

*Daniel, Maria
and
Abba the Tramp*

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Chapter 1 - The Dream

The winter wind bit through the threadbare clothes of the two children who were chilled to the bone. They stood on the pavement by the entrance of an old building. Its exterior was unkept, the paint had peeled and the windows were broken.

"Don't go in" little Maria whispered to her brother as they stared at the worn steps of a darkened, inner stairway that led up to an ancient door.

"Come on" replied Daniel, one foot on the first step.

"It's spooky". Maria peered over her brother's shoulder and into the gloomy interior.

"I am sure he won't harm us," Daniel murmured.

The children were twins, street kids. Their mother had died and left them homeless. They longed for a home and to belong to a family of their own but that now seemed like a distant dream. They slept in abandoned buildings, under bridges and on the sidewalk. Every night they held each other close and remembered their mother's warm embrace; although recollections of her had already grown dim as if she were some far off memory. Before she died she told them about their father for she had clung to the hope that one day he would return just as he had promised and they would be a proper family again. The two children could hardly recall their father. When very young he had disappeared as if vanished in mist. No one knew what happened to him. He left in the morning and never came back. After some years their mother died of over work, a wounded heart and the flu virus of 2011.

The two waifs stood in the gloom of the stairway and imagined they were standing at the entrance to a secret cave. All the stories they had heard about the old man who lived in the upstairs room flooded back. People who went up those stairs never came down, or if they did return they were changed, so people said. The rumours all said he was a strange man from another planet. Some said he was from another "dimension", whatever that meant. He was old, very old and people said he was crazy. The mystery that surrounded him caused the children trepidation for there were even rumours that he killed and devoured unwanted children; that he lured them into his room and they were never seen again or that he kidnapped them from off the streets and sold them to the devil. Mother had warned them to be careful of strangers.

The old man had come to town but no one knew from where he came. The children first saw him

while they were searching in the rubbish dumps for items that they could retrieve and sell or food to eat. They noticed that he was often alone but sometimes others followed him, most of them tramps or people who had no homes. The children joined them but always kept their distance not getting too close to him. The old man helped those who were hungry to get food. He seemed to know where to look and found the most delicious and fresh food they had ever eaten. After feeding them he would gather the tramps and tell them stories of far off places he had visited and of strange things he had seen and of realms with hidden dimensions and unknown beautiful beings. Some days he would walk into town and disappear among the crowds. Then, in the evening, he walked back to his temporary accommodation, a little room at the top of the stairs. At times, he disappeared for days on end and no one knew where he was. Some rumours said that beings from another world came and

carried him away in the dead of night. All sorts of speculation surrounded him.

It seemed to most people that he was just another hermit, another drop out, a little mad and of no consequence. He wore old clothes and a coat that was patched so many times that it looked like a thousand pieces of different coloured cloth. He wore a heavy shawl around his shoulders which he sometimes lifted onto his head. Outwardly he looked no different from any other tramp yet he was different and something about the old man drew the children to him. Somehow, he kindled in them forgotten memories of their father. Something deep within them reached out to know him. Daniel and Maria wanted to pluck up courage and speak to him and they had followed him home and now stood at the bottom of the worn stairway leading up to his humble room. Yet they were unsure. They had never been alone with him.

"Come on," Daniel said to Maria. "I'm going to find out what his home is like. I'll knock on his door and if he's mean we'll run for it. Come on."

"Don't leave me!" Maria replied as she clung to her brother's belt.

The two crept up the stairs, Daniel first, Maria pressing at his back. As they climbed, shadows in the stairwell suddenly leapt towards them in distorted grotesque images and frightening shapes, moving and pressing in on them, screaming out with tormenting, mocking taunts of derision. "Silly children," shrieked the shadows. "He will kill you," yelled dark forms. "Turn back, turn back," others screamed. The hideous cries of thousands of demented vapours fouled the air, echoing from what seemed distant recesses of another world, their foul odour rising in great swells and pounding the little waifs with unrelenting doubt.

The children peered through the darkness with apprehension. Cold cords of fear tightened around their palpitating hearts, smothering their breath as they fought to gulp in the dank, chill air. The mania of tortured shadows gripped their minds, distorting and deranging their imagination, paralyzing them and holding them captive with terror.

Another step, thought Daniel, just one more step. He forced his leaden foot higher, upwards. The commotion among the shadows reached a climatic crescendo as twisted arms reached out to grip and hold him back. A great heaviness descended upon him, his head began to swim and he felt sick.

Drained of both emotion and strength and exhausted with the effort Daniel and Maria reached the landing and Daniel leaned forward to knock on the door but he never made it.

It opened on its own accord and an immense figure stood towering above them. The children nearly collapsed in shock, "Welcome." The man greeted them in a soft, strong voice and beckoned with his outstretched hand, "Do not be afraid, come in!"

He was dressed in a long, worn coat made of patches of cloth, all of different colours, and his hair looked white. He was impressive. In fact, this close he looked truly awesome.

The two kids stood immobile but trembling. A conflict raged within them but the appearance of the figure quietened the din from the thousand screaming voices surrounding them. Still holding the door open the figure waited. Suddenly Maria turned and fled, stumbling down the stairs three and four at a time. Daniel stood riveted, looking up into the face of the ancient man. The flicker of a smile spread across the man's face which

slowly changed and looked less aged and much more fresh and youthful. The man's eyes smiled.

"Don't be afraid," he said and then peered with concern past Daniel to where Maria had stumbled away. His eyes seemed to look right through the walls, the darkness and on, as if following Maria as she fled down the stairs. They seemed to entreat her to stop.

There was something in those eyes that Daniel found appealing. They were not the eyes of a stranger at all but contained depths of knowledge as if the old man knew everything there was to know about Daniel. More than that, they were filled with deep compassion, like living, liquid pools containing purity, wisdom, care. They reminded him of the eyes of his mother. They looked right into Daniel's heart where no one had ever looked before and touched something so deep in him that he was drawn

compellingly towards the man. They were gentle, secure eyes that invited him to enter the room.

He stepped forward.

"Whew," the lad exclaimed as he looked around a room bathed in iridescent light. Yet he could see no visible source for the light.

"Where does it come from?" he asked.

"From me," said the man.

Daniel was amazed. Sure enough, it seemed to glow from beneath his clothes. He had not noticed it before but now that he was in the room it was unmistakable. The light seemed to be living, to move and pulsate whenever the man moved.

"Touch me," said the man, "don't be afraid." He held out his hand.

Daniel hesitantly stretched out his hand and gingerly touched the man's extended fingers. From a point within the man's lower palm concentrated pure light poured out and jumped across to Daniel's hand. Daniel's hand now began to glow. He withdrew it hurriedly but his hand continued to glow with a deep warm light that kindled his entire being.

"Whew," he said in wonder, "how do you do that?"

"Easy," said the man and pointing to one of two chairs he said, "now you touch the chair." Daniel reached out with his hand still glowing and softly touched the chair not knowing what to expect. The chair began to glow, a soft light that radiated around it.

Daniel was amazed. He turned and looked at the man intently, in wonder and awe.

"Who are you?" he asked.

*"Someone who knows you very well, Daniel,"
was the reply.*

*Daniel was amazed. How did this man know his
name?*

"How do you know who I am?" he asked.

*"I know all about you, Daniel, and your family
too" came the gentle answer.*

*Daniel felt a wave of emotion sweep over him.
At last he had found someone who really knew
him. He felt an urgency to call his sister to meet
this unknown friend. He was about to get up to
go and look for her when the man stopped him
with his word.*

"Don't worry about Maria, she's at the bottom of

the steps."

For a moment Daniel was visibly stunned for he was sure Maria had fled.

"How do you know?" he asked.

"Have a look" was the reply.

Once more Daniel was about to arise and go outside when the man again stopped him with the words, "Just look from where you are."

Daniel was puzzled. He glanced at the door and as he did it seemed to melt before his eyes and he found to his amazement that he could look right through it and down the stairs. Sure enough, Maria stood at the foot of the stairs looking timid and worried. Not only could Daniel see her but he could also understand what she was thinking. She felt afraid and alone. She was worried for him and feared he was in danger. He

was all she had in the world and she did not want to lose him. She felt very vulnerable, filled with doubts and fears. Her mind seemed to play tricks on her; one moment she was sure everything would be alright, next she was filled with doubts. She began to scurry away but something happened in her heart and she changed her mind, did a turn about and began to move towards the doorway. Something seemed to call her, compelling her to climb back up the stairs.

Slowly and on her own she crept up a second time, through the screaming shadows, until once more she stood by the door. Her concern for her brother overcame her fear and she gave a soft knock on the door.

As she knocked it gently opened on its own and the old man looked pleased as Daniel leapt up and ran to his sister, taking her hand and

leading her into the room. Maria had always been reserved and she depended on Daniel for encouragement. Now, hand in hand, the two children regained their confidence. Something began to happen. Daniel's hand still had a delicate glow and as he held his sister her hand also began to glow. They stood bathed in crystal light and gazed in awe at the strange man before them.

"Maria this is, er ..." and his voice trailed away as he realized he did not yet know the man's name.

"What shall we call you?" Daniel asked.

"I have many names. What do you want to call me?" was his strange reply.

Daniel and Maria stood in silence. Together they recalled their mother's promise that one day their

father would return. This man somehow made them think of their father. Was it him, they wondered?

"Are you our father?" they asked in unison.

"Call me Abba." The old man smiled, and suddenly looked so very, very youthful.

"You must be hungry" commented Abba and moved to the back of the room where there was a low table. As he moved, the light that bathed the room with liquid radiance moved with him. He opened a box that seemed to be empty but he reached into it and a loaf of bread appeared in his hands. He cut two slices and spread them lavishly with honey that materialized as he needed it. He handed a thick slice to each child. It was the best bread they had ever tasted. They had never tasted anything like it before. It melted in their mouths and warmed their whole

being. They had not eaten well for days. They had more.

With full stomachs and warmed bodies the two children suddenly felt very sleepy. Anticipating their need for rest the man went to a cupboard and flung it open. It too was empty but he gazed intently for a while and then pulled out some blankets, wrapped them around the children and indicated that they should lie down on a simple bed in the corner. The entire room was austere, meagrely furnished with only the bare necessities but as the children curled up they felt secure and blessed. The bed seemed to adjust to their bodies and was very comfortable. They could have been in the most lavish home in town. It seemed everything they needed was at Abba's fingertips. They fell into a deep sleep and dreamt of their dear mother, missing father, and home.

How long they slept they could not tell but they

awoke in the morning with the light of dawn streaming through the window. It seemed that the whole world had changed as they slept. The room was the same room yet it was different for it had expanded and was full of many beautiful things. Magnificent paintings hung on the walls, deep carpets stretched from wall to wall, a table was laden with fresh bread and other foods. Cushions, chairs and everything else necessary for a home were there. It looked more like a room in a palace than the humble room they had gone to sleep in the night before.

Rays of pure light streamed through an immense window that extended from the floor to a high ceiling. The rays bathed the two children with warmth. The crystal notes of birds called from outside. The children pulled back the bedding and were amazed to see that as they stepped out they were clothed with fresh garments and new shoes. The brilliance from outside drew them

irresistibly to a huge double door that stood at the end of the room. It was made of crystallized light and was transparent. On either side of it hung magnificent golden drapes which captured and held rays of pure light that beamed in from outside. A thin silver veil of lace stretched across the opening of the door and as they approached it this veil melted and the huge door opened right before them allowing them to walk out onto rolling parklands.

They had stepped into another world. They certainly had never seen such a radiant scene before. The air was filled with beautiful scent and a sound the children had never before heard. It was like music but more beautiful than anything they could have imagined. A river flowed nearby and trees grew on the banks. A gentle breeze touched the leaves and they rustled in harmony to the placid murmur of the gurgling water. As the children listened to the sounds

they thought they could hear the trees softly calling them to come and play. The crystal notes of song-birds filled the clear air. The whole scene was clothed with a sense of peace and joy that was so tangible that the two absorbed it into themselves and felt an integral harmony with everything around them. It was as though they too had been absorbed into the scene and become one with it.

They spent the morning investigating the fields, running from one meadow to another, one river bank to another, one glade of trees to the next. They were excited as only children can be at all they discovered. Never had they been in a park such as this. They were surprised to see that none of the birds were afraid of them but flew near them and even came to sit on their shoulders. The air teemed with butterflies of many colours. Birds were abundant and other animals of every description leapt and pranced on every side and

yet it was not overcrowded; there were deer and antelope, horses, giraffes and so many more. They had only to think of an animal and wish to see it and very soon they encountered one of them. Handsome dogs bounded up and played with them, beautiful cats of every variety greeted them. Once they thought they saw a princely lion strolling along the path ahead of them but they did not feel at all afraid or in danger.

They explored for hours. Time was of no consequence and their initial enthusiasm grew stronger as they found more and more to discover. They spent hours romping around but it seemed as if it were only moments. The time of playing brought healing to them and filled them with a new vitality they had never known. The childhood energy that had been knocked out of them through years of suffering and hardship was renewed. It had been a long time since the two children had really played as children were

meant to play.

They examined in detail everything they came across and marvelled at it all. Everything was alive in a way they had never noticed before and an undercurrent of life flowed through it all. The air was filled with light and warmth as if it were alive, the grass was rich and bounced back when they trod on it, even the ground seemed to vibrate and move beneath them as they walked, charging them with an energy unlike anything they had felt before. The trees were laden with fruits such as the children had never seen and seemed to bend their branches downwards inviting them to pick the fruit and to swing or clamber upon the branches. When they touched the leaves they released a discharge of life and health.

The children felt that they should like to eat some of the fruit from the trees. The hunger

pains they had grown accustomed to in recent months had eased but the fruit looked appealing. They each picked a large fruit and began to eat. They were unlike any fruit they had tasted and as they ate life itself seemed to flood into them. They began to make their way back to the room eating as they went.

Back in the room they looked around and soon realized it was only part of a much more extensive complex, a mansion or palace, very old and very big. The appearance of the residence conveyed the feeling of security and permanence and yet it had not lost the warmth and simplicity of a normal home.

They felt tired but strangely whole. Unable to finish the fruit they left the two halves on the table intending to eat them later. They were so satisfied and felt so comforted and had such a deep sense of well-being that they fell back into

the bed folds and slept as they had never slept before.

With morning light streaming through the window the children awoke to a new day. They felt rested, renewed and somehow different. What a wonderful time they had had as they recalled the visit to the garden. They looked around the meagre furniture of the room. They thought they must have been dreaming for nothing had changed. They got out of bed and noticed they wore their thin, threadbare clothes. So it had all been a dream. Suddenly they noticed something that stopped them in their tracks. They were stunned to see the two fruit halves lying on the table! The truth slowly settled on them and struck them with wonder, their whole being tingled with joyful impulses. It had all been real after all.

Chapter 2 - A King in Disguise

Abba arrived shortly and asked if they would like to accompany him on his travels through the day and they gladly agreed. As they left the room and descended the stairs the children were once again aware of the screaming shadows that filled the stairwell. Daniel and Maria moved closer to Abba who seemed unperturbed by the commotion and before whom the shadows fled and melted. He seemed very happy.

Throughout the day they walked from place to place and called on many people, the old, the sick, the lonely and weary. Some people knew Abba well, although they sometimes knew him by a different name. At his appearance their faces lit up and they exchanged warm greetings and reached out to touch him and embrace. Sometimes the children thought they saw light leap from Abba's hands as he gently caressed a

child or firmly lifted and guided the elderly or touched a sick person.

There was an old withered man who had a gammy leg and who sat in the market place where he had his little "shop" on the pavement and sold second-hand wares.

"How is your leg today?" Abba asked.

"Oh, it's stiff with the cold" was his reply.

Abba took his ankle and rubbed with both hands. The old man enjoyed the warmth it brought.

"Ah, that's better" he said, "Thank you, thank you," a smile creased his wrinkled face.

Abba took off his old coat patched with many colours and wrapped it around his shoulders. "That will warm you up", he said. The man

looked transformed and suddenly very handsome. The children were sure that his leg seemed to glow. As they walked on they were surprised to see that Abba was still wearing an old coat, not quite the same as the previous one but also made of patched cloth and many colours.

There was a young man in a wheelchair in the garden at the hospital. Every day, when the sun shone, a nurse pushed him out onto the lawn. He suffered from palsy with spasmodic jerks of his muscles. He flopped around and couldn't speak. When Abba came a smile lit his face and he called out in his own way, excited and with much pleasure. It seemed he and Abba had a special language all of their own and they knew just how to speak to each other. Abba held his head in his strong, rough hands and, putting his mouth to his ear, spoke secrets straight into his heart. The young man listened intently and laughed and laughed.

During the day they walked past a stately Cathedral and the children turned to Abba and asked him: "Abba, do you ever go to church?"

Abba paused for a moment as he thought about the question and a look of sorrowing love spread over his face. A single tear welled up and fell from a glistening eye.

"Sometimes," he said, as he wiped the tear on his sleeve. His sleeve glistened as if covered in sparkling dew and as the cloth slipped back from his hand the children caught a glimpse of a ragged wound on his upper palm.

The children were saddened at the sight of Abba's sorrow. They had never thought much about church before but they looked up at the weathered crucifix and began to wonder.

"Do you know about God?" asked Daniel, as only

a child can ask,

"I know him well" replied Abba.

"Our Mother always went to church and she said we should always pray because God loves us" said Maria.

Abba nodded knowingly.

Daniel ran to the door, "Can we go in and see?" he asked with childish enthusiasm, looking into the dark interior of the Cathedral and then over his shoulder to Abba. Normally they would not go near a church but the company of Abba made Daniel much bolder. Maria hung back,

Abba laughed and took each by the hand and together they stepped inside. The interior was dim and their eyes required a few moments to adjust to the subdued light so they did not

immediately see the seated figures in the pews that were dressed in black, blending with the shadows. Some were quietly weeping. A casket rested at the front and flowers were arrayed around it. Organ music played mournfully. Quietly the three sat down near the back and watched the proceedings. There was such a sense of sorrow in the people. Several women sobbed and men sat in bleak bereavement. Abba was watching one woman in particular. She sat alone, hunched with the burden of grief, lost in a dark pit of despair.

Abba reached out a hand towards her and fixed her with a look of utmost compassion. Almost imperceptibly a glimmer of silver light spread from his outstretched hand in the direction of the woman. The light seemed to pour like a stream from the deep wound in his hand that the children had glimpsed before. Now his outstretched arm caused the long sleeve of his

tunic to fall back and reveal it. Silver rays cascaded like a fountain from the wound and then flowed across the benches and aisle to settle on the woman, only a little to start with, for she somehow could not receive too much. Ever so gently it grew stronger and as the children watched they saw her bent form gradually straighten, and then her head lift, until her tear-streaked, bedraggled face looked up towards the light of a stained-glass window bearing the form of the Saviour. As her eyes fixed upon it a beam of light shone in from the sun as it burst through the clouds outside and she was bathed in a brilliant pool of gold. Her eyes came alive and she wiped back her hair as new strength flowed into her.

The children sat in wonder but no one else seemed to notice and the funeral service droned on. Without warning, a man dressed in ecclesiastical garments approached them and

rather abruptly asked them to leave saying it was a private service. Abba rose and with the children strode out into the sunlight.

On the steps of the cathedral Abba stopped to feed a hungry sparrow. The cold winter wind ruffled its feathers and it dragged a broken foot. Abba reached into his pocket and drew out a handful of mixed grain. Slowly he stretched out his hand and the sparrow hopped nearer. As he did so the children saw more clearly the awful wound on Abba's hand but this time noticed it was on his other hand too. The sparrow hopped onto his finger and began to eat. Other sparrows came close and Abba sprinkled a liberal amount of seed on the ground. It seemed one handful had gone a long way. The injured bird flew down to join the others and now looked well, no longer limping. Abba and the children walked on down the sidewalk,

As they walked it seemed that the whole world came alive. The birds sang, even the trees seemed to swing their branches down and smile, the sky above reflected love and joy. Who was this strange old man they wondered yet again? People said different things of him. Some said he was just a penniless man from another town. Others said that he was a confidence trickster who deceived people and then robbed them and was hiding from the police. Yet others said he was a secret millionaire in hiding. There were so many rumours. Some people even said he was from another place, a "hidden dimension", whatever that meant. He was old, very old and when asked he never said from where he came. On more and more days old Abba would gather around him the tramps and the children of the streets and anyone else who wanted to listen and tell them stories. He seemed to know so much about everything, but his wisdom was not of this world.

As the children went on regular daily walks they noticed that every now and then throughout the day people came to Abba, as if from nowhere, talk to him briefly and then go off again. They came and went from all directions. They were all different, men and women. As they talked and nodded their heads Abba would place his hand on their shoulders, sometimes give them a brief embrace and then they were gone. It was as though they came with messages to Abba and then left with his instructions. The children became more curious about this. Often as they watched these visitors they noticed how they gave Abba great respect and awe. When the children got to know Abba it was as though his appearance would sometimes change. He looked at times quite regal, his stature taking on the bearing of royalty. The people who came to him obeyed his words without arguing as if he had great authority.

"Maybe he is a king from a distant country" they whispered. When they got alone with him in his room at the end of one day they plucked up courage and asked him the question.

"Abba, are you a king?"

After asking him they thought it sounded so stupid. After all, kings wore robes and had armies and palaces and things. Then they remembered the palace they had visited on that first day.

"To some people I am" Abba replied, without seeming to think the question strange at all.

"Do you want me to be your king?" He asked almost nonchalantly.

The question took the children by surprise. They had just begun to know Abba as a friend, how

could he be a king as well? Surely, he could not be both their friend and a king. Kings were powerful, and ruled, and had to be obeyed. They did not want to lose their new found friend.

The children contemplated. For some moments they were deep in thought. As they looked at each other their hearts warmed, "Why not they thought, after all He must be a king."

They looked at Abba and nodded.

"Yes, we want you to be our king," said Daniel. Maria approved, "Yes, yes," she said.

"Before you decide there is something you must see" said Abba and directed the children to look towards a mural that had appeared on the wall. It was a scene of rolling hills and countryside and a broad road that twisted down to a valley where a far off city could be seen. A huge throng

of people walked upon the road and the children suddenly found they had joined them and were being carried along in a tide of humanity. There were people of every age and nationality; African, European, South American, Chinese, Indian and every race on earth, young people and old.

The throng pressed around the children making it difficult for them to walk in any other direction except the way they all went; towards the valley. Many of the people looked happy and care free but others carried heavy burdens and were bent with loads of sadness, regret and grief.

Some talked amongst themselves as they journeyed and discussed many things; their plans and hopes for the future and where they wanted to go and what they wanted to do. Others looked weary, barely able to walk. Daniel and Maria managed to find their way to the fringe of the

human throng and to see more clearly. After a while they came to a parting in the road and a sign that pointed to the "Upper Highway". It looked steep but straight.

"Which way should we go?" asked Maria and Daniel stood on his toes and peered in the direction the Highway headed.

It seemed to lead towards a green hill far away outside the walls of the city. What looked like a copse of trees stood upon it with people coming and going while some just stood looking intently at something that Daniel could not make out for the centre of the hill was obscured from view and in dark shadow.

Daniel and Maria gazed up the narrow road and were drawn towards it. Fewer people travelled on it and it seemed brighter and more challenging. They left the broad road and started

on the Highway.

It was much harder to walk along than the broad road for it was steeper but the views were beautiful. At steep places the children had to stop and rest and were tempted to go back to the broad road for crossways linked the two roads. The children could see the low road and sometimes it came close to them as it twisted and turned. Occasionally people changed roads; some from the narrow road went to the broad and some from the broad crossed to the narrow.

The narrow road was straight so they made better progress and they could now see clearly the city below to which the broad road led. The city was in darkness but bright neon lights lit the side walks and flashing adverts invited people into places of extravagant pleasure.

The narrow road led to the green hill and at last

Daniel and Maria approached and saw before them a strange scene that they had never seen before. A cluster of trees stood in dark shadow and people gathered around looking intently upon something. The children strained their eyes to see what it was. The dark horror of what they saw made them recoil in dread. They were barely able to look upon or comprehend the awful sight.

An old rugged tree was contorted as if in great pain. Its twisted limbs were covered in thorns and clusters of rotten fruit. What appeared to be a Ram was entrapped on the tree and held fast by the thorns. It looked crushed and hung grasped by the gnarled branches unable to move. Piles of putrid fruit lay at the foot of the tree and the air was filled with stench. The sight was repulsive yet the children were unable to look away.

Some people wept. Others stood mocking in

derisive laughter. The broad road passed quite close and some who travelled on it paused in their journey to gaze upon the scene. A few crossed over from that road to get a better view. Some went back but others tarried a while. Most people passed on, indifferent to what took place upon the hill.

Daniel and Maria were compelled to inch closer. On the tree hung a sign upon which they could make out the words "King of Love". They could also make out labels on the fruit; hatred, dishonesty, lack of forgiveness, to name just a few. People with sacks of rotten fruit came and placed them at the foot of the tree and walked on free of the burden and stench. The eyes of the children filled with tears of loving sorrow as they were overwhelmed with sadness. They became aware they too carried some of this same awful fruit. They had grown used to its smell and accustomed to its weight.

Maria fell to her knees. Daniel stooped until he too fell as if crushed by the weight of the burden he did not realise he carried. They felt a load of guilt, bitterness, resentment and much more fall from them like rotten fruit. Only when the last awful burden was gone could the children rise.

An amazing thing had happened. The tree before them had changed. It had come alive and turned green. The rotten clusters had changed into beautiful fruits which fell into their hands. As they ate they recalled Abba's garden and realised it had been only a foretaste for this was the Tree of Life. They wiped their eyes from tears and immediately were back with Abba.

"Do you still want me as your King?" he asked.

"Oh yes, yes" they replied not sure what it all meant but knowing they deeply loved Abba.

"Come to me" said Abba and his light began to glow. He held out his hands towards them and his hands glowed. A smile spread across his face and suddenly he looked like a King and the children sensed a regal majesty about him for he began to radiate great power and awe. A brilliant lustre transformed the old patched tunic into a glistening resplendent robe, his feet shone and on his head appeared crowns of burnished gold. The children stepped towards him and he drew them simultaneously into himself. They found themselves standing within his very being with his robes perfectly enfolding them as though they themselves were wearing them and were crowned with crowns.

They became aware of a beautiful light glowing from deep within them such as they had never experienced before. Enfolded in the robes they felt perfectly loved and accepted for the first time for a long while. A sense of peace and

security settled on them and they began to glow, from the inside out.

"Whew!" said Daniel looking at his glow.

"Whew!" said Maria.

"Come with me," said Abba and taking each by the hand he led them to a door at the end of the room. As they got to it instead of him opening it they just stepped right through as though it were not there and found to their surprise that they had stepped into another dimension. They were standing on a balcony overlooking a wide crystal plane. It stretched as far as the eye could see and from one horizon to another there were millions and millions of people. They were all kinds of nationalities and they were all glowing in exactly the same way that Daniel and Maria now glowed.

"Whew!" said Daniel.

"Whew!" echoed Mary. "Where are we?" she queried.

"Welcome to my kingdom," Abba responded, "This is your family."

"How can they all be one family?" asked Daniel. He had never imagined that his family could be so large.

"They all have one Father," said Abba, "and he is my Father too."

"Our father left us and we don't know where he is," Daniel replied looking up at Abba, puzzled.

Abba did not say a word but lifted the children, one on each shoulder, and carried them up a wide spiralling stairway to the entrance of a large

gallery on a higher level. As they walked up the stairway Daniel and Maria became aware that someone had joined them and was walking very close to Abba's side and just behind them, a woman, with tears of joy streaming down her cheeks. They suddenly felt very close to their mother and sensed her tender love pouring into them.

Reaching the higher level they came upon a sight of transcending splendour.

"Look" said Abba.

Surrounding them were Living Beings that Daniel and Maria had never imagined could exist. They lined the corridors and filled the massive hall. They were of all shapes and sizes and all of them shone with a light that radiated the same light as Abba. Abba stepped between two great open doors and entered the vast hall.

A hush fell upon the multitude of Beings as they gazed with affection and adoration upon them. Abba lifted the two children high and began to laugh, enormous, quivering rolls of laughter that rose from deep within him and reverberated through the gallery and out along the corridors like great peels of ecstatic thunder. The whole multitude of Living Beings absorbed the laughter, allowing it to wash over them like great waves of liquid joy. As it broke upon them it lifted them into a magnificent, uproarious explosion of rapture that rose to a crescendo of celebration and sounded like the deafening roar of torrents of water, crashing like cymbals and bursting in great floods of applause. They laughed in unison with Abba and then the laughter seemed to turn to music orchestrated by the ringing tones of Abba himself as if he were controlling it and the sound resonated out of the gallery, through the corridors, down the stairways, and exploded into the whole universe

until the very stars themselves sang for joy and all creation danced. Wave upon wave of rejoicing burst into galaxies of shimmering light and filled the heavens with joy. Two immense Beings of Light glided out of the throng and approached Abba who stretched out his arms and handed Daniel to one and Maria to another.

"These are your very own Guardians" he told the children.

The Beings were clothed in translucent garments of pure light and were tall and powerful and conveyed the impression of being totally invincible. As they lifted the children up Abba's love covered them in a thick, tangible cloud.

Ever so slowly and unobtrusively the scene gently receded as the cloud expanded and filled the gallery eventually obscuring everything. Simultaneously the singing gradually ebbed until

it sounded like waves on a distant shore and eventually faded completely. The children felt themselves descending, surrounded in a cloud of love and light that placed them softly upon the floor. Through the haze that enveloped them the stark features of the room at the top of the stairs began to take shape. They were back from wherever it was they had been, back from the other side, the "Far Side", the place of splendour, to the mundane trappings of earth, but within their hearts was a living ocean of life and love, of peace and harmony which swelled and grew at each thought of Abba. They would never forget where he had taken them.

They had a thousand questions to ask him. They looked around anxious to begin, but he was nowhere in the room. Just a moment ago he had been right there but now he had vanished into thin air. The children were stunned - he was gone. Yet, although not visible his presence was

still very strong, as if he were nearby, but nowhere to be seen. A great alarm gripped them and if it had not been for the marvellous events they had just witnessed they may have been overwhelmed with a sense of abandonment. However, nothing was able to break the peace which filled their hearts and pervaded the room.

"Where has he gone?" Maria asked fretfully.

"How do we find him?" asked Daniel, perplexed.

They stood unsure of what to do.

Maria called out, "Abba, where are you?"

And then it happened. He spoke to them, his strong voice coming from nowhere in particular but from everywhere, from every corner of the room. It was as if he was all around them and in them, no longer confined to a body but filling every cranny of the room and even filling them.

"I am here with you and I will never leave you. My presence will always be with you and I will lead you with love. You can come to me whenever you wish, all you have to do is climb the stairs of your heart and enter my presence through the golden drapes and silver veil. Soon I will see you again and one day, at the set time, we will be together forever."

Chapter 3 - The Cloud

At first the children felt unsure of the future. Just when they had found someone special who they hoped never to be separated from they were alone again. Everything had changed. They could no longer see Abba or touch him and yet they knew he was with them. They had a sense of his presence hovering over them as in an invisible cloud. They knew now they would enter a new kind of relationship with him.

"What should we do?" asked Maria of her brother.

Daniel was putting on a brave face. They did not want to stay in the empty room.

"We could go down to old Granny Grinny." Daniel replied.

Granny Grinny was a destitute old woman whom the children knew from the streets. She lived in a shack down near the docks, a lean-to propped up around a lamppost and reinforced with dustbins. Sometimes she got her food dumped right on her front door; half-eaten pizzas and chicken bones from the Fast Food take-away just across the street.

The children hurried down to her shack. She was not at home so they waited until she returned, pushing her shopping basket in front of her, an old creaky pram she had retrieved from the dump.

"Hello," they greeted her, "can we come and sleep tonight?"

She was a rough old soul, quite mad and always grinning as if she knew something no one else did and chuckled about it all day long.

"You little rascals, of course you can, but you had better behave."

She invited them inside as it was getting dark and cold. Once they were all squeezed in there was no room for anyone else. She pulled out an old biscuit tin, opened it and took out some dry bread slices and left-over pizza crusts which she shared with them as she stirred a blackened pot of watery chicken soup simmering on a small fire. They dipped the bread and simultaneously both Daniel and Maria began to think of the fruit they had eaten back in the palace room.

"Where's the old man?" asked Granny Grinny.

"Who are you talking about?" replied Daniel, cautiously.

"Don't pretend you don't know" said Granny and, leaning very close, whispered "The Secret

King".

For a moment the children did not know how to react. Was it possible for old Granny Grinny to know the secret that Abba was the King from the Far Side?

"Do you know him too?" asked Maria in wonder. "Oh yes, he often comes to see me," she said.

Maria felt her spirit leap. She felt she could jump and dance and sing for joy all at the same time but ended up collapsing in Granny Grinny's lap and sobbing her eyes out. Daniel just sat there dumbfounded watching his sister cry. Granny Grinny put her gnarled hands around Maria and with twisted fingers grasped her to her bony bosom. Ever so slowly they both began to glow and as they did Daniel became aware that a soft cloudy haze had filled the shack and warmth came upon them which tempered the night chill.

And then they saw him. He was sitting towards the back of the shelter that had somehow expanded to accommodate him. He had not changed. He smiled and they all began to shine with the light from the other world. Granny Grinny, who had been giggling without restraint became serene, gazing into the face of Abba with an expression of abandoned love. Maria stopped crying and sat with beaming face, her cheeks wet with tears. Daniel could not contain himself and threw himself upon Abba.

Strong arms embraced him and Abba laughed in delight at the boy's affection.

"We didn't know what to do," Daniel burst out. "We came to Granny Grinny and she also knows you." "Please don't go away again." said Maria.

Abba reached forward and whispered "But I've been with you all the time," he said, "and it was

I who brought you to Granny Grinny."

"Oh!" said the kids in unison.

*"She will be like your grandmother," Abba said,
"and her real name is Serenity."*

*"But everyone calls her Granny Grinny," Maria
said.*

"They don't know her like I do," replied Abba.

"Do we have other names too?" asked Daniel.

*"Yes," said Abba "but for now you'll still be called
by your present names. They are beautiful
names," he said, "my mother is also called Maria
and I have a good friend called Daniel, as brave
as a lion, and that's what you must be, Daniel,
as brave as a lion. I will not always come to you
like this, not till the set time comes, so you must*

always remember how close I am to you."

The cloud filled the shoddy room and transformed it into a place of grandeur. Vistas of majesty unfurled beyond the flimsy walls, and drapes of golden glory seemed to hang just beyond the cardboard that was held together with wire and string. Time passed unnoticed.

From that day on Abba was not seen openly any more in town. He had moved on, or so the people said. Some people said they had seen him in other towns. At first, Daniel and Maria were tempted to try to follow him but then they found there was no need to do so because the sense of his presence never left them. Although they could not touch him, yet they knew he was with them, just that he was now invisible. They had a sense of him hovering over them as if in an invisible cloud. They could speak to him at anytime and when they listened they could hear his voice.

They never again went back to the upstairs room for they discovered how to enter his presence whenever they wished to. All they had to do was close their eyes and imagine the stairs and immediately there appeared grand spiral steps sweeping upwards, guarded not with shadows, but with Majestic Beings clothed in white. They could climb those stairs and meet with Abba in the rooms of their inner spirit whenever they wished. Daniel and Maria would often visit this upper room to meet Abba. They also walked often in his garden and got to know its delights. This was only the beginning of their travels through the veil and beyond to the beautiful world on the Far Side.

They visited many secret places and saw many strange and fantastic things, creatures of outstanding majesty and places beyond description, things that were impossible for them to explain to others. Yet, in those days they also

met with the darker, more sombre world of shadows; and came face to face with the most grotesque being of all, the dark unfathomed reflection of the one who had no face, the dreaded "Faceless One".

Chapter 4 - The Far Side

One day the children woke to find that Granny Grinny had already left for her daily rounds. She had gone down to the docks to see her dear friend, old Mama Melody who lived near the quay.

Sometimes Mama was lucky to collect a few small fish that fell from the nets of the fishing boats as they were unloaded. She walked the beaches and collected shells and other flotsam and then carefully strung it all together and made necklaces, bangles and other trinkets which she sold to tourists who came down to the harbour to see the ships. Her wrinkled skin hung down her arms and buttocks, testifying to the time when she was young and firm. Her dignified bearing and kindly manner were well known and she often walked on the beach. She was friendly, greeted the visitors with a wave of

her hand and played with the children.

She always had plenty of time for children and somehow always had a sucker or sweet for them and blew them a kiss. And, she was always singing, beautiful songs of long ago and distant lands, of sailing the seas and of golden shores, songs of love. Rumours were that she had been a professional singer once, before hard times came. Even though she was now old her voice told of better times. Sometimes Mama Melody disappeared and no one knew where she was but Granny Grinny knew her secret hiding place under the quay. She hid there when she lost her mind for she was an alcoholic and was plagued by its dark shadow and sometimes sank into a quagmire of hopelessness. Slowly she would recover and then be well again for days. Now she had met Abba and He had helped her.

Daniel and Maria had just started into town

when a young lad came running. Breathless, he called out to them and asked them to come quickly, something had happened. The three ran all the way to the dockyard and then to a quiet corner below the quay on a beach covered in pebbles and debris. Mama Melody lay among the debris as still as a plank and as cold as ice. Granny Grinny knelt next to her with tears in her eyes. They had been such close friends. As they gazed at the cold form lying in the rubbish Granny explained how Mama had taken a sudden bad turn and collapsed. Someone had called an ambulance but it was taking a long time to arrive. When at last it came they put her on a stretcher and took her away. The children watched silently.

Granny and the children sorted out the few things from Mama's little shelter and rolled up her blankets. There seemed so little left of her, so little to tell of her passing. As they gathered the

last of her possessions and gazed out to sea their attention was drawn to a solitary figure strolling along the beach front. In some funny way she seemed so familiar. She was youthful, full bodied and lithe and her movements radiated strength and life, a beautiful woman. She ran kicking up her feet and splashing in the shallow waves, her long hair trailing over her shoulders and her shawl billowing behind her like a banner. Seagulls hovered above her. The three sorrowing friends watched her and their sorrow lifted as they heard snatches of a song as the woman raised her voice in strong and powerful tones of happiness. She seemed to dance with such lightness and grace, radiating youthful vibrancy, as if not held at all by the power of gravity. Suddenly she turned to gaze towards them. She lifted her hand and waved, then blew them a kiss, and was gone in a cloud of mist and spray. Something seemed so familiar. Was it that little wave of the hand, just like Mama Melody

used to wave? Was it that ringing song?

Daniel and Maria ran across the sand to where she had disappeared but nothing remained to show she had been there. But then they thought they heard a last soft refrain of song mingled with gentle waves lapping on the shore.

The sight of the figure on the beech cushioned the sorrow of Mama's death. The children went back to stay with Granny Grinny. She was still so tearful and sad. That night, however, she seemed better and the three of them curled up and slept with such a deep sense of well being. They fell into the folds of their worn out blankets and slept deeply. They all dreamt of the young woman dancing among the waves and it seemed that they danced with her as if they too were free from all the burdens that weighed them down.

Something unexpected happened about three weeks later. A smart looking young man came down to the docks and asked questions about Daniel and Maria, wanting to know where they lived and how he could find them. People who knew the children were cautious and did not say where they were to be found. After all, they did not know if the children were in some kind of trouble. But, the young man persisted and eventually found his way to Granny Grinny's little shack. He hung around until Daniel and Maria came home and then approached them.

"Are you Daniel and Maria?" he enquired.

"Why?" asked Daniel, unsure. He had never before talked to a man in a suit.

"Well, I represent Mrs. Caroline Sharpe," he said, "and she has left a Trust to take care of you."

*"We don't know anyone like her," said Maria
"who is she?"*

*"I am told she used to be called Mama Melody,"
replied the man.*

*The children were surprised. Did Mama Melody
have another name? They sat on the side of the
quay while the man pulled out lots of papers and
showed them figures and talked all morning and
Daniel and Maria understood nothing, except
they were going to go to a new home and be
looked after. Mrs. Sharpe had set up a Trust just
for them. She had actually been very rich.*

"What's a Trust?" Maria asked.

*The young man tried to explain but Maria did
not really understand. At first they said they
could not go and leave Granny Grinny all alone,
but eventually the young man read some more*

papers and then said that Granny could go with them too.

"How long will it take?" asked Daniel.

"Well, it should all be sorted out in a month or so and then we will come and get you." he said. "We don't know the exact day, you must just be ready."

Wow, they could not believe it. They tried to explain it all to Granny and she could not understand it either.

It was not too long afterwards, however, when Granny took a turn for the worse and began to decline in health. Then she caught a cold that rapidly developed into pneumonia and within hours one cold night she fell into a deep sleep from which she could not awaken. The children sat vigil on her little mat in the cardboard house

and watched as she slipped away. The screaming shadows seemed to crowd in around them and to smother the very life from her shrunken chest. Those same awful, deformed shadows the children had first met on the stairway leapt about in devilish dances, jiving and gyrating in a hideous display of loathsome jubilation. As she approached the moment of death she seemed to rally briefly and her eyelids fluttered open. A smile of serenity spread across her aged face. And then, suddenly the cloud of Abba's presence filled the little shack and a warm glow settled upon her. The shadows fled in disarray and as the children watched something wonderful happened, as a Mighty Being of Light, just like those they had seen in the great hall of Abba, stepped out of the air and stood within the shack shedding a golden radiance upon them. Granny reached out her gnarled and shrivelled hands towards the being and was tenderly lifted out of her frail body. As she rose she gained strength

and stood next to the being, clothed in a beautiful garment of dazzling light. As the children watched she was transformed before their very eyes. Her new body filled out, forming into the most beautiful person they could ever imagine. Her face changed, the wrinkles shrank, her cheeks and lips filled out and her hair shone as gold. The immediate vicinity of the shack became transformed and earth's dimension dissolved and moved away to disclose a magnificent stairway rising towards the huge doors of an awesome arch which towered above her. On either side of the stairs hosts of Mighty Beings stood gazing in hushed wonder. Their wings formed part of the stairs, like the rungs of a ladder. Taking her hand in his the Being led her to the stairs and they began to effortlessly ascend. As they did the children watched their ascent and saw that someone had come through the arch to greet her. It was Abba, shining in resplendent light.

Tones of celestial music began to fill the air with living sound that invaded from beyond this world and blended with explosive power and throbs of energy beyond any earthly measure. It conveyed jubilation, victory and triumph and yet carried all the tender purity of a wedding march. The scent of roses waft in the air as thousands of rose petals fell from the sky and formed a crimson carpet upon which she stepped. A heavenly liquid of crystallized light flooded through the arch and cascaded down the stairs. Now bathed in brightness Serenity gazed up at Abba as radiant as a bride with trails of light forming a translucent train that flowed in living motion behind her.

As the children watched in wonder they saw her disappear through the haze and into the cloudy crowds of those who welcomed her and the whole scene faded before their eyes until nothing was left but her still, dead body lying

pathetically small before them. The children sat overcome with joy and sorrow as tears streamed down their faces. How they had grown to love her and her funny ways. She had shown them so much love and kindness. Though poor she had been rich in other things. Now she was gone and they were left alone. They longed to see her and especially to be with Abba. Yet, they felt his warm touch, like a blanket of love, settle and wrap around their hearts.

After Granny's passing, things changed. The children packed a small box containing their belongings and every morning they looked out for the man in the suit but it seemed he never came and they wondered whether they had been misled. Without warning one day he arrived in a big shiny car and they drove away from the harbour into the wealthy suburbs to a large house that stood overlooking the city. They were shown big, clean rooms with fancy furniture

although nothing like the palace they had been to on that first day with Abba. Because of Mama's Trust they were now eligible for sponsorship to a foster home and were soon placed in one with about ten other children. It was a big change for Daniel and Maria and they found it hard to adapt. The other children were a rough lot but that did not worry Daniel and Maria. What did is the way they mocked them when Daniel and Maria told them about Abba and the world beyond. However, Daniel and Maria learnt fast for not only had they learnt on the streets how to fend for themselves but they had an advantage, they knew Abba. They also had learnt how to call upon the "Shining Ones" when they were in trouble.

The derision they received from some of the children taught Daniel and Maria to rely more and more on Abba. They knew the way into his world and how to come into his presence. They

learnt how to concentrate on Abba and the stairs into his room and then to enter through the golden curtains and silver veil into his presence. All they had to do was think upon him, or call his name when in trouble, or think about what they needed, to see the veil part and the way open. They learnt to see things other people could not see. When they needed help they thought of their Guardians and then they could see them, always close, sometimes standing or hovering overhead. They learnt to hear the voice of Abba calling them, encouraging them, giving them advice and sometimes correcting them but always in tender words of love even when in earnest. They loved his voice and often saw him through the veil but others were unable to do so even when Abba stood right in their presence.

They were also able to hear the sounds of Abba's garden all around them, the murmuring of the stream and the songs of the birds. Whenever they

saw a flower or stately tree they were reminded of that beautiful place. With practice the children found they could tune their ears to pick up other sounds, the sounds of people in distress, the sobbing of the bereaved, the lonely cries of despair of the suffering. As they learnt this skill they found they could understand and communicate better with others for they could see into their hearts and know what was troubling them. They could read their thoughts. Sometimes the things they saw and heard disturbed them deeply.

They found there were many deep pits of darkness into which people fell. Those who fell were held as if in quicksand in the grip of despair, fear and loneliness. They came to recognize the wrong doors that led from this present realm into the shadowy world of distortion and deformity, where grotesque shapes lurked, beings that were not living and yet were

empowered by death itself and which contorted in endless raging mists of foam, without substance, but able to cruelly lash all those who fell among them and to overwhelm and drown them with waves of fear, shame, and hopelessness. They found there were parallel worlds all around and some people lived more in those realms than in the present realm. They came to understand the long tunnels that led to bottomless pits of despair and warned those who were going into them. With Abba's help many turned away from these destructive paths.

Slowly the children in the home began to listen to what Daniel and Maria told them of Abba and the far off land that was also so very near. Most of the children had been traumatized in one way or another and they came from broken homes, had been abused or were just abandoned. Their hearts had been bruised and broken. Daniel and Maria had an overwhelming wish that all

might know Abba. When the others were cruel to them they constantly forgave them. Daniel and Maria won the trust of the children by their love and patience. One little child in particular was in a bad way for he and his twin were unwanted when born and thrown into a dustbin. When found only one was alive, the other was dead. The living one had been brought to the home as a premature baby and was nursed day and night. He was small of stature and had a spirit of sadness and abandonment. He was called Peter after the great Apostle, for everyone said he was a miracle. Maria cared for the little chap, now about five years of age, and spent many hours holding him and talking to him. Whenever she could she would take him with her into the presence of Abba but the little one was unable to see him. It seemed his eyes were blinded with the heaviness of pain.

One night this all changed when little Peter had

a terrible nightmare and awoke screaming and sobbing. Maria came to his side and lay quietly next to him as he shook with deep wrenches of sorrow and rejection. As she held him in her arms she began to glow with the presence of Abba. His light flowed right into her and through her into Peter. Maria knew that this was a special touch from Abba for she had seen this happen before, beginning on that first day in the cathedral. She held Peter even tighter and as she did the warm river of light became a flood that lifted them and swept them away from where they were. They travelled faster and faster and Peter stopped crying and began to hold tightly to Maria as he realized something strange was taking place. It seemed as though they were flying over a vast land of darkness that stretched far below them. They were going in the direction of a distant glow beyond the horizon. As they approached faster and faster they saw villages and settlements and clusters of light that grew

larger and brighter. As they burst over the horizon before them extended a city of light as far as they could see. They slowed and began to descend until they were flying over the homes almost at roof level. Then they paused above a house with warm lights glowing from within and gently descended to the front entrance. As their feet touched the patio floor the door opened and a kindly couple stood there as if anticipating their arrival. The lady lifted Peter out of Maria's hands while the man took Maria by her hand and led her inside.

The home was filled with warmth and love. Three children were seated inside, two on the couch and one on the carpet before a crackling fireplace. The two jumped up and ran excitedly to greet them. The one by the fire sat still with his back towards them. Then he turned ever so slowly and looked at them. He was the living image of Peter - his identical twin!

"Simon, look who has come to see you," said the man, with a broad smile, unable to contain his happiness.

The twins stood in disbelief and then rushed towards each other and embraced one another in a grip of joy. They held each other for a long while before finally letting go. During those moments a power of love poured into Peter and healed his broken heart. Something happened to Simon too as joy whelmed up deep within him and spilled over. There was enough to share with everyone.

Maria was perplexed.

"How did Peter's twin get here?" she asked.

The mother in the home knelt down before her and softly explained.

"Abba brought him to us when he found him," she said. "This is Abba's land of childhood," she continued, "All children who have lost their childhood in your world come here and we look after them until they are better and can take their full place in the kingdom. Simon will soon be able to do so now that he's seen Peter and with your help Peter too will grow and become whole."

Maria nodded knowingly. Suddenly it was if she was lifted and once more had a bird's eye view of all the land and could look into every place. There they were, millions of children who had been gathered by the loving arms of Abba. Rescued from abandonment, abortions and cruelty and though brutalized and rejected each had been placed into loving homes where they were nurtured and grew, until they became fully restored. For many of them their complete healing would only come on that day when,

reunited with someone in their families, they would be loved again. But for all of them, especially those who had no family, Abba had planned full adoption and total recovery. He would one day take them in his arms and heal them.

Next morning Maria awoke still holding little Peter who had slept soundly. Something had happened to him; contentment and security had replaced sorrow and insecurity.

Chapter 5 - The New Dimension

As Daniel and Maria grew older they were careful not to lose their ability to meet with Abba and to see through the veil. The older they got the more difficult it sometimes was for them. Their Guardians had warned them that this would be so unless they always remained children in their hearts. Many of the other children had now also seen Abba and some of them loved him as much as Daniel and Maria. Something was happening with them as if a generation was being prepared and trained for Abba's Kingdom. Many had learnt how to access Abba's presence. Sometimes they found they could do it by climbing the stairs, other times they crossed a bridge over a deep ravine, and yet other times they simply opened a door and were there. Maria simply had to close her eyes and soon she could see the misty veil and step right through. When they entered his presence they

began to shine just as they had that first day in the upper room when Abba first touched them. Abba taught them in different ways. Suddenly he was there, next thing, he was gone, as if he had vanished into thin air! Sometimes he came to them in the nights when they were alone in their bedrooms. At other times he met them in the garden or when they were walking on the road. It was often at the most unexpected times. This is how he came and went.

One day he came in the middle of school lessons. His cloud appeared at the window and then a shaft of light shot into the room and there he was standing in splendour in the midst of the beam. All the children were excited but teacher could not see him and told them to keep quiet and behave. But Abba walked up to teacher, put his hand on her head and blessed her and she was filled with tranquil peace even though she could not see him. Sometimes the Shining Ones also

appeared to the children and when they came they just stepped from the invisible world into the visible. Sometimes they took the children on tours to places of incredible beauty.

As the children grew in their relationship with Abba they became more and more able to move in his power. They even began to look more and more like Abba, not in physical features but in their inner being. They learnt to travel in an extraordinary manner, by just stepping from one place into another place, wherever it was they wished to be. Once they went to a far off foreign city and spoke with a group of children and told them about Abba. Another time they went deep into the jungles of a distant land and met with a lonely tribe who were in dispute with another tribe. They were able to speak with the children there and share with them everything about Abba's Kingdom. The children on both sides influenced the elders and war was averted.

Sometimes Daniel and Maria were absolutely invisible when they intervened for people who needed help in special ways so the people never even saw them! They did not know how they found the people but some kind of mysterious urging within them and uncanny knowledge led them to those in need.

Sometimes the children would be taken to the very "Gates of Darkness" where they beheld people trapped in dark despair. They called out to them and were able to reach inside and comfort them and tell them of Abba.

On one occasion they were led to the bedside of a man lying in a mental home, terribly ill, wasted and dying. He lay in abject misery, totally alone as his life ebbed away. As the children approached they became aware of the inner thoughts and heart cry of the man. Years before he had been overwhelmed by alcoholism which

had driven him from his home and destroyed his life. He was consumed with shame and sorrow, and the dreadful guilt of abandoning the family he loved most. He longed for forgiveness from his children whom he had last seen as infants long ago. Daniel and Maria felt deep compassion and in some strange manner were able to identify with him having come from such a past themselves. Even though they were unseen to him they were able to pour in forgiveness and understanding and in a mysterious way take the place of the man's own children. In an inexplicable manner their spirits' met with the spirit of the dying man and an exchange of confession and forgiveness took place and compassion flowed from the children. The heavy burden of guilt that choked the inner spirit of the man let go of him and he was set free. He smiled a smile of peace and reconciliation and moments later he slipped away and was gone.

One day the children witnessed a strange phenomenon.

On the instructions of their Shinning Guardians, they wandered down to visit Lazarus who sold his fresh produce on the side walk. He had a little box on the pavement on which were placed tomatoes, leeks, cabbages and potatoes. Sometimes he had little dishes of peanuts and other delicacies. He had many customers even though there was a plush grocery store nearby. He always had good prices and when some people bought from him they added a little extra to their payment. He was very special to the children for he knew and loved Abba and was a gentle, kindly man.

This morning things were not going well. An angry man stood over Lazarus, glowering down at him as bitter words flowed from his lips. He was the shop owner and now threatened to close

Lazarus down for he said Lazarus should stop taking his customers and move away.

The children sidled up unobtrusively without being observed and listened to the awful threats of the man. As they peered intently at him their eyes began to see into the world of darkness in his heart and they noticed a putrefied liquid of stench gushing from his mouth. At the same time a mark appeared upon his forehead. It came from under his skin, from deep within his veins and arteries, from somewhere so deep that it was a hidden dimension within the very spirit of the man. It pulsated in beat, not with his physical heart, but with the flow of thought energy and the intent of his spiritual heart, growing more intense as the man's thoughts focused on certain things and then fading as his thoughts changed.

As they watched him his face distorted and then the unthinkable happened. Suddenly the form of

another being, a dark being that had no face, the "Faceless One" took shape in the man's face, a hideous, deformed being, a creature from the darkness of the abyss. This face is so obnoxious and evil no words can describe it. The children shrank from the man in horror. They could hardly bear to look upon the devilish image. As the man continued to rave flecks of sulphur foam spluttered from his mouth. Thick, dark clouds formed above his head and dark rays of greed and hate shot from him and engulfed the immediate vicinity changing the scene into one of putrefied darkness.

Lazarus cringed in fear trying to shield from the onslaught of sulphur foam, covering his eyes from the fearful image. Then something else began to happen. A Being in Shining Light appeared directly behind Lazarus. The children could see him but Lazarus could not. This Being placed his hands on Lazarus's head and his

shining garments fell down and around him like a cloak. Lazarus reached up a hand and as he did so this cloak of light en-clothed him to his ankles and feet. Lazarus began to glow and shafts of pure light and loving energy radiated from him as he was empowered by the Shining Being. The children watched as the light began to dispel the darkness.

This had a calming effect on the cursing man. His raving diminished and the evil energy in him dissipated leaving him powerless. The foreboding clouds retreated. Suddenly the man swung around and fled from the light, his long shadow stretching out before him darker and darker, and longer and longer as he retreated.

Lazarus lifted his hands and quietly gave thanks to Abba and a name appeared on his forehead, a name the children could not read. A shaft of light bathed him all over and peace settled upon

him, a peace that spilled over from Abba's world.

The children were amazed. If it had not been for the Being of Light they may have been overwhelmed with a sense of horror. From that day forth the children found that they could see on the foreheads of some people a pulsating mark of raw, savage rebellion and upon others a glowing translucent seal of God's love.

Chapter 6 - The Universal Shift

As life went on Daniel and Maria became more aware of the conflict between the world of darkness and the world of light. They learnt to walk in Abba's world of light and to spread love to those who were in need. As they did so, more people came to know about Abba. It seemed that he had been quietly appearing to people, in their homes, as they walked down the street, or as they worked in the fields, and then in gatherings until there were reports of him appearing to five hundred people at one time. All kinds of people were seeing him and more and more people were getting to know him. Sometimes he came in different ways and reports of him differed as people from every walk of life encountered him. After they met with him they were changed and told others.

But not everyone wanted to know him for it

seemed he was a threat to those who followed their own selfish ways and had no love for others. Some people became infuriated at the mention of his name and discounted anything to do with him. They even persecuted those who talked of him. As stories about Abba became more widespread these people did everything possible to oppose him and bitterly attacked anyone who even mentioned his name. When reports of Abba's visitations were known these people rushed to the places where he had been in order to try to capture him. They were unable to do so, for he had always left, or was just in the next place, building or room, but never where they could get to him. These people then resorted to attacking those who had seen Abba or had been with him so that some people were afraid to speak of him for fear of reprisals. The people in some towns where he had appeared asked him to leave. They closed their doors to his followers and placed notices to say they were not welcome.

However, nothing could stop the increasing numbers of people who came to know about Abba and as the numbers grew many others wanted to see him and began to seek him. The religion, nationality or class of the people made no difference. It seemed anyone could meet with Abba, if they really wanted to. Only those people who really wanted to follow the ways of Abba could see him, others could not, even when in his very presence. Those people who saw him were changed. They began to love others with an overwhelming compassion. They also received a power and ability never known before. Many of them could travel from one place to another, they could become invisible if they wished; they could read the thoughts of others and they could not be harmed.

Over the years a great change took place so that many, many people grew to know and love Abba but those who rejected him formed themselves

into groups of darkness to oppose him and his kingdom. Some of them who were most evil were struck down by the "Shining Ones" and those who manifested the evil mark often perished in the midst of a strange invisible power. They simply began to wither. The people of darkness became more fearful of Abba and those with him for the light threatened their existence and shone into their darkness, so that they had no place to flee. There was nowhere to hide in the whole world.

And then one day when Daniel and Maria were no longer children they became aware that something very strange was beginning to happen. A stupendous shift within the dimensions of the universe itself had begun. It started slowly but after a while the whole creation seemed to pause and hover between two worlds. Then, ever so imperceptibly, everything began to rise, so gradually that it was not discernible at first.

However, Daniel and Maria noticed, as did others. They remembered what Abba had told them and knew it was starting to happen, the whole of creation was rising to meet the King.

It started with stillness, a deepening tranquillity that fell upon them and shut out all superficial noise so that they could clearly hear the sounds of Abba's realm of purity and power as it started to engulf the natural dimensions. They heard the heartbeat of creation all around them and everything began to stir. It was as if the trees were quietly murmuring in anticipation, the wind softly singing, the very air they breathed seemed to move in gentle melody. Wherever they turned they could hear the sounds of vibrant life. Looking up at night they heard the stars singing in joyful harmony, and they could hear other voices, the voices of massed choirs and vast orchestras in thousands of different languages with renderings of majestic praise whelming up

in collective swells like the roaring of a mighty ocean. This increased until it reached a crescendo. Then the chime of a single note broke through the praise and blending with the whole, lifted the combined symphony into a new level of harmony as if a conductor was raising the entire pitch of the universe. A distant trumpet sounded, followed by the sound of thunder and the roar of a mighty shift in the heavenly realms, like a tumultuous space-quake the whole universe moved from one frequency into another.

As it did something amazing took place. The visible dimensions all around them synchronized with the invisible world of Abba and all not compatible with the new frequency ceased to exist! At that very moment all the lurking things of darkness fled, evil disintegrated and all shadows dispersed. Nothing of the world of darkness remained. The hordes of screaming shadows fled in fear, and dissolved in mists

which then dissipated and were nowhere to be found. The screams of pain, unbelief, bitterness and depravity that came from the world of shadows faded into oblivion as if the beings that gave vent to them were falling into deep bottomless pits.

The whole of creation awoke in resurrection. The leaves and trees began to move in unison, swirling and clapping their branches and swaying in rhythmic rhapsody. The earth itself came alive, the hills appeared to leap, rocks began to cry out and trees began to sing. Seraphic voices of excitement softly sounded all around them to rise and ebb in swells of liquid joy, like a vast ocean. The whole creation became a mighty orchestra, the galaxies swirled with rejoicing and the entire vault of space shone with a heavenly radiance that made the universe pulsate in the power of living light.

A hush fell as Shining Guardians appeared. Taking Daniel and Maria by their hands they led them through a crystal veil into Abba's dimension. They found themselves ushered into a vast banquet hall.

An extended table stretched as far as they could see. The table was laden with great quantities of fruit, breads of all kinds, vast goblets of grape juice and many other luxuries. Seated around it were countless numbers of people, many whom Daniel and Maria had never met and yet they knew well. It reminded them of when Abba had shown them that huge throng of people who were their family. Each person wore a remarkable radiant, living gown of pure white light, each unique and each emitting strong qualities of the character of the person: purity, patience, self-sacrifice and so on. They were shown to their seats by Shining Beings. Each place had a reserved tag with a name displayed

on it. Daniel and Maria were led to theirs and read the names; "Daniel the Lion Heart" and "Maria the Tender Heart". As they were about to sit a beautiful woman approached. She was the embodiment of motherly love and looked resplendent with a luminous gown of soft compassion falling around her as she effortlessly glided towards them with her arms outstretched. They were drawn magnetically to her and became enfolded within her bosom, enwrapped in the folds of her love and united with her, their mother. Expressions of gratitude and unspeakable joy were exchanged without words. Soon they became aware of a man behind her waiting to greet them and were struck with wonder as they saw the same man they had gone to when in death - their own dear father, restored in dignity and love. He reached out and with the strength of ten men lifted them up, one in each arm and hugged them. Tears streamed down his glowing face and flowed into

fountains of joy.

Similar scenes were taking place all around them. People were shedding tears of relief, ecstasy and deep delight. Tears flowed from countless others and mingled to join in streams of torrents from yet more, all gathering into a massive river of liquid joy that ran unhindered among the huge gathering. It flowed from a glorious throne set at the head of the table. All those who were touched by the river were healed. More joyful reunions took place as Mighty Beings swept into the gathering bearing dear ones in their arms. Joy was uncontrollable. It saturated everyone.

They saw Serenity. She was clothed in a robe of pure light. She sprang up and embraced them in her arms. Then over the crowd rang a most beautiful voice lifted in song. They turned to see Melody and she waved her hand with a smile across her glowing face. Lazarus was there too.

After a time of much rejoicing the people slowly found their seats, a vast number, sitting with anticipation, waiting for the next marvel to unfold. A silence settled on them that permeated everything, a silence so still it carried a depth of expectations unlike anything imaginable. This was the moment the whole of creation had waited for, had suffered for, had dreamt of for many long ages and had hoped for against all odds.

Then from a far off distance, as if coming out of eternity itself and breaking through countless dimensions, came the sound of a distant glory, approaching like a rumbling tornado of love, a mighty torrent gathering momentum. A vast cloud appeared, with a roaring, thunderous power enfolded within it, swirling and twirling, leaping and pulsating, dancing, with extended flashes of lightning, and radiating hues of colours unknown on earth. As it came nearer

beams of light flashed from it and Majestic Beings materialized within the beams and took up positions of grandeur as if forming a royal bodyguard. As the cloud encompassed the huge throng of people it settled upon them in infinite power and became totally calm, like the eye of a massive cosmic storm, absolutely still.

Then from within the cloud there appeared a misty figure, the form of a man, dressed in a brilliant coat of different colours representing all the nations of earth. The whole company sat in speechless silence and gazed intently through the haze. Suddenly, in slow motion, an immense golden curtain fell back to reveal a figure kept hidden from the dawn of time, never seen before.

"The Ancient of Days" stood, disclosed in splendour.

Abba, for it was he, stepped from the cloud and

stood with his arms extended and with rays of light and love exuding from his hands and feet. Around him pulsed the entire universe, a heavenly radiance extended from him to the furthest reaches of eternity, his hair shone with the light of a million suns and at his feet the earth stretched out like a footstool.

He began to laugh, deep, vibrant laughter that began in the unfathomable depths of his being and rose in peels of thunderous mirth, exploding like great bolts of joy, gaining strength, gathering the people until the place began to vibrate with the sounds of rapture.

His laughter was contagious. It unlocked something deep within each person so that they too began to laugh in pure, unreserved, unbridled joy. And as the laughter increased so the tears of joy flowed again upon the cheeks of people washing away the last remnants of pain,

suffering, sadness and disappointment. The laughter grew stronger and rose as one by one each person was liberated from their world of shadows and joined in the ravishment of Abba's delight.

Great surges of rapturous joy rose in waves of energy that reverberated through the galaxies of heaven in thunderous applause. Peals of laughter filled creation as Abba embraced the multitude and became absorbed in them and them in him. Wrapping his mighty robes around the gathering Abba swept them into his own being.

Everything came together, complete in harmony.

Chapter 7 – The Kingdom

“I am going to make all things new” proclaimed Abba.

He was seated on an immense throne surrounded by tens upon tens of thousands of millions of his subjects. The majestic Guardians of Light hovered in the balconies above him and at his feet were groups of every creature that had ever existed whether they were animals, birds or those that lived in the seas. Before him were a multitude of people from every nation and generation on earth. These were all those who had found him or actually had been found by him. Behind him and around him and above him was an awesome aura of Power and Glory in the form of an infinite Person of Splendour and Love, totally at one with Abba, as if in Abba and Abba in Him, the Everlasting Father.

Every eye was fixed upon him, every ear strained to hear his every word. He held the full attention of every living creature. Once again he spoke, to the people who had come to trust and love him, those who were his children, members of his own family who looked to him as their King and Lord.

“I am going to make all things new” thundered Abba.

“And you are going to help me” he declared, looking intently at every single person as if speaking simultaneously into each heart at the same time.

He paused to assess their reaction and to assimilate the thoughts of every person as each pondered his words.

“What can I do?” thought one. Another thought,

“How can I help?” “I will do anything he asks,” responded yet another. All of them were eager.

“Yes,” he said, “you all have talents and gifts and skills that I am going to use to build my new creation, a kingdom that will continue to grow and increase without end for ever and ever.”

“You have all learnt lessons on earth when you faced adversity, pain, suffering and many difficult times. Now you are going to put what you have learnt to good use. I will need all your knowledge and wisdom to make my new kingdom. You will govern for me and make decisions with me. I will honour you and give you great responsibility and you will do great things. Nothing will be impossible for you to achieve.”

“First of all we will restore this beautiful planet to what it was before the darkness fell. The

whole world will be filled with peace and there will be no more hatred and violence. Then the earth will bring forth its fruit, it will blossom and produce harvests of food in abundance as it was made to do. All the animals will be at peace and the lion will live with the sheep.”

At that, a majestic regal lion stood up, stretched with a mighty yawn, strolled over to some timid lambs and lay down among them. A young kid snuggled up between its massive paws and fell asleep secure in the knowledge it was safe.

Abba continued, “There are lots of children from the dark time before, who were abandoned. They need healing and lots and lots of love. They need teaching so that they can understand my ways and be restored. Who will take care of them?” he asked.

Maria leapt to her feet and shouted “Yes, yes, I

will” she cried out without inhibition. A resounding applause rumbled through the throng as many others also jumped up and joined her. Some people who were older and looked wise, kind and gracious also came forward as mothers and fathers.

Abba was well pleased and his approval was evident for all to see. “Yes, they will need brothers and sisters and mothers and fathers to care for them” he said and with a wave of his hand a host of Angelic Beings lifted the volunteers away to gather the lost generations of children and begin the great task of healing.

“What of all those broken lives ravaged by famine and drugs and slavery and despair, who will sacrifice themselves to see these people restored and renewed in my name?” he asked. Thousands stepped forward with devoted appeals to be used in this great task. “Send me”

said one. "I will go" said another. "I will give my all" said yet another. Daniel sprang to his feet and stood as tall and as straight as a warrior. "I will obey your command" he said with a strong voice that all could hear.

Abba burst into thunderous clapping.

Multitudes responded and moved off to find those who had never heard about Abba and had no opportunity to love him, people who had been abused all their lives, who had suffered in horrendous ways from wars and disease and cruel acts of violence.

"Search them out" cried Abba, "don't miss a single one. The gates of darkness will not hold them captive. Let all who wish come to my kingdom and be healed."

And so the great task began, a task that would

need the dedication of all Abba's chosen followers to make all things new. It continues even now, behind the curtains of this present dispensation, in the great corridors of the vast invisible realms that few from this world have ever dreamt of or seen. If it takes a thousand years his kingdom will be established in power and glory.

Abba still searches for those who will respond to him, who will open their hearts to believe and learn to obey his ways. You too can know him if you have not yet met him. He is still walking our streets and visiting our homes. You can reach out and find him in your own life and he will come to you, through the shadows and darkness and all the doubts and trials, Abba is there with you. All you have to do is talk to Him and he will hear you.

You do not have to wait for some future time,

you can know him now.

He is called by many names. Some call him the "Good Shepherd" because he is as tender as a shepherd for a wounded sheep or lost lamb. Some call him "Servant" because he came to help all those who are weak and poor. Another name he is called is "Master" because he is Master of heaven and earth. He is the "Bread of Life", "The Lamb of God", the "Lion", the "Light", the "King", the "Word", the "Holy One, the "SAVIOUR".

You can learn more about Abba.

Dearly Beloved, There is a wonderful book that tells you about Abba and in which you can discover more about his Eternal Kingdom. It is called the Bible and here are some chapters and verses that you can read that tell about his love for you and his Kingdom.

Abba means Father. Some of His other names are: Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace; Isaiah 9:6. The Word, The Lamb, The Good Shepherd, The Ancient of Days, Seated on the Throne of Heaven: Daniel 7:13,14, 22.

Joseph had a coat of many colours: Gen 37:3.

Abba's friend Daniel: Daniel 6:3-23

The Stairway to Heaven: Gen28:12, John 1:51.

The Ram caught in the thorns tree: Gen 22:13.

The Highway: Isaiah 35:8.

He appeared to people in the OT: Genesis 18:1 he appeared to Abraham.

He appeared to people in the NT: Luke 24:15, John 20:14, 1 Corinthians 15:3-8.

He will come in a Cloud: Luke 21:27; Matthew 17:1-5; Revelation 1:7, 14:14.

Little Children enter His Kingdom: Matthew 18:1-5.

Guardian Angels: Matthew 18:10.

He healed many people: Matthew 4:23, 9:35.

God's seal in our Forehead: Revelation 9:4,

Ephesians 1:13, Revelation 22:4. Given New Names: Revelation 2:17.

*The Narrow and Broad roads: Matt7:13,14
Travel through the dimensions: Acts 8:39,
2Corinthians 12:2-4.*

Abba's Mansions: John 14:2.

The Gates of Darkness: Matthew 16:18,

*A Feast in Heaven: Revelation 19:9, Luke
14:16.*

*Millions before the Throne of Heaven:
Revelation 5:6-14, 7:9-17*

*The River of Life and the Trees for Healing:
Revelation 2:7, 22:1-4, 14.*

Every tear wiped away: Revelation 21:4.

*New Heavens and Earth: Revelation:
Revelation 21:1,5.*

*Abba, God's King of Love: 1 John 4:7-17, John
3:16, Matthew 27:37, Revelation 19:16.*

He is one with God: 1 John 5:1, John 17:21,22.

