

Chapter Ninety-Five

On Wednesday, December 28, there was a lull in the household activity. Everyone was back to work, or taking care of chores neglected during the festive holidays.

Prairie Wind took her little girl—well bundled in her arms—for a walk on a cold sunny morning with more fresh snow. Jennifer came with her so she could take pictures of Mother and Child on the snowy Rosebud.

During the afternoon, Prairie Wind announced that she wanted to do some work in her law office. Richard and Jennifer carried the downstairs cradle into the law office and set it beside Prairie Wind's chair, behind the big oaken desk. Then they went out to visit Grandmother across the road, leaving Prairie Wind alone with her little girl in a blissfully quiet house.

Prairie Wind had been thinking during the two days of rest in the hospital. She had been thinking—despite the interruptions—during her days at home. She had been thinking especially during the quiet times when she nursed Prairie Dawn.

Now she turned on her laptop, clicked on Word and filled the screen with a blank page.

She looked down at the child beside her and gave the cradle a push so that it gently rocked. Prairie Dawn had recently nursed and now she was peacefully asleep.

Prairie Wind began to type:

To Relinquish:

To renounce, to give up, to hand over, to let go of, to yield, to surrender.

Men control,
While women relinquish.

Women spend nine months doing the most important job on the planet: women bring new life into the world.

But as soon as the child is born, the mother relinquishes her child to a world controlled by men.

How many million women live today in refugee camps with their children, because for the past five thousand years of recorded history, men must have their wars?

How many children never grow up to become doctors, to become teachers, to become lawyers, to become members of Congress, because the child was born a girl? The mother wanted her daughter to have a complete and genuine education—the education which she never had—but in the early years of the marriage, the father shouted with anger, shouted with anger, shouted with anger, until she gave up. Her spirit crushed, she relinquished her daughter to a life without education, without opportunity, without meaning.

How many women have relinquished their sons to someone's army, so that he squandered the prime of his life by working for war profiteers, until he was shipped back to his mother and his wife and his children with brain damage, or missing limbs, or in a coffin?

Men control,

While women relinquish.

Men spend their lives acquiring more and more and more.

Women spend their lives relinquishing more and more and more.

Until once again the economy collapses, once again negotiations fail, once again drought parches the land, whereupon the men, summoning five thousand years of willful ignorance, burn each other's churches. And start another war.

While the women, summoning five thousand years of deep and visionary wisdom, are told to remain silent.

* * *

No more.

Now Mother Earth shall speak.

She has endured the burning of her forests, the plundering of her seas. She has watched her buffalo slaughtered almost to extinction. She has watched her whales slaughtered almost to extinction. She has watched her California sea otters slaughtered almost to extinction. She has watched as her First Peoples were slaughtered almost to extinction.

She has watched for long enough.

She calls upon the women of the world to be her voice.

She calls upon the women of the world to augment their five thousand years of wisdom with her three and a half billion years of wisdom, gathered as she nurtured life upon this planet.

She calls upon the women of the world to relinquish their silence, to relinquish their fear, to relinquish their servitude, so that they, who bring life into the world, can nurture that life, protect that life, and encourage that life. So that each girl and boy might flourish and grow to their full potential. To their full potential.

Mother Earth calls upon the women of the world to move beyond the Gross National Product, and percentages of annual growth, and price per barrel of oil, and global expenditures on military weapons, and fossil fuel subsidies, and unpaid national debts, and profit margins and bitcoins and bubbles.

Mother Earth calls upon the women of the world to look beyond the causes of collapsing stock markets . . . to the causes of collapsing biospheres.

Mother Earth calls upon the women of the world to look beyond oil in the Arctic, to look beyond timber and beef in the rainforest, to look beyond military trade shows with the latest generation of jets and tanks and missiles and cyber-hackers on display . . . and to explore instead the quiet, steady steps toward peace.

Mother Earth calls upon the women of the world to become architects of peace. Build your own schools. Half of the human population is waiting to sign up for courses.

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So many opportunities, so much progress, so much *life* has been relinquished. No more.

A hundred thousand generations of grandmothers, reaching back to the first campfires on the plains of Africa, are waiting for the generation of women today who refuse to tolerate the madness any longer.

Do not relinquish your right to become all that you could be.

Do not relinquish your right to live on a healthy planet.

Do not relinquish your right to bequeath upon your children all the blessings of peace.

That you can carry in your uterus a fertilized egg which grows for nine months into a child able to be born into a world with air for the first breath, and milk for the

first meal, and love for an entire lifetime . . . is a miracle which exists on our tiny ball of dust, in a vast empty universe.

Do not relinquish that miracle.

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She printed a copy, and sent copies to both Jennifer and Richard, her messengers to the world.

Then she lifted her Very Patient Daughter out of the cradle and stilled her fussing and murmuring . . . with abundant time for peaceful nursing behind the big oaken desk.

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