

Chapter 1: Grace

And finally, Grace met Aelfraed, who in physical, earthly form is usually a canine. He is bonded to Grace and her new charges, the humans she will tend to. Aelfraed does his best to care for his humans too, counting on Grace to guide him.

The Introduction of Grace's Charges

Sophia and Grace bring into focus all the lives to which they are connected during this Third Earth.

First there is a woman, Mumbie, born in primitive earth times, when humans have extensive use of regions of the brain—regions they won't so easily access in the "civilized" ages—that allow for more psychic activity and a more natural state of grace. She has a dark complexion and small stature; she is compact, quick, and bright.

Next is a male, Garth, born during the Middle Ages into a farming family in Europe. They are dealing with the strict feudal laws of the times, with an overbearing kingdom ruling over the countryside. Broad-shouldered, tall, and strong, Garth is protective of his family and distrustful of outsiders.

Arnina is born in the United States in the technological age, one of a huge number of souls volunteering to live in that pivotal time of earth's twenty-first century. She is extremely creative, with an eagerness to "find" Grace, yet she is often lost.

Alistair, who took his birth in the salubrious Light Age, the twenty-sixth century, is tall, slender, wise, and full of divine love, with a passion to find new ways to help others. He wonders if he can adjust the frequency of humans in order to raise their consciousness while staying anchored in both spirit and his humanness.

And of course there is me. I am not a physical being, but I have been. Actually, I am very intimate with these souls; I may have even been one of them. But that time seems so distant now.

Chapter 2: Mumbie Prehistoric

Mumbie is born into a clan of twelve on the plains somewhere above the equator, where it cycles from hot, dry days to frigid, snowy, and difficult days. She is a strong but small baby who, moments after her birth, stares with recognition into her mother's eyes. Her mother gazes back with the same familiarity. Their bond is old, and even though her mother is young, she proves to be quite capable and clever as Mumbie's caretaker.

These first, fragile weeks, our newly inducted spirit guide, Grace, hovers about Mumbie, filled with a sense of awe. Grace is aware of Mumbie's intentions, as well as her own hopes for this tiny being.

In the dark of night when Mumbie awakens, not really hungry, she looks into the space around her for Grace because she can actually see her. And when Mumbie spots Grace, she contentedly falls back into a sound sleep.

Mumbie is an expressive baby. Her mother is sometimes frustrated trying to figure out why she cries so loudly, but it is just that during the day, Mumbie has difficulty seeing Grace. Mumbie loves her mother, but when Grace is nearby, where Mumbie can see her, she feels warm and full of peace.

Grace understands what Mumbie is going to face. She knows that this dream of human life will feel real to Mumbie. Physical hardships are part of the order of things on primitive earth; seeking physical comfort is second only to finding enough to eat.

Mumbie's mother, Aye, and Aye's sister, Kirka, are learning from their elders about herbs and other plants: what soothes a toothache, what purges tainted food, what coaxes an infected wound to heal. Much of what they learn is of an intuitive nature, like holding a plant in their hand and feeling repulsion, or ease, or warmth.

Aye and Kirka take many walks about the plains, usually along with Aye's son, Kombi, and two older women who joined the clan many years ago. On sunny, breezy days, Aye straps Mumbie to her back, gathers some skin sacks in which to carry their finds, and happily follows the older women. Mumbie loves these days too. She giggles and gurgles, bouncing on her mother's back, feeling the sun on her skin and the lovely, lovely air moving about her toes. She loves these long walks almost as much as the short trips to the creek, where her mother carefully lowers Mumbie's well-muscled little body into the water, allowing her to kick and squeal with delight.

As Mumbie grows, Grace is always with her, her love for Mumbie total, infinite, no matter what Mumbie does. When Mumbie is sad, she speaks to Grace, using her people's name for the mystical, Great Spirit. And Grace fills Mumbie with her own light so that the girl can feel her presence.

When Mumbie is older, she struggles with the fact that she is so small; it becomes apparent that she is below average for their clan. In fact, she hears others speaking about this very subject. One afternoon as the men are coming back from a hunt, one of the them sees his boy playing with Mumbie and tells him, "Boy, she is no good for you! She is scrawny, small. You stay away."

Another time she hears the one who mated with her mother: "Mumbie will not get a good mate. Mumbie is a runt."

As time passes, it becomes clear even to her that she may have a hard time finding a mate. Most of the men and boys avoid her. When she asks her mother about it, Aye tells her, "Mumbie says things Mumbie shouldn't."

She is so plucky. She speaks up to her mother and the other women and, occasionally, to the males—even when it means a harsh slap, or worse. But she can't help it. Something rises in her that she can't ignore, something that just must be said, for the squelching of it is more painful than the consequences.

Mumbie asks a question at the campfire, where the men are telling boastful stories of their hunt. As they talk about the big deer they lost, she suddenly asks the one who mated with her mother, "Why did you not circle behind deer, close the hole that allowed it to escape?" Her arms are flailing through the air to illustrate.

He takes his spear and thrusts it violently into the ground, angered by Mumbie's disrespect, and with his black hair flying from his ragged face, he stomps over to her. She rapidly curls into a ball, covering her vulnerable front, and braces herself for what's to come.

As he beats her, he loudly asks the stars, "Why did the boy with Aye die and she, the bad one, live?"

Once he leaves the circle, Aye holds Mumbie.

Grace rushes reassuring light into the girl, as do Sherman, Spencer, and Guinevere. During times of suffering, these four guardians support each other's humans with extra energy. They hope the humans know that they are never forsaken, that their guardians will never turn their backs. The guardians hope the humans will feel their presence and treat themselves gently, telling themselves not to give up.

Aye often wonders why Mumbie makes her own life so difficult. She can't understand where the girl's boldness comes from.

The males are often gone, hunting for food, for several days at a time. The females just gather more roots and berries when they run out of meat. Aye throws the roots into the campfire until they are edible, and she mashes the sour berries with the sweet tree fruit to make them taste better.

The day comes when Grace presses an idea into Mumbie's thoughts, knowing her deepest desires. You will teach, Mumbie. Clans will learn from you.

When this happens, Mumbie is playing with a toddler who was born to Kirka the previous summer. Mumbie has grown strong and lean, and even though she's still below average height, she is close to being fully grown. In the lighthearted moment when she hears Grace's words, she immediately stops; she feels a little pitching in her stomach, an unease, hearing these words from the Great Spirit, but at the same time, she feels excitement. She picks up the child and hands her to Kirka, and then she turns and walks off toward the woods to be alone.

Aye calls after her, "Mumbie, come back!" but she doesn't respond. Aye knows it won't do any good to call again. Aye knows that Mumbie listens to something inside her—other voices—and that the voices of the clan do not carry as much weight. She goes back to her packing; soon they will break camp and head for land with a deep cave where they can stay out the winter.

The open, grassy plains provide no protection from the icy winds of winter. The grass is drying out, the trees in the distance are losing their leaves in a fiery blaze of color, the earth is smelling musty, and it is a long walk to their winter camp.

Once in the woods, Mumbie finds a nice, smooth rock under a small canopy of trees, brushes the damp leaves away, and sits to think about this new idea. It would be dangerous to bring it up to the clan; they would think she is crazy. In her clan, women only take care of the children, gather plants for eating or healing, make skins wearable, and help the men prepare the meat. Women do not teach except to show their daughters how to do these tasks.

Mumbie, sitting on the rock in the woods, closes her eyes.

As she rests there quietly, she has a vision—she sees herself working the soil with others who look different than the people of her clan, and they are all smiling. She is doing things with sticks and wood that she has never seen done before. She feels purposeful.

Grace, as a brilliant blue butterfly, lands gently on her knee, hoping Mumbie will see her as an omen of better things to come. As Mumbie continues to sit, eyes closed, wondering what her vision means, peace replaces her anxiety.

Finally she opens her eyes, and her gaze falls on the beautiful butterfly.

What does this mean? she wonders. This butterfly that comes to Mumbie. And this big dream comes to Mumbie. Mumbie sees magic.

The Great Spirit is letting her know she is to do something important. The idea galvanizes her. This will be her quest, to find out what this vision prophesied. She will keep asking, *What? Great Spirit, what is Mumbie to be? What is Mumbie to do?*