



Regiena Heringa

## Crenssen and the Earth Inside

The inhabitants of the mountains of mauve, the foothills and the meadowlands thought that the sacred forest of Mareithia was connected solely to the great road called the “Cheminaad,” that rambled down from the vast sea of Sevenaaz and dwindled as it turned south. But this was not entirely true.

Shimmering Mareithia had a secret passageway into the great lands within the earth. Thea, a young girl living on the inner edge of the great forest, had once voyaged inside the deep and magical land below. (See the story *Thea’s Voyage*). From inside its holy ground and high above in its glorious sky, great Mareithia’s forest and lake held a legend of miracles.

There were, however, some passageways into the inner earth *outside* of Mareithia’s woods and although many would deny the existence of these mysterious corridors, one boy’s adventure proved that they were real.

The boy’s name was Crenssen. He was thirteen earth years old, yet he looked only ten. At his birth there was great rejoicing as his parents had waited many years to finally have a child. He was an unusually small baby with very short arms and legs but he was gentle and loved by all. His mother, Morrienne, often spoke of his birth as a mystifying moment.

“He was born the night a brilliant full moon hung like a wheel of fire in the deep blue sky over Mareithia,” she would whisper to those around her. “When he first opened his eyes a ring of twelve stars formed around this moon-fire in the sky and I knew he would be named ‘Crenssen.’” (*Crenssen* in the ancient tongue means “of noble descent”).

Over the years, Crenssen’s body remained small, but his mind grew. His father, Oline, a traveller, was seldom at home. But when he did return from his foreign journeys, Crenssen sat spellbound near the cooking hearth and lived the stories his father told about wondrous animals that changed shape, rainbows that danced at night and shiny ships that flitted through the clouds.

Then one sunny day in early summer the thirteen-year-old boy had an adventure that would change him forever.

Crenssen had left the family dwelling before sunrise in order to breathe in the early mist and hobble his way down to the Cheminaad before the day warmed up. Over time, he had developed an interest in sketching and he secretly thought that he would enter the great woods of Mareithia and draw some of the fine oaks that graced the land there. If Crenssen had been totally honest he would have admitted that he felt rather sorry for himself. He was irritated that he was trapped in a body too small for him and that he would never be able to journey to other lands like his father. *If I can get to Mareithia perhaps I, too, will have an adventure and then I, too, will be able to tell great tales just like my father,* he thought.

But the great forest lay further away than Crenssen had calculated and after a long time of hobbling and limping, a heavy cloud of discouragement dropped down on him like a cold, grey cloth. He was tired and dusty and his drawing materials rattled in his bag like dried stones.

*There is no use going on,* despaired Crenssen sinking heavily into the edge of the road and plucking at a hard stem of some plant. *Mareithia is like a sweet dream. The closer you move towards it, the more it pulls away from you.*

“Well, I certainly wouldn’t say that,” called out a cheery, male voice from the other side of the Cheminaad. “Sweet dreams are like petting your favourite animal or drawing a beautiful tree. They are to be savoured and lived as long as possible.”

Crenssen’s disappointment shifted instantly to full alertness. He sat up and saw that across the way was a perfectly formed, healthy, smiling thirteen-year-old boy that looked just like him! His curiosity growing greater than his fear, Crenssen slowly approached his double who sat cross-legged near the roadside smiling and nibbling on a fresh green stalk of grass.

“Who are you?” asked Crenssen. He glanced around him and then up into the sky where he saw the wisp of a moon accompanied by several faint stars.

“My name is Paslinn and I live inside here.” He pointed with finely shaped fingers to the earth upon which he sat. “From time to time I come to the surface of your planet to encourage people by telling them secrets. I am here today for you.”

"I'm not discouraged," retorted Crenssen and instantly his heart divided itself into lies and truths.

"Hmmm," replied Paslinn smilingly. "It seems to me you are ready for an adventure." Crenssen's face suddenly beamed. Paslinn laughed out loud. "Come with me."

Crenssen hobbled after his twin friend suppressing an icy moment of envy as he watched Paslinn walk ing with such elegance and freedom.

"You will be just like me in a few minutes," responded Paslinn to Crenssen's unspoken feelings.

Within the time it takes a butterfly to open and close its patterned wings, Crenssen found himself in a wondrous place inside the earth. He hobbled with his friend through the beautiful gardens, feeling the sweet warmth of a gentle, shaded sun, and returning the smiles of kindness from the inhabitants. He even began to grasp snippets of their musical tongue: "ilnaameeri" and "smennia say-yine."

"I don't understand, Paslinn," said a very confused Crenssen. "Everyone here has a perfect body. Everyone here smiles and seems so good-natured. I recognize a little of their language. And you are a mirror likeness of me. What does it all mean? Why am I here?"

"Well, look at yourself," Paslinn answered with a grin.

Crenssen looked down and saw that his body was whole and beautifully proportioned. A wave of gratitude flowed over him and his heart grew big. His friend whispered affectionately in his right ear: *Crenssen, your sweet dream has opened up to you. Take hold of this dream with both hands and become it. You are upon this earth to grow into what you create. Always think thoughts of goodness and the universe will move its power into you. There is nothing finer in Creation than the gift of a sweet dream. If you become that which you long for, your world will smile back at you. Never forget this.*

For a moment, everything in Crenssen's mind went as blank as the snow in winter and then he found himself sitting once again in the grass beside the Cheminaad. Bewildered, he looked around. Everything looked normal...but not quite. The moon and its companion stars were

still peering through the sky, but his body was now and would forever be, strong and perfectly formed. Crenssen gasped with astonishment as he looked at it. How could this be? Slowly, the memory of his adventure with Paslenn came back to him and Crenssen finally understood: Everything was a dream and he could make the dream as beautiful and as real as he wished.

*What an astonishing tale I have for father,* he thought as he stood up nimbly. With a brisk step and a wide grin, Crenssen continued on to Mareithia. There were sketches to be made and dreams to be fulfilled...