. Abel and Kip watched him, and then Abel said, “Alice was packing for Amsterdam. I presume you couldn’t talk her out of it?”

Kip shook his head. “She pointed out that there would be better healers there anyway.”

“Hopefully not for long.”

“That’s part of the idea.” Kip smiled.

Abel looked at him for a long moment. “Maybe someone there can explain your dream?”

“If I feel the need to be laughed at in Amsterdam as I was in Boston, I’ll ask.” Kip smiled. “I’m sorry. I know you mean well.”

Abel looked neither offended nor amused. “It’s not an ordinary dream. You’ve said that.”

“I know. Maybe you’re right. Maybe there will be someone there who can help.”

“All right.” The other fox met his eyes. “It’s a lot of weight you’re carrying. Can I help with any of it?”

Kip draped an arm over his shoulders. “You can look after Aran and Arabella, and help with Alice’s cub when it arrives.”

“That I can do.” Abel answered Kip’s smile with one of his own.

“And keep talking to the Isle Calatians. If you can find us two more students as good as Jorey, that’ll be a great start to the next class.”

“I can do that as well. Jorey himself will be the best ambassador, though. Take him back to the Isle to show them what he’s learned.”

“Maybe we’ll stop there on the way back.” Kip squeezed Abel and then dropped his arm.

Aran had finished inspecting the strawberries and now ran back to them, into his father’s arms. “They look healthy,” he announced.

“Good.” Kip reached down to rub between his ears; he flattened them and smiled. “I’ll be gone for a few days and I’m counting on you to keep them looking healthy until I get back.”

“You’re taking Jorey with you?” Abel asked.

“We’re taking all three of the students,” Kip said. “Emily

thinks it'll be good for them, and it'll show people that we're a real school. We won't tell them that three is the entire class."

"I imagine Master Argent will be pleased to have a break." Abel smiled. "Whenever he comes to dinner, he looks as though he's been trying to chase them all around the town."

"I wouldn't be surprised. I only have them for one class and they're exhausting. I don't know how he manages every morning. In our classes with Patris, we were so quiet. Is it something we're doing wrong?"

"They're not afraid of you." Abel gave a slight smile.

"I'm not afraid of you," Aran echoed. "I think you're a very nice second father."

"That's good." Kip crouched down to be at the cub's level. "Because you're a smart, wonderful little fox, and I love you very much."

Aran detached himself from Abel to go hug Kip. "Do you think I'll be magic too one day?"

"We'll see." Kip had watched, but neither he nor Abel nor Alice had seen any sign that Aran or Arabella had any more access to magic than their father. "Maybe in a couple years we'll play some games and see how you do."

"Good." His little tail wagged.

Kip let go and stood. "I suppose I should get ready to go, too."

"Come on, Aran," Abel said. "Let's help your second father pack."

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Tim Susman started a novel in college and didn't finish one until almost twenty years later. In that time, he earned a degree in Zoology, worked with Jane Goodall, co-founded Sofawolf Press, and moved to California. He has attended Clarion in 2011 (arooo Narwolves!) and published short stories in Apex, Lightspeed, and ROAR, among others. He has also published many more novels and short stories under the name Kyell Gold and has won several awards for his fiction under both names. You can find out more about his stories at timsusman.wordpress.com and www.kyellgold.com, and follow him on Twitter at [@WriterFox](https://twitter.com/WriterFox).



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ABOUT THE ARTIST

My childhood was spent moving, changing locations and school environments. My constant companions became a dragon's horde of fantasy novels and my animals. This connection to creatures through the lens of fantasy has always been a touchstone for my work.

Through the years, I've experimented with many different media, wandering many paths. Now I've settled into the twin focuses of watercolor and oils. I find the dichotomy of their approach refreshing, and each time my hands move from one to the other I approach my work with new ideas and a cleaner view of where I should go.

Art is a way for me to communicate my love of the natural world and the fantasy I see within it. I think that the creation of a narrative around wildlife and fantastical animals can lead people to see the world and the many lives encompassed within it with more compassion and joy, returning the wonder of childlike curiosity to their lives.

I enjoy employing abstract backgrounds with minutely detailed subjects. The duality of the abstract work with small areas of focus lets the viewer fill in parts of strange color fields with their own story. My inspiration from nature and the narratives I like to weave around the strange beasts in my paintings lets me tell soundless stories to those who wish to explore them. In my paintings, bears covered in moss and trailing mushrooms emerge from the mist, gryphons dive from heights unknown

with jewelry trailing them, and sphinxes ask questions unheard from behind blank masks. Where they come from, and what they want to say is left for those who watch them to determine. I hope through my work people can find a bit of mystery, of that wonder you have as a child making shapes in clouds, imagining what monster is in the closet, and making each walk in the woods a journey that may take them to Narnia, to Middle Earth, or a world of their own making

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