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Maybe not, Doon said, but he knew the diamond was more than a jewel. Trogg jumped, but Doon raised a hand. It doesn't matter, he said. Go on with your trading now. Pretty soon, you'll see. Trogg frowned at him, but he put the diamond in the front of his truck and then went back to his suitcases and boxes, and he and his family finished putting their goods in. Trogg held each of his objects in turn, and people shouted his offers. The sun fell lower in the sky, the shade of the town hall and the shadows of the trees by the river were elongated through the stones of the square. As darkness deepened and Trogg continued their trade, Doon and Lina walked quietly around the square, entering each store and stamed and talking briefly to their owner. One by one, the shopkeepers left their tents, each with a diamond, their bulbs joined together and illuminated. They were at their doorstep. Soon the whole square shone and shone. Trogg looked up. He ripped off his glasses, as if they might be interfering with his vision, and looked at the brightness. He seemed completely dazed. Doon approached him and smiled. He couldn't resist. His name is e-lectric-ity, he said. Have you heard of him? CAPITULO 27

very bad to Doon; (2) Scawgo had also been treated badly; (3) they were not particularly nice people. But there were also some arguments in their favor: (1) they could have been worse for Scawgo than they were; (2) Maggs had helped Lina; (3) Trogg was witty in some respects; and (4) they were clearly not doing well as itinerant and needed help becoming civilized people. The Troggs were given an old four-car garage in the back of the Pioneer to fix them for themselves. Doon taught them how to use his diamond, and Lina offered to teach them to read. Over time, they settled pretty well. Maggs' herd became healthier and increased, and eventually provided wool for many coats and blankets. Trogg invented a clever way to make folding awnings in the store, and Yorick and Karza learned that gouging, snoring, grunting and hitting were not acceptable types of behavior and made some efforts to reform. Lizzie changed her mind about becoming Doon's girlfriend. It was too serious, she decided, and besides, it was clear she liked Lina better. Instead, he began trying to meet Scawgo, the strange boy who had come with the Troggs. It was hard to get to know him, because he was very shy, but Lizzie was sure that someone as charming as she could get to him. She could say she needed laughter and encouragement and Scawgo returned to his real name, which was Tim. He explained to Doon that the reason he had never tried to leave the Troggs was that he had nowhere else to go, knew he couldn't do it in the world on his own. But now that he'd come to Sparks, he decided he'd like to live with someone else. He moved into the Pioneer Hotel with the Hoam family, in a room on the first floor so he wouldn't have to climb stairs, and became helpful helping in the kitchen. One day, he showed his treasures to Lina and Doon, when Doon had recovered for him from the high platform in the Troggs' apartment. There was a shiny red stone bracelet that had been his mother's, and a bow loath on a rope that came from his father; three shiny pebbles he had found in a stream; an ancient silver coin; and two things he'd found in Ember: a book full of beautiful hand-drawn images of insects and several drawings of a strange city that he'd discovered on the wall of one of the apartments he'd helped look. My big book! cried Doon. My pictures of the city! cried Lina. When Scawgo learned that Doon and Lina had done these things, he offered to return them. But Doon said she was planning to start a new bug book, and Lina said she would like one or two of her photos, but that she could keep the rest. I can always do more, he said. There are endless drawings in my imagination. Kenny sat on a log for a large part of the summer. He would meet a fox's lair into the woods, and if it was extremely quiet, the cubs would go out and play and I could see them. Once he took Doon to see them, too, and Doon told him about the fox that helped them when they left Ember. The months following that harsh winter were also hard, but in a different way. People weren't fighting to survive anymore. They were simply doing the hard but satisfying work of life: building, planting, cooking, sewing, trading, repairing, learning. Sometimes Doon complained so much to his father about working so much, when he was tired when the job hadn't gone well. His father had moments of tiredness and discouragement, too, his right hand had never healed very well and still did not work very well. But what he said to Doon was: You know, son, I don't think there's such a thing as an easy life. There's always going to be hard work, and there will always be misfortunes that we can't control lurking at the edges: storms, diseases, wolves. But there's something like a good life, and I think we have one here Doon had to agree. He spent hours working with the diamonds. He discovered a small lever inside the metal collar, when he squeezed it, a spark shone, surprising him, and showing him that the diamond could be used as a match, to initiate a He figured out how to relax cables from within the metal rings and connect them to other things besides light bulbs. He found an old electric fan in a warehouse at the Pioneer that repaired it, and when he hooked it to a diamond, the fan turned very well, making a weak stream of cold air. He connected an old toaster to a diamond and burned some pieces of bread. He discovered how a diamond could run a water pump, if it had only had the materials to make an electric pump in the first place, and how several diamonds could be hooked together to provide enough energy for something bigger, such as a refrigerator. If a roamer ever came through an old refrigerator that could make it work. But above all diamonds simply showed what was possible: that sunlight could be captured and stored for the use of humans. Understanding how this was done, finding the means to do it, learning how to make light bulbs, learning to make diamonds, these projects would take many, many years. Doon understood that they wouldn't happen in his life. But I could start. I could learn, do things and teach others. I knew it was the job I'd choose. Lina made a discovery involving something old and familiar and something very new. It happened because of a roamer who came through town in late spring. Murdo this time was the first to see him. She was down the Pioneer, taking some pickled plums to Maddy, and there he was going up the road from the south, carrying three horses. Two were thin, with drooping backs and gloomy coats, but one—dark brown, with a black mane—held his head high and had an animated step. Mrs. Murdo was surprised by an idea. It was a good idea that ran ahead of the homeless man on his way back to town, and was breathing hard when he arrived at Mary Waters' house. Mary, he said, I think we could do something wonderful for Lina. Mary agreed, and so it was done: one of the diamonds was exchanged for the brown horse, and the horse became Lina's. She named him Fleet and spent almost every one of her few moments off that summer learning to ride it. In the fall, she could stay even when he galloped away. Time passed: more winters, not as dark or as hard as the first, more wet springs, hotter summers. The new houses were built; new fields were planted. The roamers came through the things the city needed, and sometimes these were bought with a diamond. In this way, little by little, the diamonds ended up in other villages. The itinerants told the people of those villages where the diamonds came from and what they were for, and over time the bulbs of the abandoned places, which had always been useless before, became items in the of the itinerant. Sometimes people who had bought the diamonds sent a message back to Sparks, asking to buy more diamonds or wanting to know more about what could do. Doon wrote an information booklet in response to these requests, and the school's students helped him make copies of it. In this way, diamonds and their knowledge slowly spread across the field. Increasingly, the villages in the area communicated with each other. The vagrants, whose ovens walked slowly and often stop, were the main connection, so messages did not come and go very quickly. This is what made Lina think once again of being a messenger. He began to travel the empty lands to small settlements and villages, following the routes of the itinerant, but going much faster than them, carrying letters and small packages from one place to another. Sometimes Doon would go with her, sitting behind her and clinging around her waist, to the ruins of ancient cities, where she would pick up old electric razors and hair dryers and plugs and wires that could help her with her work. Sometimes Torren went with her, called him going to roamer practice. Lina taught Torren the song she had heard from the old roamer about Ember. She had already remembered the words, and knew that Maggs had had it wrong. Maggs had sung it this way. What is hidden will come to light again, a diamond jewel more precious than gold. But those lines should have been: What is hidden will come out again. It's much more precious than diamonds and gold. The precious treasure was the people of Ember, just as Lina had understood when she first heard the song. The diamond was also beautiful, but without people finding it, understanding it and using it, it wouldn't have been worth much. Most of the time, however, Lina was on her solo trips. Murdo worried a little bit about him having accidents, either meeting bandits, or getting lost. She's just a little girl. Mrs. Murdo gets restless. And yet, she reminded herself, look at all the remarkable things she and Doon have done! her extraordinary powers, actually, but because of how well they used the ordinary powers that they all had: the power of courage, the power of goodness, the powers of curiosity, and knowledge. Lina would be fine. Mrs. Murdo concluded. After all, she was growing up and would soon be deciding on her own what she wanted to do. He asked Lina not to go into the desert during the hottest or coldest parts of the year, and Lina agreed. Lina divided her time between helping Mrs. Murdo and Dr. Hester at home and going on a courier trip. He loved to embark on these trips, preparing the saddlebags that Mrs. Murdo had helped him make, pack food and supplies, plan his route, and loved to go to their destinations and deliver the letters that people had waiting. But most of all, he loved the trip itself. She loved to throw herself into the broad feet strong in the early morning coming out, first on a walk as a packet of letters slipped from one of his bags and fell to the ground. It was his fault, she hadn't packed very well. She saw him go, and Starfleet stopped so she could go down and get him back. But one of the letters had somehow blown under her feet before she stopped, and was torn apart. He picked up all the pieces he could find. It probably wasn't an urgent letter, was for Edward Puskot, of a man in another city who was also interested in finding books. But it would be embarrassing to have to admit that you ruined it. He stopped at the library to explain this to Edward. I wasn't there, but Doon was leaning over a thick volume with wet pages. One thought struck Lina. She smiled at herself. Doon, look, she said. He sat next to him and spread the pieces of the torn letter. I think most of it is here, he said. Maybe you could help me put it back together. Sure, he said. He started moving the pieces. Let's see. This seems to say . . . and then this would go here . . . And this . . . He paused and looked at her. Haven't we done this before? Lina laughed. So is Doon. One glance was between them, like a rapid stream of electricity. Sparks grew and thrived in those years. Behind the Pioneer Hotel emerged new houses, built in groups around small courtyards so families could live easily connected to each other. There came a day when one of these houses belonged to Lina and Doon. Poppy lived with them, and next door lived Mrs. Murdo, who created a clean and well-scrubbed place by herself until, a year or two later, she accepted an offer from Doon's father, who left her small cabin to be with her, and she did her best to tolerate the a lot of small items she could not resist collecting. Much, much later, on the site of the ruined city that Lina had seen from the Casper wagon, a new city began to rise slowly, a city of bright buildings with shiny roofs, not buildings so high that they turned the streets into gloomy canyons, but buildings barely higher than the trees that grew around it. It was a beautiful city, a bright and dazzling city, where the carnages by the sun carried people up and down the hills, gardens gardens in the courtyards of schools and between shops, and shops with colorful sails arrived at the port from distant ports. Lina never saw this city, of course, not with her real eyes, although she had seen something very similar to the eyes of her imagination. But her great-great-grandfather lived there, and she kept, hidden in a carved wooden box, the fragile old drawings that Lina had made. He would take them out from time to time to look at them and marvel at how they captured the spirit of the city that Lina had never seen before. But that was all many years in the future. Murdo is sweeping the yard of the doctor's house in a wildflower field with Fleet, Doon is trying to hook an old hair dryer to a diamond, Mrs. Murdo is sweeping the yard of the doctor's house, and Dr. Hester is in the garden spreading corn for the chickens. Torren is sitting near a tree stump with his plane. It spins and zooms in. He's trying to imagine himself in him, traveling to distant lands, being the biggest roamer he's ever lived. Of course, he can't get off the ground, and he never will. But imagine I could. Imagine I could fly up like a bird. He saw the green landscape of spring scattered below, with the river bending through it, fields dotted with yellow mustard flowers and orange poppies, and people doing their job. Above, I would see beyond Sparks, the roads leading to other villages and settlements, and on the roads the itinerant who connect one place to another. Then imagine I could fly even higher, like a plane. Now I could see the vastness of the land below. The mountains would look like white-beached wrinkled cloth on the peaks, the lakes shone like coins, the paths would be threads, and the slopes and grass fields would be a green carpet as far as their eyes could see. Here and there, groups of dots would appear where people had settled, but there would be great distances between them. The world would seem beautiful and peaceful from up here; I wouldn't see the storms, fights and terrors that can make life difficult. And at last, imagine that it could fly higher still, as high as a rocket heading into space. From here, I'd see the round edge of the planet. In the abyss between him and the earth's surface, you might notice an object moving along an unstable orbit. Sometimes I stay so high on earth that a person below might mistake it for a slow-moving meteorite or comet, sometimes I pounces very close to the earth. It's what many people in the area had noticed lately, most of them thought it was a traveling star. But he's not a star at all. It's a small unmanned spacecraft that departed for Earth more than years, after an astronomer named Hoy McCoy, who lived in a town called Yonwood, made the first contact between human race and beings in another world. (8) At that time, his discovery was kept secret, except for a privileged few. Other scientists, like the county's president, were told that he paused for a moment in his rush to war to contemplate what this discovery might mean. Eventually, a few years later, the news leaked. Newspapers made headlines about small green men, and people got very excited. But after a while, when no small green men appeared, the usual worries took hold again, and the small ship heading through space was almost forgotten. Fifty years passed. Then came the great Disaster, and after that, there was no one to remember it at all. But the spacecraft continued its journey, and those who had sent it continued to monitor its progress during the many decades of its flight. Finally, a few months before Lina and Doon made their journey back to Ember, he arrived. He's been collecting data to send them back to his home planet. He will report that the magnificent and powerful civilization he hoped to find appears to have disappeared and that a much smaller, humbler civilization has taken its place. You will notice that a large part of this world is in darkness at night, but not at all, in some places, the sparks of light shine, not the fires, but the electric lights, bright spots like diamonds in the dark. People here don't seem to have lost everything that came before, the little ship will report. Some of them have survived, part of their learning as well. It seems clear that they are making a fresh start. JEANNE DUPRÉAU is the best-selling author of *The City of Ember*, *The People of Sparks* and *The Prophet of Yonwood*. He lives in Meritt Park, California, where he keeps a large garden and a small dog. For more information about Jeanne, visit her website at www.jeanneuprau.com. JEANNE DUFRAYS EMBER CITY EMBER BOOKS The Darkhold Diamond / Young Adult / Fantasy / Science Fiction are rated 4 out of 5 / Based on 32 votes votes

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