

## A Seed of Hope

“Mommy, it’s too *hot*,” the little girl whined dramatically, slumping over as she plodded through the grassy field behind her mother. “I want to go home.” She stopped for a minute as if to emphasize her point, and then, seeing her mother was not also pausing, continued to follow her, trotting to catch up. “Where are we going?”

“You’ll see. Come on, before it gets dark!” She took her daughter’s clammy hand in hers and looked up at the sky. She couldn’t help but wonder if she was doing the right thing, if it was fair to her daughter. Was she really fit, she wondered, to raise a child, another human being, craft an entire life, all on her own. *No*, she shook her head as if to somehow jolt the doubtful thoughts eating at her out of her mind. *I’m doing the right thing. I can do this.*

Over the grassy plains, far into the distance, she could just barely make out the vague outline of their new house. Having just moved in that morning, both were tired, but she felt this was absolutely necessary.

She took a deep breath, and realized just how refreshing the crisp cool fall air was. The sun’s radiant, golden warmth caressed her as she marched on in no particular direction toward the end of the field. *This is good for us*, she thought. *This will be good for us.* That was, after all, the entire idea she had based their move to the countryside on. She *hoped* it might do some good for the both of them, at least.

Still, she couldn’t deny the fact that she had also moved hoping that some of the pain of divorce would be washed away in the country’s clear waters. But she also couldn’t shake the feeling that perhaps she was running away from her problems, from her past, from her pain. *No*, she told herself. *We’re not running away, we’re starting anew.* And just hearing herself say those words, she felt a surge of energy. She was ready. For what, she didn’t know, but at least it was something new.

“Wow, Mama, look!”

She heard her daughter’s breathless exclamation beside her and looked up for the source of her awe. Then she saw it. To say it was beautiful would be an understatement. Above them, the sun had begun to set, and its serene descent into the horizon had streaked the sky with an array of vibrant colors. The soft, billowy clouds seemed to scatter along the canvas of an atmosphere like splatters of white paint. The sun’s light blazed brilliantly before it seemed to sink into the edge of the heavens. She stood in the middle of the field, surrounded only by grass and sky, mesmerized by the raw beauty of nature, soaking it all in and hoping the moment would never end.

“Mommy, hurry up!” Her daughter’s voice broke her out of her thoughts. The little girl had begun to run ahead, also having been reinvigorated by the beautiful day. “This place is amazing!” She exclaimed in glee as she skipped through the tall stalks of grass, laughing just to hear her jubilant voice echo off the forest periphery.

Reluctantly, she began to run beside her daughter until they reached the end of the field. *This was it*, she thought. *A blank slate.*

The things she was going to draw!

“Ok, *now* will you tell me what we’re doing here?” The girl crossed her arms impatiently, still fidgeting with excitement.

She reached into her pocket and pulled out a miniscule object, barely visible on the skin of her palm. A seed- one that would grow into a tree over the years, first poking through the thick layer of dirt, timid, unsure, but soon confidently reaching for the sky for the rest of eternity.

Together, they would grow. Through thick and thin, they would stand tall, their roots planted firmly into the ground. It wasn't going to be easy, she knew, but it would be worth it.

With that in mind, she handed the seed, that simple, tiny ball full of life, to her daughter. "Will you do the honors?"

The little girl grinned, showing a gap where her two front teeth should have been and kneeled to plant it. She crouched down beside her and together they set it into the earth. Dirt squeezed under their fingernails as they dug a niche for the seed. *A new beginning*, she thought, *for all three of us*.

And as she stood up from the grass, brushing off her pants and taking her daughter's hand into hers, she felt something she hadn't felt in a long time- a barely noticeable flicker sprouting in her chest, in her heart.

Hope.