



# JENNIFER OAKS

## Treasures of the Unseen

UNDER THE SOUL SERIES





# TREASURES OF THE UNSEEN

UNDER THE SOUL SERIES

BOOK ONE

JENNIFER OAKS

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**Treasures of the Unseen**

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*“Everything is temporary, emotions, thoughts, people and scenery. Do  
not become attached, just flow with it.”*

— PRINCE EA

## PROLOGUE

### THE PINK TREE

“Daddy! Mommy home!” Gabrielle shouted, relieved to hear the roaring of her mother’s car coming in the driveway. She had spent the last few days looking out the window, wondering when her mother would be back.

Without hesitation, she ran to the front door. Her little toes lifted her body, and her ginger curls bounced to the feel of her excitement. She grabbed the doorknob, twisted it, and ran outside.

“Wait... Wait for me...” her father said, running behind her.

Gabrielle barely gave her mother a moment to set down her bags before rushing over and squeezing her leg. Each tiny toe-lift brought her closer, her bangs bouncing with every step.

“Oh, my beautiful Pumpkin! Come here and give Mommy a hug. Hmm... you smell like strawberry shortcake. Did you have your bath?”

“Mmm-hmm.”

“And your new dress too!”

“Mmm-hmm.”

Her mother tilted her head. “You did.”

Though her dress was half tucked into her leggings, she twirled as if she had spent half a day getting ready for the most important rehearsal of her life.

“For dance! Member? You said!”

“Of course I remember. How could I forget?”

John moved closer, his arm encircling his wife’s waist before leaning in to kiss her. “Welcome home, sweet ballerina. Let me give you a hand.” He grabbed the luggage and carried it inside.

“Mommy!” Gabrielle tugged at her mother’s dress—five, six times. “Mommy, pleeeeeease! Dance!”

“You want to see my new moves?” Charlotte climbed the front set of stairs and walked through the unfinished entry. “We learned so much in such a short time my head still spins.”

Gabrielle’s brow furrowed at the unfamiliar word. “Ssspippiin?”

They stepped into the living room, where the notes of classical music mingled with the scent of freshly cut flowers.

“Kin kin!” Gabrielle shouted, her hands up in the air, ready for the swirls. At three years old, she couldn’t quite say her full nickname correctly, and her squeaky version always made her mother smile.

“Yes,” Charlotte said, eyes following her daughter’s arms.

“Spin, spin, my little Kin Kin.”

And they danced for what seemed like hours, their rhythm only broken by the ringing phone.

John walked into the kitchen, eyes fixed on his wife and daughter, and brought the receiver to his ear.

“Hello, John speaking.”

“Hi, Mr. Arseneault. It’s Dr. Scott. May I speak to your wife?”

“Is something wrong?”

“I’m afraid I cannot speak to you—patient confidentiality.”

“Oh, okay. I understand. Just a second.”

John set the phone down and walked into the living room. The sun was setting, casting strong reddish hues across the room. “Honey, there’s someone on the line for you.”

“Who is it?”

“Dr. Scott.”

Charlotte’s face went pale. Whiter than a winter night. She let go of Gabrielle’s hands and clutched her stomach.

“Are you okay?” John asked.

Without answering, she walked into the kitchen and picked up the phone. Pressing a hand to her chest, she searched for a breath that refused to come.

“Hi, Charlotte, Dr. Scott. I’m afraid I have bad news. The results came back, and they aren’t encouraging.”

Charlotte looked at her husband, unable to speak. Her knees buckled, and she collapsed onto the unvarnished floor.

“Hello? Hello?” the doctor’s voice echoed in the silence.

“It’s me, Dr.,” John mumbled.

“I will need to see your wife. Please have her come to my office first thing tomorrow morning.”

“I’ll pass on the message.”

The line went silent.

John knelt beside Charlotte, wordless, wrapping his arms around her. He ran his hand through her hair and welcomed the tears.

Gabrielle walked up slowly, hands behind her back. “Why Mommy sad?”



John pulled his daughter close and held her tight. "It will be alright, Pumpkin... it will be alright."



"She is so young... I have fought with all my heart John, but... but I can't anymore. I will miss her terribly. Such a beautiful life I will miss," Charlotte said, with water in her eyes. "I'm so sorry. There is nothing else I can do but breathe and let go. But why is this happening? I don't know. It is impossible to understand such fate. She doesn't deserve to grow up without a mother by her side. Maybe I should've taken the medication..."

"Shh... Don't torture yourself. You did what was best. I am proud of you."

"I thought I could fight this thing on my own."

"And you did. Honey, you were brave and fought this with all your heart. You handled it with such grace. For you, and for her. Now if you feel it is time to let go, breathe and do so. You will be dearly missed, but your spirit will remain with us. Always."

"Thank you. I love you so much."

He left a soft kiss on her forehead. "I love you too, darling."

As the moment drew closer, she allowed the inner peace to wash away her fear and regret. "Bring her to me," she whispered.

John stood up and called for Gabrielle. A few seconds later, she appeared in the doorway. Uneven wrinkles marred the hem of her polka-dot dress, one sleeve slipping off her shoulder. A smear of pink icing curved like a question mark

across her belly, and the red ribbon her mother had gifted her slightly twisted—but still proud.

“Yes, Mommy?”

“Come here,” Charlotte said.

With John’s help, Gabrielle climbed onto the bed next to her mother.

“Do you recall where you were before you had me as your mommy?”

“Yes,” she replied.

“How was it?”

Gabrielle mingled her tiny fingers together, pressed her arms on the mattress, and gazed at the empty space between her and the ceiling. “Oh, it was beautiful. White. Sunny. Always happy.”

“I think that is where Mommy is going.”

“Me too?”

“No, not for now, Pumpkin. Not for now.” She reached for Gabrielle’s hands. “You still have plenty of things to do and games to play. You have more love to feel and more love to give. One day, you’ll grow into a beautiful young woman, and you will amaze the world with whom you are. And remember, no matter where I am, I’ll always be with you. I’ll remain forever seated by the light in your heart.”

Tears welled up in Gabrielle’s eyes, each hesitant to meet her cheeks.

“But Mommy, will we dance again?”

“If you close your eyes, I’ll be right there, and we’ll dance till the sun goes down.”

“Until I fall asleep?”

“Until you fall asleep.”

“You promise?”

“I promise.”

The little girl leaned in for one last hug. “I love you, Mommy.”

“I love you too, Pumpkin.”

After releasing the embrace, Gabrielle wiped a tear from her mother’s face and whispered into her ear, “If you feel lonely, look for the pink tree and the bench. I was there, and I was never alone.”

Charlotte smiled softly, brushing Gabrielle’s curls from her face. “I know, my love... I know. You were never alone.”



## THIRTEEN YEARS

“G  
abrielle! Your taxi is here. Do you need help?” John asked at the bottom of the old maple staircase.

Gabrielle shouted from her bedroom. “No Daddy, I’m fine. Give me a moment, I’m coming down.”

Even if thirteen years had passed, the memory of her last moment with her mother was as clear as spring water. She looked at her reflection in the mirror above her desk and wiped a tear from her face.

“We’ll dance till the sun goes down,” she heard. The voice was soft, familiar, comforting—like the taste of freshly baked bread, still warm from the oven, topped with a pat of sweet, melting butter.

Behind her reflection stood Charlotte—young and beautiful, just as she was back then.

“Mom? I miss you so much,” Gabrielle said. She wanted to turn around and hold her one more time, but knew too well the vision wasn’t real.

Charlotte raised her arm, her fingertips brushing Gabrielle’s shoulder. “All will be fine, Kin Kin. I know it

wasn't easy growing up without a mother. I'm sorry. You've had your share of darkness, but I'm afraid we can't go without it. I came to tell you something before you leave. You are strong—but don't forget to listen to your heart. It will guide you far better than anything else."

Charlotte's ghost faded.

"Mommy, wait... I... I don't feel the light in my heart anymore. What happened? Did it go with you? How can I find it again?"

"Follow the signs. Pay close attention," Charlotte said, just before her reflection disappeared.

"No... don't leave." Gabrielle lowered her head, covering her eyes with trembling hands. "I need you..."

With emotions pressing from every angle, Gabrielle took a few seconds to retouch her makeup. She didn't want her smeared eyes to raise questions—the transition was already heavy enough for her and her father. She retrieved the red ribbon from the top drawer, the faint scent of sandalwood clinging to it, and bound her hair in a high ponytail.

She walked to the other side of the bed and gazed out at the playground where she had spent her childhood, its rusty swings swaying violently in the wind. Dark clouds pushed north, promising a massive storm. The echoes of laughter, scraped knees, and small victories seemed to rise from the earth itself, carrying both warmth and longing. Each memory, more vivid than the last, was carefully preserved, like autumn leaves pressed between the pages of a book.

Before Gabrielle was born, John and Charlotte had made an offer on this two-story cottage, its white picket fence already weathered by time. Since the owner had passed, the bank was only interested in the minimum payment to close the loan. The deal was too good to refuse.

Imperfect as it was, the house thrummed with the promise of renewed life—laughter and dreams waiting to be made real within its walls. John had dreamed of renovating it, pouring his hope and plans into what could be, while Charlotte pursued her ambitions as a professional ballet dancer. But as time went on, and his hair grew greyer, his dream never came to pass.

Suitcase in hand, Gabrielle walked down the stairs to where her father waited. To her surprise, he looked much older than he actually was.

“Your ride is waiting outside,” her father said. “I told him you’d be there in a few minutes. I must say I’m glad our neighbor agreed to take you to the airport. You know it’s been forever since I drove out of town.”

Gabrielle noticed his hands tucked deep within the worn, rough pockets of his trousers.

“It’s alright, Daddy. Everything’s gonna be fine.” She knew him well enough to catch the hint of concern in his eyes.

After the death of his wife, John had somehow felt inadequate to take on the emotional challenge of raising a little girl on his own. He had been genuinely competent in the more stereotypical male role and had seen great success in providing a roof, food, clothes and a helping hand for school, but when it came down to the harsh internal logistics of understanding the emotional waves of a human being, he more often than not bailed from it.

“Do you have everything you need?” John said, swirling his foot on the hardwood floor, mimicking the movement of his thoughts. His eyes, restless too, never came up to meet Gabrielle’s.

“Don’t worry, Daddy,” Gabrielle said, touching her father’s

arm. "If I need anything, I have someone I can ask. Nadia is a great friend."

"Good. I guess I'll be seeing you next summer, then," he said, reaching for Gabrielle's suitcase.

"For sure. I'll stay for a couple of months. This will give us some time to catch up." With a playful whiff, she smiled from the corner of her eye. "Take care of yourself, Daddy... and don't do anything stupid."

"If by 'stupid' you mean doing anything at all, don't worry—I'm way above that."

The sound of their laughter carried through the hall.

"Daddy?"

"Yes, Pumpkin?"

"Whatever you do, don't blame yourself, okay? You've been a remarkable father—and one hell of a mother. I know today isn't easy. I have my share of uncomfortable feelings right now, and I don't quite know what to do with them. But I know you both loved me more than I'll ever be able to love myself. Thank you for that." She jumped into his unready arms. "I love you so much, Daddy."

He clung to the suitcase in one arm and Gabrielle in the other.

"I love you too."

A strong wind made its way into the house, pushing through the front door and taking down the coat rack. The sound of the metal slamming the wooden floor caught them off guard. It was not unusual for this part of the land, but somehow this one felt different. The screen door bounced against the wall, making John smile.

"Must be your mother coming to wish you good luck. I remember how she used to rush into the house when she had



something exciting to say, leaving the door open. This sound used to drive me crazy. It's funny how it's those little things you miss the most."

"Are you gonna be okay, Daddy?"

"Yeah, I'll be fine. You know, I've never been too good with all this," John said, his hand gesturing at the space in front of his chest. "Now that you're going, I'm suddenly thinking about my life. This house was my dream. Your mother wandered around the world, and that was fine with me. Watching her shine made me happy. What I realize now is that I embraced her dream but left mine on the side. Even after she left, I still felt too guilty to do anything. But today it's different. Today I want to."

"That's great! Know that you have both our permissions to do as you please with the house," Gabrielle said.

He raised his eyebrows. "I never thought I needed permission for that, but thanks. It feels good. So... at what time is your flight?"

"One-forty-five. I'll land at around eight-forty. I'll text you before bed."

"Yeah, that would be nice. You know, your old father is still worried about his little girl."

John walked out of the house, stood on the porch, and filled his lungs with a deep breath. Gabrielle followed.

After greeting their neighbor, John opened the backseat door. Gabrielle climbed in, and he placed her suitcase beside her, closing the door gently before leaning on the open window.

"Have a safe trip."

"Thanks, Daddy."

As the car drove away, she watched the house—and her

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father—disappear into the distance. She leaned back against the worn leather seat, letting the hum of the road carry her forward.

## THIRTY THOUSAND FEET

Gabrielle stepped out of the car, a rush of euphoria flooding her body. It was 1 p.m., yet the horizon had dimmed into an eerie green, hovering with strange intention. Heavy clouds pressed low, swallowing the distance. Even the wind seemed to join the moment, its sharp gusts tugging at loose objects, rattling doors, stirring up anxieties.

With a thank you to their neighbour, Gabrielle left the car and took in the scene. Her stress level went up like a child on their first day of swimming lessons.

Small planes waited patiently, a faint shimmer clinging to their wings, as if they knew the secret path to an unclaimed future.

Behind it stood the control tower, bold in deep blue, squinting at the horizon through its glassy eyes. It wasn't a fancy airport. Not even comfortable. In all honesty, it was quite forgettable, if not for the views. But to really see it all, you'd have to be flying, which Gabrielle had never done before.

Around her, the ground crew members moved in, heads

down, voices clipped as the first growl of thunder rolled in like a throat clearing in warning.

She held on to her ticket—her boarding pass folded tight in her hand. Montreal was only a quick hop away, but it might as well have been another universe. She glanced one last time over her shoulder at the stretch of land and sea she called home for just long enough to fall in love with it all over again.

She grabbed her bag and stepped through the front door, finding herself face to face with the only check-in counter in the building.

“One suitcase, Ma’am?”

“Yes. That will be all, thank you.”

The agent glanced at the pass, tapped a few keys on his keyboard, and said something that sounded very much like:

*“Yup, you’re off to the big city, Ma’am.”*

“Thank you,” Gabrielle said, before turning away to face the waiting room.

She eyed the boarding screen, her flight coming into view. Forty-five minutes until takeoff.

“Now what?” she whispered, drifting toward the seating area.

She sat down, tucked her bag behind her head, and closed her eyes.

“Pay attention,” she heard. “Follow the signs,” the voice continued.

Gabrielle opened her eyes.

The voice wasn’t her mother’s ghost this time.

Before her stood an old woman with long straight white hair, a purple trench coat, and black vintage rubber boots.

Startled, Gabrielle gripped the arms of her chair.

“Don’t be afraid, my child. Don’t be afraid.”

Gabrielle glanced around, hoping no one had witnessed the scene.

...They had.

And judging by their baffled looks, they seemed grateful the strange old woman had chosen a different target for her... cosmic theatrics.

Inside the hood of her raincoat, the old woman's face somehow seemed smooth and incredibly soft. Gabrielle thought she looked like a modern witch who had traded her superpowers for longevity. But even from her certain age, she hadn't lost her inner child's spirit. She was wearing deep plum lipstick and smoky eyeshadow. And more impressively, looked good doing so.

The old woman leaned closer and whispered, "What's your name?"

"Gabrielle."

"Oh, sweet child. This is a remarkable name. I bet your mother loved you very much to give you such a name."

"Yes, she did," Gabrielle said, still looking around.

The old lady sat next to her, her coat dangling onto Gabrielle's chair. To avoid the touch, Gabrielle held on with a full grip, sitting herself up and leaning slightly to her right.

"My name is Dorothy. I'm traveling to see my grandson. He just had heart surgery. The doctors didn't know if he was going to make it, but he did. I'm so proud of him. Unlike me, he has his whole life in front of him. Well, here I am rambling about my story. But what about you, young lady? Where's the wind taking you today?"

"I'm going away to study dancing."

"Oh, that is lovely," the old lady said. "Ballet?"

"No. My mother studied ballet, but I wanted to try contemporary dance."

"That must be something. How about I take out my cards and do a little reading for you before you go?"

"That won't be necessary, thank you," Gabrielle said.

"Oh, it's on me. It's been so long since I did a reading. I always carry a deck with me just in case," Dorothy said, looking into her bag. Her eyes lit up. "Ah, there you are."

"Why not?" The cards had sparked the old lady's passion, and Gabrielle didn't want to ruin the moment.

"Just close your eyes and think about a question or concern you might have. Something you would like more clarity on."

"Okay. Got it."

Dorothy mixed the cards and dropped the deck on her left thigh. With her right hand, she turned the first card from the deck. The Tower. "Oh my goodness," she said.

"What?" Gabrielle asked, moving to the edge of her seat, her eyes wanting more.

"You, my lady, are in for a little surprise. This card means that you are going to experience some radical changes through unexpected upheaval. Your world might fall apart, and you might feel confused, but go through it knowing something good is waiting for you on the other side. Just dance with the storm. One day soon, you'll look back and be glad it happened."

"What's the change? When will it happen?"

"My dear, no one can say, not even the cards. The Tower only suggests a sudden, unexpected incident that will change the course of your life. For a moment, you won't be able to tell which way is up and which way is down. What you must remember is that whatever happens, you are in the heart of it, experiencing the good and the bad. Don't forget, everything works together to bring you closer to your—"

A voice resonated through the main speaker, stopping Dorothy's reading. "All passengers on the flight to Montreal should proceed to gate five for boarding."

Gabrielle stood. "Well, I guess this is me."

"Enjoy your flight little one, and good luck with everything," the old lady said with a full smile.

"It was nice meeting you. Pass my best wishes on to your grandson."

"I will, my dear. I will."

Gabrielle followed the line to the plane, passed through the narrow hallway, and found her assigned seat. Beside the window, she sat down, lost in her thoughts about the old woman's story.

"A sudden change? A radical shift? Of course—I'm moving to a new city. I can't believe I almost fell for it." With a roll of her eyes, she smirked at her own gullibility.

As passengers gained their seats, Gabrielle turned her gaze outside and stared at the ominous clouds. The thought of seeing the entire world through this tiny window suffocated her. She took a deep breath and closed her eyes. Whatever Dorothy's card had predicted, she wasn't ready to watch it unfold from 30,000 feet.

## SAFE LANDING

The plane landed on time, and with the quick wash of relief came a revelation: the skies might have been her mother's joy, but they would never be hers. She much preferred the smooth, comforting rhythm of ground transportation. Less safe in theory, perhaps, but the wheels against the earth offered her the illusion of safety she needed.

When the plane screeched to a halt, she quickly stood, the smell of jet fuel thick in the air. She edged politely through the line of passengers, eager to step off at the first chance.

Once outside, she gave Nadia a call.

"Hey, it's me! Just landed."

"Awesome. The chauffeur should be there. Do you see him?"

Gabrielle looked around.

"Yup, I see him. Did he come up with the idea of the pink sparkling cardboard with my name on it?"

She laughed. "No, that was my idea. What, you don't like it?"

"It's perfect."



"I knew you'd like it. See ya in a bit!"

The chauffeur opened the door and carried Gabrielle's luggage to the back of the car.

Thirty minutes later, they arrived at Nadia's apartment.

Nadia's family owned the entire block—old houses squeezed tight against one another, their big windows framed by reddish-brown brick walls. One by one, they were being restored, and Nadia's was the first to shine with new life.

The chauffeur left the lights flashing, stepped out, and opened the door. Luggage in hand, he followed Gabrielle. They walked up the stairs to the second level. She pressed the doorbell—the brass cool beneath her fingertip—and a sharp electronic ping cut through the silence.

As soon as Nadia's dog heard the ring, he came rushing to the door, barking with excitement.

Nadia opened.

"Oh, Gaby, it's so nice to see you!"

The chauffeur dropped the suitcase by the door and walked out. He got in his car and drove away, leaving Gabrielle slightly confused.

"Don't worry about him—he doesn't talk much. Unlike this furry ball! His name's Mozart, by the way. The dog, I mean! And I think he already likes you."

Gabrielle knelt to pet him, savoring the warmth of his fur beneath her fingers.

"So, how was your trip? You must be exhausted," Nadia said.

"I'm okay, thanks. But I think I could definitely use a shower."

"Of course. Let me show you around, and then I'll leave you to it."

Gabrielle followed her as she weaved around Mozart's rubber toys scattered on the floor.

"This is the living room. Or if you prefer, Mozart's playground," she said, patting the top of his head. "Yes, Mommy's talking about you. You're a good boy. Oh yes, you are."

Gabrielle looked toward the living room windows. Squeezed between the curtains was an old wooden bench, topped with colorful throw pillows. She liked the one that read: *You are gorgeous*. She moved closer to take in the view—broad trees created shade and offered enough privacy for comfortable daydreaming sessions. A feature she knew she'd be using a lot.

They walked to the other side of the apartment, where the bedrooms were kept separate from the open-space layout.

"And here's your room. What do you think?"

The bedroom was on the small side, with a tall narrow window overlooking a red brick wall from the other building. She immediately noticed Nadia's vibrant decoration style. Crisp white walls flashing against the congo pink top duvet, an orangish tone of what seemed to be Nadia's favorite color: pink. The closet doors had been removed to provide more space, and on the right side of the bed, a three-drawer cabinet doubled as a nightstand and a dresser. Hand-painted black, with shiny gold knobs, it gave the room a bohemian feel.

"I like it a lot," Gabrielle replied.

"Alright, the bathroom is just in front, right there. Your towel's hanging behind the door. Let me know if you need anything."

"You're a lifesaver."

"Thank me later. Did you know my parents placed a bet on how long I could keep a roommate?" Nadia said with a wink,

holding up her dog like a newborn baby. "I'll be in the kitchen if you need anything."

Gabrielle put her suitcase on the bed, took out her phone charger, and plugged in her phone.

*Hey Daddy. I made it! Good night. xx*

She pressed send and walked to the bathroom for a quick shower and new clothes. When she got out, she found Nadia in the kitchen crafting an evening snack. Mozart was sitting on one of the two bar stools, supervising the operation.

"Feeling better?"

"Oh yes. Much better. Hmm... it smells amazing! What is it?"

"Hope you're hungry."

"Starving!"

"I'm making my focaccia recipe. Well... it was actually my grandmother's, but I've added a few twists of my own. Let's eat before it cools," Nadia said, as Mozart's little tail wagged with excitement.

"Careful, Mozart—this one's for Gaby!"

"Wow, it's incredible. I've never tasted anything like this. You're becoming a hot mama, that's for sure."

"I know, right?" Nadia took a basket full of that delicious bread and walked to the living room. "So, are you ready for tomorrow?"

"How ready do I need to be?"

"You haven't heard?"

"Heard what?"

"We are going to be tested."

"Tested? What do you mean? We already went through days of auditions. Why would they do that?"

"To make sure we're all on the same page, I guess?"

"Well, in that case, no, I'm not ready." Gabrielle gave a nervous laugh. "Are you?"

"Are you crazy? I've been ready since the day I moved out of my parent's house. And believe me, I ain't going back."

"Well, I'd better get some rest if I don't want to be the first one back at the family home."

"But it's not even late."

"I'm solar-powered, remember?" Gabrielle yawned, quickly covering her mouth with her hand. "And it was a rough day."

"Alright then. Sweet dreams." Nadia picked up their plates and carried them to the kitchen. "Oh, before you go—I should mention I'm leaving early tomorrow. Erick's taking me out for breakfast before class, so we won't go together. Sorry."

"Sounds romantic. Don't worry about me; I'll be alright. We'll see each other in class."


"Have a good night."

"You too. And thanks for the snack."

"My pleasure."

Gabrielle walked to her room, and with barely enough energy to close the door behind her, she collapsed on the bed. The phone screen glowed from her nightstand, illuminating a single reply from her father—a heart. She tucked herself under the sheets and drifted off, forgetting to set her alarm.

TO BE CONTINUED...

Grab your copy on Amazon. 

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**JENNIFER OAKS** writes stories for seekers—fiction that blends the texture of real life with the soul's longing for meaning. Her work is layered with mystical whispers and hidden clues, inviting readers to trust what they feel as much as what they see.

She was eight years old when she first sat at her desk and wrote "Love Stories" across a blank page. The dream whispered again in high school when she won second place in a writing contest—a red ribbon she would later weave into *Treasures of the Unseen*. But it was *The Alchemist* that turned it all into a calling, and writing became the work of her heart.

Jennifer has moved 33 times in 45 years before returning home to French-speaking Eastern Canada, where she lives as a mother of two and simple-living advocate drawn to curiosity, intuition, and the beauty woven into everyday life.

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