



PORTAL WATCHERS OF TELBA BOOK 5

OUTSIDE SPACE  
AND TIME

SUSAN LYTTEK



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Telba Book 5

Susan Lyttek

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## *Characters*

Portal Watchers—Garth Vieta, Ne-tel Di'in, Bern Fallon  
Tel—Holy and perfect creator of the world  
Nevv Vieta—Prophet. Brother of Wirth and Murenn  
Subja—Semi-eternal queen of Telba  
Let—The king of demons  
The Vil—Once-human servants of the queen  
Wirth and Mara Vieta—Garth's parents.  
Jana Vieta—Garth's sister  
Quizon Vieta—Garth's baby brother  
Murenn Vieta—Oldest Vieta brother  
Filia Vieta—Murenn's wife  
Kattya (deceased) and Som Fallon—Bern's parents  
Gunston Di'in—Ne-tel's father  
Telya (ne Fallon) Di'in—Ne-tel's mother, Som's sister  
Alatel Di'in—Ne-tel's twin  
Uncle Foon and Aunt Bela (ne Di'in)—Relatives of Ne-tel  
Fortuna and Ki'ri—Ne-tel's cousins  
Jata—Foon's loyal servant  
Captain/Shipmaster Yom—A seafarer  
Dral—Firstmate of Yom  
Masa—Leader of the children of the North  
Tilee—Masa's sister  
Nelas—Queen of Telantia and Bern's grandmother  
Nellie—Granddaughter of Nelas and Bern's cousin.  
Crown Prince Xant and Princess Merinda—Nellie's parents, Bern's uncle and aunt  
Java—Telantian priest  
Fallon—Boy of the North whose family crafted ships  
Prophet Quizon—Famous prophet who wrote the Advice  
Maeve—A pirate

Aidan and Anah—The first people on the first world  
Parep—Son of Amma  
Amma of Telantia—Parep’s mother  
King Evad—Historical leader of Telantia and prophet  
Wal—Prophet and leader across the stars  
Fent—Elderly soldier  
Haime—Elderly bard

*The Portal Watchers of Telba Series*

**Portal Watchers**  
**Heartbeat of Fear**  
**Wrestle the Stars**  
**Three Impossible Tasks**  
**Outside Space and Time**  
**Sum of All Expectation**

## *Dedication*

For the generations of teens who have read,  
commented on and added dimension to these stories.  
They wouldn't have become what they did without  
you.

In memory of my mom who would've adored Salty.



## PROLOGUE

Murenn looked inside the portal control room to make sure Garth and Nellie were no longer there. A hand rested on his shoulder and nails squeezed into his flesh.

"My dear Murenn," Subja cooed while digging in deeper. "How delightful to find you here."

He tried to turn around both to bow and to escape her claws, but he felt the barrel of a weapon in his back. "Your Majesty. Might I turn around to face my queen?"

"You may not. Weren't you just checking to make sure your obnoxious nephew escaped? I still wonder how he made it work that way." She moaned. "You used one of the vials!" Her nails dug harder into his shoulder. "Do you know how long I had to work to gather those vials of blood? I hoped to do it the easy way the next time I call a creature." She pulled her nails slowly down his back. He tried not to move, but the pain made him want to squirm.

"A misstep on my part, Your Highness. Surely you can understand that. Love of family and all that."

She sighed. "Family? If you truly serve me, I become all the family you need. Obviously, that did not become the case." She tsked. "And to think I had invested so much in you."

The weapon moved to his shoulder and fired. In almost the same instance, a Vil closed the door Murenn had opened and stepped between him and the exit.

The sound of the weapon discharging so close to his ear coupled with the shock of the blow muted the pain for a moment.

The intensity of it made him gasp. He could see the pain flow across his vision in shades of white tinged with red. The sight of the brown door in front of him grew hazy around the edges. He wondered if he would lose consciousness.

“Seize the traitor,” Subja screeched the command. If the weapon fire hadn’t deafened him, that scream might have.

As if he were a rucksack, the Vil picked him up and threw him over its shoulder. As it did, the queen’s claws scratched all the way down his back starting with the fresh wound. He twisted, but there was no way to avoid the pain.

She walked around to look up into his face. “I hope you enjoy your extra time in my dungeon. You must have loved it immensely to send yourself back there so quickly. Especially knowing that you have left your nephew and that pretty girl to rot in the other world.”

That thought was almost worse than the pain.

# 1

*“Tel is outside of time and space. He has to be because he created both of them. Neither impedes his will. Neither is too difficult for him to rearrange.” Prophet Quizon in the Advice*

Garth gazed at his surroundings. He had never seen anything like this place. The green life threatened to overwhelm him. It was beautiful, yes, but it was huge. Was there even a sky above all these trees and bushes and flowers?

He glanced at Nellie. She didn't look scared. If anything, she looked enraptured. Her mouth was slightly open and her eyes wide.

“I never thought—” she broke off. “I never dreamed.”

“What?”

She turned to face him as if seeing him for the first time. “Garth, you idiot, don't you know where we are?”

Of course, he did. They were in the land of the dinosaurs. They were in the same place that Subja had obtained her T-rexes—where they might just get eaten. “The dinosaur world, obviously.”

She smiled as if he were a young child. A very

young child. That look was bad enough coming from a parent, but coming from a girl as pretty as Nellie, well that did something strange to his stomach. "No silly. We are in the beginning world. First world. It must be just after the disaster because your uncle saw those T-Rexes eat another dinosaur. Aidan and Anah are here somewhere." She looked around as if expecting to see those she named.

"Who?" Garth was expecting another one of those looks and he got it.

"The first people. The people Tel created at the very beginning of the first world. The ones who once walked with Tel." Her voice dropped. "The ones who disobeyed and walked through the gate."

Had he heard about them? Was that one of the legends that Nevv had told him? Or even his dad? His dad remembered all those stories.

She continued. "The ones who listened to Let, the same chief demon that Subja now serves." She whispered as if she didn't want to be overheard. "He was originally called Luz, but he changed his name to be the opposite of Tel's, so that people might think he was as strong as Tel. That would be like me thinking I could be as strong as Tel."

This was news to Garth. "Why? I thought Let was powerful."

"For a demon, yes. But compared to Tel, the creator of all? He is an annoyance, nothing more."

He had seen the demon work. Yes, their prayer called on Tel's power to vanquish it, but the creature had done some incredible things that Garth could

never imagine doing or equaling. "I have seen Let. He is terrifying."

She nodded. "I would imagine so. He runs most of Telba right now. I'm just saying that compared to Tel, he is nothing and has no power." She turned and looked at a flower whose bloom was nearly as big as her head. "Isn't that beautiful?" Its petals were pinks and peaches with streaks of red heading toward the center. She leaned in. "And it smells so nice, too."

Garth was just getting ready to follow her lead and sniff the flower, when she keeled over. As she fell, the flower lunged for her and wrapped its petals around her leg.

## 2

*“Terrified by the murder of their king and the treachery of their own, the people of Telantia, the heirs of the promise, acted the coward. Rather than stand for Tel to all of Telba, they cowered and hid until the world all but forgot their presence.” Unofficial records of the priestly order of Telantia*

Queen Nelas paced the temporary shelter. “Hast there been no sign of my Nellie?”

“None,” Bern admitted. “I am fairly certain, Grandma, that she went through the tunnels to help my friend, Garth.”

The queen moved anxiously about the room.

“I canna feel her, Bern. I canna feel her on Telba. But I didna sense her death either.” She moved some of the salvaged treasures around absently. “Oh, why is she so headstrong?”

Bern patted his grandmother’s shoulder. He still wasn’t sure how he was supposed to relate to her. As queen? As grandma? As something else? “If it helps, Nevv has a similar connection to Garth. Priest Java relayed that the prophet had said something much the same. My guess is Nellie found Garth, and the two of them are together, wherever that together might be.

She knew the tunnels and passages really well when we were in Subja's city before."

The older woman bowed her head. Suddenly, she looked tired and much older.

"Tel will protect them, right? Your Garth is doing what Tel told him to." She lifted her chin. "I have to believe it."

Bern didn't know what else to say. He opened his mouth, preparing to say some platitudes as he thought of them, but, at that moment, one of the guards rushed in.

"Vil approaching again from the southern entrance, Your Majesty." He eyed Bern. "And Your Highness."

Bern still didn't know how to respond to the title, so he just nodded his head.

The queen's posture stiffened into her full regal pose. "What else can the abominations do to us? They have already destroyed the most beautiful city on Telba." She turned to the guard who was waiting for orders. "Ready the troops. Arm them with stones of power. And call on the priests to pray. Subja will not triumph."

The guard bowed. "Yes, Your Majesty."

The queen took Bern's hand. "Let us go to the temple. Its tower still stands. We will watch the battle from there and hope it is just a skirmish. We will watch and pray. Then, we will recover and commence our plan to help the rest of Telba."

~\*~

They had left the *Promise* with seven people. They'd returned with nineteen. Since both of the dinghies could carry six, they got everyone back to the ship in two trips.

Ne-tel would have been happier if it had taken them all night to bring back everyone who had signed on to fight the huge man-eating dinosaurs, but they had only needed one trip to carry the volunteers.

"Don't look so glum," Ally said. "It's still more of an army than we had. And everyone is passionate about fighting the creatures. That is something."

"I guess." Even though Tel had told him it would be an impossible task, he had thought at least the army he gathered would be an army—not a ragtag group of former slaves and servants.

"So, boy—" Yom came over looking for direction, "—are we heading back to Cavtel City?"

Ne-tel nodded. "At dawn, yes. That's what Tel wants me to do." He grumbled. "I just don't see that our odds are much better now than they were then." He looked off to starboard where his uncle and cousins stood. "But I know I needed to be here for my aunt. That part was good." He looked over at Ally. "I wish Dad had been able to see the change in his sister."

She reached up and squeezed his shoulder. "We'll tell him. He will be glad to know that she knew right from wrong at the end. Who knows why Tel wanted him to stay so long in the western port and then head through the prophet's land before going home? Each of us can only do what Tel wants us to do. We can't walk the path for others."



With her words echoing in his head, Ne-tel went to find his bunk for the night.

He laid down, but couldn't sleep. Instead, he stared at the bottom of the bunk above him and listened to the sound of Masa's even breathing. This room had sleeping spaces for four comfortably and six in a pinch. The bunks could be put together with a board to connect them to give a third person somewhere to sleep if necessary. But since he hadn't managed to recruit that many, they could each sprawl out comfortably. Before the recruitment, there had been three in this room. He wasn't sure of the name of boy who claimed the bunk opposite him, but Fallon, whose family had originally built and cared for the craft, slept in the top bunk.

Since being put in charge, Ne-tel found that when he was supposed to be sleeping it was a very difficult thing to do. After tossing for over an hour to find rest, he gave up, and went out on the deck. Maybe some cool air and a glimpse of the stars would help.

His uncle was there, leaning over the railing.

Ne-tel walked over and stood next to him. He couldn't detect anything specific that the man was watching, but it felt good just to share the moment with him. They had been through a lot together and much of that on a ship, albeit not this one. The vessel they had been drafted to serve on had barely survived a series of storms and now lay half buried in the lagoon of the northern caves. At least it was there the last time Foon had seen it. Ne-tel had been tossed off and into the waves.

What was it about past adventures that made one nostalgic? Maybe just the fact that they were over? Ne-tel knew what happened when he had followed the plesiosaurs. It had been horrible in parts, he had thought he would drown, but he had survived. But this impossible adventure? He couldn't see how it would work out.

"Can't sleep, nephew?"

Ne-tel shook his head, but then realizing that the man probably couldn't see the movement in the faint starlight echoed by the small lighthouse in the distance, confirmed, "No. I hoped some cool air and a look at the sky might make me tired enough to rest." He was afraid to ask why Foon wasn't sleeping. He guessed it might have something to do with grief.

"Throw some prayer into the mix."

How quickly he'd forgotten! Wasn't it just a couple of days ago that he had walked with the golden man? "You're right. Why do I keep forgetting that?"

The man hunched over the rail as if he were looking into the waters below. "You keep thinking of what *you* have to do instead of what Tel is willing to do, or what he has already done."

That made sense. He let the words and the ideas behind them percolate. After a while of standing there in silence, Ne-tel felt as though he needed to say something that he didn't want to. He cleared his throat. "Are you thinking of Aunt Bela while you stand out here? Is that why you can't sleep?"

His uncle pushed off the rail to a standing position, turned, and sat on the lower rung. "In part. I

wish it hadn't taken the loss of her leg and then her life to show her that following Subja and the demons was wrong. I wish that I had had more time with a woman who was like the woman I fell in love with." He gripped the rail he sat on as if he needed to in order to stay put. "But even so, I am grateful that Tel did reach her. I will walk the golden fields with her one day." He paused. "In a way, I grieved the loss of her a long time ago."

That made sense to Ne-tel. It had never made much sense that the two of them were married, but then, he never saw much of his Uncle Foon in the visits over the years. He would show up at formal meals, but until he had saved Ne-tel from a Vil a few months ago, Ne-tel had known next to nothing about his uncle. He was simply the man with the horses.

"As soon as it's light, we will sail to Cavtel City?"

"Yes," agreed Ne-tel. "Although I'm not sure how we'll fight two dinosaurs there. We don't have much more in the way of strength from when we first entered its port."

His uncle pushed back up to a standing position and clasped Ne-tel's forearms. "Maybe not, but you have obedience. You did what Tel told you to do, and that is a power in and of itself."

"But if I fail?" Ne-tel choked.

The man squeezed his arms gently before letting go. "Obedient failure is worth a thousand times that of successful disobedience. Let Tel worry about whether you succeed or fail. He gave you the task, after all." He took a couple steps away from the rail and towards the

stairs. "Now that I have given both of us a talking to, let's try to get some sleep. I have a feeling tomorrow will be a long day."

While Ne-tel could still feel the tension, almost like an extra heartbeat beneath his skin, the exhaustion was there too and getting stronger. In spite of everything, he yawned. "You're probably right about that." He took a couple of quick steps to catch up with his uncle. "Thank you."

### 3

*“What I am doing is so new, you will not predict it. The way that I am leading my children is so strange, you will say, ‘Has our God gone insane?’ Do not fret... I have seen how it ends.”* Prophecy of the hidden prophet, speaking for Tel

Ne-tel didn't remember landing on his bunk, but he woke up to the sounds of activity and glimmers of light coming through the porthole.

“Good,” said Masa, seeing him moving. “We are about to set sail. I think Captain Yom was looking for you.”

Ne-tel put on his one change of clothes and headed up to the deck. The captain was at the helm, and the movement he had felt on waking was the process of turning the ship around so that it would face the open ocean.

What was beyond the open ocean? Anything? He knew that water surrounded Telba on all sides. In the north, he had caught glimpses of the Cliffs of Insanity which were said to be the end of the known world, but were they? Why was there an ocean if there wasn't something beyond it?