
LAND *of* SHINING WATER

THE
Quarryman's
BRIDE

TRACIE
PETERSON



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Chapter 1



ST. CLOUD, MINNESOTA
APRIL 1886

Seventeen-year-old Emmalyne Knox tried to suck in air but found it impossible to breathe. Her throat constricted, and air couldn't seem to get past her mouth and into her lungs. Blackness edged her vision.

She reached out and gripped Tavin MacLachlan's hand, not caring if anyone thought it inappropriate. They were, after all, engaged to be married in less than two months. His presence strengthened her, and at last she found she could draw in a shuddering breath.

"Let us pray," Reverend Campbell announced in sober tones. "Father, we commit these bodies to the ground and these spirits to you. May your comfort be upon those who have suffered these losses. Amen."

"Amen," Emmalyne whispered along with the rest. She looked up to meet Tavin's sorrowful expression.

"Are you all right?" he asked softly.

"As well as I can be." She looked to her left, where her mother, clad in black, stood pale-faced and rigid. Rowena Knox's eyes were dry at the moment but swollen from long

hours of weeping. Emmalyne's young brother, Angus, stood on the other side of their mother. Barely twelve years old, he favored his mother in appearance with his dark brown hair and green eyes. Their mother's Scottish and Welsh ancestry made her a handsome, albeit petite woman, while Angus already stood inches taller than Emmalyne. He would surely soon surpass even his father.

Luthias Knox might have been short of stature, but there was no doubt that he was a man of strength. Even now, Emmalyne's father showed no emotion. His ancestry, beginning with his origins in the highlands of Scotland, was proven in his red hair and fierce blue eyes. His brogue and hesitancy to spare a coin for anything even remotely frivolous left no doubt.

"I'm so sorry for your loss," Emmalyne heard Tavin's mother say softly, coming up to them with her hand outstretched. Emmalyne nodded, seeing Tavin's younger brother, Gillam, and sister, Fenella, standing just behind their mother. Fenella and Emmalyne were the best of friends.

Emmalyne looked into the warm gaze of the woman she would soon call mother-in-law. "I can scarcely believe they're gone." She let her glance return to the two open graves where her younger sisters, Doreen and Lorna, had just been laid to rest.

"The tornado took so many lives," Morna MacLachlan said, nodding her sympathy.

It hadn't yet been a week since a massive storm ripped through St. Cloud and Sauk Rapids. The devastation had taken lives in both cities, but Sauk Rapids had borne far more of its destruction. Emmalyne's family was just one of hundreds that had suffered the tornado's wrath. The house they had lived in was now merely a pile of wood.

“*God’s wrath*,” her father had said with an angry fist raised to the heavens. The memory made Emmalyne shudder even now.

“Dory was just fourteen,” Emmalyne murmured, forcing her thoughts away from her father’s near blasphemous anger. “Lorna only ten. How can they be . . . gone forever?” Her eyes welled with new tears.

Morna embraced Emmalyne. “’Tis a hard truth to bear. I dinnae see your older sisters. Were they unable to come?”

Emmalyne nodded, returning the embrace. “They live too far away and couldn’t afford the trip. They have their own families to worry about now, so Mother didn’t really expect they would come.”

“Still, they would have offered her comfort,” Morna replied.

Fenella stepped closer to join in the hug. “Oh, Emmy, I’m so very sorry. You know I loved them so.” She, too, began to cry.

“I know you loved them,” Emmalyne whispered. “They loved you, too.” She relaxed in the warmth of the three-way embrace, relishing their comfort and support.

“At least I needn’t bear this pain alone,” Emmalyne said, finally pulling back. “You have been so good to my family. Mother said she would never have made it through those first few nights without your kind intercession and invitation into your home.”

“Letting you stay with us was the least we could do,” Morna replied. “You’re soon to be family in every way, and there was no need to delay welcoming you into our numbers.”

“And I have always wanted a sister,” Fenella assured her. “Soon that very wish shall come true.” She smiled, but the sorrow of the occasion kept it from lasting too long.

“Yes, but I know that our presence in your home hasn’t

been easy. My father . . .” Emmalyne let the words trail off as she cast a quick glance to see if he’d overheard. But he was busy scowling at something the pastor was telling him.

“He can be most difficult.” Emmalyne let out a long breath, as if the truth had been pent up inside her for quite a while.

“He’s grieving the loss of his children, Emmalyne. You’ll need to be patient with him. Come, Fenella. We must offer our condolences to Mr. and Mrs. Knox.”

Morna’s excuse for Emmalyne’s father was gracious, but Emmalyne knew there was no good reason for her father’s unyielding temper and harsh words. She’d never witnessed or received gentleness or kindness from her father, and she seriously doubted he was capable of either. Emmalyne had grown up to fear and venerate him, to never question his decisions or commands. Perhaps that was why she always cherished Tavin’s tenderness toward her.

Emmalyne felt a gentle squeeze on her shoulder and turned to find Tavin there, his green eyes showing concern. She felt a rush of comfort from the love she found there. “I’d best speak my condolences, as well,” he told her. “I wouldn’t want your father to think me rude.”

“Father won’t think anything,” Emmalyne muttered, “except how much this is costing him.” She was glad Morna had already moved away to speak with her mother.

“Try not to fret, love,” Tavin said close to her ear. “Tis but a few short weeks, and you’ll no longer have to worry about what he thinks.” He drew her along with him and walked over to her father and mother.

Extending his hand, Tavin met Mr. Knox’s hard-fixed stare. “May the peace of God be upon you. I’m heartily sorry for your loss, sir.”

Father refused to take Tavin's hand, and Emmalyne's heart sunk at the sight. Her father could at least receive the sympathies of others without being uncivil. Tavin appeared unconcerned, however, and moved to give Emmalyne's mother a hug.

"Mother Knox, you have my deepest sympathy. I was very fond of Doreen and Lorna."

Mother nodded, her expression one of disbelief and shock. She had cried herself out in the previous days and now seemed at a loss as to what she should say or do. She looked down and shook her head. "I . . . I . . ." There were no words.

Tavin patted her arm, then turned to speak to his own mother. "I'm going to walk Emmalyne back to the house."

"Nay." Emmalyne's father suddenly interrupted the conversation. "Ye'll not be doin' that."

Shocked expressions fixed upon Luthias Knox. Emmalyne couldn't imagine what had gotten into him, but from the look on his face, she knew it didn't bode well for any of them.

"If you need us to stay, Father . . ." she began, but her words quickly trailed off.

By now the few attendees of the funeral were making their way back to their carriages, as the grave diggers began shoveling dirt atop the small caskets they'd recently lowered into the ground. Emmalyne hated the sound of the dirt hitting the wooden lids.

"Ye and Rabbie have been most good to us," Father finally said, looking with a grim nod to Robert MacLachlan, Tavin's father. "I'm sorry to say I cannae stay and repay ye just now."

"There's nothing to repay," Robert MacLachlan declared. "You would've done the same for me and mine."

Father nodded once, and Emmalyne thought she saw just

a hint of softening in his expression. He fixed her with a gaze just then that almost seemed regretful, something she'd never witnessed in her father's countenance before.

"We're movin' to Minneapolis," Father declared in his abrupt manner.

"But surely nae until after the wedding," Morna interjected. "'Tis but a few weeks away—"

"There will be no weddin'."

Emmalyne's heart began to pound, and her jaw dropped open. She held her breath and thought to do the unthinkable and contradict her father.

Tavin spoke up. "What are you saying, sir?"

"I'm sayin' the weddin' is off. Emmalyne has a responsibility to her own family. With her younger sisters dead and her older sisters married, it falls to her to remain and care for her mother and me."

An icy chill settled over Emmalyne. *The tradition!* She'd forgotten all about it. Having been the third oldest and far from the last daughter in the Knox family line, she had seldom given the tradition much thought. Now, however, she was the youngest daughter, and in the Knox family lineage that made her responsible to give up a life of her own to care for her aging parents. It had been done that way for generations.

"You gave your blessing. The wedding has been planned," Tavin protested.

Emmalyne looked at her father. His ire was up, and there was fire in his eyes. "Ye'd do well not to question me, boy. The wedding is nae gonna take place, and that's ma final word."

"But, Luthias—"

Father waved Robert off. "We have our way of doin' things, Rabbie. You know that as well as any man."

“For sure I do, but—”

“There’s nothing more to discuss. I’ve just buried two of ma daughters, and we have a long trip ahead of us.”

“Surely you can stay one more day,” Morna argued.

“Please, Luthias. I don’t feel at all well,” Mother inserted, seeming to wilt before their eyes.

Emmalyne watched her father wrestle with the moment. He finally took hold of his wife’s arm. “I suppose ye’ll just be faintin’ on the way if I try to see ma plans through. We’ll stay one more night, but on the morrow we take our leave.”

Emmalyne fought back a wave of nausea as everything she’d planned for crumbled to dust around her. The tornado had not only taken the lives of her sisters and destroyed their home; it had cost Emmalyne her future.



Sleep refused to come that night. Tavin’s sister, Fenella, tossed just as restlessly as Emmalyne, and given the narrow bed, when one moved, they both did.

“I can’t sleep,” Fenella finally declared, turning over once more, this time onto her back. “I can’t believe your father is doing this, Emmalyne. You must not allow it.”

Emmalyne stared into the darkness. “What choice do I have, Fenella? I must respect his wishes. The Bible makes clear that I owe him honor and obedience.”

“But you love Tavin.”

“Aye. I do love him.”

Fenella leaned up on one elbow. “And he loves you. You cannot go and leave him like this.”

Emmalyne wished with all her heart there might be another way. “I don’t *want* to leave him. You know I don’t.”

“Then don’t. Go to him. Elope tonight.” Fenella got up from the bed. “I’ll go get him right now. You two can leave before anyone wakes up.”

“I know you mean well,” Emmalyne whispered through trembling lips. “But, no. I cannot. It would be a dishonor, and my father and mother would never speak to me again.”

Fenella was already pulling on her robe. “Just talk to Tavin about it. Maybe he’ll have some idea of how to make it all work. Your mother and father won’t reject you. You’ll see.” She hurried to the door, pulled it open, and gave a little shriek.

Emmalyne sat straight up in bed. “What’s wrong?”

“It’s Tavin,” Fenella said, stepping back. “He must’ve had the same idea.”

Tavin stepped into the room and stopped at the foot of the bed. “I won’t lose you, Emmalyne. You’re to be my wife.”

“Tavin, you can’t ask me to go against my father and mother,” she said, clutching the blankets around her. “It wouldn’t be right. I love you, but we must give them time. Perhaps Father will see the pain he’s causing and change his mind. I plan to speak with him in the morning.”

“Let’s just leave tonight and be married,” he begged. “Once it’s done . . .”

“That’s what I suggested,” Fenella put in as she lit a candle.

The warm glow barely punctured the darkness of the small room, but it was still enough to see the desperation on Tavin’s face. Emmalyne wished she could offer him some comfort, but she needed it herself. She knew her father’s mind was set, and she had never known him to back down once he had determined his course of action.

“Once we’re married, they won’t be able to undo it,” Tavin said, trying again. “We can show them that we still intend

to see to their well-being. I want your parents to be assured that they would have care in their old age.”

Emmalayne shook her head miserably. “Father says that marriage divides the heart and mind. He doesn’t think a woman can be both answerable to her husband and to her parents. He believes the tradition—”

“Curse the tradition,” Tavin spat out. “It’s ridiculous to put such a demand on someone’s offspring. Your parents are being totally unreasonable in their expectations.”

“But they’re still my parents, Tavin.” Tears were filling her eyes, and she blinked them away. “We both believe in the one God and that the Bible is His Holy Word. The Bible says that I am to honor my mother and father, that my days may be long. Don’t ask me to defy the Word of God.”

“I’m not asking you to defy God. I just don’t want you to throw away our happiness together. The Bible also talks about a man and woman leaving their parents and cleaving to one another.”

“Tavin, don’t you see? We could never be happy . . . not with my father’s curse upon us, and that’s what it would be. He would never forgive me.”

Tavin’s expression changed from one of loving desperation to an expression Emmalayne had never seen in him before. “And that’s your final word? You choose to worry more about your father’s forgiveness than my love?” His implied accusation made her stomach clench.

“I choose to honor God, Tavin, as best I know how,” she finally said, “and do as He would have me do.”

“Right. So that your ‘days may be long.’ Well, have it your way. Your days will be long . . . and no doubt very lonely.” He stormed out without another word.

Emmalyne felt a single tear trickle down her cheek. *So that's the way it is to be*, she mourned, pulling her knees up and leaning her head on them while a new flood of grief escaped.

Her father's anger and God's judgment . . . or her beloved's wrath and deep disappointment.

Somewhere in the midst of it all were the shattered remains of her heart.

Chapter 2



ST. CLOUD, MINNESOTA
ELEVEN YEARS LATER, JUNE 1897

Emmalayne had just finished brushing her mother's long dark hair as her father entered the hotel room. He cast a quick glance in their direction, then motioned to Angus.

"Go bring the wagon around," he ordered his son.

At twenty-three, Angus was a little taller than their father and just as muscular. He finished securing his boots and stood to stretch. "Aye, I'll see to it." He left without further comment, and Emmalayne quickly turned her attention back to her task.

She twisted her mother's dark brown hair into a serviceable knot at the nape of her neck. Rowena Knox was still a fine-looking woman, though the hardships she'd endured had taken their toll. Her spirit seemed broken, and she no longer showed any interest in what was happening around her. Emmalayne feared that her mother's melancholy had robbed her of any pleasure, for nothing seemed to please the woman.

"So we'll be going to inspect the house MacLachlan secured for us," Father announced. "There will nae doubt be a fair amount of cleanin' to do."

"I haven't the strength," Mother protested, her voice weak

and lifeless. She lifted her eyes in supplication to Emmalyne. "I'm afraid you'll have to see to it without me." Her voice was missing the heavy Scottish brogue revealing her early upbringing in the south of Wales.

"'Tis all right, Mother. I can tend to it."

For Emmalyne, the last decade was consumed by a routine that did not vary. Her mother's sadness left her with little energy or will, and hence the bulk of responsibility, as expected, fell to Emmalyne. Emmalyne, now twenty-eight, accepted her lot in life with as good an attitude as she could muster. Yet her broken heart had never really healed, no matter the amount of time she spent in prayer or reading God's Word. She kept searching for some sort of sign that would indicate God's blessing was upon her for her obedience. But misery and suffering were her only companions.

"We'll take a broom and mop. Soap and towels, too," her father said. "At the price we're payin', I'm sure we can borrow from the hotel. If we have need of more, I'll return to town. Rabbie said there's a good-sized pot out there for heating water outdoors and a working well."

Emmalyne finished assisting her mother and went immediately to her trunk. They had left Minneapolis only days before, and she hadn't wanted to return to St. Cloud for fear of running across Tavin again. But she couldn't help but wonder how he was and if he'd married yet. Eleven long years had passed . . . and for eleven years that unanswered question had whirled through her mind.

She'd exchanged a few letters with Fenella after their move to Minneapolis, but even those had stopped after a time. Fenella was no doubt married with wee ones, and taking time to write to an old friend was probably difficult to spare.

Pulling a heavy work apron from the trunk, Emmalyne nodded to her father. "I'm ready."

"Oh, I wish you wouldn't leave me alone," Mother begged, taking hold of Emmalyne's hand as she passed. "A doctor is supposed to come today, and I would rather not be here by myself."

"Hush, woman," Father demanded. "There's no need for Emmalyne to remain. She'll have work to do to set the house right. I'm not gonna spend a single dollar more on a hotel room than I have to."

Mother looked properly chastised and bowed her head. "Aye, Luthias, of course you are right. I pray you won't be long."

Emmalyne saw her father give a brief nod, but in no other way did he acknowledge his wife. It seemed sad that two people who had shared so much should be so distant. Emmalyne couldn't help but wonder if her father had ever shown love to his wife. If so, Emmalyne had certainly never witnessed it, and her mother was unwilling to speak on such matters.

Making their way downstairs, Emmalyne longed for a cup of strong tea and something to eat. She glanced toward the dining room. "Father, might I have a bit of breakfast first? The day will no doubt be long."

He looked at her with a scowl and gave an exasperated sigh. "Bring along something ye can eat in the wagon."

"What of you and Angus?" she asked, trying her best to sound sweet.

"We were up long before ye and ate at a decent hour."

Emmalyne nodded. "I won't be but a minute." She hurried into the hotel dining room and motioned to one of the serving girls.

"Yes, ma'am. How may I help you?" The waitress didn't

look that much younger than Emmalyne, and it seemed strange to be called “ma’am.”

“I find myself in need of breakfast that I can take with me. I wonder if you have some biscuits and cheese, perhaps?”

“Let me see what I can find for you. I’m sure we can prepare something.”

Emmalyne nodded and added, “Please hurry. My father is waiting.”

The waitress scurried from the room, ignoring one man waving his cup for more coffee. Emmalyne glanced toward the door, where her father waited. He would no doubt be angry that she had delayed their departure; however, she’d been up quite late with Mother. When Rowena had one of her spells of sadness, it was best that she keep company with someone—and that someone was most generally Emmalyne.

When the waitress returned with a small wrapped bundle, Emmalyne put aside thoughts of the night. “Thank you so much.”

“I put in an apple, as well,” the girl said. “Should I charge this to your room or will you pay now?”

Emmalyne dug out a few coins and handed them to the girl. “Will this cover it?”

“Yes,” the girl replied. “If you wait here, I’ll bring you your change.”

“That’s all right,” Emmalyne said, taking the food. “You keep it. I appreciate your quick help.”

She made her way to where her father stood. “I’m ready. They were quite kind to prepare this in a hurry.”

“I’m thinkin’ the cost will be outrageous,” Father grunted.

“I paid for it with my own money, Father.” She hoped that might put an end to his grumbling, but of course it did not.

“The sooner we are out of this hotel, the better. Everything costs so much. Why, they charge more’n any man has a right to.”

“But we have a clean room, and you and Mother a good bed,” Emmalyne offered. She didn’t bother to remind him that at least he had slept in one—she and Angus made do with the floor. “With Mother feeling so poorly, it’s best for her to be close to a physician, Father. Didn’t you say that this house we’ll live in is outside of town?”

“Aye. MacLachlan said it was the best he could get us for the price I could afford. I’m sure ye can make it suitable. Your mother will just need to get better.”

Emmalyne tried not to grimace at another reminder that the MacLachlans were once again going to be an intricate part of their lives. Why her father had decided to uproot his family and move back to St. Cloud was beyond her. Father trusted only a few people, and among those was Robert MacLachlan. But given the past between them, Emmalyne thought it strange they would return to the very place where they’d known such pain. Mr. MacLachlan must surely have offered Father a most lucrative deal, because as far as Emmalyne knew, money was the only thing capable of enticing her father these days.

She climbed into the back of the wagon and sat on the edge, dangling her legs as she ate her biscuit and cheese. Beside her were the various cleaning items her father had somehow secured. The bulk of their household goods were due to arrive by train that afternoon.

Biting into a biscuit, Emmalyne again thought of Tavin. Fenella had told her in a letter that Tavin had packed a few belongings and left shortly after the Knoxes’ departure. What

little communication she'd had from Fenella after that only mentioned Tavin briefly, stating that he had gone east in search of quarry work. He had planned to make his way to Maine, where he had heard the work was plentiful. His anger was all that seemed to guide him, and Fenella had been quite worried about him.

Are you still in Maine, Tavin? Her mind churned with questions, finally ending with the one that haunted her constantly: *Do you think about me as much as I think about you?*

St. Cloud had grown considerably since Emmalyne had left. When they had previously lived in the area, they had resided in a small house located between the city and Sauk Rapids, just to the north and east. Now, however, her father informed them they were to live southwest of St. Cloud, closer to the MacLachlans' home and quarry. Emmalyne prayed fervently that Tavin would stay away. She feared she'd never be able to put him from her thoughts otherwise.

She tried her best not to be bitter. God had command of her life, didn't He? At least that's what she had always been told and believed. Even after her father abandoned his faith, she had continued to trust God for wisdom and guidance. But her father had little tolerance for attending Sunday services, and that extended to his wife and children. Emmalyne knew her mother missed attending services; she missed them, as well, though as the years passed, Emmalyne had found occasion to slip away to church. Sometimes she'd even convinced Angus to escort her. He never complained, but neither did he seem overly interested. Emmalyne sometimes wondered about her brother's beliefs. He said little, most likely because he knew Father wouldn't tolerate such talk around the table. There was very little occasion for conversation at other times.

Trying a taste of the cheese from her perch at the end of the wagon, Emmalyne glanced around at the town of St. Cloud. There were banks, churches, and a bevy of storefronts that offered nearly anything a person could think of—jewelers, clockmakers, dress designers, stores selling ready-made clothing, barbers, and grocers. The town was nowhere near the size of Minneapolis, but it certainly had increased its offerings since Emmalyne had last been there.

“Looks like they’ve had fair weather,” Angus said from the wagon seat beside Father.

“Yes,” Emmalyne agreed. “Everything is so green and pretty.” The sun had already warmed the morning and felt good against Emmalyne’s face.

“Hope there’s still time to get in a gairden,” Father commented. “Rabbie said there are plum trees on the property.”

Emmalyne finished one of the biscuits and put the other aside for later. “We can make jelly and jam. That will be good.” She noted the busy streets were less congested as they made their way west. Here residences began to dot the landscape and businesses were fewer. A church rose up before them, and Emmalyne noted well-tended flower gardens gracing the property. Maybe it wouldn’t be so bad living here. After all, she’d simply go on caring for her mother and father—Angus, too. At least until Angus found a wife and married. The thought brought a pang to her heart. That wasn’t to be for her. She gave her head a small shake and went back to her inspection of the town.

She saw more trees as the wagon lumbered along away from the city proper. Emmalyne noted elms, maples, black walnut, and cottonwood among their numbers. She recalled that her father had mentioned there being a small stream on

the property—a burn, her father called it—and a pond, if she remembered correctly. It gave her hope that there might also be willows, her favorite tree. As a child she had loved to hide beneath their sweeping branches and imagine herself in a castle.

The town eventually gave way to farmland and fewer houses. Emmalyne found herself enjoying the ride, imagining a simple outing to see the countryside with no work awaiting her. The sounds of birds and the rustling of the grass complemented her daydreams. How wonderful it would be to merely lie upon a blanket and stare up at the sky. Emmalyne smiled to herself and drew in a deep breath. The scents of the country filled her. Perhaps she had missed it more than she'd realized.

Several miles from town, Father turned onto a much narrower dirt road. The farmlands were now edged with forest and rocky outcroppings that bespoke the wealth of granite available to those who cared to try their hand at the difficult labor of quarrying it. Emmalyne's family had always been involved in quarry endeavors. Her father had at one time worked with the stone itself, but over the last twenty years he had contented himself with managerial tasks in the business. He was good with figures, and this made him an asset for invoicing and keeping accounts in order. In Minneapolis he had worked for a small factory doing just such work.

“How much further?” she asked, hoping her question wouldn't upset her father.

“Jest a ways,” he replied, seeming to be deep in thought.

After years of living in the large city of Minneapolis, Emmalyne now could only wonder at life in the country. She was used to having things readily available to her. If there was a need,

she could simply walk a short distance to obtain whatever was desired. It would be more than a short walk to St. Cloud, and since they had no extra horses or wagons, Emmalyne knew those trips would be few and far between. There would also be no electricity or indoor plumbing, both of which she would miss dearly.

Father turned the wagon down yet another even narrower road that dipped in and out of thickly treed grounds. Emmalyne looked upward at their shade and hoped their property might also be filled with such beautiful foliage. It might make for some very pleasant evenings outdoors, if the flies and mosquitoes would leave them be.

She tried to imagine their home. Father had said it was a wood-frame structure that had two large bedrooms on the first floor and a third upstairs. Emmalyne had already chosen the upper floor for her room—not that she'd really been given a choice. She imagined the privacy and ability to get away from the arguments her father was bound to have with Mother. It seemed the two were always quarreling over one thing or another—usually related to expenses.

Perhaps she would be allowed to paper her room. She would, of course, have to buy the materials herself. Her father would never pay for such a frivolous thing. Emmalyne still had some money of her own she'd received from sewing, but it was dwindling fast. She couldn't help but wonder if she might be able to take in some sewing here. Of course, with their home so far removed from town, it would probably be difficult to find customers.

The wagon slowed, and Emmalyne craned around to see if they had arrived. Her father urged the horses right. Emmalyne gasped, unable to silence her shock. The driveway was

little more than a grass-grown path with ruts, but it served to bring them alongside a well-weathered house—if the place could even be called that. Signs of neglect were everywhere. Thick, high weeds had taken over what might have once been an attractive little yard. The walkway that led to the broken-down porch was obscured by an overgrowth of vegetation and debris.

“What hath God wrought?” she finally murmured.