The first week of August hangs at the very top of summer. All the heat at the top of a Ferris wheel when it passes is the top of the line-long year. Everywhere the days grow shorter; the world is a ripening away into Autumn. The first week of August is hot, with blank white dawns and shining glaring moons, and sunsets smeared with too much color; hunting or storms that never seem to come. By night there is lightning, rumbling on the edges of no thunder, no storms. It is a special time when special things can happen...just as they did one August not so long ago.

One August not so long ago, three things happened, and in the first there appeared to be little connection between them:

At dawn Mac Tuck set out on her horse for the day-long ride to the wood at the edge of the village of Treegap. She was going there, as she did every twenty years, to meet her two sons, John and Daniel.

At noon Daisy Foster, whose family owned the Treegap wood, lost her patience at last and decided to make plans to run away.

And at sunset Leonard Cipher appeared out of nowhere and tried to buy the Treegap wood.

No connection, except for the wood. But things can come together in surprising ways. The wind was at the hub of the wheel, all wheels must have a hub. A Ferris wheel has one, and the sun is the hub of the wheel. A fixed point, they are joined best left understood, for without them nothing holds together. But sometimes people find this out too late.