

Three Piece Suite

Suite I

Strand

by Susan S. Krichbaum

Before compasses were invented, ancient sailors navigated the seas using the stars and a magnetized rock suspended from a tripod by a thread. This rock, known as a lode-stone, directed these sailors even on stormy nights and cloudy days by indicating the position of true north when the heavens could not be trusted.

I see it. The incidence of colliding souls is rare, and usually reserved for old novels and new dramas. I have seen this rare celestial meeting once. I am the observer. When Sarah met Luke, the day was not prophesied by a blind oracle on a cliff or predicted by a star in the East. Though they were acquainted, no one, not even the two of them knows what cosmic forces align when some people meet for the first time? Do planets in distant universes set into binary orbits? Do moons eclipse moons? Do suns collide?

I don't know how it happens, but I know what it looks like when, envisioned the nebula that awaited the mere firing of a single charged particle in a single cell in the briny depths of the sea to leap to life. It started with a text message from him to her... "If you were a penguin, what color would your tuxedo be?" No one, not even the two of them, recalls what the "right answer" was; the "right question" had been asked, and it became the lode-stone of their relationship.

Sarah and Luke were both juniors in high school when it began. Despite their tender years, they had both seen their share of battering emotional storms. Both feared the power that others might wield over their fragile hearts, but in each other, they found a safe harbor. Before long, they had woven the strands of a bond between them. This invisible connection allowed them to sense one another's presence. Even thoughts and emotions hummed along the line that joined them. They both cherished family, and

quickly became an integral part of each other's sanctuary. They both adored music and roller-coastered through the swells and valleys of each song together. They both loved stories, and together, in a sense, began to write their own. The invisible rope tethered in the fall undulated and stretched through the winter and into the spring. New moons waxed and waned while Sarah danced beneath them, and Luke played a soulful trumpet tune. Waving between them, the strand mesmerized the observer and lulled us all into a ruptured hypnotic state. It was a glorious golden cable glistening in the April light.

Funny thing about ropes. They can secure, or they can bind the people that are tied by them. By May, Luke had begun to imagine his tether as a noose, and in June he slipped the bond. He ran frantically to escape the lasso that he imagined was orbiting above Sarah's head. Inexplicably, he saw what was not there, and failed to see what was. He didn't realize that her hands were tightly wrapped around the frayed end of the rope he had snapped. Sarah stood still, paralyzed by celestial influences beyond her reckoning. In his struggle to free himself, he failed to see the thin, clear filament still encircling his own heart. It ran into the earth, along a subterranean chamber, only to resurface and anchor somewhere on the edge of a tear-dampened eyelash of a girl, frozen in her grief. But not for long could the mass contain her moment of fragmentation. In an instant, the earth shattered and burst. Sarah had gone supernova.