



The Recorder

As a recorder, Emit has one of the busiest jobs in the community. People rely on him for accurate information, each one of life's events needs to be recorded properly and with precision, some more urgently than others, but all need to be done with care. When it comes to his best friend's marriage, Emit is reluctant to sign on the dotted line, he needs to investigate things further.



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Emit looks at the information in front of him. He knows he has to record the information, he knows he has to make this event official, but he also knows, in his heart, he can't. There is something wrong here, he has been taught all his life that his calling is to be a recorder. Everyone in the community has a purpose, and his is to record all the life-cycle events, as well as smaller events that happen. Starting from the birth of a new child and includes everything there could possibly be in that person's life. He has always done this with a happiness in his heart, but not today.

He witnessed the wedding, as is his job, he saw to it that each sacred item was handled properly but this wedding should not have taken place, he knows that deep into his core. He has one week to record each event, if he doesn't, then the couple is no longer married. Tomorrow is the last day. Every time he looks at the record book and at the license he has to sign to say things are recorded, he can't.

“Oh Miranda, what would you do? You would know. Why do you have to be so far away? Some days, I still need you around,” he slumps down onto his chair and begins to rock feverishly. His mother, Miranda, was always able to calm in down on these rough days.

The chime on the clock awakens him from his thoughts. “I must go to the Elders but I don't have a lot of time. I will go to see the Elder Waller, he will know. He always seems to know about these special issues.” Confident in his decision, Emit grabs his travel bag and proceeds out the door to find the Elder Waller.

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The road to the Elders is not always easy, one only knows it's the right time to go when the road is smooth and laid out in front of the person traveling. Each turn he takes has been the right decision, no backtracking, no obstacles to overcome, he is being led straight to where he needs to be today, this makes Emit feel better. The Elder Waller's house is in view. He approaches slowly and goes around to the back of the house where visitors are accepted, or not. He will sit and wait until his turn. Emit chooses to sit down on the stone walkway in front of the garden with the bell flowers and where the songbirds are in abundance.

Here he is quiet, here he gathers his thoughts so he can phrase his questions and concerns properly. An Elder doesn't always like long stories, so he needs to make his words concise and accurate. But how does one describe a feeling? How does one put into words that their innards are dancing but not in a comfortable way like when a child is born? Emit sits and waits.

The Elder Waller knows when Emit approaches, he always knows when someone comes or even wants to come, it is up to him to make the path smooth or bumpy. He watches to see what Emit is doing, when he sees Emit sit down, he knows the boy needs to gather his thoughts, he will watch and wait.

“Yarmuse, he can't wait longer, he has a job to do. Less than one day left,” his wife points out.

“Oh, my heavens, you are right my dear. Right as always, you are. Will he be ok with this? It's not easy to watch, but he needs to see this, at least once,” Yarmuse says.

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“I don’t know. He is a fragile soul but he is strong at the same time. He is the most cautious with his recordings as we’ve seen in a long time, and we have all benefited from that caution more than once. Remember the wedding he actually stopped?” Jeanuse asks.

Yarmuse bows his head forward in remembrance. The groom did not take kindly to being broken up with, especially in a front of a crowd and then a week later, he was arrested for spilling his magics into the belly of the mountain. No longer wanting to be a part of his people. He had assumed she wanted the same thing but she is an enchantress, who wouldn’t want to stay with your people when your greatest gift is to give happy dreams to children? She never minded her lot in their insular lives, but the groom? He found them to be a burden. Now he sits in a cell and thinks all day, about what he threw out and about what, if anything, he can still get back.

Yarmuse takes his shoes off, he needs to feel nature to do what he has to do today, and walks over to Emit, he sits down next to his young friend. “Emit, you are torn by this latest wedding, I can tell. Tell me what troubles you, I know what troubles others but I need to know from you, specifically, what you see or don’t see,” Yarmuse rests his hand on the shoulder nearest to him.

“I have sat here for two hours, I have no words to describe how I feel. It’s wrong, it was wrong at the pronouncement and no one would hear me, it is even more wrong now. Please Elder Waller, you have to help me set this straight, or what good is a recorder who no longer trusts his own recordings?” Emit exhales.

“Draw me a book Emit. Over there in the sand,” Yarmuse points to the patch in front of them and hands Emit a small stick in which to draw with.

Emit does as he is asked, he takes the stick and draws a rectangle that resembles an open book, complete with a page being turned. “Now, take the water from one of the bell flowers and pour it on one side,” Yarmuse says, Emit, again, does what is asked of him. His drawing now looks like a book made of glass.

“Turn that page Emit, we need to see what is going on in the house that troubles you so,” the Elder Waller points to the page on the right.

As Emit turns the right page over to the left an image shows up on the left side. After only a moment, they are watching Hatch and his new wife Pearlesce in their own kitchen. “Now reach over to your left and take a conch shell and place it on the top left corner so we can hear them.

“A baby, we need a baby to make us a family,” Pearlesce complains.

“We cannot have a baby now, we have not received our papers yet. It is not wise to produce a child without the papers,” Hatch points out.

“To the river with the paper, I need a baby Hatch. We got married so I can have children, it is your job as my husband to do so and yet you avoid me in the bedroom. Nervous you can’t perform?” she teases him.

“No,” he says softly.

“You know something I don’t?” her voice now scratchy, like one who is much older.

Emit looks to Elder Waller, “You see, something is wrong.”

“Wait, it will be revealed,” he answers slowly.



Emit looks back at the on-goings in Hatch’s kitchen. He sees Hatch fighting himself. He is holding on to his head and shaking it. Emit looks to the elder, he shakes his head and points again to the book’s page. Emit watches with concern for his childhood friend.

“Why can’t you be in my bed?” Pearlesce asks one more time, this time she hovers over him as he has sat down at the table holding onto his mouth. No, Emit realizes, he is holding in his words, trying to control them so they don’t come out. He is losing the battle, she is getting closer to him, a blue cloud appears above her head. Emit moves back so as not to be affected by this sight.

“Yes, Emit, I see the cloud too. She is an evil one. That blue is not natural. She needs a child, not only wants one. Her cloud is blue because she is losing her strength and needs to procreate soon, so that she does not die. The mother is dyeing, we will see it soon enough. He can’t fight this, his words will have to come, against his own will,” Yarmuse says quietly as he puts a hand on Emit’s shoulder to keep him from leaving his post, he must learn the truth. The truth about the girl has been revealed, now he must learn the truth about his friend.

Emit watches as Hatch struggles with formulating his words in the right way. Only an evil one can force the truth out of someone, her voice calls the words, he can see the heat in the room rising. Hatch is moments away from saying all that he does not want to say. What could he be holding back? Emit wonders.

Emit watches as a tear runs down his cheek, Hatch sits up and shakes his head, he is too tired to fight her, she sits in front of him. “Yesssssss,” she hisses out.

“I cannot lay with you, as my heart is with another. We were only married because my father owes his life to your father; that is all. Many years ago, in the big war my father was caught by the enemy. He was tied to a stake and left there for our people to find, dead. You see, my father was not a high-ranking person and the rules of war are you can’t kill anyone not important enough, so he was saved because of that, but he would die if he was left there for too long and that was considered ok.

Your father was a high-ranking officer, the kind that the enemy could not only kill but also hold for ransom. It is someone like him they were after. They would have easily traded if the situation came to it. However, your father and his men found my father in the realm of the beasts just outside their own camp. Standing on his tiptoes being supported by a stake in the ground and tied to it around his chest. My father was losing his fight for life. It was getting to be too late if another sun set.

Your father saw the birds hovering over him and heard what they were saying. He knew that the animals were getting ready to enjoy my father’s flesh. Your father’s men distracted the guards long enough for my father to be freed by your father, he then left his hat there to prove that my father was taken by a higher rank. The guards were tied to their own chairs and made to watch.

Now, so many years later, your father went searching for a husband for his only daughter. Knowing that my father had only one son and that I was not married yet, I was drafted to be your husband. I have no love for you, there is another,” Hatch lays his head on the table. His has no energy at all left. This is taking so much out of him, he doesn’t know what else to do.

Emit is watching with a heavy heart. His oldest and dearest friend has done something only their kind dream of. He has listened to his heart, he has found his heart’s other half in another.

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Usually it’s up to the elders to help the hearts find each other. But obligation came first, and Hatch did what all good citizens would do. Honor bound first. Heart bound is for the lucky few.

He watches a few more minutes, “It seems she is letting him get his steam back, it takes a lot out of a person to speak against their will I suppose,” Emit says quietly to the Elder Waller.

Yarmuse speaks in a tone of voice that sounds as if he is meditating, “turn the page to the right,” Emit does as instructed, he sees Hatch’s father and mother, “Use a second shell to hear them,” Yarmuse continues

Emit does as he is told and listens intensely to what is being said. Hatch’s father in law is very distraught he is waving his hands in the air and watches his wife on her bed, possibly her death bed, when he sees the blue smoke come into the room and turn into an amber glow, he knows the truth. Hatch’s father calls out, “My angel! You killed my angel” his eyes bore into his wife.

Now she is the one who cannot speak a lie, “I needed to live on, you were the one who was supposed to give me many, you only gave me one!” she calls back to him. “Killed is an ugly word, I could not get to you if she was in the way,” she sneered at him. “Why isn’t my daughter with child? What kind of weird man have you married her off to? She must be with child soon,” her voice sounding more and more threatening, yet weaker at the same time.

Emit looks to Elder Waller for clarification. Still in his meditative voice, he answers, “An evil one can’t break love, they cannot penetrate it at all, but they can swoop right in and grab hold of grief. It’s the strongest of emotions a man can have for a woman, his other half. This man loved another, he was destined to be with her but she was taken away, the evil one literally sucked all the life out of her. In his grief, she approached him and consoled him. She thought he would give her many girls, evil ones can only go through the women, men, to them, are useless, he gave her four boys and only this one girl. But each birthing takes energy from her and with this last one finally being a girl, she has had to wait all this time to marry her off. Her powers only weaken with time not grow, they need to procreate to keep themselves going. This evil one is resting in the head of the mother and now in the heart of the daughter but should the daughter not become with child soon, she will die too. Once they hit a certain age, procreation is a must or they lose all their powers.”

“What, what will happen to Hatch’s wife if she is not with child? I don’t think I can be responsible for a death, it is too hard on my heart,” Emit looks for solace.

“My dear Emit, it is war with these evil ones, there are so few left, we don’t know who they are anymore, your insides told you this should not be recorded, and now we have proof it should not. We have to let this one go. Her essence will leave the mother first, Pearlesce’s father I’m afraid, will grieve all over again for his first love. But this time his sons will know and they will be able to help him through all that he grieves for.

The daughter needs the energy of new life inside of her to survive her own mother’s death. If not, she too will wither away, unless we find a biter to find her first. He can release the evil energy and it will dissipate into nothingness, she will be gone all the same. Pearlesce will be able to live a life she never knew she had or wanted. It will be like discovering yourself for the first time. She will no longer even want Hatch, or need him. All will be well,” Yarmuse explains as simply as

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he can, he knows Emit will still have a hard time with this, but every recorder has to witness a biting at least once to understand it's not always a bad thing.

A scream brings their attention back to the father's page. They watch as the smoke goes from amber to yellow and now to green as her host form falls down to the abyss where it belongs. If her daughter had been with child, she still would have passed on but not with such dark colors, it would have been smoother and Pearlesce's father may never have found out the truth. "Now he knows son," Yarmuse whispers

Pearlesce's father bows his head in sorrow and bellows loudly from the bottom of his heart. Emit feels his pain and anguish all the way inside of him. The sounds reverberate his bones, "Elder Waller, please, don't let Hatch lose his heart's other half. Call the biter, I can't let him go through life being controlled."

"Done already Emit, quickly turn back the page to see how Hatch is doing," the elder says.

Emit turns to see that Pearlesce's cloud has turned into purple, it's the last color before the people around her can see her for who she is. Hatch is pacing the floor, he knows there is nothing he can do about his words, he looks to the sky because he is hoping something bigger will help him through this, he makes sure she is not watching and he pulls out an amulet and begins to press it to his heart. He shakes his head and begins to speak after he puts it away, "She, my true beloved, is with child. Today is almost the day for the child to come," he says with some confidence.

"Ah, with child you say?" Pearlesce repeats his words.

Emit looks to Elder Waller, he knows that Hatch could get into trouble for this. The elder shakes his head that all will be well and points again to his ears for Emit to listen carefully. Emit lets out a breath of relief and turns to watch Hatch's wife.

"We must go to her," she says suddenly full of energy, "It will not be good for her to have a birth on her own. We must take care of the baby as a married couple so it will not be shunned, or worse", she let the thought hang there in the air for a moment then whispers, "or burned."

Emit takes a gasping breath. Yarmuse puts his hand on his young friend's shoulder, "All will be well. She is trying to win for life here. She wants to get to the baby first. If the baby is a girl, which she is hoping for, she will grab the baby and have her suckle on her breast, the exchange between baby and mother will be as good as being pregnant and she won't even have to wait for the birth of her own. She will immediately have the energy she needs to go on to create more of herself," he points out quietly.

Emit looks surprised, as far as he knows the woman who give birth is the only kind who can feed a new baby. "I know what you're thinking Emit, and it is normally true, but the evil ones used to be birthers until people found out that they can impart their evil through mother's milk at will, and they would live on and on in many, many girls born in one community. Then the declaration came that only men could be birthers and we have found, over the generations, that men do a fine job of being a birther. Many women have found comfort in having the father of the child be in the room with the birthers, to ensure all goes well. She needs to find this other woman fast though, I feel the time is critical. Turn a page to the right again, so we may find her first and I will know the biter has come to the right place."

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Emit turns the page to the right and finds a third shell to place on this page. They see a young woman, someone Emit recognizes as his own cousin Diametree. She is plump with child and her cheeks are orange with the readiness of birth. This is why he has not seen her in many months, she is hiding on the hills of Sage, in a cottage no doubt owned by Hatch. He has provided for her well, Emit is pleased, yet still worried.

A tall, thin man is coming towards the cottage, Emit looks to the Elder and he shakes his head approvingly, he knows this is the birter.

He knocks at the door, Diametree answers with a smile as he always knows her to do. “Can I help you sir? Oh my!” she backs into the cottage, looking over the man’s head.

“Ahh, you can see me then,” he smiles at her.

“Why would a birter be coming to me? I have no evil here, I promise you. I hide nothing. I don’t even wear the clothing to hide by fatherless child,” she says to him.

“Ahhh, child, we know this baby is not fatherless, he knows what time the child has left inside of you too. He will come soon. But we must ready you. May I lay my hands on you to check the child?” he asks concerned.

“You are a birther as well?” she asks.

“We have regular jobs and are sent to where we are needed to do the best job we can. I have watched many births, assisted with many and fought off a few evils to protect the little ones when necessary. May I?” he asks again putting out his hands.

Diametree lifts her apron so that the birther can put his hands on her bulging belly without her seeing. He lays his hands on top of her belly with his pointer fingers touching at the tips and he slides his thumbs down always keeping them touching, now he has formed a diamond with his fingers. The hole inside these four fingers looks like the diamond he needs, he gently blows on the opening so he can see the baby. He smiles, he knows now the baby is a boy, so that will be helpful. He looks to his left and smiles, he knows Yarmuse is watching. Yarmuse shakes his head too, Emit notices the exchange but keeps his words to himself.

When the birther closes his fingers slowly, Diametree drops her apron back down. “Thank you for letting me check my lady. The baby is looking strong and ready. Do you have your room ready? Has anyone given you the tools you need?” he asks in a soft voice.

“My mother knows of the birth, she has been here many days, she left the house yesterday, she left me all set up. Her father was a birther and so she knows what to do in the house. Now I wait she says. But I have to say, whomever sent you I am thankful. I am not sure I can do this alone, the process seems so overwhelming, but I know why my mother left, I respect her for that,” she says softly. “Just recognizing I’m having a baby with no father could have gotten her in trouble.”

Emit’s heart warms watching his cousin. She is a beauty and Hatch will have his fill of children from her, he has a good feeling about that. They have too much love between them. This mishap does not matter to Emit, he will record this birth as an honest one.

“Yes, Emit, that’s a good idea,” Yarmuse says to Emit’s thoughts

Emit smiles. “Will it be long before they get there?” he asks.



“No, the evil one wants this, no, needs this bad enough, she will make their legs move at horse-like speed,” Yarmuse answers.

Emit looks back at the book, he turns back a page to see that Hatch and Pearlesce are already at the bottom of the last hill they need to climb. He flips the page again to his cousin.

The birther has finished examining the ready room, “Ok, my lady, I will be outside waiting for some company.”

“If you are waiting for an evil one, she will see through your shield as I have. You need to have three upon you. No less,” she says with confidence.

“Yes, this too you are smart about,” he walks outside and with a flick of his wrists produces a shell on top of himself and a third, then, to be safe, he smiles and adds one more. Depending on the strength of this evil one, she can see through many layers, it takes time though and if her energy is diminishing she may not have time to get through all four of his covers.

He sits on a stone and begins to whittle on a piece of nearby wood. Diametree watches out her front window, she recognizes the hair before she sees the body. It can only be one person. She sees the smoke above her as well, she hopes Hatch sees it too. She gave him the amulet to help him see truth, to protect him. “Speak to her strength not her vanity, she hates beauty,” she says in her head to the birther.

He looks back at the cottage and nods to show her he heard her. A speaker, he deals with today, he has not had the pleasure of birthing a speaker. Usually speakers are men. This woman is special, he must treat this situation carefully. He sees the woman approaching close enough to speak to her now, “Good afternoon!” he calls to her. “my, what great strength you have to walk so far ahead of your escort and so speedy too,” he exclaims.

Pearlesce looks up, she sees a tiny man sitting on a stone, she hates little ones; they are bigger nuisances than the full-sized men. What a waste of good energies. “We are looking for a woman who is to give birth today. We come to help. We are related,” she says with confidence, knowing her husband is twenty paces or more back and can’t hear her yet, especially in his current state of fighting his own truths.

Hatch watches the woman in front of him. Thankfully, Diametree gave him the amulet the last day before his wedding. She knew, she knew something was wrong and with that amulet, he knows too. He also knows that he is having a son, he keeps putting his hand on his heart and he feels two beats, a boy is of no use to an evil one. She will be done with, here and now. He can be here for the birth of his son. Hatch stands a little taller. A son to a builder like Hatch is about as great a gift as it comes. He is even ok if he learns his mother’s task of being a speaker. He wins with either one. The babe is not here and he is already proud of him.

Upon seeing his wife standing up he realizes she must be talking to someone, but it’s not his beloved, he knows for sure, he scurries up the rest of the way to make sure no other problems have befallen her. “Ahhh, good afternoon, my dear fellow, this wonderful woman here has told me you’ve come for the birth. My name is Quiver, I am the birther for today, at your service,” he says putting out his hand to shake Hatch’s.

Pearlesce smacks it down, “No time for small talk, let’s get to my baby. I mean this birth,” she says quickly to cover up her anger.

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“Ahh, but my lady, don’t be in a hurry, the baby is surely not coming today. I’ve already checked. Can I interest you in some fresh fruit?” he asks.

Diametree speaks to only Quiver, “No, the baby is coming soon. I have moved to the bed chamber now. It does not want to wait, it knows its father is here, he is calling to him.”

Quiver shakes his head again, she can see and hear him now, they are connected because she wanted to be, it is her choice, Quiver cannot get away until she releases him. “Or we can go check on the mother and child again, being that you are family and all,” he says making a quick new plan in his head before they open the door.

Hatch allows his wife in first, he puts a hand on Quiver’s shoulder and his other on his heart to tell him he knows it’s a boy. Quiver understands and smiles. The men walk in quickly after Pearlesce goes to the bedroom to check on the mother.

“You have company my dear,” Quiver says to Diametree

“I see,” she says with breathy words.

Quiver’s eyebrows go up, she wasn’t kidding, this babe is coming fast. “Ok, I see we need to move quick now, that’s a change,” he moves around the room with precision and places everything in place for the birth that is coming now. He stations Pearlesce right in front of Diametree’s legs, “Please wait here, it’s a comfort to all babes to be greeted by strength.”

Pearlesce smiles, once that baby is in her arms she knows what to do. One suckle, and she is as good as cured. Her strength renewed and she will carry on for her already withered mother.

Hatch approaches Diametree and holds her hand. Pearlesce is concentrating so hard on the bottom half of the mother she does not see the love cloud in the room, if she did, she would know she cannot penetrate love, even if the baby is a girl, she will not be able to nurse this baby.

Quiver gives Diametree instructions and she follows them exactly. She holds Hatch’s hand on one side of her and the bed linens with the other hand, her legs are propped up and ready to birth this child. With his eyes, Quiver talks to Diametree, ‘talk to it, tell it what to do, which passage to take, how to turn, it will be painless this way.’

Diametree does what she is told, she knows her body well and instructs the baby to turn and how to squeeze itself out of her. The next few actions happen like a split second to her.

The baby comes out, Pearlesce grabs the child but before she can bring him to her breast, Quiver is behind her and bites her neck, releasing the cloud, Hatch has grabbed the baby from Pearlesce’s arms and places him on Diametree to have his first taste of mother’s milk. Hatch watches as the cord between mother and child grows dim. No longer needing to be connected, their connection withers so thin that Hatch can now easily break it. Now the bond is only through what Diametree gives her son through her breast milk.

With a swing of her hand, Quiver is knocked down, thankfully on soft ground. Pearlesce falls to the ground forward. She has no energy, her breath is uneven, she looks to her left and sees the smoke leaving her, her heart is physically being wrung out, it hurts so much she can’t take the pain but there is part of her that is fighting to stay around. She does not want to be gone with the wind as the smoke is. Emit looks to Yarmuse, “Will she be ok?” he asks.



“I believe so, she is not out of the woods yet. Her heart has taken a beating and her innards are all being wrung out, literally, she is going through a lot of pain right now, I’m sorry,” he says honestly, “but, I believe she has tremendous strength of her own, as she is not calling out.”

Two women walk into the cottage with a man right after them. Emit is watching, not knowing what is going on. Then he smiles. The women are there to bear witness to the marriage of Hatch and Diametree, if done before the baby is breathing for a full hour, the wedding is solid and so is the birth. Emit will record both immediately. The two women then pick up Pearlesce and nod to the left, Emit now knows Yarmuse sent them there and they have finished their job. “Where will they take her? To her father?”

“Yes, Emit, he is grieving right now and is probably hurting for her as well. He most likely thinks he lost her also because how can she be carrying a child if the marriage has not been recorded? She will need care, but he is a strong man, his sons are good too, they will slowly give her back her lost memories, the ones she would have had if she had been paying attention to life around her and not on a mission her whole life to procreate. She will learn of her childhood, her life, her likes and dislikes and then she will be free to live a life of happiness, however, she will not be allowed to marry or birth a child. We are never sure if the biting is complete. Mistakes have happened,” Yarmuse answers.

“But how can she be happy if she is always with half a heart?” Emit asks.

“Emit, my young friend. It will take her years to recover from this, as many years as she is now. By then, she will be happier to have a life than none at all. She will most likely live out her days with her father. It has happened in the past that father and daughter pass at the same time, when his hourglass is empty. They will be ok. Now, maybe it’s time we look for your other half? Hmmmm?” the elder questions with a smile on his face

“Um, well, that is...” Emit begins to stammer, he regains his words, “Sir, I came for a situation, and you have allowed me to be part of a solution. This is more than one can handle in a day. I must take leave of you; I am sure I’ve missed a few happenings that need to be recorded. How do I close the book?” he asks.

With a sweep of his hand, Yarmuse closes the book and replaces the shells where they were. The water from the bell flower is absorbed immediately into the ground and new flowers are already growing there.

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Emit has seen Diametree’s baby and has brought Hatch the traditional father bracelet to share with his son, it is what ties them together. Emit had the flowers of the Sage hills engraved on the bracelet. As a father, now, Hatch has one on each arm, one that matches his own father and one to his son. His cycle is complete.

Tradition dictates that the groom’s first man, in this case Emit, bring the bracelet upon the first birth of a son as well as the ring on the day of the wedding. Since theirs was not a traditional marriage, Hatch called his buddy to bring the bracelet. Emit is not allowed to tell Hatch that he was there. It makes it all so much better though, knowing he would have been there either way, Hatch has told him this much.

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“Now Emit, what did you bring your cousin?” Diametree asks with a teasing voice.

“Well, for you my dear I bring this,” he holds out a charm bracelet, “to add amulets for each and every love child you will have,” he says with a smile.

Tears fall down Diametree’s cheeks. “That is the best blessing you could give a person. Oh, Emit, one day you will see how wonderful it is to find your heart’s other half. One day soon I hope.” Her tears still falling, she jumps into her cousin’s arms and they stand there for a moment sharing each other’s love.

“I have a demanding job Diametree, hard to find time to settle down with someone. But the Elders will let me know when it’s my time, I’m sure,” he smirks at her. Elder Waller has called upon him three times since Hatch had his baby, but he doesn’t want to tell them, not his best friend, or even his cousin, not now.

He has been told where to walk, what day, what hour and for how long. If it was any other Elder, he would not listen to the rubbish being told to him, but Elder Waller is special. His wife even more so, and boy can she cook a roast. Emit thinks to himself.

“Emit, yoooo hoooo. Boy where did you go?” Hatch asks him, waving a hand in front of him.

“Daydreaming. I’ve had so many things to record this Spring that I rarely have time to sit with the people I’m recording. Twenty-three births since this little guy came and fifteen weddings, four deaths, eighteen near misses and forty-five illnesses. I have been looking down at my book more than at my food plate, so thanks for all the fixings tonight Diametree, you sure do cook well. Did Eldress Waller teach you?” he asks.

“Eldress Waller? Wow you keep good company Emit. No, I haven’t had the pleasure of meeting her yet. But if you are comparing me to her, wow, I’m flattered. Ooo, sorry, the baby is calling. Bye my cousin. Lots of love to your heart,” she calls to him as she walks out of the room.

Hatch smiles, “You know she loves you Emit. You’re the only one in the family who hasn’t shunned us because of the quick baby. Her mom loves him and me, thankfully. I built her a new house as a thank you wedding gift and she couldn’t be happier. Her other sons, not so much,” he says.

“They are all full of themselves anyway. They chose to be outsiders. They gave up their gifts for the ability to fit in with the rest of the world. Now, they are slaves to money and not a happy soul in the lot. I think the youngest is about to come back here. He has asked me if it’s possible. I sent him to Elder Waller yesterday. I think he will be ok now. He told me the women he has met all want items and not inner strength, they want material more than matrimony, and he doesn’t understand that part. He followed his brothers because he was told he had to, but I think he misses our simple lives. He will continue working with animals, as he became a vet in the outer world, but here, he will be able to speak with them as well, if he can get back his gift. He will love you too Hatch, he was young and under the influence of older brothers when he left” Emit says.

“Good to know. Did Elder Waller ask you to walk along the river yet?” Hatch asks. Emit looks at him questioningly. “I told him I wanted my other half, I didn’t want what was a good match to my gift and he helped me find Diametree. I found her at the river remember? Water



pushes hearts together, without water we don’t live. It is with water that I found how to live. Excuse me, fatherhood has turned me corny,” Hatch says.

“He told me to go yesterday but I got caught up in recordings, the outbreak of illness has me running from door to door,” Emit told him.

“Emit, we are allowed to look at electronic mail, it will be easier for you, let you live a little if you use it for recordings. You still have to write it in the old books but you will have the information right away and not have to run. Do you always have to verify illness? I understand babies and weddings but illness? They can send you a picture of a sick person, you can record what needs to be said then too. Can’t you? Ask Elder Waller, he will know better.” Hatch says. “Aww man, here I am telling you how to do your job. That’s not nice and Diametree will have my head. Sorry,” Hatch bows his head ashamed of how he has acted.

“If it was anyone else Hatch, I’d be annoyed, but I know you’re saying this because you want me to have what you two have. I get that. I’d love to have this aura around me all the time. Elder and Eldress Waller are as connected by the heart as you two are, still, at their age! Oh, my phone is buzzing, another record to be done. Ok, I’ll look first, I see that look in your eye,” Emit smiles at his friend.

“It’s from the Jermaines down the block, Mr. Jermain didn’t make it through the night,” Emit says slowly.

“Ain’t that a termite in a tree? Ok. I’ll let you go, this one you have to see. Thank you for the bracelet, you picked the exact thing to make this all real for me. Not sure how you know what you know, but I’m ok with you knowing,” Hatch hugs his friend goodbye. He watches as Emit walks out with a serious face, he is happy he doesn’t have Emit’s job, he could not see all the sadness he sees every day.

He walks back to see his wife and child still suckling on his mother. “Mr. Jermaines,” he shakes his head from side to side.

“Oh, sweetheart. He was a good man, I know you and Emit have a long-time friendship with him. He was a healer, did any of his children get that gift?” Diametree asks.

“Yes, two of them actually. One of the older boys and their youngest girl. She was in Emit and my class in high school. You remember her, she has that blue streak in her hair, born to heal they say. In the outer world people dye their hair blue and think they are something special for going against conventional ways in their group.

By the way, I have a job with an outer company next week. They want me to come and fix their structure, says the foundation beams keep buckling on them. Amateurs,” he smirks.

“Not really, they have been building for thousands of years, they learn new things all the time; we can’t fault them for learning things differently. It’s who they are, as we are who we are. We need to get along to make us all safe, you know that. I’m proud of you that you are going for this job,” she smiles at him

“I know. I only say these teasing ideas to you. Just to make you smile. I do love your smile,” Hatch says with a big one on his own face.

“Hatch, think logically for a second. A healer. Don’t you think that is what Emit is needing? Someone who can help him through the hard recordings? This isn’t his first and surely



won’t be his last. He is the youngest recorder in history but no one else was around to take over with the passing of the old one. He will be doing this for a very long time, as you will be building, you were both early bloomers and at the top of your craft quickly. Think about her ok? I’ll talk to Eldress Waller,” she says.

“Emit is a special guy to me Diametree, this is no simpleton here, this is Emit. My Emit, my brother, friend and first love, all rolled into one,” Hatch says.

The words take her back for a second but she understands the emphasis he is trying to make. “That is why I said I’ll talk to the Eldress unless you want to talk to her yourself?” she asks.

“Me? Talk to the Eldress? She scares me. No, if you believe it’s a possibility and she does, but I mean really does, not a cursory yes. Then, feel free to proceed,” Hatch sits next to his wife and kisses her head as he watches his son continue to gain nourishment directly from his mother. The mystic of it all still moves him profoundly.

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Diametree takes the baby up the hill to the Elders’s home and sits outside, as many do, waiting to be approached by the correct elder. She counts herself as lucky, she has never come before and the road to getting here was a smooth one. She is hoping the Eldress comes out herself. She takes the baby out of his carrier and lays him down on the soft moss near the blue and yellow flowers. She snaps a picture and sends it to Hatch, Emit, her parents and her siblings. The baby looks so tranquil laying there as if he is studying the whole world around him all at once. The patch is the same as you can see all over the community, no one will know where she is right now. She hopes anyway.

Emit receives a picture on his phone of Hatch’s and Diametree’s baby and immediately recognizes the flowers. What on earth is she doing by the Elders? He thinks to himself. He doesn’t want to give off that he knows where she is, he decides to keep the information to himself. He looks down at the baby again and a part of his heart becomes warm. “Don’t fool yourself Emit, no one will be having your baby,” he says, saddened by his own words.

Emit watches as the elders introduce many people to their heart’s other half but he has yet to even be called. Even after all he went through recently with the Elder Waller and Diametree’s baby. He clearly saw more than most men have seen, unless they were with their wives for the births, but usually the birther sends them out and Emit knows why. Birth can be very tricky and very emotional, many men don’t know what to do with that kind of strong emotion. He had a really hard time with his emotions himself and he was only watching through a water book, in person, he is sure everything would hit him much harder.

Many people have more than one gift, especially birthers and healers so why can’t Emit have a second? The difference is, that being a recorder there is no time for anything else, you’re always being called to the next event. Sometimes the events are with outers and sometimes it’s only within the community, either way, they have to be recorded. Emit loves his job, he loves meeting everyone and watching families grow with each new child but deep inside of him, he wants to be with a family too, one of his own. The closest he will ever come to that kind of completeness is what he already has done, he witnessed Hatch and Diametree’s son’s birth.

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Diametree loves her son and how peaceful he looks here on the moss. She slides his pants off so he can feel the moss on his skin, it makes him smile even more. Diametree smiles too, she never knew she could have her heart captured twice, once with her husband and now with this baby. She smiles and feels a warmth take her over.

“A real beauty you have there. I believe he will be a healer,” says Eldress Waller.

Diametree’s heart swells as she has received her wish to meet with the Eldress. “Thank you for greeting me Eldress Waller,” Diametree stands, picks up her baby and puts out her hand to be fully addressed by the Eldress.

Eldress Waller receives her hand and takes her over to some tree stump chairs, she takes the baby from Diametree’s hands he immediately radiates heat into her arms. “Yes, a healer this one. What a blessing you have Diametree,” she says softly.

“You feel him too? Oh, thank you Eldress Waller, I thought maybe it was only a mother’s heart that created such heat but he is healing me isn’t he, from the birth,” she asks.

“Yes, he is making sure you are strong and will be able to deal with him as a healer, it’s a hard job but it’s a wonderful gift to have. I believe his birther bestowed it to him the second he saw him. Otherwise it takes years to discover one’s gift. But this is not why you are here is it?” she asks with curiosity in her voice.

Diametree bows her head down a moment, she did come for her son, but coming for Emit had been a ruse to her husband so he wouldn’t think she was seeking approval from the Elders for what they had done. Even though they were married properly it still has him worried.

“Diametree, tell Hatch not to worry. The whole thing was witnessed by my husband; that is why there are provisions for these things, because sometimes our bodies know what they are supposed to do before our heads and hearts have come to accept reality. Please child, take a deep breath and tell me what really is troubling you,” the Eldress asks.

Diametree looks up, the Eldress is telling her the truth, she sees right through her and she knew she would, which is why she wanted to come. Her confidence will help Diametree to speak. “I came regarding Emit and Ms. Jermains who just lost her father. Her father was well known to Emit and Hatch and she is as pure as a pearl straight from its shell. Emit wants his other half even though he feels this can’t happen,” she concludes.

“Can’t happen?” the Eldress asks

“It is Emit’s belief that because he is destined to be a recorder, and proud to be one mind you, that he is not going to be given the gift of a heart completed. He said this to me himself. He tells me, all the time, that he wants a brood of children, that he has enough of a heart to love them all, but instead he will learn to love those that he sees born. Eldress Waller, even a birther and a healer are entitled to a companion, can’t we find one for Emit? Would Ms. Jermains work? I love him so much, I want to see him all the way happy,” Diametree holds her hand over her mouth, it was very nervy of her to ask an Elder to do her a favor. Especially since they have accepted her and Hatch’s situation so readily.

Before she finds the words to apologize, the Eldress speaks to her, “My dear Diametree, you can’t fix everyone’s heart. This is not the first time you’ve been here on behalf of a person’s heart, is it?” she looks down through her glasses at Diametree, “although I do admit I appreciate it



more that you come to us with these requests and don’t try and speak in their heads to get them to do this on their own. That is one sure fire way to lose your gift,” she finishes with a stern look on her face.

“Yes, Eldress Waller. I understand that. I only use my gift when necessary, like the day our little boy was being born, I spoke to the birther and to my son,” she says softly.

The Eldress puts her hand on top of Diametree’s now shaking hands. “You’ve done good, no worries here, I promise. You understand that Mr. Jermain’s was not as pleasant as Emit and it would not have been wise to make the connection while he was alive. Some things have to wait for the right time,” she finishes with a smile and finally hands the baby back to Diametree.

“But he cared deeply for both Hatch and Emit, I’m afraid I don’t understand,” she says in desperation.

“To have a son in law as a recorder would mean Emit would know all of Mr. Jermain’s life and he would write them all down. If one would look at Mr. Jermain’s records there are pieces that are missing that had to be found out by other parties, it makes our history so hard when people think they don’t need to report everything. That their business should only be there’s. It’s a concept from the outers, they don’t let anyone in on their lives so no one knows whether to send condolences or congratulations any more. The worst part is that these are the same people who will also complain that no one sends them congratulations or condolences and they will create a grudge and never speak to that person who neglected them. Mr. Jermain’s was many things to many people but he was also very private. Emit would be obligated to record all and he couldn’t handle that. However, as a healer, the young Ms. might appreciate all the goings-on to be written down in ways her father never did. Most healers like to look back at the records to help decide how to heal a tricky issue. How close are you to the Jermain’s family? Can you invite them over?” the Eldress asks.

“I don’t know them well but Hatch has known all of them for a long time, so has Emit. That’s why I have reservations about this too, wouldn’t they have picked up on a connection themselves?” she asks.

“My sweet Diametree, sometimes the obvious is right in front of us and we don’t see. Matters of the heart are like that. It will hit you when you’re not looking like it did for you and Hatch, or in some cases it needs intervention,” she smiles.

“Is there something I can do for my dear cousin? Or is this now in your hands?” Diametree asks hugging her baby a little bit tighter.

“Let’s see how things play out in the coming week. If I need you, I’ll send for you,” the Eldress stands up to indicate the meeting is over. Diametree stands as well and walks over to her baby’s carriage. She knows that one is not supposed to address an Elder who has dismissed you. She watches as the Eldress carefully walks back up the stairs, she almost looks like she is floating. Longevity of life to see so many wondrous things must be amazing. Diametree thinks to herself as she walks back home.

“Don’t feel guilty that you came for the baby and Emit second my dear, I understood.” Diametree hears the Elder’s voice inside her own. She is a talker as well. Diametree smiles at the thought.

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It has been a quiet week for Emit as far as recordings go and he has enjoyed the quiet very much. So much so, he has taken the liberty to drive over to the outers's building they call a library. He is curious as to how they record their happenings and found out that this is the place to find that information. A place they keep records.

"Excuse me Ms.," Emit says to the woman behind the desk.

"Shhh," she says in an angry tone until she turns to see who is at the desk. "Ah, sorry, maybe you don't know the rules but we don't speak above a whispered tone so as not to disturb those that are reading sir. How is it done in your libraries?" she asks quietly.

"Is it so obvious that I am not from around here?" Emit asks.

"For one, you called me Ms., and two, you said excuse me. Unfortunately, many of our young ones don't remember these things anymore. They seem to knock on my desk then demand an answer immediately. So, thank you for your polite upbringing. I see you've brought your records book, or at least a copy of one," she says.

"I was curious about how you outers record what goes on around you all the time. There are so many more people to record. Do you have separate recorders in each community? Are there many recorders or only one like myself?" he asks.

"Call me Milly. I apologize for laughing at your questions, sir. I am aware that your community may not be as large as ours but you need to understand we 'outers', as you call us, number in the millions. There is no way we could have people write down our every move. Our government has records of births, deaths and marriages, business starting points and failures but that is about all. Any other information is put out through what we call the media. That would mean either newspaper or magazine. Have you any such publication in your community?" she asks curiously.

"No maám," Emit says, "recordings are personal and kept sacred."

"Follow me. You may find it quite interesting," Milly gets up from behind her desk to escort Emit to the periodical section of the library. She shows him hard bound encyclopedia, microfiche, newspapers and magazines. Each one more fascinating to him than the last.

"And you say, each one is written by someone else? How do you know they can be trusted? It's an honor for me to be a recorder, it means the community trusts me to do the right thing," he says.

Then she introduces him to social media on the computer. She shows him how everyone is recording their own on-goings now whether people want to hear it or not. This concept puzzles Emit. In fact, some of the negative newspaper headlines also puzzle him. The more he looks at these books the more he sees sadness in it all.

How can people live by hurting each other? There is no real enemy except themselves. They are hurting their environment in many ways and yet they keep going on. Emit thought this was going to be a wonderful trip, but now that he has learned all of this, he is grateful for being given the gift of recorder for their community. He knows other communities have recorders too, he has met some, and they are mostly like him. Proud to be a part of the big picture. Here the



outers are all trying to be the picture and not be part of anything bigger than themselves. Emit feels sadness inside his heart, he can’t seem to shake this odd feeling.

“Emit? What are you doing here?” Amethyst asks picking her head up from her book.

“Amethyst Jermaines, oh, I’m sorry. Did I disturb your reading? I’m not supposed to speak above a whisper Ms. Milly told me,” Emit answers surprised to see her.

Amethyst sits up a little more. She has never seen Emit outside of the community. He looks so large in this room. Everyone in the community loves Emit, he is so kind and caring; it is why people call him for so many things to record. They want to see him. He brings happiness when necessary and solace if it applies. As a healer, Amethyst can appreciate all that is Emit and seeing him so close right now is like seeing him for the first time.

They say when you go outside people can still tell where you came from and seeing Emit here, she can surely tell. She gets stares because of her blue streak in her hair, people out here ask her how she gets her roots so blue and she has no idea what they are talking about, she was born with hers. She tries to tell them this but they don’t understand and they get offended that she won’t share who does her hair.

“I’m here to look up new medicines that the outers have come up with. Some of them make sense to me, the plant-based ones, others, not so much. Did you know they have chemicals that can alter a body’s chemistry? It’s amazing to see but I’d be so afraid to use them. Our body systems are not quite the same I don’t think. But the ideas are fascinating. Emit, have you heard me? You look sad.” She says

“What? Oh, I’m sorry Amethyst, it’s just that I thought we were more alike than we are. Ms. Milly showed me this idea they call social media where people record their own lives for all to see. This upsets me. I record to make history correct not to make myself look better than the next guy. All of these things are so disillusioning. I’m going to head back, I have my car. Are you ready to go? I can give you a lift,” he says solemnly.

“Emit, that is very kind of you. I think I would like a ride back. Let me put away the books I took out ok? I’ll only be a moment,” she answers

Emit watches as Amethyst glides through the library to put her books away. She had taken out twenty of them, they were all over the table in front of her open to various pages. She is always looking out for people. Things like this warm his heart to see such kindness. He has been at a few of her healings to record them. She does well with both animals and people.

She has a smile that brightens a room when she walks in. Emit wonders who her other half is. Now that her father is not around to guard her, she will need someone. Her brothers have their own wives and families to watch after, they can’t take her in too.

“Ready?” he asks as she approaches again.

“Yes, thank you. I love coming here when things are calm in the community. It’s close enough so that I can get back quickly if I need to. Only, today, I didn’t take my car I used the bus system, it takes much too much time, it would never do in an emergency. I’m glad you’re here. Have you seen Hatch’s new baby? He is so handsome you could give him your heart so quickly,” she says adoringly.



“Yes, I saw him. I recorded the events of the day too, right away I might add. Oh, I’m sorry, I should not have said that about someone else, you might get the wrong impression of them. They are good people Amethyst. I really....” he stumbled on his words.

Amethyst puts her hand on his and says, “No worries, no one around here heard you and wouldn’t know who or what Hatch is anyway. Come, let’s get lunch before we go all the way back. My brother’s diner is on the way home, I stop by there a lot when I’ve come here,” she adds

“That sounds like a plan. I’ve been there before, chef makes a grand soup. My favorite food of all,” he exclaims.

“Really? You have a thing for soup? Such a big man like you, I’d have thought whole cows is what you snack on,” she says with a smile.

“Hmmm, a nice thought, but not a practical one. I have to keep in shape to make sure I can be everywhere at once. I suppose you have to too. I do appreciate a good steak now and again though. I use my mom’s recipe when I want a good one. She had the best, no contest,” he smiles. “Here is my car, let me get the door for you,” he says as he pulls the passenger side door open.

“Thank you Emit,” Amethyst’s stomach does a jump as she watches him run around the car to his side. He puts another coin in the meter before getting in.

“Why did you do that? The next person pays, you already paid for this spot,” she says.

“I like to share the wealth, maybe by doing this, I will make someone happy today,” he smiles.

Amethyst smiles too and her smile does something to his stomach, but he is not sure what that something is. The two talk constantly all the way to the restaurant, out of the car and to their seats. There has not been a break in conversation yet. Then the waitress interrupts them.

“Whoa Amethyst come up for air and tell me what you want to order,” the waitress says.

“Oh, Hi Myrtle. You remember Emit, don’t you? The recorder,” she says with pride in her voice.

“Happy to meet you Myrtle,” he says. “I’ll have your biggest steak and Amethyst will have one bigger. We both want a side salad with no dressing and only one serving of fried potatoes, we will share. Oh wait, bring us both a house favorite drink please,” he smiles

“How did you know Amethyst’s usual order? Wow, he is good. Better keep this one young lady,” the waitress addresses Amethyst before she walks away.

“Oh, I’m sorry, I didn’t ask you if it was ok for me to order for you. Ugh, I’m not a very good companion, am I? Tell me what you want, I’ll go over and change anything,” Emit says holding his head down.

Amethyst looks at him in amazement. How did he know exactly what I wanted? Literally it’s all I ever get here. He is so in tuned to me. Why is he so sad? Poor Emit, he does not know the power of his own charm. She reaches across the table and holds his hand. “Emit look at me, please,” she says.

Emit looks up slowly, her eyes are pleading with him, at least he thinks they are. “Yes?” he asks.

“How did you know? I mean really, she is not kidding, it’s what I order all the time. She only asks what I want because sometimes I change my drink. Myrtle is my brother’s wife she



knows me well, but it is you she doesn’t, I think you impressed her,” she says still holding his hand. She can feel the sadness in him. All the gaiety in the car was not enough to change his inner mood and as a healer she can’t do a person’s emotions. She can only change the body not the heart. “How can I make your happiness come back?” she asks.

“There is nothing to heal here Amethyst. I’m having a nice time with you. But I do feel a bit bad for making you laugh when maybe you want to still be contemplating your father’s return to nature,” Emit says quietly.

“Actually, my father did not always appreciate my laughter, he said as a healer I was supposed to be thinking at all times so that I would be ready to save a life at a moment’s notice, if necessary. Emit, he was not like me in so many ways it’s a wonder I received his gift. My brother’s all received my mother’s gift of being creative. One is a chef, as you know, and another is a weaver. Then there is my oldest brother who also was a healer, until he joined the outers in their pursuit of better medicine. He joins them out in the forests to find new plant-based medicines.

Father was not proud of him, but the rest of us are. He uses his healing gift to help them to see if the medicines work. You remember him don’t you Emit? You recorded when he saved that young boy from falling from the sycamore tree a couple of years ago,” she says as she finally takes a deep breath. “Sorry I tend to talk in full conversations in one breath,” she smiles.

Emit leans back in his chair but before he could speak the waitress appears. “Emit, did you record the baby from the Tudor mountains? Or was that someone else?” she asks.

“Um, I was not home that day, it was someone else. I heard there were a lot of problems, they had to call a healer after the birther could not finish the job and then there was a spirit healer called as well. A lot can happen when a child joins the world. As wondrous as it is, it takes a lot of work on the part of the mother, the birther and everyone around them,” Emit instructs her.

“Wow Emit, you really know birthing. I’m impressed. I hope you can be at my next one,” Myrtle says.

“Myrtle! When? Oh my, this is wonderful news. Isn’t this great news Emit?!” Amethyst jumps from her chair to hug her sister in law. She puts a hand on her belly and smiles, the baby feels strong. “Whoo hoo!” she says before she sits down.

Emit smiles at her enthusiasm. “I guess you told her,” a male voice says from behind Myrtle. Amethyst jumps up again to hug her brother. He hugs her back and swings her from side to side. Emit watches this enjoyable exchange with a pang in his heart. He wishes that he could have had that with his brother but his brother is no longer around, he returned to nature last year after an accident. The healer could no longer help him.

Emit looks down at his food, he wants to share in her joy, as a matter of fact he finds himself wondering how her brother is feeling right now holding her so tight. Where did that come from Emit? He asks himself. “Oh Emit I could not be happier, I’m so glad you started eating without me because sometimes I can get lost in my brother’s lives and forget I’m with anyone,” she says still in her excitement.

“Oh, there I go again. I’m so used to being alone I forgot my manners. Please eat some. I’ll wait for you to catch up. It was not nice of me,” Emit kicks himself under the table.



“Emit, I will catch up easily. Have you ever seen me eat a steak? My brother always tells me to slow down because he doesn’t think I even taste his meats. Please, go ahead and eat, I didn’t mean to make you feel bad again. Honest I didn’t. I am happy you feel like yourself here. It’s a great place isn’t it?” she asks with a mouth full of food.

“I like watching you eat Amethyst. Most women don’t enjoy a good steak. On top of that you are enjoying the salad with equal enthusiasm. I suppose as a healer you need all your nutrients and your body responds positively to what you give. I’ve never seen that in someone before. I’ve had a nice time being with you this afternoon. I’m happy for your brother and Myrtle, new life is always good news to me. I was the one who recorded your father by the way,” Emit speaks quietly as the restaurant has become full with patrons and he doesn’t think it wise to announce personal information.

“Yes, I know Emit. The family is told who the recorder is in case there is a discrepancy.” She says quietly back to him.

“Discrepancy?” he sits up quickly feeling accused.

“Well, yes, sometimes family members get very picky about how they want things recorded in the end. You did a wonderful job why do you look so scared right now?” she asks.

“I’m good at my position Amethyst. I take pride in every recording. I check and double check them, no one has ever called me back on something. How else could I take your comment?” his voice a little shaky now trying not to get emotional in front of all these people.

Amethyst sees Emit’s reaction and she knows he is hurting right now. She also sees that his hand is shaking and he wants to leave. She can always get another steak tomorrow. Besides, she wants to satisfy him more than her stomach for once. “Come Emit, let’s leave now. We can pick up dessert later if you still want to be seen with me. Do you want to go over to the flaming pond? I find the pond a good place to relax. I use it all the time to heal my own thoughts,” she says as she stands up to help him understand she means to leave.

Emit looks up, Amethyst’s eyes are glistening, oh damn Emit, you made a woman cry in public. The Elders aren’t thinking of you, you can’t even think of anyone but you. Her hand is out idiot you’d better take it or you’ll be insulting her twice in one meal. Emit says to himself. He stands to take her hand, Amethyst calls to Myrtle that they will grab more later.

They walk to the car hand in hand but after Emit puts her in the car, he hears something. ‘Emit, she is sweet on you, I hope you see that, and no, you didn’t do anything wrong, that glistening in her eyes is for you, not sad tears. Sorry, this is Myrtle I am a listener and with listening comes talking but only when necessary and this time I found it necessary. You two are very much alike, she always feels she does the wrong thing or says the wrong thing, same as you have been thinking at lunch today. By the way, I only listen when a person’s thoughts are loud and you’ve been yelling at yourself this whole meal. Relax. Take the day for what it is. A chance meeting and a really nice way to get to know each other. Obviously, the Elders are helping out, there is no healing to be called to and no recordings this whole time you’ve been together. Goodbye my new friend.”

The words stop as he gets into the car. He looks out his window and sees Myrtle at the door, he nods his head and she does too. He knows it takes a lot for a listener to do the talking as



well. She will most likely go in and sit down a few minutes. So, she thinks he is supposed to be with Amethyst right now. Ok, why not, he will try and let himself be open.  
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Emit and Amethyst meet for steak lunches once a week now for a couple of months. They visit the fire pond at midnight together to see the flames at their best. They talk, they laugh and occasionally they even cry. She doesn’t seem to mind that his emotions come out sometimes and he doesn’t mind that she has a hard time saying words in the right way, her intentions are always good. People understand that about her and accept her healings.

Hatch and Diametree have invited the two of them over for dinner tonight. Hatch says they haven’t had guests since the babe was born and who better to have than his best friend and his new girl. Emit hadn’t realized Amethyst was his until Hatch made that statement, the idea really made him smile.

They arrive early, of course, because Emit always does. Amethyst knocks on the door, “A beautiful home here,” she says to him.

“Why thank you, we like it,” Diametree says as she opens the door. “Come, let me show you the rest. You men can deal with the baby.” Amethyst giggles as she is escorted away from Emit, she looks over her shoulder to see him with the babe in his hands, they are so loving, his eyes are taking in the babe in his arms, before she even leaves the room the child is asleep on Emit’s large arm.

“So, time is getting close, what are you two going to do?” Diametree is never one to use extra words.

“I know that. In our community we are almost at the point of no return even if we wanted to. I like him Diametree, everything about him, but he is still so hard to read sometimes. Emit lives in his own mind and it’s hard to join him sometimes,” she sighs and sits down on the stool by the counter to help Diametree chop some of the greens.

“Emit is a simple man Amethyst. You are the first person to get this close to him. He has always longed to be with someone but he is probably scared. He most likely feels you are too good for him. I’ll bet he goes to see the Elders Waller soon. He is close with them. If I spoke out of turn I’m sorry, I have a tendency to speak my mind and not care who will hear me,” she says looking at the shocked expression on Amethysts face.

Amethyst stares at her for a moment, “I’m not shocked you said what is on your mind, I know he is close with the Elders Waller, he has spoken of them. I’m shocked that you feel we are a complete heart. I’m not sure I know how that is supposed to feel,” she says.

“When you inhale, he exhales. You come in a room, he lights up, you watch him and you light up. I don’t know if it can be any simpler than that. Who do you see in your mind the last before you go to sleep, who do you see at the first light of day?” Diametree asks.

“Emit,” she says thoughtfully, “Oh my goodness Diametree, can this be real? Could we have found each other by happenstance? Fairy tales are made of ideas such as these. We’d best finish up in here, no telling what those men are discussing.”



The women laugh and continue cooking together as if they have been doing the same routine for years. Hatch sits with Emit in the sitting room. “Emit, how are you going to secure her heart? Something big or small?”

“Hatch! What makes you think this is the time for something? Yes, she is a wonder to be around, and yes, I think of her in all sorts of ways but a heart complete? Without the Elders involved? Next to impossible,” Emit exclaims.

“Emit, it happened to me and Diametree, remember?” Hatch says.

“Yes, so there was the one in a million, it should not happen again. At least not so soon,” Emit says.

“Why not, maybe it happens more often than we all think. Maybe, we are lead to believe that it’s impossible so we appreciate it so much more when it’s really there. Emit, it’s time. You either do something yourself or go speak to the Elders Waller,” Hatch says.

The women walk in laughing loudly, Emit loves Amethyst’s laugh it always takes over her whole body. “Shhhhh, girls, he is asleep,” Emit says in a hushed voice.

The women hold their stomachs and run out of the room laughing even more. “I don’t want to know, do you?” Hatch asks. Emit shakes his head.

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Emit sits outside Elder Waller’s window hoping to speak to him sooner than later. Last time he was here, it took a couple of hours. He sits and waits patiently though, this is too important to be rushed.

“Good afternoon Emit, I take it things are well with the community because I don’t recall any weddings recorded that are amiss. Is it about the Menny’s twins? Are they ok?” The Eldress asks.

Emit turns to greet the Eldress, he will speak to her if that who is out here, it is their wish. “Good afternoon Eldress Waller. You are looking lovely as usual. I like the greens in your hair,” Emit says casually.

“Why Emit, if I didn’t know better I’d say you were looking too close at this old lady,” she teases.

“Old is in the mind Eldress. I am actually here on a personal matter. A matter of the heart; believe it or not. Is it possible that I, too, have found my heart’s other half without your intervention?” he asks.

The Eldress smiles, she knew they would find each other, she has been watching them ever since that accidental meeting at the outers’s library. “Emit, finding one’s heart’s other half involves a lot of faith in the powers that be. You’ve always believed in all that our community does. I am assuming you are asking to make this official, am I wrong?” she asks with a smile he can’t see because his humble head is hanging low.

“Yes maám,” he answers simply.

“I will be right back,” she leaves the courtyard for a moment and returns with a small box for Emit. “This is what Amethyst will appreciate the most,” she says to him, “ask her to complete



your heart, I’m pretty confident she will accept the gift as well as your heart,” the Eldress smiles again.

“Thank you maám, I think I now know what it means to be inwardly happy. We are meeting at the fire pond again tonight, I think I will talk to her then, yes?” he asks for confirmation that this is a good idea.

“You can plan that, but as you know, either one of you can be called away at any given moment, let it go if that happens, and if there are no interruptions, congratulations my dear child.” She opens her arms to him and Emit willingly walks into them. Eldress Waller does not offer her hands to too many. Her hug feels complete to Emit, it’s the only way he can describe how he feels in her arms.

~ ~ ~

For two weeks Emit and Amethyst have been trying to meet up at the fire pond. Emit is beginning to think the Eldress told him about not making it there because it was not supposed to happen there. But where is such a moment supposed to happen? Where else makes her so happy? Her brother’s restaurant? With her brother the traveling medicine man? Or her brother the weaver? All these people make her happy all the time. Eating makes her happy all the time too.

Emit sits up in his bed, an idea has come very clear to him. He quickly gets on his computer and sends out electronic mail messages to all of her brothers. Within minutes he receives the answers he is hoping for. Emit resumes his sleep with a smile.

In the morning, Emit is called to do three different recordings before lunch, Amethyst has been busy with a few animals that are having difficulty breathing. Emit is hoping that his evening plans will go smoothly. Everything and everybody is set to do their part, and he has the gift from the Eldress to give her, at the right time.

Emit picks up Amethyst at her home right before her usual dinner time. “Good evening Emit. You’re looking awfully happy tonight,” she says with a smile.

“I am actually. Can I come in?” he asks.

“Sure, why not. I’ll open the windows though because it’s been hot in my place all day and you may not like it as much as I do,” she says walking to the window.

“I like it when it’s hot too, I usually open all my windows when friends come over,” he smirks at the coincidence.

Amethyst looks to see if he is joking, he isn’t. “Well, who would have thought? Would you like a drink? I made some nut cookies if you’d like,” she answers him.

There is a knock at the door, Amethyst stands to open the door, “Hey baby sister, am I too late?” he asks. Emit watches as Amethyst’s face lights up and she jumps into her big brother’s arms. He lifts her as easily as a leaf in the wind. A horn honks behind him, and the two of them look outside. Her other brothers, along with Diametree and Hatch are all getting out of cars and coming to the house. Amethyst never needs a reason to celebrate life, before she even knows what is going on, she runs out to everyone to give hugs and receive twirls. All of her brothers are much larger than she is, this has always been her favorite kind of hug.



Diametree and Hatch receive the same enthusiasm. They all walk into her place together and Emit is still sitting on the chair. With all the laughter and all the cheers Amethyst finally sees him still sitting there and she smiles at him, the biggest smile she has ever given him.

With her brothers gathered around her and her friends by her side as well, Emit begins to speak, “Amethyst. I never knew that I was living with half a heart. I never knew that it needed completion until I met you. I thought that maybe I would at least find a mate, and that was even a maybe, but then I found you. Well, I knew you but I never knew about you.

I never knew you liked your home warm, but your feet cold in the midnight waters like me. I didn’t know you could eat a steak faster than your larger counterparts and enjoy it even more when you do, I learned how to see the flowers not only for their beauty but for what they can do for us. I saw how you can take a seemingly wilted plant and bring it back to flourish.

I am that wilted plant too Amethyst. I am in need of flourishing but I won’t be able to do it without you. While I may tower above you physically, you are so far above me in every other way. It is for these reasons and more that I ask you to please say you are willing to complete my heart on a daily basis. With the blessing of the Elders Waller, I bring you this,” Emit walks towards the crowd of people and Amethyst meets him half way.

She takes the box and opens the lid. A ring made of a petrified healing plant and on top is a seed. Her heart skips a few beats in excitement. She takes the seed in her hand and whispers to him, “This is what you make tea from to enable you to have children. I will save it for when it is officially recorded that we are married. This ring is all I am. I do not know how you knew this, but this plant is what healing stems from, only a healer would know. You are wise beyond your years Emit. This will give me strength and knowledge to do what needs to be done for so many people. And you my dear Emit will give my life all that it will need.” She slides the ring on her thumb as is the custom of her community and puts the seed in her locket for safe keeping.

As Emit stands taller he picks her up in his arms and she grabs him around his neck. He holds her close to see her face and into her eyes. “Is that a yes?” he smiles.

“Yes!!”

The whole crowd begins to cheer. Emit puts her down so she can show off her ring, the seed, she will keep as their secret. No one needs to know. Hatch walks over to his oldest friend, “Well, that was a great speech sir. In front of all that she cares about. You did good man, you did real good,” he pulls his friend in for a hug.

~ ~ ~

The Elder Waller performs the ceremony himself. Diametree was asked to make the flower wreath for the bride’s headdress, Hatch is in charge of making sure all the brothers know what their part is because there is no father to do what needs to be done.

After the ceremony, in a private room, the Eldress Waller gives them a private blessing, she serves them their first meal together and then leaves to join the others in celebration.

“A steak, how apropos,” Amethyst says.



“The Eldress made us both our favorite meals. We don’t have to finish, there is plenty of food out there waiting, and lots of celebrating to do, with everyone we love,” he smiles at his new wife.

One is not allowed to record one’s own information because that would be biased. But the next day, Emit and Amethyst receive their license to consummate their union.

Tea was served.

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