

Just as a diamond is coal transformed,

So clear awareness can arise from our confusion

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*Emotional Alchemy*

## **Magma Effect**

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## **Foreward**

Diamonds. Strongest, hardest, and the most highly prized crystal to be found anywhere.

People are diamonds too in a way, did you know?

I believe it is common to find diamonds in people just not that easy to spot them at first.

This is a story, gentle reader, of how an ordinary person much like you or me found and began to fashion that diamond.

It is also a story that shows how, if we were of a mind to, with the aid of a few guiding principles, we might find and fashion our own – so shall we?

## Chapter One

### Beginning

It had been pressure since day one, or so it seemed. Pressure to go here, do that, say this, be something, anything. Pressure to conform, to fit in, to stand out, to speak up or pipe down. There had to be more to life – and there was, in the end.

Funny thing about the pressure was how it changed.

For days, weeks, months even, it would come from one source until it seemed you would just crack. Then it melted away but seamlessly, invisibly, another pressure or even two would take its place. Same but different, different but the same.

Then in the end everything came out alright. No, not alright but just right and I could give you the essence of it here and now but.....

As the only way to truly appreciate a destination is to undertake the journey, I feel I should not say too much too soon so instead let us travel a while together. It will not take long and we will encounter no dangers that can not be overcome, so let us begin. We will end in good time.

South felt like a good idea. The land would be gentle to cross and the air warm to breathe. Yes, south was right.

Having endured yet another day of pressure; mind numbing, throat drying, blood cooling, tear jerking, stomach churning, heart stopping, pressure – you know the kind - it was time to go.

Old ones in younger days had told of mystical Oracles to be encountered on a journey; disembodied voices that spoke pure truth and could guide a listener to their hearts' desire. Exactly where the Oracles were to be found the travellers neglected to mention but as everyone who claimed to have received their great wisdom had returned within a few days of leaving they had to be close.

South was as good a place as any to start and the going would be soft which was all that Jai could face just now.

But why leave now? In fact why leave at all? Home was a nice enough place with nice enough people. There was music and dancing, food and drink, friends and relations, places to go and things to do.

You'd think Jai had as much as a person needed to be happy and yet real happiness, happiness with depth and meaning, as distinct from fleeting pleasure, was elusive in Jai's domestic world.

Work was pretty average too. You know the kind of thing; some good days, some not so good days; some times when you got the credit you deserved for stuff that happened be it positive or negative and some times when no matter what happened in the end, the part you played never made the light of day. Here it was purpose that seemed to be missing.

Jai longed for some overwhelming sense of there being some point to it all – the deadlines, the targets, the milestones, the benchmarks, and all the other means and methods of measuring how close (or not) the team got to success (or failure) day in day out.

It was not these things, however, that got Jai moving. Jai's leaving had its roots in events of the previous evening.

## Chapter Two

### Leaving

“Good day?” the neighbours had asked Jai returning from work, the same as they had asked every other day and Jai nodded and smiled, just as Jai had nodded and smiled every other day. “Good day?!.....” shrieked the voice inside Jai’s head “ how would I know? What makes one day good and another bad? Half the time it seems stuff that’s good for others brings me nothing but grief..... good day my.....” at which point, the familiar rant was abruptly curtailed by the most unexpected sight crumpled on Jai’s doorstep.

“What on earth..... are you doing here?” exclaimed Jai lifting the brim of a battered and battle-scarred hat to peer into bright blue eyes that danced in anticipation of the night to come.

A tall, rangy figure gradually unfolded itself and drew upright before gaily sweeping Jai into its arms.

“Returning home to live a life less ordinary than the one I left all that time ago! And what, may I ask, are you doing here?”

“I” replied Jai testily “live here, as you well remember, and I have an ordinary life to live that requires all my time and energy thank you very much”.

“Now, now Jai, there’s no need to be grumpy with me. I come with stories of adventure and discovery, surely that is worthy of some welcome, a small smile even....”

Jai looked up into the face that, despite its lines and wrinkles and the odd smudge of dust, was still the face of someone who had brought love and laughter into some dark times in the past, and then put on a smile.

“You’re right, welcome old friend. It is good to see you and you must forgive my rudeness, but there has been little else today that was good or warranted a smile.”

Placing a long, bony hand on each of Jai's shoulders the traveller shook her head and sighed.

"Then something must change, life is a gift to be enjoyed not endured. Come, let us go in and I will share with you tales to delight your heart and nourish your spirit and you will make supper to feed the bodies of both of us. Deal?"

"Deal" said Jai, with a real smile this time, and opened the door.

Some time later, after a simple supper, Jai and Freya sat by an open window nursing their drinks and bathing in the summer breeze as heady scents of lavender and honeysuckle carried in from the gardens outside.

"You really don't look happy Jai" frowned Freya "I've seen you deal with all sorts of challenges; studying, moving house, starting a new job and losing loved ones, but I've never seen you so low. What's different this time?"

"Nothing" came the reply, followed by a sigh and then a pause. "Actually that is probably it you know, nothing is different, absolutely nothing and probably never will be either. All those things you mentioned kind of came and went, the pressure was never going to last for ever, I always knew it would ease off one day but now..... now it feels like this is all there is and all there is ever likely to be, nothing is ever really different, the pressure is always there and it is wearing me thin."

"Okay" said Freya brightly, "so what are you going to do?"

"What do you mean... what am I going to do?" snapped Jai "I can't do anything. I'm fully committed at work, too tired at night to take on extra and all my money goes on basic living!"

"Basic living" Freya shuddered, "I don't much like the sound of that"

"Well neither do I" said Jai "but there is nothing I can do to change things."

"Of course" laughed Freya "that's it."

"What's 'it'?"

"You can not change things" came the reply "all you can change is you".

Next morning, and feeling only slightly the worse for wear, Jai left Freya sleeping on the couch and went into work.

Things were spiralling out of control, as usual. One crew hadn't completed their allocation; schedules were out, customers waiting, performance targets for the whole week if not month would be shot to pieces by closedown unless there was a miracle and Jai..... well, somehow Jai just couldn't get worked up about any of it.

"Another thing that landed on my desk this morning" came a strident exclamation, interrupting Jai's thoughts, "that I can't possibly be expected to resolve in the time frame given" continued the clipped and increasingly hysterical voice "is complying with the latest memo on the In-house Strategic Development Initiative for Rising Talent (IS DIRT for short) .... Ideas.... Anyone?"

The voice belonged to the Head Of Section (HOS for short). This was not the first time a critical issue such as complying with executive directives had been thrown down, gauntlet-like, on the table for someone else to either solve, or take the blame for – HOS never seemed to care about the outcome, only about making sure it sat on someone else's head. What was different this time was that instead of ducking out of sight behind a pillar Jai spoke up

"What do you need, HOS?"

"I'm dealing with IS DIRT, I need a testing role for an aspirant leader from our sister operation and I need it tomorrow!"

"Okay" said Jai

"But that's not all" HOS continued "I need a specific quality-based action learning challenge, bottom line impact potential and I need somewhere for them to stay for the duration."

"Sounds like you need a miracle, HOS" laughed the front line.

"Yes, you're right, I do and not for the first time" nodded HOS frantically "and I'm fresh out of miracles so, Jai, anyone, ideas?"

For a moment everything stopped.

Jai saw HOS and the front line as if frozen in time. The silence was total save for the sound of Jai's heart, beating hard enough to burst. "Is this it?" Jai wondered "is this what Freya was getting at last night, is this **the** chance to not change things but to change me instead... or is this just a chance that I can pass up and take a later one when I feel more ready?" but before Jai had chance to explore this question.....

It all started up again.

"Well? Well? Ideas?" HOS scoured every face in view. "Somebody, anybody?"

"Okay HOS" said Jai, taking a deep breath and speaking with fingers crossed "here's the deal – your perspiring leader..."

"It's aspiring leader" sighed HOS as the front line sniggered.

"Whatever. They come in here tomorrow, take my role, live in my place and are tasked to get this current phase back on track by the due date and identify a new wave of efficiency gains so that all this never happens again" announced Jai "what do you think?"

"That certainly sounds like a miracle to me" said HOS "but if they do that what do you do?"

"I..." said Jai, trying not to think too deeply about this new turn of events having anticipated at least a bit of an argument with HOS to buy some thinking time, "I go on special leave on half pay and the rent for my place will cover the rest. Deal?"

"Deal" replied HOS and dashed off to complete the paperwork that would make the deal real.

"Deal?" squealed the voice inside Jai's head, "have you completely lost the plot? What if they are better than you? What if everyone likes them better than you? What if they..."

Fail dreadfully and I take the rap for it, thought Jai. There are so many ways this could go horribly wrong for me. But it's done now and as I've heard Freya say so many times before there's no better time than now to make the best of it.

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Author Jackie Le Fèvre

If you have enjoyed these first two chapters and would like to receive the next two by email we'd love to hear from you.

All we'd like to know is something about Jai.....

What kind of music is in Jai's collection.... What's the inside of Jai's place like.....Does Jai like any sports?..... what sort of stuff does Jai read?....what does Jai like to eat?.....

..... you get the idea – tell us about your Jai and we'll send you the next two chapters about ours.

Deal?