

IN STONE SERIES

Name
in
Stone



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CECILIA JOHNSON

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~ Book three ~

CJ ORIGINALS PUBLISHING



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DEDICATION

To Earth and all of the wonders, sustenance, and life it offers each one of us every day.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

*I thank my husband Mickey for his endless support and encouragement.
I'm a lucky gal.*

*Arise and drink your bliss
for anywhere you live is holy ~*
William Blake

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I BLIND PURSUIT

Swiping at low branches and sticking spider webs, I ran as fast as I was able. The forest was silent except for the moaning wind, the snapping twigs underfoot, and my labored breaths. It was barely dawn, and my guardian was dying.

Recklessly, I'd ridden my bike three-quarters of a mile on the gravel road to the cottage on the corner. I discarded it in the woods at the edge of my Aunt Janet's yard. The almost-full moon was high in the twilight sky and an icy chill clawed through my thin clothing. Shivering, I followed the well-worn path that twisted and turned through the forest surrounding Shirkee's pond. After leaving the trail, I used my full senses and leapt over logs, flowing creek beds, and large rocks. The thrumming of the bear-shaped Spiritstone in the leather pouch over my chest guided me through the deepest shadows toward Murdell.

The bear had spoken to me as I slept, bidding me farewell. The crystal skull hadn't entered my consciousness since the firestorm, the destruction of the orchard, and Willow's massacre. But as if stirring from a long slumber, it whispered, *Liby, wake up.*

The hunter had injured Murdell, but had not made a clean shot, and the bear had escaped to his den at the base of the bluff. I had to get to my friend. With all my heart, I wanted to save him.

Though the property was posted, I was sure the hunters would follow Murdell. The Spiritstone warned me to take care. I heard far-off crashing and curses as one of the hunters yelped with pain. *He probably tripped.* Knowing where the bear hid, I was sure I would make it there first.

Gasping, I doubled over as waves of agonizing, white-hot pain seared my insides. With crouching steps, I grunted and continued forward. I pulled my hand from my stomach and was horrified by the blood dripping from my fingers. Almost instantly, my hand flashed, changing into a black, bloodied paw. The agony wasn't mine, it was Murdell's. *Oh, my poor Murdell.* As I kept moving, in my mind I saw the bear's blood pooling beneath him. Almost as abruptly as it started, the empathetic ache stopped, and I felt his passing.

Noooo... Sucking in a shuddering sob, unbidden tears coursed down my face. Murdell's life force, the power with which he had so easily and

gracefully achieved motion, had left him. My heart felt as if a hungry wolverine was tearing and gnashing at it, trying to pull it in two.

Murdell had been a friend, teacher, and my avowed protector. Right or wrong, there was no way I was going to allow anyone to gut, skin, and desecrate Murdell's beautiful body. Putting my friend on display was out of the question; he would stay in the arms of his Earth mother.

Though I wasn't able to save him, somehow I had to shield him. As I brushed and turned leaves with a broken branch along the path Murdell had taken to his den, the silver ring on my index finger occasionally glistened in the morning's light, and an idea took form. The ring was a receptor of sorts. It linked me directly to the crystal skull setting in its amethyst container on my bedstead. I hadn't used its endless knowledge since my quest to find the crystal case. Not since the firestorm. The case was the Mindstone's power source, and the crystal skull had been charging, so to speak, for months.

Never having used the Mindstone to alter someone's perception, I didn't know what to do, so I asked it for guidance. Quickly, I gained my answers along with assurances that my instincts were correct. I encouraged the wrath of the wind, and it blew swirling dried leaves and buffered the noise I made. Continuing to cover Murdell's final path, I followed it in reverse.

Snapping branches and hushed voices carried through the tangled brush. The hunters were closing in. Trembling, I slipped behind a large oak, and with the aid of the Mindstone, I changed the bears' trail to an entirely new direction and reality. Blinding the hunters from Murdell's real tracks, the path now led sharply to the south and then back to the east, instead of the westerly direction Murdell had taken. In my mind, the route eventually turned back, up creek, and disappeared along the small tributary that would lead the hunters far away from my friend's final resting place.

The hunters and their dogs approached. One of the canines slowly moved toward me, sniffing and snuffing loudly. I held my breath, even though I knew they couldn't hear me because I'd joined the crystal skull's power to cloak the area.

The second tracker was already on the phony trail, but I feared the first pooch's big nose was going to smell its way through the barrier of my manufactured illusion. She inched closer to the large oak and glanced up in confusion. Controlling my shaking, I wordlessly encouraged the hound to move on. Using the skull, mind-to-mind I pointed the dog toward the creek. Like magic, she turned, nose to the ground, hustling along in the direction of the other pursuer. The unfamiliar hunters were relatively quiet except for the encouragement they gave to their dogs. "Come on, Ginger. That a girl, Cinnamon. Hunt that bear."

Guilt assailed me as I realized this might also mean the death of an additional bear in the region. If this group were not able to retrieve their

trophy, surely they would hunt another. Knowing every act has its own set of repercussions, I almost relented. Before I did, the Mindstone confirmed that no other bear's life would be taken anywhere from these particular huntsmen this year. The crystal skull could see into the future as well as the past, and its assurances eased some of my guilt for denying the hunters their victory. The stone showed me they would not return. Still, I waited until they were long gone before I walked to where I knew my friend's body rested.

Reaching for the pouch lying against my heart, I pulled it from under my shirt. By the time I reached Murdell's den, I had retrieved the treasure from within the small sack. Holding the silky, smooth, bear Spiritstone I felt its usual buzzing throb.

I did not climb into the den with Murdell. The Mindstone had shown me the lifeless bear and the way he had curled into himself as he'd taken his dying breath. Sitting outside the entrance, I closed my eyes and reached inside until my hand met with thick, coarse fur. Along with his pungent odor, his lingering energy hung close to his once-powerful body. With a slight tingle, I felt a last touch from his spirit, which passed through my hand into the Spiritstone. Though it caressed me with barely a tickle, my heart felt pierced.

My tears had ceased while I worked with the Mindstone to misdirect the hunters; now I was drowning in them. Reflexively, I kneaded the still-warm bear's fur, rocking slowly, and weeping with heartsick abandon. My ribs ached and my throat tightened. I cried harder as memories flickered in my mind.

The first time I saw Murdell, I was sitting beside my younger sister, Abigale. On a large tree branch with our legs dangling over the water's edge, I spotted the bear in the bushes about fifteen yards from where we sat. Our minds connected, and without spoken words, we conversed. At a young age, when I lost my friends and felt alone, it was Murdell I sought out.

The bear was there when I presented my wide-eyed brother, Andrew, Abigail's twin, with the hummingbird Spiritstone. In my mind's eye, I watched Murdell fighting a mountain lion on a rainy night. He had valiantly saved Brenna, my Aunt Janet's schnauzer, from certain death. There were so many wonderful memories.

I reluctantly released my hold on Murdell. Recalling my magnificent friend as he appeared during our last meeting, I worked hard to hold on to the clear vision of his strength. Large muscled and shining midnight black, Murdell was respected by all in the forest. His natural confidence and effortless wild grace would remain in my memories, not those fleeting moments before his death.

Suddenly, a strong vibration came from the Spiritstone I clutched tightly in my hand. The ancient relic was stone from the creator, and there were abundant Spiritstones, one for each species. Holding the talisman up, through watery eyes, I gazed upon “Bears” essence. From either side of the stone, bears paraded to its dazzling center. Brown, white, cinnamon, blond, and black of all bear shapes and sizes made their way in an infinite procession. Though the Spiritstone was relatively small, the bears in my vision appeared as if they padded in front of me full size. And even though I had looked at this amazing spectacle on innumerable occasions, I was still in awe. Subdued, I watched, mesmerized. One black bear actually stopped the parade for a moment and looked directly at me. That had never happened before. Gasping with surprise, my heart skipped a beat, and I expelled one last hiccupping sob. It was Murdell.

The bear said with his distinctive voice, “Goodbye for now, Lily.”

He turned toward the stone’s brilliant center and walked into its sparkling light. With a quavering smile and a prayer, I kissed the Spiritstone reverently and whispered, “See you later, Murdell.”

My friend’s spirit, walking among the others in the amazing, red, blue, and green, bear-shaped stone, gave me an unexpected feeling of peace. I polished it on my cotton jacket before returning the Spiritstone to its leather pouch and tucking it back under my shirt. After wiping my eyes with my sleeve, I got back to work.

With the help of the Mindstone and spirits in the forest, I disguised the entrance to the den with shrubs and ivy. I wasn’t taking chances; no one would find Murdell. Together, Andrew and I would figure out a way to collapse the cave and bury our friend. His body would return to the one who nurtured and sustained him through his potent life. *Oh, I’m going to miss you, Murdell.*

Not ready to go home, I returned to the forest path in the opposite direction the hunters had taken. Poignant memories of lost friends crowded my mind. Touching prickly conifer boughs, I breathed deeply, inhaling the intoxicating scent of pine pitch and the earthy, slightly dusty smell of fallen leaves. I could easily become the tree, the leaves, or anything else seen and unseen. My abilities in nature would be unfathomable to most people. But I was melancholy, so I kept my connection at bay.

Colleen had taught me about nature. For years, she’d been my best friend. Our unlikely relationship, because of our extreme age difference, had started shortly after I began delivering eggs to her. My weekly lunches at the elderly Mrs. Harrison’s had been magical. It was late spring, around my twelfth birthday, when Colleen presented me with The Box. It was adorned with lilies and an intricately carved hummingbird, and though exquisite to see, the real magic happened when the box was opened. Inside, the cover was etched with elaborate scrollwork, and below that, seven

names. Colleen's name was engraved above mine, which was the last in order.

Colleen had carved the box identical to the one she had, except she'd added a hummingbird to honor the likeness of the Spiritstone she wore around her neck. A few short weeks after giving me the priceless box, at the age of ninety-three, Colleen crossed over, and the magic her box held transferred to mine, changing my world forever. This property had belonged to her, but she'd left it along with the cottage on the corner to my Aunt Janet. It has been only a little over five years since she died, but it seemed like a lifetime.

In five years I'd learned how to be still. In the stillness anything was possible. With little effort, I could blend with and become my surroundings, fly with the birds, or become the wind. Though it'd been a long process and it would be hard to describe how it's done, for me it's normal. In the quiet, I hear and speak with animals, insects, and plants. Creating energy fields and stepping into other dimensions takes a special kind of focus, but the ease once it's learned is astounding. Andrew picked it up so quickly that I felt slow and clumsy for a time. Though I knew I could do things I was sure few had ever accomplished, my humanness got in the way all of the time. I could be fearless, but trusting myself was still harder than negotiating unknown dimensions.

Reaching the edge of the pond, I kneeled in the silt at its shoreline. Seeping through my jeans, the water was bitter cold, and held the scent of fermented leaves. It smelled of autumn.

Leaning in, I peered at my barely wavering reflection. Green eyes stared back. I ran my index finger along the slightly puckered scar at the corner of my lip. It was still pink, but it was healed. Turning my face to the side, I gazed at the smattering of red scores that flecked my cheek, up my jawline, all the way to my ear. Though my face's alterations were noticeable to a casual observer, to those who knew me, it was my eyes that appeared the most changed, rarely smiling.

Aunt Janet had finally been able to even out my short, barbered hair. It'd been two months since the nasty *Gutlox*, the Raisin, hacked off my long, dark, honey-colored hair to feed its unusual appetite. The firestorm ravaged what remained, and with my multitude of injuries, rendered me, for a time, virtually unrecognizable.

I ran my fingers through my hair and rubbed the stubble along the nape of my neck. I kind of liked the way it felt. What would John think of my new appearance? Scowling doubtfully, I swiped at the water's surface and abruptly turned away from the rippling pond.

Quickly, I stood and tried to ring the dark wet silt from my pants legs. *Lily Ann Bud, don't be an idiot; John doesn't even know who he is. How would he*

remember me? He probably doesn't even know it's 1981. Another lost friend, but this one so dear, so loved, was still alive. Amnesia had stolen his memories.

John disappeared along with his father and his father's fiancé over two years ago. The plane that Spencer, his dad, had been flying crashed. Spence and Tanya's bodies had been recovered, but John's whereabouts were still unknown. With my isolated premonitions, the authorities were able to piece together information about his head injuries and the hospital where he was last seen, but little else. *Not for long. Now that the Mindstone was open for business, nothing was going to stop me from finding John—my Jomradin.*

John and I had spent a lifetime together. His name had been Jomradin then. We had been spouses of change, on a dimension where the magic of existence was commonplace. Life was short for all but the phoenix. We were golden phoenix, he and I. We had been mated for 500 years in a past life of mythical proportion. And now he doesn't even know who he is.

Riding back toward home, on the gravel of Maple Road, my eyes stung with tears. Again, I thought of Murdell, his straightforward way and wonderful guidance. When I spent time with him, I felt invincible. He was my precious champion.

Only last night I had decided it was time to go into the orchard to connect, if I could, with Willow's brethren. The firestorm had taken more than the remnants of my hair. It had destroyed my closest confidante. I missed our easy companionship so much. The tree, with its simple yet direct knowledge, was a huge part of my education, but more importantly, my balance. Willow was the first being to awaken me to the cadence of nature. And the tree had helped me more than any other to understand my own rhythm.

After the firestorm, Andrew and I had a memorial of sorts for Willow. Since then, I couldn't bring myself to visit the orchard. I went through torture to recover the crystal case where the Mindstone now rested. Though I was successful, it came at a high cost. Because of my victory, Gloam retaliated by bringing a rain of hell and death down on me, the orchard, and my oldest friend.

The being threatening the Earth's very existence had told me that the planet would not save itself. Gloam was powerful enough to cause earthquakes and bring beings here from other dimensions. Gloam was a Cruin, a gatekeeper of Earth's soul. There were only eight Cruin on this planet. One of them, Loam, was my counsel. None of Earth's spirits are sure how a Cruin could have become corrupted. I still didn't understand how Loam could have been unaware. Loam told me all Cruin are of the same mind.

I'd been given and attracted tools and allies. But I really didn't know what it was going to take to keep the world turning. Though past events had primed my well of confidence, they did not fill its depths.

Not ready to face anyone, I left my bike in the carport. Making my way through the uneven grass of the yard, I unbolted the door on the white coop with red trim, painted to match the barn. Latching it open, several clucking chickens immediately made jittery nervous steps over the threshold and headed outside to scavenge bugs. After filling the feeder and water containers, I gathered the eggs and then left the half full basket just inside the door.

The trees surrounding the outbuildings were partially bare and many of the leaves, bright-colored only days before, littered the grass. As I kicked my feet through the thin dry layer, they swooshed loudly and the sound brought our happy Jasper out from wherever he'd been. Wiggling and bending sideways while showing his full set of teeth in a goofy affectionate smile, cheered me some.

Hugging him, I kissed the bridge of his nose and said, "What a good boy. What have you been up to?"

He flopped to his back, hoping for a chest rub. I obliged. Although I talk with flowers, trees, and other animals, unless I obtained the Mindstone's help, most of the time I still didn't know what our mutt of a dog had on his mind unless it entailed affection. Jasper knew what I was thinking though because he wriggled back onto his feet and trotted toward the orchard. He looked back after a few steps and pounced playfully as if to say, "Come on, it's where you were headed anyway."

With a slight smile, I said, "Smarty dog. All right, I'm coming." But I didn't hurry. Guilt and loss overwhelmed me. Then I remembered a conversation I had with Willow quite some time ago. Willow had told me, "Guilt is a human emotion. Nature does not feel guilt."

It seemed crazy to the emergency responders who brought me to the hospital the day of the firestorm that the backyard had been spared the devastation of the orchard that lay just beyond. Sadly, I walked into the area where immense willows and twenty or so large apple and pear trees used to stand. My father and brothers had cut up most of the downed trees, and we all helped stack it in neat rows not far from the back porch. It still pained me to think of Willow as firewood. Destruction was everywhere I looked.

Look closer. The whispered voice caught my attention.

Stumbling over small branches cluttering the area, I maneuvered as quickly as I could to Willow's twisted stump. Alongside and in between, the lengthy veins stretching outward away from the mangled trunk a very small, fragile twig of a willow protruded from the ground. Leaves still clung to several of its branches.

The voice was different but the inflection was similar. "Willow?"

"We are all of the same spirit." Reading my thoughts, the tree spoke again. "Do not be sad for me, Lily. I am still here, and although I am not the same in appearance, you will always recognize my spirit."

Running my hand along the flesh of the silky sapling, I said, "You're like a baby."

A curious little sound I took for glee bubbled forth. "Do not be fooled. I still have the knowledge of the ages." That was my Willow, all right.

With renewed hope, I sat down in the seat that nature created just for me, a not quite flat and somewhat rounded spot on one of the vast roots. Then, I relaxed back onto what was left of Willow's old trunk. The view from my special place would never be the same as it had, but I no longer needed the secrecy of the tree.

Willow said, "Now you will be able to appreciate your surroundings without my bulk interfering."

With a sigh, I said, "I never considered anything about you interfering. I miss your swaying umbrella of foliage."

"I am renewed, Lily. One of my branches found its way into the earth during the storm that transformed me. I am already rooted. Now, each year, my vantage will alter and my strength will double."

I shouldn't be sad, everything changes, but I had dueling opinions. I said, "But you were so magnificent."

Willow was excited about its new form. "Lily, the past is over; I need only to live each moment as it comes."

With its small stature, the tree's once melodic voice that was like a song filled with wind, echoes, and whispered squeaks blending into a musical sonata, now came to me as barely a whisper. Even so, Willow's strength, wisdom, and character had not diminished.

As we reminisced about Murdell, my heart opened to the surrounding energies, and I noticed new life everywhere I looked. There were other twisted willows with new shoots protruding from their broken bodies. Some late-season, sun-loving, purple asters flourished where before there had been only a few. Without the shade of the massive willows, yellow coneflowers had spread throughout the area. Three large apple trees had miraculously escaped the raging storm. Several other trees that would have found the way to the sun quite a challenge just two months before, gleamed with thriving energy and each stood several feet taller. The sawdust had been covered by grass and goldenrod. Renewal was all around, and although I had said goodbye to a dear friend, I had regained another.

Before I left, Willow said, "Leave the past in the past. Remember the knowledge you gained this very morn. Sometimes, to learn great things you must experience great change. There are no losses. Murdell marches joyfully with the creator now and that is his blessing."

Silently, I walked away thinking of what I had gained, and I placed my hand on the pouch lying over my heart.



2 LITTLE BROTHER

When I shuffled into the kitchen with the basket of eggs, no one questioned where I had been. Mom lifted her eyebrows after glancing at the dried dark circles I wore from the knees down. Abigail saw the exchange, and before my mother could comment, she blabbed, “What happened? Where have you been?”

My older brother, Randy, looked at me with protective concern and asked, “Are you okay?” Glancing in Abbey’s direction, he repeated, “What happened?”

Our oldest sibling, Shelley parroted, “What happened? What’s the matter?”

Without answering them, I walked over to where Andrew sat scowling and put my hand on his shoulder. He stiffened, and my eyes watered. Softly, I said, “Andy, Murdell’s dead.”

Andrew immediately jumped out of his seat and ran from the room. With care, I set the basket on the counter and glanced over my shoulder. Randy stood up. Fighting tears, wordlessly I shook my head. There were sad faces all around the kitchen table. I turned and followed my younger brother.

Andrew was in the den looking out the window at the gently falling leaves. He’d grown up so much since last spring. Andy had tirelessly worked with me for months, in secret, to help find the Mindstone’s crystal case. He was proficient at dimensional travel, quick witted, courageous, and an invaluable partner. We’d become close, and I was proud of him. His back remained ramrod straight when he asked, “What happened, Lily? Was it Gloam?”

“It was Hunters.”

After my clipped response, he turned and asked, “How did you know?”

“Murdell—and the Mindstone.”

Facing me, Andy squinted and his voice shook with anger. “If he didn’t die right away, why didn’t you come get me?”

I said, “It happened so fast, there wasn’t time.”

Dropping his head, he stuttered and asked, “Where is hhe? Did they—”

Quickly, I shook my head. “We, ah, hid him.” Then I explained, in some detail, what had occurred. Pulling out the chair from under the desk, I sighed and sat down. “Andy, later I want you to help me bury Murdell. We can cave in his den.” I noticed movement in the direction of the doorway. Glancing over, I saw my mother standing there with a concerned look on her face.

Andrew said, “Sure, we can do it today.” He shuddered slightly.

I said, “First, I think you should go out to the orchard.”

He grimaced and snapped, “Why would I want to go there?” His voice caught. “Isn’t Murdell dying this morning bad enough?”

I took hold of his arm and said, “I had a really nice chat with Willow this morning.” Then I sent a smile in my mother’s direction. With a tiny nod, she silently turned and retreated.

Andy’s eyes widened, “How?”

“Why don’t you go out and ask Willow.”

Like a jackrabbit, he ran to the door. Over his shoulder, he said, “I’ll be back to help you later.”

Andrew also had a seat that fit him perfectly on the other side of Willow’s old trunk.

Everyone was still in the kitchen when I returned. As I ate breakfast, I shared some of the dawn’s events with them. They did not communicate with nature the way Andrew and I did, but they knew a great deal. Even though they didn’t know Murdell personally, as Andrew and I had, the family was very sympathetic.

~

My Dad was a long-haul truck driver and had been one since before me or any of my siblings were born. That afternoon, he returned home after an extended three-week run. Although he was tired, he agreed to give Andy and me a hand burying Murdell. My father’s knowledge went a bit further than the rest of the family’s. He also wore a Spiritstone. My father’s hung around his neck on a leather woven cord. It looked like an obsidian arrowhead, but it thrummed with the essence of Zebra.

Andy, my father Joe, and I held our Spiritstones. To prepare for the burial, I lay some blue jay feathers I had found in the woods in the mouth of the cave opening and said a prayer. It was the same one I had used when I had given Andrew the Hummingbird Spiritstone three summers before, and it was the same one I had used every day for most of a past life I remembered, as the recluse, Gabriel Lily.

Breathing deeply, I chanted, “We are all one spirit of the creator, may we all link souls to create a world of love and union with the Earth, so we may live in a domain of compassion, understanding, and mindful relations. By feeling our connection to all things, we are not bound, we are freed.”

After I spoke the last words, a bright golden light burst from Murdell's den, and a rumble came from low in the earth. With the aid of the Mindstone, I pushed the golden energy back into the opening and the rumbling increased until the ground shifted slightly under our feet, and the earth inside the cave fell in with a muffled *whomp*.

A sob escaped my throat as the Earth made a great sigh, and the golden light danced away on waves of glittering energy. Andrew stood facing the grave with a forlorn look. He let me take his hand. My father stepped behind both of us and wrapped us in a hug, and we all stood silently in honor of Murdell.

My usually quiet father was the first to speak. Though he had become somewhat accustomed to nature's spirit magic, I could hear a nervous edge in his remark. "I guess we didn't need the wrecking bar and shovels." He rubbed the notch at the top of his nose, a habit he had when he was tired.

Shaking my head, I said, "I guess not, but I'm still pretty sure I needed both of your help. Thank you."

Andrew remained silent, but he nodded weakly, fidgeted, and then gave me a shove.

Dad helped us to position the marker in front of the bear's final resting place before he picked up most of the tools and left us to our work. Andy and I spent the rest of the afternoon chiseling Murdell's name in the marker stone. We reminisced only briefly about Murdell, though.

Andrew finished chipping away a crude M and then handed me the chisel and hammer. He said, "Is the skull ready to use? Does it seem clear now?"

I said, "I don't think it's all the way there yet, but it does seem pretty clear."

"Lily, are you going to start looking for John?"

Biting my lip, I said, "You know mom and dad don't want me to use the Mindstone anymore. I didn't tell the rest of the family the crystal skull helped to wake me up."

Mom and Dad had forbid Andrew and me from dimensional travel indefinitely. I couldn't blame them. Even though they knew I had made my own destiny and would not be discouraged, they no longer agreed with my involvement. Truth was, I wasn't afraid for myself. But the responsibility I felt for my family and friends weighed on me. For the last couple of months, I'd been healing and laying low. But I knew at some point I was going to start searching for John.

Andy said, "I won't say anything to Mom or Dad, but you didn't answer my question."

Changing the subject, I said, "Have you noticed Abbey acting strangely toward me lately?"

"What do you mean?"

I hedged, “I’m having trouble putting my finger on it. I don’t know. It’s like she’s studying me or something.”

He took the tools back and looked away. “You know you’re different now. It’s not just how you look, Lily. You didn’t tell us anything when you found the case. You’ve hardly talked since you got out of the hospital.”

Shrugging, I said, “You know, when I went to that dimension, I was willing to do anything to get the crystal case. I thought the Raisin was going to cut out my tongue.”

Andrew scrunched his face and asked, “Would you have let him?”

A chill went down my spine, and I shuddered. “I would have done whatever the Gutlox asked.”

“Lily! That’s crazy.”

Shaking my head, I said, “No. I’ll do whatever it takes to find John. And I’ll do whatever it takes to stop Gloam.”

Andy darted looks around us. “You know you shouldn’t even be thinking those things out here, let alone saying them. There are ears everywhere.”

“Gloam took John away for a reason. I know, just like the Cruin knows, that I’m not going to stop looking for him.” I shouted, “I’m never going to stop.”

Fidgeting, Andy said, “I want to help.”

~

Searching, marching forward through field after field of wheat. As I began to tire, in the distance, I saw him. He didn’t wave when he turned my way and appeared not to notice me. He looked lost; he looked numb. I would have yelled to him, but a deafening explosion of hoof beats surrounded me, and I staggered. Wild horses raced and hurdled over me by the hundreds. I could see muscles flex and bulge as the pungent mustang and mares shining from sweat flew past. The ground shook with the pounding riot, clumps of black dirt flying. My hair blew from the force of the horse’s hooves warm air, but miraculously none of them made contact. Caught in the stampede, I lost sight of John.

My ears still rang with the thunder of the stampeding horses as I woke to a dark bedroom. A light sheen of perspiration prickled my entire body. Throwing back the covers, I got out of bed and padded silently toward the opened door.

Abigail breathed deeply and mumbled, “Lily, get back.” I stopped moving, thinking I must have woken her. Then she said, “You don’t know what he’s capable of.”

I stood transfixed, and I wondered what she was dreaming. Abigail tossed fitfully and then her arm twitched. She spat, “Get away from me.”

Gently I reached out, shook her shoulder, and said, “Abbey, wake up. You’re having a bad—”

She slapped at my hand and crawled quickly up against the wall snapping, “Don’t touch me. I told you to get away from me.”

“Abigail you’re having a bad dream.”

Her eyes flashed in the dark, and she said, “If anything happens to him, I’ll never forgive you.” Then, incredibly, her body relaxed, and with a shiver she climbed back under her covers, rolled over, and sighed. Her breathing deepened almost immediately, and she was asleep.

Slipping out our door, I made my way down the hall. I wasn’t sure of the time, but it was so quiet in the house I could hear the ticking of the clock standing on the buffet in the dining room downstairs. After I used the bathroom, I returned to the warmth of my own bed, but I laid awake.

The wind picked up and began to howl. The moon occasionally peeked from behind the blanket of clouds, and I pondered what Abbey had said. *Was it directed at me or an apparition from her dream world?* Eventually, a net of clouds captured the moon, and the night blackened, pulling my mind into its inky well.

~

I heard a knock, but when I opened my eyes, all was dark as thick pitch. Tentatively, I whispered, “Who’s there?” The only thing that answered was another knock. Suddenly angry, I hissed, “What do you want?” Still no answer just a dark void.

~

I was in a deep unrecognizable forest. The wind blew fiercely and tore at my clothes. Trees paled and scratched my arms, legs, and face. I took a step backward and tumbled into a hole. Someone laughed a wicked, sickening squawk as I wind milled downward.

~

Walking over the threshold of the hidden door at the back of my closet, I was struck by the majesty of my surroundings. It took my breath clean away. I was quite certain the location was not of Earth.

The sky, a deep rainbow of colors, crowned a lustrous world of smooth iridescent mountains. The large meadow was covered by mumbling, grumbling straw-type grass. They were dark lavender stalks of noise. I was pretty sure they were talking, but I couldn’t understand a word. They were all speaking at the same time. How could they possibly understand each other?

There were twenty or so feet of orange-colored sand between me and the vocal vegetation. Glittering gems of red and violet littered the pumpkin strand. In the distance I could see something fairly large moving in my direction.

The gems chirped and beckoned to me, but as the red bear neared, the grasses quieted. It was as if Heaven were being offered, if only I would commit myself to two more steps. I could see the bears eyes and in them Murdell and Mabeal, the first live bear I’d ever encountered.

One step closer... The ring connecting me to the Mindstone gave warning, breaking my hypnotic state, and the dream world before me transfused into a nightmare.

The glittering gems were actually vile, grotesque, fanged beetles with greenish-gray-plated bodies. They jumped from the dank, smelly soil on their black pincers and crowded

the edge of what I thought was a sand bar, snapping and gnashing their razor sharp teeth. Thankfully, they didn't seem to be able to leave their stinking island mire.

The sky appeared toxic, resembling the smoke plumes from a radioactive waste plant. The once beautiful grass looked black and as sharp as porcupine quills. In the distance the putrid, pocked mountains seemed to be having a quarrel with the sky. They swiped high into the thick air with lumps of slimy rolling ground. The sound was horrible, like rusty hinges, nails on a chalkboard, and squealing tires all at once. If all of these things weren't bad enough, the most alluring creature no longer looked like a red bear. It was beyond gruesome, spikes as long as turkey basters protruded everywhere on the creature except its hideous face. Gnarled and scarred, it looked like its head had been put through a meat grinder. It had no visible ears, and puss dripped from its nose, eyes, and mouth. My gag reflex kicked in. The odor was so incredibly putrid, I could have stuck my head in a sewer and found relief.

It was terrifying, and yet I had trouble tearing my gaze away. As the changeling approached, my better judgment finally surfaced. I turned and raced back to the door. When I reached for its handle, it evaporated and the exit disappeared. The wall where the door had been was now made of stone. There were foot and hand holds extending vertically as far as I could see. I didn't need to look to know the beast was close. Its reek was so overpowering that I dry heaved in repeating spasms.

Quick as I could, I shimmied up the wall. Without looking down, I continued my upward momentum until my fingers began to bleed and my bare feet felt raw. The rotting smell was still following me. Knowing I would be lost if I looked down, I resumed my skyward trek. I left a filmy trail of blood in my wake, but I refused to cry even though my muscles screamed and my hands and feet burned like they were on fire.

Suddenly, a switch clicked in my head, and I stopped moving. Fear had driven me to this predicament. Stupid, stupid, stupid... Why hadn't I thought of it before? Gloam had plucked me from my nightmare and put me into a worse one. The panic I felt while I plummeted down the dark hole made it easy. Of course, it was the Cruin, the one who would destroy Earth and all mankind. It had been a very long time since Gloam had entered my dreams. My terror had allowed the being full access. Seeing past my fright, I used the Mindstone and imagination to create an escape hatch directly overhead. It was so simple, and yet I hadn't thought of it until I was ready to surrender. Gloam was infinitely dangerous, but fear was still my worst enemy.

The gateway led me straight into the infinity room. I'd experienced the Cruin's cruelty and had a scar to prove it from a prior dream. The chamber I arrived in was a place of healing, and it sealed tight upon my entry.

In the infinity room, I was weightless. It was an immense room where time did not exist. There were no objects on the floor, but there were bottles of healing tinctures, salves, and oils lining the walls. The continuous spiraling shelves were lined with books on natural remedies, trees, flowers, and insects. Also, in the circular room the shelves were filled with encyclopedias, maps, and books on mammals, fishes, and birds. The space was loaded with knowledge of all things Heaven and Earth. Its size was mind boggling. I was

but a pinpoint. There was no ceiling, only blackness of the deepest void. The shelf-filled walls went on forever, spanning the height of infinity. I was in awe every time I visited.

Upon entering the Library of the Eternities, I silently called to the spirit dwelling in the carved stone I carried. A glittering, iridescent bear materialized as if it just stepped through an elaborate stage curtain. As always, the brilliance of its light dazzled and lifted my energy immediately.

I said, "Hello, Maqua" to the beatific spirit of Bear.

"Greetings, Lily." We spoke few words, but our mutual respect was felt.

"I've come in search of healing." I lifted my fingers up for emphasis, and without words, I televised through my mind what had occurred only moments before. Like all nature beings, Maqua could easily see my thoughts.

Without any further ado, a beacon of golden energy shone down on me like a spotlight in a theatre. Through the blaze of heavenly aura, sparks flared and illuminated, creating a kaleidoscope of glowing colors in glorious prisms.

My pain evaporated as soon as the healing light touched my body. Comforting vibrations encircled and lifted me, slowly spinning me high into the chamber. I experienced an ecstasy so pure that my soul sang out like the tap of a high tuning fork. My ears were filled with humming echoes of harmony and blessed frequencies. Unbidden, my drooping eyelids shut. Through the lovely drone I heard Maqua say, "Murdell sends his thanks and love. I'll watch over you. Sleep well, Lily."

~



3 BEWARE OF THE MORN

In the morning, I awoke feeling wonderfully rested. Pink scar tissue on my fingers and toes was the only evidence of the painful nightmare.

I shut the alarm off before it rang. It was a school day. Grabbing the pile of clothes I'd gotten out the evening before, I hustled into the bathroom to shower and finish my morning ritual before anyone else got up.

Although I'd been journaling since I was twelve, I rarely shared my unusual experiences of what went on inside my head. While Andrew and I looked for the crystal case, I let him see what was in my adventure journal. I had more than one journal. My dream journal was exclusively mine.

Colleen had schooled me years ago about the importance of my feelings in my dreams. Using them, sometimes I could work through problems and find direction, and dreams could be used as a doorway into other dimensions. Unfortunately, Gloam knew how to manipulate them. Those dreams were always my worst. Fear—the Cruin took hold when I was afraid.

I woke Abbey and watched her prepare for her day. She looked so much like Shelley and my mother, small nose and wide luscious lips, and her skin was almost flawless. Her silky blond curls were a wild mess and her pajamas rumpled, but she still looked beautiful.

Sitting on the edge of my bed pretending to write about last night's dreams, Abbey seemed not to notice. There was no trace of the nastiness of the night before. I wanted to use the Mindstone to find out what she'd been dreaming, and it would have been so easy. But I couldn't do it.

I said, "How was your night? You were talking in your sleep."

Abbey just shrugged and said, "I don't know. I didn't want to get up."

I smiled. Abigail never wanted to get up. Then, like an ON button, Abbey flounced out of the room and down the hallway toward the bathroom. That was her way. I had to practically drag her out of bed, but once her system kicked in, her mind fired on all cylinders. She was up and raring to go.

After locking my journal in the wooden box Colleen had carved for me, I hurried down the hall to the stairs. Taking them two at a time, I avoided a few of the loudest creaking wooden treads. The dining room was at the bottom. Without slowing down, I continued past the large oak table and chairs through to the kitchen. Staying on the rope rugs as much as possible,

I avoided the chill of the wood floors. At the back porch, I put on a warm jacket. I cringed as I slipped my thin, stocking-clad feet into ice-cold boots before trotting out to the chicken coop. Chores before breakfast.

Because of the chilly morning, the hens were all in their nesting boxes. After refreshing their water and shaking down the cracked corn, I added minerals in their feeders. Carefully, I removed warm eggs from under the hen's soft, downy rumps. The sedate chicks barely took notice of my gentle prying hand. Though I had never had a dialogue with them, we managed a peaceful give and take.

Suddenly, there was a loud *bang*. I jumped, and the chickens clucked and hopped nervously. A few moments later, the coop door burst open, and Andrew charged in. Hens leapt from their shelves and scattered in a riot of cackles. Andy urged, "Come outside."

"What's going on?"

He grabbed my arm and tugged. "An owl hit the barn. Hurry, it's not dead. You've got to help."

With their excellent eye sight and flying skills, I couldn't imagine what would've caused the bird to hit the building. When we reached the barn owl, it wasn't moving. Putting my hands above the bird's pretty, heart-shaped face I requested, *Make me a channel of your energy and life*. As I moved my hands just inches above the owl, I focused on its entire body. The bird's internal injuries were extensive. As loud as its impact had been, it didn't surprise me.

In the silence of the moment, the owl spoke. "It is no use. The darkness is coming." Andrew took a sharp intake of breath, and I knew he'd heard.

Quickly, I looked around and then back at the owl. "What darkness?" Can you tell me?"

The bird's reply was shallow. "I know not—"

Just then I heard a hissing "*Jcherrrr*."

I whispered, "It's a Doolie."

Andrew's eyes widened and he looked around frantically. The energy I channeled through my hands weakened, then stopped. My palms had cooled, and I sensed the owl's life force leaving its body.

Andy looked down, and he pinched his lips tight. I said, "I'm sorry Andy, the owl was hurt too badly."

Glumly he said, "First Murdell, and now Jammy."

That surprised me. "You know this owl?"

Nodding, he said, "We'd only spoken a few times, but he had a great sense of humor. Owls aren't as serious as you'd think."

We reached down at the same time to touch his friend, and I felt Jammy's soul fly free. An instant heaviness surrounded us before I heard the "*Jcherrrr*" again. As quickly as possible, I put my hands up and asked the

Mindstone to raise the Doolies' energy, but I sensed the creature was already gone.

Two and a half years earlier, I learned of the slippery, low-energy Doolies. It was the day I found the Crystal skull. They were there to retrieve the Mindstone before me.

Suddenly, the wind picked up and dried leaves pelted us and slammed against the lean-to with loud snapping pops. Andrew carefully picked Jammy up, and we ran for the barn. The feathers that had loosened and fallen off after the owl's impact blew in a flurry.

Once we made it inside, I pushed the door shut. Andrew scowled and asked, "Where did that come from? Did the Doolies do that?"

"I think so. Every time those creeps make an appearance, the Aspectia kick up a storm." The nature fairy Pea Peckle introduced me to these plentiful ancient nature beings many summers ago. The Aspectia are the beings that pour forth the rain, and craft the blankets of snow. They are the cloud artists and wind makers, they are all aspects of Earth and sky, driven as much by other beings emotions as they are by their own fancies.

The wind picked up and the barn boards rattled. *What could the Doolies be after now?* "Andrew, what did you and Jammy talk about?"

"Nothing much. Why?"

"I don't know, but it might be important."

"You think the Doolies wanted to kill Jammy?" He sniffed and stroked the owl's soft feathers.

"I'm not sure. Maybe. Try to remember what you two talked about."

"Well, the first time I heard Jammy, he was singing a silly tune about three blind mice. Only the owl had its own words. Instead of see how they run, he sung, 'easy picking fun.' Things like that. He was over there." Andy pointed to the beam it had perched upon. Then he said, "The bird just watched me. And he kept singing the funny tune. When I laughed, Jammy stopped singing and asked me what was so funny? When I said, '*you are,*' the owl just blinked." Andrew scowled and his eyes filled with tears, and he looked away.

The thundering of the barn boards and a stiff draft prickled the hair on my neck. Instant gooseflesh. Walking to the window, I crooned a soothing song to the Aspectia in the language they had taught me. The winds subsided and the hammering of the boards stopped. The effect calmed my nerves, and I sensed Andrew relax.

Facing him, I asked, "Did Jammy tell you anything that didn't make sense at the time?"

Tipping his head to the side he said, "Yah."

"What was it, Andy? Tell me no matter how silly it might sound."

“It wasn’t silly, really; it was weird.” I lifted my eyebrows in encouragement. He continued, “Jammy said, ‘The coming dawn is black, but the sunset will return the light.’”

“Was that everything, Andy?”

Shaking his head no, he said, “Once, after Jammy told me a joke about a bobwhite and a fox, he got all serious, and blinked twice. Then he said, ‘Always remember, Andy, my boy; trees don’t lie, but the Earth shifts and darkness doesn’t fall—it is cast. So, listen closely to the Earth and beware of the morn.’”

With Andrew’s last words, a shiver went down my spine. We both jumped when the barn door slammed open, and an irate Abigail bounded through. She squawked, “Mom said, if you don’t get in the house you’re going to have to skip breakfast to make the bus.” Without as much as a backward glance, she was out the door as fast as she had come in.

Taking down an old blanket that hung over a rail, I said, “Here, let’s wrap Jammy up and we’ll take him out to the woods when we get home from school.”

With a nod, Andy helped me swaddle the owl, and then we left the barn. On our way back to the chicken coop to retrieve the eggs I’d gathered, I said, “Would you write down what Jammy told you and anything else you remember?”

He asked, “What do you suppose Jammy meant?”

Shaking my head, I shrugged one shoulder and said, “Don’t know. You know how nature likes riddles.” Another shiver went down my spine, and I glanced around the yard before we entered the house.

~

Before second bell, I wandered into art class and retrieved the fresh canvas I had finished preparing the day before. The gesso was dry and very white. A few students milled around the classroom and some loitered, chatting about the upcoming football game. It was Friday. One of the schools toughest rivals were coming, and expectations were running high.

Mr. Bing had Rosie, a soprano opera singer, on the stereo system blasting through the large complex of rooms making up the art department. It was my last class of the day, and my anxiety had nothing to do with the night’s football game. I already knew the unfortunate outcome of the evening’s event.

Since Murdell’s burial, I’d felt blocked. In my mind, I’d created a lot of excuses. There was too much going on at school and lots of homework, but that wasn’t the real reason. I was afraid.

What if I couldn’t find John? What if I did? What if he never remembered me? I hadn’t dated since he had disappeared. What if he never remembered me? I felt I would love him forever. What if he never remembered me?

My school week mirrored my inability to act. I'd accomplished little in art class. Though I had cut wood for stretchers, stapled canvas on several forms, and then applied numerous coats of gesso to each, finishing their preparation, I was stalling. I had no idea what I was going to do with them.

Standing in front of an easel, blank canvas in hand, Joni Torrez, my best friend, interrupted my self-bashing party. She said, "Hey, girl, whatcha going to do with that?"

Gnawing at my thumbnail, I said, "Don't know. You have any ideas?"

Lifting her eyebrows and putting her hands on her hips, she said, "Oh no. You're not putting that on me. I have enough troubles trying to decide what crap *I'm* going to create. Did you see the horrible ashtray I made?"

I said, "I thought it was a candy dish."

Shaking her head sorrowfully, she said, "It's embarrassing how little talent I have."

I said, "Don't say that. You're the best singer in the entire high school."

Putting her arm around my shoulder, she smiled wide and said, "And this is why you're my best friend. You always know how to cheer me up." Pointing at the blank canvas, she added, "But I'm still not going to tell you what to do with that."

Mr. Bing came over and squeezed Joni and my shoulder. We both scowled. He said, "Enough talking, ladies; let's see some work. Lily, that canvas won't paint itself, and Miss Torrez, we need to discuss your next stupendously imaginative project. Or would you rather scrub sinks and tidy up art supplies?"

She rolled her eyes and said, "Haven't you noticed I'm color blind? And as far as imagination... I mean, what is that?"

Mr. Bing raised his arm and pointed a finger into the air. With bravado he said, "We must never give up." As he guided her away by the shoulder, he said, "Never fear, Miss Torrez. Maybe wood, sculpture, paint, and pottery aren't your forte, but you haven't tried string yet."

She laughed and said, "Why not? It beats washing sinks."

Mr. Bing said, "That's the spirit."

Grinning, I loaded my palette with paint, and then thought it was probably foolish on a Friday. But I was suddenly feeling reckless and determined to forge ahead. The very second my brush touched the white canvas, I was inspired by color and movement. Everything else in the room fell away. I no longer heard music or idle chatter. It was as if I was cloaked by an obscure, infinite line of focus. So deep inside myself, oblivious to all else, I was lost and without any comprehension of what was being created right before me, seemingly by another's hand. Rinse, wipe, mix, dab, paint, rinse, wipe, mix, dab, swirl, arch... paint, breathe, paint... The in and out of my breath was my mantra. It was a loud, soothing sound in my brain... Rinse, wipe, mix, paint, swirl, stroke, breathe...

I jumped, startled out of my creative fervor. Mr. Bing had me by the shoulder and he deftly grabbed the hand holding my brush so I didn't inadvertently swipe my painting with it. He said, "Miss Bud, it's almost time for the eighth-hour bus. You'd better clean up and get a move on. Or are you staying for the football game?"

Blinking hard, I looked at him with dumbfounded incomprehension and said, "What?" The room was empty and totally devoid of music.

Mr. Bing repeated himself and looked at my painting quizzically. His lips slowly widened into a huge smile. Raising his eyebrows several times he said, "Well, well, well, what have we here?"

Stunned, I stared at the canvas, and then hurriedly washed my brushes in the strong smelling paint thinner. I said, "I'd better get going." With a final dazed look at my painting, I added, "Thanks, Dom; I'll see you on Monday."

Glancing back as I reached the exit, I saw Mr. Bing's confused look. He said, "How did you know my nickname? My wife is the only person to call me that."

Continuing through the door, I grinned and raced for my locker. I prayed the eighth-hour bus was running because I hadn't signed up for the last bus of the day. As I slammed through one of the school's front doors, I breathed a sigh of relief. Mr. Newton leaned against the small yellow bus sucking on a cigarette. As I approached, he held out the clipboard with the sign-up sheet, dropped his cigarette butt, and ground it into the sidewalk. After I scribbled my name, he followed me into the bus and pulled the handle closing the doors.

Nodding to a few of the other riders, I slid into an empty seat and exhaled. Dragging a wet oil painting around is never a good idea, but it didn't really matter, I couldn't take it with me. Even though my mind didn't register painting it, the finished picture was branded on my soul.

In three hours, give or take, I had completed a painting that normally took me weeks. It still astounded me, but I had learned long ago time was not absolute. To most, a day was gauged and determined as fixed, but I knew the count could be altered and sidestepped.

On the dark bus ride home, in my mind the painting became a brilliantly backlit stage. The house, and the area where it stood, was not familiar to the Midwest. Adobe walls formed a lovely courtyard, and the distinct arched entrance brought the eye ever forward. I'd seen a few similar homes out on the road with my father, driving through Arizona and New Mexico, but none were as stunning as this Santa Fe-style house. It was large and flat-roofed. Just below the roofline, golden timbers protruded from its sides, and a rustic ladder leaned against one of the external walls. Small, rectangular, high windows ran along the south-facing exterior, alluding to considerable depth in the structures partitions. There was a curved,

columned portico in front with several large sycamores, and many shade trees flanking the side of the home.

Right before I put paint to canvas, I'd thought about John. No doubt the Mindstone delivered that specific house, and I was certain it was where I would find him. With luminous strokes, I had cast a misty golden aura around the structures. Above the sycamores, a cloud rimmed in gilded brilliance flew like a phoenix.

As the bus bumped along rough roads, details came to me like snapshots of memory. In the shadows of the deep porch, a large collie lay curled with its muzzle tucked under one paw. Beside it was an empty rocker. Then the pictures expanded beyond my painting until I saw a graceful curving driveway creeping along a narrow river, surrounded by more sycamores and an abundance of cottonwoods. On either side of the glades, fields of crops stretched far and wide. Huge mountain ranges ran parallel at a distance from the river. The expansive property was a grand fertile basin in the middle of a desert.

The panoramic valley floor was stunning, made even more striking by the clear, deep blue sky. With each new vision, the peace and contentment of the ranch settled through my body and into my bones. A feeling of healing and well-being followed. As surely as I knew this was where John now lived, I felt his happiness, and I could tell he was being restored.

It had been over a year and a half since John's disappearance. He had been severely injured in the plane crash that claimed his father and his father's fiancé. Amnesia and the loss of an eye had kept him in the hospital for a month, but a stranger claimed him before anyone figured out who he really was.

Now, the answers to John's whereabouts were as much as in my hands. *Why wasn't I excited? Would it bring him pain? What if we found him, and he never remembered me or his few remaining relatives? Would he be happier where he is?* The man who had taken him claimed to be his grandfather, but that wasn't true. I'd been afraid for John for so long. But he's okay. *What should I do? Would he hate me for taking him away from the comfort this stranger had created for him?* His aunt was still struggling after a recent divorce and relocating to a new town. She'd moved into their home after he and his father had disappeared. John's mother had died when he was twelve. *Would introducing him back into the chaos of unfamiliar faces be a detriment to his healing?*

Through the Mindstone, I sensed John's love for the green lush valley and the desert mountains surrounding him. His feelings were so strong; I longed to be there with him. *Would I be welcomed or scorned? What if he never remembered me?*



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Cecilia Johnson lives on the wild rivers coast of Oregon with her husband Mickey and their two furry companions, Leroy and Gracie. Her family, nature, exploring, and creating beauty are among her greatest passions. Writing is Cecilia's favorite way to tap into the universe's warehouse of magical ideas, but walking the beaches or hiking the many spectacular trails of the Oregon coastline with her family keep her grounded in Earth's grand realm.

On any given day you might find Cecilia picking up garbage on a road, beach, or with the Trash dogs, a local cleanup crew that is very enthusiast about a healthy and beautiful environment. Cecilia encourages each and every one to take the time to watch a bird, the stars, or an ant on the sidewalk. Even the blades of grass beg your notice. The World awaits.

I hope you enjoyed reading 'Name in Stone' as much as I did writing it. If so, you might be interested in the first two books in the In Stone Series. Find out the details of how Lily's odyssey into nature began. Follow along on Lily's adventures and her first blush of love. You can find links to both novels, book one, 'Energy in Stone', and book two, 'Secrets in Stone', on my website at CeciliaJohnsonAuthor.com.

Reviews are always appreciated.

Wishing you much laughter, and the good fortune to find magic and wonder wherever you may be.

Cecilia Johnson



