

~ PARADISE FOUND ~

**A
Gathering The Dreamcatchers
companion novel
#4**

Sample Chapter One

Cristina Salat



Green Flame Omnimedia

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Summary: Amelia's battles to remove herself from her father's custody end when she is 16½. Now it's time to create a new life and family of her own...and perhaps a whole new way to live too. She's not a kid anymore after all, and it's never too late to become a happy adult, right? Paradise Found: An adventure in sovereignty, intentional community, friendship, sex, and all the magic in the world.

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***Like a clap of thunder...
change comes***

Chapter 1:

Unsettling America

Unsettling America: In interconnected systems, one change anywhere leads to other changes here, there, everywhere. With each choice life spins in new directions creating new possibilities.

Amelia

Way back when, Janey was not kidding: a piano really is the heaviest piece of furniture in the world to move.

The chipped yellow one we'd bought for \$25 at a Salvation Army when I was 14 and we were scrambling to furnish our shill San Francisco apartment so Mom could win custody of me, was about a thousand times heavier than my wooden chest of drawers or banged-up trunk of board games and art supplies. My book shelves, in fact — made of unpainted boards screwed together with metal brackets by me and Janey — were sturdy enough to hold more books than easily fit onto the shelves, but with all the books packed into boxes, the pine shelves themselves were so light, on moving day I could just about carry them out of the apartment myself!

But I'd been receiving postcards for the past 2½ years along with emails about 'Esoterica,' the new civilization my friend Gabrielle was forming with her friends on an apple orchard tucked between Sonoma County vineyards, redwood forests, and the Northern California coast — a place where people didn't even lock their doors, except at night — and now that I was finally done with court stuff, I was definitely heading there...and though I had no interest in taking more piano lessons like I had when I lived with my father in New York, the funky yellow piano I'd been pounding on throughout our custody battles — which somehow sounded way better than it looked — was definitely coming with me.

Though it weighed a ton.

When we first bought it, actual movers got hired to bring the old upright with its peeling Hello Kitty, star galaxy, and beer stickers into Mom and Janey's new pale pink apartment, back when efficiency and speed were

critical in terms of keeping my fucking father away from me...but now that we can relax, we've just rented a U-Haul to get me and the piano up north and we're doing the moving ourselves.

Hoisting the chipped yellow piano up onto blocks so Janey (who is now officially my mother's wife) can screw a sturdy wheel into each corner, it takes all three of us to lift each end of the piano one at a time and wedge blocks underneath with our feet. But once the piano is safely attached to wheels, rolling it across the apartment's hardwood floor isn't hard.

Janey backs the U-Haul to the front steps so its extendable metal ramp plus a thick slab of construction plywood lets us avoid having to get the piano down the steps entirely. We just glide it right into the truck on its new little wheels.

"So far so good," Janey huffs. She brushes her hands on her jeans.

My mother leans against the U-Haul, catching her breath too.

"No steps on the other end," I grin. "Gabrielle says there's a wooden walkway right from where you park to the front door!"

"Solid wood?" Janey says. "Or slatted wood with spaces in between?"

"It'll be fine," I say.

I am 16½ years old.

The worst parts of my life are over because my birth father is out of the picture now. For good.

I have money, a new life to start with Mom's and Janey's permission, and all the time in the world to live it.

Even with all the years I got tutored and home-schooled, I took the GED and passed with flying colors, so if going to college is something I want there's Santa Rosa Junior College or Sonoma State University up north where Gabrielle lives...or I might just start learning everything there is to know about her new civilization and growing apples.

I don't know what the future will hold, but at least it will be very different from what these last years have been. And that's something.

Whatever comes next will be my choice.

My mother comes up behind me placing her hands on my shoulders. "This is a moment," she says, pointing me towards the cavernous inside of the U-Haul as Janey clambers up to secure my piano with rope. "Take it in."

"Yeah," Janey wipes her brow, giving me the eye. "A piano-moving moment that will hopefully not be repeated any time soon!"

In interconnected systems, all things work together. Bees collect nectar and pollen for their own purposes, but in the process wind up pollinating all sorts of flowers, bushes, and trees that benefit species beyond their own.

Want to read the rest?

The complete PARADISE FOUND can be found in e & print versions here:
<https://www.amazon.com/Paradise-Found-Gathering-Dreamcatchers-Novel-ebook/dp/B07DS7FGVZ/>

And don't forget to review it!

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Thanks for sharing your thoughts.
Looking forward to hearing them! :)

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Happy dream-creating & dream-catching!