

# **Book Review**

***Heartland : A Parable*  
By Charles Fivaz**

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The year is 2174 but there are no massive technological advances. On the contrary, the oil-driven economy of the 21<sup>st</sup> century has collapsed and humankind has reverted to a lifestyle of a much earlier age in which people live and make their living in relationship to the land. There are four large farms centred on a vacant wasteland which contains the Source that sustains them all. Their farming principals are based on the teachings of the Master Farmer – teachings of sustainability, simplicity and respect for the land and all its inhabitants.

This sounds like an idyllic situation, but over the years, something has gone terribly wrong as splinter groups, breaking off from the original farm, have formulated their own interpretations of the Master's teachings, leading to feelings of superiority, lack of acceptance and even intolerance of other farms and their ways.

Out of this situation comes Hannah from the original farm. On the verge of adulthood, she sets out on a quest of discovery which gradually turns into a mission. Early on, she encounters an Indigenous tribesman who's wisdom and true connection with the land is in stark contrast to that of Hannah's own community. He gives her a sense of identity that will sustain her throughout her journey.

Saddened by her community's lack of acceptance of her mother, who came from another farm, Hannah sets out in search of her origins and her first discovery is that while people may discriminate, the land blesses all alike. She continues to travel and work her way around the farms until she finally meets a community where some people have a broader vision of the Master's teachings and of cooperation between the farms.

Meanwhile her father Adam, struggling with his own loss, sets out to find her. Always just managing to miss her, he learns that faith is not willpower, and only in weakness can it bloom.

Eventually Hannah leads him and his companions into the Heartland where, in spite of tragic events, they manage to locate the Source. Only out of these circumstances can healing and reconciliation begin.

The landscape is beautifully captured in this inward and outward journey. It is a story of vision and hope, of sacrifice and courage where, in order to bear fruit, a seed must first fall into the ground and die.

– Lynne Roberts, 2011