

“The Last Sparkle”

By Christine Sauer

Prologue

“The intense longing to go beyond our circumstances is in all of us. That’s why we love to gaze at the starry night sky and dream of what could be.

But not all of us are born into circumstances that make life easy, and life happenings often throw off our paths.

The #Sparklesisters are based on the (somewhat fictional) journey of Harried Harriette to a better life. Her quest to rise up from sadness and despair to living her best life, recovering the sparkle in her eyes and getting the spring in her step back.

She rises from an abusive childhood and marriage and walks through the 7 steps we all must go through to become – “Sparkling Suzie!”

You can help yourself and others to sparkle by being a member of our free #Sparkles community. We are like-minded women and caring men at different stages of our journeys through life.”

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Harriette sits back in her rocking chair, where she is holding her 12-year-granddaughter on her lap.

It's evening, and Hilda is already wearing her pajamas.

Hilda loves Harriette's stories, and she sure can tell many of them...

"Tell me about your childhood" Hilda begs her,

"You know, Hilda", she says to the girl, "When I was your age, I was very unhappy."

"My brother Henry and I were twins, and my mother was a woman who was devoted to my father, your great-grandfather."

"He was a hard man, and as it was common in these times, he liked boys better than girls. Women were second-hand people. Can you imagine that, Hilda, dear?"

"Really, nana?" said Hilda quizzingly "that sounds so unfair!"

"And it was, dear. I am glad the world has changed for women but let me continue."

"Although I am exactly 1 minute older than Henry, your great-uncle, he always was the preferred child, and I only learned that I was really a bit older than him after many years, and after my mother swore me to eternal secrecy..."

"She knew, if my father had found out that that she had told me, he would have been very upset and might even have beaten her again, like he often did."

"Really, nana?" asked Hilda softly, hugging her

"Yes, as I said, great-grandpa was a hard man."

"We all were afraid of him. Even my brother Henry was afraid of him. "

"Your great grandpa didn't care. If someone went against him, he lashed out. With words, or with a smack across the face."

“So, grandma” said Hilda, “how did that influence your future life? Didn’t you always tell me that it’s not the circumstances that shape a life, but how we deal with it?”

“Yes, that is so” said Harriette softly, “but you know, when you’re still a child, it is really hard or even impossible to understand that. It sure was for me”

“I grew up angry, feeling very lonely and sad. That’s why I got married early, and I picked a man just like my father, and just as hard.”

“Oh no” Hilda said, “that must have been awful!”

“It sure was at times” said Harriette,

“But you know, life is not easy. You will see that yourself when you grow up. You will face challenges like I did, and I hope that my stories and what I am teaching you will help you to learn to deal better with it when it comes”

“But nana, I don’t want hard times. Can’t life be wonderful every day?”

“I understand, Hilda, dear” the old woman chuckled,

“But think about it this way: The Universe sends us into this life to learn. When we are born and even during our lifetime, we often don’t realize or know what it is we must learn.”

“It may be to be more gentle, more loving, to help others, to be more persistent, to push through hurdles and climb out of the holes life may throw us into.”

“Nana, that sounds really awful”

“It can be at times, dear, but let me tell you this: As I am getting older, I am more and more grateful for all the people that I met on my journey

through life. The good people – and even those who I considered bad at the time because they hurt me.”

“Hurt you? That’s awful!”

“Yes, Hilda, it sure felt that way at the time. But later I recognized that everyone could help you understand the world better and be a lesson to learn from – even if it is to serve as an example to show you how you don’t want to live your life.”

“Wow, nana, I never thought about it this way,” said Hilda and snuggled closer to her grandmother.

“It is true. And in life, you will meet many kind people, caring people that can serve as a guide. Often these are people that walked your walk before you, climbed the same mountain that you think is unsurmountable, and know a better way to the top.

These guides in real life are role models to follow, guides, teachers, mentors, lighting up the road for others out of the darkness”

“The light at the end of the tunnel!” exclaimed Hilda.

“Yes, dear, I told you the story often, how I myself was in a very dark place, so dark that I didn’t want to live anymore, but there was a small inner voice in me that told me that this was not the right thing to do, that there would be a light at the end of the tunnel, even if I couldn’t see it at the time”

“And as guide after guide came into my life, people who cared, whether professionals or friends, the light at the end of the tunnel slowly became brighter, easier to see, until it seemed to magnetically attract me, and I just had to go there.”

“Nana, did you ever actually get there?”

“I did, my darling. The light got brighter and brighter until it infected me and I, too, started to shine, to sparkle.”

“But, nana, how did you get to the light? The road must have been so long, and - wasn’t it very dark?”

“Yes, dear, at times it sure wasn’t easy. There were many steps I had to take. One after the other. One of my guides, I called her Luna, guided me along the 7 steps that led me to my light.”

“Oh, Nana, the 7 steps? What were they?” Hilda asked.

“Well, imagine it like a quest, a series of voyages you have to complete on your journey before you arrive at your final destination.”

“You start at the beginning, you look back at where you started, then you have a good, honest look at yourself. “

“Wow, sounds scary” Hilda interrupted

“It sure was, very much so. And I didn’t like at all what Luna showed me.”

“But I needed to see my own image in the mirror of another person. And it was Luna’s love and care that got me through this part, which I still consider the hardest part. And it got easier from there.”

“Easier?” Hilda quizzed.

“Yes, you know, it’s like when you learn to run a marathon. The training for the first mile is the hardest, especially when you start from doing nothing all day. It’s the same with the marathon of life.”

“Okay, nana, I get that you got started, but how did you know where to go?”

“That’s a really good question, Hilda, my dear”, Harriette said.

“You know, so many people these days just float around in life and have really no idea where they want to go, so instead of living their purpose, they just drift from one thing to another that society or life throws at them”

“That sounds, like, awful!” quipped Hilda

“Yes, dear, for most it is, especially once they get older and feel the time getting shorter as they age, and death is coming closer. That’s why people are so afraid of dying”

“Because they never used the time they had when they could have?” Hilda asked.

“Exactly, dear, you got it. When we live our purpose and passion each day, we will not be afraid of death, whenever it comes.”

“So how do we know what our purpose is? How can I know my purpose?” Hilda asked.

“Great question again, dear, and again, it’s hard sometimes. And it is different for everyone. But you know, any purpose that truly has meaning and leads to a life that you can call fulfilled and that you can look back on when you are my age has two elements.”

“And what is that?” Hilda interrupted

“Well, first, it must be something that you feel passionate about. Something you love doing. And sometimes you again need some help to find that. Luna really helped me with that a lot because I struggled very much with that myself.”

“And the second thing?”

“Ah yes, Hilda, the second thing. It also must be something that points outside of yourself, you could call it something that helps others.”

“Like - being a good mother?” Hilda piped in

“Yes, that’s a great example. You can certainly find purpose and fulfillment in a family and caring for those who you love.”

“But - what do the people do that don’t have a good family?” Hilda wrinkled her forehead.

“Well, you know, that’s why I always say: You can choose your friends, but you can’t choose your family”. Harriette laughed softly.

“If there is no or not enough support from your family, you can choose friends that care about you and that you can care for.”

“You know, Hilda, in life it all comes down to choices. You can choose to stay the victim of circumstances – and end up unhappy, scared and lost, or you can choose to be victorious and choose the path of a better life.”

“Wow, nana, that sounds really difficult.”

“It is, Hilda, it is”

“So, tell me more about your life, nana. What other quests did you have to master and do?”

“Aah, Hilda, look at that clock. It’s 9 pm. Bedtime for today.”

“More of this story will have to wait for another day.”

“Let me sing you a lullaby, that my own mother used to sing to me. It’s an old German lullaby. She learned it from a friend of her mother, who was of German origin...”

„How exciting!“ Hilda said and hopped in her bed.

And Harriette caressed Hilda’s hair and started singing:

“ Der Mond ist aufgegangen
Die güldnen Sternlein prangen
am Himmel hell und klar,

Der Wald steht schwarz und schweiget,
 Und aus den Wiesen steigt
 Der weiße Nebel, wunderbar.

Wie ist die Welt so stille
 und in der Dämm'ung Hülle
 So traulich und so hold,
 Als eine stille Kammer
 Wo ihr des Tages Jammer
 Verschlafen und vergessen sollt.

Seht Ihr den Mond dort stehen?
 Er ist nur halb zu sehen
 Und ist doch rund und schön.
 So sind wohl manche Sachen,
 Die wir getrost belachen,
 Weil unsere Augen sie nicht sehn.

So legt euch denn, Ihr Brüder
 In Gottes Namen nieder,
 Kalt ist der Abendhauch.
 Verschon uns, Gott, mit Strafen
 Und lass uns ruhig schlafen
 Und unseren kranken Nachbarn auch“

(English translation:

The moon has been arising,
 the stars in golden guising
 adorn the heavens bright.
 The woods stand still in shadows,
 and from the meads and meadows
 lift whitish mists into the night.

The world in stillness clouded
 and soft in twilight shrouded,
 so peaceful and so fair.
 Just like a chamber waiting,
 where you can rest abating
 the daytime's mis'ry and despair.

Behold the moon – and wonder
 why half of her stands yonder,
 yet she is round and fair.
 We are the ones who're fooling
 'cause we are ridiculing
 as our minds are unaware.

So, brothers, in His keeping
 prepare yourself for sleeping;
 cold is the evening breeze.

Spare us, Oh Lord, Your ire,
let rest us by the fire,
and grant our ailing neighbour peace.)

Epilogue

And Harriette smiled, kissed the sleeping Hilda for a last time on her forehead, softly turned off the lights and went back to her chair, gently rocking, gazing through the window into the endless starry night sky.

She had found peace. She was truly happy.

And as she softly floated to heaven, the white light enveloped her, and the chorus of angels were singing her sparkles.

Her life was completed, her life's missions fulfilled. Her star was shining bright.

And all the stars were sparkling forever in the night sky - for all of us to see and enjoy.

