

Third chapter

Strange dreams of great star battles plagued his mind. Things he should not have known but they were all in vain as his morning alarm woke him. Groggy, he tried to sit up. Something didn't feel right so he decided to roll to the side to check. Sure enough, there on his backside was the beginnings of a tail. Yep, definitely not human anymore. Great. Well, gotta get ready to take the train anyways.

Sam got changed, checking once he had jeans on that the tail didn't show through, and packed everything he would need. He didn't have any body hair so it wasn't necessary to bring any shavers which he only thought about because of his own dislike of body hair on women. Normal things like toothbrush and body wash went in the bag though as well as enough clothes for just over a week. The trip was for six days but it's always good to have a few extra sets of clothing. You never know what'll happen.

A quick uber trip down to the train station and he was waiting for his train. There is always delays on this line but he preferred to be early just in case. He looked over and saw some kid staring at him. He thought it odd until he remembered how young his appearance was now, coupled with his new gender. He pinched the bridge of his nose in frustration and ignored the kid who couldn't have been more than 13 years old. If he had young teens and preteens hitting on him now because of how young he appeared then hell wouldn't stop him from screaming.

Hours later, he was sitting in the dining car, munching on some snacks he had purchased. These trips were boring and he needed something to keep his mind occupied. Food just felt like a good option, particularly considering how thin he was now and needed to put at least a couple pounds on. Muscles were not attractive in this much detail on anyone. He went to flex his forearm just to prove a point to himself but wound up poking his palm with something sharp. It was then that he noticed his nails were thicker, black, and pointed, taking the shape of rough claws. He wished there was nail trimmers and files in his bag at this point. Those nails were dangerous.

Sam noticed someone walk up behind him who seemed to be looking at his hair. He looked up at the person with a question in his eyes. At least it wasn't the kid from the platform earlier, but judging by their hair, they were either a stylist or saw one frequently.

“Can I help you?”

The person gestured to Sam’s head, “sorry, I don’t mean to intrude. I just noticed your hair and I needed to know how you got the feathered look down so perfectly! I mean it is perfect! Not a hair out of place but it doesn’t look to be gelled in place.”

“I assure you, this is completely by accident. I didn’t even think to style it this morning when I got up.” Sam ran a hand through his hair to try to straighten it out since he had actually forgotten to style it or at least slick it back with everything else on his mind. Something didn’t feel right though. It felt like he had clumps of gel left over but he remembered washing everything out of his hair this morning in the shower. “Wait... you wouldn’t happen to have a mirror would you?”

“Oh, always! Here you go.”

It was a small compact but it served the purposes just fine. Opening it he noticed there was still makeup in it. The stranger seemed to be more interesting than he originally thought. His hair was more important than chatting it up with this guy about the finer points of alternative life styles. Sure enough, it had that perfect feathered look. Strangely though, he could actually feel the bones of the feathers in each clump. It wasn’t just feathered, it was *feathers*. It formed a crest of sorts between his ears and down his neck partially.

“Huh. That is pretty cool that it did that. I wish my hair cooperated like this more often.”

“So sad. I had hoped you had the secret to the style to share with me. I still love your hair though, girl. Thank you for your time.”

He walked off and Sam just nervously chuckled to himself. Sure he did have the secret but that is rather impossible to replicate with anyone human without implanting actual feathers in their head. Sam’s stomach rumbled inconveniently then so he headed over to the restroom off to the side of the car. The moment he locked the door and sat down he felt the brakes on the train lock up, nearly throwing him to the floor of the small cubby. There was some shouting while he did his business but he paid it little mind since he was preoccupied at the moment. After finishing he cracked open the door to see practically everyone from the train now standing in the car. Since his way

out of the room was blocked, he just stood there looking out into the crowd to see what was going on.

The wall of the train ripped away and everyone leapt away from it, packing people closer in where Sam was. Now he really was trapped. A couple guys in hazmat suits stepped through the hole holding a big black hose each. They opened the nozzles without ceremony or warning and sprayed the crowds. The screams reached Sam's ears first as he saw people's features melting and burning where the spray landed on their skins. This was really bad. Just in front of the doorway was the kid from the train station that had stared at him. Sam pulled him into the bathroom and behind the door right before a spray went through the crowd right in front of him. Sam got an up close and personal view of the effects of this chemical they were spraying as a person turned around right in front of him with their face boiling and melting off. Quickly fading to bone and even that started to melt but at a slower rate. It was then that Sam noticed he had caught some of the spray but it was not burning his skin or anything. He realized it must have been the same chemical that he was hit with in the explosion.

A zip then a huge explosion rocked just outside of the train car and the men in hazmat suits left in a hurry, dragging the hoses with them. Gunfire and more explosions followed them out of the train as one knocked over the train car they were in. The body of one of the victims fell into Sam as he was trying to protect him and the boy. He fell to the back of the cubby and hit his head on the handicapped railing around the toilet. He saw the kid getting up and staying away from Sam and the body as his eyes closed and unconsciousness claimed him.

Sam awoke to the sound of a heart monitor for the third time now since the explosion. At least this time he wasn't drugged. That just meant that he felt the full pain of hitting his head on a metal railing as hard as he did. With a groan he sat up and looked around. The room was bright though it didn't look like the lights were on. It was strange since he could look up at the lights in the ceiling and not see them glowing like they should have. Off to the side though he saw Lacy sitting in a chair. She looked like she had been crying since her mascara streaked down from her eyes.

"Lacy? Are you awake?"

Lacy groaned and looked around, probably thinking she had heard a voice but wasn't sure what it was.

"Lacy?"

"Sam? Is that you? I'm going to turn on the light. I can't see anything."

Sam watched Lacy stumble her way to the doorway and click on a light. The light from the overhead lighting was almost blinding for Sam but his eyes adjusted and he could see fine again.

"Gawd that hurt. Almost as bad as hitting my head. Hey Lacy. How're you doing?"

Lacy just stared at Sam for a bit, taking in his new appearance now that he was sitting up and coherent, "you look different."

"Hah! Understatement of the century right there. There are more changes you probably can't even see either. What time is it anyways?"

She pulled out her phone to check, "midnight. You've been out for six hours. At least that's what they say. The FBI is here. You saved that kid's life on the train, you know? They're saying you're a hero."

"I wish I could have saved more. Everything happened so fast. They almost got him too. I couldn't believe what I saw on that train. It's going to give me nightmares for years. I saw people *dissolve*! Gawd it was disgusting; traumatizing!"

"Eeew. That does sound pretty gross. I couldn't imagine either. But you didn't dissolve from the stuff! Small blessings?"

"Yeah well I think that chemical is why I turned into a girl and why I'm still changing. Lacy, I'm growing a tail. A freaking tail! How weird is that?"

"Really? Can I see it!?"

With a laugh, Sam got up from the hospital bed. He noticed he was wearing a hospital gown again which meant his clothes had been soaked in the stuff as well. He

turned around and showed Lacy the foot and a half long tail that was hanging from his back side, “see? Growing a tail.”

Lacy laughed and almost seemed excited about the idea of Sam getting extra appendages, “nice butt by the way. That is soo cool though! What else is changing?”

“Well my hair is now a crest of feathers. I have no body hair whatsoever. Aside from the tail I don’t know about anything else.”

“Here, take off the gown and I’ll give you an inspection.”

Sam, having been friends with her for years, didn’t care in the slightest. He just pulled off the gown and let Lacy get to the inspection. Right away he noticed the white splotches across his chest and legs, “well that is new.”

Lacy walked up and started looking at the splotches. Sam noticed as she touched them that there was fur in the middle of the splotch about an inch in from the edges. She touched a few of them, playing with the fur in the larger splotches a bit before moving behind Sam. She grabbed hold of the tail and got a closer look at it, a few splotches and fur growing on that as well. It was tapered, around 4 inches across at the spine and almost pointed at the end. Lacy moved to the front again and looked at Sam’s feet. She noticed the toes were deforming and shaping differently as well as Sam’s heel was smaller than it should have been. The last place she looked was Sam’s crotch. A big white splotch was covering it so there was fur that made it to where she couldn’t see the slit, but she moved it aside much to Sam’s dismay. She spread the lips and everything before Sam moved backwards to avoid any more... intimate probing.

“Well I wasn’t expecting that intrusion! Did you really need to look there?”

“Yeah actually. You know you don’t have a clit?”

“Well I’m an alien. It makes sense that my equipment would be different. And no you can’t look again. You lost privileges going into that area. You could have at least asked first! That was extremely intrusive.”

She stood up and looked Sam in the eyes intensely, “your eyes are purple and like a jade green. I think the pupil is slit too. Hang on.” She leaned in and got up in Sam's face to take a better look, “yep. Slit pupils. Very reactive to light too!”

“That's nice. Can you back up a couple feet? I'm feeling like a piece of meat now.” Sam pushed lacy to arms length to have some breathing room. He knew she was fascinated by this stuff but it's a whole different game being the one being examined. Thankfully the door opened and a doctor walked in followed by a guy who looked like he was dressed like an agent a while ago but was now disheveled and tired looking.

The doctor spoke first, “well we definitely can confirm that you are not human and as such we have no idea what to do with you. Blood tests do not work and our scans show nothing wrong with you. We are going to release you into FBI custody so they can appropriately deal with you.”

“Whoa! Slow down there. I was given 3 weeks to say goodbye and set my affairs in order. Why am I going straight to the FBI now?”

The FBI agent spoke up this time, “because you're starting to not look human. We don't want to cause any panic among the civilians and seeing something with white fur and a tail running around will do just that. Unfortunately I can't get anyone out here to pick you up for several hours so I'll need you to stay in the hospital until then.”

“Nuh uh. Screw that. I was given three weeks, I don't want to leave yet. If you must, come get me in a week and I'll go but I have things I really don't want to miss coming up. I'll stay low if I start looking less human and wait for pickup but I don't want to miss things I've had planned for a year.”

The agent held up a hand, “you will stay in this hospital and await pickup.”

“No. I won't. I'm going to see my friends.”

The agent looked taken aback. Surprised even, “that should have worked. Oh god, you're immune.”

“Whatever. I'm going to get dressed then in leaving.”

Sam grabbed his luggage he noticed in the corner and pulled out some clothes. As he was slipping it on he could hear the agent talking to Lacy outside the door, “look, apparently she's stubborn but you can't let her leave! There is too much at risk. She could be captured!”

“Look, Terry, I understand your concern. Sam may seem rash but HE is actually one of the smartest guys I know. He won't go down without a fight whether that's you or someone else. Just let him have his peace before he goes with you.”

“I don't like this one bit. Fine. But anything happens, here's my number.”

Sam heard him walking off right as he was walking through the door. Lacy gave him a nervous smile and pocketed the phone number. This was going to be an interesting day.

The next day after waking up on Lacy's couch, Sam noticed the changes were getting more pronounced. Thankfully it was cool out so he could get away with wearing a windbreaker to cover his arms. His tail was getting harder to cover though since now it went all the way to his knee. There was a couple of bumps near the base of his ribs that were growing too. He was still going to the convention this weekend whatever happened though.

Lacy woke up after a little while and they headed out for some brunch. Sam's leg looked funny from behind with the tail going down the pant leg but at least it wasn't in plain view. That wasn't the issue so much as the dark feathers growing on the backs of his ears and the fact they were starting to point. Sam still insisted on getting brunch at the cafe up in Portland. They both knew the weird stares would be worth it though.

Sam saw people changing their stares from him to a few vehicles passing by. It wasn't that often one saw military grade vehicles on the streets of Portland. Sam was hoping it wasn't the FBI there to collect him since they said they were going to. The last of the six vehicles stopped next to the cafe as the rest continued on, the passenger climbing out. This man was huge, easily six foot five and built like a linebacker. He glanced around then locked eyes with Sam. It was then Sam noticed the artificial eye before the man stomped right over to Sam.

“Alien, you are coming with us.”

This guy was definitely not FBI. He was dressed in fatigues and carried a patch for the known terrorist group, Home World Purity. They were out to catch the aliens the FBI haven't picked up yet. This really wasn't going to go down well.

“How about not. I haven't finished my panini yet! Why don't you go back in your truck and wait.”

Sam was waving the meat head off when he snatched Sam's wrist. Sam tried to pull his wrist back but the man's grip was like a vise! Sam tried pulling harder and was just picked up by his arm instead. The man started walking back to his truck but Sam was having none of that. Sam swung his legs up and planted them in the man's armpit.

“Let go or you're getting a dislocated arm.”

Sam wondered if he could follow through with his threat considering he just noticed the arm was mechanical. Since the man never hesitated in his steps, Sam figured it was time to check. Gripping the large wrist with one hand and bracing the other, Sam pressed with his feet hard. Immediately he heard cracking and the sound of alarms going off in the man's headset. The panic in his eyes was genuine as Sam ripped the arm from his body, doing a backflip back onto the sidewalk with the arm still in hand. The grip was still tight but Sam worked his arm loose before swinging the metal arm at the man who came back for a second round. It connected with his head and he was down for the count. Sam was about to teabag him when he noticed more meat heads coming his way. Now was the time to run. And run Sam did, with traffic, and kept up with them. Sam could actually run faster but currently he was going with the 40mph traffic down the street. A few people saw him running and checked their speedometers thinking they were going slow.

Sam turned down an alley to avoid being caught and kept running. Crossing streets and making turns, he kept going for an hour or so. Then he started to get tired. As exhilarating as it had been to run for so long, it apparently wore him out. He ducked down a small alley and sat down behind a dumpster. It wasn't the most pleasant place to rest but it would have to do for now. Then again, the wave of fatigue that hit him caused him to pass out on the spot so he didn't have much of a choice.

