Me - Emerald Coast - Ajea

An introduction of Avonlea on a world colonized through magic and technology.

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I stood at the edge of the cliff and stared out over the land slashed ocean. The Emerald Coast stretched its wing from far beyond the north-west horizon out into the warm equatorial waters before me. The majestic coastal mountains carried on in chains of archipelagoes where the land sank sedately into the water's embrace. Cold arctic air, flowing along the feathered highlands, endlessly combed the tropical winds, bathing the rainforests from which the coast got its name. The forests had adapted an age ago, blending away climate borders. Dangerous, because you had no way to distinguish where you were along most of the coast and deep into the eastern veldt of the interior. Only far to the east did the tropics become a dominating blanket over ancient slopes. Neither man, nor beast was ever entirely sure of the perimeter of his habitat.

From where I stood at the southern tip of the North Wing, I could see the brilliant jewel of the Angel Islands. Over the southern horizon would be the space port. Far beyond that would be the South Wing that a hundred generations had gradually tamed. I had seen it once, when I’d been a young girl. That had been five summers ago. When I had learned the truth about the Angels and how they had fallen from the sky.

The sons and daughters of Earth had come more than eight hundred and fifty of their years before I was born. Angel Colony had come to Ajea with no possible means to go further or go back. Their surprise at discovering us at the end of their costly journey was no sharper than our own at their arrival. In fact, it had taken a full generation for our two peoples to fully realize how frighteningly similar and yet disturbingly different we were from each other. My ancestors, and that speaks of individuals on both sides of that gap, had much to overcome. My existence, and that of a few million like me, is ample proof of how deeply they had tried to bridge that gap.

Now, over a hundred years after Angel Colony’s Earth-born siblings had rediscovered their lost tribe, the delicate wedding of Angel and Exotic into one people was tearing and fraying with alarming impetus.

Mighty Earth strode boldly across the face of the abyss, ignorant or uncaring of the deadly forces that had barred so many civilizations from their place in the stars. No. Hardly ignorant, and not uncaring. In fact Earth had defied and rebutted the punitive strikes on its celestial adventures with a frightening stubbornness and tenacity. So it was Earth who had gone out to rediscover strings of worlds where humans, both *normal* and Exotic had struggled for scores of millennia in isolation. So it was Earth who extended the protection of their fleets, their *Aegis,* over these established worlds and the colonies they seeded with ardent efficiency.

At first, Exotic as well as Angel greeted the arrival of this Allied Earth Aegis to Ajea. The celebration ended when Angel Colony was recognized and admitted to the AEA. The publication of the treaty had some glaring errors. There had been no mention of or consultation with the sovereign authority of Ajea, and the name of their world only appeared as a reference. There had been grave explanations delivered in response to our outrage at having been robbed of our world by the careful phrasing of the treaty. Excuses, really. I didn’t have any trouble figuring it out the morning I first heard the story. I have refined that initial revelation with hard and cold facts that were never openly aired in Ajea’s bid for recognition as an Establishment. First point, some small percentage of the populations of nearly all the Establishments admitted to the AEA were Exotics. Emphasis on that word “small”. Second point, until Angel Colony dropped on us from the abyss, one hundred percent of our native “human” population qualified as Exotic. Third point, the difference between *normal* and *Exotic* come from the subtlest differences in our DNA. There are gene sequences that code for three prime and up to seven developmental genders—and the highest and most reliable genetic-based psi potential ever known.

There it was. There it still is. We—Exotics—are too utterly human to be denied, and too wholly alien to Earth’s conception of humanity. The same polarity of thought and belief—the same dualism—that had plagued communication and understanding between my human and Exotic ancestors now pressed down on us from above as it still jabbed us from within.

I grew up at a time when the colonists were busy tearing away from Exotic life; our ways, our traditions, our practices, institutions and beliefs into which we had welcomed them as kindred. It was a terrible time, with the deep blood roots between families on both sides of the opening rift becoming strained and broken. I was spared too much awareness of the bitter collapse of scores of generations’ efforts to unite the inhabitants of Ajea, for I was one of those cursed souls among Exotics who never realized my inborn potential for psi. Mind-blind.

On the day that I almost destroyed my future, it was this lack in me that had me dwelling on the opportunity I had spent almost ten years, as the AEA reckoned time, preparing myself for. It was my blindness that led me into the trap. My mind was a knot of apprehension, as I worked through the forms of combat dance. The evening light was slanting across from the sea, filtering through the forest of columns of the vast open air architecture of the sprawling complex. For three days we had lingered in the hospitality of the *Kathet·yn·caoi.* All traditional *lyn* communities had *yn·caoi* at their hearts. It is where the nameless come for respite from the wild. It is where anyone may come for sanctuary, or suit. It is our temple, our school, our court of law. It is home to those who do not have or are far from their own home.

The facilities provided to a guest of the *yn·caoi* are small and starkly elegant. I, like most of my *Jen,* had habitually made my way to the public grounds and dedicated areas to practice my disciplines. The complexity of the dance so long ingrained in my body kept me at a meditative distance from the hard eyed contempt that had greeted the non-male members of our company. I had heard of the trend of this community’s growing bias. I had never really understod sexual politics, so I simply ignored the attention. I was far more interested in the reason that the *Jen·Tempas* had come to this place. In particular, I was absorbed in the reflection on what this meant for me personally.

Like all individuals on worlds under the AEA, I was permitted to apply for citizenship in the AEA when I was a child. Unlike most Exotics, my psi latency made me an acceptable candidate for application to the AEA’s military academies. Unlike any normal, however, my culture had severe prerequisites for assuming what my culture defined as a warrior’s role. In order to receive the blessing of my house to pursue a career in the Navy of the AEA, I had to obtain the name and status of *naioma.* I had to complete the “devotion of the body as a weapon”. I had to master my body, or rather master my existence in physical terms. This was not a special requirement for me alone, every Exotic who had taken service with the AEA was expected to earn the natural authority and responsibilities through such devotions to equip and prepare them for their path. To earn a name worthy of the responsibility of representing their people in the AEA.

It was in the *Aet·i·diamas Jen·Tempas,* sort of a touring school, that I studied and practiced the devotions of *na·an·ima.* I had seen most of the civilized world during my years among the *Jen,* and quite a bit of the wild, where the nameless lived in the total freedom of nature. The nameless were one of the responsibilities of the *oma.* Among the nameless, *na·oma* are raised into the devotion of *na·omna;* the last devotion to complete before elevation to *nai·oma.*

I had been lifted into that last devotion only weeks ago. From the wild we had returned to civilization by way of *Kathet·ni·hayr,* where Aeth, our maestro, could contact the port at Angel’s Wing, where all contact with the AEA passed through. In spite of my distaste for the counter-conservative values and traditions that had taken root and flourished in this community, I knew what our visit here meant. Aeth had decided to transmit my application to the Academy Bureau. He had effectively said that I only had to wait out one standard year. If they approved my request for consideration, I would be on my way to Earth well before I reached the cut off age of standard eighteen.