

## “The Wishbringer”

### Chapter One

One day when the world was newly wrought, the clouds laughed at the sea. The echoes of their laughter rolled across the sky with little effort until, at last, they touched the foam. The clouds boasted of their freedom and challenged the waves to a race to the edges of the Earth.

*Fa la la—waves below,  
Oh ha ha—ever slow.  
La de da—follow me,  
Oh ha ha—o’er the sea.*

As the clouds found the afternoon, rumours of their laughter reached into the ocean’s great depths. Through the shrouding blue, the sleeping ears of Neptune were tickled with ripples of jest.

“Who mocks me?” spouted the Seaking as he woke from his watery dreams. His fury grew and grew until all the Seven Seas boiled with his wrath. With a mighty shout, he called for his chariot of shell and flew towards the surface.

“Look who we awoke!” giggled several of the clouds as Neptune broke through the surf. And the warm winds pushed them a little bit further away. “Race us to the world’s edge, you silly waves,” tormented the windtorn wisps.

Naturally, this made Neptune very furious. His cheeks became red with fire as he frantically gestured his golden trident at the sky. But even so, he knew that the waves would never catch the clouds.

The afternoon winds soon propelled the last of the jeering puffs towards the horizon. With the clouds and their torment finally gone, the Seaking’s anger began to wane. Giving a long blow on his shell horn, he summoned three seasprites who immediately appeared riding on the crests of the restless currents. They began to play on their foam flutes. As they wound their way through all the gaysongs they could recall, the party slowly drifted towards a beach of sparkling sand. In the brightness of the sun, the sprites sang to the gulls that had come to greet them.

*Seabirds above  
Have the wind  
As their domain.*

*Lovespread wings  
Cover the currents  
Quick and sure.*

*While crashing waves  
And reaching seafingers  
Yearn to fly.*

While the merry-makers continued with their childish lyrics, Neptune began to desire a partner so that he might have someone with whom he could dance. He slowly gathered some of the sprites’ melodies and some of the white foam from the water and began to mold them together. As the creation took form, he blew his breath into it. When he was finished, a woman sprang forth from the waves.

She was as beautiful as the blues of the ocean and her golden hair was as radiant as the sun. The music that had created her instantly delighted her. She began to dance with the Seaking. Soon, all his anger left him and he joined the song.

*Like the sun  
That warms our time,  
My love reaches  
Arranging to rhyme.*

*Like the sand  
That touches the sea,  
Your golden hair  
Sparkles 'round me.*

*Like the sea  
That foams at each crest,  
My wandering heart  
Finds you o'er the rest.*

And so they sang and danced for as long as the sun shone above. When dusk finally settled over the Seaking's party, the restless seasprites swam off in search of moonbeams. Neptune bid the woman a good night and left her on the beach with a song of sleep.

## Chapter Two

Long lay the world in the darkness of night until a gentle light broke the stillness. The blackness turned to a deep sapphire as the omega star yielded silently to a genesis sun. And with its stretching arms, the yawning sun called to the dawnbirds and awakened the morning wind.

Watching this bluewaking moment by the seashore stood a centaur, waiting while the sun had dried itself from its night-long dip. Nearby, on the glistening sands, the yellow morningcrabs were ditting with dabs of the sparkling grain while windspray and white wavebirds were carving out figures above the windbent reeds.

As the centaur watched the sun ignite the sand’s gold, he noticed the woman sleeping form on the beach.

“What have we here?” he mumbled to himself. “I have never seen a creature such as this.”

Following the sound of his soul, he walked towards the source of his desire. As he approached, she awoke to the delight of the wavebirds and the morningcrabs.

“Good morning.”

Squinting at the sun’s reflection off the water, she turned towards the form beside her and met his brown eyes.

His curiosity could not be contained any longer. “Excuse me, but I have never seen one such as you. What do you call yourself?” he inquired.

“I—I do not know.”

“Where do you come from?”

“I am sorry, but I am afraid that I cannot answer that question, either. All I remember are dreams of song and foam and of dancing on the waves.”

“Well,” said the perplexed centaur, “we cannot let such beauty go without a name. Hmm—let me see. I shall call you Arianna—Gift of the Sea.”

“What is it that you call yourself?” asked Arianna.

“Farthorn.”

“And from where do you come?”

“Like you, I am unsure from where it is I come. I awoke one morning in a field remembering only dreams of melody and wandering. Since that morning, I have walked through many pastures and over many hills until this morning—when I first saw this place where land and water meet.”

“Farthorn—would you mind if I wandered with you?”

“Come, Arianna. Take my hand. Together, we shall walk.”

### Chapter Three

And together they did walk. Farthorn played many gaysongs on his wooden flute and told Arianna stories that made her laugh. And when he would tire of playing, Arianna would sing songs about sunbeams and wavebirds. As they played and sang, they walked along the beach until they had gone a great distance. It was then that Arianna touched the centaur’s arm.

“Do you hear that melody?” she asked.

“No, I do not,” Farthorn replied, being somewhat puzzled.

Arianna ran on ahead to what appeared to be a break in the sands. She found a little stream that weaved its way across the beach and emptied itself into the surf.

“There!” she pointed upstream, away from the beach. “It is coming from behind those rocks.” She turned and ran, following the stream to a place where it gently fell over giant gray stones. Within a second, she discovered the source of the song. Sitting amongst the rocks in a patch of warm evening sunlight was a curious little creature who evidently was not aware of Arianna’s presence—at least not until Farthorn clamoured up. The creature was a wood nymph.

The nymph’s small green eyes meet the blank stares of Arianna and Farthorn. Without hesitation the nymph was up on his feet and running across the field from which the stream came.

Neither Arianna nor Farthorn had seen the likes of a wood nymph before. They called out and pleaded for it to return, assuring peaceful intentions. But the little nymph was quickly disappearing into the woods on the far side of the meadow.

The two travelers started up the path that the nymph had taken, following him as best they could. Through woods, across meadows, and over babbling brooks they scampered, catching brief glimpses of the nymph as he paused to check on the progress of the setting sun. Finally, the nymph stopped at the edge of a field filled with giant mushrooms. Stepping silently, he headed towards the tallest of them and vanished behind it. Farthorn and Arianna followed him into the gathering darkness, around the curve, into an oval entrance at the base of the large trunk, and up a set of spiralling stairs.

Once they reached the top step of the mushroom spire, they realized they were in a compact dome-shaped room. As soon as their eyes adapted to the diminishing light, they saw the nymph standing on a little balcony, his light green hair blowing in the evening breeze. They watched as the nymph pointed straight at the spot where the sun had sunk below the horizon before waving a goodbye or two.

He came back inside the room and quickly reached over towards the fireplace to take a large silver teapot from the flames and placed it on a nearby table.

“Would you like some tea?” he asked politely.

Farthorn and Arianna stared at the nymph and then each other.

“Oh—do excuse me. My name is Bim. Bim Brightenburr. What might be your names?” he said, remembering his manners. Farthorn spoke up.

“I am Farthorn and this is Arianna, Gift of the Sea. We heard your melody coming from the place where the water falls from the fields and empties into the sea. We did not mean to startle you—but we did wish to speak with you. That is why we followed you. We mean you no harm.”

Bim laughed a short high-pitched snort and took three tea cups from the cupboard. He began to fill them with the sweet-smelling honeytea.

“Oh—do excuse me, again,” apologized Bim a second time. “I often forget my manners. I didn’t mean to run off with such haste, but my teapot was boiling over and I had to wave farewell to the day’s light as I do every evening. Come, please sit with me and we shall talk. Tell me of your wanderings.”

Bim led them to sit at his kitchen table. Once they were settled, Bim listened with great curiosity as Arianna told of her dreams and of her first awakening. Farthorn then recounted his dreams and his journey to the sea. When the two accounts were more or less finished, Bim spoke again.

“And where might you be going now?”

There was no immediate response. The centaur looked at Arianna blankly. Neither of them had ever thought of where they might be going. Until then, it had not seemed to matter. But Bim’s question had uncovered a feeling of uncertainty.

“We are not sure,” said Farthorn finally. “When we were wandering along the beach, a destination did not seem important. How do you suggest we find a place to go?”

“Oh, dear me,” said Bim with a very troubled look on his little face. “This is quite unheard of—folks who do not know where they are going. Alas—it is not a wood nymph’s

lot to give advice, mind you—it is a dangerous thing to do.” He thought a moment.

“Perhaps you should ask The Wishbringer for some direction.”

“And who is this ‘Wishbringer’?” inquired Arianna who had been sitting quietly by the dying fire.

“Oh, my,” puzzled Bim again. “Folks who have not heard of the all mighty Wishbringer.” He paused and looked up at the awakening stars through the darkened window. “The Wishbringer cares for all the creatures and all the fields and all the streams. He put the sun and the moon in the sky—and the stars are His children. He knows everything about what was, what is, and what will be. He can tell you where you are going,” said Bim with a satisfied certainty.

“How do we find him?” questioned Farthorn.

“Tomorrow, at the break of dawn, I will lead you to His Garden in the center of the Great Misty Lake and you can ask Him for what you need.” Bim yawned. “Come, it is long past bedtime. I will show you to your bedrooms.”

## Chapter Four

To the east there came a gentle light. A soft breeze touched the silent leaves that hung from their sleeping branches. The rustle and the amber morning light mixed with the dreams of Arianna and Farthorn as Bim awoke. Without the slightest noise, the nymph followed the winding steeps down to his front door. Taking a short path through the woods, he found his way uphill where he met several maids of flower. Together they sang the Morningright, greeting the newday sun.

*Ask the night sky  
For the morning sun  
And await the coming of dawn.*

*Ask the new day  
What it has done  
By keeping silent for so long.*

Within minutes, Bim was skipping back down the path towards his mushroom house whistling a melody to match the blue sky. So delightful was the song that it found its way into the deep slumbers of Farthorn and Arianna and yanked at them both until they opened their eyes.

“Good morning, you two! Come and get up!” prodded Bim as he poked his sleepy guests. “Do not waste the beautiful day. We have a journey to make!”

After a hasty breakfast of honey and bread, Bim led the two down the stairway and out unto the grass lane. As they walked through woods and across meadows, Farthorn’s curiosity began to brew. He wondered about the Wishbringer and who he really was.

Finally, he called to Bim who was up ahead dancing with the sunflowers and the morning glories.

“Again, little one, who is this Wishbringer?”

“He is all that is. He made the entire world with all its creatures. He cares for everything and fashions each new day. And it is said that He grants to those in need one wish. Beyond that, I cannot say anymore.” Bim paused for minute to catch his breath then said, “Come—we still have quite a ways to go.”

But Bim’s response did little to satisfy Farthorn’s inquisitiveness. In fact, they served only to give rise to more questions. A wish, Bim had said.

Farthorn looked around him. The sky was brilliant blue, the streams were glittering in the sun, and the flowers filled the fields. The birds sang sweet songs and the wind set the grasses and the leaves free from their silence. What, if given a chance, could he possibly wish for?

Farthorn was not the only one alone with their thoughts of bewilderment. Bim’s words had also entered Arianna’s heart and set it aflame. She, too, wondered what she might desire if given such a wish. The beauty of the world was great, indeed, but there did seem to be something deep within that yearned for a wish. She could not place it, so she turned her attention to the noon sun and Bim’s lazy melody.

And so the day passed as the three travelers found their way along paths that twisted and turned over the land. Before they realized the time, the sun was setting in the west, taking with it all of the color from the treetops and leaving Arianna, Farthorn, and Bim with only the sound of their hearts and the twinkling of the silver stars above.

## Chapter Five

The dreams of Farthorn were tangled with shadows of dimly masked uncertainty. Many strangers walked through his sleep, speaking of things never before considered. Questions burned like fire and with each passing scene, kindling was added, stoking the growing flames.

Just when the blaze of Farthorn’s inner being could have leaped from his dreams, they unexpectedly subsided and disappeared altogether. There came a sense of peace he had never known. He seemed to be sitting up, although he was indeed lying in the soft grasses.

And then the wind started to blow, its voice bearing a strange song.

*Milleur, the dawn  
has not yet come,  
the chill is still here.*

*Visions, the faces  
of those I know not,  
their faith always here.*

*Omega, says he  
who brings the answer  
with time, Wishbringer.*

*Centaur, why now  
this early morning reverie  
and its end, now.*

Farthorn fell back into a dreamless sleep as the song ended and the night sky’s reign over the earth waned.

## Chapter Six

The wakening sun found Farthorn and Arianna in a deep slumber. They did not stir until the morningbirds that Bim had sent called to them.

“Where is Bim?” asked Arianna after a yawn.

“He has gone on ahead of you, you sleepyheads!” The unfamiliar voice had come from behind them, seemingly from the trees. They both turned around to find a large whitebird perched on a branch and watching them.

“What did you say?” said a puzzled Farthorn.

“Follow.” And with that, the majestic bird rose into the air with the morning breezes and flew off to the east.

Farthorn and Arianna got up immediately and continued along the same path that had guided them the day before. The way soon lead them to a clearing. There they saw a most unusual sight.

Before them was a mountain. They had not seen it from the distance, although they surely should have. There were no trees on its rocky slopes and it did not seem to have a peak or summit.

Yet the path did not waver. It lead straight up along one side, around several boulders, and sometimes under ledges or through narrow walls. Always up, it lead. And Farthorn and Arianna followed it, resting now and again, never being able to tell how far they had come or how much farther they had to go.

After a time, a leveling off answered the cries of their tired feet. The path followed the base of a ledge until it suddenly turned in to the rock wall, revealing a short tunnel. They accepted the entrance’s invitation and within a minute, they reached the other end and were treated to a most incredible view.

Stretching out from the sheet rock face below them was a sea of shifting mists. On both sides of them, they saw that the rim of the mountain extend out circling out to eventually meet on the far side of the mist, forming a large crater.

Out in the middle of this sea of mist—rising out of the grayness—stood a plateau of sorts. Most of its surface was covered with a crystal blue lake that had no apparent source, yet water fell from most of the plateau’s edge. In the center of the lake, there was a small island covered with many trees and flowers.

As they cautiously continued on the path down the inner wall of the mountain, the way curved out toward the island. A bridge of naturally fashioned stone led away from the rock face of the mountain. It was supported every so often by a stone pinnacle that reached up through the mist.

After hesitating a moment, they started across the bridge—being very careful with each step. It was difficult to pay attention to their path with such unusual sights around them. They arrived at the bridge’s far end—at the edge of the plateau—without mishap and continued on the path for a short distance. It ended abruptly at what appeared to be a small wooden pier. Tied to one of the moorings was a boat—and there, standing and watching them, was one Bim Brightenburr.

Farthorn and Arianna ran along the rest of the path to greet their new friend. Bim welcomed them with a sigh of relief.

“I have been waiting! I left early this morning to come and announce your arrival,” said Bim. “I am so glad to see that you are finally here! Come—you are expected.”

## Chapter Seven

As the small boat with its three passengers moved away from the pier, they could hear the beginnings of a soft chant. Bim needed no oar or paddle to steer the vessel as it was guided by a gentle breeze. None of them spoke.

After several long minutes of drifting, they drew near to the island. The music grew louder as many other voices and melodies joined the song. The wind slowly pushed the boat until it came to rest at a dock fashioned much the same the one they had left at the plateau’s edge.

One by one they got back to their feet and stepped ashore. Bim immediately pointed to a narrow trail that led through the many trees and bushes. They made their way to the center of the island—feeling as though something was drawing them—or perhaps someone was softly calling them. They became lost in their amazement at all they saw and heard.

They came to a small gate made of coarsely cut stone. They paused briefly to catch their breath and then entered the garden. What they found overwhelmed them. Even Bim—who had been in the garden many times before—still seemed to be dazed.

All the colours of the rainbow shone from every leaf on every flower and tree. The grass was greener than any field that any of them could recall. And the birds sang sweet songs that rivaled any ever sung.

In a little clearing, there was a man dressed in white and sitting on a simply constructed bench. His hair was grey. Arianna and Farthorn noticed that he had a grey

beard, as well. His knowing eyes seemed to call to them. They walked towards the peaceful figure with uncertainty in each step.

“Greetings Farthorn, the Hunter. Greetings Arianna, Gift of the Sea,” welcomed the peaceful figure. “And, oh yes—Greetings Bim Brightenburr, Lover of the Sun.”

“I am He who watches over the Realm of Creation. I am the Pillar of that which is. I helped to forge the world and fashion all of the creatures of Heaven and Earth, of field and stream. I helped put the sun and the moon amongst the stars. I know what has been, all that is, and all that will be.

“Come and sit. I have gifts for each of you—gifts that I made especially for each of you. For even as I assisted in your creation, I left you without purpose and understanding. These are needed if you are to find the answers that you seek.

“To all three of you, I give a soul. Just as the waters that surround us will spring from some unknown source and fall from the edge of this lake for all eternity, your spirits will shine from Creation’s Center and continue long past your days on this Earth. When you leave this place, your course will become clear and your purpose will revealed to you.

“Now, to Farthorn who has desired a form such as I have given to Arianna, I give a body not unlike mine in appearance. With it, you can share the feelings of joy and pain that accompany it.”

In an instant, Farthorn stood on the legs of a man rather than on the four legs of a centaur. His hide faded and his tail was gone. His heart felt the peace like that which had entered his dreams. He looked at Arianna and reached out to hold her hand.

“Arianna, Gift of the Sea and mother of those to come, I give to you the gift of being able to bring forth new life into the world and to care for it until such time as it can care for itself.”

The Wishbringer rose from the bench and lifted his right hand toward Arianna. He touched her softly on the forehead.

“So it is done.”

Next, He knelt on one knee and spoke to Bim.

“Now, to little Bim, I will give you a special place in the sky next to the sun so that you may never lose sight of the dayfire. When your days in the woods draw to an end, I will return to show you to your place of honour. And those who are yet unborn will marvel at your speed and brilliance.”

## Chapter Eight

Farthorn and Arianna awoke beneath the limbs of an old tree that stretched out its limbs to partially block the first brilliant rays of the morning sun. They saw each other as if for the first time. They both felt a love for one another—a love borne of some deep and hidden memory and dreams of some past life that could not be recalled. As they stood up, Farthorn offered his hand to Arianna and she took it.

“Farthorn,” she whispered.

“Arianna,” he replied. They slowly turned their heads to look out from the hilltop to see fields of green and trees filled with fruit and singing birds. Just above the horizon shone a white point of light that seemed to beckon to them. A cool wind blew at the white clouds as Farthorn and Arianna walked down the path towards the glistening waves of the sea.

