



## October                      Autumn

by Pamela Wilz  
Rites of Passage Team 2002

The wheel of the year turns; earth changes her robes. Persephone has returned to her rule as Queen of the Underworld. It is at this time in the Mystery School year that we have an opportunity to review the year, integrating our learnings and experiences, reflecting on where we are now in our process of growth and self-discovery. This is a time for a rite of passage.

Rite of Passage. A rite to acknowledge change and growth.

These words invoke in me images of elaborate ceremony and celebration...a feeling of having *finally* attained a goal after a long, arduous struggle...of reaching an ultimate. Something really big.

I believe all of that is true. I also believe there are many instances of change and growth that might not always be recognized as such...what about acknowledging them with their own rites of passage? I believe many moments contribute to the process of learning and growing. Starting something new. Making a decision. Reaching out to someone. I forget about all the steps I've taken...all the growth opportunities I've held. I get so focused on an end goal that I rarely notice or acknowledge the daily details that contribute to it. I lose sight of the fact that my final goal is an accumulation of earlier accomplishments...and that it might just be a milestone toward another goal...which, in turn, is a milestone toward another...and another.

What about you, fellow Mysteries? Remember the six challenges that Theseus faced on the road to Athens, long before reaching the labyrinth? Do you remember to acknowledge all of the steps you've taken thus far on your journey? Or do you focus primarily on the end, that for which you strive? As you review your year, what challenges have you overcome? What change and growth do you acknowledge?

Rite of Passage. A rite to honor endings and beginnings.

One thing must end so that another has room to begin. I have found this to accurately reflect so much of my experience. As I approach the Rites of Passage weekend in this, my Rites year, I've asked myself many times and in many ways: "What is ending? What is beginning?" And I find my answers change and shift...expanding and contracting as I expand and contract. For me, the strength of some old teachings has ended; I no longer feel restricted by them...and I feel the beginning stirrings of



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opening to something more...greater possibilities. What endings do you honor? What now has room to begin? How do you honor your beginnings?

Rite of Passage. Acknowledging. Honoring.  
Many parts make the whole.

As I near the end of my Rites of Passage year, I think of how I have changed as a result of participating in this training opportunity. Of particular importance to me is the concept of interdependence (as opposed to independence). For as long as I can remember, being strong, independent, and completely self-sufficient was something I admired—a goal for which I labored. Over time, I noticed that my regular companion was a driven sense of purpose. I noticed that while I was quite capable in some areas, I was less capable in others. I noticed that I often felt lonely, even in the midst of a group of people. I wondered where it is that joy hides.

A gift I've found this year is a shift in that thinking. I'm learning about interdependence. I'm learning that I don't have to be totally self-sufficient...that I'm even more capable when I combine my skills with those of others. I'm learning that loneliness exists inside of me. Best of all, I'm learning that joy isn't hiding after all...I can see it when I look into the eyes of those around me. I can see it when I look into a mirror...for joy exists inside of me as well.

This reminds me of Ariadne spinning many things into her grand thread...a thread far stronger for having been composed of diversity...many strands coming together for a larger purpose. I'm learning that I, too, can spin. I think of the many people who have encouraged and supported me...and of those who have allowed me to support them. I think of the times I've stepped on my growing edge...the times my teammates or mentors requested something that I stretched to give. I think of the times I requested of them and they stretched to give. So, instead of independence and self-sufficiency....I can see capability, connection, and joy.

So, Mysteries, I wonder what threads of new learning you spin for yourself. How have you changed? What growth would you like to honor this fall? What parts have contributed to the whole of your experience?

As the year comes to a time of rest, I honor and acknowledge all of the Mystery School community—those I've seen at weekends and events and those who've never been to the Grove, those I know from online posts and those who are silent yet present. I honor and acknowledge staff and friends and teammates. I honor and acknowledge each of you and the work you've done. For we are all part of the whole. We *are* the whole.

Blessed Be.



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Life as a Sacred Path...Musings from The Book of Shadows  
Stumbling Along My Path

By Jane Holt

In my journey into the labyrinth I have discovered that there are heros and then there are heros. Within myself there are two very different heros. They aren't necessarily good or bad in and of themselves. They both wear the title of hero and they aren't the same.

I call the first the Classic Hero. This is the hero who steps in to rescue or save a situation. This one is very familiar to me. I get lots of rewards and superficial connections when I play this role. It also sets me off by myself. It makes me different, other than those I am rescuing. It keeps me separated. It is a role I put on as a child and one I quickly grab for when life gets frightening or I am feeling out of control.

The other hero is much less familiar to me. I don't even have a name for this hero. This is the hero who steps forward when my common sense tells me to stay put or stay out. This is the hero who has the courage to step into the mysteries of life without wanting to change or control them. I step into this role when I put all my knowledge and experience behind me and simply say, "Wow, what is all this". When I walk this path I am seeking nothing more mysterious than the experience of being alive. Interestingly, I have never experienced anything more mysterious or awesome than those moments when I am consciously aware of simply being alive.

I honestly do not have a rational reason for why I return again and again to this path. It is a compulsion. It is a need that goes deeper than reason. It is a seeking that is necessary to my life. When I walk this path I almost always stumble for it is littered with life experiences. When I stumble I usually discover things I would have otherwise missed.

This last week, for example, I discovered that I would rather stay hurt and angry than face the fear and pain behind your eyes. If I stay self righteous I don't have to really see you. If I don't really see you I can escape the unbearable intimacy when I recognize myself in you. I can escape the pain of recognizing your hurt in me. If I stay hurt and angry I can keep a barrier between us. In fact, I can even rescue you. I can put on that Classic Hero role and separate myself even farther from you. I can be the hero who is larger than my hurt. I can take control, say the right words, smooth things over and fix everything. Everything except you and me. Everything except me, for I have also recently discovered that the farther I keep myself from you, the farther I keep myself from my own essence. The greater the barriers I build between us, the farther I am from the center of myself.

How do I find my way to the center of my self? I find my way there through my other hero, the Foolish one, the one who seeks experiences rather than answers. The hero who has the courage to simply step into life and look it in the eye. When I have the courage to look directly into your eyes I see myself reflected back. I see all of my pain and hurt lurking there behind your anger. I feel your pain and hurt lurking behind my anger. It takes great courage for me to really see you for it requires that I look directly at myself as well. When I really see you the intensity of what I feel is beyond my ability with words. The intensity of anger is nothing compared to the intensity of intimacy, the intensity of recognizing the kindredness of our souls, of recognizing our soulfulness, of recognizing myself. The fragility I feel when I have been hurt is nothing compared to the vulnerability of looking into your eyes. When I see you, I see myself. Where we touch is the center of my being and the center of yours. The essence of life touches the essence of life.

It is a true fool's journey and also a true hero's journey, for the journey is only half over when I look and seen the oneness of our being. What is the rest of the journey? Taking that knowing, taking that experience and living it for the rest of my life. That is the rest of my journey. What is the rest of yours?



## The Initiatory Priestess Program: Living a Philosophy of Leadership

The intention of the Initiatory Priestess Program (IPP) is to build and/or refine *leadership* skills and enable their active application during Mystery School and open events. Leadership...a word of many meanings. Here at Diana's Grove, the philosophy of leadership is not about administration, but it is about management - management of yourself in the context of a community. It is not about control, but it is about mastery, in the sense of a continuous apprenticeship, a lifelong process of growth. It is not about being authoritarian, but it is about authority, the willingness to be the acknowledged author of your actions and take responsibility for the powerful impacts that result.

The IPP is designed to *develop* this philosophy of leadership. What does leadership development look like at Diana's Grove, where community and ritual are co-created? How can leadership, which implies hierarchy, come out of co-creation, which ensures input by all? Diana's Grove does have a leadership hierarchy, as do all groups - either overtly or covertly. Rather than power by control of resources, our hierarchy is grounded in the power of commitment. Diana's Grove leadership is a hierarchy of commitment. A hierarchy of commitment...what does that mean?

Mystery School is a program for *personal* development. It begins with the intention to learn about yourself...for your own purposes, your own goals. Leadership commitment...it begins with the intention to learn about yourself *for the purpose of serving a larger goal*. On first reading, this phrase may sound desirable to many - noble and beautiful. If you are among them, we caution you to be careful what you ask for....

- i Fulfillment of that intention first requires attention - focused observation and awareness of the group and its dynamics. Commitment that can evolve into leadership requires attention to who you are in the group - your roles in the larger dynamic.
- i Fulfillment of that intention also requires diligent engagement - active and continuous involvement that is self-motivated...by the intention of service to others. Commitment that can evolve into leadership is about choosing to participate in ways that have an observable positive impact on the group, on the whole that is formed by the interaction between the group and the process.
- i Fulfillment of that intention is a decision, a dedication...a contract for allegiance to a common vision and purpose. Commitment that can evolve into leadership is apprenticeship to something larger than yourself, larger than your process.

The first place that the Diana's Grove hierarchy of commitment becomes truly visible is the Initiatory Priestess Program. The primary indicators that lead us to invite you into the IPP are indicators of commitment. Likewise, the IPP may require a different commitment - both in quantity and quality - from the one you made before becoming a part of the IPP. The work you do and the growth in leadership commitment that you gain from the IPP may lead you to think about a Rites of Passage year...or not. The IPP is a prerequisite for a Rites year but does not automatically result in a Rites year.



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*Who is Invited into the IPP for 2003...How and When?*

As preparation for the Initiatory Priestess Program, we strongly recommend that you have fully attended 10 of the Priestess Path program sessions that wrap around Mystery School weekends. What we *require* before an invitation to IPP is our own observation of your ability to actively use what is taught in these Priestess Path sessions. What we require is our own observation that you are ready to have your *primary* focus - not sole focus - be the group rather than your personal work.

After the Mystery School early registration deadline of December 21<sup>st</sup>, we will issue an email invitation to those among the registrants who we believe have met these criteria. Yes, this implies that those who register after that date will not be considered. Why? The IPP is a program about commitment and the first commitment is to be in Mystery School, which begins January 4th. We want to know that your level of commitment extends to letting us know that we can count on your presence in Mystery School before the new year begins.

The December invitation will make clear what is offered to you and expected of you if you commit to the IPP group for the coming year. That group forms at the first Mystery School in January, so you will be asked to make a decision - a commitment - by January 21<sup>st</sup> about whether you will be a part of the IPP group for the year.

*IPP and Mystery School Participation*

To make the Initiatory Priestess Program a truly effective program for you, we ask for another commitment...to consistent participation. At a minimum, read the packet - before you arrive if you're coming to that month's event - and read posts to the IPP email line to stay current with our discussions. We strongly recommend that you attend a minimum of five Mystery School weekends, including either January or February. (Count the May and October Intensive weeks as three weekends each.) We also highly recommend the Priestess Intensive in September and the November closing weekend as part of your IPP program. If you are among those Mysteries who cannot come to at least five weekends, talk to us. Your commitment is the most important parameter of your participation and there may be other patterns of participation that will create an effective program for you.

Simply put, the hierarchy of commitment flows both directions. The greater your commitment, as demonstrated by participation, the greater will be our commitment to mentorship, and the more opportunity you will have to learn and grow in leadership skills.

**If you have questions about or an interest in the Initiatory Priestess Program, take some initiative! Send an email to [canyon@starband.net](mailto:canyon@starband.net).**



## Seeds of the Future

by Teri Parsley Starnes

"How will I know when it is time to leave the maze and enter life?" *The Book of Shadows*

Astrology is based on the belief that a moment has power to seed the future. If ritual is laying down new patterns, then astrology is reading the patterns seeded in the moment of ritual. We all stand this month in the center of the labyrinth. At the Grove, those dedicated this year to the Rite of Passage will stand in the center of ritual and complete and begin a journey. I see their rite of passage as a symbol, a mirror, for my own rite of passage. If we look astrologically at the moment of culmination of this rite, we learn something about their passage and ours.

I set the chart for 9:30 PM on October 19 at Salem, Missouri. I do not know the exact time the ritual will be completed, however the planets will not move much in this space to time. The chart of this moment is juicy with story! Here is the plot... Two Grand Trines (planets connected harmoniously in all the signs of an element), one in Air and one in Fire, create a lot of power for transformation, energy for speaking, choosing, deciding, knowing the truth, being creative, and identifying the self. Grand Trines look like equilateral triangles in the chart. They are closed systems of potential that need challenges in order to be released. The challenges come from oppositions to planets in both triangles. On this evening, the planets become characters in our story.

In the Air Trine we have Saturn as Chronos or Time, Uranus as Change, and the Sun as Self. This is a moment of change of self in time — a moment of destiny. Chiron the Centaur unlocks this moment because Chiron is opposing Saturn. Chiron, half horse half man, represents the integration of many opposites — the healer and the warrior, the wild animal and the civilized human, the wounded one and the wise one. I imagine he gallops into the ritual and looks around the circle holding a private conversation with each of us. Chironic time has been called healing time. What distinguishes this moment in time for you, what oppositions are you synthesizing, what wounds are you releasing, what is your true and unique nature?

In the Fire triangle we find the Moon in Aries, Jupiter in the kingly sign of Leo, and Pluto in Sagittarius. Pasiphae, as the Moon on this night, is the instinct of our passions, courage, and heroism. Minos as Jupiter, is the king facing the challenges of the throne, and the Minotaur as Pluto, is the shadowy figure of our fears in the labyrinth. This triangle symbolizes the fiery passion, creative potential, and power of these characters. There are two oppositions which upset the balance of this triangle and ask us to be accountable, to integrate, and to surrender. Neptune (Poseidon) opposes Jupiter, reminding us that no king is worth his salt unless he learns to sacrifice or make sacred his kingship and his kingdom as Poseidon asked of Minos. This aspect invites us to remember this element of Mystery, that we can not serve in a worthy manner unless we have made what we serve sacred to us. What do you make sacred and how do you serve it? Mercury (Daedalus, the magician) opposes the Moon. What role did he play in Pasiphae's destiny? What role does he play in yours? Did creating the labyrinth give our instinctual nature (the moon) a place to hide, or was it the key to uncovering it? Mercury honors both parts of our minds, the rational and irrational, the useful and the trivial. It presents us with truth through paradox. Perhaps at this moment, Mercury is reminding us to trust our instincts and to question them at the same time. Daedalus also created the mirror where we see our selves reflected. What did Pasiphae see in the mirror? What do you see?

This is a story of a moment in time as I see it. There are other stories, and other choices. What seems important to me is to take a moment to acknowledge the new patterns I have laid down this year and to let that moment become a seed for the future. Then I will know I am ready to leave the maze.



## Skippy Speaks - Skippy Finally Tells All - Or - Who's in League with Whom?

Drat! They seem to have caught on to me. The story teller isn't telling me anything. She must have found out I was spilling the beans...or perhaps she is still a bit put out by my portrayal of Pasiphae as a gothic romance heroine. At any rate, no one's saying anything when I'm around.

And I want to know what's going on, don't you? I mean...Theseus gets to the center of the labyrinth, the palace walls of Minos' kingdom begin to fall in... and the Minotaur has disappeared. **What's going on?** Why do these bulls keep disappearing? Who's pulling whose strings here? Who's in charge? There are way too many questions that need answering and on behalf of you Mysterics I am seeking answers.

Yes, yes I know they, the very mysterious "they", promised you a year of secrets, promises, and shadows, but did you ever figure there would be **this** much mystery involved? I mean life is enough of a mystery by itself, isn't it? Did "they" have to add mystery on top of mystery? Did "they" have to confuse the issues even more than normal? Tell, me, dear Mysterics, do any of you feel like you have any more answers than you did in January?... Oh, some of you do, huh? Ok, tell me this; do any of you know what it's all about, life that is? Do any of you know what life is all about? No hands, I see. I told you, there are still too many mysteries.

Why don't they, the Powers-That-Be They, as opposed to the earlier mysterious "they", just come out and tell you what is going on, huh? Why not save you the trouble and give you the answers before the test? You may have noticed that we dogs usually know exactly what we want and what is going on, often when you poor humans appear totally mystified. The only thing that really mystifies us dogs is some human behavior and why skunks were invented in the first place. However, over the years I have grown fond of you Mysterics and I am indignant on your behalf. Why aren't you born knowing, like we are? Why do your gods let you muddle and stumble through life, finding clues here and there, but basically living in the midst of a giant mystery your entire lives? It's just not tidy and besides, there doesn't seem to be nearly enough time for you to take naps in the sun. A basic ingredient of a good life as far as we dogs are concerned.

Now, I realize that it is possible that you humans might possibly want something different from life than we dogs. We are the more evolved species, after all, and you humans may simply need to try harder. But, I am suspicious of a diabolical plot against you. And I have my suspicions as to whom is responsible.

Since it is a mystery, I consulted with another of my outstanding alter egos, Dr. Skiplock Sholmes. She is always up for a challenge and has extraordinary powers of deduction. While sadly she still hasn't figured out **how** to open the closet door where the dog food is kept, she always knows when it's time to open the door, "I am hungry, ergo, it is time to feed me, consequently it is time to open the dog food door." See, great, deductive powers.

After doing her thorough, mystery solving routine, Skiplock confirmed my suspicions. I really don't know how to tell you Mysterics this, but after careful consideration Dr. Sholmes and I believe that the culprits behind this fiendish and maze-like mystery are none other than first; Poseidon, God of the oceans, who is also known as Neptune, the God of Dreams and Visions. Neptune, the God who loves the watery depths and loves to conceal what you most want to know. Remember Poseidon? He's the guy who set this whole thing up in the beginning. I was suspicious of him way back in January. And who is in league with Neptune/Poseidon? Who is ensnared in his watery net? Skiplock and I believe it is...

Yourselves... Is it possible that you are dreaming reality into being? Is it possible that you are creating your own dreams and visions? Is it possible that you and Poseidon are in league together to transform your lives? With every answer the mystery gets deeper. Curious, eh? Time for a nap, time to dream up more answers.