Settling in Cascade

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Summary

Following New Direction and Aftermath of Rain - Naomi goes back to America and settles in Cascade so that Blair can go to school

Notes

Written for the 2018 sentinel bingo prompt 'Marking Territory'

Blair was nearly twelve before Naomi decided it was time to settle down, let Blair attend school and get the qualifications he would need to go to university. Not that Naomi had neglected his schooling in the nine years she had spent wandering all over the world, letting him see and experience so many things. She was quite sure he would not be seen as under-educated, unless perhaps in math, a subject in which he had little interest.

Not that she blamed him for that. She had read somewhere that most people were either language or number oriented, and that very few were both. And in all honesty, she was glad that Blair seemed to be language-oriented; she couldn't see that the ability to work with numbers would be of much use to him unless he wanted to teach math, thus passing on information that was pretty well useless to him.
to youngsters for whom it would hold no great value in their day-to-day lives.

But where to settle? America, certainly - but her parents would be as reluctant to acknowledge Blair now as they had been twelve years earlier. No; Fort Worth was out; indeed, Texas was probably contra-indicated. "If you're in Texas, all our neighbors will wonder why you didn't come home." Naomi could hear her mother's voice - though what they expected her to do with Blair she didn't know. If she wasn't prepared to give him for adoption when he was minutes old, would they really expect her to abandon him when he was twelve?

She was afraid that they would. The appearance of respectability...

No. She would never be able to visit her parents while Blair was dependent on her. Not that she grudged that. Although she wrote to them occasionally, she had never quite forgiven them for not letting her admit the truth about her pregnancy, for forcing her to hide Blair's existence.

So... where to go?

How far could she go from Texas and still be in America?

She knew she could go back to Fairweather Camp - she still exchanged letters occasionally with a friend there; but no. She had enjoyed her days at the Camp, but - while she still followed some of it - she had outgrown much of the hippie lifestyle.

So where to go... Maine, perhaps? Washington State? Odd how, everywhere she had visited, Naomi always preferred the west to the east... So Washington State it was.

She checked for flights that would take her from Australia, which she was currently exploring, to Washington State, quickly establishing that she could get a flight to either Vancouver or Los Angeles from Sydney, Brisbane or Melbourne.

Vancouver was certainly nearer where she wanted to go, but even if they were just changing planes there and never left the airport, she thought she'd probably have to deal with being (for a few hours) in Canada. After doing some more checking, she decided that flying to Seattle, with a change of plane in Los Angeles, would probably be the best option. She could stop in Seattle for a few days while she decided where to settle for the next five or six years - Blair wanted to go to university, and until he was old enough for that, she would have to provide a home for him. However, once he did go to university, he could, if necessary, live in university accommodation.

Again she thought about it. Which Washington cities had universities? She checked, finding six that looked promising.


Naomi knew that Blair's primary interest was people, and how they lived. He had found the way of life of some of the places they had visited fascinating. So maybe whichever college had the best anthropology department?

Well, she could investigate that when they reached Seattle.

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They stayed in Seattle for nearly two weeks. During that time Naomi checked out universities, quickly establishing that the one with the best reputation for anthropology was Rainier, in Cascade.

And so she moved them a little further north, went to Cascade, and - knowing that she would be here
for four years at least, and Blair, if he still wanted to study anthropology and went to Rainier, would be here two or three years longer than that - bought a small apartment; it had a living room, kitchen and two bedrooms. Whether she would stay put after Blair was sixteen, she wasn't sure; she had come to love the constant traveling she had done over the preceding nine years. But if Blair still needed her once he was sixteen, she knew she would unhesitatingly, and without resentment, stay in Cascade.

What she would do with the apartment once she left, she hadn't decided; wouldn't decide until it was time to go. Blair could stay in university accommodation if necessary... but having a home of his own could be an advantage...

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Naomi set out to mark her new territory in Cascade by visiting places that looked as if they might satisfy her interests and getting to be known there, and encouraged Blair to do the same, knowing that the places that interested him most were not the ones that interested her. He was old enough now to be at least semi-independent, and once he started school in September his classmates would surely introduce him to things she knew nothing about - sport, perhaps? She had never had any interest in team games, though at one point when they had returned briefly to America, her then boyfriend had taken Blair to some basketball games, and he had met and obtained the autograph of Orvelle Wallace. He had shown some interest in the game after that, but after Ken was killed in an accident they had left America again and Blair had been unable to see any basketball games.

Well, perhaps now... though a lot would probably depend on the sports of choice of the school he went to.

Meanwhile, he had joined the library. Naomi smiled to herself, knowing that no other interest was likely to interfere with his love of reading. Anywhere that had books was always going to be Blair's territory of choice. A library card marked that territory as his - or marked him as its territory? Having the staff in a bookshop recognize him would mark that as his territory, too, although he hadn't, as far as she knew, gone looking for a bookshop - yet. But the realization that he now had somewhere to keep any books he bought would soon send him in search of one, even though he mightn't buy many books. He had one or two, though traveling the way they had been doing meant he couldn't carry more than a handful that he never tired of re-reading, books that she suspected he would always keep, even though they had been written for the early teen market - his reading and interest age had always been far higher than his actual age.

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September came and Blair started school. Apart from number work, he soon showed that his general level of accomplishment was far above his chronological age, and he was twice advanced a year; he sat his final exams, and left school when he was sixteen, and urged by the head teacher he applied for a position at Rainier. His marks were high enough that he was accepted.

Naomi stayed in Cascade for a few months longer, and then, satisfied that Blair was settling in at Rainier without any problems, began traveling again - a week visiting a nearby city to start with then, slowly, leaving for longer and longer. When Blair graduated, and then started working as a TA at Rainier, she transferred the apartment to him, increased his allowance somewhat (though she was sure he would have no financial problems - she knew he had saved most of his allowance since they settled in Cascade).

Then she resolutely (metaphorically) gritted her teeth and went to visit her parents in Fort Worth.
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