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The Bastard

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Cover Page Footnote

This piece was presented as a branch to "The Prince in the Meadow"

The Bastard

**This piece was presented as a branch to "The Prince in the Meadow"*

The Village did not know that it was the bastard.
It did not think that it could have been a bastard.
The forest knew. The meadow knew.
The village did not know.

In before times the village was not, but the meadow and the forest were. They were, and were not alone. The forest was only the forest – it was not all the trees, and the meadow was only the meadow – it was not all the grasses along the stream.

The two knew each other and yet did not – they did not know of the Spring. The Spring knew of the meadow and the forest, and also of the bastard, before they themselves knew. The Spring was where the meadow and the forest met; a stream had brought the meadow and a tree had brought the forest.

So it came that the forest and the meadow knew each other, but did not know of the bastard. They knew only of the Spring, which had drawn both close to each other. The Spring watered each and sustained each – encouraging the forest to grow thick and the meadow to hug tight.

Such is the before times – countless seasons passed like this: autumn, winter, spring, summer. Trees braved the open meadow; flowers climbed over fallen logs; the meadow caught fire in spring and the forest in fall; the wind rustled leafed branches and bent tall grasses alike. Ever on trickled the Spring.

In during times came the village, which formed around the Spring in the union of the forest and the meadow. Trees were felled and land was made bare. Change came swifter than before – the Spring's trickling proved an inconstant measure in the world which the young village had brought. Roosters announced day, wives' calls announced dinner, and the Spring became unheard.

The Spring was consumed by the village – it was capped and a well dug in its stead. The stream and the trees followed way of the Spring – trees turning into gnarled, dark phantoms; fields of flower reduced to grassy, oft-trod pasture. The Spring, through which the meadow and the forest were, was no longer.

The Village did not know why it was the bastard.
It did not think that it could have been a bastard.
The forest knew. The meadow knew.
The village did not know.