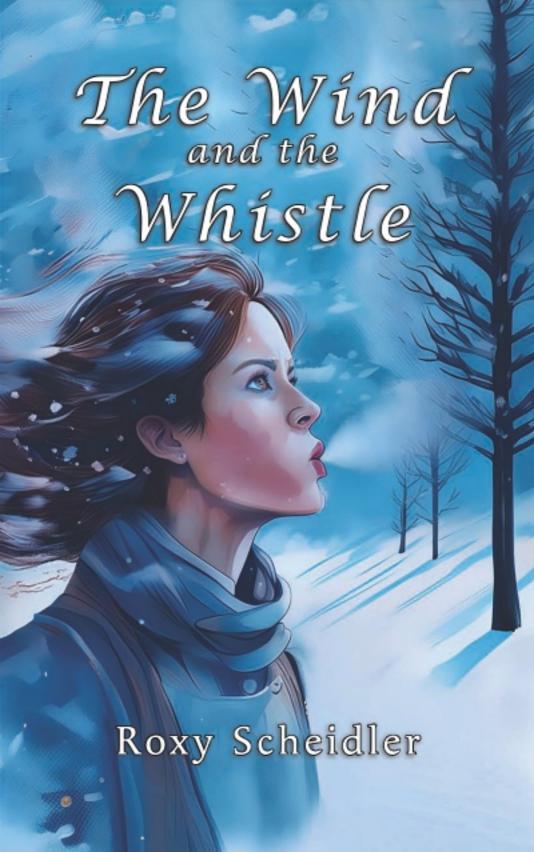


This is the first in a series of books of the Lawrence Elliot Maple family. Their large, grand old house and property will reveal its secrets, mysteries, and surprises. It is a fictional story with a heart.

The Wind and the Whistle By Roxy Scheidler

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Chapter One: THE BLUEBIRD SHOWS HIS TRUE COLORS

"Softly the evening came with the sunset."
-Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

The pretty girl smiled as she said aloud the words her mother had spoken to her many years before. She remembered well her mother's voice. The girl was thankful that Henry Wadsworth Longfellow had written those beautiful words.

If not for the poems and the words she had heard as a child, the earliest memories of her mother would have been long ago forgotten. The words had kept her mother's voice alive.

Stephanie Ruth Maple sighed as she looked through the kitchen window. Filling the sink with hot water and soap, the girl began washing the dinner dishes.

The beauty of the sunset streamed through the windows of the grand old house. The brilliant reds and oranges, pinks and golds began to shine brightly in the large kitchen. The first sign of the sun's evening display was beginning.

The girl smiled as the old dog Lucky came slowly into the kitchen. She patted the dog's head and walked out into the enclosed back porch which always smelled of apples to get the treats he liked. Lucky barked excitedly.

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There was no time for the girl to go outside and enjoy the wonder of the sunset. She was behind in her work. There were dishes to be washed, and the kitchen must be cleaned thoroughly.

Whether the girl was free to go outside and enjoy the beauty or whether she stayed inside and let the beauty come to her, it was all the same. The girl loved the sunset. This evening, she would watch streams of color as they created their magic inside the big old house.

Stephanie continued washing the dinner dishes as she looked out the window above the kitchen sink. She began to smile as the brilliant bluebird slowly began his own glorious evening display. The large glass figurine had sat proudly on the terrace of the house next door since before the girl was born.

When she was a little girl, she had laughed in delight each evening as the bluebird changed his colors. He became even more beautiful as the setting sun mixed with his already dazzling blue. Sometimes, she had pretended to hear the proud glass bird singing. The girl knew exactly how the melody would sound if he could.

The lovely glistening colors sparkled. The girl knew the bluebird enjoyed his brilliance. He was well aware that no bird looked as splendid as he did during the sunset.

Holding his head up high, the proud bluebird knew his moment had come. He radiantly displayed his true colors for all the world to see. He was the most beautiful bird in the world. The large glass bluebird figurine knew this, and the girl knew this, too.

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The girl and the bluebird both held their heads up higher during the beautiful sunset. The sun's rays seemed to energize both of them. Their evening's happiness was as brilliant as the sun itself.

"Enjoy your moment, my friend!" Stephanie said quietly as she gazed in wonder at the bluebird in all his glory. The large bluebird glass figurine was dazzling in his splendor.

No one was there beside her to share the moment. No one noticed the single tear which had run slowly down the girl's face.

The brilliant reds and oranges, pinks and golds mixed with the bluebird's already brilliant blue shone brightly inside the grand old house. The girl stood quietly as she looked through the kitchen window. She was certain each new sunset was the most beautiful of them all.

Too soon, the sun's vibrant colors had begun to fade. The girl felt sad, but it had been a glorious evening display.

When Stephanie had been a little girl, she had gone outside with her mother every evening. Of course, this was as the weather had permitted. Together, they had watched the sunset and the pretty bluebird as they burst forth with their lovely colors.

Sometimes, the sun had hurt the girl's eyes. Then, she and her mother would continue to watch the sunset through the beautiful bluebird as long as they could.

It was then her mother would tell her to smile at the pretty bluebird as he showed his true colors. The little girl had pretended

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she could see the bluebird smiling back at her. She knew the brilliant bluebird was pleased that the girl and her mother were watching.

The girl had a pleasant face. If she had any dreams of her own, they were well hidden, tucked away and not visible to anyone. The girl found her joy in finding the beauty of the moment and cherishing it.

This evening, she had no time to go outside the big old house and look at a sunset or to look for her dreams. The girl was content and found her happiness in what life had chosen to bring to her each day.

The girl smiled as she washed the dinner dishes. Once again, the large glass bluebird figurine on the terrace of the house next door had shown his true colors. Once again, the girl had listened as the melody of the bluebird had been sung into her heart.

Stephanie had often wondered if anyone else had been watching or listening each evening as the bluebird had his moment? She wondered if anyone else had ever seen the proud bluebird as he had shown his splendor to the world?

The girl only knew she and her mother had seen the large glass bluebird figurine as he had shown his true colors to the world, and they had listened to his lovely melody. It would remain forever in their hearts.

Lucky looked up at the girl as he padded out of the kitchen, through the swinging kitchen doors, and into the living room quietly.

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The old dog lay down at the bottom of the stairs. Everyone was constantly falling over him, but he had made up his mind that was where he wanted to sleep. Unless, of course, the old house was cold and there was a warm fire in the fireplace.

Stephanie continued her work. It would soon be dark in the house, and she turned the bright overhead light on in the kitchen. Looking out the window, the girl sighed as she scraped a heavy pan and then washed it. Soon everything was clean, dried, and put away.

The stove and the big old oak kitchen table were soon washed, and the kitchen was once again spotless. The sun had set, and the big old house was quiet. The girl smiled. The kitchen looked bright and cheery again. Like the glorious sunset, the kitchen, too, was sparkling. It had been a long day, but now it was evening.

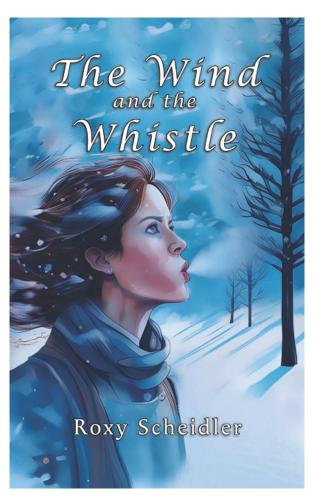
The girl thought of the beauty she had just experienced. Tonight's sunset had shone its colors vibrantly of reds and oranges, pinks and golds. The large glass bluebird figurine on the terrace of the house next door had never looked so radiant. His own brilliant blue color mixing with the sun's own vibrant colors had shown proudly for all the world to see.

Stephanie Ruth Maple smiled, but a single tear was still wet on her cheek. Once again, she had watched as the beautiful bluebird had his moment to shine.

"Let us, then be up and doing, with a heart for any fate; Still achieving, still pursuing, Learn to labor and to wait." The girl continued smiling as she spoke the words aloud, but it was her mother's voice she heard quoting Henry Wadsworth Longfellow and it strengthened her.

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Deep inside her heart the girl dreamed and wondered and yet understood, it was not quite yet her time to shine.



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