

Voang

Written by Nathan S.J. Sunshine (mostly in 2010)

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The descendants of Drisim's family had ruled the Multiverse for eons. Happiness was no longer the rule, for war was once again rampant. The Drisims refused to use force to stop the violence. There were many gains and many losses. For some the wait for peace was unbearable. The descendants of Jahoth's family had always felt slighted by the Drisims. They took note of the inability of the current rulers to keep the peace. The Jahoths offered to head peacekeeping forces. When the Drisims refused, the Jahoth went ahead anyway. Eventually many of the fleeing rulers escaped into shelters belonging to the Drisims. The Jahoths demanded the leaders be handed over for justice. The Drisims once again refused. Thus the Jahoths attacked the cities of refuge, killing all of the inhabitants as well as the former rulers. Knowing that they must act quickly lest the other rulers rally against them, the Jahoths moved on the capitol and seized control. The Jahoth took advantage of their new position to systematically kill the Drisims. The Drisim sovereign was publicly vivisected. Orders were issued to hunt all remaining Drisims down. The Jahoths ruled brutally and violently suppressing any uprising. Thus, as they proclaimed, they had peace. The wife, Oakodrism, meaning best friend's spouse, daughter, Poat, meaning sister, and son, Sim, meaning the befriender, of the executed sovereign escaped to the far reaches of the Multiverse, to an ancient derelict palace, long abandoned. They were in constant fear of being found, but nonetheless chose to live resolutely and freely despite the terror. One day while they were getting food, they spotted an assassin in the village. Quietly pursued they hid in an abandoned house. The

assassin found them there. The Drisims prepared to meet their fate, when a man burst out of a hidden room and killed the assassin. The man was struck by a poisoned blade and died soon after. As the man passed, his wife, Hwegroa, meaning moon, daughter, Petelee, meaning the redeemer, and son, Goamfureepof, meaning virgin, returned to the house and saw what had happened. If they stayed the Jahoths would kill them on charges of collaboration. The Drisims took in the family. They became fast friends, particularly the children. It quickly became apparent that despite the family's modest abode previously, that they were very intelligent. Never once did they complain about their lot and never once did they ever consider turning in the Drisims. The Drisims came to trust them and soon the family knew the whole story. One day the children were wondering through the far reaches of the palace, when they came across a series of rooms where it appeared a noble and her family once lived. Though dusty and grey as everywhere else, it was mysteriously kept. They came across the children's rooms. Poat was holding an old artifact when Goamfureepof stepped on a board that creaked. Startled, Poat dropped the artifact. It landed on a nub at the bottom of a wall. A sound of clinking and clacking rumbled through the wall and a hidden chamber revealed itself. Meanwhile Sim and the Petelee were in the room next door. They were sitting next to each other on an old bed frame talking. During a slow, awkward silence, for some reason Petelee gently touched Sim's hand. Startled he fell backwards, breaking through some of the fragile wood of the frame, and hitting his head on the wall. Petelee laughed, closing her eyes. Sim struggled to get up, using a nub on the wall as leverage. There was a clinking and clacking and a chamber opened. Poat and Sim ran back into the hall, Petelee and Goamfureepof staying in the respective rooms. After talking excitedly, Poat and Sim went first into the room

where Goamfureepof was a moment ago and explored the chamber. They found a rusted old chest and easily broke off its lock. In it they found a plush animal, slightly worn, but surprisingly preserved. Likewise, they went to the other room and explored the other chamber. They found a lock on a wardrobe that easily broke. In it on the back of the top shelf they found a sheet of music, the notes still easily readable. After retrieving the second item, Poat and Sim look around, in both rooms, and found that Petelee and Goamfureepof were not there. They returned to the main bedroom and found them sitting together on the frame of a bed. Petelee was holding a small instrument, a pipe. She explained that she found it in a hidden alcove beside the bed. The children quickly returned to their mothers. Many years had passed and Sim had taught himself to play the pipe. He had become ever closer to Petelee over the years and she loved nothing more than to hear him play the melody on that sheet of music that Sim had found in the room. One day they were at the funeral of Petelee's aunt. Over the years the children at least had adopted a more lenient sort of secrecy. Sim brought the pipe and during a more touching part of the ceremony, he got the strange notion in his head of playing that old melody. Suddenly the aunt stirred and got up, fully alive. Shocked Sim grabbed Petelee's hand and they fled. They arrived at the palace out of breath and told everything to Poat and Goamfureepof. The children had Sim play the pipe on several other occasions and found that it healed ailments as well as curing death. So they decided that they would spend their time secretly finding those in need of healing around the town so that Sim could save them. Wonderment went through the town as sick people were miraculously healed and then it seemed that sickness ceased to exist at all. But having already been superb at being secretive, the children kept their disguise. Word spread

eventually from one part and then to another of the Multiverse, and eventually a hope entered into the hearts of all other Sentients—for news of healing, even if only a story, reminded them of the days of Dibødo, now greatly longed for. Word reached the Jahoths. But they disregarded it as nothing but a story, and refused to take it any more seriously. So the rumor was made, but no one knew the truth. One day Petelee and Sim were playing (playing: originally hothuwain, meaning **kissing**) in an abandoned house while Poat and Goamfureepof kicked around their plush animal on the roof, as they often enjoyed doing. But curiosity got the better of them from time to time and they would take turns peeking in the window. Once Sim moved his hand, while Goamfureepof was looking, and startled, Goamfureepof fell forward. Suddenly the window frame gave way and Goamfureepof dropped two stories onto the wooden floor of the house, next to Petelee and Sim, headfirst. They all heard a loud crack. Sim screamed and ran to Goamfureepof, but in an amazing moment, Goamfureepof stirred, first sitting on his knees, then standing up, brushing himself off. “I’m fine, I think,” he said. Then they noticed. The plush animal that they had thought had been left on the roof lay on the floor next to Goamfureepof. They all looked at each other and at the plush animal. The plush animal lay there, nothing stranger about it than any other plush animal. After that day, the children tended not to talk about the incident, though Poat and Goamfureepof no longer played ball with the plush animal. Instead Goamfureepof took to carrying it around in a bag. But no more incidents occurred. All disguises must eventually be revealed. As assassins failed to return from their journeys to the town, so their superiors took note, and eventually sent more qualified informers. Thus, rather than aiming to kill the Drisims outright, they instead returned and reported what they saw. So the Jahoths

had found the remnant of the Drisims at last. Rather than take a chance, they sent a legion to give the town an ultimatum. They arrived and gathered all of the townsfolk together and surrounded them with weapons. Then the commander stood before and spoke: “Unless the Drisims come forth, we will kill every one of you, and burn the town.” The Drisims and the family were hidden among the crowd and heard. They had no choice. They stepped forward and Oakodrisim pleaded with the legion to spare the town if only they would focus their objectives on them. The commanding officer laughed, spit on her, and gave the order. The legion began to slaughter the townsfolk. The legion began with the children, pulling them from their parents’ arms, and then the adults by lot. At last they were all dead. Now they turned to the Drisims. The commander grabbed Petelee by the neck and threw her on the ground. He told his lieutenant to enjoy his spoil. Sim shouted and pleaded as the lieutenant stepped forward and got onto the ground in front of Petelee. He moved his hand, but suddenly he screamed and fell back, leaving his arm behind, blood gushing from the empty socket. Next his neck exploded, a geyser of blood shooting into the sky, as his eyes went blank. The commander shouted an expletive, as the Drisims looked around, stunned. What had happened? The legionnaires looked around aimlessly for an enemy. At last the commander, seeing no visible threat, grabbed Petelee by the arm and wrenched her up. She did not get all the way—she punched him in the face and kicked his groin, getting up the rest of the way herself. The commander shouted another expletive. Then stepping back, he shouted for the legionnaires to slaughter the Drisims. They raised their weapons. Loud noises rang out as projectiles streamed towards them. As the Drism’s stood resolute to their fate, a blinding, shimmering white light suddenly surrounded them, black

ribbons intermingled, and the projectiles rebounded. Shocked, the legionnaires dove to the ground, but it was too late. Explosions erupted everywhere, as blood and limbs flew. They looked around, frantically for a target. As they began to regain a semblance of calm, while the commander issued new orders, the real killing started. Heads exploded, intestines tore through flesh, and blood pooled on the ground as one by one the legionnaires fell. Mad with fear, those remaining opened fire, killing many of their own comrades. When only a quarter of them remained, the remnant grouped together, preparing for a final onslaught. Suddenly a red line appeared on each, running up their center, their insides spilling out as they fell down in a pile with many a loud scream. Finally only the commander remained, his weapon now drawn, looking everywhere. The Drisims were horrified. They would not rejoice even at the fall of their enemies. Then the commander noticed. The plush animal stood on the ground in front of him separating him from the Drisims. Cursing, he shot at it. It went through it, a stream of fluff shooting out one side, leaving a small hole. Then an explosion sounded and the weapon flew from the commander's hand. The commander drew a knife, and walked slowly towards the plush animal. He raised a hand to strike. A soft touch grabbed his arm, holding him back. It was Hwegroa. "Enough," she said. Finally the commander threw down the knife and stood his ground. Nothing happened for a moment. Then Petelee looked into Sim's eyes. She nudged herself forward, slowly, and keeping her gaze, cupped Sim's hand in hers, and kissed him lightly. Moving back, she spoke so only he could hear. "You know what to do." Sim nodded, and getting out his pipe, he began to play the melody. Oakodrism looked surprised, but Hwegroa seemed preoccupied, her eyes looking up at the stars, a half-smile on her face. Nothing happened at first. But then

some energy, a still silent sound, shook the air. A sort of electricity. Then blood on the ground began to flow. It formed rivers and streams, and narrow lines, and moved back towards the bodies of their former Sentients. Then limbs and organs started to move. Rolling and slithering slowly and carefully. Bodies began to jerk and move in every which way as limbs reattached, blood flowed back into vanes, and the clothing itself knitted back together as of new. As Sentients became whole, their eyes regained their light, and they stood. Still at first, they began looking around in wonder, as if awaking from a dream. It appeared they at least, though now awake, could not see the miraculous events that continued, but as their friends lived once more, went and hugged them, and kissed them, and then looked to the center, as though waiting for something. Most miraculous, the legionnaires also lived again. They looked around, rather than embracing each other, a new look on their faces, different from before, almost a certain embarrassment to be witnessing the loving reunion of families and friends that they just recently had so wronged. At last every person who had died stood alive once more. Sim continued to play, until every now living person had reunited, and now faced the center. Then he stopped, and stood, and Petelee rose beside him. Petelee spoke to the commander. “Do you see now commander? Your people see. And soon I believe they will make their choice. What will you choose? Who do you serve? For isn’t it your duty first and foremost to serve yourself, or else how will you serve others? What is it the Jahoths truly desire? How will you choose to serve them? How will you choose to serve yourself?” The legionnaires looked at their commander, a new determination in their eyes. The commander felt those stares. He looked wildly around him, turning in each direction. All eyes were on him. His legionnaires had demands, though they did not say

it. The Drisims only looked at him with pity and hope. The townsfolk, simply seemed bewildered, and appeared not to know who he was. So he looked up at the stars. But they did not answer him either. It was a tense moment. Finally he looked at the plush animal. A gleam of moonlight strayed onto its black eye, reflecting a white gleam. Stifling a scream, the commander turned and ran. He pushed his way passed the crowd, and never once looked back. Not all townsfolk had been in the square that day. The humblest had found hiding places, in privies, and trash heaps, in open graves. At the beginning of the events, they had hidden themselves nearby, looking and observing the events. Now they came forward, next to the Drisims, and addressed their people. They told them what had happened, about the miracle. They spoke of the miracles that had been happening to the town now for so many years. About the great riddle, that now apparently had an answer. The eyes of the townsfolk finally opened, and they all looked at the Drisims. Now Sim spoke. “We are not heirs to Dibødo, as you might now be hoping. No. It is our disgrace to his memory, that we are descendants of Drisim. We have hidden among you out of selfishness, at the peril of your lives, and we have seen the inevitable result of that risk. Only by a miracle were you saved. We were the cause of the calamity, and only by chance was it repaired. Now we can ask no more of you. We must leave this place, and you at peace.” Sim bowed his head. Petelee had been looking at Sim intently. Now that he finished, she walk up right in front of him, so their noses were practically touching, and gave him a light slap on the cheek. Then she touched his chin with her finger. Speaking somewhat bemused and comically to him, she remarked: “Only the most pious humility has you speak in this way. Your disguise is withdrawn, and do you see the townsfolk recoil against you? Do even the soldiers who came to rape

and pillage this town because of you now scheme against you? Are you not a beloved son, brother, and friend in two families who have cherished you for all of these years? Calamity—a risk, you were, yes. But any risk is worth taking if it brings the proper balance. How many years have you hidden in the shadows, healing and comforting, but with no praise for yourself? Calamity—you have been the miracle. Under you and your family, there were problems. But the Jahoths have proven themselves the true tyrants. It was only a matter of time before something like happened today occurred—if not here, then in another town of innocents. And today, you stood up to your humility, and healed everyone, not only the townsfolk, but those who came to kill them. You bring both life and mercy. You also forget, that Drisim was not purely evil. He was a great man, only second to Dibødo, who saw much, and knew every peril, every enemy, accept himself. Ultimately his greatest mistake was dismay and fear. He came to believe that if he could not reach the virtue of Dibødo, then he was worthless. Of course this was not true. But you, Sim, have what he sought most. Humility. You know the fear of leadership, of position, and power. You have hidden yourself away, only coming forward when it was absolutely necessary, when the people demanded your service. You are the true heir of Dibødo. You are the true friend that Dibødo always sought. You are the reason he entrusted your family with the rule of the Multiverse. Everyone loves you, Sim, because you know the meaning of friendship. You mean so much to us. If you left, we would miss you. If you left, we would be lost without you. My mother, your mother, my brother, your sister, would all be empty without you. If you left... I would be alone. Because... because Sim. You are the man I love.” Then Petelee stepped forward, and holding Sim lightly, kissed him. Not any ordinary kiss. But with passion. She moved

her hand. “Not here, Petelee,” he said. She laughed and smiling a rainbow, embraced him fully. Then Poat and Goamfureepof came up, and one on each side, held Petelee and Sims arms, as the couple held each other’s wrists. The mothers stood together and watched with a knowing smile. The townsfolk, many of them crying, a few clapping, began talking amongst themselves. The legionnaires went and sat down in a big clump, waiting for the decision on their fate. Hearing that the scary, old derelict palace was in fact habitable and in good order, the townsfolk resolved to restore it. The purpose: as the new seat of the Drisims rule. Their town wasn’t much, they said, but they would be honored to have such wise leaders. They wanted Sim, but he deferred to his mother, Oakodrism. Oakodrism agreed, but only if Hwegroa sat beside her. So it was agreed, and Hwegroa sat beside Oakodrism in the great hall of the palace. But while she seemed to make important decision, most of the rule was left up to Oakodrism. Their children served as princes. Of what, the townsfolk tended to say? Soon it was much more than a town. Word spread fast. In every corner of the nation, it was told that the heir to Dibodo had arrived, and that great miracles once again prevented sickness and preserved life. Soon the mayors of towns everywhere came before Sim and gladly and willingly bent the knee, though he always passed it onto Oakodrism, who in turn passed it onto Hwegroa. Sim was otherwise busy. He went from town to town, curing and healing as he went, always with Petelee by his side. Petelee was not merely a bystander. For as Sim learned and recognized, some hurts take more than a pipe to heal. In fact, Sim soon found that the melody was much less effective when Petelee wasn’t around. But he did not scorn this fact. He saw it only as a reminder that he should keep Petelee with him as often as could be arranged. So the fame of the Drisims grew. Soon the sovereign of the nation

herself bent the knee. As the years passed, the expansion of the Drism's new nation included many smaller nations. Fully one tenth of the Multiverse lay under their control. What of the legionnaires? Theirs was an interesting story. They were set to work, first on restoring the palace, then on building the town. Their hearts had truly changed, and after some time, their guard was lifted, and eventually they were told that they had proved themselves, and could be free. But they continued their work, now as civil servants. It would be a trend, and a standard, of how the civil service should function. What of Poat and Goamfureepof? They remained best friends. Nothing more, nothing less. But they were busy too. Theirs seemed a strange idea. From the start of their rule, they arranged an edict that ever child was to have a plush animal. Those already born then were able to choose, and that tradition continued, that when children reached a certain age, they would choose and receive their plush animals too. What of the commander? Well he eventually made his way back to the Jahoth in their capitol. They were not pleased by what they heard. They promptly had him executed. As he died, he said nothing, but only kept his eye raised to the stars, a tear slowly making its way down his whitening cheeks. But the damage was done. For on the way to the capitol, he had shared his story at enough barracks and taverns. Word of the slaughter as well as the healing made it to every ear. Soon the tradition of giving plush animals to children made its way into the rest of the Multiverse. Just as firm a tradition of a different sort established itself among the legionnaires and officers. They refused to ever come near one, except of course those they gave to their children. Soon the Jahoth issued orders. The sale, creation, and ownership of stuffed animals was to be forbidden. Yet the police and enforcers were also unwilling to go near the animals. So they continued to be

distributed. The Jahoth grew serious. They executed many. But still the will of the people remained stronger than any of their attempts. At last even the children in the capitol began to receive plush animals. This was too much. They sent their own family members to burn the stores and tear plush animals from the arms of children. They checked every person entering the capitol and confiscating the stuffed animals, turned all of those bringing them in away. Outside the city the enforcement of the edicts never changed—everyone knew that the Jahoth were cursed—none wanted to be part of what they saw was coming. Of all the attempts by the Jahoth even in their own city, they failed. Mothers and fathers began sewing and knitting the plush animals themselves. Supplies were provided on the black market, and none who wanted would be turned away, for even the gangsters' children had plush animals, after all. Until this day, it is the tradition in capitols for parents to make their own plush animals for their children. So to the Jahoths increasing wrath, they more and more became a laughing stock, the butt of discrete jokes whispered in private. But for now, they were at a loss of what to do to make the situation better. They knew how to stop the Drisims though. Force was what they knew, and force is what they used. They sent legions to the border towns to force the people to return to their control. But strangely, the legions never returned, except for the occasional commander or lieutenant. These they promptly executed for their failure, but it did not seem to change any of the outcomes. Accept that eventually even these officers failed to return. A despair came over the Jahoth and they began to prepare to face what they knew was to come. After many years the Drisims ruled most of the Multiverse, except for a ring around the capitol. At last it was time. At the far end of the Multiverse, in an ancient keep, Petelee and Sim were married. Goamfureepof and Poat of

course were their attendees, and the leaders and nobles of the entire Multiverse, came to give their wishes. It was a ceremony to remember. In fact, Poat got so drunk, she proposed to a man who she had been dancing with but had hardly known, by the name of Kooquaip, meaning general. At last Petelee and Sim retired to the main guestroom, and had their moment. For they had waited until the time was right, and were now rewarded all the more for their patients. Guards were left outside, that they should under no circumstances be disturbed. One strange event was recounted later. The guards awoke in the morning realizing that they had been asleep. When they thought about it, they thought they remembered seeing a man standing at guard, strange for there were no others as this was their duty, though this man was nowhere come the morning. But no one thought anything of it, and the news remained a rumor among the servants of the keep, and went no further for some time. It was said that on that evening, at one point, many in the Multiverse felt a stab of pain, as though a spear had been thrust into the right of their chest, only to be replaced a moment later by a sense of laughter and vindication. A burden left each of them and their hearts felt lighter. But another force had been at work that evening. For Kooquaip had not been there by accident. He was a spy for the Jahoth, who had hatched a plan, a last desperate effort to gain control. He and a few others knew that the people of the keep, particularly the Drisms, were protected, and that they had better stay far away from any plush animal. But what of the pipe? Take away a lions claws, its fangs, and what threat is it then? So while Petelee and Sim were together and the keep noised with revelry and joy, they did not notice as the conspirators met where they knew the great treasure to be, and Kooquaip at last finding his charge, lifted the pipe. Hiding it in a jacket pocket, he and the others stole away. When they had gone

almost out of sight of the keep, the others kept running. But Kooquaip stopped for a moment. He looked up at the stars and then at the keep, a thought running through his head. He thought he heard a voice, something he had forgotten about. Then it was gone, and he turned and followed his people. Thus when the morning came and the guards sobered up, they checked their charge, and shocked and dismayed, hurried to tell Oakodris. She was bothered, but of course waited to tell her son and daughter-in-law. For it was the custom that the bride and groom not only receive an evening alone, but also a day and an afternoon. Thus it was at the next evening as they emerged that they heard the news. Sim was devastated. For a moment he despaired and crying in Petelee's arms, he remained silent and empty. Petelee lifted up his chin, kissed him, and stroked his head as she spoke. "Healing does not only come from a pipe. Isn't love just as strong? Your mother loves her people and they flourish because of her. Will they not do the same simply out of your love? And remember," she laughed, "I am half of the spell, and they do not have me!" Sim's spirits lifted, and he despaired no longer. Then another piece of news came. Poat was missing. She had gone for a walk and never came back. At this even Petelee was speechless. But now both of them knew not to despair. For redemption is the child of hope. Petelee, Sim, and Goamfureepof, now far from children, committed to search for Poat, even if it would take them into the heart of the Jahoth capitol. So they left the keep and began their search. Many great stories are told of their journey. They were not able to heal all in their path as they did before, but they were able to comfort them. Rather than be dismayed, the people were understanding. Comfort and dignity, they found, was nearly as potent as actual healing. They were impressed by the determination of Goamfureepof, and determined themselves to keep their errand a

secret. So after many years, Petelee, Sim, and Goamfureepof, indeed reached the capitol, having searched everywhere else. Entering the city they once again returned to the practice of their youth, and passed secretly from place to place. They found that the old barracks where the last of the Drisims had been kept before they were sent to the slaughter were avoided even by the Jahoths, and chose that as their place of refuge. The silent fields reminded them of their youth, and Petelee and Sim took comfort in each other. It soon became apparent that not all was well with Goamfureepof, for now he stayed up much of the night staring at the stars. “I can see him”, he would say. Eventually Petelee and Sim decided it would be best if they all slept together, like when they were children. Petelee and Sim had spent many years as friends, and they had self-control. Goamfureepof refused at first, but when his sister insisted, he joined them each night, and slept soundly, while Petelee and Sim actually enjoyed the new distance: “A challenge”, Petelee would say. “A reminder of earlier days,” said Sim. Every morning, though, Goamfureepof would disappear before either woke up, so that they could have their moment. One day, early in the morning, Goamfureepof was staring out at the last of the stars as the sun came up. “Father...,” he seemed to whisper, and his thoughts were lost in the glimmer. A hand on his shoulder brought him to, and he turned expecting to see Petelee and Sim. It was neither. Kooquaip stood before him with his best people. No words were necessary. Soon they had gathered Petelee and Sim. Bags were placed over their heads, and in the early morning quiet, with no one around to see them, they were marched through the streets. Petelee, Sim, and Goamfureepof, all held hands as they walked side by side. Suddenly the bags were withdrawn. They were seated at a table, in a small marble room, a fire blazing nearby. Kooquaip alone sat at the table with

them. When he saw that they were all looking, he drew a knife and approached Petelee. Despite being bound, somehow Goamfureepof managed to stand and trip as he ambled towards Kooquaip, shouting. Petelee laughed, having been in worst straights. She stared into Kooquaip's eyes as he bent over her. Taking the knife, he first cut the binding around her arms and hands, then the rest of the binding. Goamfureepof looked embarrassed as it seemed something dawned on him. Sim spoke. "What are we here for Kooquaip?" Kooquaip cut the rest of their binding. Then he sat back down at the head of the table. He spoke. "Why do you think we are here?" They all seemed to ponder for a moment. Then Petelee answered with a question. "Your name, Kooquaip. It means "general" doesn't it?" Kooquaip was not expecting this, and took a moment before he responded. "You know it is. And your name means "The Redeemer", yes?" Petelee seemingly ignored this and continued. "It is funny that the children of the moon should fall into the hands of a general. Because in the time of Dibodo, generals..." then Petelee was interrupted by her brother. "Were the tyranny of Drisim, who struck down the star and her children." Sim looked bemused at the siblings, not at all ashamed anymore at his heritage. "So," continued Petelee. "What will your choice be this time?" "An alliance," spoke Kooquaip." "Go on," said Sim. "Your family will share power with mine. We will rule together." Petelee scrunched her face, "Will the rest of the Jahoths go along with this?" With a smile on his face, Kooquaip responded, "I think they will." With that, he went to the door and knocked on it four times, and sat back down at the table. It was a tense moment. Then the door opened. Poat walked through. Goamfureepof explained, "Sister! What does this mean?" Poat smiled and walked over to Kooquaip. "It means this," she said. And with that she kissed him. "As I said," Kooquaip turned, holding

Poat's hand, "An alliance." A short while later, Kooquaip was to go before the queen and the king. He told them he was bringing guests, so went his scheme. The two adults, and two children, wore their disguises as they had long ago. They were effective even now. Once before the king and the queen, Kooquaip made his announcement. "I am to be married," he proclaimed. The king and queen looked at each other. "To someone of your choosing," the queen said. "Let us see this person." Poat stepped forward and bowed. "Greetings, your majesties. I am honored by Kooquaip's offer and would gladly accept," she smiled. "Of whom are your parentage," asked the queen. "Oh, an ancient line," replied Poat. "It is well respected and esteemed only second to your own. If you will allow me to introduce my siblings." She introduced each with their disguises. "This is BeeÓoch," Petelee bowed. "This is Thuehhwee," Goamfureepof bowed. Finally, "This is Mow," and Sim bowed. The queen looked seriously at each of them for a moment and then looked towards the sides of the room. Guards began filing in. There was nothing the five could do. Soon they were surrounded. The king asked, "Do not take us for fools. It is clear you siblings are wearing disguises. You may have fooled everyone else, but you have not fooled us. And you have seen fit to overlook the matter of your name, and the nature of your parentage." Taking off her disguise, then, Poat stepped forward, walking straight towards the king and queen. "Very well. If you must know, I am Poat. Daughter of the Drisms. When I was only a child you slew our father, slaughtered our people, and sent my mother, brother and I into hiding. There we made a comfortable living off of nothing. Despite that, my brother found his calling. And we brought healing and happiness among your people once again, even in the dusty corners of the Multiverse. You sent legions to destroy us, but they could not subdue the might of

free hope. For every bit of force you sent forth that much came back against you. Now I have won the heart of one of your own.” Then Sim stepped forward. He took off his disguise, and revealed, “Yes. I, Sim, standing before you at last. We are in your power. But think of this. It does not have to end like this. We do not come forward now to claim something that belongs to Drisims. No. We come forward to share. An alliance. Let us end this.” Petelee put her arm around her brother’s shoulders. The queen laughed, and they issued orders to the guards, who began advancing. Then Kooquaip spoke. “Damn it! Do you serve the king and queen blindly! I am as much a Jahoth as they are, or any of you.” The guards pause. Kooquaip continued. “I will speak now. Whatever darkness was created by Drisim in the past, we have done and worse. I am ashamed to have counted myself among the guilty. But now I have spent time with a Drism. They were not loved by the people for not. And they certainly were not loved for being perfect. No one is perfect. And they were not loved because of anything that happened in the past, but because of who they are. They are freedom, they are comfort, they are love. They are friends to all of the people and the people know it. I know it.” He turned to face the king and queen. “And if you don’t understand. If you love the misdeeds of the past more than the present and future, of perceived wrongs that cannot be undone, over the current needs of your people, then I dethrone you. On behalf of the Jahoth, saving the matter of our family’s guilt for another day, I remove you from your rule.” Turning to the Jahoth guards and the courtiers now entering the room, “We will gather and decide on new rulers, and to consider the alliance proposed by the Drisims, as soon as this crisis is resolved. So say we all.” Kooquaip finished and a shout of approval filled the room. Petelee and Goamfureepof stepped forward. Petelee spoke, apparently

to the queen. “You have made your point. You have made your example. The only enemy left is yourself. We will pardon you, and allow you to serve, and someday you may join us again. We will love you, now and always. Come with us.” Petelee took the queen’s hand and Goamfureepof took the King’s. The King began to follow Goamfureepof. But the queen would not follow. Petelee turned around and saw a flash of light as the queen drove a dirk at her. Petelee collapsed on the ground as Poat, Sim, and Goamfureepof rushed forwards. She was not hurt. They all looked up and saw a man standing above them. He was holding a spear that now impaled the chest of the queen. She crumpled, but not before the king made a lunge at the man with his own hidden weapon. In less than a moment, the man brought the spear down on the king’s head, and he fell, dead. The man was breathing hard. Then he nodded at Petelee and Goamfureepof. Looking around quickly, he turned and ran out the back of the throne room. Poat began to run after, but Sim grabbed her arm. He spoke to her, “No. He has to run.” And so the crisis ended. Soon Oakodrisim and Hwegroa came to join them. Discussion went on for a long time. Many terrible deeds had been done, and appeasing all parties took a lot of work. In the end it was decided that no one ruling family, person, or peoples, had the wisdom and love to lead the Multiverse. Instead they would create a republic. Power would be distributed evenly such that local matters and regional issues were left locally and regionally and only overarching concerns would be delegated to the federal council, committees, and officers. Thus the rule of the Drisims and the Jahoths came to an end. Though not completely. Oakodrisim was almost unanimously elected the first Jooquaip of the Alliance of the Multiverse. Kooquaip went to work for the civil service along with the rest of the Jahoths. But not before he and Poat were married, and

at last their long wait came to an end. Eventually Kooquaip finished his service, and came back to the capitol. There he made his way to the top, serving as the Chief of Staff to Oakodrist. Poat achieved the higher end. Beginning as a delegate for the palace and the nation now surrounding it, she rose to the position of Select Delegate, with the title of Prince of Sentients. Sim chose a no less important appointed position as Chief of the Alliance Council of Healing. It is said that after the final crisis they had taken time to search for the pipe, having now two of the three ingredients, and in great want of the third, at least according to Sim. Eventually they returned to the capitol. No one ever saw the pipe again. What they did see when they returned, was that Petelee was pregnant. The citizens of the Multiverse buzzed at the news and her and Sim had to get used to being in the spotlight again. Well, as was inevitable, at last they gave birth to twins, a boy and a girl who they named, Hweebçvoa, meaning the Cosmos, and Hwaelos, meaning the Universe. Hwegroa and Goamfureepof came and joined Petelee in bringing up the children. In these ways, many years passed. After ages and eons, a Second Great Peace, when Hweebçvoa and Hwaelos were grown, and most of the Multiverse had long forgotten the events of the past, a strange report went around, though very difficult to verify. Apparently, great as they were, Oakodrist, Poat, and Sim disappeared for a while. Interestingly enough Hwaelos, Petelee, and Goamfureepof had long been absent from public life, though they did appear from time to time. Of course Poat and Sim never failed to talk about them. In any event, Oakodrist, Poat, and Sim were gone for a long while. One evening the townsfolk at the palace reported that two guest chambers had been used, though they were no longer occupied. They said they found only a piece of parchment. On it were the words, "We will bring him back." Later that year Oakodrist

could be seen in public again and Sim and Poat were back at their jobs. Sim never quite seemed the same though. He cherished his children and later his grandchildren all the more. But he and Poat would be seen sometimes, in a corner of some tavern, he playing a pipe and she holding a plush animal. When asked Sim would say, "He is true at last. A best friend to my children, to the moon and the star."