

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 3

THE FLOWERS OF THE HILLSIDE PARK

“Okay, little beauties, time to open your eyes! The children will be here soon!” cooed the little sparkling one with a magical touch, as she flew from flowerbed to flowerbed.

The flowers stretched out their petals and gave a yawn. It was time for the day to begin. Like throwing off their covers, each flower opened up to reveal their full shape and form. The wind began to play a beat and to its rhythm each flower began to sway and bend, or rock gently.

Sounds of laughter were heard from up the long pathway that led to this beautiful garden. The children of Wonder Hill were instructed from an early age, how to care for the gentlest inhabitants of their land—the flowers and new plants just emerging from a seed. This taught them many things. They learned gentleness, of course, and also that their presence in Wonder Hill was very important, for the life and growth of these tender plants entrusted to them depended on them being around to tend to each plant they were given charge of.

They learned the names of all the most common plants, trees and flowers, and learned how each one needed and depended on something slightly different than another. To some, much water was given; to others just a little. To some, a place of shade was preferred, and others needed a great amount of warmth, light and heat. Some could stand tall all on their own, others would grow so long they needed something to crawl up and grab on to—like a trellis or tree, or rock wall of some kind.

Some seeds took a longer time to sprout, and some never did. Others would sprout right away with little care or time.

All that the children learned in their daily looking after the gentle plants of Wonder Hill aided them in becoming the people that Wonder Hill needed—caring ones with gentle hearts, and wise.

When the children arrived, the Flower Fairy fluttered eagerly around, instructing the bees and busy insects just what to do. For without the care they gave to the centre of the flowers, it would be hard for the flowers to grow just right—that is to produce new seed or fruit of some kind, if that is what they were designed to **place their seeds into**.

The children, most of them, didn't see or realise the unseen realm where Flower Fairy resided. Flowers were somewhat in the between realm, partly in the seeable place where the children and dwellers of Wonder Hill could enjoy them, and partly in the unseeable zone where they showed their emotions and heard instructions from unseeable instructors, such as the flower fairy watching over them here today.

Faithfully and carefully, the children watered each of the garden beds, ensuring that each plant was given enough, yet not too much, watering. They picked up the fallen leaves and petals that had fluttered on to the soil, and pulled out any unwanted growth that would suck the nutrients from the soil before the chosen plants growing there could be properly fed and nourished.

When the simple, yet careful work was done, this team of children went happily about their play in another part of the field. They took care not to have any of their game implements come near the flower beds. They learned caution in their play. And they learned that their playmates were also to be treated well and in a caring manner, for through an unkind word, look, or use of a play toy, a friend's smile might wither likewise, just as a trampled on or unwatered flower would do.

There was a little cave on the side of this lovely park, called "Hillside park". This is where the invisible caretakers of the garden resided. To the eyes of an onlooker it would look like an empty, rocky nook to sit in, perhaps in times of rain. Yet, there were many more things that were unseen about it, and only those in the realm of the floral caretakers could see and enjoy them.

If you happened to be a fluttering flower caretaker and you entered the cave for a time of fun and frolic, you'd see a very elaborate place, set up to the detail with every bit of comfort and beauty that a fairy minded dweller would think up.

Velvet rugs lined with little golden bells floating here and there for a fairy to rest on might be one feature seen and enjoyed in this cave. Dancing candles of various lights would also be seen, rather like the miniature lights on a Christmas tree, yet moving about as if in time to music. And music would certainly be heard in this mini place of wonder, along with many types of musical instruments sitting here or there on cushions, ready for use, or hung up decoratively on the cave wall.

Vessels of all sorts would be filled to the brim with drinks and perfumes ready for use or enjoyment.

When it was time to rest, and songs had been sung, and playfulness brought to a close, those wishing to rest in this natural nook would settle to the hum of the beautiful. This was a type of instrument that was played merely with light shining down on it. This would cause the particles that were incased in it to rise and hit against the musical sides, causing them to vibrate. The beautiful's hum, the sound it made, was most relaxing, yet kept the flower fairies in a partially awake state, should they be suddenly needed. It kept them from getting groggy, and kept their minds alert, though their little beautiful selves would sleep in a peaceful state.

One night, when Almena, the head of the fairies in this part of the Hillside Park was suddenly awoken, she rose swiftly to see just what and why she was being summoned. As swift as a bird in flight she flew out to the dew-covered grass and just listened. But she didn't have to wait for long, for the reason was quite plain in view.

"Oh, darling child!" she said, and fluttered over to a sleeping form. A child had fallen asleep on the rocking swing, and their parents weren't aware of it.

Quickly, with a gentle air of calmness, Almena flew back to the cave where several flower fairies were sleeping. With a ding of her wand on the large bell that hung from the cave ceiling she awoke them with a start. Not just awake were they, but awakened with full knowledge that there was a task to be done, one of urgency, out in the garden.

Still rubbing sleep from her eyes, the youngest of the fairies fluttered down to Almena, saying, "I'm ready. Who needs me?"

Somehow this little fairy just knew it was a "who" and not a plant that needed attention. This little one, Sparkina by name, had a way of knowing things unspoken.

"Thank you darling, your help will be most appreciated," Almena spoke gently, then taking Sparkina by the hand flew out of the cave, with the others following in a light filled flight over to where Almena led.

Around and around they circled in a dance of light, singing softly to the little one, until the child awoke, and began rubbing the sleep out of their eyes. At first they were bewildered as the garden looked different. It was dark, and not the light of the fading sun that they had fallen asleep seeing. But then Sparkina came and sat right on the child's shoulder and began singing a song.

It was a song saying, "Go home, little one, your mother is waiting for you."

Then all the fairies turned to their visible state, and with light led the way for the child to walk to their nearby house. When at the house the child opened the door to be enfolded into their waiting mother's embrace. However, when the child turned to look again at the little light-filled entourage that led them home, the path was as it normally was, lit only with a bit of moonlight.

"Where are they?" the child spoke.

“Where are who?” the mother said, picking her little one up.

“The little ones that led me home, that first woke me in the garden, that sang to tell me to come back to you,” the child replied.

The mother rested her child’s head on her shoulder and said,

“Perhaps they will return to you now as you sleep in your bed and dream of them. Perhaps in your dreams you can revisit the garden and play with the dancing light fairies.”

At this the child was ready to tuck into the waiting bed and fall dreamily asleep. Perhaps she did visit the garden and the cave in dreamland. Mother was most sure of this, for when the morning came, there was a special glow and light in the eyes of her child. Something surely had occurred in the night, in the land of dreams, while they all silently lay to rest.

GIFTS

Each of the Quauf children had their own special gift, and some of them more than one. First, of course, was Manly-Lane. He had the gift of speaking languages of all sorts. He would hardly need a day or two in the presence of someone who spoke another language, to pick up on it and be able to communicate at least basically, in that tongue. Whenever foreigners came to visit, he was a great tour guide and assistant, helping them find their way around and getting the information they needed.

Second came Ashlee May. She had the gift of sparkles. Whenever she was around, the ground, the people, the flowers, and all that she touched would give off sparkles and show an extra touch of shiny beauty. Whenever weddings or special celebrations would happen, she was often called for to be a flower girl and toss beauty and sparkles around.

Third there was Coronation-Neil. He could put together, and take apart and remake just about every piece of machinery around. He was a great help to mechanics who often asked for his advice. He had his own workman shop for building all sorts of things.

Fourth was Anna-Bella the Princess. She had the gift of beauty, and it would continue to develop more over time. She was the most beautiful girl in all the area. It didn’t make her look down on others, for coupled with this gift, she was given the humility to realise it was just a gift, nothing she did for herself. She knew everyone had something special. Sometimes she wished she could have a gift or two that was given to others, but knowing that others also wished they could have her gift of beauty, made her realise that it was best that each one appreciate their own gifts and not waste time wishing to have what others have. Each gift was given for a reason, for their life, and was just what they would truly be glad they had, one day.

Fifth and Sixth were the twins—Tourren and Bellissa. Their gifts complimented each other. One had the gift of endless curiosity, and a vigorous interest. There was no situation that was unstimulating to his senses. There was always something to learn about and discover. The other, Bellissa, had the gift of answers and knowledge. She could look at something that her brother wondered about, and suddenly the thoughts would come to her, and she would figure it out. Or she knew who around would know the answers and be able to help them figure things out, or learn to do certain things.

The Seventh child was Daffodil, and she could make just about any flowering plant, bush, vine, or plant-growing food in the garden spring to life and be filled with beauty after some loving care. She would go around with her little watering pot, and all that she watered, if it was growing poorly for some reason, would be again in full health. She had a way with plants.

Eighth was Emily Lily-Heart. Her gift was a secret, it was to be revealed when she was much older. Sometimes she got glimpses of it, and others did too, but it wouldn’t be of much use as a child. It was being stored up for the right time when she would be in full bloom.

(But I'll let you in on the secret, hers was the gift of knowing just what her babies, that she would have one day, were thinking and in need of. She would have a clear vision and idea of just what her little ones were feeling, and without guessing, be able to help them in the right way.)

The Ninth child was Strongheart the Determined. He had the gift of never losing sight of a goal he was reaching for. Of course, as he was still just a baby, it meant he used this gift in baby-like ways, for baby level goals—like learning to walk and climb, and reach for things he wished to have. But as he would grow older it would be put into good use for more mature goals like finishing large projects, and helping others.

IN THE QUAUF HOME

Tourren and Bellissa were combing their dog's fur. These twins knew how to both have fun, as well as get a job done. They did most things together, and learned while helping one another.

"Oh! There is another burr stuck in your fur Ol' Boy," said Tourren as he combed it out.

"That's what happens when you run and run through all the wild places. We could barely catch up with you," Bellissa added, talking to the dog, whose name indeed was, "Ol' Boy". It was a name suitable for him now, for he was well on in years, yet he had strength and stamina to run far and wide and to out run the children many a time.

"I think we should get him a leash," said Tourren, "then he wouldn't get so messy going into the most wild areas."

"But who would hold it?" Bellissa wondered, knowing they'd all most likely want to hold it.

Tourren joked, "Maybe the leash could have lots of handles and we all could hold on, and then Ol' Boy could be pulling us all along!"

The twins laughed.

"I don't mind combing and washing his fur after letting him run wild. It's part of the fun," Bellissa said in the end.

They agreed. They didn't want to stop his joyful freedom, just because it meant a little work to clean up afterwards. It gave them more time together. He was getting on in years and might not always be there, so they would enjoy whatever time they did still have Ol' Boy with them.

"Darlings," mother Quauf called out to all her little ones. She was holding their youngest little one in her arms-- Strongheart.

"It's time to meet at the fireplace. Come now. Leave what you are doing. Father will be here any moment now."

This was a time they met together every day for family discussions, reading, and quietness. It was important to them, otherwise things sometimes could get rather out of hand, with so many personalities all under the same roof. This was a time when troubles were worked out and discussion for "a better day tomorrow" were had.

They took time to let each other know what good they had noticed that day, something good that another had done. This helped to reinforce the good traits in one another that they wanted to see and hear more of.

When father came, they all were sitting very quietly on the soft rug by the glowing fire. No one was speaking—that is except the youngest one or two, who spoke to their mother in their baby and toddler ways.

"Hello, my children," father Quauf said when he entered the room. "Thank you all for coming."

"Hello, Father," they said and rose to greet their father with a hug before settling down again.

"Tonight we have something very interesting to discuss." This got the attention of the family. They did like to hear about interesting things, especially if it concerned them.

It was on this night that Father Quauf told them more about the place called, “Alpantine Villiage”. By the end of the evening’s discussions and activities, it was decided that a few times a year they would venture out—father and one or two of his older children—to explore the area and to bring needed supplies to those living there.

“This place has dwellings that are somewhat different than ours, but their needs are still just the same. Since we here have our needs met, perhaps it’s time to explore a bit further and be of assistance to those living in wilder parts.”

At this term, Tourren and Bellissa both looked at each other with a smile, remembering the fur brushing and clean up job that they had to do for Ol’ Boy when he went to “wilder parts”.

“I guess ‘wild and clean up work’ go together,” Tourren whispered to his twin sister. She nodded. And since they had both been good at doing the tasks around the house that required care, they could look forward to being on an exploration team with their father one of these months.

EXPLORATION AND ADVENTURE

Anna-bella and Coronation-Neil were walking close together down a tree-laned path, some months later. Well, just about everywhere there in the Alpantine Village could be called “Tree laned” as trees were one of its most outstanding features. Trees of all kinds.

On this rather dark path, due to the overhanging trees and twinging vines that blocked out much of the light, the two didn’t know what to expect.

“Isn’t it exciting?” said Coronation-Neil to his sister.

Anna-Bella wasn’t so sure. These wild places made her think of wild animals. She wasn’t sure what to expect.

But father was up ahead and knew this place was safe for them, though it looked on the wild side for sure.

Just then a loud and unusual looking bird flew overhead from one tree to the next. They both let out a cry. It had taken them by surprise, and the size of the bird was unexpected. They’d never seen such before.

Coronation-Neil quickly said in his comforting way, “This will give us more interesting things to tell our family about. The wilder things are, the more fun we’ll have telling stories when we get back!”

Of course Anna-Bella was thinking, in her timid way, “*If* we get back safely.”

But sure enough, the day came when they were all snugly sitting once again beside the fireplace, chatting happily. And it was true. The more wild and adventurous the stories, the more interesting they were.

For those listening it was just a story, a true account, but they didn’t have to live it out. What might be hard or uncomfortable for the one having to live out something, makes for a time of great entertainment for others who never had to go there or do that. But they would all, or just about all, get their turn to see what it was like, and experience new and possibly even uncomfortable things, and then get to tell the stories to a listening family, of what happened.

Each trip took about a month, for travel there and back did take time. This made for a very long story telling time when they got home.

After a year had passed, each of the children had gone a time or two, and learned much. Plans were being discussed about possibly moving there, to be of assistance to those living there.

Even though the Quauf family wouldn’t have much in the physical to share with them, if they lived there, yet the skills they had, and the gifts they each had, would be of great assistance. There was much their family could teach others. With new skills taught to the dwellers, they could then make things better in some way.

It would take perhaps even a few years until the Quauf family would be ready to move, as there was much yet to be done, and many more visits to prepare themselves a place. But it was what they knew was going to happen eventually, and their hearts were set on moving on to a more adventurous life, and a life that helped many others.

When Strongheart the Determined, the Quauf family's youngest addition, would be walking, talking, eating well, and could care somewhat for his basic needs, as most three-and-a-half year olds can, it would be a good time for the big move—to the Alpartine village. Strongheart the Determined who had shown his gifts well already, would enjoy the next challenge, along with his family.

It would be hard to leave those they had grown so close to, but perhaps it wouldn't be the last time they would see these ones. They were hoping indeed to see them again and again, just in a new situation, should others dare to visit such a wild land and lend a hand to help out as well.

During the last few years Emilda and her mother Shaulic made sure to enjoy the company of the Quauf family all they could, for time would move on, and so must they. It was a good way to not take friends for granted, but to cherish the time left with them, knowing that there was an end to things remaining just as they had. Though perhaps when the children were older, the visits to and from the village—from both families—would be more frequent. The future held many interesting possibilities.

NOTES

Bernardo was saddling up the large and majestic horses, when a messenger approached. "I hear you are soon to be taking a fly-ride trip with a bunch of new riders, over yonder near the Alpartine mountainous area, is that right?"

"Yes, that is correct. Do you have a message to pass on?" Bernardo inquired.

"Here is a package of letters, written by various children in Wonder Hill. They wish to say hello and send greetings to them. Can these be delivered on your trip?" the messenger asked.

"I think that can work out. I've already received one request to do so, from a certain young man by the name of Manly-Lane Quauf. He has one letter to deliver from his sister to a family living there. Perhaps with so many of the town interested in writing, we'll need to ensure a special part of the trip be planned to pass these letters on," Bernardo answered.

A short while later the young men arrived to mount the steeds, for one last practice flight. The trip to the Alpartine area would start early the next morning.

"Manly-Lane," Bernardo called, as he approached, "How would you like to take charge of all the letter deliveries to be done tomorrow on our first long trip?"

Manly-Lane was surprised, and felt honoured to be trusted with this responsibility. It certainly was going to be an unusual and special day following.

"You just never know what will happen next when living in Wonder Hill!" Manly-Lane thought, as he tucked the package of letters, along with Daffodil's letter, in his pouch, and climbed up on the tall and free-spirited horse, called just that "Free Spirit".

Manly-Lane stroked the horse's neck as he thanked him for taking him up to the skies, during these weeks of training. He double checked that that pouch carrying the letters was securely fashioned, and strapped snugly on to him—as take off was just moments away.

Then the call was made—the special whistle that Bernardo made—and the team of horses began to get on the move. They followed his lead horse, first walking, then trotting, then full speed galloping, and soon taking off into the air with wings spread.

It's an awesome sight to behold, and even a greater thrill to be on one of those magnificent steeds as they ride and charge through the sky. It leaves you breathless. Manly-Lane loved the thrill of it. He was glad his parents had trained him right, and that he'd made the choices in life that permitted him to attend this special training camp.

One day as Manly-Lane was just coming out of the woodshed when his father, Mr. Quauf came to bring him a note.

Manly-Lane put down what he was holding and quickly opened it up.

Father and he both wondered who it was from and what it was all about. Someone on horseback had brought it to their house just then.

"Dear Manly-Lane,

I so much enjoyed your company last fall, and I was hoping to have the pleasure of another extended visit this year as well. But all the best to you, whatever may happen. --Trudy"

Manly-Lane smiled. Memories came back to him of this elderly lady who was happy and jolly, though unable to get around due to a mishap with her legs. You'd hardly know she had some sort of disability, for she always wore a grin on her face.

Different ones in the town would go and spend anywhere from a week to a month at her place, to make things easier for her. They'd do the wood chopping for the fire, bring the food in from her garden, cook simple meals, and so forth.

Teens especially were encouraged to help out, knowing what responsibilities would be on them soon, and the more practice they got in caring for others, the better prepared they would be for their future.

"So, what do you think?" Manly-Lane's father asked.

"I think I'll go for another round, if you can spare me. Perhaps Emilda and her mother would like to come stay here, to fill in for what I often help with."

Father liked that idea, and so it was decided that in a month from that day, Manly-Lane would take his turn in the house of Trudy, and father would ask Shaulic and Emilda if they'd enjoy staying at their house here for a week.

Overall it was a great plan. Helping out here and there, and not always remaining in one solid location was a common occurrence in this part of Wonder Hill, for that is what made things thrive in the best way. Change would always be a part of life, and so changing every now and then to accommodate the needs of others was a needed part of life as well.

SURPRISE VISITS

It was a lovely day, and Celtellina went to sit under the shade of her favourite tree, along with Courty, the dog. All of a sudden, as they were walking, Courty stopped, whimpered slightly, then turned back and walked to the house—as if obediently doing what he was told to, by some invisible being.

Celtellina looked around, wondering what was happening. She too felt the presence of some angelic being, but saw no one. Just then in her mind the words began to form.

"I think it's time I introduced myself to you. I've been with you for a long time. I'm one of your helpers in the invisible realm. There are many of us that help you and watch over you, though you can't see us."

As she heard these words spoken to her mind, an image began to appear, and Celtellina could half-way see the shape and form of the being that was looking at her and speaking to her, though inaudibly.

Celtellina felt she was in the warm and friendly presence of someone that loved her and cared about her. Her eagerness to have this angelic friend continue speaking, encouraged him to continue.

"I'm sent as a friend and caretaker for you, dear Celtellina. I used to be side-by-side with your great-grandparents. I'm happy to let you know that I'll always be around. You're never alone."

As these words finished, the outline of the angelic friend faded, but his presence was still felt. Celtellina sat on the grass and pondered what had been and was happening. The voice in her mind continued.

"The King wants you to know that He loves you. That is why I have been sent to assist you in your journey in life. There are challenges for you to face, but you won't have to deal with them alone. I'm here to help."

At that, the moment of connecting with this angelic friend seemed to fade, while the seeable and touchable realm around her became more alive to her. Courty returned and sat with her, and birds began chatting in the tree's branches. A large smile was on the face and in the heart of Celtellina. The feeling that comes after knowing you are personally loved and cared for by the King and others He sends to help, is a joyous and tremendous one.

From that time on, though she didn't usually see his form visibly in front of her, Celtellina did often hear him speaking to her in her mind. He would tell her funny things, or give her good ideas, or perhaps compel her to do this or that so she would make great decisions and do things that pleased the King and was good for those around her.

Later, after her parent's journey took them all the way back to Wonder Hill, she still had her faithful helper and companion.

SHANE

Roden was just getting dressed for the day when he spotted dust tossed up on the path way, the kind that comes when a horse and rider were galloping along.

"I wonder who has come to visit our area? Must be someone new," he thought to himself.

When ready for the day, he decided to step out the front door to go meet and greet the newcomer.

He found a young man, somewhat his own age, just getting off his horse at the community well. By the time Roden had approached, the young man had pulled up a bucket of water for his horse to drink, as well as a glass of water scooped out first for himself.

"Hi there," Roden said with a smile, as he approached the well.

"My name is Roden, and my father's house is just up the road a bit. Have you come from far?"

"I've come from quite a ways, in fact I'm just travelling through, getting to see this area. I'm sure I'll move on soon and continue my journeys. My name is Shane. One day I hope to find the place to call home."

"Well, you are welcome to join us for our first meal of the day, if you wish. There are stables and an empty stall you can let your horse rest in for a bit. We've got what he'll need there. Come, meet my family, and tell us more about yourself and your travels," Roden invited.

Shane was more than happy to do as suggested, and following Roden, led his horse to the stables to rest and eat. Shane was then shown to the washing room set up in the stables.

"Got a clean set of clothes to put on?" Roden asked. Shane nodded. "You must feel ready for a wash and change by now. But come and join us at the house when you are freshened up," Roden said.

After washing and putting on a fresh set of clothes, Shane put his former clothes to soak in the tub of water, while he went to enjoy a meal with a family he had yet to meet. Very glad for the provision of his needs on this day he then knocked on the front door.

Roden, seeing who it was from the side window, opened the door wide to welcome him in with a greeting hug.

"Do come and sit down," Roden's mother said, and motioned the way. "I'm Mother Grenda. We have a place set just for you."

“Nice to meet you,” Father Moustour said, shaking the young man’s hand and giving his name.

Celtellina was in the kitchen to bring out a jug of water.

She first offered water to the visitor and poured him a glass.

“This is Celtellina, our daughter,” Mother Grenda said to Shane.

“And this is Shane,” Roden said to Celtellina.

Celtellina smiled and said, “Nice to meet you.”

Now that all there had been properly introduced and were seated, Father Moustour led in the blessing for the meal.

Hearty and interesting chatter and discussions were held. There was much this traveller could tell them, from all he had seen and where he had passed through.

“I do enjoy hearing about travel and what things are like in other places,” Celtellina thought, and a new idea was born in her heart. “If it ever works out in my life, I think I’d like to have a place where travelling visitors can stay for a meal or a night or somewhere to let their horses rest for a bit. I could then hear all kinds of stories, and visitors to our area would have what they needed.”

And it was only a couple years later when this dream was brought into reality, as the story later unfolds.

MORE GIFTS OF THE FLOWETTES OF WONDER HILL

Shellina and Emillina are best of friends. This is clearly seen as they playfully toss away their concerns at the close of each day, and run through the meadows, playful and laughing.

Though in their late teenage years, they behave as mature young ladies in their work and in meeting the needs of the day. Yet they can be very playful and light-hearted when day is done.

“Let’s go up to that mountain ridge,” Emillina said to Shellina one fine late afternoon. And so off they went. Well they didn’t have far to go, for these two were given the gift of flight. It was in deed a rare gift, and rarer so that two, living at the same time, and knowing of each other, would have the same special gift.

But they were no less unique, for other gifts of these “flowettes” made them so.

They couldn’t flap wings and fly like a bird, but they could buoy up from the slowing soil and rather hover up just a bit, and their light frames would move very swiftly along to wherever they were meant to be. They didn’t always use this gift, for there were times when walking was a better option—such as when working with the children or animals. But when they were together there was no reason why not to up and flow and “fly” as they called it, for it was the speediest way of travel.

No time was lost on petty steps, one at a time. With speed and with ease they would reach their destination for times of relaxation and enjoyment. Before hardly a few minutes had past, Shellina and Emillina were sitting on the mountain’s ridge overlooking a lovely vale, not too far below.

“Tell me, if you will, my dearest Emillina, what other graces have you been granted—that you have noticed so far in your young years here in Wonder Hill?” Shellina asked her friend.

Emillina paused for some time to think. But it wasn’t long before she spoke, as just that day she had indeed noticed something she had never realised about herself before.

“Well, it’s odd that you mention it, for it was indeed just the thing on my mind to talk with you about,” Emillina responded.

This very thing revealed one of Shellina’s gifts—the knowing what another wanted to say, and to allow them the chance to speak of it.

Emillina continued.

“As I was coming out of the shed after feeding the horses, all of a sudden I was in a daze or suddenly in a dreamlike state. I could no longer see the soil on the ground, nor the pail of waste that was I taking out to compost, I wasn’t aware of my ripped and old garment that I used for the dirty work on the farm.

“My mind, for that moment, was filled with new sensations. All I could see was colour and light, and stars that seemed to be dancing around me. I was laughing with joy. The soil I was walking on seemed to be all golden. The dress I had been wearing was a robe of light. Even the sound of the horse seemed like a song. Instead of a heavy pail of waste, I was carrying a bouquet of flowers freshly picked. Instead of mud on my hands, they sparkled like glitter was on them.

“And then I heard a voice saying, ‘Welcome to Wonder Mountain’. But before I could ask where or what it was, the vision faded, and again I was where I was, doing what I was doing. I was who I am, and though in a daze still, I managed to finish the tasks at hand. But it did make the rest of day rather interesting, with something so new to think about, and wonder about. It was certainly a ‘wonder-fill’ time. And when I had my time of quiet later on, there was simply nothing else I could think about. I still am yet pondering this.”

Shellina was always quick to write odd experiences down, for they were rather normal here in Wonder Hill, if one was eager to spot them and ask others to honestly tell what they were experiencing. So into her notebook went this little happening in her friend’s life.

It wasn’t more than a month later when something of this sort happened again. Emillina explained it in secret to her darling friend, Shellina.

“I was just about to do the washing from supper last night, when all of a sudden the place around me changed—in vision only. For indeed it was yet the same it was. The dishes still needed washing, and all was in deed the same.

“However, the lovely vision showed that rather than me being as a servant, I was on a throne of sorts, and servants of all kinds were waiting upon me. It wasn’t that I was idle, but that I had such responsibility to many others, and I simply couldn’t do so without the help of those coming to wait upon me. I would tell them the tasks that needed doing, and humbly they would agree and go and tend to them.

“Though in splendour, I didn’t have much time, if any time to myself, to lounge around. I was doing my part by passing out the needed tasks to those who could properly do them.

“In some ways it seemed a more relaxing life to be the servants, though busy working, than to be the one they came to for guidance. It was as if, due to my labour here in Wonder Hill, I was granted in some future location, a new mission. Rather than merely working with objects and plants, or even animals, that I was given the task of working with other people. It took far more skill than washing a few dishes or feeding the horses or planting seeds for a crop. I had to be wise, kindhearted, understanding, patient, and praise them always for their efforts towards the large task we were all meant to attend to.”

When Emillina finished describing what she’d seen the day before, Shellina smiled. She was glad that her dear friend had been granted a new gift—or it was at last opened now for her to enjoy?

“I too had an interesting experience yesterday. It seems we have things occur somewhat at the same time in life so we can discuss and enjoy it together,” Shellina said.

Now it was Emillina’s turn to listen. She had no idea what her friend would say, as she did not have the gift of knowing afore time what someone might wish to talk about.

Shellina began,

“I was walking between the shed and the house, carrying a load of washing when all of a sudden I felt as if I was flying above the house and far above it, so much so that I could see the whole area and all our neighbours. I wasn’t of course up there in the sky, but it felt as such and I could see it all, as if it was a vision, but with my eyes open.

Then I saw the reason for it. I spotted a team of cattle escaping out of the broken-down fence. The farmers in that area weren't there yesterday, so it would have been a very unhappy surprise to come home and see their cattle missing and have no idea whatever became of them. They might suspect some wrong doing by others, and then ill feelings between neighbours could have occurred.

When the vision passed and I was able to see the surroundings around me once more, I knew what I was to do. I informed my brother, who is great at rounding up cattle. He took my word for it, assuming it was merely my gift of knowing things, and took to horse and was off before the cattle had a chance to get too near the swamp and cliff edge.

He was able to then get help to work on the fence, while the cattle were secured in the barn. A good brother he is—both for being swift to help, and also to listen to his little sister and take me seriously. It was good he did, for it saved a lot of trouble, I'm sure. Now, when the farmers return, tomorrow I do believe, they will have good feelings about their neighbours looking out for them, rather than the opposite occurring."

Shellina finished her account of the mysterious events of the day before.

It was good to have gifts when living in Wonder Hill, life was so much better as they all learned to use them, and use them for the benefit of others.

FRAGRANCE AND FRIENDS.

After a day of helping care for and teach some children, Celtellina sat on a garden chair in the setting sun. She thought about the happy moments of the day, and pondered what she could learn from the various happenings.

For her garden to be a beautiful garden, and bring joy, it needed work put into it, it needed drops of dew, it needed to display beautiful plants, and it needed people to share it with. She wanted the garden of her life to flourish too. She would put work into making a nice life for those in Wonder Hill, she would realize that drops of dew or tears were part of keeping things growing fresh—tears of caring about others, and tears when calling for the King to help her through something difficult in her life. She also needed to choose the good and lovely things, the beautiful and pleasant things to be a part of her life. She then needed to be willing to share the good that she had in her life with others, and do it freely and unselfishly, spreading joy around.

After sitting peacefully for quite some time, in the setting sun, just then she noticed something new in the garden, something that wasn't there even an hour ago. It was in the part of the garden that she had planted some "mysterious seeds" that her brother gave her when he and Emilda had returned from a trip. Nothing had appeared to grow, for a very long time. She almost had forgotten about it. But now, most unexpectedly, growth was seen.

Celtellina walked over and knelt down, and saw before her very eyes the stems of flowers growing, up and up, at a rather rapid pace. When they reached the height of a young child the growth stopped and a bud quickly formed at the top. The bud then sprung open, revealing its lovely gentle white flowers. Then to her utter amazement, the flower center began to light up and glow. These were Light Flowers!

What a lovely surprise! They were as evening garden lamps shedding a soft and beautiful light. Of course in Wonder Hill amazing and sudden things would happen, but the fact that one never knew just when something extraordinary would occur, kept life interesting and its dwellers tingling with excitement, day by day.

Eventually as the moonlight grew brighter, the glowing flowers' light faded, and their petals folded for their rest that night. Celtellina felt ready to do the same. She would be eager to show her brother the Light Flowers the following evening.

"Celtellina, are you going to bed soon, dear?" she heard someone say.

"Oh, I lost track of the time... the flowers, the special ones, have grown suddenly..." she began to say as she stood up and made her way to the house. She wasn't expecting anything else unusual to happen, but to her surprise, when she entered her bedroom, her bed was covered in rose petals, and a delicious fruit snack was set decoratively there

for her to enjoy. It seemed hearts of light were floating through the room, and sparkles were seen whenever they landed on or touched something or someone.

“Oh, what is this?” she exclaimed, in joyful surprise.

Roden and her friend Emilda both came in and gave her a good night hug, then sat to chat with her a bit while she ate the snack she thought they had set out for her. With a twinkle in their eyes—knowing just who it was that had done this—they both said, “We didn’t do it, but we do love you too. Maybe one day you’ll find out!”

With that mystery, and feeling like a blanket of love had surrounded her, she went peacefully to sleep.

A strong smell of fresh flower perfume filled the air, as Celtellina awoke from a most engaging dream. She looked at the surrounding room and saw that it wasn’t the room she had gone to sleep in. What could this be? Or perhaps she was still dreaming? Whatever it was, it was interesting and pleasant.

She was about to find out who had filled her room back at home with rose petals and love—and who was responsible for this intriguing moment in her life. Once again, it was life in Wonder Hill, when amazing, unexpected and pleasantly surprising things would happen, at unexpected times. Such as now!

An angelic voice cooed, “Are you awake now, darling?” and in walked three tall and majestic figures, aglow with light, and radiant smiles on their faces.

“We’ve come to escort you today. You may not remember us, but we used to spend time together, before you came to live here in Wonder Hill. We are from the Enchanted Dome—the place you will return to, when your time of living here is finished.”

Celtellina had a vague memory of these friends and teachers, but couldn’t remember much. However, she felt completely relaxed and comfortable in the presence of these ones, as if she had known them for centuries. Perhaps she had.

When Celtellina sat up she found a silver tray placed in her lap. On it was a scroll and a golden key. With a puzzled expression on her face, she looked up for her friendly visitors to explain more.

“Here is a map, showing you the secret way to the King’s Treasure Cave. And this key here will allow you to open the secret chest that you will find on your journey,” one of the beings simply explained.

“I’m going on a journey... today? Or when, and with whom?” There were many questions on her mind, but for now the answers were simple.

“Keep these until the time is right, and we will assist you then. You won’t have to travel alone. Even though you seldom see us, we keep watch over you and will know just when the time is right. Put these in a safe place, and keep your heart ready to go. We’ll wait for word from the King of the Realm who knows when the time is right.”

With that, the angelic beings vanished. Yet, in their place was a glorious light that seemed to get brighter until it filled the room. Celtellina’s mind was awhirl, wondering what was going on. Then she let out a gasp.

“Oh my, G...”,

“Yes, exactly...” a new visitor said in a deep and comforting voice. This visitor was different. He looked every bit like, and in deed was, a King—the King of the Vast Realm himself.

Though Celtellina’s mind told her she should be bowing down respectfully to Him, or feeling very small, instead the Royal Visitor beckoned to her to fly into His arms, and she felt she wanted to do nothing else but to be held in His powerful, yet gentle embrace.

“My darling Celtellina,” was all He seemed to say for quite some time. She, too, was speechless. It was not a common thing for the King Himself to appear in this form. Everyone knew His usual form was so large and so grand, only vast infinity would contain Him in all His glory and proper size. The common person couldn’t even see all of Him—much like one can’t see the whole universe when looking outside. But for rare and special times, the King could appear in ways that the humble small Wonder Hill dwellers could see Him. It was understandable to those in Wonder Hill that

one could transform in appearance, in order to be of assistance and help to others—such as Shane, Roden’s friend, could do for a short while, though with limitations. The King of the Realm, had no limitations of course, and all He did was out of love and kindness and to be of assistance to those living in Wonder Hill.

Then with words that seemed to come from His heart to hers, more than from lips and voice, the King said, “You’ve given love to the children of the area, each day, and I wanted to say thank you.”

Celtellina felt a wave of emotions surging through her being, but the message was still being transmitted to her heart.

“The way to have a lovely village, town, family, or home, always starts with the way the children are taught and instructed, what is shared with them, what is withheld, and the things that are allowed into their lives. Like planting seeds in a garden, this is what causes them to grow up and make the community what it is. If you, darling, could see all the good that has taken place in Wonder Hill, due to your good choices and the ways you care for the children, you would be amazed. One day I’ll show you. But for now, I wanted to encourage you that you are doing a good job, and I am pleased to call you a citizen of the Enchanted Dome, though for now you are to live in Wonder Hill.”

Celtellina looked up into the most loving eyes and charming smile she’d ever seen. It was hard to believe this was actually happening. Or was it? It didn’t matter what history would record, for her it was as real as any other part of her life.

As fast as her mind could think a question, it seemed the King of the Realm knew just what she wondered, and had answers to impart to her. Then the thought came to her: The reason the place she lived in was called “Wonder Hill” was indeed because of the many questions people had, and the mysteries that were often part of life. But the way to know the answers was to communicate in a special way with the King of the Realm. Perhaps He even allowed there to be many unknown or unexplained things, so that those who lived in Wonder Hill would seek to talk with the King. In this way they would become wiser and happier; and the King would feel glad to be included in the private thoughts and in the lives of those He watched over, chose to serve, and indeed ruled.

This thought came from the King, and was true. He added then, in picture form into her mind, one further thought. A picture of the Treasure Cave, and the secret chest was seen with her mind’s eye. What one would discover there would further enhance one’s understanding, answer more questions, and solve mysteries. The King wanted the loyal citizens of the Enchanted Dome who for the time being dwelt in Wonder Hill, to still have access to His secrets and treasures. Those who kept safe the golden key and followed the ancient map, would find things they always longed for.

“When am I to go on this journey, and where will it lead me?” questioned Celtellina, after this vision reminded her of what the angelic visitors had told her.

The King answered. *“This journey is a different one than you imagine. You will still reside in your home, in your town, and still be available to help teach and inspire the young ones who come to you. Yet, there will be a secret passage way, a secret threshold to a path will open up to you. When you step through and begin to walk, it will be as if you are on a parallel life to the outward one you now live. When you have your times of quiet, you can close your eyes and suddenly you will be transported to the secret path, and be just at the place where you last were.*

“Every time you slip away to continue your journey to the Treasure Cave and to discover the secret chest, you will go a bit farther. At last, through daily visits and travel up the secret path you will arrive at the destination. You will not regret your effort to get there, for joy will fill your heart, and answers to so many of your heart’s questions will also be given. The jewels and gems and all that you will find will thrill you. Though you live a simple life now in Wonder Hill, having given up, at this time, the glories you once knew while in the Enchanted Dome, when you gain access to the treasures I have placed in the cave and in the chest for people like you, you will feel you are very rich indeed.”

Celtellina pondered on this amazing message, and sat back on her bed to examine once again the map and the golden key. In that moment the vision of the King vanished, though she could hardly tell as she smelled the same lovely aroma, and felt the thick air of love still surrounding her like a warm blanket. It seemed the words He spoke were imbedded in her heart. She would remember them always.

After giving her time to reflect, her three angelic friends and guides re-entered the room. One was carrying a tray with a delicious breakfast displayed; another, a small stringed instrument and was singing a lovely song; the last one held a new set of clothes for Celtellina to don.

She smiled seeing all these gifts coming to her, and when the gift of the song was through, one angelic friend said, "We'll start today, and journey with you as far as you are willing to travel. Would you like that?"

Since savouring a mouth full of food, Celtellina just nodded.

"We'll see you later then, when you have eaten and are dressed. We'll know when to come."

"Okay..." was all she could say before they too vanished.

After eating slowly, for she had much to think about, at last Celtellina put on the new set of clothes. They were a perfect fit, and just right for the journey she was about to begin.

The moment she was dressed, a knock was heard at the door.

"Ready to go?" the three welcome friends chorused together. Indeed she was, and off they went. The map was securely gripped in Celtellina's hand, but she had looked at it and studied it for long moments already, so she already knew what was the first place to go to. Her guides encouraged her as they saw she was heading in the right path. The golden key she placed in an inner pocket of her clothes right near her heart, a pocket that seemed to be made to hold this key perfectly.

Under the twirling and swaying vines that clung to the trees they ducked. Through marshy wetland they trudged, sometimes up to her knees in mud. Over rushing streams with slippery rocks acting as a bridge they crossed. Though the map indicated the way, it seemed far more difficult to walk on than Celtellina thought it would be. But every time she wondered if it was the right path, even though the map seemed to say it was correct, she would look up and see the smiling reassurance from one of her angelic guides. This gave her the courage to carry on.

Every so often she would stop to commune with the King of the Realm. His words to her heart and mind gave her the specific guidance she needed to make it safely. When she fell and got hurt, felt weary, or started to go off on a false pathway, or was tangled in some low lying vine plants, the King would instruct her on what to do to be free, or tell her to rest to recover, or give her a warning and some advice. Though the false paths usually looked more inviting and easy, perhaps even more used, the King's warnings to her that she would not reach the Treasures if she went on those paths, kept her pressing onward on the right paths.

Perhaps the path to the Treasures was called "secret", because so few were traveling it, and at times it was overgrown. Celtellina determined in her heart that once she found her own way through, she would be sure to tell others and help make it easier for them.

Soon after she took her first steps with her angelic friends on the secret pathway, she woke in her regular room. She enjoyed a regular day and helped in all the ways she could. But eager to carry on with her journey, the soonest chance she got, she glanced at the map and saw where she was to go next, closed her eyes and whispered for help. In an instant she felt her feet back on the secret path, and continued on with the next steps.

After a while it seemed to Celtellina she had been travelling for weeks on the secret pathway; though it happened in small steps for she was also, simultaneously, living a regular life back at home. Going bit by bit like this means many days would pass, yet perhaps only a few hours of time would be spent on her secret journey, per day. By the time weeks had passed of her journey, many months or a year had gone by in regular life in Wonder Hill.

ALPANTINE VILLAGE

One night as Emilda drifted off to sleep, she listened to the song being played by the jewellery music box that had been a gift to her and her mother. It seemed to transport her from one realm to the next.

In her dreams that night, for the first time, she did meet and greet her father. She knew it was him, instantly, and they had much to talk about. However, it seemed that to everything she began to tell him, he would respond as if he was well aware of it all, and very acquainted with so much about Emilda's life.

“See, we in this other realm—those of us now working in and enjoying the Enchanted dome, aren’t gone or non-existent. We are just as real and alive as ever—and have as much involvement in your life in Wonder Hill, as we can,” father Errand said.

“Really?” Emilda questioned. It was a new thought to her.

They walked together, while father Errand continued.

“Take for example your recent trip to the Alpartine people. I bet you didn’t know I was there before you were? Well, I know them from when I was living in Wonder Hill, and also now. I was the first one of our little family to arrive there for this mission trip you and your mother went on. I scouted things out, made preparations with the others on the mysterious and ethereal team I went with. When everything was set, we gave the word that we were ready for you both to arrive. And that is when you did.

“I saw you both, weary footed, thirsty, and tired, walking up the last mountainous bend as you neared the small village. The plans were then played out in full—some of us helped you both find the crystal clear water trickling out of that rock just before you stepped into the village; some of us saw to it that a kind-hearted wife would be preparing a bit of extra food just then, who would feel generous enough to invite you in to eat with her family. And I? Well, I was beside your mother at that moment, whispering to her that it was all going to be a great trip and worth her and your effort. When you woke the next morning, I had already been at work to ensure that the team of volunteers who you were working with, were ready to feed you both breakfast as well, and feel motivated to do their part to help with the projects planned for the day.”

Emilda was wide-eyed and in wonder. It had been a family trip after all. Perhaps if her father hadn’t been working on things in the unseen realm, things would have gone much differently.

A very content and inspired Emilda woke the next morning from her dream, and could hardly wait to speak with her mother about it. But while sitting outside, listening to the birds welcoming the new day, she pondered all the ways that she and her mother had been a help to the Alpartine people of the mountain village. It was amazing, and almost supernatural, how much had happened and worked out well.

Four new wells had been dug, and a new stream had been located further up the mountain, the water of it could be channelled to the needy villagers. No long treks to the Clear Lake to haul water; it was now at their fingertips, or fairly close by. Children and mothers were so very appreciative.

A sewing team of women had agreed to meet every seven days for helping to mend and create the needed clothing of their village. No longer did each mother have to sew all the needed clothing and linens and household items for her family, all on her own. Women who had the skill and the will gave of their time to help out. This eased the load of many, and made it easier for the mothers with new little ones to give them better care each day.

A village kitchen was built out of rock, logs, and clay. Most families ate at home, but there were those who lived alone, or had very small families. When they took turns to cook and share the food, they had more company and friendship. In this way they only had to prepare food every few days, as each one took their turn. Then, when it wasn’t their turn to cook, they could work in the gardens and tend to the plants better. The fresh foods became more abundant, as they got better care—and more frequent watering as well.

When it was time for the weather to be colder, and less fresh foods would grow, a volunteer team worked for two weeks to help preserve and bottle up foods that had grown in abundance. These jars of preserved goods were distributed among the different houses and families, so all got an equal amount according to the number of family members they housed and needed to provide for. Somehow when it was done, it seemed like twice the amount of food that had been worked on was there, in jars. Everyone was thrilled and didn’t know how it happened, but gratefully received it for added sustenance for their family during the months to come.

One day, while Mother Shaulic and Emilda were there, news reached them that on the other side of the mountain a deep cave was discovered to be the dwelling place of a large, rare, and rather fearsome creature. None wished for it

to make its way around to their village. When word spread about the existence of this creature, all the village folks were quite a stir and wondered what to do to protect their little ones. The second night, Mother Shaulic and Emilda called for a special meeting for those interested to attend. It was to be held in a cave that was candlelit and had a glowing fire build inside.

“The King of all knows about each of us—our little ones, and yes even the biggest creatures that dwell in their caves, much like we sit here now,” Mother Shaulic began. A peace began to fall on the crowd that had gathered there, as she spoke words of comfort to them all. “So, we are going to ask the King to take care of the situation. Helping one creature relocate is far easier than having all of you here have to relocate to a safer place, don’t you think?”

Everyone nodded, and then bowed their heads in silence and reverence.

Emilda then knelt on the dirt floor, and looked up, and offered a request to the one who can command the sea, the waves, the clouds, and all the creatures below to do His bidding.

Suddenly a shudder was felt, and a deep, far-away, somewhat muffled roaring sound was heard. Everyone’s eyes opened wide as they waited with bated breath to find out what was going to happen next.

They heard a sound like thunder, yet sounding like a voice coming from echoing rooms of outer space. Then the sound of a large chain was heard, as if the creature was being put on a leash of sorts and being led away, to where they didn’t know. But as long as it was away from them, their village and their little ones, that was fine with them.

Rain started to pour from the sky, yet instead of huddling in the cave, seeking to stay dry, everyone felt moved to run out and rejoice! They didn’t know why, but they just felt a great lifting of their burden and concern. The matter had been resolved. Then as one member was looking around at the surrounding hills and distant mountains, they let out a gasp. Soon others all noticed the same thing.

They all saw, for hardly a moment but long enough in deed, the largest angelic being they’d ever imagined existed—nearly as tall as a hill himself, and as muscular as the boulders that were seen around. This angelic being was leading, with a chain, the large beast, to his new dwelling place in a distant mountain. It entered a cave there, in a place where no one lived.

Everyone was in awe, and could hardly wait until they would return to their homes and tell the good news. The next day a celebration was held! There was so much to be glad about. So many good changes that had enhanced the joy and life quality of those living there. Children danced and acted out the story of their deliverance and protection—all starting with a simple prayer of a girl and her mother.

In the weeks that followed, a cosy cottage was set up to welcome children of all ages who needed something to do to keep them busy. It was set up with supplies and materials to teach the young ones all the needed skills for surviving life in this mountainous area. Of course, they could learn it at home too, with their family, but this made it easier for the mothers who needed time to mind their littlest ones. It was safe and cosy, and the people of the village who were particularly skilled in survival skills and practical living activities—mostly the grandparents—could take turns teaching and playing with the growing young ones of their village.

At last it was time to return home. Glad for such a wonderful trip with much success on their mission, Mother Shaulic and her daughter Emilda then left for their long walk home. They promised to return the following year for a short visit—and this time bring others with them, and needed supplies the people would be grateful for.

And thus Emilda concluded her thoughts and memories of the helpful trip they had just returned from, hunger now taking a seat in her mind. But she didn’t need to mind that; her thoughtful mother was soon at her side.

“There you are dear,” Mother Shaulic said, handing her daughter a breakfast drink, and commented, “Your thoughts seem far away. How did you sleep?”

Emilda smiled. She would enjoy telling of her dream, and chatting about all that they had just been through together, and perhaps making plans for their trip back to the Alpartine village next year. They’d take the day to just relax, chat, and enjoy a slow and pleasant day.