



Ariadne called to Theseus...and he heard her call.

He must have known he was being called by something beyond himself, something beyond the comforts and safety of the world he knew. Why would he listen to such a dream? Why does anyone listen to such a call? Theseus was the grandson of a king. In a time when survival was not easy, when hardship and death came often and early, Theseus lived a privileged life. What would open him to hear a call that would change his life entirely? Why listen to a voice that called him to set off on a long, uncomfortable and dangerous journey? Why didn't he throw his cat off the bed and pull the covers over his head? What would make him want to listen to a voice that was destined to utterly change him and his world? What calls someone out of the known and into the unknown?

I suppose that being the rumored son of a god would have some effect on a young man. And yes, I know, this was the time of heroes and great destinies. And still I wonder, what draws a hero forward? What pulls someone from comfort and safety into the unknown, into possible, even probable death? What calls your hero forward?

Ariadne called to Theseus...and he answered her call.

He answered the call by stepping into a new relationship with himself, with his family and with his world. The only way he could answer the call was to become who he was destined to be. First, he had to let go of who he thought he was and the beliefs he held as that person. It was his first heroic act. Did he do it for Ariadne? I don't believe so. Would you give up everything, including the person you were, for a misty being in a dream? I might for the dream itself, but then I would be doing it for what the dream offered me, not for the person who sent me the dream. It is a fine line I know and yet it is a line. Are heroes called forth for others or for themselves? Do we step into heroic acts because our hearts call us to? Or do we step into heroic acts because a dream or a need calls us to? Is there a difference? Can we serve our own hearts 100% and at the same time serve a dream or a community 100%? I believe Theseus believed so.

Ariadne called to Theseus... and he began the hero's journey.

He must have believed mightily in himself and in the dream that Ariadne sent him. How else could he have acted with such courage? One didn't just take off for a vacation down the road in those days. In those times, like now, once you step beyond the borders of your own world you step into the Sacred, you step into the world beyond. No one knows what lies in that Beyond except those heroes who have had the courage to answer The Call.

What is The Call? Whatever asks you to step beyond the boundaries of your own world, beyond the boundaries of comfort and safety. Whatever asks you to give 100% to Life. Whatever asks you to give 100% to the life you choose to live. Whatever asks you to give 100% of who you truly are and another 100% to what you truly believe in. What calls you into being 100% yourself? What do you believe in 100%? What are you willing to give 100% of yourself to? What will, at the same time, allow you to give 100% to yourself?

What calls to your hero's heart?



Life as a Sacred Path...Musings from The Book of Shadows Discovering That My Heart is Already Fearless...And So, I believe, is Yours

By Jane Holt

Sometimes I get tired of doing the Mystery School work. Sometimes I get frustrated by it and sometimes it discourages me. Sometimes it seems trivial compared to what other people in the world are doing and dealing with. Sometimes I think I am silly for taking what seems to be the hard road. Often, I feel this way when the work has something important to say to me. Something hard for me to hear.

The Book of Shadows work for August is about courage. Courage is defined as an action based on desire, an action directed by the heart and based on the heart's desires.

It is my heart's fearlessness that pushes me on this path. It is my heart that tells me to keep going. To dig a little deeper. To reach a little higher. To stretch a little farther. To risk a little more. It is my heart that moves me forward. On this road that I walk with you, I act with courage. I act from my heart.

The idea of acting out of desire scares me. What I desire can be so elusive for me, I'm often unsure of what I really want. Besides, if I don't know what I really want, then I won't feel bad if I don't get it. Okay, so I act out of logic and common sense. I'm rational about how I behave. I think things through before I act. I have been saying and attempting all of that for years and I'm still not very good at it. More often than not my emotions get tired of my mental processing. I confuse myself with all the thoughts and possibilities that run through my mind. Then, I just give up. I let my emotions or other people's emotions guide my actions.

How would I behave if I were to intentionally act from my heart? Here's the catch. I can't act from my heart unless I know what my heart desires. I have to be able to ask my heart what it desires and I have to be able to hear the answer. I have to take the time to listen. Then I have to be willing to act on what I hear. I have to honor the answer I hear by taking action.

All the years that I didn't act from those answers might be why my heart stopped answering me. It might be why it is so hard for me to ask and to listen now. Could it be that my heart and I are out of practice? If I want my heart to talk to me, I have to promise to listen. If I want my heart to tell me what it desires, I have to promise to honor its answers.

If I ask the questions, I have the responsibility to listen to the answers. I live in a world that allows me the luxury to learn who I am, to learn to act from my heart. When I know who I am, I act courageously. When I don't know who I am I act from the dictates of my culture. Worse, I act out of fear or from what I don't know.

My heart may tell me to act without knowing. In fact, my heart tells me it is ok to act without knowing. My heart never tells me to take action based on what I don't know. My heart isn't afraid of the unknown. It amazes me, my heart is not afraid. My ego is afraid. My mind is afraid. My body often responds out of fear for self preservation. The mystery to me is that my heart isn't afraid.

The truth is that my mind fears my heart's fearlessness. My mind fears my heart's desire to reach out and be unafraid in that reaching. My mind fears my heart's passion for life. Who knows where my heart will lead me?

My heart has led me to all of you. Perhaps it's time I start trusting my heart. Perhaps it's time I admitted that it's not the hard road I walk, it's my heart's road. I believe it's also your heart's road. Do you hear your heart? I believe I can.



Fall Events

Flyers about our fall events are on their way to you. They might already be in your hands. We are asking for your help in making these opportunities vital and successful. We have an array of wonderful and talented guests: Suzanne Sterling, Alphonsus Mooney, Mimi Baczewska, Ubaka Hill.

We would appreciate your support as we support these talented artists, singers & Priestesses.

The economic decline is impacting the size of our groups this fall. It won't affect the quality of your experience. Smaller, more intimate... yes. You can still expect great meals and excellent coffee, yes! This fall, you will get something more... you will know that the choices you make for your own personal and magical growth are the choices that will enable the Grove to continue welcoming you and your friends.

Just imagine... just when you realize the world needs magic, you realize that you are magic. Your presence, the time you take to share a flyer, these are magical acts that will sustain the Grove during this time of conservative generosity. 100% for yourself. 100% - a benefit to us. Its Magic. So... Register. Tell your friends. Come - meet Suzanne Sterling and you won't doubt that you are a part of a magical act.

100% - Come and feed your body, mind, spirit and soul. 100% - your decision to enrich your life will sustain us and enable us to keep the Grove vital, healthy and available for you. Such is the nature of magic, by feeding - we are fed.

Autumn Offerings

August Mystery School: The Hero's Journey - Theseus' Story. We will look at the Labyrinth of the Hero's journey. Classic myth revisited - be it Bilbo Baggins, Hercules or Psyche... the labyrinth is thoroughly known. You have only to grab the thread of the hero's path.

September Priestess Intensive: 4 days to explore the arts and skills of leadership. We will look at Icarus' story. We will discuss hubris: can't live with it, can't live without it. We will explore the mystery of flight and the yearning to have wings given to us, to be granted the gift of flight by those we admire. We will look at the cost of accepting those wings, those coveted wings, from others. And finally, we will explore the skills that enable us to make our own wings.

September Retreat Weekend: Drumming! No, no... let's call that rhythm. Hands, drums, feet that stomp, shakers, bells... In the cool of the autumn - play on. This weekend will offer Friday and Saturday night rhythm circles, an early evening drum circle, and drum related workshops.

Fall Equinox: The Feast of Persephone with Suzanne and Alphonsus

The Fall Retreat: The week that follows the Fall Equinox is dedicated to personal practice, retreat, and self care. This is a very long retreat weekend... that means the focus is on relaxation, regeneration and community... not on intensives, skills and myth or rituals that plunge you into the mysteries of your soul. (We do that in May.)

In October

Mimi, Rites of Passage, Ubaka - and a Yoga Retreat offered by a wonderful St. Louis group.

In November

The Closing Mystery School and The Crones Weekend for Mysteries and Friends.



The Scales of Oracle

by Teri Parsley Starnes

Some storytellers say that Themis was the mother of Prometheus (name means Foresight). He had a twin brother Epimetheus (name means Hindsight) who was usually not considered very smart. It seems that people thought seeing into the past wasn't as good a trick as seeing into the future. How silly is that? Imagine Themis holding the twin babies in her scales — Prometheus big and strong and Epimetheus — weak and insignificant. I don't think she would bear twins of such imbalance. Hindsight gives us wisdom — an ability to put together the pieces of what just happened to see if we can do it better next time.

What does his brother Foresight do for us? Really, I am asking myself the question, why do I practice divination? Why do I look into the energies of the past, present, and future? I find it interesting that Themis, the Goddess of Divine Justice, was also oracle of Delphi. Perhaps the Greeks realized that to know divine justice required someone who could listen to divinity and speak its truths? an oracle. What does this idea of divine justice have to do with us today? What is the value of oracle now? I think we are different from the Greeks in that we have the notions of self-empowerment and self-responsibility that perhaps they did not have with their beliefs of life being fated, social status being set for life, and the gods being above us mortals. For some today, thinking that we need oracle to hear wisdom takes away our self-responsibility and makes us dependent on oracle. I agree that this is possible and is a danger. For me, however, divination has always moved me closer to being a co-creator with divinity. Perhaps that is why the Gods feared Prometheus so much. He wanted to give humans that fire of creation? the knowledge that we could also divine the future as well as the present and past. Perhaps we are even creating the future as we divine it.

That idea, that I am creating the future by divining it is both wonderful and terrible to me. It is wonderful because I accept my own divinity, my own authority and I accept it in others as well. It is terrible because there is a lot of responsibility that goes along with being a creator. I find that the cornerstones of Diana's Grove community are very valuable in guiding me through this challenge.

Choice. When I am divining the future, it is very important for me to communicate that what I see is choice. Pluto may be transiting the Sun but there are many choices about what we can do about it. Choice takes away fatedness and powerlessness. We actually do have choice to embrace the Pluto transit in the way that we choose, with the intention that we set for ourselves.

Thinking well of self and thinking well of others. This pair of cornerstones tells me that if I am creating the future, so are you. It reminds me that in the act of reading a chart for someone else, we are both creating the future. We are all divine beings and to respect (to see again, to see for real) is to see myself and others as more than a transit, a planetary configuration, or a sign of the zodiac. We are Mystery reflecting Mystery.

Stewardship of self. Being a steward of myself means I agree to use myself well. It means that I believe that it is my responsibility to take care of my growth, to bring my talents into the world. My philosophy is that whichever means we use, I use astrology, the purpose of divination is to learn more about our talents and the means by which we can steward them.

Sacred wound. Accepting that we all carry a wound through which we may reach our genius is the ground of compassion and hope in which I root my approach to listening to the voice of divinity. Perhaps this is where Prometheus really frightened the gods. He proved that even though we were wounded with mortality, we deserved the fire of creativity even more than the immortal gods did.

Hindsight and Foresight and Themis holding the balance; this is an image of divination I like to aspire to as I journey through life.



The Priestess Path: Beyond Form, Moving Toward the Center

As we walk this labyrinth of the year, there are patterns within patterns. From January through May we focus on laying the foundations of the year. During this time Diana's Grove staff works intentionally to lay a pattern of welcome, support and inclusivity in our ritual style and in our community relationships – we invoke you. From May through the summer we work increasingly toward participant/community co-created ritual. We invoke you and (as Jane said in a recent post to cauldron) “You step in with grace and style – with feeling and caring – and the rituals become even more alive and ‘real’.” Our rituals and our community become infused with your involvement and your life force – you invoke us.

We are now at the time of the year where we move from the deepening of our personal and small group learnings into the fullness of a larger whole. Now is when we reach beyond ourselves to each other, to our friends and family, and to next year's community of Mysteries.

This year, part of that process is the cross-pollination of the Priestess Path small groups. The Priestess Path now weaves our conspiracies of intention. Together, we breathe energy (life-force) into each other's ongoing discovery; we conspire together.

Each Priestess Path small group is working with a Labyrinth of intention. We are all working with the Labyrinth of Priestessing. These Labyrinths follow a common thread. While each group continues the thread of its individual Labyrinth, all are brought to life through a broader context. We move beyond form to invite the excitement and vitality of wholeness. Integrating the work brings us to completion – it truly takes us into the Center.

Our five separate paths (Ritual Arts, Community, Trance, Gathering, and Small Group Facilitation) weave together into a multi-layered fabric of intention. Small Group Facilitation, the Gathering, and Creating Community meet together to conspire the fabric of community. Ritual Arts conspires with Trance to weave the color and texture of multi-sensorial prayer into our ritual work. We all work together to co-create rituals that are personally and communally relevant to each of us.

This work takes us into the future. It takes us into the fall events where we might invite friends and family, it takes us into our home and global communities, and it takes us into next year. The Priestess Path takes us on the hero's journey where our individual treasures are not the end. It is all about us while being about far more than we could ever imagine.

Beyond form. What waits in the Center for you? What will you bring to the Center with you? Ongoing discussion about the Priestess Path happens on Cauldron02@topica.com.

If you aren't already on that list just send a blank email message to:
Cauldron02-subscribe@topica.com or email techsupport@dianasgrove.com with your request to be invited to join the list.



When Paradigms Collide...

Paradigm literally means form. In common usage, and I do use paradigm most commonly, paradigm means an unconscious assumption, an assumption about form. Unconscious assumptions... I say something and since you know all about that something, you think you know what I'm talking about. There are so many words that invoke a litany of knowledge.... Ritual, religious, spiritual. Feminist, priestess, priest.

The Paradigm invoking word of the summer is "Staff". Staff, a lineage of assumptions are attached to that label. The staff are those who work at the Grove. Yes. The staff are those who work for the Grove. Yes... that is true. Staff are salaried. Staff get paid. Staff do it for the money. That is a valid paradigm but it is not our paradigm.

Some of our summer events were smaller than in previous years. Lunacy had a few more people who called themselves staff than those who didn't. The Astrology week was a staff tutorial with the addition of a few deeply appreciated star-struck participants. Staff, at the Grove, doesn't mean that someone is being paid. It doesn't mean that they are attending an event in exchange for their labor. If a staff person is attending the workshops and morning sessions, they are paying for the event. Their discount, like yours, was determined by the number of weekends they selected. Staff has an additional discount based on the amount of work they do during the weekend.

Staff are Mysteries who have made a commitment to attend events to support the community, the work and their own continuing development. Economic stress is reducing the number of participants. Therefore staff is becoming, proportionally, a larger group. Their relentless support has allowed us to move through the summer without canceling events. Their relentless support enables us to serve you well at a significantly lower price.

Although, I have great reverence for words and their literal meaning, I will admit to taking outrageous liberties with Staff. In the early days of the Grove, we would say "If you want to meet the staff, shake the hand of the person next to you." As the years passed, we discovered that it was wiser to make a greater distinction between those who are staff and those who are not. We have a higher expectation of our staff's behavior than we have of those of you whose actions represent your personal choices rather than our policies. When "staff" speaks, although their words and thoughts are very much their own, they are often heard as speaking for the Grove.

Staff - As this paradigm collides, assumptions bumping headlong into assumptions, we find that we are the ones who will change. Next year, we will be offering a Continuing Education program to those who are currently known as staff. This word better describes the work that "staff" does. It better explains why so many people commit to serving the community at the cost of their free time. It explains those meetings, planning sessions and the relentless support of the sacred made present that the staff provide to you and that we who live here provide for the staff.

Information on the Continuing Education program will be available to those who have completed a Rites Year in September. May we who teach always learn. May we who learn pledge our curiosity to self-awareness and service.

With appreciation for the confusion,
Cynthia



Skippy Speaks Reveals ~The Tail of Dias, Shining Canine Hero

I, Skippy the Brave, sometimes known as Skippena, Warrior Princess, know a thing or two about heroing. I know a lot about being a hero in the wilds of the Ozarks. I have been the center of many heroic battles and my strength and courage are the stuff that legends are made of. We dogs understand the importance of thinking well of ourselves. We also understand the importance of knowing our own limitations. I don't have many, but I have to admit that I haven't had much time to study up on ancient Greek history. However, I do have resources. I have Skippocles, the Amazing-One-Dog-Greek-Chorus. Who better to seek out when I need to know the truth than She-Who-Knows-It-All-And-Is-Willing-To-Tell?

I found her on a cliff high above the blue Mediterranean, lounging in the shade of an ancient olive tree. She wondered what had taken me so long to get there. She had a story to tell me. She, Skippocles, had *The Story* to tell me. "The Two-Legged Ones," She said, "They have their story. But we, we dogs, We-Who-Keep-The-Truth, we know *The Story*." I was quite excited, bouncing around barking like a puppy. I also wasn't a bit surprised. I have found over the years that the stories told by You-With-The-Opposable-Thumbs often leave out major characters and significant happenings. One year Mystery School was devoted to the story of Persephone and Hades. Only once or twice was their delightfully ferocious and incredibly loyal dog Cerberus even mentioned. The truth is that without Cerberus their home would be overrun with people like Psyche trying to get free samples of beauty creme or The Waters of Immortality. Cerberus was quite understanding about it all, but I found it reprehensible.

And so I found it also true of your storying of the hero Theseus. Really, Theseus was able to accomplish a lot on his own. Why would you leave out the important, I would say pivotal role, of Dias, Theseus' companion-hound? I get so disappointed in You-Who-Know-The-Secret-To-The-Dog-Food-Door. Just when I begin to think you understand that the world doesn't revolve around you, you accept as truth a story that is so patently and obviously erroneous! It is a good thing we dogs have infinite patience.

It is a good thing we dogs are around to take care of you. Which is exactly what happened in this story, *The True Story*, as opposed to Your Story. Oh, dear, I see that, once again, my editors have cut short my page space, I will have to be brief in my telling, unlike Skippocles, She-Who-Is-Willing-To-Tell-All-Including-Every-Last-Detail. We dogs can spin tales for days. It is a gift. The tale of the great and brave hound Dias is long and involved. Its telling can literally take days, for she was a hound of destiny and a hero with many adventures of her own. Now that I know her story I will spread it through all the hounds of the Ozarks. The name Dias will become a legend told in every holler and at each crossroad.

It was Dias who was responsible for Theseus making it safely to Athens. Without her who knows what would have happened to The Minotaur and Ariadne, to Daedalus and the rest. It would have been a very different story without Dias, The Brave. Just as a ferocious wild boar was about to kill Theseus, she flung her body between them. First she offered herself as sacrifice to save Theseus, then she fought the boar to his death. Some stories say that Theseus killed the boar, but it was actually the bravery and skill of a red-gold dog with short hair that saved the day.

After that fierce battle, when Theseus was forced to leave the gravely wounded Dias and her companion, the horse Assis, with a healer, he must have felt so alone. But he also knew that Dias had pledged to continue battling the forces that threatened to stop him from his heroic journey. Eventually, Dias fought her own 6 challenges and faced her own final seventh one. She was truly an equal to any hero. Some day, when I get the entire newsletter I will tell you the rest of her story. Hers is a wondrous tail!