Book of the Month II

At the Turning of the Wall

A Story of Quest and Redemption

By Arthur Hagopian

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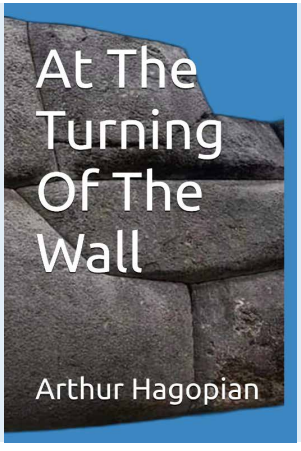


The magnificent megalithic structures at Peru's Machu Picchu form the background inspiration for this new fantasy by Australian Armenian author, Arthur Hagopian. A thousand years ago, a mysterious people set about building a megalithic city within a city, and named it Quatzatollen. Driven by the urge to unravel its secrets, Golod, a popular teacher and accomplished builder, embarks on a quest, trailed by Miraqanda, an accidental traveler, a lost, victimized youth seeking redemption.

The trek turns out to be far from a walk in the park, each milestone and signpost leading them into greater serendipity, the serendipity helping forge the bond between the two disparate characters. Golod and Miraqanda will eventually stumble upon the city but find out that its massive gate is opened only once a year, its access restricted to children. And birds. They can fly at will over the walls: Who can stop them?

Miraqanda proves a fascinating, though sometimes difficult companion, a challenge for Golod who takes it upon himself to point the way for him to recognize himself and uncover his hidden talents. And when the other three motivated people appear on stage, the road is paved for Golod and Miraqanda to attain their mission in life. Bonnaseret the Dean of the College, Akapea the shrewd artist and businessman, and Johan the master builder, all join in facilitating the attainment of the two seekers' vision.

As an architect, Golod's unbridled vision is translated into concrete reality with the creation of a skylight on the roof of the Big City museum, an unheard-of feat at the time. As a teacher, he helps his students soar to new heights of creativity, and inculcates in them the concept of sharing and human kindness, in the process winning over the rudderless class bully and entrusting him with the care and protection of his blind classmate. For himself, he desires very little, his footsteps raising not even the slightest plume of dust as he traverses his highway of life.



It is this intrinsic abiding humanity of the characters that comes most into focus and pervades the undertone of the book. As when Golod helps a developmentally disabled child to climb out of darkness into the fascinating world of reading and books, and Miraqanda saves the life of a homeless girl, and an itinerant healer prevents the death of the wolf sharing her cave. Perhaps one of the most endearing characters in the book is Golod's blind student to whom the trees speak of their joys and fears as he walks barefoot in the forest.

Arthur Hagopian has served in several countries as a teacher and journalist. He is the author of two books on Jerusalem, a reconstruction of the life and times of Jesus, a history of classical Arabic literature, a couple of fantasies, and a string of children's books. He has also acted as a consultant on the Canadian 3D IMAX production, "Jerusalem the Movie." He is married and has two children and three grandchildren. Born in the Armenian Quarter of the Old City of Jerusalem, he currently resides in Australia, where he spends his free time building cardboard models of ships, castles, and haunted houses for children.

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