

Glimpses of CELTELLINA
—and the Wonder Hill Orb—

There are secrets and mysteries imbedded in these tales, that the wise hearted with alert minds just might decipher.

BOOK 1

LUCENT ORBS

--An introduction of sorts

Somewhere in a black swirling nothing, vast as far as time itself, a ball of light draws near. Closer and closer it comes until it obscures one's view entirely. 'Obscure' being merely a term used, for it's now that one can really see anything at all--for the former blackness was, in reality, covering the scene and nothing could be seen. Now, as this sphere approaches, the onlooker is rather absorbed into this orb of light as it moves on its course through the black vast nothing.

If the viewer had been suspended there in time, in space, to see the orb orbiting, eventually the passing light that passed on through, would continue on its journey. Out the bystander would come, seemingly out the other side as the light moved past, giving the sensation or view as if they had just exited this ball of light.

Now the darkness would be seen once more, but this time a new realisation that they were not alone, and that if they lingered quite long enough, the light would unite with their frame once again as it moved again on its course through this part of the nothingness and blackness.

This is called hope. A hope for something not seen. And hope is turned to desire. For the very emptiness creates a craving for more. And desire must have trust, trust to believe there is more; that a craving is possible to be satisfied. This can only be maintained by the faithful, and to be faithful one must wait. It is the waiting that cultivates patience in the heart of those waiting for the light to come once again.

And so, were an onlooker to be suspended in the empty vast darkness, and were they to hope, desire, trust, believe, stay faithful at their station, waiting patiently, their sight would be rewarded. Only this time, they might choose to let go of their fixed place of lingering in the dark, to no longer merely be an onlooker who is left behind in its wake when the moving light surrounds them, touches them, and travels through them. This time when the orb of light approached, they might choose to move along with it and in it, never to be left in the vast nothing again.

If one, standing on solid ground, were to see this moving orb of celestial glory rise as if a sun peering part-way up on the horizon, it would seem to be a dome of light. Up and up it would go until a view is seen of the full sphere. Yet when one simply sees the first glance of this orb of light, a dome is all that is observed. This part-way view, this partial understanding, is sufficient for a time, for that is all that can be seen; all that is meant to be seen, like a sun at the very start of a day.

As this light hits the eyes of an onlooker, it is enticing. Forward is all they wish to go, closer to this orb of light with a golden hew. Enchanting it is to those who desire to be bathed in the rays of this rising and overwhelming light. And overpowering it is to any who wish to linger in the shadows alone, wishing for no light at all to arouse them from their unnatural slumber.

Those who draw closer are indeed drawn in, yea welcomed. For its very rising was a call to come, to come and take part in a union of soul with light and light with soul; and none are turned away, save those who choose to linger in the darkness that their own space provides.

They are not pushed away, for they did not come to the light. It is more as if they are simply left behind as the orb of light and its new inhabitants move on and out and above and through and around and over and up and away, as far and wherever the lucent orb of light travels on to next. Perhaps to gather yet more citizens that await its appearing.

THE ENCHANTED DOME

In a vast zone, too far and wide for any living earth-dweller lingering in time to measure, an orb of eternal light sent out smaller globes of brightness, rolling as marbles through a sea of velvet.

Our story takes place on such an orb.

Its size, compared to the large ball of glory that it came from is very minute indeed. Yet when matched against the dark sea that it resides in, it stands out as radiant. Its light, though relatively small, can be seen far into the distance.

This one became known as “The Enchanted Dome” by the residents. For as they look up from inside of its walls of light, a dome covers them; for the light has taken a spherical form, and they do not have an outsider’s view of its entirety—it’s full form, the side that is seen out in the black zone.

To stand upon a dome—upon the Enchanted Dome—rather than to be under its protective curve, is likened to standing atop a hill or mountain. What is inside and causing the hill to be formed, one doesn’t know as they stand atop the shapely curve of the Enchanted Dome. When standing or living on the outside of this Dome dwellers can not see what is held without the glorious Enchanted Dome, only the outside spherical form, for at this time where our story begins, this orb has been cloaked over, like a curtain on a stage.

This orb took on an appearance unlike any other sphere of light in the galaxy. Clothed in reds, greens, blues, greys, turquoise, dusty brown, and an array of other colours, this orb of light was transformed. The wonder that was within was hidden—its power source, its light. With grass and trees, seas and land, ocean depths and mountainous terrain it was fully disguised, fully encased, so much so that those dwelling atop, on the outer surface of the dome, were, for the most part, unaware of what lay within.

This outer realm, where one could see the blackness that surround it rather than being filled with only light, was called, “Wonder Hill”—at least the one area where a certain lady called “Celtellina” dwelt for many days, yea years.

When standing atop Wonder Hill—and one is always atop it, as the curve of the orb goes—one can see into the blackness and notice pinpoints of light. But it is never clear to a dweller just what or how far away these other moving lights are.

Of course, on Wonder Hill, other sources of light brighten it for a time causing light to shine for a day, and then fading again at the close of the day, reminding the dwellers that they are on the outside, facing the darkness, rather than fully absorbed within the glory of light.

But there is a time for both; a time to be nestled inside, overwhelmed with light; and a time to observe what goes on in the surrounding zone, as a learning space.

And so it was that Celtellina, a *Child of the Wind* as she was called, became a resident in the outside realm of the orb of light. Here she was to learn many new things. Here she would learn, most of all, to desire what was within the realm of light, and to long to find a way to be reunited with the loved ones who had once walked in the outer zone, but were at last dwelling inside the light.

To a content dweller on the outside realm of the lucent orb, two things would seem as fact—yet both are in reality, an illusion. One, being that they were stable, still, stationary as they went along their life on the surface. The other illusion was that though there appeared to be a sense of time—as in, there was day and there was night—yet dwellers still formed the impression that time was timeless and would continue on endlessly.

The realities were quite radically different. Those living in the lucent orb, the “Enchanted dome” knew this right from the start. They were in fact moving at a tremendous speed; always. It was as if this orb of light were in fact a very large transporter, encasing its residents through the black emptiness.

As for the concept of time, the passage of time, when one day followed the next and would continue on to infinity, that couldn’t be further from the truth. For time itself had a time limit. And before too many revolutions had past—when some light would come and shine and then fade into darkness each day again—so would time move on past.

The time when time ruled the exterior would pass. The cloak shrouding the orb of light would crack or rather be absorbed into the light. That is when all things would and will become new. A new beginning, and new realities for all of the dwellers of lucent orb. No longer would it be the “outside team” and the “the insiders” but all would live in the light of the dome, and onward would they travel through the seemingly endless vastness of nothing else but light and dwellers in it, here and there and all around.

When one orb of light would orbit its way near to another, and brush past it momentarily so that dwellers could peer at one another, this was a most curious and rare event. One never knew what was to be encountered on the journey of the lucent orbs of light and wonder.

And on the journeys continued.

Was there a station to stop at? No one knew, as no one had lived that long yet, or should I say lived that far yet. For we speak of a time when time is no longer the ruling commander of life span. We speak of the place and the space, the speed and the distance, instead. And one must travel far to see what the rest of the realm too vast to comprehend, holds for dwellers in the light.

WONDER HILL

The rising light, the fading shadows, the deepening and brightening of colours, and the warmth the companion of light brings to Wonder Hill has embraced it again another day.

“Get up, get up, my dear,” a mother might say to her young ones, as she thinks:

“There’s water to be drawn for the cooking, washing, and care needs. There’s food to be served. There are animals to tend to. There are thirsty crops to water. And there are things to be learned—many things. Time won’t wait for us. We must be on with the day, for numbered they are. What will we use this time for while it yet exists?”

The young mother presses herself on while the father has already been at work, long before the rising light, for he too knows that light always wins the race. But if he wants to not be left in need when the day closes, he must get a head start, while it is yet dark. He can’t outrun the passing light, nor can he stall it, but he can press on to do all that he can and that he must.

A son wakes with sleep dreamily enticing him back into its comfortable bosom, but he too knows that if he is to eat anytime soon, he must rise, for food will not appear on the table without helping hands aiding it.

Daughters, too, know that dresses and skirts will not sew themselves and cover a lady while she sleeps. If they want clean and dry wear to cover them, they will need to get on with washing the soiled garments so they will dry before the darkness and dew visits them again in the evening.

And so life on Wonder Hill is filled with work and pleasure; light and darkness; questions, yet time and opportunity for discovery; heat and cold; beginnings and endings; time together and times when one is alone; and on goes the list of various experiences that one comes to know in day-by-day living.

Yet to each one, at birth, is given something unique, something to aid them in a special way. No one living on Wonder Hill is entirely like another, and that is part of the wonder—the wonder of discovery of what gift or gifts each dweller is endowed with. The gifts cause joy to the recipient, though sometimes present a challenge for others. And that is because they are as an aid, to give the dweller an advantage that another does not have. It is to give them a winning help, something to pull out and use when the situations best suits it. Or to merely enjoy it at times.

A gift to one might be a challenge to another; and yet in a mysterious way, what seems as a challenge in life to one, might be a gift, and aid another in their journey.

All is not the same for all; for all are not, and will not be entirely free of their uniquely held qualities.

In Wonder Hill, learning to blend in a way that each one’s gifts are used to the best, is the way to tackle the challenges that all dwellers face.

JOURNEYS INTO THE PAST—THE DOFLYNN

“All aboard! All aboard! Last chance for boarding the Doflynn! Come now or stay behind. Forward to new lands we go!” the captain called out.

Long before “Wonder Hill” had been well populated, a certain vessel named “Doflynn” was on its way to explore such a place.

As its name indicates, it was a swift moving one, set out to do new things. It was said to be “flyin’” to its destination. But what would it discover once there, those aboard the ship didn’t really know, though they had some idea as to the basics to be expected.

“Mama, why can’t we go by horse and cart to this new place?” a little girl about the age of three-and-a-half, asked.

“Because this is the only way to get to where we need to go,” her mother replied.

“Are there no roads?” this girl named Sheena Strongheart, continued to ask.

“The road is through the water. We must go through the watery road, until we get there. This ship will get us there.”

She was satisfied then to look over at the vast ocean and wonder how they would be able to cross so much water. It would be an adventure indeed. Soon the girl and her family were tucked away in a little cabin for some rest, along with 14 others trying to do the same.

It wasn’t comfortable, but the ‘flight’ as the captain liked to call it, would be rather swift, and then great space and open lands for discovery could be theirs.

In the middle of the night, when Uncle Dodad was snoring rather loudly, making it nearly impossible for most others to rest in the swaying of the ship, the girl sat up.

She began wondering, perhaps even fearing, if this ship would indeed get them safely there. But would she rather stay behind where she used to be?

Perhaps there were some things she did, and would, miss. There were her cats that stayed behind, for they would indeed have a job to do. The primary reason these travellers were leaving was that their town fell victim to the most horrendous fire they’d ever experienced. Down fell one building after another. It was no place to call a home, not by civilised beings. She and her family, along with her cats, had taken refuge for some time in the outskirts of the village, where the fire was less aggressive.

Now they--and few, if any belongings--were aboard a ship, promising them something better. It did take trust, but hope was better than the despair of the village in ruins.

The cats who stayed in village would help to clean up the place of the many, way too many rats that were inhabiting the place. The fire took care of many, but rats, like cats, can make many and many more in a short amount of time. So they needed to be patrolled and controlled.

At last some rays of light peered in through the window and the girl thought it safe to whisper.

“Mama, are we there yet? The night has been long. I didn’t sleep much at all.”

Her mother just held her closely and smiled, while whispering in her ear:

“It was a long and restless night, though it did seem to go by rather quickly, I think. I’m sure we’ll arrive just in time. Until then, let’s do our best to bravely wait. I think it’s at noon day that we’ll finally get to our destination—when the sun is fully risen and is shining brightly down on everyone and everything.”

Meanwhile, up on the deck the hands of the ship were preparing for a storm. They could see waves of unusual size where they were heading to. The clouds and whirling wind looked dark. They prepared to get through it to the other side. Indeed the land was not far off, but they’d need to make it through the change of weather, and whatever else was causing these troublesome conditions.

A boy and his father held on tightly to ropes and rails placed along the stairway. They were swaying violently, but they were determined to catch sight of what was going on, up there, away from the sight of most of the travellers.

Trying to see more, to see what the hands of the ship were seeing and were dealing with, meant they got a bit more battered than if they merely stayed below deck. However, they were interested and determined to get a glimpse, even if it meant they might get a bit wet.

“What can you see, Dad?” the boy asked, tugging on his father’s coat. His father was up the stairs a bit further and could see more out the window of the door at the top.

“Oh, it’s a wet and wild one. I see the men working hard and fast.”

“Can I see, dad?” said the boy squeezing his way up a few more steps. His father then held the guardrails tightly, protecting his son between his arms, so he could get a good look.

As the boy took one more step, suddenly the door flung open, with him pushing on it and falling. The ship had swayed wildly. This gave them both a gust of strong wind, and a very cold and wet sensation. A flash of lightning lit the sky in a jagged pattern.

The boy tried to shut the door, but he couldn’t. The wind was way too strong. The father kept his grip as tightly as he could, so the boy wouldn’t fall down the stairs. There was only one way to get the door to shut. The boy would have to go up to the stormy and wild deck and shut it from that side. But he’d be up there, while his father was still below.

“Go,” his father said. “They could use someone like you, it seems.”

A strong pair of arms picked up the boy, just as he was attempting to shut the door. It never did shut all the way. A board was used to brace it shut. The wind had bent it in such a way that the wind was constantly coming through it now, though not in full force.

The boy was carried to a pile of ropes, and secured on to the ship with one of them.

“Here!” the gruff and tough sailor said, over the noise of the wind and waves. “Hold this light. This is to show those on the shore where we are, and let them know we are coming. The smaller boats will then be prepared to take us in.”

The port they were to land in was nearby “Wonder Hill”, but was a well-established place—at least the port was. It was a place of travel, and ships going in all kinds of directions would let down there to take in supplies, or to give those aboard a rest and new sailors would come on board having a change from the rather quiet life of port guarding.

The boy held a rope that was attached to a lamp. He was to move it up and down or side to side, using the rope. This would create a sign for those to see, even through the fog, that a ship was soon to pull in near to the port.

The father was glad his boy could help, though it was different not having him near to talk with him as before. Eventually the father made his way down for a brief time to tell others the news they were eager to hear.

The first question, of course was, “Where is little Jimmy?” All the father had to do was to point his finger upwards towards the deck that was above them all.

Eyes were wide with wonder. These were interesting times indeed. Some would be taken to help up above, when they showed great interest in the goings on of things out of sight. Some would stay below to tell the things they had seen and heard and experienced in their brief times of discovery.

Ah, the peace that came at last, with the rising of the sun in all its glory. It was a time for all to straighten out themselves and all their dishevelled clothing, wash up and brush their hair. They did want to look respectable while entering their new destination.

While the smaller vessels were coming out to get them and ferry them to the land they all had time to sit atop the deck and get a good look around. They had time to eat their first proper meal in quite some time, it seemed. They sat

with the sailors, and the captain too. They got to take a good breather and time of relaxing, before moving on to the next part of their travels.

When the travellers at last set foot on what was to be their home, they were tired, yet excited. They had all been through many things. It felt good to be on land, but where to start?

Well, they didn't know where to start, not because they were at a loss of what to do but rather because there was so much to do and they were hard workers.

"The first thing we need to get our hands busy doing is...." started off one traveller, offering a suggestion. Others pitched in with theirs.

One old woman pulled out of her handbag a book she'd managed to keep safe all this way—even safe from the fires; safe from the rats who liked to destroy books of all kinds; safe from mould.

"Maybe this will help us," she said.

The title of the small book was, "How to start a city so it will last a millennium".

Soon men were grabbing at it and desperate to see what it was all about. Since they'd never heard of such a thing, they were mighty curious indeed.

Before too long a group had gathered and were reading bits of this book aloud together, while the old woman pattered around to find some good soil to begin growing a little garden. She and several in her family had collected seeds for a living, and they managed to bring some with them. It was time to get to work.

If she waited until some big farm land was established, that would take too long. Just a little plot to get started on was all she needed and all she had the strength to do just then. But she could do what she could.

And that is how the first shipload of settlers came to Wonder Hill.

The journey was difficult, though not too long. The real challenges now lay before them.

What would life be like here, many years from the day of their arrival? Would it be a pleasant place to live? A lot would depend on the choices they made, and how hard they worked. But not just work would do it, it had to be work in the direction of good progress.

JOURNEYS INTO THE PAST—ARNOLD

When Arnold sat by a river he took some time thinking about what had happened, and why it had happened mostly, to the village he once lived in.

What made it break down in liveability, and in beauty? What caused the rats to multiply, like, well, like rats? Memories of the cleansing fire were played out in his mind. Life there had seemed so busy, yet pointlessly so. What were they all busy doing? He couldn't remember something that was really worthy of his time. Why was it all gone now? And why did he actually feel happier to have a new start to life, and be far away from that old place? There were so many questions.

However, when he would read parts of the book the woman had loaned to them, it began to become clear what had happened. This book was never made available, perhaps. Or! A thought stunned him. Yes! he thought. There was something else. Was it perhaps destroyed, buried, and banned, and all, or nearly all, available copies removed?

Now this thought intrigued him. For surely a document that important would not or should not have gone unnoticed.

With more vigour than ever, he now wished to read all that it had to say. For a place that clearly did not allow its citizens to follow the helpful instructions to survival, did not survive. So, if they now did things the opposite way, and take heed to the helpful advice, perhaps there was more of a chance of the new village being one they and their children, and their children, and down through the centuries, could enjoy and thrive in.

Arnold knew there was more, however, to simply knowing how to set up a village right. There would need to be some way to maintain and keep things going in the proper direction—and that could only come from people’s willingness to venture off the well-beaten downward path of habits and customs, and change to a new style.

They’d need to be, in heart and mind, as constant travellers, making new discoveries on a daily basis, and trying new things that they were unaccustomed to. For the day, or year that they settled down and would become totally satisfied with the way things were, never to make good changes again, was the day things would begin to deteriorate.

Their village would need to feel, in the very soul of it, beating in every living heart of it, that they were pioneers. Only then would they be able to both survive and thrive. But the pioneering had to always be in the direction of their united goals, as a thriving community. It would do no good to just try this or that; the village wasn’t to be as a classroom for exercises on who could try the wildest things. But rather, who was willing for the sake of all, to experiment with what would make things better, and learn to get good at doing it. And then move on to learning new and better ways.

For as a wheel on a vehicle that is in motion keeps the people moving forward, so they also must not stagnate, but thrive through change—but change in the right ways. And sometimes returning again to the beginning again for another round—like seasons do. Or like a wheel that starts again. A new beginning. Moving and changing, between the options that made life in the village a pleasant and an ongoing enriching experience for its dwellers.

Sometimes it was in doing nothing for a time that made things get better. Like Arnold was doing just today--sitting to ponder, and then a great revelatory thought was revealed, and helped paint the right outlook on the situation.

Leaders need this; children need this; parents need this; workers need this.

And thus it was in the years that followed, that the statute of “Quietness” was observed. All men, women, children, families, old, young, and even visitors were to be enriched and refreshed daily by a time of quietness. This was one of the secrets to a thriving and beautiful land.

This time of stillness, in time, became known as “Wonder-Fill”; a time to be filled with wonder, and to, perhaps, have some of their questions answered. And when one finished this time they almost always seemed to feel and say, “Wonderful”.

Bits of wonder also began to fill parts of the village, or “ville” as it was called for some time.

By the time grandchildren of the first settlers were living and thriving, the nickname “Wonder-ville” had officially been named “Wonder Hill” for it was on this lovely hill that wonderful things began happening.

JOURNEYS INTO THE PAST—THE TRIPLETS

The first signs of something truly unusual occurring happened when the first grand-children were born. A set of triplets graced the life of a certain respected and hardworking couple. Well, it was more than a couple, for indeed they lived with several others. There was much to do to keep up with life in Wonder Hill, and to ensure the next breed of citizens were properly bred and trained and learning the happy ways to keep life thriving.

The triplets were originally nicknamed “Tripay, Tribee, Tripcee”. However, the more “Wonder-Fill” time their parents had, the more they started to notice that something in deed was unusual in a very good way.

Tripay seemed to know what everyone was saying, right from the start. He was gifted with the knowledge of language, without having to go through years of learning. He couldn’t speak for some time, but he understood everything and responded in ways that made it clear that understanding was part of him, from nearly the day he was born.

Tribee, a quieter soul, would seem to be staring out at nothing, yet the smile on her face at these times, and the waves of her hands showed that she was indeed seeing something that others couldn’t. They never did know what they were missing, as only Tribee could see whatever it was. But it made her happy, and later on, when she learned to speak, she’d tell things that were going to happen, before they did. “Because the tall man told me,” she would say. No one knew quite who the “tall man” was, but Tribee always took time to look and listen to what he had to say.

Tripcee was neither quiet, nor of understanding like her brother and sister had the gifts of being. She could go on and on talking, nearly right from the start. Of course, the words she said, no one around could understand, for it was in a new language completely. How Tripcee learned it, or rather knew it right away, was a big mystery, for everyone in her household spoke only one language. However, when she was about 14, and had learned to speak as others around her, as well as her given secret tongue, something mighty curious occurred.

A newcomer to Wonder Hill moved in some houses down from her family and friend's residence. This young man was of a different nationality to everyone else and certainly felt out of place or lacking in company. Yet, one day as he was sitting alone, he was thinking aloud in his mother tongue. Tripcee understood him perfectly, and responded in his language.

The youth turned in earnest surprise. How was it possible? He alone was there from his family, who were the remaining ones from a tribe that lived far away. There were very, very few who knew how to speak the language of the "Elks" as they were called.

And this began a long and wonderful friendship. Tripcee began to teach this newcomer the ways of the Wonder Hill, and how to keep it a thriving place. He had a friend, and because his words could be interpreted, he was then able to be a useful and hard-working citizen of the village.

Tripcee also taught him to speak "Walna" the language spoken most by her family and those around. And it is not too surprising to say, that these two became wed some years later, for it simply was meant to be.

And as the gifts of these special triplets became apparent, and began to be more and more of a help to those around them, so did their names change, or rather they were called by their proper names. Their gifts had earned them names of dignity.

Tripay was called, "Knowble". Tribee was called, "Perceptible" or "Percy", and Tripcee was called "Eunetty".

When having a time of learning—as all citizens of all ages took time for, so that Wonder Hill would continue to thrive in all the right ways—Knowble, Percy, and Eunetty were reading about the very first building projects of their grandparents. They loved to learn about how their village started out. True stories, not just read, but that could be told and retold by the very people who were there when it happened, was an engaging and interesting way to learn.

On this day, their great-grandfather Arnold's book was being read. He had come over on the Doflynn with his young son Jimmy—who was the grandfather of the triplets. This book told of their family history, what it was like in the old village, why they had left, all about the ship journey and how Jimmy had met a girl named, "Sheena Strongheart" on the ship.

Eventually, Jimmy and Sheena were wed in Wonder Hill when they were of age and able to do things like build a place of residence, care for animals, and grow their own crops. And of course they had to have the other skills needed to be able to teach their own children what was important in life to know.

But Jimmy loved Sheena for years, and so did she admire Jimmy and the brave things he did. So this made them learn all they could, and learn it quickly, so that by the time their bodies were big and strong and able to raise a family, their mind and skills could match their bodies' abilities. Both were needed.

This was the first wedding to ever take place in Wonder Hill, and thus held an important chapter in great-grandfather's book. Children soon followed, all 16 of them. And some time later, as the book revealed, one of those children, a certain Hester, as was his name, was wed to a lass named "Etellie". These were, of course, the names of the triplet's parents.

Hester and Etellie only had three children, but these triplets kept them mighty busy. Yet, never too busy to miss their "Wonder-Fill" time each day. And as they did keep up with the custom of the land, so did their lives flourish at an even pace, not too quiet and not too fast. Just like a brook running joyfully along, perhaps over some rocks, yes, but peaceful to be around.

And so was their family and team they lived with, a happy and delightful team, where the triplets could learn how to build a pleasant life and thrive as a family, as a household, and as a whole village.

Today, under the mango tree, that was planted by Grandmother Sheena and her family, the triplets sat with father Hester to read.

“Here we are, on page 16,” father began, while Knowble, Percy, and Eunetty listened.

“My Grandfather Arnold writes: ‘There were 16 of us on the Doflynn who were skilled with village construction. We met each day for about a week to draw up plans. This had to be done right away if we wanted the place we lived in to look nice, to have good gardens, to not be too crammed together for comfort, yet not too spread apart in case help was needed. And that is how the original shape of the village housing set up was done.

“‘What each house or tent or living domain was made of, and how big, or what shape it took on, was all up to the dwellers of that particular household. Each one could choose their style of living according to what suited them and they enjoyed—and could change it according to the need. More rooms could be added, or a whole new construction could replace a simple one that had been quickly put up--when more time and resources were available.’”

Father Hester finished reading that portion of the book. It was time for more interactive discussions on the topic with his listening children, before taking a walk around to see some of the buildings that were first put up, and to teach about the many different type of abodes that could be made.

“They must have had to work hard, right away, when they all arrived,” Knowble surmised.

“Indeed, and we all still are, day by day. Aren’t we?” Father Hester replied, looking at Percy and Eunetty. They understood that father was reminding them of the task they were meant to have helped their mother with that morning.

“We were having ‘Wonder-Fill’ time. We’ll help mother now,” they replied in their defence.

“Oh,” said Father Hester, “what wonderful thoughts came to you then? For true Wonder-Fill time is not talking or chatting to one another, but finding out perhaps a secret that can be passed on to help others.”

Percy and Eunetty thought for a moment, then found the words to express it.

“We learned that the houses that are built in one way seemed to decay faster than others. As we looked at all the buildings from the hill we were sitting on, it was clear to see what types of houses would last longer. I think we’d like to build those kinds when we are older and need more room for our own young ones. It takes longer to build, and the materials need to be brought from a distance, but in the end it takes less work because you won’t have to build a new one, at least not for quite a long time.”

These comments above both the girls had added in, as they had both observed this.

“Well,” said their father, “Now I’m getting a class on construction from you! Isn’t that something. Why don’t you take some time to write that up. You both could start your own book now, about life in Wonder Hill as it is now, and the things you learn, so that your grandchildren and great-grandchildren can keep going and growing and learning in all the ways that will make this place the best it can be yet.”

And that is how the library of Perspectible and Eunetty first began.

GREENDA—LULLY—MOUSTOUR

“Let’s add another rose to the bouquets! Look at this lovely one right here in perfect bloom,” Grenda suggested as she and little Lullaby—or Lully—her sister, were flower picking.

“Here’s a big one!” Lully pointed out a frilly carnation.

“And let’s add a tulip or two. This is going to be a very lovely display,” Grenda said.

Happily they then skipped their way back to the house, down the path that passed the pasture, over the little bridge, around the huge oak tree, through the archway formed by vines with flowers growing over an arched trellis, and suddenly there was their house door. You’d almost miss it amidst all the floral displays and beautiful greenery, if one gleefully kept on skipping.

But right before they began ascending the little wooden steps, something stopped them.

“Oh, hello,” came a voice they knew well, and certainly loved—that is by Grenda, especially.

She turned to greet a certain youth with a wheelbarrow load he was taking to replenish the nutrients of one of the gardens where they had just come from.

“Hi, Moustour,” Grenda returned the greeting, somewhat shyly.

Moustour was always the bolder one, and never tried to hide the fact that he found Grenda far more beautiful than the roses and flowers she was holding just now.

“I’ll come over and see you young ladies, when I’m done a bit of outdoor work. I’ve got a new kitten to show you. – Maybe you can help me to name it,” Moustour said, and excused himself with a smile.

He was quickly off, and so were the girls quickly inside to find the right vase for the flowers they had picked.

“Mother, we’re back,” they said almost in unison.

She came out of the back pantry room where she was organising the stored and preserved foods. She kept her household well fed, even when fresh foods weren’t always abundant. She thought ahead and took the time to prepare, then when the weather and season changed they had what they needed.

“Oh, look at that!” their mother exclaimed. “My you must have chosen the prettiest flowers in this side of Wonder Hill!”

The girls smiled at the enthusiastic complement. But soon their attention was back on the boy, or the kitten, depending on who you were talking about.

It was clear what Lully was thinking about, when she said:

“Mother, the boy who lives nearby said he has a new kitten to show us. And we get to help him name it too!”

Mother smiled. She knew how her littlest girl loved animals, little ones especially.

Then she looked up with a twinkle in her eye to her much older girl and asked, “And what boy would that be?”

Though she knew already by the shy smile that Grenda was trying to hide. “Moustour”, she replied in almost a whisper.

“I think I have some cookies and cream we can serve when he comes. Would you like that?” Mother offered.

The girls nodded. The event was sounding better and better. –And all the more so when the sound of rain and thunder began. It gave them something fun indeed to do.

Knowing that Moustour wouldn’t keep working too much longer in the rain, they anticipated his soon arrival.

Lully pulled out her very large doll house that had hallways and doorways and stairways and cozy doll beds. This would be the perfect play place for a little kitten to explore.

Meanwhile, Grenda set up the table beside the couches with cookies, plates, water and cups. The cream would be taken from the cold box later on, when he arrived. She also placed a box of indoor games that could be played with a group while sitting—just in case he was able to stay for a longer while.

“Shall I change my dress?” she wondered, but thought it silly.

“If a young man enjoys talking with me, he won’t notice what I’m wearing—if it’s me that he’s wishing to get to know.” She had just put that dress on a few hours earlier, so there was no need to change it anyway. It was merely a thought that fluttered through her head, while trying to dismiss the nervous or shy thoughts that tried to take control.

Her heart seemed to skip a beat when she looked out the window at the wet and rainy weather, and an approaching visitor. All was set for his arrival, and had been for some time. There he came at last, with large boots on and something being held under his jacket. Quickly Grenda moved to open the door so Moustour could get out of the rain as quickly as possible—especially when carrying the little bundle of happy fur.

Lully was all too eager to see this little kitten that she helped Moustour hang up his wet coat and led the way to the sitting area. Grenda followed slowly, and stopped off at the kitchen to get the cream for the cookies, and some napkins.

As soon as they were in the sitting room, and the kitten began to do its antics, like kittens like doing, everyone felt at ease and were soon laughing. Grenda forgot all about her shyness and was serving cookies and engaging in lively discussions.

What was the kitten named? Well, since it liked playing hiding games under and around the furniture, as well as in the large doll house, Lully suggested, “Heidi”. So Heidi it was. And an open invitation was given for this furry little friend to visit any time Moustour would like to bring her over.

I could say “several years passed” but though it was true, it hardly seemed like it, for these young friends—Moustour and Grenda—soon found they were in deed in love. Well, they didn’t really know what “in love” was, they just simply very much liked being in the company of each other, and the more they did together, the more they learned to like about each other.

Yes, there were some things they did and said that made the other one sad, or caused them to wonder if the love was still there or was there as strongly as before, but things would always smooth out again as they kept building their friendship.

The day came when Moustour and Grenda were wed, and what a lovely wedding that was! This was a special time in a couple’s life, for that is when many things happened that would change their life’s pattern and flow.

When Moustour embraced Grenda as his bride, as was the custom of the land he chose a family name. The name he took on was “Grand”. It was to remind them to always try to do their best, and do the best they could to make Wonder Hill the best they could.

Lully was happy to do the playful job of throwing rose petals on the happy couple.

The joy of their union was topped, in time, with two delightful children who came to make themselves at home in the “Grand” household. Yet these did not arrive in the Grand household as soon as would be expected, but rather after many happy years as a couple. It was indeed surprising why children had not become part of their household right away. But there were other things to keep them happily occupied. There was always plenty to do and many people to help out in Wonder Hill.

It wasn’t until they were rather far along in years when a certain brother and sister were born to this happy couple: Roden and Celtellina. These two began life as friends, and continued on as they embraced new friends and grew up in a lovely place of Wonder Hill.

JOURNEY PREPARATIONS

Grenda was outdoors fixing up her herb patch, weeding, planting, pruning, collecting herb leaves to be dried, and so forth.

“Oh,” she said suddenly. “It’s happening again.”

Quietly she sat on a large rock, closed her eyes, and breathed deeply and slowly.

Without premeditating, sometimes out of the blue she would be overtaken with a sensation of suddenly being in another realm, but just for a few moments.

Later, when at supper, with her family, the elderly Grenda tried as best as she could, to describe what she saw.

“It was suddenly like I was no longer here on our property, but in a place of extreme beauty. It was so new, yet something in me seemed to remember, in a very faint way, this place of wonder.

“There were flower gardens of all sorts surrounding me and reaching off far into the distance. I saw a cottage house, though it seemed to be floating above the ground, not securely placed on it. There were coloured jewel-like large stones suspended in the air, going up like a staircase of stepping stones to the door of the cottage.

The door then swung open and out flew several delightful fairies, shining and each of a different colour. They were going out on some fairy mission, to spread their cheer around. They flew over the flowers and as they did, the flowers seemed to deepen in colour and brighten in shine. They looked better than before, with sparkle dust on them as well.”

As soon as she began walking on the first stepping stone, that led up to the door of the cute little cottage, all of a sudden the experience ended, and Grenda was, as she was before, still there in her herb garden.

Moustour nodded thoughtfully.

“I think what you are seeing, my dear, is a glimpse into a very small part the ‘Enchanted Dome’” he said.

“The Enchanted Dome?” the children and their mother exclaimed in question.

Moustour went on to explain what he had learned as a boy. He’d read some stories written by some of the first settlers, and some mysterious accounts that were happening soon after their arrival. Hardly anyone wanted to talk about it, as they didn’t understand what this “other world they were seeing” could be.

Those whose relations had passed away, had these “picture visits” the most. And when they saw this lovely place, that seemed to be coexisting at the same time, they met their loved ones who were no longer dwelling in Wonder Hill. It would greatly encourage them.

“I’ve always wondered about those things I read about. It sounded so real, but I had yet to talk to someone who had an experience like it. But what you, dear wife, are expressing, sounds very much like such a place,” Moustour said.

Grenda and her husband Moustour were being prepared to take a journey, before too long, to go and live in the mysterious “Enchanted Dome”. It wouldn’t be long before the call came for them, and then Celtellina and Roden’s life would take quite a new turn.

MR MACKALLEN AND SHAULIC—Part 1

“I’ve almost finished baking the pie for tonight’s Festival!” Shaulic said to her husband, Mr. Errand Mackallen.

“Wonderful,” he replied. “Then while we wait, let us sit for awhile on the porch. I need to talk with you. As you know this trip has many challenges and many unknown things about it. The festival being held at the half-way point to where I’ll be heading is only the first part of the journey.”

And so they talked about the adventure that Mr. Mackallen was about to head out on. There was a village not too far, a place they visited a few times. Since it was on the way to where Mr. Mackallen was traveling, and it happened to be at the time of their Spring time festival, it was decided that he could perhaps pass through for a visit. He wouldn’t show up empty-handed however, as his dear wife had baked some delicious pies for him to share with the villagers.

“You realise that I don’t really know how long I will be gone? I may even appear missing for a time—that is, no one might be able to trace me for some time. I may even be lost as well, and hope to find nourishment. But with so many others who have gone that way and never have returned again, it is a mystery that does need solving.

“Where have they gone? What are they doing? Did they fall prey to wild beasts—the sort we have never seen or heard about? Is it too wonderful a place they found, that they never wished to return? Or are they hoping to return, but are going around in circles, lost and hoping to find a way out?”

“The questions that puzzle me are many. I do believe it is something that I am meant to do. And I am very grateful for a willing wife who will give me leave for however long it takes, until this mission is complete,” Mr. Mackallen explained.

“Yes, darling,” Shaulic replied, and a tear or two ran down her smooth cheeks.

“I too love for mysteries to be solved, and I do have what I need, here on our farm. All the produce I need is here. My brothers and sisters can come in turn with their families to assist me. I believe it is a worthy endeavour and I release you to go, for I know you won’t be content until this dream or passion has been satisfied. It’s better you are out trying to help, than to be here wishing you could and feeling discontent. If there is something that you are meant to do you’ll never be completely at ease until you try your best to do it.”

Mr. Mackallen hugged his dear wife tightly and cried a few years too. It was hard to have two completely different dreams and wishes competing for his time—one wish being to stay home and be a husband that is there to care for his wife, work hard on the farm, and do what he could to make things better where he lived. Yet, he held also an equally strong pull in the direction of exploration and discovery. However, the time was right to give this second dream a chance and see what became of it.

When Mr. Mackallen entered the village there were indeed signs of festivity all over the place. Decorations and parties were happening here and there—all outdoors of course. Some groups were under trees, others beside the streamlets that flowed from the main river some distance away. Some sat on mats on the grass, others on picnic benches, and some villagers were still milling about wondering where to go, or who to join in partying.

Mr. Mackallen took in the scene. He didn’t want to just hand some pies to some and not the others, especially when he didn’t know anyone around at that time. He didn’t want to risk upsetting town’s folks. Just then he spotted a door where some servers were coming out bringing trays of goodies to this and that group.

“Perfect idea,” he thought. “I’ll give it to them. They’ll know who to serve it to.”

And so into the large kitchen he went, and introduced himself. Without saying much, for indeed they were very busy, he put the pies on a side table for the servers to use them as they wished. But before he left the building a certain cook came from the back room, wiped his freshly washed hands on his apron and approached Mr. Mackallen.

“You’re not from around here. That was mighty nice of you, and your wife I presume, to bring us something else to work with—freshly made and ready-to-serve pies. Please, here’s a plate, serve yourself up whatever you fancy that is around in the kitchen. Enjoy! And Godspeed you on your journey,” the head cook said.

“Oh, thank you. Very much appreciated,” Mr. Mackallen replied and did just that. He sat then at a table outside at the back of the kitchen building where some of the other servers were taking a break.

He overheard a discussion from the table next to him. He couldn’t help but hear it, as they were being rather loud. It seemed the whole town was. It wasn’t particularly relaxing, but a good meal was a help. It might be the last nice warm meal he had in a long while. He really didn’t know. After going for seconds and thirds (which he tucked away in his bag, for some time later), he sat to digest and ponder what had been said.

“I’ve been to the gorge. Well, sort of. It’s deep and very hard to both get down as well as up again. I just peered down a cliff edge to see what I could see. People say a new style of dwellers live there, and the animals are unusual too. —Or so said a rare “come backer” when they managed to escape. Well, at least that’s the way he put it. But I dare say the look in his eye told me he rather enjoyed it there, and he was trying to “get away” for domestic reasons. His flavour of wife wasn’t to be found there, or so I suspect. I think they do like to keep what goes on down there mighty secret.”

To this the other resting server had replied, "I wish there was a tunnel through the mountainous area that opened to an entrance right there in the gorge, without the treacherous journey down, and the nearly impossible climb out again."

That's all Mr. Mackallen got to hear, as they were then summoned to get up and take their turn at serving the next customers.

When Mr. Mackallen rode away he had this thought on his mind: "Maybe it's the gorge! Wherever that is, and whatever it is. Maybe that is where the so called, "Missing folks" have gone.

MR MACKALLEN AND SHAULIC—Part 2

It was an hour past dusk when Mr. Mackallen, still riding on as long as his strength would take him, heard a voice. Or was it the wind?

"The gorge is to your left. Take care, for you don't wish to fall into it mistakenly—that is if you wish to see your wife and child again."

This voice took him by surprise, and caused him to ride fully awake. He did not wish to have a stumble. He turned then to the right and made his bed for the night under a hanging over cliff. The stars could be clearly seen in the vast night sky, and the moon shone bright as well.

As he was nibbling on some take-aways from the town's kitchen beside the fire he had built, he suddenly jerked, nearly choking, as a thought struck him.

He had been so focused on the mystery of the gorge, and not falling into it, that some words of the whisper in the wind escaped his focus. But now in the utter silence, or near silence, the whisper came back to him with more clarity than before. It had ended with "see your wife and CHILD."

What child? He had a few nieces and nephews, but to his knowledge his wife was not with child nor had borne any yet. But maybe, like the whisper in the wind, this bit of understanding had also escaped his knowledge. Perhaps his wife's as well.

"Is she with child and did not tell me so? Or perhaps she does not know yet herself," Mr. Mackallen mused and questioned within himself. This would give him greater determination to seek that which he must, and return with as much speed as he could muster. For if there was a child involved, surely his presence would be needed more than it already was.

"My dear and precious Shaulic. Why ever didn't you tell me? Was it because you wished to not detain me in my heart's quest? Or am I the only one with this knowledge as of yet?" Mr. Mackallen continued to discuss things with himself until he fell asleep.

Throughout the night, when the hard surface caused him to stir and turn again in semi-restless sleep, Mr. Mackallen continued to ponder about this new thought that struck him that evening.

Meanwhile back at the farm Shaulic was hauling water to refresh the animals when a sensation chorused through her body. It was a feeling she hadn't had before. "What could this mean?" she wondered.

Her sister, Gauldina of the "Gauldina Straits" area of Wonder Hill was visiting that evening to check on the farm and help out, along with her two strong sons. Her younger daughter was glad for the change and helped feed the animals and enjoyed the farm.

When the lads were resting, and the youngest girl was fast asleep, the sisters had time to chat.

"Yes, it could be quite likely that you are with child," Gauldina replied at some point in the discussions.

And so it was that in time, some months down the line, that a certain “Emilda” was born into the Mr. Mackallen household. If only he had been there to hold this little one!

“Won’t he be surprised when he gets here—if he does,” Shaulic said to herself, while knitting a bonnet for her little one, now that the weather was getting chilly again.

But it wasn’t long before her beloved Mr. Mackallen did indeed return, much to the delight of the household.

“Isn’t she a doll? Such a treasure. A welcome sight indeed. I couldn’t think of a more fitting gift to receive upon my arrival home after these 12 long months,” Mr. Mackallen said with joy, holding their young one.

“Was your trip a success?” Shaulic was ever so eager to find out. And thus began the nightly tales of all that he had encountered while gone on his quest.

He had at long last discovered there was indeed a secret and safer way into the gorge, through a tunnel built many years before, but covered for security reasons. For the gorge held many precious natural substances. Were it easy to access, the living area wouldn’t have retained its peacefulness, but would have turned into a place of greed for those eager to get their hands on it.

Mr. Mackallen had come across this fabulous discovery only in the 11th month of his trek. There was so much more to be discovered, and he planned to do this when he felt the little one was old enough for him to be gone for a while.

When Emilda was nearly three years old, her father set out on a trip to what was called, “The Alpantine Village.” This was the place where at long last a cave tunnel, going through the mountain, was discovered that led to the gorge village.

Shaulic and little Emilda would travel with him to this Alphantine Village and stay there, while Mr. Mackallen took the trip through the cave tunnel to find out more about who lived in the gorge, and how they lived, and if they were happy there.

He wasn’t meant to be gone for longer than a few weeks, or a month at the very most. However, this was a trip that took a most unusual turn that none of them predicted.

“How long as he been gone now?” a concerned villager asked Shaulic.

“It’s been three and a half months now already,” she replied. “I’m beginning to wonder if he has entered a new realm and is unable to return at this time.”

Indeed she was right, for in the cave tunnel system were openings to more locations than merely the mysterious gorge village. There were openings to even enter the very Enchanted Dome.

That night Shaulic had a most fascinating dream.

Mr. Mackallen had appeared to her and told her of his most recent and incredible discovery, but he needed time to explore. He said he was sorry for not being able to come back yet. The new place he had entered made it very hard to travel to the realm where his wife and child were. He had discovered the ultimate discovery—a passage way to a land and place so very different, and in deed so very wonderful.

“He’s gone to the Enchanted Dome,” Shaulic woke saying. “I’m sure when the time is right he’ll come back to us and perhaps lead us to this amazing place he has discovered, or we will join him where he is. Until then we shall be brave. And perhaps as time goes on, Emilda and I can return to this Alpantine village. They are in need of assistance.”

Shaulic also pondered that Mr. Mackallen may return by the way of the Alpantine passage, and perhaps one of the times they visited is when they would be reunited again. Time would tell. For now, they were to carry on with life.

And so it was that from time to time the mother and daughter would visit this village that was equally mysterious. The passages ways it had were many, and not all of them had been discovered yet. It would be an interesting life, though very different than what Shaulic had anticipated.