

Ask!

THE FABLE
OF
MICAELA

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and **Crystal Dwyer Hansen**

#1 NYT Bestselling Author of the *Chicken Soup for the Soul* Series

The Fable of Micaela from

Ask!

THE BRIDGE FROM YOUR
DREAMS
TO YOUR
DESTINY

Mark Victor Hansen
and Crystal Dwyer Hansen



A POST HILL PRESS BOOK

Ask!: The Fable of Micaela

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The Fable of Micaela

To prepare your heart and mind for the miracles that lie ahead, we begin with a fable...

You were born with a destiny. Your job is to discover it. Once you discover your destiny and start to move toward it, you can manifest innumerable blessings for yourself and others.

Most people have beautiful dreams deep inside the things they would like to have, the relationships they'd love to enjoy, and the wellness and well-being that would help them express their best. But often those dreams lie dormant inside. Hidden by fear or unworthiness or a lack of awareness of what *could* be.

The Golden Destiny Bridge

Micaela's life was miserable. She was doomed to toil and labor all the days of her life. Her clothes were shabby, her stomach never full, and her only shelter from the harsh winds was a thick grove of trees she called home. She missed her mother and father terribly. From the local villagers all she got each day was silence, as she was generally ignored other than the occasional angry stare or impatient shove. She kept to herself mostly, trying to avoid the threatening bill collectors who had tried to find her to intimidate her into paying them for the bills remaining from her mother's illness. It wasn't enough they had already taken her home from her. In spite of her father's spending everything he had to get mother well, the relentless illness and the grief over her husband's sudden and tragic death had finally drained every ounce of life from her mother. Within a thirty-day period, Micaela had lost both of her parents. They had been the light of her world, and now everything felt heavy and dark. One night, after a long day's work, she lay her weary body on the bed of leaves in her grove. She dropped into an exhausted sleep and began to dream.

Micaela's First Dream: The Being Appears

In the middle of a deep and dreamless sleep, she heard a voice. He said, "Micaela, come with me."

Micaela was suspicious of strangers and mostly stayed away from them. But this was no stranger. His warmth and familiarity left her defenseless as she readily agreed, "Okay." Immediately, as her mind said that word, she was lifted up and soaring soundlessly across a beautiful night sky, alongside this...Being. Somehow, it didn't seem strange at all to be high above, effortlessly passing through the night sky, watching the lights below, guided by this warm, loving presence whom her mind couldn't recall knowing but with whom her soul felt so comfortable. Soaring along through air that was neither warm nor cold she felt both calm and exhilarated, as if everything was right.

After a time, she found they were suddenly hovering above a large bridge. It appeared to be daytime now, but even through the morning light, the magnificent bridge below seemed to shimmer and sparkle with golden radiance. She watched from above as people moved about, not seeming to notice the existence of Micaela and her guide as they gazed down upon them with the being on her left side. It never occurred to her to look at him next to her. In fact, it seemed as if she knew she wasn't supposed to gaze directly at him, but that was okay. Micaela watched the people below. Some seemed to be eagerly entering the opening of the bridge and others journeying across its great expanse. Those people had looks of hope, excitement, and anticipation on their faces. But others seemed to walk past the bridge as if they didn't see it. They seemed preoccupied, sad, or distracted, and because of that, unable to even notice this beautiful bridge before them. As she watched, the Being spoke. *Be careful what you choose, Micaela. Everything you think and do is a choice. Your decisions are powerful and will decide your path. Certain choices will lead you to your destiny and others far from it. The key is to ask. To ask again and again and never stop asking.*

Micaela fully understood his meaning, even beyond the words he spoke. As she said *okay* after each of his admonitions, and to affirm she knew what he was telling her, she realized they were speaking through their minds, not their lips. Still looking down at the people, she realized the tragedy of those who missed the bridge. She felt sad for them. At the same time, she felt the happiness and hopefulness of those making their journey across.

Suddenly, Micaela's eyes flew open. She was once again on her bed of leaves in the grove. She sat up quickly. What had just happened? Was it a dream? It

didn't feel like a dream. It felt *real*. Who was this being? Why did he care so much? Why her? Why did she deserve such grace and kindness?

Her heart was lighter as she jumped up and pulled the quill and parchment from her old bag. It had been so long since she had used them, since Mother had died, and she had been indentured to the quarry owner to pay off the debt they owed from her mother's sickness. The tiny bit of ink she had left was almost dry, so she quickly wrote down everything she could remember about the encounter. She finished with these words that rang in her ears all day, over and over: *The key is to ask. To ask again and again and never stop asking.*

Several weeks had passed, and ever since her encounter with the Being, Micaela had not been quite the same. Her step was lighter each day as she walked to the quarry to do her work. Now she looked at people differently. What did they think? What did they know? Is there something she might learn if she opened up and asked? That word...*ask...ask...ask...* kept running through her mind throughout the day. As she was loading her rocks in her cart a few days later, she looked up at the middle-aged woman working next to her who had a pock-marked face and a missing finger. The woman always seemed to be happier than she should be.

When Micaela made eye contact with her for the first time, she gazed back with a smile and said, "At least when I do my work, I can say I'm working for the King!"

Normally Micaela would have turned away and ignored her. Instead, she looked at her and asked, "What do you mean? This quarry is owned by heartless men who don't care about anyone."

"No, young one, the King needs these stones to build the buildings that store the food for the villagers and to build the buildings to house the soldiers that protect us from harm. He needs the stones to build the walls that keep out the invaders who are ill-intentioned and want to steal from and pillage our community."

"Are you saying the King is kind and cares about us?"

"Oh yes, dear girl. Good things sometimes take hard work. Not everyone likes to do it. But if you understand the work is for something bigger than yourself, it becomes easier. Not everyone stays here forever like me," the woman said chuckling.

“I see,” said Micaela, “but don’t you want to get out of here at some point and do something better?”

The woman laughed. “This is where I like to be,” she said with eyes shining. “I enjoy giving my help to the ones who’ve had it the hardest. This is where they usually end up. I’m here for them, and that’s what makes me happy. It’s what I was made for. What is your name, dear?”

“It’s Micaela. And what is yours?”

“My name is Bekkie.”

After talking to Bekkie, the day went so fast for Micaela. She started to notice for the first time, that when Bekkie would go to take a dip of water from the dipper by the well, she would also bring a drink to the older workers. Men and women who didn’t move quite as fast anymore. Bekkie also left them with a cheerful word and a happy smile. If their carts weren’t full enough to meet the minimum, she added more rocks to make them fuller. As Micaela began noticing these acts of kindness carried out by her new friend each day, some of the sadness Micaela had carried for so long started to melt away. Over the next days, she continued to watch and learn, paying careful attention to Bekkie. When she left the quarry at the end of each day, she didn’t feel so tired. She noticed that her back wasn’t aching like it used to as she walked home to her grove on her familiar path. Even now as she was walking home, thoughts of Bekkie made her smile. She felt thankful for her new friend and looked forward to learning something new from her each day.

Micaela was relieved that finally the hot days of summer were waning. The days had become a bit cooler and more comfortable. She yawned, feeling restful as she cleaned up the remains of her simple supper. She started to settle into her leafy bed to get ready for sleep. Beyond all the grief she had suffered, she was finally feeling there was more for her. She thought about the dream she’d had a couple of months ago. Since then she had begun to feel there might be a purpose for her life. But what was it? She still couldn’t figure it all out—why did the Being care so much about her? Why did he bother? But since then she hadn’t felt the same. Or been the same. That beautiful bridge! What did it mean for her? What was on the other side? She felt hopeful—even a little excited about what might be waiting for her. The changes were already happening, and she could feel them and see them each day. She had started wondering about everything. She felt a new curiosity inside that was telling her

maybe things weren't as she had thought they were. Maybe they didn't have to be. Maybe if she started questioning everything, she could discover something completely different. She knew she had already stepped onto that sparkling bridge. She could see the bridge in her mind as she drifted off to sleep, and the sparkles became stars of light on a calm, peaceful night.

Ask Yourself—The Amethyst Gift

Micaela's Second Dream: The Angel Woman

Micaela was walking through a dark forest being pulled toward a light. She kept walking hurriedly to get to the light. As she entered a clearing, she saw a magnificent bonfire lighting up the night. Next to the bonfire, she saw a beautiful older woman with white hair. Everything about the woman was light and bright. The woman was holding out loving arms to her. A soft gentle white light surrounded the woman, and she shone with the same light. As she stepped in front of her, Micaela knew she was looking at an angel. With a glorious smile, the angel woman extended her hands to give Micaela a gift. It looked like a beautiful, purple, shiny amethyst. As Micaela reached out to take the gift, she suddenly felt the light fill the center of her body.

The woman spoke:

Your inner wisdom has already been seeded by your Creator. To find it, you must learn to find the awareness of that gem inside of you and keep calling on it. It is the center inside of you through which the wisdom of God pours. Ask yourself, "What are my gifts? What do I love to do?" Asking yourself will allow you to tap into the inner wisdom of the Creator. It is already inside of you. Through this, you will become the scribe who will write your own future.

As the sun pulled Micaela out of sleep, she realized she was still in the grove, but she had been given another important message through her dreams. She sat up and tried to recall every single part of what she had just seen so that she could understand it better. She felt inside like she had been called to something bigger. Again, she quickly grabbed her writing set and recorded it all. She didn't ever want to forget. She knew it was special. Thank goodness she had taken some of her coins from work and bought fresh ink. She ate a roll, dressed quickly, and rushed off to work.

Each day seemed to get a little better. Micaela thought often about the angel woman and the gift she had given her in the dream. She wondered if she was just imagining it, but she noticed she felt light and bright on the inside since then. Like the woman spoke the truth about her gifts. Now she just needed to figure out what they were. She started paying a lot of attention to the others around her. For the first time, she started to wonder about their stories. Why were they here? Did they have other people in their lives whom they loved? Were they happy or miserable here? She'd been so mired in her own misery she'd never thought of anyone else. Until now. Just today the supervisors placed a sign that all workers needed to be at the south end of the quarry. She looked up and saw a young man who looked just a few years older than her, get hauled over by the scruff of his neck to the south end of the quarry as the angry supervisor yelled to him, "Pay attention and *read the sign* next time!" The young man landed near Micaela's feet. The humiliation in his eyes as he looked up at her moved her heart.

She asked him, "What happened to you? Did you not see the sign posted over there?"

He looked at the ground as he replied, "I've never learned to read. There are quite a few of us here who don't. They just rely on others to tell them what to do. I haven't made any friends yet because I just got here last week."

Micaela felt truly sorry for the man. She wondered what it must be like to not even be able to read a sign. A warm glow started in the center of her belly as she asked herself, "Is there something I can do to help this man and others like him? What gifts do I have that I could share?"

"Would you like to learn?" she asked.

"Ha! Me? Learn to read? How in the world would I do that? You think these rocks are going to teach me to read?"

"No, but I will."

The man's brow furrowed as he looked back at her suspiciously. "Why would you do that?"

"Because I can. Because I want to," said Micaela.

Trying not to look too hopeful, the man replied, "Even if you wanted to, and I'm not too stupid to learn, when would we find the time to do it?"

"What is your name?"

"Jack. My name is Jack."

“Okay, Jack, I’m Micaela. Every day when we take our lunch, I will teach you another letter and its sound. That will take twenty-six days. Then we will begin to put the letters and sounds together in small words each day. As you learn small words each day, tied together in a short sentence, you will begin to understand how it all comes together. Very soon you will understand longer words in longer sentences. Before you know it, you’ll be reading!”

A huge smile that couldn’t disguise his excitement or gratitude erupted on Jack’s face. “Really? Is it that simple? I’d be so grateful. I...don’t know what to say. I honestly don’t know why I deserve your kindness.”

“Well, just know that you do,” she said with a smile. “Everyone does. If you’re okay with it, we’ll get started tomorrow.”

“Yes. Good. I’m okay. No, I mean I’m more than okay. I’m...I’m so...ready. I...uh, don’t know how to thank you for this,” he said as he hung his head in humility.

“You can thank me by doing the same for someone else. Just promise me you will.”

He jumped up off the ground with his arms outstretched. “I...of course! I will! If you teach me, I’ll share it with everyone!”

With a beautiful smile, Micaela said, “Tomorrow it is, then. Meet me by the well right at the lunch break and don’t be late. We’ve got work to do!”

“Don’t worry! I’ll be there!”

When Micaela turned to go, Jack jumped up thanking the heavens, then fell to his knees with tears in his eyes. Wiping them away, he stood and rushed back to his cart. He felt so strong; at the end of the day his cart was piled higher than ever with stones as he wheeled them happily to the collection area where they would be hitched to the donkeys for transfer.

Sixty days later Jack and Micaela were finishing their lesson and their lunches, and an older man named Gus squatted down next to them. He said with a twinkle in his eye. “I’ve been watching you the last couple of months. She’s really got you reading, hasn’t she?”

Jack responded by ceremoniously holding the parchment up high in front of him and reading, “I see the tin cup. I can fill up the cup. I can drink the ale.” He looked at the old man with a huge grin. “What do you think?”

“I think you found yourself an angel there to care about you that much. No one’s ever cared about me like that,” he said with a chuckle. “You should thank your lucky stars.”

Jack's face was full of sympathy for Gus.

"Do you want to learn to read?" asked Micaela.

"Maybe I'm just an old fool who can't learn. It's too late for me anyway."

"Why is it too late, Gus?" asked Micaela. "You come here every day to work. Why wouldn't you use the lunch time here like Jack has and learn to read?"

"Ah...no one ever offered to teach me."

"Did you ask?" said Micaela.

"Ahem...uh...okay...um...would you teach me? To read?"

Jack jumped up and said, "I will, Gus! I can teach you the things Micaela has taught me. But I want to ask something. Micaela, if I teach Gus to read, would you be willing to teach my young cousins to read? They live near the grove by you. Maybe after work or on a day off, you could go there just for an hour at a time. They are a good family, but the eldest child, my cousin Charles, is crippled. My aunt and uncle fear if he doesn't learn reading, he will be useless to anyone, and his life could be in peril as he gets older, once they are gone. I have new skills that you've taught me, but this is too important, Micaela. They need someone like you who truly knows how to teach so Charles's future is safe. If I promise to keep teaching Gus, will you teach them? I know it's a lot to ask, but I know this will change their future for the better, just like you've changed mine. Please?"

Micaela knew what her answer to Jack's heartfelt question needed to be. "Of course, I will, Jack. I can leave work each day and go directly to their house before I go home. I'll just have to take my supper later some days. Give me the directions to their house and tell them we'll begin next week!"

Ask Others—The Emerald Journey

Micaela's Third Dream: The Pond

Micaela was in a beautiful carriage riding along through a jungle. She bounced a bit on the padded velvet seat as she looked through the windows at the thick growth of rubbery trees and bushes she'd never seen before. She felt exhilarated and reached out to touch the thick rubbery plants with her hand. She felt a lovely excitement to the depth of her being. Like everything in the world was perfect. Like she lived an extraordinary life. Like there were magnificent things waiting for her. Suddenly the carriage came to a stop. She jumped out and called up to the driver, "Please wait. I won't be long. I'll be right back."

She walked with purpose into a large, beautifully designed building, with a different design she hadn't seen before. As if it were designed to fit into the surrounding jungle. She stepped into the soothing space inside but immediately looked beyond the large room to a pond just past the large openings on the other side of the room. She moved toward the openings and beyond to the pond. The water looked so soothing. She kicked her shoes off to step into the pond and looked up as she did, noticing for the first time that the edges of the pond were filled with people both standing on the edges and wading into the water. She realized they were all looking at her. Not just looking at her, looking *to* her. For what?

As she looked from face to face at each one, questions began to run through her mind. Each one had something to learn. A part to play. Something to contribute. She knew they were all waiting for her to ask them. Ask about them. Ask to learn. Ask to grow. Ask to change everything. As she continued to look from person to person, there were so many questions to be asked and answered that she suddenly felt overwhelmed. As she exited the water into the building, all eyes were still on her. She felt a rare combination of honor, responsibility, and self-consciousness all at the same time. She moved into the cool, calming building and walked down a hallway to an open door. As she stepped into the room there were two beautiful, fresh-faced young women standing there. They seemed so happy, so very pleased to see her. "Hi, I'm Micaela," she said to them.

"We know," one of the women answered. "Your name means God's Gift. We've been expecting you." She pointed to a beautiful upholstered chair. "Just wait until you see all that you're going to learn today. It's all in your destiny. You won't believe the things you're going to do."

As Micaela stepped toward the chair, she suddenly remembered she had left the carriage driver waiting. "Oh, I'm sorry. I've left someone waiting outside, but I promise I'll be back."

The young ladies just smiled and said, "We'll be waiting for you," as Micaela took off down the corridor and out to the entrance from which she had entered. She hurried toward the carriage, jumped back inside, and it lurched forward. She felt absolutely blissful as it moved ahead, gently rocking farther into the jungle.

Suddenly her cheek tickled, and as she woke up and brushed it, a beautiful butterfly flew off.

What was *that* dream about? She said out loud, "I need to write this down so that I can understand it!" As quickly as she could, she penned the details of the dream, including her feelings about all of it.

She hardly noticed the work she did that day even though she collected more rocks than she ever had. She couldn't stop thinking about how beautiful the jungle was in that dream. She had heard tales of the jungle before but had never imagined it contained such exotic beauty and peace, until now. She could still feel the exuberance she had felt riding in that beautiful carriage through the thick green growth of plants and flowers she'd never seen before. How she actually felt the rubbery leaves on her hand. The wonder of all those people around the pond looking to her for something so important. What was it? And the young women who wanted to tell her about her destiny. What did they want to share? And why had she left before they could? While she still had more questions than answers, she knew a remarkable message had been given to her. She felt different. She felt purposeful. She felt as if she was appointed for something very important. But what, exactly? She hadn't forgotten the guidance the Being had given her in the first dream. She would follow it. She would keep asking. She would keep moving across the bridge to find her destiny.

Another week had gone by. Jack had gone to his aunt and uncle's house after his conversation with Micaela the week before and told them the good news. Their eyes had filled with tears as he told them the young woman named Micaela, who had taught him to read, was willing to come to the house each week and teach their crippled son, Charles, to read. Each day at work, Jack started meeting with Gus by the well at lunch break to start teaching him his letters. Already Gus looked a little happier, even a little younger as he and Jack put their heads together over the parchment each day, going through the lessons. Jack started to have fun with Gus, calling out letters while they were filling their rock carts, to see if Gus could pick out a word that started with that letter. The days flew by.

The first day Micaela showed up at Jack's aunt and uncle's home, they were almost speechless. She introduced herself, and after a moment, with tear-filled

eyes, they said, “Nice to meet you, we’re Edgar and Elene Holloway. Thank you. Thank you so much for coming here to help our Charles.”

They invited her in, and there was Charles in a chair with wheels. She thought she might find a boy who was sad and sullen. Instead, Charles looked up with flashing warm brown eyes and a playful grin and said, “I’ve been waiting a really long time to meet someone like you!” Micaela liked him instantly! The small house had a large front room where they lived, ate, and prepared food, and three small back rooms where they slept and stored things. They all agreed the corner of the front room by the window would be the perfect place to start the lessons. Micaela pulled a sturdy stool up to Charles’s wheeled chair, pulled her supplies out of her bag, and began the lessons.

From the first day, she found Charles to be eager and willing to learn. He had a keen sense of humor as well and would say things unexpectedly that made her laugh. She made sure that as she taught him to read the letters, he was also learning to write them. The first lesson flew by, and afterward, they insisted she join them for a supper of meat and vegetable stew and bread. It tasted delicious to her. As she walked home to her grove, which was very close to their home, her heart and her stomach felt warm and full.

A few days later, when Micaela arrived at the Holloway’s house after work, there were two other children in the front room. A boy who looked to be just younger than Charles, maybe eight years old, and a girl who looked to be only about six. Micaela was surprised but pleased to see them. Elene Holloway quickly introduced the children saying, “I hope you don’t mind. My sister’s children Annie and Gabe haven’t learned to read either. They’re young enough that I’m hoping they could just listen in on Charles’s lesson and learn along with him.” Micaela noticed that little Annie seemed shy and embarrassed. Gabe looked at her eagerly for her answer.

“Of course, they can join us!” she said. “It will be no trouble at all. But we may need to buy more supplies for them.”

“No worries. I thought they would need them, so Mr. Holloway picked them up at the street market yesterday,” said Elene.

The lesson went wonderfully well, and by the end of the day, shy little Annie was leaning on Micaela’s shoulder as she finished reading back her first letters.

The word got out among the villagers, and little by little, more kids began to join the lessons. Micaela didn’t mind. In fact, she looked forward to meeting these new young ones each week. She made sure she started back at the basics

each time for the newcomers, and then Elene would practice with them while Micaela moved forward with those who were becoming more advanced. Micaela was proud of Elene. She was learning along with her son and had improved her reading skills along with his. Charles was a quick study. She couldn't teach him enough! He was so hungry to learn.

Soon enough, over the next months, the little house was so crowded with eager students they needed to find a new place for them to gather. One of the fathers whose son had been coming to learn had a building where he stored and sold grain. It had a large open floor in the center with lots of shelves and bags of grain lining the walls. He closed the business late in the afternoon each day, so he offered to let the lessons take place there. The bags of grain could be used as benches for the children to sit on. Everyone seemed very happy with the new arrangement. They were less crowded, and the parents whose children came for lessons brought buckets of water to drink in case the children got thirsty. Elene came rushing to the building, excited and out of breath, just before they started their first lesson there with her arms full of parchments. "I've just come from the local church. I told the pastor about the lessons you're giving to the village children, and he was so happy to give me these parchments for us to use for the writing of the letters and words!"

Each day as Micaela finished work at the quarry and hurried over to begin giving her lessons, she looked forward to what was ahead. It was truly enchanting to see the children grow and change so much. They came in looking scared and unsure. But after a few sessions they would begin to warm up, delighted by the magic of learning to read and the world it was opening up for them. The parents were all so grateful. While most of them didn't have extra money, they paid her in pieces of cloth, warm meals, fresh vegetables, or a bit of meat, and occasionally, a coin or two. Since only royalty had access to education, it meant so much to the people. Very soon she was becoming known around the village as Teacher—sometimes even referred to as Headmistress. People everywhere were learning to read. They grew to love Micaela.

One day, when a family she had been teaching found out she was living in the grove, they offered to give her a small dwelling that had been used as a grain shed long ago. They had built a bigger one closer to the granary a few years ago and had not used the small one since. Micaela thought it was far too generous of them, but they insisted, even helping her clean and sweep it out and set it up

with a proper bed frame, a comfortable straw-filled mattress, and two chairs and a table where she could enjoy her meals. “We can’t have our village teacher exposed to the elements!” they said. “We need to keep her safe and dry.” Micaela had never been happier. She felt needed and so appreciated.

In fact, lately she had begun to reflect on her life. She had suffered terrible hardships, having endured the loss of her parents and the bill collectors taking so much from her. Yet she could now see how many things she had to be grateful for. She’d had a very fortunate childhood. Even though they hadn’t been wealthy, her father and mother were unusual because they had served in noble households. Mother had learned to read from her kind mistress, for whom she had worked as a very young woman. She had also taught Mother to do numbers and figures so that she could help log the expenses and income of the estate. When Mother had married her father, she’d taught him to read and do mathematics that she knew. It had given her parents an advantage in running their small business for so many years and allowed them to have a comfortable house, plenty of food, and warm clothing.

Micaela’s parents had known how much it mattered to have education and knowledge, so they had taken painstaking efforts to teach Micaela everything they knew, starting when she was very, very young. She hadn’t really understood the value of the knowledge she had from their teachings, until now. These children she taught were so precious, many of them so bright and eager to learn. It pained her heart to think that all children couldn’t have these opportunities. Knowing that made her more resilient and determined to continue to teach as many as she could, no matter how much effort it took. It was a life-changing gift she could give them. She felt deeply honored to be able to have the gift to share. Some of them were progressing so much they could read a full book. She did everything she could to get her hands on books that could be shared. They were hard to come by, so she began to encourage those who could to start to write their own little books on the parchments and put them together with strings pulled through holes they made in the sides of the pages.

Even though the group was quite large now, Micaela knew each one of them by name. As the children gained more knowledge, Micaela loved to question them to understand each person, their thoughts, and ideas. What were the things that mattered to them? What did they truly want in life? Because she had

asked them about the dreams of their heart, she knew a lot about the things that were important to them.

One day a well-dressed, distinguished-looking gentleman came to the lessons. He approached Micaela at the end of the lesson saying, "Excuse me. You must be Mistress Micaela. May I speak with you?"

As Micaela looked up, she couldn't help but notice his deep blue eyes and the blend of rugged aristocracy of his face. "Yes, sir, how can I help you?"

"You've been teaching my son, and I wanted to come thank you personally. What I didn't know until recently is how many people in the village you've been helping. From what I hear, people are coming from other villages to learn from you. That is quite a feat to become the Headmistress to all of the villages in the kingdom."

"Well," said Micaela, blushing, "thank you for the acknowledgment. I'm not sure I'm quite as important as all of that, but I do know I enjoy helping people make their lives and daily tasks easier by helping them learn all that they can. Who is your son, sir?"

"I'm Conrad Eaton. Please call me Conrad. My son is Andrew. I work as a treasurer to the King. Even though Andrew has had access to teachers in his young life, he has never been able to learn to read. His best friend in the village convinced him to come here with him for your lessons, so he's been sneaking away to do so. I don't know what you've done or how you did it, but as I tucked him into bed last night, he wanted to show me what he could do. He pulled out his parchment, and for the first time ever, he read me the words on the page. I feel tremendous gratitude for you, Mistress Micaela. I feared my son would be severely scorned and overlooked as he got older, like other people who can't read. You have given my son a new beginning. How can I ever thank you for that?"

Micaela started to feel warm and a bit overwhelmed with the outpouring of praise this important man was giving her. "I...love Andrew," she said. "He is a very special boy. He sat at the back of the group the first day he came. I noticed he started crying and seemed very sad at the end of the first lesson. I sat down alone with him and asked him why he was crying. He said he can't see the words the way other people do because he's stupid. I told him no one is stupid; we sometimes have special ways of learning things. After he answered more of my questions, I realized he was seeing the words backwards. So, I devised a special way for him to look at the words, and we spent a little special

time together during every lesson to practice that. He has been so excited as he realized he can learn to read he's been coming over on some Sunday afternoons to get extra help. After a while, he started being able to do it on his own. I didn't know his home was on the castle grounds or that his father worked for the King. When he showed up with a group of the poor village boys, I thought he was one of them."

"He feels those are the only true friends he has. The kids from parents of nobility make fun of him and tell him he is stupid. I've told him he can find friends anywhere, and he has found them outside of the castle. Even though the King has questioned my wisdom in allowing this, I know it's what makes Andrew happy, so I don't discourage it. His happiness is more important to me than traditions and protocols."

"Your son is one of the most kind, gentle, and intelligent children I've ever met. He's thoughtful and considerate to everyone. He also has a gift. He is a brilliant storyteller and has started to write his stories and do lovely drawings for them. They are very special, but I think he's waiting to show you. Maybe he wants to surprise you."

"Well, I'll look forward to that surprise. Mistress Micaela, I won't keep you any longer, but I want to thank you again and tell you that anything you should need to make your efforts in teaching the children easier, please do not hesitate to ask. And here is a small token of my appreciation." He placed a small, weighty leather bag in her palm, stepped back, took a quick bow, and said, "I'll be seeing you again very soon, I hope. Thank you for your time today."

As Micaela watched him walk away, her heart was racing for no apparent reason. She thought maybe it was because she was trying to take in everything she had just seen and heard. She peeked into the top of the small pouch and saw it was full of gold coins. Gold coins. Not silver. She hadn't seen a real gold coin since before Mother got sick. Father used to have one or two when he was making a big purchase.

Later that night in her little home, as she tucked away her dishes from supper, Conrad's words were still running through her mind. In those months he'd been coming for lessons, she'd had no idea little Andrew lived on the castle grounds! He was such a sweet, humble boy. And the entire village knew about her? People were coming from other villages? Finding out what the children needed and then teaching it to them was so important to her that she had never

taken the time to wonder where the children were from. She only knew they needed her, that she could help them, and that she loved doing it. He worked for the King? So he talked to the King every day, and now he had just spoken to her! In fact, he made a special trip to speak with her! She fell to her knees by her bed, overwhelmed with gratitude. While she knew she had been guided to this place, she still didn't know why she deserved so much good. So much happiness. But she was deeply grateful for all of it. For this warm, wonderful house to live in. For the beautiful children who came to learn. For the dreams, the Being, for Bekkie, Jack, Gus, Elene, Edgar, Charles, for little Andrew and Andrew's father. Conrad....

She must get some sleep now. Life was so good, and there was so much more to do.

Ask God—The Pink Sapphire Light

Micaela's Fourth Dream: Conrad

Micaela dreamed she was walking down a village road with Conrad. There was a strong pull between them. The feeling that they were being pulled together to merge into one. As they approached the end of the road next to a beautiful wood-crafted house, Micaela saw a beautiful bright pink star shooting across the sky and descending. It was coming closer and closer to them—both of them staring at it because they couldn't look away. As it got closer it became larger. Finally, it was hovering in front of them, bigger than both of them. It was an enormous giant oval of soft pink light. As she looked into the center, it was as if the star had a beating heart and some kind of intelligence. Conrad stepped back in fear. Micaela reached for his hand and said, "Don't worry. It's just here to gather information about how you and I can help the world together."

Micaela woke with a jolt! She sat up feeling awake and energized. What was that? Why had she just had a dream about this man she only just met a few days ago? The pink star was so beautiful, and it seemed so...alive. She put her feet on the cool floor and hurried to the shelf, taking down her writing tools and sitting at her little table. She wrote down the whole dream, feeling the same feelings all over again. It was she who had reached out and grasped Conrad's hand in the dream! ...*how you and I can help the world together*.... She had been so sure and so bold! She felt embarrassed just thinking about it!

Where did all that boldness and certainty come from, and what did it all mean? She may never see the man again. They came from completely different worlds. He was just being kind and grateful for her help with his son's reading. Maybe it was just her imagination running wild. But it didn't feel like a strange imagining. It felt like something real. Like something was happening. Some strange destined connection.

"Ok, that's enough," she said to herself as she placed her things back on the shelf. "Time to get to the quarry." She was already running late, and she had a surprise for everyone.

All morning as she picked up the rocks and placed them in her cart, she had been thinking of the Being, wondering what he thought of last night's dream. He had become her spiritual lodestar since his first visit with her in the first dream. To her, it felt as if he was a personal representative to the Creator of all. She kept asking him in her heart: "Tell me, what does this mean? What am I to think about the dream? Is there something there I'm supposed to pay attention to, or is it nothing more than my silly imagination? Is this a clue to my destiny?"

As she asked these questions from her heart, and contemplated the answers, the morning flew by. She was working with such energy and exuberance, her cart was two-thirds full by lunchtime. She walked to the well to join her friends and set a bag of goodies on the ground with a big smile on her face. As each of them pulled out their meager portions of bread or a bun, she laid a cloth on the ground and spread out apples, dates, cheese, and bits of different kinds of dried meat and invited them to enjoy! She'd had so much fun at the market the day before, using one of her gold coins to buy the treats for her friends. By now, Jack had taught a dozen more people to read. They all joined in their happy feast. She had plenty so everyone nearby could enjoy.

"I have been so fortunate and blessed by all of you. I wanted to share some delicious things to celebrate how much we've grown together. How much we've learned from each other." After much eating and happy chatter, Micaela pulled something small out of the bag and looked right at Bekkie. As she held out a simple but beautiful pendant in the shape of a heart, handing it to her friend, she said, "Bekkie—watching you express yourself each day through your kind and gentle heart helped me find my heart, which I'd hidden away for so long. Thank you for being a true friend to me and to all of us. You make our lives so much better by being you. I had truly lost myself. Without your loving

heart to show me the way, I'm not sure I would have found myself again. So thank you." The little group clapped and hugged right before the horn blew. The signal for everyone to get back to work.

She couldn't have been more buoyant as she finished her day at the quarry and headed to the grain building for teaching. She was thinking of those happy, eager faces that would be showing up for their lessons soon.

As she moved her feet along the path quickly, she was suddenly yanked back abruptly by the arm and spun around roughly. There right in front of her were the two nasty-looking bill collectors. Her heart dropped suddenly and started slamming in her chest. She felt like she couldn't breathe as the one with the scar across his eye said, "Ha, you think you can avoid us, Missy? Who do you think you are, running away from your debts?"

Micaela looked at the two men who had already taken everything from her. That familiar feeling of defenselessness started creeping over her. She began to stammer, "You...you've already taken everything I have. I've paid you again and again. I have no more to give you."

"You think we're stupid, Miss?" said the tall one covered with pock scars. "We hear the talk in the village. The high and mighty teacher who teaches all. Well that teacher better be sharing some of the spoils, or she might be losing one of her teaching fingers. In fact, we can make sure, if we don't get what we want, you lose everything."

"This nice little life you think you have. It all might just go away in a blink," the short, heavy one said, as they both pealed into fits of laughter.

Just then Micaela felt three little bodies throw themselves up against her in a tight hug. There were three boys she taught, one of whom was getting so tall he almost reached her shoulder. Micaela heard more noise behind her and glanced back to see more of her little students headed her way to get to their lessons. Her three little saviors stared at the two men with very intense looks on their faces.

"So, you think your little children are gonna save you, do ya? You'll find out you have your own lessons to learn if we don't get some payments from you soon." They turned back in the direction from which they'd come, saying to her, "Don't get too comfortable, little teacher. We'll be back before you know it."

Micaela and the children stood there holding their breath until the men were far enough away. "I hate those men, Mistress Micaela! Why are they trying to

scare you?” asked the oldest boy.

Trying to control her shaking voice, Micaela said, “Oh, don’t you worry. We’re not going to let those mean people ruin our day. They’re gone now. Let’s forget about them and go have the best lesson ever!”

It took all her will to appear calm and cheerful during her lesson that afternoon. She was so relieved when it ended so she could be by herself and think and not worry the children. She kept looking over her shoulder as she made her way to her little house. For the first time, she was thankful her friends had insisted on installing bolts on the doors and window covers as she closed up the place tightly and sat down think. She looked up toward the ceiling, and thinking of the Being, she started asking, “Why is this happening again? Why won’t they leave me alone? What is going to make them stop? What if I lose everything I have?”

Micaela had a fitful night’s sleep, finally falling deeply into sleep a few hours before dawn. She slipped into another dream.

Destiny and Diamonds

Micaela’s Fifth Dream: Treasures of Life

Micaela was at the grain store finishing the class and looked down for her satchel. It was gone. She knew she had set it there. It contained all her gold coins. It was all she had. She quickly ran out of the store and started running toward her home. She burst through the door and everything was gone: her table and chairs, her bed, her writing tools. Everything. Gone. She hurried out the door, racing ahead to try to find her things, and up in front of her, she saw a white house she’d never seen before. Maybe her things were in there! She ran toward the white house and opened the door. To her surprise, her mother, her father, and even her grandfather, who had died before she was born, yet she knew him somehow, were all sitting there in chairs that were lined up against the walls. There were other people there too. They were all smiling and seemed very happy to see her. They seemed to recognize her, like they were somehow connected to her family. Her mother stood up and said, “Welcome, Micaela, please take a chair. We have something to show you.” Micaela looked around in wonder and then took a seat.

Suddenly, two young men who looked like servants from a castle came in bringing a very large trunk. They brought it and set it at her feet. “This is for

you,” they said as they opened the lid, and inside were miniature houses and carriages with people inside all of them, like a toy set of a large estate. She was awestruck as she looked at the beautiful things. After she looked carefully at all these beautiful things, they moved that trunk aside; then two more serving men came through the door bringing another large trunk. They placed it in front of her and opened the lid. Inside was the most beautiful clothing made of the most beautiful fabrics she had ever seen. She leaned over in amazement as she touched the most exquisite clothing made with beautiful fabrics, realizing all of this was for her. The trunk was once again moved aside, and two more serving men came through the door with yet another trunk. They opened the trunk and to her astonishment, there was her satchel with all the things she thought she had lost, including her gold coins. Micaela woke up.

Her eyes were wet in the corners as she tried to hold on to the faces of her mother and father. They had looked so beautiful. Like they glowed. They were so happy, and Mother was well! She had asked the Being to help her. Had he taken her there to see them? To some special place beyond this world? She felt humbled that all those gifts were for her. Instead of feeling like she was ready to lose everything again, she now knew that was not true. She knew she had been given a vision of something very different from that. She stopped feeling afraid. She knew in her heart no one could take anything away from her. As she finished writing about the dream, her last line on the parchment read, “I know now that the Being hears me and loves me. I know he has more in store for me than I’ve ever dreamed of.” She turned her head upward in gratitude and uttered, “Thank you.”

Everything went well over the next few days. Work at the quarry flew by. More people than ever were challenging themselves to read, and Jack was starting to become a teacher in his own right. He was a different man now than the one who had fallen at her feet that day many months ago. She had even seen him talking to the daughter of the butcher at their village stall a few times, and he seemed awfully happy to be there!

Some of the children were reading so well now, they were helping her tutor the younger or newer ones. Little Andrew was almost finished with his surprise for his father. He had written a story with beautiful illustrations. It had taken him a while, but as they tied the parchments together in a book, Micaela could only imagine the joy Conrad would feel when he opened it!

As if right on cue, she looked up to see Conrad walk in the door. They had just finished wrapping Andrew's book in a cloth to give to his father later that night after supper. The children were shuffling out the door, and Andrew scurried out to play tag with his friends. She and Conrad were suddenly alone together. Why did her cheeks suddenly feel too warm again as he approached her? She hoped he didn't notice it. "Well hello, Mister Eaton! What brings you here today?"

The closer he got, the more it felt like those deep blue eyes could see all the way inside her. She adjusted the parchments in her hand, trying to distract herself from it. He smiled broadly at her and said, "I've brought some good news for you. The King wants to see you!"

"Why? Why would he want to see me? What did you tell him?"

"I give him reports each week, but it's not what *I'm* telling him. It's what everyone in the village is talking about. Do you know how much you've changed the way people feel, Micaela? Do you realize you've given hope to the hopeless? That you've given people a reason to wake up and be happy each day? People have changed. They work harder. They're helping each other more. They're opening businesses now that they have more skills. You might think you've done a small thing by helping people read and do numbers, but, Micaela, it's so far beyond that. You've changed lives for the better. You've made our entire village better."

Micaela was aware that Conrad knew about her teaching the children. But how had he found out that on Saturdays she had been helping some of the businesspeople understand how to do numbers to keep logbooks for their businesses? It started with helping the Holloways with their logbooks and had spread to a dozen or so others who really needed help so they could keep better track of money coming in and going out to help make better decisions in their trades and, hopefully, make better profits. "Well, I guess the word gets around in this little village, doesn't it?" she said, feeling a bit self-conscious.

"And thank goodness it does!" he said with a smile. "The King has been looking for someone like you for a long time. His Queen is a very kind woman who insists that they do more for all the people. They want all the people in their kingdom to have prosperity and happiness. She's been trying to find a way to get lessons for reading and numbers to people who live outside the court, but they didn't have a way to do it...until now."

“You mean me?” Micaela started going from self-conscious to overwhelmed. “But how would I manage to do that for the whole kingdom? How could that possibly happen? We’re so overcrowded *now*. I mean, I’m not ungrateful of his notice, but truly, I don’t know if I can do any more with the time and space I have.”

Conrad laughed out loud, completely enjoying her humble lack of awareness. “Micaela, the King and Queen will provide you everything you need. They want you to lead the teaching of all the kingdom. It’s what you’re already doing. It’s what you do so well. They’re going to make it easier for you and make sure that you can reach all our people.”

“How will I have time to reach them all?” she asked meekly.

“You will groom the best learners into more teachers. You will make sure they are prepared with your skills and knowledge, and then you will assign them to different areas and villages of the kingdom. You will be the headmistress of all learning for the kingdom. I humbly ask you to join me on Saturday. I will have a carriage pick you up at your home, and we will go together to speak to the King and Queen.”

Micaela’s mind began racing. What would she wear in front of the royal couple? She had a few practical dresses, obtained with the coins he had given her and the cloth that others had provided, but nothing fit for a meeting with the King. As if he could read her mind, he summoned his driver, who immediately brought a package to him. He handed it to her and asked her to open it. As she pulled the package open, she gasped. She was looking at the most beautiful dress she had ever seen. The fabric was exquisite. She’d never had anything like it.

“Please accept this gift from the Queen herself,” he told her. “She wants to thank you herself over a luncheon at the castle, and she wanted to make sure you felt very comfortable attending.”

She looked up with moist eyes, “How can I refuse such a gift and invitation? It would be my great honor to come with you to the castle on Saturday to meet the King and Queen!”

“It’s set, then!” Conrad said enthusiastically. “I will pick you up promptly at the eleventh hour. Please be ready!”

“Okay, I will.... Uh...don’t you want me to tell you where I live?”

“Micaela,” he said smiling, “I already know where you live. Everyone in the village knows!”

He took a quick bow, saying, “Okay, then. I’m off now, and I look forward to Saturday, Mistress Micaela!”

Micaela bowed her head with a quick curtsy and said, “Yes! Thank you! I’ll be ready!”

As she watched him walk out of the building, she felt giddy. Completely exhilarated but nervous at the same time! Was she even worthy of such an honor? She wanted to shriek with excitement, but knowing the kids might be lingering outside, she instead threw her hands in the air, and jumping up and down, whispered, “Thank you, thank you, thank you!”

When the kids came for lessons the next day, she greeted Andrew at the door. Bending down to him, she said, “Andrew, what did your father say when you gave him your book last night after dinner?”

Andrew looked up with big sincere eyes and said, “After my father read the book, he started crying really hard. He cried when my mama died too. I thought the book made him sad at first, but then he told me those were happy tears. He said the book made him happier than any gift he’s ever gotten. He told me happiness that makes you cry is the best kind of happy of all.”

Micaela gave him a tight hug as she said, “Andrew, I’m so glad you were able to give such a special gift to your father. Your storytelling and drawings are a gift that could make so many people happy, so I hope you keep sharing your gift.”

Andrew gleamed with pride. “I will, Miss Micaela. Now that you taught me to read and write, I’m gonna make so many people happy!” And he ran off toward the other boys who had just come in.

Over the next few days at work and teaching lessons, Micaela felt like she was floating on air. She kept pinching herself to make sure she was awake, and this wasn’t all a dream. She threw herself happily into her work. She challenged the workers who were learning to read and write by asking them to spell words out loud. The quarry seemed like a different place now. People knew each other, helped each other, and took pride in one another’s accomplishments. Even the grouchy supervisor had softened a bit. He wouldn’t stoop down to their level to sit with them to learn, but she saw him hovering nearby and listening carefully. He wasn’t quite so rough with people these days.

Finally, it was Friday. Micaela stayed a bit late at the granary to finish working with each of the kids. There was barely any light left as she rushed home. Suddenly she felt a chill, and the next second the bill collectors stepped out in front of her from a tree, behind which they had been hiding. She was filled with dread as she took a couple of steps backward.

“We told you we’d be back. Now where’s our money, teacher? You didn’t really think we were going to let you have all the spoils after everything we’ve done for you, did ya?” Suddenly an arrow shot past the man’s ear, nicking it as it flew by. “What the...!” the man yelled, looking past Micaela with a shocked expression as three men rode up on horses. There were Conrad and two other men, one with a long sword drawn in front of him.

Conrad spoke up, “Micaela, these men aren’t giving you a problem, are they? Because if they are, I can make sure it never, ever happens again.”

Through a clenched grin, the pock-faced one said, “No, no, we just were makin’ sure the teacher didn’t need any help gettin’ home.”

“If I find out you’re anywhere near Mistress Micaela again, I promise you it will be the last time. Are we clear?” Conrad said as his colleague moved closer until his sword touched each of their chests.

“Y...yes, we’re clear,” they mumbled as they tried to back away as carefully as possible.

“Good then!” Conrad said as he jumped off his horse and gave a hand to raise Micaela up on it. “We’ll make sure our village teacher gets to her home safely tonight and every night.”

When Conrad lifted Micaela down from his horse in front of her door, she was speechless as he walked her to the door. Finally, she said, “Thank you. You didn’t have to do that, but I’m very grateful you were there. Those men took everything from me after the death of my parents to pay the bills for the money we owed due to my mother’s illness when father couldn’t work. I thought giving them everything I had, including our home, was enough to make them leave me alone, but now they’re back, asking for more.”

“I intend to find out a lot more about those men, and when I do, you’ll be hearing back from me about it. You don’t need to worry now. They won’t be bothering you anytime soon. Get some good rest, and I’ll see you tomorrow, then?”

“Yes, I promise I’ll be ready on time,” she said with a grateful smile. “See you then.” She closed the door on her little house, locked the bolt, and drew in a

huge sigh of relief. She had gone from giddy exhilaration to sheer terror all in a day, and suddenly she felt so tired. It was all she could do to eat her small supper and drag herself to bed to fall into an exhausted sleep.

Someone was knocking rapidly on her door. She shot out of bed. The sun was high, and she had overslept. She opened the door to see Elene standing there. "I'm here to help you get ready for your big day!" Micaela was so happy to see her friend and gave her a big hug! Elene made a quick breakfast of eggs and berries she'd picked from her bushes. Then she started heating water on the fire for Micaela's big tub. She dumped lavender oil into the hot water. Smiling, she said, "You're going to the castle today, so today you will look and feel like a princess!" She laid out the beautiful dress Conrad had given to Micaela, smoothing it and making it ready for Micaela to step into. After scrubbing Micaela's hair and then brushing it until it dried and was gleaming, she helped her into the dress. When Micaela spun around, Elene gasped! The robin's-egg-blue gown was elegant on Micaela's graceful body. It brought out the blue-green of her eyes so they sparkled like jewels. Her bronze hair was pulled up on one side with a beautiful comb Mother had left for her. It was one thing she had hidden from the men because it was something that had looked so beautiful on Mother when she had worn it. Micaela put on the pretty little leather shoes she'd purchased from the village shoemaker. It was her biggest splurge in a long time. She was excited but so nervous! Elene looked into her eyes as she said, "Remember, Micaela, the only thing you have to do today is to be yourself. You've changed so many lives by doing just that. Don't try to be anything different. Just be you."

Elene was right. She had come so far by searching, asking, and finally finding herself and her Destiny Bridge. Now she was taking another step forward on the bridge. Above all, she must remember that her gifts lie in expressing all that she is. Nothing more. Suddenly, there was a gentle knock on the door. Elene peeked out the window and said, "He's here." She wrapped her arms around her friend for one more big hug.

Elene opened the door, and Conrad stepped inside. She heard him draw in a quick deep breath as he looked up at Micaela. He stood there a bit dumbfounded for a moment, then quickly gathered himself, saying, "Mistress Micaela, you look absolutely beautiful today. That dress suits you so well. I hope you like it."

“I love it—thank you,” she said with a beautiful smile. “And I’ll certainly thank the Queen when I see her.”

“Shall we go, then?” He held out his arm for her. Taking it, he guided her out to the carriage. After helping her inside, he jumped up to the seat across from her, and off they went to the castle. Elene stood there until she could no longer see them, tears streaming down her cheeks. She felt like she was watching her own daughter go to the most important event of her life. She was so proud of Micaela. So happy for her.

Micaela’s eyes were gigantic in her delicate face as she took in the beauty of the castle. Conrad had gone off on some business the minute they arrived, so she was seated on a comfortable chair as the servant brought her some tea in a sitting room. Happy to be alone for a few moments, she tried to gather herself and breathe deeply. She didn’t know what to expect or how this was going to go. She kept thinking about what Elene said to her this morning: *Just be yourself.*

The double doors at the far end of the room were suddenly flung open. Conrad strode in looking very pleased. He held out his hand to her and said, “It is time for you to meet the King and Queen.”

As they walked toward the thrones sitting side by side at the end of a long hall, time slowed down, and it seemed Micaela was watching the whole thing from outside herself. She was so glad she had Conrad’s hand to keep her steady. When they reached the King and Queen, she made a deep curtsy along with Conrad’s bow and looked up again as he began to introduce her. “May I present the Mistress Micaela, who is known throughout our lands as the one who is willing to teach all the people.”

Micaela looked up into the faces of the King and Queen. The kindness each of their faces showed instantly put her at ease. The King spoke first. “Micaela, you are here today because you have created quite a reputation for yourself, not only in our small village, but in most of the villages in the kingdom, people know your name and the work you’ve been doing to teach all those who desire to learn.”

Just be yourself.

Micaela looked earnestly into the King’s eyes and said, “Your Majesty, I have done nothing more than to try to share any gifts I might have with those who have a desire to learn. It is truly my honor to be able to answer the needs of

others. There is nothing more rewarding than being able to grant someone's wish to learn by helping them through the process. Knowing that I have answered another's most heartfelt requests has brought me more joy than any gold or precious jewels."

"That is why we have chosen you to be here today, Micaela," said the Queen in a voice born of gentleness and strength. "Your generosity and humility are a rare combination that has caused us to take notice of you."

"Those qualities, along with your fast-thinking mind and tireless work ethic, have all been noticed and repeatedly reported back to me and the Queen. You single-handedly have changed everything in our kingdom, Micaela. People are happier, they're working harder, they are more productive and feel more valuable...more hopeful."

"Your Majesties, I deeply appreciate your generosity of praise, but I was simply doing my best with the gifts I've been given."

"And that is what makes a great leader, Micaela. One who doesn't seek praise or glory but instead utilizes their gifts and talents to lift and glorify others. In this way everyone rises and becomes better. You are a natural leader, Mistress Micaela. Because of that, the Queen and I are inviting you to take a position with the Royal Court, as the Head Mistress of Teaching for the entire Kingdom. We will give you the resources you need to teach a group of people who can be sent across the land to teach in every village. Our desire is that learning reading and numbers is no longer saved only for nobility, but that every person learns those skills to better themselves. In this way we will bring great strength, prosperity, and happiness to our Kingdom."

Micaela looked at them with a radiant smile and answered, "Of course, it would be my greatest honor to take this position, Your Highness. I promise to do my very best and not let you and the Queen down."

"We have no concerns about you letting us down, Micaela," the King answered with a jovial chuckle. "Hopefully we can keep up with you as you continue your movement for teaching and learning across the villages."

"Your work has come to us at a most auspicious time, Micaela," said the Queen. "The time has come for all people to rise to their best because that makes all of us stronger. We know that you are a divine gift to the entire kingdom. Thank you for being all that you are and teaching all of us exactly what we needed to learn. Now let's celebrate our new Headmistress!"

The luncheon banquet was a sublime feast with many toasts and accolades given. Conrad was especially jovial as he sat next to her, leaning in to explain who people were and what their roles were in the royal court. Her heart and mind were alive with anticipation of all that was ahead of her.

When she returned back to her home, she spent all evening chatting with Elene about her magnificent day! Elene had been waiting for her when she arrived back at her home very late in the day after her adventure at the castle. They sipped tea and giggled together like two young girls!

Now it was Monday afternoon, and she was walking home after teaching lessons to the children. As she neared her house, Conrad came galloping up on his horse. Could he see how much she lit up when she saw him? She hoped she didn't give herself away too much. He slid off his horse and asked if he could speak to her. "Of course," she said.

They pulled two chairs outside to watch the last of the sunset. "The Queen asked me to ask you if you could start next week at your new position."

Suddenly, reality set in for Micaela. How was she going to get out of her contract at the quarry? Someone owned her contract. They might as well have owned her. Why hadn't she thought of that?

Conrad saw her face cloud over and asked, "What? Something is wrong, I can feel it."

She hung her head in shame and said, "I haven't told you, Conrad. I work every day at the quarry as an indentured worker. I don't think I can work for the court. I don't know how to get out of that."

Conrad tipped her chin upward and said, "Do you not think I know that, lovely Micaela? The men who indentured you are very bad men. I followed up on them and found they have carried out much corruption throughout the kingdom. They've done great harm to many people. I brought your contract before the King's solicitors, and the King signed your release from it. Those men are now being held in a prisoner camp so they can no longer destroy lives. The King was very relieved this was brought to his attention. You are free, Micaela."

She could hardly believe what he was saying. She didn't mean to, but she began to cry. Conrad reached over and held her as relief from the past two years of dread slowly flowed out of her body. After a long while, she finally looked up with a wet, red face and said, "What about my friends at the quarry?"

“They’ll always be your friends, Micaela. This is clearly going to take some getting used to, but you are free to do as you wish.”

Micaela stepped out into her little garden outside her lovely little house. Her new home was a cozy cottage, inside the higher town near the castle so she could easily meet weekly with the Queen to report the learning progress in the Kingdom. After several months of living there, she was beginning to love her new surroundings and becoming more comfortable each day with the authority she had over so many important things. As she snipped flowers from her garden for her dinner table, she smiled thinking about her life. She had hired Jack, Gus, and Elene as her first teachers. More were being trained each week. She had her own little house of learning in the village, a school that had plenty of tables and chairs for children to sit upon and writing supplies for everyone. She was starting to amass quite a good collection of books for the students to use and borrow, as well. Classes for the children began earlier in the day now. The adults came later in the afternoons to learn to read and write, followed by a supplementary hour for those who wanted to learn the methods of teaching. Charles now came with the adults because he had decided, as soon as he turned seventeen years of age, he would become a teacher!

Once a month, Micaela brought lunch to her friends at the quarry. She missed Bekkie so much and looked forward to the time they spent together. Little Andrew came by every day to spend time with her now that they lived so close. He was a happy, confident boy now. So different from the scared, shy little boy who showed up for his first lesson. When Conrad finished his busy workdays, he would come by and the three of them would enjoy dinner or strolling through the town together.

One late Saturday afternoon, Conrad stopped by in an open carriage. He had invited her to go for a ride to the cliffs for a picnic. She expected to see Andrew, but when she asked, he said Andrew was staying behind to play with his friends. After riding along for a while, enjoying the beautiful green landscape surrounding them, they stopped by a waterfall near a cliff that overlooked a panoramic expanse of the kingdom. Every once in a while, they would see a wild bunny or a deer peek through the foliage. They laughed; ate cheese, dried meats, and fruit; and reminisced over the past year. Everything that had happened. All the delightful changes that had taken place in both their lives. Micaela knew her life had begun to turn that night the Being had come to her. She had started to ask and had never stopped.

The day was drawing to a close, and they stood to watch as the sun was dropping low in the sky. Conrad reached over and, squeezing her hand, he suddenly dropped down on one knee and asked her one of the most important questions she'd ever been asked: "Micaela, will you marry me?"

The light from the sunset was shining a soft halo around her as she threw herself into Conrad's arms and answered, "Yes. Yes, I will marry you!"

After a marriage celebration that was fit for a prince and princess, Micaela and Conrad held hands and walked toward the beautiful carriage that would carry them on their wedding holiday. They looked deeply into each other's eyes just before he lifted her in. Micaela knew she had crossed the bridge. Her hopes and dreams had become her most beautiful destiny.

As the story of Micaela concludes, know that your story is just beginning. We invite you to [Click Here](#) to get the full copy of *ASK! The Bridge from Your Dreams to Your Destiny*, and take this Asking Journey with us, all the way to the manifestation of your greatest destiny!