

The story of the House on the Hill – a gift!

This could be what happened...

Chesa Spuondas (Romansh for «House on the Hill») has already witnessed a great deal, in the same way as somebody who has seen a lot of the world. It learns about life and the world from the people entering and leaving it. The walls have ears and the windows have eyes. The mansion retains memories and stories and children's laughter. It breathes and thinks, it can rejoice and can sometimes even be quite angry. Every now and then it wishes it could speak. Then it waits for someone to come who understands its language.

Right from the outset the House on the Hill was something special. Its location had been carefully chosen: the back was to be protected and the front was to offer extensive views across the valley. The occupants should be able to breathe freely and allow their minds to wander. The windows should only reflect clouds and tall fir trees, and green and blue. The best craftsmen and artists were enlisted. They laid floors, created elaborate banisters, designed furniture, making the interior something exquisite, bit by bit. During its early days, lavish parties were held in the mansion, and many people came and went, bringing with them their stories and their friends. And everyone was happy and lively here.

A little girl loved the House on the Hill which belonged to her father. It was her castle and her best playmate. She knew every corner, every room, every nook and cranny. She understood every sound and every movement. The two spoke the same language and spent many wonderful years together. Later, when the young woman married, her father presented her with the house as a wedding gift. She could not have wished for anything better and nor could the house: what could be better than being a gift?



The woman moved into the house with her family. However, because times were different to the days of her childhood, there were not as many celebrations. Fewer guests came and the few guests who did come less often. Therefore, there was a part of the house which was always a little sad, and a part of the woman was too. The woman was a good person. She had a great deal, but she was very happy to share her wealth. She wanted to do something for the house and for herself, so she decided to give it away.

The house was to be opened up to many people again; particularly mothers, women who were perhaps sometimes on their own, or tired or poor, who did not have a house of their own or, if they did, certainly not such a large house. The woman sought advice from a man whose job it was to take care of others. Together, the two of them gave away a great deal of money, because the woman had lots of money and the man knew many people who were in desperate need. This is how the house finally passed to an organisation which ensured that, each year, those in need could benefit from spending time in this spacious house. This ethos has not changed at all since.

To this day, the House on the Hill continues to be a gift which still gives to others: a smile here and a good word there, a friendly gesture, a moment's peace, a room, a little time and, every evening, a sunset. This is how the story could have unfolded. Anyone wanting to know exactly what did happen simply has to be quiet for a moment before falling asleep. Then maybe the house will tell them more of its story.

Chesa Spuondas was bequeathed to Pro Juventute in 1963 and has been operated by Pro Juventute as a hotel since then.