

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 6

DAISIES, DAFFODILS, AND DEW DROPS

Melon, Susana, Edwina, and Torque, had come to spend the afternoon at the Doflynn's Lodge. This was now the residence of Roden Doflynn, his wife Emilda Doflynn, their little baby Bundle, and Sister Celtellina as she was most often called.

In Wonder Hill, when a couple was to be married, all able hands in the community worked together to either build a home on available land for the new family to dwell; or they were invited to stay in either of their parent's homes. It was decided on amiably and according to what was most practical and desirable for the young couple.

When a young man was married, it was then that he took on a family name, a name he wished to be called by. He often discussed it with his wife-to-be until they agreed upon something they each found pleasing.

When the wedding occurred, which indeed was a rather sober occasion with solemn promises given and many prayers offered for the couple, it was at this time that the man, or Roden in this case, announced his family name. Or if they wanted more time to discuss or decide, it would be announced later on, with the celebration that was held a week or two after the wedding ceremony.

When Roden and Emilda were married, the name "Doflynn" was chosen, as it was the name of a ship that had taken many of his great ancestors to this land. These pioneers had been peaceful and hardworking folks, and much of the town's good traits were owed to the good sample laid down by them.

The house they now lived in had been built just as Roden had imagined it should. It had only taken three months to complete. Their former house and home, though now the property of Celtellina, was made available by her for travellers to stay at, when passing through this side of Wonder Hill.

Celtellina called this former home, "Traveller's Peace". She did well setting it up, and seeing to it that all who needed a place to stay for the night, were welcome and comfortable. Sometimes it was used for friendly gatherings or celebrations. For any good purpose that Celtellina desired, it was to be used by her, as the sole owner and remaining unmarried family member. She chose to reside, however, together with her brother and his family in their new house.

Little baby Bundle's grandmother, Mother Shaulic, was welcome anytime at Doflynn's Lodge. Though she would often spend her days ministering to any and all who needed her caring hands in the surrounding land. If a baby was to be born, she often accepted the offer to stay with the family, sometimes for a couple months, to lend a helping hand. This enabled the mother of the new little one to be free to give all the cuddles and love that were important for a wee little one.

If there were crops to be harvested, and the men were all out working, Mother Shaulic might be seen taking food and drinks to them, to save them time, and the work was done faster with more joy.

Sometimes she offered her help to Celtellina at "Traveller's Peace" when a particularly large group of travellers were passing through and needed accommodation. Together they would make up the beds, cook a nice meal, and then do the washing and cleaning.

A year had passed since they had moved into Doflynn's Lodge, and no time was lost in setting up the garden. Celtellina had used some of her special seeds given to her by Roden, to make the grounds the most attractive that it could be. A vegetable garden was also flourishing, along with a water garden and pond where fish swam. A gentle waterfall kept it fresh.

There were other things done each day. The mornings were spent in housework, cooking, and helping with little baby Bundle, the newest addition to their beginning, yet growing family. In the afternoons, Celtellina would have various children of the surrounding area, come and visit to help her in the garden and to sit under the shade of a tree to read a story. Through this she was learning to relate to many types of personalities, learning to communicate in patient ways, and learning how to teach.

The children all looked forward to their time at Doflynn's Lodge. Whenever they would see Roden, they would run up to him—often having to run, as he would let them have to chase him first. Then, when they would catch up he would swing them in the air, letting them fly and flutter down to the ground using their childish wings, while he gave the next child a lift. They were usually laughing and joyous whenever Roden came around.

Then there were the times they were allowed to sit very still and quietly, while Mama Emilda brought little baby Bundle to visit. If they were calm and gentle they could each take a turn to hold him in their arms. Mama Emilda would remind them how special each one of them were as well. Each of them used to be small, just like he was now, and had also been held so lovingly in the arms of their mother and family and friends.

Today as Melon, Susana, Edwina, and Torque visited Doflynn's Lodge, they too got to give a cuddle to little baby Bundle.

"All the love that has been given to you," Mama Emilda said, "Is bundled up like a gift in your heart. And one day, when it's your turn to care for some new little one, that love is going to burst out and you, too, will pour love on your new little ones. And it's very important, you know, because they too need to have lots of love bundled up in their heart, for them to use when they are grown and have a family to raise also.

"Love gets passed down from one generation to the other, starting when new wee little ones are first born. Of course we give love all through our life, to many others—but it's especially important when a person is just new to Wonder Hill. They need extra caring—just like each of you got, and are still getting!"

When Mama Emilda left, Celtellina announced: "Today we'll get to plant the bulbs for a new flower bed of daffodils! Who would like to help?"

All the children chimed in and went bounding off to help do some planting. While on their way, Edwina saw a patch of wild daisies growing and picked a few. She placed one in each of the girls' hair.

Susan's hair was braided over the top of her head, like a headband, and Edwina placed the yellow faced cheery daisy in it. Melon, the youngest, had her hair hanging down freely, so Edwina took a lock of hair on one side of her face and formed a little braid with the longest stemmed daisy. Melon smiled and went to see her reflection in the pond, while gently touching her decoration.

For Celtellina, Edwina asked her to sit down on a rock at the pond's edge, so she could reach her hair better. Celtellina had part of her hair up in a bun, while the rest flowed down. Edwina wrapped the stem of the flower around the bun and wove the end of it into the bun to secure it.

"And what about you?" Celtellina asked. Edwina had given to others, and now it was her turn to be given to. All at once, the girls looked around and found an array of wild flowers in the grass, of many different colours. They each picked a few and put them together to make a bouquet. It was presented to Edwina, while each one in turn placed a kiss on her cheek. She was wearing a lace bonnet, and so flowers wouldn't be seen if they had been placed in her hair. She smiled and held it fondly as they continued walking on to the place where the daffodils were to be planted.

There was a pen nearby with some farm animals, and Torque, the little man of the team, took an immediate liking to a lamb grazing on the lush grass there.

"Would you like to go in there, Torque, to pet and help feed the animals?" Celtellina asked.

Torque nodded eagerly, and was let in. Roden had just come by then, with little baby Bundle on his back in a baby carrying pack. He was here to check for eggs from the chickens, and give grain and fresh water to all the animals. Torque was a willing young helper. He helped to carry the basket and point out where he saw eggs. He threw grain to the chickens, as well as to some little ducklings who were waddling around near their mother. He gave a handful of fresh grass for the adorable lamb to eat right from his hand.

As they left the large pen area a hand washing pond was there, and young Torque happily splashed his hands and washed them.

“Would you like to help me carry the egg basket back to the house?” Roden offered him, to which he quickly agreed. Torque looked over at Celtellina who nodded and approved. Torque didn’t want her to wonder where he had suddenly gone. She knew he was, for now, under the care of her kind big brother, Roden, while she and the girls continued to plant daffodils.

“Will you need to water these flowers a lot?” Melon asked.

“Well,” responded Celtellina, “There’s something special about this garden. At one point in the night a mist covers the whole garden, and the ground and the plants all get a lovely delicious drink of water. Everything gets very wet. When I come out in the morning, there are sparkling drops of dew on every plant, even every blade of grass.

“Sometimes it takes until midday before everything is dry and the sun warms them up. Also, the water in the garden is done in such a way that it pours out to different parts of the garden. The plants get all they need in this way—besides the rainfall, usually a couple times a week.”

SENSATIONS OF FLYING—Part 1

“On your marks! Get set! Go!” Bernardo’s loud and booming voice was heard. The thundering sounds of a multitude of galloping horses followed. This was no ordinary team of horses, and they were not competing in a race. They were in training.

Bernardo’s family came from a long line of those who knew the skill of horse flying. Nearly all young men in this side of Wonder Hill, when they reached teenage, asked to take part in this training course.

The horses were raised and bred and trained in a part of the land quite far removed from settlements. But when Bernardo wasn’t sailing or fixing a ship, or studying navigating and map making, part of the year Bernardo and his brothers were holding professional training courses for those who wished to learn to fly across the sky on the Wonder Horses. They were a special breed, and received careful training.

Just as the Children of the Wind in Wonder Hill could suddenly be seen with fairy wings and ascend up or float down from high places, so could these horses also, though with much larger wings of course. Wonder Horses had to be trained to use them skillfully and to stay airborne. They had to learn how to descend with grace and land gently, so as to make the ride pleasant and safe for the rider.

Since this was a learning sport that maturing young men nearly all wanted to take part in, Bernardo’s great-grandfather, who began this training place, thought it the perfect opportunity to set it up fully—a full-learning course for growing young men.

Not only were they trained to ride and fly-ride on horses, but there were carpentry workshops with skilled carpenters to instruct them. Indeed, much of the houses that were built for newly married couples were done by those who had gone through this very carpentry and building course. There were workshops for teaching metal work, clay work, art, and other creative useful skills.

On the weekends, the growing young men that wished to go were taken on long hikes and treks, sometimes for days or weeks at a time, to learn how to survive, cook for themselves, find food in the wild, and prepare preserved food that would last them on such a journey.

They learned to make cloth, string and rope, how to sew clothes, and how to make shoes. They learned to teach and communicate with others, and how to get along and help each other.

Good hearty meals were served, that they helped to prepare. Places for bathing and washing their clothes were available for use. They were taught gentlemanly manners, and how to be with the lady they would yet find to marry.—How to be the man she would learn to trust and depend on.

Lessons of truthfulness, and honesty were shared, mainly through stories told by older, wiser and well-experienced men, who had learned the hard way what worked and didn’t work.

If any of the young men who were granted the privilege of being at that special camp, were found out to be untrustworthy, couldn't choose their words carefully, were thinking more about themselves than others, or who acted ungentlemanly even after kind instruction, they were told they needed more time to grow up and learn instruction from their parents. They would be sent home to continue their childhood training under parental instruction. If young men wished to stay for the duration of the training period, they had to be truthful, kind, serious minded, and courteous.

If parents wished for their growing young man to get the esteemed privilege of entering such a training place, they would have to do their part to instruct and train them well, for years in advance, so they would be suitable for learning in such a place. It wasn't a place to do whatever one thought up, but a place to prepare for real life, where words, attitudes, and actions could affect everyone else, and one needed to be wise in what they said and did.

Bernardo would tell the growing young men,

"Just as the horses need training to be able to ride across the sky, and give you a thrilling ride, so do all men here need training to have the ride of their life take them to the best places. Improper training won't get you off the ground. So pay close attention, don't waste time, always be truthful, honest, and care more about the others than you care about your own wants and needs. Then you'll fly high, in so many ways!"

SENSATIONS OF FLYING—Part 2

Some years passed, and Bernardo and Lully were blessed with their first two children—a set of twin boys. Lully missed her husband when he was taking his turn helping at the training camp, but she knew it was very needed to ensure a great community of citizens dwelling in Wonder Hill. Indeed it would even help her young boys one day.

Sometimes the children would go with her to visit their daddy there, when he was gone for a month or more at a time; other times he came back for short weekend visits. Most of the time, however, he resided at their new home. Since they lived closer to Celtellina and others, they had plenty of help in the meantime.

One time, when Bernardo was due to return, Lully and the children had set up the house in a special way, with fresh bouquets of flowers in vases around. Everything was clean and tidy, and her husband's favourite meal was prepared.

Lully was looking down the dusty road, on the lookout for Bernardo's galloping horse bringing him home again. But when she saw nothing, she wondered if he had been delayed for another day or so. It was getting late in the day and she didn't know what to expect.

All of a sudden a thunderous sound was heard in the sky above. Her first reaction was to see if there was laundry on the line, as a cloudburst might be upon them. However, when to the rumbling noise was added the sound of neighing and the loud whistle of a trainer and horse team leader sounding out, she knew it wasn't thunder at all.

"Come quick!" she called to the young ones who were just inside the door. "I think I see daddy!"

The twin boys came running out, and when Mama Lully pointed up they laughed and clapped their hands, then yelled "Daddy!"

Bernardo, looking very handsome, led this team of horses in a complete circle in the sky above, all around their property, spiraling down to then land on the ground in the pasture nearby. He motioned to Lully to bring the boys over. Excitedly she held their hands and ran over to where Bernardo sat on his large white horse, whose wings were still extended.

"Would you like to go for a ride?" he called out to his family.

He loved them so much, and had missed them just as much as they had missed him. This was his way of reuniting and thanking them for the great gift they had given the community and so many other families, by allowing him to help assist in the training camp.

After the horse's wings had folded in and vanished, Lully lifted one boy up to sit in front of his daddy on the horse, then the other boy to sit behind him. One of the other riders helping to lead the team of horses came over to offer his help. He kept the children steady, while Bernardo slipped off to give his wife a tender greeting hug and kiss.

Bernardo then helped to lift her up onto the back of the horse, behind the other boy, and then he mounted. This flying Wonder Horse was big enough for a family to ride, and so ride together they did. A call was yelled and a whistle blown. The horses knew the call well. First the team of horses trotted, then began to gain speed, then at just the right moment they spread their wings to catch the wind, and up and up they went.

The boys, Rorrall and Tendorch, were having the thrill of their lives. Squealing with delight and could hardly catch their breath as these children of the wind galloped through the paths of wind high above their house.

After circling in the air above their property a couple of times, Bernardo gave the particular whistle for the team to begin to descend, and gently land. With galloping speed, the large white steed landed and eventually slowed to a halt.

The boys were very excited! When their father helped them off they thanked him repeatedly, while walking in to the house to then offer their gift of kindness to their daddy—and Lully to her husband.

“I am hungry!” Bernardo said, when smelling and seeing the specially prepared food set out for them all to share. Let me just instruct the other riders where to take the horses for the night. Perhaps we can have one more fly tomorrow. Would you like that?”

Rorrall and Tendorch cheered! It was worth it after all, to share their daddy with others sometimes. With these kinds of rewards, it more than made up for it.

“Well, after all, you will be in training to one day lead the team of horses too!” Bernardo said to his pleased boys.

“It’s family tradition!... But maybe you’d rather not...” he said with a twinkle. Rorrall and Tendorch looked at each other, like “He’s got to be joking!” and they yelled loudly their agreement to one day be trained to take over the job of the horse fly-riding, as well as the camp. There was a thrilling life up ahead for these young boys—soon to be growing young men.

CELTELLINA AND SHANE

Celtellina was sitting on a rock by a crystal-clear stream. She watched as the water rushed over the little rocks in a soothing way. It was sometime since she'd had a moment of quiet contemplation. She kept herself busy doing this and that. But it was time for serious thought, and most of all there was a decision to be made.

Quietly, ever so quietly, behind her Shane approached. He didn't want to interrupt her thoughts, yet he did want to join her where he knew her thoughts were residing.

Knowing that he was there, she said nothing as Shane then softly stroked her long, beautiful hair. That morning he had asked her the biggest question he'd ever asked someone. Would she journey on together with him, as man and wife?

It wasn't, of course, the first time she'd thought of it, but it was now an official question that did need answering, and certainly some thought put into it before doing so, as it would affect the rest of her life—and his, and a good many others.

Finally, Shane whispered, "You don't have to answer right away. If you'd like to go on as friends for some months more, I'm fine with that. I know it's a very life changing decision to make. Of course I know what I would most like, but if it isn't what you would most enjoy also, then I do not wish for it. Please take your time, sweet one."

Celtellina turned around to meet his gaze. There were tears running down her face. She had always wished for a life partner to do things with, to laugh and cry together with, and to raise a family with. Yet now when it was being offered her, it seemed a rather daunting decision to make—like taking a leap into the air and hoping the landing would be gentle enough.

"It's not that I don't like you, Shane, for we understand each other well. I do love you very much. I guess I just wish I knew what the next chapter of my life story will be before I said yes. It's hard not knowing what will follow. Will I like the future if I say yes? Will you? What will be the tough times we will face if we get started on the path of married love and child bearing? There are so many things I wish I knew so I could be sure it will be right for us both," Celtellina said, though haltingly through a few more tears.

Shane held her dearly in an embrace and shed a few tears of his own. He did want the best life for her, and wanted to do the best he could to make their life together as fulfilling and beautiful as possible.

Finally he spoke.

"I don't know what the future will hold if we join hand in hand, and heart to heart. But I do promise to be the best husband I can be, and that includes being a great dad and grandfather for the children I know we'll have. I want to be with you for the long haul, through all the season of life. But if you aren't ready yet, I'll wait a while. And if you really know it's not for you—a life together with me—then I'll find someone else, and so will you. Either way I want us both to be happy and stay close friends."

That was what Celtellina needed to hear. She needed to know that he was interested in a life-long, through-every-stage-of-life commitment. She didn't want to find someone else, she just needed to know that Shane wanted to be with her until whatever happy ending their life story had.

Celtellina looked up into Shane's eyes and said in a whisper, "Okay. Let's do it."

Shane then shed tears of gratitude and kissed her hand.

"Thank you," he whispered into her ear as he held her close and stroked her hair tenderly. "Thank you, my Darling. I promise to take very good care of you and our little ones, however many or few they may be, whatever comes our way."

Arm in arm together they walked back to the house to tell her brother Roden the news. There was a glow and smiles on their faces as they walked the pathway nearing the house.

Roden was just coming out to feed the goats when he spotted this "happy couple" as it now appeared to him. And he was right. One look into Celtellina's eyes, and hers into his, with a slightly shy smile confirmed to Roden what he suspected.

As they all three approached the door, Roden placed his arm around Shane and said with a bit of a knowing smile, "Come on in, brother-in law." --Which is exactly what he was to be.

Shane gave Roden a playful jab in jest. Roden was right. They didn't even say anything, but he knew, and the teasing playfulness helped to lighten things.

"I think it's time to celebrate, don't you?" said Emilda, who was far along with a new little one growing inside her. And so they did, that night, after the children were asleep.

"Cheers to Wonder Hill's latest addition to the married couple's collection. Coming soon to a vacation spot near you!" Roden said with a grin, as they all held up their glasses of fruit juice.

"So, where do you want to go together after the wedding?" Emilda asked.

Shane replied, "I was thinking of the abandoned fortress on the cliff that overlooks the sea. It's used for events and such. Maybe we'll just go there for a while. It's so quiet and we'll have lots of time to get to know each other. And there is plenty of room for visitors to come and stay with us too, if they so wish. I hear the air is particularly fresh, and there is a good garden growing too, with plenty of food to pick and eat fresh."

Celtellina added, "I always did like houses made of stone. We'll need to heat our water up on a fire, prepare our own food, and can snuggle in the mansion-sized bed. It will be a new and exciting experience. I'll love the view. We can read, talk, go on walks, visit with whoever wishes to join us, work in the garden... "

She would have gone on listing the various activities she could imagine doing up there, but something else was on her mind: The journeys. The secret journeys. That is actually what she most wanted to do in this time away, her and Shane, taking mysterious trips into another realm while they yet resided in the "Castle" as they chose to call the rock fortress they would go to after the wedding.

The wedding was planned for a month after that day. This would give enough time to prepare things, but not too much time, so the happy couple wouldn't have to wait.

The wedding took place then in the "Castle" and many folks came to wish "Shane and Celtellina Rocksworth" a long and abundant life.

After the two days it took for all the happy events to take place, at last the couple were alone in the quiet, together.

"Will you still be my wife?" Shane asked his lovely bride.

"If you need a confirmation, I'll answer that tonight beside the fireplace," Celtellina said, pretending to begin removing an item of clothing. Shane understood perfectly well that she was happy enough to go for it and proceed with their new life together and all that unfolded.

"Will you, Shane, take me as your wife?" she asked, playing along with his game of confirmation.

"Hmmm, I shall have to consider it," he said, holding her in an embrace. "I think I shall have the correct answer for you tonight, at around the same time as you plan to reply to my question."

They then both burst into laughter and ran outside to enjoy the sparkling sunshine and get some fresh air and exercise.

Some hours later they sat gazing into each other's eyes as they lay relaxed on the huge and soft bed. Their questions of earlier had been well answered.

"Tomorrow is the first day of the rest of our lives," Shane at last said.

"And it will be sprinkled with much beauty I know," Celtellina replied.

RODEN AND EMILDA

While Celtellina and Shane were away, spending time at "The Castle" rock fortress, Roden and Emilda were adding to their growing family. A new child was born and quickly became an important part of their family team, as each one was. Mother Shaulic was there to help out while her daughter recovered and gained strength, as well as new skills in caring for the latest little one.

It was nearly their wedding anniversary and so Roden decided to make something special of it.

Mother Shaulic would prepare a lovely spread to feast on, friends would come by to visit, and most of all Celtellina and Shane would be there with them again at last. They would enjoy their anniversary all together.

And so it happened, as wonderfully as planned, and a special day it in deed was. Celtellina and Shane got to meet their new baby niece, and caught up on the stories of all that had happened when they were away.

Roden and Emilda chatted and reminisced about the day they chose to be married, and all that had happened thus far. There were some twists and turns in the pathway of their life, but overall life had been lovely. They'd given and continued to give to others, so when they needed help with the challenges that having a family brings, there were always those ready to help and be there for them.

"What did you honestly think, Emilda, when I first asked for your hand in marriage?" Roden asked his wife during the light hearted meal time chatting.

Emilda answered honestly,

"I couldn't think of a better one to be married to. I'm happy with my choice. I just sometimes wonder if you got what you were hoping for. 'Cause I sure bring a load of work along with me—keeping the house and home going, raising and caring for the young ones, feeding us all, as well as all you do for the community in this side of Wonder Hill."

Roden reached over and gave her hand a squeeze. "Such pleasant work indeed it has been. And it's not all work too, for many good times we share, happy times, and times of growing and learning. I wouldn't have wanted it any other way, sweetheart."

This was what Emilda did need to hear. For at times, especially when caring for a very young child, it was easy to feel that the work load surpassed the pleasures and pleasant things, and that she wasn't able to help with as much as she'd like to. It was a woeful temptation to feel that she was adding to the workload of others, rather than been a support and help.

"It's like a well-written story book," Mother Shaulic added in, knowing what her daughter might be feeling. "You need all the parts in all the chapters for the storyline and the final chapter to make sense. You both are living through a part of the chapter of your life now, but things will move on and the story line will keep building and new things will come along. But you need to be patient through what is happening now in order for some of the best parts to occur in the story of your life later on."

That night as they retired for sleep, they lay in the veiled moonlight as it came through the thin drapes and shone on their bed. Memories of their first kiss, and when they first were wed were flashing in their minds. Though it hadn't been all that many years ago, still it seemed much time had passed through all they had experienced.

"Do you remember that time..." Emilda whispered, careful not to wake the sleeping baby, "that time when we were sitting under the shade of the willow tree by the brook 'Beautiful' and we exchanged rings? Well, they weren't real, but were made out of strands of grasses, braided?"

Roden nodded. Indeed it was a pleasant memory to him. Not the rings, necessarily, but for some reason Emilda looked more beautiful than ever, as she was committing her life to be with him in an intimate and long-term way.

"I remember we walked hand in hand from that tree up the path way to the lavender garden, and I was thinking that from that moment on my life would be changed, and I would have a close partner and companion at last. As we walked together that day it was as if we were journeying on life together. Thank you, Emilda, for being here with me. I don't have to walk alone."

After so saying, Roden placed a tender kiss on the lips of his beloved before falling into a deep sleep.

It would be wonderful to say that Emila also enjoyed a peaceful night, but there were mothering duties to tend to. And so she braved on, being the wife that her husband was ever so grateful to have.

When the years past, as years tend to do when you are focused on raising a brood of young ones, Roden and Emilda only grew more deeply in love. It felt different, yes, then the more emotional type that was shared in their beginning days, yet it was of a richer quality.

Love showed itself in the fact that less offence was taken at the careless comments one might mistakenly make in a moment of stress. Whereas in the beginning of a marriage such an occurrence might cause emotional heartache, yet in the later years they had learned to trust one other's love and true motives, and thus such accidental slips of the tongue were passed off as a glitch without much focus being put on it. In other words, they more quickly forgave each other and moved on.

Another way they knew love had deepened is that less of their thoughts and ideas and things they each talked about were about themselves, primarily. Instead they thought more about how each other felt and what the other one was thinking or needing. There was less downward feelings as a result as they emphasized caring for one another.

One day as their eldest child, Bundle, turned 13, he surprised his parents with a gift. Yes, just the fact that he gave a gift to his parents on his birthday was surprising and showed a depth of character and a warm and caring heart. The love of his parents had certainly rubbed off on him.

The gift he gave was a poem that told of all the ways his life was blessed because of the daily gifts his parents gave to him and his siblings. Along with it, he sang a song he'd written, a song that told of a hope to one day be as caring for a mate and children as they had been. He presented these things at the close of the day. A very memorable birthday it was in deed.

Emilda felt touched and cried a tear or two. It did feel very good indeed to be appreciated. She squeezed Roden's hand. He just smiled and then said,

"Son, you have no idea how much this means to us. Words are powerful aids in helping a family to flourish. If you use your words as wonderfully as you have done for us today, and do so with any future family you raise, you will have a wonderful effect on them."

It was then that Roden presented the last gift to his son, a book of words—as nearly all books contain, primarily. Yet not just any words. It was a book that had been passed down from some of the original settlers of Wonder Hill. Several copies of this book had been made in years past, but few had this book now or even knew of its existence.

"Read it and you will do well," Roden said when his son opened the package.

"Thanks, dad and mom. I will," he said, and off to bed he went to begin doing just that. But first he read the title aloud to his curious brothers and sisters, "*How to Start a City So it Will Last a Millennium.*"

PAPA SHANE AND MAMA CELTELLINA

Sweaty and robust from his heavy garden work, Shane came into the kitchen for a refreshing glass of water.

"Were you able to write the letters to our friends?" he asked Celtellina, who was in the middle of sewing patches on to the pants belonging to their youngest boy, Ned.

"I'm part of the way done, but it seems every time I try to get to the paper work, something else pops up that seems to need my time far more," Celtellina explained in a half chuckle.

"Okay, well, I'm here now and can help with any 'home emergencies' that come up. Would you have time now to work on sending them if I tended to any more 'pop ups' of needs?" Shane asked.

It made for a smooth relationship with a husband who realised how much help a mother appreciated receiving, if he wanted his wife to help him with things. They each had to give and learn to receive.

"Sure, that would be wonderful," Celtellina replied, turning the four children over to her husband for his care, and setting aside the sewing. She'd try to get to it later.

Papa Shane was great at making things fun, and would romp around and play games, or just sit on the floor to chat with his children. It was clear that he loved them all very much. After about an hour had past, the letters were all written and ready to be sent away. Of course, by that time everyone was hungry and there was no dinner fixed yet.

"Of course, I shouldn't be surprised that there is no dinner yet cooked," Shane said, realising what had just happened. His wife had kindly complied with what he felt was most important to do, but it had slipped his mind that it came at the cost of other things getting done.

"Well, we can only do the best we can," Celtellina said to encourage her husband when he apologized for his oversight.

"I guess that project could have waited, but I was getting impatient. Now we have hungry kids and parents. What shall we do?" Shane asked, wondering if it had been the best use of the time. Time seemed hard to come by and always there was choices what to do with it.

Together they put something quick together for a meal and enjoyed it with laughter. It need not be fancy, they were all pretty tired anyway. When the children were asleep, and Celtellina was in bed holding their young one close to her, Shane pulled up a chair to the foot of the bed. He'd give his wife a good foot rub while she put the youngest to sleep. After all, she was expecting another new little one as well.

Shane was thoughtful of his wife's needs, and this made for happy times when they were together. Celtellina wasn't afraid to put in a good day's work, and then some, as the night went on and the children had care needs. This made Shane admire her very much.

There was work a plenty, but there was love just as much. This made for a good strong team that could raise many young little ones, and teach them the important things for citizens of Wonder Hill to know.

"Shane, darling," came the voice just as he was set up to chop the wood for the fire. It had been tremendously cold lately, and this was a hard but important task that he must keep up with. His two older boys were good at collecting small kindling or dragging any fallen down branches over to where their dad cut the wood. Everyone did their part to make their home as warm and peaceful as it could be—warm in all kinds of ways.

Shane tried to put on a smile, but he knew what was coming next. It was a call his dear wife often used when she needed help, and needed it right at that time. Feeling a wave of pressure, knowing the sun was setting soon, and a cold wind just brushed over his already chill neck, he was unsure if he would be able to bravely and cheerfully respond in a patient and relaxed way.

First he took a breath and choose to focus on the beauty of his wife's face, then at the colours in the sky. He whispered in his heart some of the things that he was most grateful for. It was then that he felt ready to respond with a "Yes, sweet darling, what can I help you with?"

Celtellina continued, "I just needed a hand to reach the box on the top shelf. I need something in it for making the meal now, yet as big with child as I am, I think it not wise to..."

She didn't need to say any more, for in a moment, before she could finish apologizing for stopping him from his urgent task, he was there to help.

“There you go, my love,” Shane said with a kiss. “Thank you daring for taking such good care of our needs for nourishment.”

Celtellina was touched. It made her feet hurt less and her tiredness lift for just a bit more as she carried on tending to the needs of her family.

A hearty, yet simple meal was enjoyed that evening, and then to “fireplace story time” the children went. There they would sit, curled up under several blankets, to hear him tell them stories, or listen to him reading, or hear a song, or whatever their father wanted to share with them. It was a pleasant way to end the day. This then gave their mother time to put the youngest one to sleep, and get some end-of-the-day quiet time—“Wonder-Fill” time.

She didn’t have as long and detailed journeys as before, into the unseen realm, learning about this and that. But a little time each day did help to refresh her. More was needed than merely trying to rest at night; she needed rest of heart and mind and soul. If she thought sleep alone would empower her for the next day’s duties, a rough night’s sleep while caring for her little ones would remind her that she needed time alone in quietness to be truly refreshed, or to get ideas that might make something a bit easier in their day to day living.

SEAN’S FARM IN PARADISE

For the first few years of their married life, Shane and Celtellina continued to live in the Doflynn’s Lodge. Yet as both her’s and her brother’s family grew in size, or rather in numbers, it was time for expansion. Shane and Celtellina would move to their own place.

Father Baufin, ever grateful for the help that Shane had given to him some years back, offered them a place they could live, that was built already. It was unused now as the residence had moved on to some other place, and it wasn’t too far from the “Castle” where they spent their first three months of married life, and did enjoy revisiting time and again. The grounds and house needed fixing up, but it was in a very quiet and enjoyable place to live.

The first night they were at last settled into their fixed up new home, Papa Shane and the children sat near the fireplace for story time. “To night’s story is called, ‘Sean’s Farm in Paradise’,” Papa Shane said, holding a new story book. “I think we’ll relate to it.”

Papa Shane began reading “Sean’s farm in Paradise”:

“Ha, ha! I nearly caught the flower!”

Playful children running in the field beside Sean’s farm house were laughing. They were playing a game of “Toss the flower and see if you can catch it”. The one who caught it would then be the one to run and run to a certain location before the others caught up with them. However, if the flower dropped and no one caught it as it fluttered through the air, then the one who tossed it would have to run fast away before being tagged.

Sean looked out from his top floor window. He was glad that he had taken all the time to clear away the rubble that had filled this part of the land: “Paradise in Disguise” as he called it.

“It’s just a paradise waiting to be discovered,” he reminded those helping to clear the many rocks, boulders, and most of all, old building matter that filled this large farm-to-be.

“It’s a farm,” he’d also say, though it looked anything like that. It used to be a place tightly packed with buildings of all sorts—too tight. So when the storm hit, followed by the most enormous earthquake that ever was felt, the too tall, toppling buildings swayed and knocked each other down into a rubble heap.

“This will get our muscles in shape for the real work of the planting and crop reaping,” Sean would say to any weary ones helping him to clear and prepare the future farm. He was someone that could see the possibilities—what something could and should be, long before the work was done to make it so.

It was with great joy that Sean sipped on his fresh lemonade—made with lemons from his own orchard—and saw the laughing children enjoying the vast expanse that had been cleared and repurposed.

Sean thought: “Much better to look around and see laughing little ones, rather than dominating, tall, life-less buildings. If we all spent more time outdoors we’d see there wasn’t much need for an over population of buildings springing up so that we can do indoors what should be done outside—for the most part.”

Bit by bit, “Paradise Farm” was taking shape, or rather was returning. With pleasure, and sweat and a few calluses, Sean saw his vision becoming a reality.

Soon he went to join the playful ones in their gleeful enjoying of the land that was once again just that—not cluttered space. When the panting-for-breath youngsters sat under a fruit tree, Sean also sat there and read to them from a book he kept tucked away in a hiding place around the roots of this tree.

“Feed your mind, feed your body,” is what he always said at times like this. The children knew if and when he came out to play, that he’d take them to his special orchard and give them all types of nourishment for growing young ones.

“Now, where did we get up to?” he said peeling back the pages of his “Chest of Treasures” book, as he called it.

“We got up to the part where the man said, ‘I’ll take you there’ and then led them through a narrow passage way,” one child recalled.

“Ah, there we go. Oh! Ha! It’s right were the marker is. Good then. Here we go,” Sean found the spot and began to read, while an older girl brought a basket of a variety of fruits she’d picked just then for them all to share.

The basket was passed around, as were the thoughts from Sean’s “Treasures” story book shared.

When story time ended, and the young ones were ready for something of a different pace, Sean’s son, a 14-year-old strong young man lead them to bathe their feet in the stream that ran through this part of the land. They walked along, got their feet and ankles wet, and played a few more water-related games before returning to their homes, a distance away. Sean’s son would see to it that everyone made it safely home.

Sean mused as he waved to the young ones when they passed through on their way home. He recalled his motto: “Paradise isn’t paradise unless all are welcome who wish to enjoy its pleasant fruits; and all wish to do their part to clear away that which messes it up. And I will add, ‘until all young ones are fed properly and well, and are safe to wander here and there playfully; safe to roam and safely home’.”

The story Papa Shane was reading ended, and into bed went the children—and parents as well of course. A special night it was, their first in their well-set up and fixed up house.

“Thank you, darling,” said Celtellina to her husband. “Thank you for all you have done to fix this place up. It’s just perfect. I can hardly wait for our visit to the castle tomorrow. The children are so excited. They already are talking about how they can start to fix it up too, so it’s pleasant for visitors to come often.”

Shane just smiled. It was true that whatever the parent did or didn’t do, did have away of affecting the inspiration and perspiration levels of their children. Into a happy sleep they all slipped, with new vision and dreams to explore—both while awake and when in dream land.

CHILDREN AND GRANDCHILDREN

Days turned into weeks, and weeks into seasons, seasons into years, and years into decades. On went time in the life of Celtellina, Shane, and their growing family. Together they walked, together they cried, together they climbed, together they nurtured the young and growing ones.

The names of the seven children they were graced with were: Tommy, Emanuel, Esther, Greane, Sormae, Estella and Joyvelle. Each, in their own way, showed forth their special gifts they were granted as citizens of Wonder Hill.

As they then grew of age, each one found a special companion who shared their heart's wishes and dreams and would help them also build character traits that needed enhancing.

Tommy and Emanuel, buddies through the good times and the difficulties, found themselves very much enjoying the company of the lovely ladies Shellina and Emillina. As they grew to know and love each other, much like their parents, together with Uncle Roden and Aunty Emilda were four close friends, so were these four a great team and did much exploring together.

The adventurous side to their natures seemed to be enhanced when they were together. It was seldom to see them around their neighbourhood, once the boys had come back from Great Uncle Bernard's training camp. They were skilled and trained and ready to do so much, and they were the perfect gentlemen. They made sure they were, as these ladies meant a great deal to them.

It took some years of learning much about one another, and exploring adventures until the four had decided that they never did want to be too far away from each other, for the rest of their life, if possible.

Tommy asked for Shellina's hand in marriage, and Emanuel wish to spend his life's journey with Emillina. A very grand and double wedding was held for these love birds who wished to fly into fully mature living—having a family to call their own.

It wasn't until the first grandchildren were born, given to these couples, that Celtellina and Shane's youngest at last child graced their home--dear and cheery Joyvelle. Together with her daughters-in-law, Celtellina could both care for her youngest one, and help assist and train these new mothers in their motherly duties. They had to learn how to manage now a family, along with the duties and joys of married life and love and home duties. It helped to take the strain out of it somewhat, as these young new mothers had some to speak with about the womanly questions and strain that sometimes came with starting a family.

Indeed it was like ploughing a field, the breaking up of what was once only a grassy meadow, to now be suitable for new growth. Yes, there were tears, not because her sons were unkind to their lovely brides, but just because times of watering were needed for new seeds of growth to spring up. Times of tears and misunderstandings, or other challenges, when responded to correctly help to water a marriage and even bring life-partners closer to one another.

They choose to act rather as one family, the four of them, rather than each having to bear the weights and jobs on their own. They built their houses in close vicinity of each other, and joined each other for as many activities as suited them well. The men worked on the building projects together—along with others in the town who helped them, of course; they collected and chopped wood together. The women cooked together, or at times helped care for each other's young one, giving a sister-in-law time to be alone with her man.

For the sewing and the mending they took turns helping with it, doing it for all of them at times. This seemed to make life all that much easier. Since coming from a big family, the boys were more accustomed to having more than just a wife around, but a family. There wasn't the sad sorrow of a lonely wife without someone to talk with who could rightly understand things; the women were close friends and were glad for each other's companionship.

When there was any type of family or farming emergency, the men didn't feel at a loss of what to do, as there was always someone to call on for help. If the young men wished to go on some travel adventure from time to time, to keep up their inspiration, they could do so, knowing that their wives would well look after one another, even each other's children, if in need.

Shane took each of his sons aside one afternoon each week, one at a time, for fatherly advice and counselling. Men didn't always have a lot to discuss, but it was important that little nicks and nags be worked out early on, so they didn't grow into bigger problems. It was something an experienced husband and father could give to his sons—time to listen, time to ask questions, and time to give good advice or suggestions.

If there was anything that he and Celtellina could help with that could make things easier for these new families, that was the time Shane heard about it and could see what steps he might be able to take. Mostly it was good for the young men to know they weren't facing this huge challenge alone. Their parents were there, ready to counsel, ready to help, ready to do whatever was necessary to help. No one had to feel alone in some little world. They were all in it together, to help each couple and each young one have the best success in living a life of joy.

A HOUSE MADE OF STICKS, ASHES AND MUD—Part 1

When Celtellina and Shane's first grandchildren were old enough to enjoy story time at the fireplace with "grandpa Shane" this was a regular and happy event. Father Baufin had a large library of many books, good for ages. Books of stories, books of history, books of facts, books of all kinds. Shane liked to have several books on hand that he read through with his children and now his grandchildren.

The story book tonight was called, "*A House Made of Sticks, Ashes and Mud.*" Grandma Celtellina had prepared a night snack for this evening, and Joyvelle sat with her nephews and nieces to listen, who were about her age anyway.

Here is the story they read that night:

Zoey was a cute little creature that lived near Rhyne River. You never knew what creatures you'd encounter there, whether you were gliding down in a floating vessel—and there were many types of those—or you were hiking along it, or going for a dip.

Even those dwellers who lived along the river could expect to be surprised with spotting new creatures they had never seen before. In fact, those living there were the most sure to see new creatures from time to time, as that is just the way it was. Sometimes it seemed that the very nature of the water had transforming elixirs mixed within it.

"See that creature bobbing in and out of the water?" an onlooker might say to his neighbour. "I thought I saw something very similar to it just a month ago. Yet now the features on it have changed somewhat. It seems the more time it spends in this mysterious water, the more it changes. It's quite a bit larger than it was before, and the shine on its fur has a bluish tint, rather than only blackish brown."

The listener might reply, "Is that so? Perhaps that is the reason that so many new-looking creatures and so much variety is seen along this amazing river."

And this indeed would be the correct assumption. For the water of this part of the land had a hidden spring source that fed it constantly with mineral filled waters—but not just minerals, life-giving elements; almost as if the water itself was alive.

So on this day, as happy children played in the gentle waves that the river splashed on the shore, they spotted a new little furry creature, and decided to name it "Zoey".

Zoey was long and slender, yet could curl up into a furry ball and fall fast to sleep at the base of a tree with big roots growing near the water's edge. It could climb up to the top of the tree if it felt curious to see a "bird's eye view" of the river and greenery around. When it yawned it displayed its mouth full of teeth that looked like pearls they were so white and shiny, and rather smooth as well.

"Where does Zoey live?" one child asked the others in an attempt to start a game of exploration. If they watched this creature long enough they might see it building a place to live, or crawling into its already established abode.

"There it goes," one child said as they all then quietly and quickly followed where Zoey was bounding off to.

When Zoey came to a pile of burnt wood and ashes from a firepit that a dweller had used some days before, he abruptly stopped. But he did more. Unexpectedly, as they watched on, the children saw Zoey use its mouth to pick up a large mouthful of ashes, and dash off with it.

This was very curious indeed. Where was Zoey going? And most importantly, what did he need the ashes for? Clearly it wasn't thought of as food, or they would have seen Zoey linger there to swallow one mouthful after the next.

"I saw Zoey go there," another child said, pointing to an old hollow log lying flat behind some sparse bushes. By the time the children neared the hollow log, Zoey was off again to gather what seemed to be supplies for a project this creature was making.

The children looked over the "building materials" and there were three main items, neatly put into piles: Ashes, mud, small sticks. Some bits of grass or pieces of vines were mixed in with the mud as well, but mostly it was wet soil from the river's edge.

Now that they knew where Zoey liked to go, they visited the hollow log every day for about a week. Each day there was something different, some progress being made on what started to appear as a place of residence for this little creature.

Walls of sort were erected using the materials, and a very cozy looking place was taking shape.

At last the day came when it seemed there was nothing more to be done on Zoey's living quarters. When the children crept quietly up to it that day, they saw a very comfortable looking creature curled up for a good long sleep. It was his hibernation living quarters. For it was in there that he stayed for a good long while.

The river land, however, kept buzzing with life and excitement, and new creatures or variations of the same creatures were seen all the time.

A few months later, Zoey yawned and stretched and shook his fur until it was all fluffy again. He was ready to be up and around. He had grown longer and taller during his snug sleep. Out of his cozy sleep nook he crawled.

At first the sunlight was too bright for his eyes as he peered out of his dark enclosure, but before long he was crawling out again and was ready for a good run along the shore of the river. On and on he ran before he was tired. The long rest had done him good, and made him wish to run with vigor. Oh, how fast his legs sped by. He hardly had a chance to say hello to some of the folks he was passing beside, it just felt so good to run.

However, on Zoey's way back down the river side, he walked slow enough to greet the various animals that he had sped past moments before.

"Haven't see you in a while," one owl spoke, who was unusually awake at that time of the day.

"Been sleeping," Zoey replied.

"Ah!" said the owl, looking him carefully over. "Indeed you do look rather refreshed and invigorated."

He looked that way, because it was so.

"Guess I better catch up on some sleep myself," the owl then said and crawled into a hole in the tree.

But just to be funny and show a bit of friendliness, as soon as the owl was tucked away in his hole, Zoey, who could climb trees well, quickly made his way up the tree to surprise the owl."

"Peek-a-boo!" he said, peering into the owl's bedroom.

"Ha!" the owl laughed. It was surprising indeed.

"Good night!" said Zoey before bounding down the tree again, leaving the owl some time for peace and quiet.

A HOUSE MADE OF STICKS, ASHES AND MUD—Part 2

Now, where did I put my trousers?" a man living along the river said aloud to himself.

He hadn't actually put them anywhere but on the laundry line outside to dry. However, they were nowhere to be seen. Well, not seen by him that is.

Meanwhile, in another part of his property a lady rabbit-like creature was just putting the finishing touches on to her cozy new tunnel bedroom that was lined with soft material. Oh, she and her family were going to sleep well tonight.

Apparently the wind had blown Mr. Torrential's trousers off the laundry line, and a certain Miss Rabbit, found this discarded item and was putting it to good use.

When Mr. Torrential walked to the back of the house to take out the food scraps he saw something most amusing. At first he wasn't sure if he was actually seeing what it seemed his eyes were seeing, but then he laughed aloud as he realised his pants were not only found, but had been found and put to good use by a team of rabbits who lined some ruts with them. Some fur balls and fuzzy ears could be seen poking out and then hopping back in again.

"Well, well, little fuzzy furry friends," Mr. Torrential said, seeing how delighted they all were in their fabulous new accommodation for the night.

"Have a good sleep then," is all he said. "Perhaps we can talk about it tomorrow. I do have some spare cloth I could let you use, in exchange for my trousers. I'll see you tomorrow."

And so it was that the trousers were recovered the following morning, and a soft lining of cloth was given to the furry family, who were pleased to enjoy the use of it.

Mr. Torrential smiled as he rehung up his pants to dry, after washing them once more. He'd secure them better this time in case a wind decided to play hide and seek with his pants again.

This time the sun dried them in good timing, and a happy Mr. Torrential was seen walking in the back yard to check on the equally happy furry friends in their fancy living abode, using the cloth he'd given them.

When the children sat at the dinner table that night they chatted with their parents, Mr. and Mrs. Torrential, about the animal they called "Zoey". What Mr. Torrential found most interesting was how this creature constructed his living accommodation. Or more accurately put, what materials were used to make it.

"I shall have to check out this creature's home with you tomorrow," Mr. Torrential said. "Will you take me there, please?"

And so it was that while their mother prepared their morning meal, Mr. Torrential was led by his children to the specially built home of a certain "Zoey".

"Very nice, very nice indeed," Mr. Torrential said, as he squatted down to take a closer look at the mix of the materials used and how firmly it held.

"I've never seen this before. I'm starting to think that others--those of the human form--might be able to try out some of this type of building. Maybe it would work well for something."

Mr. Torrential did like to build, and people often came to him asking him about how to make this or that, and what were the best materials to use when constructing a home.

He would, of course, first of all find out where they lived and what natural resources were available around there before suggesting a building plan. It would be no good to suggest something that was not possible to gather or find. However, what this "Zoey" made his house with was mighty available in nearly all places around. All had ashes from the fires they used to cook and keep warm. Mud was easy to gather, just as easily as sticks and such.

Mr. Torrential would look into this and if it proved successful, would offer it as a suggestion for future homes being built. If not entirely, for some part of the construction perhaps it could be used. And so it was that soon after that discovery, a new style of homes began to be constructed and seen here and there around--all because some curious children had time to observe what new things were going on around the flowing river, and a man had taken the time to listen to his children and learn from what they discovered, and then did something about the information.