

SAMPLE CHAPTER

CIRLCE OF SEVEN

Enolai Ceps Meets Ned Log

And then for Nola something wondrous happened. Ned Log entered her life. Ned, with his cheerful disposition reminded May so much of Neves and that set well with her. Ned being so full of life and happiness that he could not except sadness in anyone could only help their daughter.

Nola was swept off her feet. May and Neves began to see flickers of the little girl, Nola. Whenever Ned was around, Nola was radiant and happy. She didn't have to add much to the conversation or share much to attract Ned. It was a comfortable relationship with Ned offering all the support while Nola reveled in his attentive presence. It didn't take him long to realize that Nola was not aware of how attractive she was. She stood five feet eleven inches in height, towering over most men. She wore her long black hair straight without a semblance of curl and back off her small, heart-shaped face. To Ned, her face was in total alignment with her small, aquiline nose, perky mouth and dark mysterious eyes that broke from the symmetry as they were large, black, and shining. If she had a mind too, she could have succeeded in the world of glamour, but this was not in Enolai's nature.

Ned would talk for hours about his dreams and ambitions. At the time of his meeting Nola, he was enrolled in a local school studying to become a computer engineer and would talk endlessly about his studies to Nola. Nola listened though she understood not even half of what Ned said. She was just happy that he wanted to talk and spend his time with her. Nola knew that several of her classmates

had more than a passing interest in this Oklahoman, but she was the target of his attention. Somehow this made Nola feel exceptionally good.

Not only did Nola recognize a change in herself, but also it seemed that her mother had changed since Ned had appeared. May seemed more talkative and friendly toward her daughter.

Yes, Ned was a breath of sunshine in the lives of the Ceps woman. Even Neves had become attached to Ned though he tried not to show it too often. Inside Neves knew that Ned would be the one to take Nola away from him and this was not a cause of celebration. Yet Neves could not help liking this carefree, well-educated boy.

Therefore, it really did not come as a surprise to May or Neves when Ned asked for Nola's hand in marriage. But it was a surprise to Nola. Nola had looked upon Ned as a shepherd trying to gather in the stray sheep. She had felt that Ned's attentions were like that of a brother and not those of a future husband. She had never dreamt that Ned could love her as deeply as she loved him. Nola not only loved Ned but needed him far more than she could ever have told him or shown him. She didn't hesitate to accept his proposal.

Nola and Ned didn't have a lot of money and were pleased as punch when a neighbor down the street offered to let them use a vacant house, they owned just steps away from the Ceps resident. From the minute Nola stepped into the house, built in 1890, she felt something, but she shook it off as she walked through the expanse of the interior. It was a massive three-story colonial with hard wood floors throughout. Once she had accepted the offer, she was given the keys and a few instructions. When Nola asked how much, the neighbor said, "consider it your wedding gift." May joined her daughter and was pleased as punch. It would do just fine.

From that day forward, Nola was joined by others as they went about cleaning the place. The house had been vacant for some time so there was a lot of dust to contend with. But the structure was solid and in great shape. On the day before the wedding, Nola and her mother stood back and looked at the transformation. Not only was the place clean from top to bottom, the decorations they had accumulated, along with the borrowed tables and chairs had turned the place into a fairy tale. Even the paper tablecloths looked elegant, with their blue paper napkins and blue bordered plates. All of this was in the front two rooms, while the enclosed porch behind another living area were decorated with streamers and kept open for dancing. Nola turned and smiled at her mother. It had been some time since the two of them had done anything together and now, after everyone had left, they were overwhelmed with joy, as they hugged each other firmly.

Nola flinched as a weird sensation went through her body. Her head lifted and she saw a form out of the corner of her eye. Panicking, she squeezed her eyes shut, then slowly opened them to look over her mother's shoulder only to see that whatever was there had vanished.

Her mother released her as though sensing nothing and Nola took a quick glance around. Seeing there was nothing nor anyone there she decided that it was just the light playing tricks on her.

It was the end of October when the wedding was held. Luck was on their side as the day dawned bright and clear with little chance of rain, so Nola and Ned were able to say their vows outside on the house lawn. Nola wore a crimson red heart on a gold chain belonging to her mother that she had admired since she was a little girl. She also had a white gold bracelet lent to her by Ned's sister and a blue garter demurely hidden under her wedding dress.

Nola had never thought anything could be as beautiful as her wedding dress. It was all gossamer and lace that flowed around her, making her feel wonderfully beautiful even though she would have to return it the next day. When she was dressed and ready, she walked on air to be at Ned's side.

With the flickering of strings of small white lights hung across the lawn, they said their vows in front of family and friends. Ned had included a special moment in the ceremony where they moved into a semicircle and joined hands with friends and family while the celebrant read aloud. "These are the hands of your best friends and family, the hands that will hold your children. Nola you hold the hand of the one who will care for you always, the hands that will still reach for yours when you are old and grey." The Celebrant paused and said, "I pronounce you husband and wife. Ned, kiss your bride."

His kiss said it all. That he would love and protect her for the rest of her life. And then, to end the ceremony, Neves laid down the broom that he and May had jumped many years ago. They watched as Ned and Nola joined hands and jumped the broom.

Ned and Nola moved to the door to the house and greeted their guest as they entered the transformed interior.

It was when they were making their way into the house that what looked like a swirling mist appeared. It moved swiftly only several feet off the ground. Nola pulled back on Ned's arm as she watched the mist transform into a shadowy figure before it finally disappeared.

It was only then that Nola heard Ned saying, "Darling, what is it?"

At that point she realized he hadn't seen anything. With an effort, she smiled and replied, "It is nothing."

The rest of the evening passed with no nonentity interfering with her happiness as she danced and ate an

endless assortment of food until she thought the seams of her dress would burst. That night as she lay beside her new husband, Nola was totally, undeniably happy. The warmth of his body next to her seemed so natural and she gave herself to him in sheer joy.

From that moment forward their life together was blessed. They were inseparable and every want and desire became attainable.