

Innocence Derailed

INTRODUCTION

When did it all start, her search for truth, for a faith she could use as a source of power? Kate's mind skimmed back in time, the parts she endured, the parts she treasured, all so different, but all important in the quest.

There was the first day, back in 1968, when Spirit began to manifest its presence into her being. And after that came a love so strong, she still carries the embers in the back of her heart. It was the beginning of the immeasurable expanse of intensity for what was to come....

Jane Catherine Rozek - 2022

Chapter 1

FIRST CRAVING OF THE HEART

Kate meandered down the streets of Portland's inner city, where shabby second-hand shops elbowed each other, and old gum dotted the sidewalks. Her steel-blue eyes followed the vertical lines of the towering buildings that reached up to pierce the sky.

What would my life be like if I lived here one day? She imagined being on a rooftop, a young fledgling at the edge of the nest, poised for take-off.

Kate was fifteen and her years of living in a small eastern town in Oregon were in sharp contrast to that dingy part of the big city landscape. She meandered off alone, leaving her mom and big sister leisurely shopping for college clothes a few blocks away. She looked around and adjusted the strap on her purse, but her mousy blonde hair and faded bell-bottoms jeans melded right in with the flow of other pedestrians.

A sign propped up in a grimy window read, "Office of the Salvation Army." *Ha! That's ironic. Armies don't save people. The soldiers drafted to fight in Vietnam are trained to kill.*

That thought bothered Kate because after all it was 1966 and the war had been escalating for years. Then she stopped dead in her tracks as the weathered door of the office flew open and a strange young woman burst out onto the sidewalk. She glowed with poise and glided past with an oh-so-buoyant smile.

Kate absorbed the joy and the powerful aura radiating from the woman but where did it all come from? The young woman had on a simple T-shirt, dark jeans, and scuffed boots but worn with such artistic flair. No timidity in her presence, just bold in spirit, like she walked the earth on a glorious mission.

Her strangeness intrigued Kate in a tingling awareness. *Where does she get that boldness and confidence? Because what this girl has—is what I want.*

As if in response to her thoughts, clear and simple words whispered into Kate's conscience as the young woman disappeared down the street.

~~AN~~INVITATION~~EXTENDS~~TO~~YOU~~

Kate stood on the sidewalk and looked around. No one else was nearby, so who had spoken? Had the woman issued an invitation to her...subliminally? It had seemed so real. She shook her head to clear the strange thoughts but then had to backtrack fast...