

FALTOFAR by Morri Stewart

EXCERPT

Chapter Five

A Reunion of Sorts

No more than ten paces separated the two. As Olitus moved forward, so did the Sepherii, until they were both within feet of each other. To Thom's amazement, Torr extended one long leg and bent the other in what could only be defined as his equivalent of a bow. Olitus acknowledged the Sepherii's formal greeting with a nod of his head.

"These are strange times in Faltofar. No human would deny the blessings of your kind at his or her side," Olitus said, with the beginning of a smile. "I speak for my family in saying we are honored."

Torr stood to his full height, his head tilted proudly back. His eyes spiraled and a low hum emanated from him. The previously unconcerned grouse hens, disturbed by the activity in the yard, flapped and squawked in their pen. Olitus, displaying the sense of humor he was renowned for, began to laugh at the clamor of anxious bird noise that filled the air, and the formality of the moment dissipated in the fresh night air. His father's laughter was infectious, and Thom joined in, the tension he'd felt all day disappearing in the dusty yard. Olitus gathered his son to his side in a bear hug.

"The Sepherii is well taken care of, Thom?" he asked, waving a weary hand at the bandaged foreleg.

"Good!" he exclaimed at Thom's nod.

Olitus swiped his hand across eyes bleary with dust and travel, scratching at the growth of a beard. "Then let us leave him to the night for now." Before turning away, Olitus stepped even closer to the Sepherii and spoke softly. "Well met, Torr. I am glad for your company." He nodded a goodnight and moved toward the porch.

Thom hastily stepped closer to the Sepherii, awkwardly raising his hand, indecisive as to whether he should extend it in a handclasp or just wave. He opted for the wave.

"Good night Torr," he said, then hurriedly followed Olitus, almost bumping into him when his father stopped abruptly. Olitus had pivoted to address Thom when his eyes alighted on the dwarf's club tucked into his son's belt. All humor was gone. The moment stretched out.

“I would gather you have a story to tell me, son, but I am in need of the comfort of our hearth and your mother’s kindness, and words are better woven in the light.”