

*Before you or me anything else in the world was born, two people were first upon the Earth. The first was short and shaky as a reed in the wind. The second was tall and stood stiller than willows. The two saw each other and no one else, so naturally they decided to play together. The two spent long evenings across still-livening grasslands, drank all they needed from pure waters, and subsisted off of just the sun. And they would run and laugh and talk and tackle and do all the sorts of things something new can do. All in all it wasn't a very long time, and eventually the two friends found the world changing while games lost their luster. The leaves were turning brown and red, strange new creatures were bursting out from the brush, and they could sometimes almost swear that the figure spied just over the horizon wasn't the other.*

*"I don't like these days anymore." Reed told his friend one day.*

*"I don't either. But what could we do about it?" Willow said.*

*"Maybe it would get better if we played like we did before. Before you were Willow and I was Reed and everything was still shining new." Reed said.*

*"But then there'd be no one to enjoy the new world, if your plan worked at all." Willow responded.*

*"Maybe, but what else could we do about it?" Reed said to his friend.*

*"We could keep playing and playing and maybe one day we'd feel okay that everything isn't shining new anymore." Willow suggested.*

*"I don't like that idea. And we don't know if it would work." Reed told his friend.*

*"Well we'll have to pick one idea someday. I'm going to pick mine." Willow told his friend.*

*"And I'm going to pick mine." Reed responded.*

*Both looked at each other, hurt.*

*"In my plan we could've still been friends." Reed said.*

*"In your plan there wouldn't have been an us to be friends." Willow said.*

*Both stood against one another for a while, before they both asked.*

*"How will we know which idea worked?"*

*They both agreed to try their ideas and meet in their success.*

*And so the two set off from one another to try their ideas. They found that the horizon-people were their own people and that lots of new people were popping out of the ground with each passing day. Both of the two became teachers to these more-new-but-still-old people.*

*Reed played in the simplest ways and always, always remembered the first day. Reed's students too lived simply and fought against names, words, and all the other devils of darkness.*

*Willow's games grew more and more complex, each day adding painful new convolutions onto an indelible record. His students too recounted all days and lived in the lonesome palaces of themselves.*

*By the time each teacher had taught one student, it would seem like it was in no time at all that they had become a teacher. And then that teacher would teach their own student, and soon enough the paths had twisted into so many forks that one would imagine they could never tell which idea would win.*

*But they still teach to this day.*