

Between the Worlds

The Magazine of the Diana's Grove Mystery School

July 2005

Myth, Magic & Community

The Marriage of Sir Gawain



Astrology for the Journey
The true story of Gawain's quest

Labyrinth Journey
Finding and owning your power

Destiny Calls from the Shadows
Answering the unanswerable questions

Plus...
My Favorite Places
Highlights from the online poetry
And much more!

July 2005
Volume 8
Issue 7

Between the Worlds

Myth, Magic, and Community

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Meet the Writing Staff!

All writing, editing, and layout is done on a volunteer basis as a labor of love for this community. We would love your comments and feedback so that we can continue to improve our publication.

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"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has." --- Margaret Mead

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The Stories the Knights Will Tell

by Cynthia Jones

During the summer, the knights will tell their stories. Lancelot spoke in June, the month of lovers. In the July packet, Sir Gawain will talk about his life and his quest. His life depends on finding the answer to an unanswerable question: *What do women really want?* Teri's astrology article illustrates the difficulties of such a quest. I would love to write this introduction to the month's work about the answer to that illusive question, but Gawain's process of discovery (and the answer) is key to the rest of his life. I don't want to take away his fate by revealing the end before the beginning. Join Gawain on July 15th and the next part of the packet will tell the whole story.

The Invisible Attack on page 7, refers to the story of the Invisible Knight and his invisible attack. Rumor, gossip, carefully-placed slander; how can we battle what we cannot see? How can we defend ourselves from the invisible destroyer whose body and lance are not visible to the one who is injured? Can any community be safe when this fellow is allowed to move freely through it? And...doesn't he mount his horse and ride through every group?

Let me tell you the story. It begins when King Arthur is resting in his pavilion. A knight passes by talking and moaning to himself. He is deeply grieved. Arthur calls out to him, offering his sympathy and help. The knight walks on. He is too distressed and hopeless to even lift his head. "You cannot help me," he mutters to Arthur and to himself.

The man's pain captures Arthur. The thought that he, as King and keeper of this kingdom, can be of no help captures him, as well. He finds that he cannot sleep or take rest as he intended. Sir Balin rides by and stops, of course, to salute his King. "Can I be of

service?" Balin asks.

"Why yes," Arthur answers. He tells Balin of the passing knight and asks him to find him and bring him back to the pavilion. "Surely," he tells Sir Balin - a strong and fierce knight - "we can do something to ease that man's distress."

Sir Balin finds the mourning Knight, introduces himself and asks the man to return to the pavilion at King Arthur's command. "Sir Knight," Balin says, "you must come with me and tell King Arthur the cause of your sorrow."

"I cannot," the knight says. "I am in great danger. If I were to return, it would cost me my life. You do not understand. I cannot do it. If I go with you, I will reach the end of my life and not Arthur. I weep because I do not want to die and an undefeatable enemy has taken away my integrity. Soon, he will have my life as well."

Balin is not afraid. For him, there are no undefeatable enemies. Sure of his power and prowess, he replies "Come with me. I will protect you. Under my care, no one can harm you. Look at me,

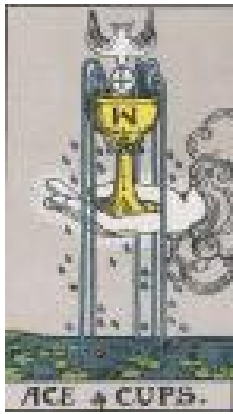
how could you possibly be safer alone than in my protection?"

The passing knight sighs. "If I am to die, I will let my life be a lesson for you...and for your mighty King." Both men mount their horses and begin the journey back to Arthur. Sir Balin's head is high. His body is tense with attention. His eyes scan the horizon; he listens

to the path behind him with acute interest. As a Knight, to fail one who is under your protection is the greatest possible failing. Sir Balin is sure of his ability to succeed. The passing knight sighs deeply. He looks at the world he is soon to leave. The dappled shade, the pattern of sunlight, the sweet air - life's pleasures are simple and...so hard to give up.

Rumor, gossip, carefully-placed slander; how can we battle what we cannot see? How can we defend ourselves from the invisible destroyer whose body and lance are not visible to the one who is injured?

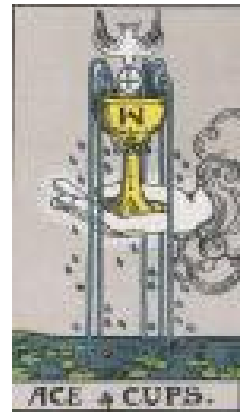
The story of the Invisible Knight continues in Cynthia's "Community Arts" column, beginning on page 16.



Tarot Week at Diana's Grove

August 6 - 13, 2005

Who Stole the Ace of Cups?



The cards want out of the box! The Major Arcana have secrets to tell. They want to engage you in a Mystery...the mystery of who stole the Ace of Cups. Each Arcana Card has a motive....Why would the Magician want the Ace of Cups? Did the Emperor take it? This Drama will unfold each night. One of the cards wants you. No, it needs you! "Come," she pleads. "Let me out of the box. I have a story to tell. Will you be my voice?"

During the day...

Step into the Tarot's Mysteries

Learn the cards: Play, journal, read, act, interact;
discover how much you already know while
reaching for the mystery yet unseen.

Symbolism, numerology, constellations, spreads
-- they all await your discovery!

During the evening...

The Mystery comes to life

The major arcana speak through you as a
character in a story of deception, murder, and
intrigue. Use what you've learned to uncover
the truth about what's really happening in the
Court of Cups!

Each day will begin with a Tarot Circle, and then two sequential morning paths taught by Cynthia Jones and River.

What to look forward to:

- An introduction to the Tarot
- The Tarot as a Spiritual Philosophy
- Keys to reading the Rider-Waite-Smith Deck
- Keys to reading the Crowley-Harris Thoth Deck
- Numerology and the Tarot
- The relationship between Astrology and the Tarot
- And much, much more!

Cynthia Jones has been reading the cards for over 25 years. She sees Tarot as a philosophy, a spiritual path and a key to understanding human nature, and has inspired many others to discover their own relationship with the archetypes.

River remembers using playing cards in lieu of paper dolls as a child, and has been working with the Tarot for over 15 years. She teaches and reads professionally in the Chicago area.

This week is designed for beginners, advanced students, professional readers as well as those interested in teaching the Tarot. In other words, this week is designed just for you!

Let your cards *Out of the Box*. They have so much to say to you. See what can happen when the images in your Tarot deck are free. There are many ways to read a card. During this week, we will offer workshops that give you a classic overview of a deck... any deck, all decks. We give a foundation in numerology, symbolism, patterns, and the Tarot's philosophy. And you will also have many unconventional, not-in-any-book encounters with the cards.

****The Early Registration deadline has been extended!**** Register now and pay just \$495 for the week!
Call 573-689-2400 for details, or register at www.dianasgrove.com

Destiny Calls from the Shadows: Dogged by Mystery

by *sisalfish*

For me, the July new moon questions in the Grove's Book of Shadows revolve around the nature of moon work – shadow work – itself. They ask:

If a part of you, an aspect of you, has been imprisoned in a limited form that really isn't yours, what aspect of you might that be? ...In the crescent bowl of the new moon, plant the seed of an answer to a haunting question. Journal about the question you cannot answer.

In discussing the nature of shadow exploration, I feel an obligation to state that I have no idea what I'm talking about. Seriously. I am not one of those people who can tell you, in three succinct sentences, what shadow work is. I've finally come to accept that I approach things as a mystic – the more I delve into things, the more mysterious and inexplicable they seem to get. I think if shadow work were that easily explained I'd distrust it, so I may resist understanding it for my own reasons.

What I discover, in getting this column down every month, is not that I come to any linear understanding, so much as I find another way (and another, and another) that *time spent with the moon and shadow is valuable*. It isn't that exploring them necessarily makes things clearer or more understandable. More often, I just come away knowing I have a huge, inexplicable resource of comfort and challenge – a kind of un-understandable partner in reaching my destiny, one that resists explanation, one whose power comes from my willingness to listen to it and trust it beyond logic.

The answers are there, always, as the July Book of Shadows promises. "The new moon is deep within the one who seeks to know. The magic of mystery is within you," it says. But what form will those answers take, and in what way can I make use of them? For me, that's part of the mystery and challenge of moon and shadow work, and I go into it knowing those questions may remain unanswered, and trusting that, even so, the work will have value.

So my linear, left-brained mind agrees, a little reluctantly: OK, let's take a look at the shadow work for the month. And right away, reading the July new moon observations and suggestions, the linear side of me has a serious disconnect. Journal about a question I cannot answer? A part of me imprisoned in a form that isn't mine? That disconnect is where the shadow process begins for me. My linear mind stumbles – it tries to dissect those suggestions, restructure the sentences to make sense of them, but they only become more confusing, less direct, more convoluted – while, in a wooden pen at the back of my mind, the slaving mongrel dog that is my subconscious has heard the call, and is straining at the gate.

"Let me out," he calls. "I've been called, let me out." It reminds me that it has been a very good dog. He has not thrown himself, howling, onto the conference table in meetings I've been in. He has not overcome me with creative inspiration at a time when I've promised to write a factual article for children on the subject of George Washington. But – he reminds me – "I bring great things to you, and you know it, and you owe me. This is my time. I've been called. Let me out."



"My best shadow experiences are like my best dreams – they defy explaining. Their power is diffused if brought onto this plane. They invite me to stay in the world between, as they make sense there."

My linear mind responds before I do. It is shamed. These questions – a form beyond my own form (and one, it's implied, that I can transform into), and the value of a question that currently has no answer (and

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"In looking at how I approach shadow, I discover I do honor the Beast – so much so that it would break my heart if it turned into a handsome prince. I have enough princes on this plane. It's that ally on the other plane that I've come to value."

that may, indeed, be most valuable if I can never fully answer it) – those are not questions my know-it-all conscious mind feels comfortable with. At all. It is amazing how quickly my conscious mind, hanging its head in embarrassment, gives up the ghost and folds away into the background, and when it does, the gate opens and my subconscious comes loping out.

And he and I engage in the Book of Shadows' questions. But it's the process - yours and mine - that I think I value more than the answers. How I will answer the questions, and how you might, doesn't really matter. To me, shadow work is like dreams – hugely useful and rich for the dreamer, but if told to another, often seeming like something of a poorly-written poem or story. My best shadow experiences are like my best dreams – they defy explaining. Their power is diffused if brought onto this plane. They invite me to stay in the world between, as they make sense there. Certainly, the dog understands them entirely, in his non-verbal, wholly intuitive way.

Some of my friends – the watery ones – would not find exploration of their shadow process useful. They like keeping it, and the wisdom they find, wholly in the realm of that other plane, apart from

explanation or dissection. But for me, an understanding of my own process has led me to respect the work and its possibilities, and has affirmed its uses, and that understanding makes me step into shadow work more often.

So rather than delve into what wisdom the shadow process delivers, I invite you, if you think it might prove useful or interesting, to spend a little time applying linear thought to your own shadow process. What form does the moon's call take for you? What shifts take place that allow you to answer that call? In what way is time spent with the moon and her shadows of value to you? How does honoring, or dishonoring your conscious, linear mind contribute to the process?

When I ask myself these questions, the answers that come aren't always supportable on this plane – the left-brain, linear, logical plane – but the dog behind the gate understands them implicitly. To him, they speak of bones. Treats. The dog star. Between. Destiny. He knows the wisdom of something a friend quoted to me:

*"Like Beauty embracing the Beast, our beauty is deepened as our beastliness is honored."*¹

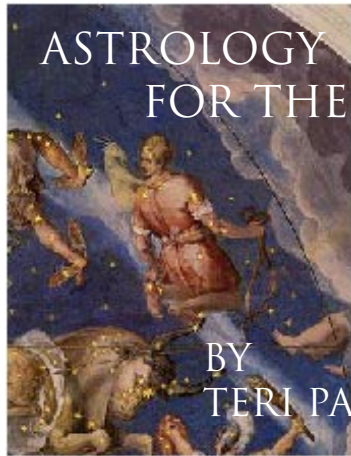
In looking at how I approach shadow, I discover I do honor the Beast – so much so that it would break my heart if it turned into a handsome prince. I have enough princes on this plane. It's that ally on the other plane that I've come to value.

¹ Many people take credit for this quote. Rather than list them, I'd rather say I honor the person who wrote it for its depth and insight.



sisalfish is a writer and editor living in San Antonio with her husband and a neurotic sheltie named Chee. This is her fifth year as a Mystery in the Diana's Grove Mystery School, where she is currently participating in the Grove's Initiatory Priestess Program. She works as an editor and writing coach for poets, fiction writers, novelists and writers working with spiritual subjects. You can contact her at sisalfish@satx.rr.com.

PATTERNS OF CHOICE:



ASTROLOGY FOR THE JOURNEY

BY
TERI PARSLEY STARNES

You might have heard the story of King Arthur's challenge: he has been given one year to find out what women really want or he will be put to death by a knight that he has offended. I, Sir Gawain have agreed to help my king in this quest, so Arthur and I have set off in opposite directions to search for the answer. I have been going from town to town, woman to woman, and I have amassed quite a collection of different responses to the question. The following is my journal of this quest.

I met the first woman in a small town called Rams Head. Mia was glad she was the first to be asked. She told me she liked being first. She was the first female mayor of the town and also the first woman to read. She told me that women really want to meet challenges head on, and that they want to run things. She was a fine example of this desire.

I thought I'd found my answer until the next village, Bull's Run, where I met Eartha, a woman who thought meeting challenges was fine, "if that's what you like."

Goodness knows, she could take anyone on, but what she wanted more than anything was to surround herself with every fine piece of furniture, fabric, or food that she saw. She was quite an expert at knowing the best of everything. She'd even managed to make a fine living selling these beautiful things to others. I began to think that what women really want is to appreciate the finest of all things.

That made perfect sense to me until I wandered

into the next village, Ville de Deux. There I met Sosie, a charming woman who simply wanted to talk, talk, talk! She could care less about acquiring objects; she wanted to discuss everything around her. She was also quite good at sales. I bought a new horse from her. She also sold me on the idea that what women really want is someone to listen to them.

I needed a breather. I had just met three very different women, each with distinctly different desires. I found a comfortable inn in the next village. The Seaside Inn, right next to the beach, was the perfect place to rest. Luna owned the place and she certainly put her stamp on everything. However, she wouldn't stop feeding me, and she did get a little defensive when I told her about what the other women I had met really wanted. It took a while to get her to tell me that women really want their feelings to be honored.

After my rest, I moved on; perhaps I had found the answer to my quest. But no, in the next village I ran into Leona. She had no problem at all telling me that what she and all women really want is to be treated like a queen...no, to *be* a queen. Leona was quite sure that every woman needed her own kingdom, and while we're at it, that word could also be changed; "queendom" had a nice ring to it.

Would it be possible to find out what women really want? Dutifully I moved on to the next dwelling. It was a farm, surrounded by abundant fields of wheat. Only women lived on this land.

Perhaps I was getting somewhere. The farm was run like a well-oiled machine; every thing in its place and every woman knew her job. After staying a while, I learned that women came to this farm to be of service, to learn a craft, to seek excellence. Was this what women really want, to be of use and be skilled at doing something useful? I couldn't

"I hope Arthur will have the wisdom to decipher these answers. I think I am as confused as ever."

stay to find out for sure; after awhile the same routine everyday got to me and I had to move on.

After the rural life, I decided to see if women in the city wanted something different from their rural sisters. Yes, it was so. The next woman I met, Librana, was committed to culture. She held gatherings in her home where artists, philosophers, and knowledgeable people of all types would meet and

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Astrology... Continued from page 6

talk. Another talker! She assured me that what women really want is refined civilization. If this answer had not been contradicted by all the women before her, I might have believed her.

I moved on. I was drawn to a most intriguing home in the forest, one that I almost did not see for all the trees nestled around it. I was both attracted to and a little frightened of the woman who lived in this home. She looked me straight in the eyes, as if to taunt or challenge me. She promised that I could learn what women really want if I dared to live in her home for one year while looking into the depths of my soul. I almost stayed but I knew Arthur needed me and time was running out. I left behind the mysterious, dark woman of the forest.

The next woman I met was traveling along the same road as I. It was unusual to find a woman traveling alone. She claimed she was born for the road, loved adventure, and furthermore, she knew that all women really want the same thing as well. She insisted that women need to leave behind their safe, comfortable lives. She had a faraway look in her eyes; maybe she knew something that the rest of us didn't.

The road began to get steeper as I continued. Soon, I found that I was climbing a mountain and far above, near the top, there was house. I had a feeling I was about to meet another woman who was going to tell me what women really want. Cornucopia stood at her door watching me scramble over the rocks in the path. She nodded wisely. She told me of her own journey up this mountain years ago, her goal to get to the very top, the challenges she met along the way. She told me in the most somber tones that achieving her goals is the only thing a woman wants.

I had met ten women with ten different desires. Was it possible that there were more? As I looked out from the mountaintop, I spied a tower on the next mountain across the valley. It called to me. The woman who lived there, Urania, spent most of her time at the very top of this tower looking at the stars all night. She told me that the stars could reveal what women really want. She also said that the stars reminded her of freedom. What can that mean?

On my way back to Camelot, I decided to visit Avalon. The women of the mists always had wisdom to share with Arthur's kingdom. The boat came for me across the still lake. The gentle sounds of the waves lapping on the hull emphasized the answer the priestess gave me. What women really want is eternity.

I've completed my year's journey. I've written

down all that I have learned. I hope Arthur will have the wisdom to decipher these answers. I think I am as confused as ever.



Teri Parsley Starnes is a consulting astrologer and Diana's Grove Mystery. To reach her for appointments or questions, please email her at: tpstar@mninter.net.

The Invisible Attack

by Teri Parsley Starnes

I like to pay attention to coincidence. I like to think of coincidences as guidance from my allies. These coincidences can be a conversation, an image, a memory, or a book popping up at just the right time to give me new insight, direction, or inspiration. Such a coincidence happened to me yesterday as I was reading a book recommended to me by a friend - *Sacred Contracts* by Caroline Myss. When I took on the challenge of writing about this month's theme - "Invisible attack: rumor, gossip, slander. How to battle that which you cannot see" - I did not know what I could possibly say about this topic. I certainly do not feel like an expert; so it was very fortunate that this book came at just the right time to bring me new awareness. Because I was already thinking about the issue of wounding through words, I paid more attention than I ordinarily would when I read what Caroline had to say about the fifth chakra.

The fifth chakra is the energy center located in the throat. The things I say and the ways I say them come from my throat. The fifth chakra represents the power of choice. According to this author, its strengths are "faith, self-knowledge, personal authority, ability to keep your word." She goes on to say, "The fifth chakra is also the center of the energy of honor. It resonates when you

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The Invisible Attack... Continued from page 7

'give your word' to someone.... When a person breaks his word, that action reverberates for years within the psyche of the betrayed. [And, I think, also the betrayer.] It cuts to the soul." Myss writes that this chakra is where I act to retrieve my soul when I call back pieces of myself that are lost when I tell lies.

The throat is a powerful place in our bodies, representing powerful choices and powerful consequences. What I say can uphold my honor or might very well destroy it. What I say about others can reverberate in my psyche as well as in the psyche of the one I am speaking about. What I say can either bring my soul deeper into alignment with my values or it can eat away at my soul leaving me hollow.

I have felt the deep regret of wounding someone else through my words. I have lived with the shame of knowing I have gossiped or slandered someone else and, in so doing, not upheld my values. I must confess...it has taken me the better part of a day to come to the place where I can write those words on this piece of paper and not feel that they will destroy me. That is the power of words. Will these words give too much away? Will I show too much of myself? Will your image of me tarnish?

I understand why the throat is a place of vulnerability and intimacy. Marilyn Sue Warren revealed to me the mystery of that word, intimacy as "Into me see." Can I stand the intimacy of being seen, of being heard? I also understand why the throat is the place of betrayal. I think I most often betray others with my words from a desire for cheap intimacy. I have noticed myself slandering or gossiping about another in order to feel close to the one I am talking to. In those situations I am surrendering a greater intimacy for a lesser one. Perhaps that greater intimacy - where I show my vulnerability, my values, and my promises - is the piece of soul that gets lost when I lie.

There is a problem with shame. It gets in the way of atonement. Perhaps the one I have slandered is not even aware of my words, but I am. And even

when I regret the words, there remains a bit of separation, a block to intimacy with that person. I have lived with that separation. However, the throat can also heal. Honor can be restored. Words can recreate intimacy. But it takes care and attention and, as much as I would like to say it doesn't, I think it also takes more words. Words of the greater intimacy; words that reveal, words that uphold values, words that don't break promises.

How do we battle those invisible words directed at us by others? Frankly, that does not feel as important to me as battling myself when I let those careless words fly too quickly toward someone else.

As surely as I know that I lose honor and soul through

the words I want to call back to me, I know that my attackers are also losing honor and soul. As surely as I know I want to forgive myself for those words, I know it is possible to forgive those who attack me. I'm no saint. I get angry when I am misrepresented, or when those who criticize me do not do so to my face. Just today, I noticed my anger when my 14-year-old daughter was misrepresenting me to her friends. It felt unjust, and

that injustice recalled every injustice I have ever felt. Emotions have a funny way of doing that. I can quickly become a child and want revenge.

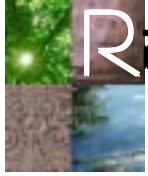
For me, however, my strongest regrets are not when I have failed to defend myself, but when I have failed to use my voice for the greatest good. Caroline Myss writes, "The inherent soul knowledge of the fifth chakra communicates to us that we must develop the strength to make choices that reflect who we are." I am learning that my words are a powerful avenue for developing that strength.



"For me, however, my strongest regrets are not when I have failed to defend myself, but when I have failed to use my voice for the greatest good."



Find out more about Teri, who is a member of the Mystery School Initiatory Priestess Program, following her regular column: "Patterns of Choice: Astrology for the Journey" beginning on page 5.



Ritual Artistry By River

Welcome to Ritual Artistry! This monthly column explores the nuances and facets of Ritual Arts from design, to facilitation, to impact. This month, we explore relationship and connection in ritual.

Safety vs. Comfort

One of my favorite ritual tools is discomfort. I don't mean the type of discomfort such as getting a rock in my sandal as I walk to ritual. I'm referring to that kind of discomfort that pushes psychological and subconscious edges – discomfort that gives me the opportunity to see an unhealthy or unwanted pattern in my life, and challenges me to make a shift. However, when I'm facilitating that kind of ritual, my primary concern is ensuring the participant's physical safety. I really do believe that a good ritual is designed to be safe, but comfort is rarely one of my goals. In June, a few members of the Mystery School email list dedicated to Ritual Arts started a great discussion about the line between comfort and safety, and I'd like to continue the conversation here.

Of course, comfort is subjective. Ryan, one of the members of the Ritual Arts list who has been participating in this discussion, posed some interesting questions: "Whenever a ritual micro-intention involves purposefully leading participants out of their comfort zones, the effect can be hard to predict. The same action that might make one participant too uncomfortable to do the work might seem too superficial to another, and yet to a third participant it might be the ideal amount of discomfort needed to serve ritual intention. Is it possible to please everyone? How as priestesses can we walk this boundary?"

My answer to that is, "provide context." I still believe that the most powerful tools that we have as facilitating priestesses are our voices and our bodies. However, giving the best visual and verbal

presentation of your life will mean nothing if you haven't given enough information to the participants about where that piece fits with the larger intention, and why it's important. Another name for this tool might be "creating a field of relatedness."

One way I see "field of relatedness" is as an atmosphere that the ritual priestesses intentionally work to create that draws the participants in and allows them to have a rich and full experience without having to worry about safety or having an appropriate boundary violated. One of the ways that we begin to do this at Diana's Grove is by offering a session we call "Ritual Conspiracy," which often happens well before the ritual itself. This is where we give the participants the relevant information about the evening ritual in order to let them know what to expect. We go over the intention, we learn the chant, and we talk about logistical considerations like, "We're going to the creek, so bring suitable shoes so you don't hurt your feet on the rocks."

Logistics and intention are important, but there is an even deeper layer of information that helps to create that field of relatedness. At the Grove, we have the advantage of having been around for over a decade. Our philosophy is clearly stated in all of our materials, and many people have given us feedback

"I really do believe that a good ritual is designed to be safe, but comfort is rarely one of my goals."

over the years on how we live our values rather than just pay them lip service. From the moment I step foot on the land to the moment that I leave, I know that I am in a place where this particular community philosophy is alive and boundaries are upheld. When I lead the "Ritual Conspiracy" session during Mystery School, most, if not all, of the participants have experienced our style of ritual before, so I don't have to work very hard to build up their trust in the fact that safety is a top priority.

When I'm at a non-Mystery School weekend at the Grove, or in my home community and leading the same session for 100 people, half of which have never been to a ritual before, I don't have that luxury!

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"I work to hold myself to an even higher level of accountability when I'm in these situations by ensuring that every action I take relates back to either what I've said or what I've advertised."

At that point I need to be very clear about my group's values – particularly for the Cornerstone of Choice as well as self-responsibility. And I work to hold myself to an even higher level of accountability when I'm in these situations by ensuring that every action I take relates back to either what I've said or what I've advertised. If the promotional materials say that the ritual starts at 8:30pm, then that's when we start. If I say that Choice is a value, then I engage and invite participation without forcing it. If I say that I trust people to take care of themselves and ask for help if they need it, I model that by not "care-taking" when someone is having an emotional moment, but rather staying nearby and remaining accessible if needed. It's one thing to say that I value something, it's another thing to "walk my talk" and strive to uphold those values.

If all of this groundwork is in place, then I have a much better opportunity to draw the participants into the mythic reality that I am creating as a facilitator. I can introduce some material that allows people to push their edges and experience the kind of discomfort that comes with growth and self-awareness. And, I need to ensure that there is context for everything I do, both before and during the ritual. If there is going to be a moment that

might jar the participants out of their experience, then I either let them know in advance, or state the obvious in the moment. And of course, I can't anticipate every possible point in a ritual that will trigger something for a participant. To do so would be counter-productive. It's a subtle nuance to know when too much information detracts from the ritual rather than adds to it, and it takes practice to figure out just where that border lies. Laurie, another active member of the Ritual Arts email list made a great statement, which summed things up nicely for me: "Some people may still find elements of the ritual to be unacceptably uncomfortable (I've sometimes been surprised at the things people have found difficult - ritual moments that, as a planner, I did not even suspect might be challenging), but at least we will have given them all the information and tools possible to avoid or meet those challenges, as they see fit."

There are a myriad of other ways to invoke safety to facilitate an edge-pushing kind of ritual that I just don't have the space to go into here. So I challenge you to keep your eyes open at the next ritual that you attend. How do the priestesses uphold their agreements? Did you get enough information before and during the ritual to feel safe? Were you given too much information to really engage with the magic and mystery? Learning your own preferences and getting feedback from others on what elements of ritual are empowering and what detracts from or threatens an experience will go a long way toward honing your ability to hold that line between safety and comfort.



River lives her passion every day by designing and teaching workshops in ecstatic ritual throughout the country. For more information on her classes, travel schedule, and past articles on ritual arts, visit her website at www.rivermagic.org. She lives in Chicago, Illinois with a roommate, cat, and (at last count) fifteen drums.



Labyrinth Journey

By Canyon

This monthly column summarizes concepts and activities from my book in progress, Labyrinth Journey: Seven Paths to Living Fully, which is a journey into and back out of a seven-path labyrinth. Each column builds on a journey begun in February.

Exchange in Resolution

Last month, you emerged from the center of the labyrinth, back into the path of Contrast again. Your healthy Self was suddenly faced with a challenge, to meet – head and heart on – your friends, family members, partner, co-workers...even strangers in healthy relationship, healthy community. And now, the path turns again and you are back in the circuit of Resolution, but holding onto new patterns for Exchange with others. Here is where you must find and own your power.

This is the ninth path of the labyrinth: there were seven on the way in and now you are entering the second path of the return journey. The image for nine is three triangles inside a triangle. Why do four triangles make a nine? Nine refers to the points created by the corners of all the triangles, as shown in the diagram. You may only see four points (covered by dots) but some of these points are the corners of more than one triangle! The outer three angles are each part of two inner triangles and the center dot is part of all three inner triangles; all together there are nine points. I use this as an image of your power overwhelmed.

You first became wounded when someone overwhelmed one or more of your boundaries. For example, I have heard many people say that they

were spanked. Many people like to tell themselves that it wasn't abuse, wasn't "a big deal." But, I promise you, if you were a child and an adult hit you in any way, it was a big deal. It was abuse, even though you may no longer remember how bad it felt to your child self.

The wound of being hit by your parent is an easier one to dismiss than many other wounds of childhood, because some ways of hitting children – spanking, a "swat," slapping – are culturally sanctioned. And, yet, I have also heard people dismiss sexual assault on their child self; emotional or other, more severe, physical abuse; surgery or invasive medical treatments....*It didn't really hurt THAT much. I just got over it, you know? I don't really remember it.*

So, if you don't believe me, just pretend that you do, for the moment. What does this kind of overwhelm look like to you? Imagine that all your boundaries – physical, mental, emotional, spiritual/psychological – are the edges of the big triangle. Layered upon each other, these boundaries form the edges of who you are. Now close your eyes and imagine.... Something overwhelms or violates one of those edges. I invite you to sketch a picture of what an overwhelmed or violated boundary looks like. When I drew my own, it was the wall of a house with a large hole blasted through it, as from a missile.

Here's what it "looks like" for children. When a boundary is violated, the person who violates them – let's call that person The Perpetrator – seems to come into the child. The child's physical, emotional, and

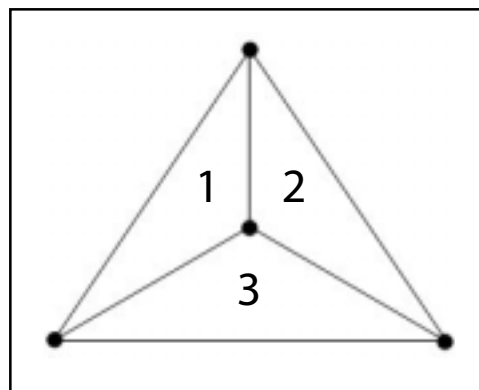
psychological boundaries are breached and The Perpetrator's feelings, thoughts or words - even body - literally become inseparable from the child's. The child can no longer tell where he ends and the adult begins; there is no psychological skin between them. The child is overwhelmed and feels powerless. She loses touch with her own power and feels only the power of The Perpetrator.

And that abusive power of The Perpetrator never leaves you...until you make your own power complete again.

In the triangles within triangles image, the three inner triangles are:

1. The Perpetrator's abusive, invading power

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integrated into you, because on some level you believe that it will protect you from...

2. Your feelings of powerlessness – the result of your overwhelmed, violated boundaries.

You believe that The Perpetrator's power will protect you because it overwhelmed you despite...

3. Your true and rightful power...

Which you see as having failed to protect you.

Notice that the Perpetrator's invading power and your feelings of powerlessness, together, suppress and cover up your true and rightful power.

Yes, you have a true and rightful power that is a healthy part of you. Power, in and of itself, is not a bad thing. Power is simply the ability to act, to take action. If you are unaware of or denying your true and rightful power, it may be because you still feel powerless as a result of your wound(s) AND you are still hanging on to The Perpetrator's misused power as the only solution to your powerlessness.

Some of us, as we identify with The Perpetrator's violating power, act it out on others. This fact is why children whose parents hit them often grow into adults who hit their children. If you are hurtful or violent toward others, in words or deeds, you are "acting out" (projecting outward) The Perpetrator's boundary-violating misuse of power, which is contained within you.

Some of us turn The Perpetrator's power against ourselves. This fact explains why victims of physical or sexual abuse commonly abuse themselves with drugs, alcohol, self-mutilation.... If you are self-destructive and/or depressed without treatment, you could be turning The Perpetrator's misuse of power inward as a weapon against yourself.

There really aren't any other choices for handling overwhelmed power except a mixture of the two – turning The Perpetrator's power partly outward and partly inward.

You can begin to live again from your own power, rather than the absorbed power of The Perpetrator. The Perpetrator's abusive power doesn't get kicked out, however. It gets *squeezed* out when your own true and rightful power grows large enough to fill all of your self.

The first step is to acknowledge that the stories of powerlessness and unhealthy power that you tell yourself are stories. What stories? How about:

- I don't need you.
- I'm completely different from you and everyone else; what is true for you and most

other people is not true for me.

- I'm not worth it ("it" being a blank that can be filled with many things – your time, your effort, your attention, your love...).
- It doesn't/didn't really hurt...or hurt that much (how much is THAT much?).
- I'm not wounded/hurt; I'm just ____ (lazy, worthless, stupid, no good...).
- If you really knew me, you wouldn't like/love me anymore.
- I'm just like my father/mother/ ____ (never in positive ways, mind you!).
- I never get angry.
- I never feel sad.
- I'm not afraid of anything.
- I don't deserve to ____ (be happy, have a relationship, be successful...).
- It's all my fault.
- Nothing has ever been my fault; everyone else just dumps on me.
- I have to be perfect.
- I can never be good enough.
- I'm just not __ (lovable, capable, smart, pretty...) enough; I never will be.
- Life just sucks; I can't change that.
- I don't have any of the answers.
- I have all the answers.

Recognition that these are stories, not fact, is more than half the battle. Then, acknowledge that your self-deception with these stories is a pattern that has helped you to survive, and embrace that pattern with gratitude. Write it a thank you letter or throw a party in its honor, to show your deep thanks that these stories of Perpetrator power and powerlessness kept you going until you were ready to find and live your true power.

Finally, work a little bit every day to feel and exercise your boundaries by using your power – your ability to take action – on behalf of your own wholeness and in support of others' growth. For example, before you agree – or refuse – to do anything, really check in with your true feelings about the request and the person making it...before you reply. These tools can help you walk into resolution with your old patterns of power and powerlessness in exchange with others.



Find out more about Canyon following the "My Favorite Places" column, where she appears as a guest columnist this month.



HOUNDS OF THE HILL: AKIBA

Oh little ones, you have already found your freedom. You hustle away from me as soon as you are full of my milk. You run along the fence and chase the birds and tumble together in the place where the earth is imprinted with the nestling weight of many dogs before us.

My children, there is so much I still must tell you. Right now, you cannot know how typical you are as chows and that you will be bound to one person. You will be intensely loyal as I was and am. You will be diligent and ever-present to protect, as I am now. I have barked, I have nipped, and I have bitten those who came too close to you and did not notice my snarl.

You cannot know what you want now beyond food, warmth, and attention. There is so much more that we all want and sometimes no one there who cares. But I am with people who care now, and I can ask: What do I, your mother, want?

I don't want to be wild. I am not the wolf at home in the forests who thrives on establishing her own mode of survival. I don't want to be abandoned with broken, unusable furniture at a recycling center in the middle of the night. I don't want to be less than I am by having to beg to survive.


Babies, my babies, I will never abandon you to either fate. And yet I will likely not be with you always, perhaps not even for long. I will defend you to the death with all the blood, flesh, and bone that allows me to be who I am. My love for you is absolute, and it is beyond a desire or want.

If you are left, as was I, you may go feral, as I did. If there is no one for you to love and take care of, you will barely understand what it means to be a living being with the heart to see your way to a world beyond the abandonment.

And yet.... And yet, there is something greater than any injustice that may be done to you. There is something inside me and inside each of you that will lead you past betrayal. And I have no other name for it than desire.

I can only explain this to you by sharing what

I desire. I want the world to redeem itself for its own sake. What I mean is I am a chow - you are chows - and we will not bark in order to express ourselves. So let us have the silence of a simple act of kindness and respect. Let us have a reassuring touch. A home for life. A child to play with.



"There is something inside me and inside each of you that will lead you past betrayal. And I have no other name for it than desire."

I don't want soothing sounds and whistles and coaxing phrases. I don't want a world where people react to a starving, stray dog and just feel pity for it.

Most of all, what I want and what I want for you, my children, is a world where response comes first and comes more naturally than even the feeling. Yes, these are all important: freedom, responsibility, creative expression, autonomy, service, love, hope, faith. But what must come first, I will say again: I want a world that redeems itself for its own sake.



Mystery List Tapestry by Lorely Lather

Vows To Our Visions

Camelot and marriage vows were two colorful threads weaving through the Mystery List in June. The story and workbook showed us that Camelot represented a world vision. For despite Merlin's cautionary words, Arthur determined to marry his vision of a better world the day he married Guenevere.

One Mystery envisioned Camelot as a world in which we fully support our children in becoming what they can be. She had considered her commitment to this world vision thoroughly and felt hers was a monogamous vow to this vision. She noted how her vow to a singular vision helped her focus, not on the greatness that might come from small actions, but on the value of the small actions themselves. A second Mystery said her Camelot looks like a giant library where teachers and students are happy learning together. A third said that doing what brings her joy is her Camelot.

A list of possible world visions was offered - laid out like thread samples for possible weaving into our Mystery List tapestry. Suggested visions included world peace, economic parity, women's equality, native rights, GLBTQ rights, and reproductive rights. I realized as I read that list that there are additional world-changing visions we Mysteries might marry. My own vision for a healthy planet/healthy people was not listed, nor my vision of world population balance. I further realized I was polygamous in my commitment to world visions; I have not focused my energy on a singular vision, as the children-centered Mystery had. I imagine we Mysteries all share the vision of life-affirming spirituality evolving at Diana's Grove, but most of us have other visions, too.

The Mystery List weaving quickly turned to specific vows the Mysteries were willing to make to their visions. The first vows offered were by a photographer. Photography had been his partner for 35 years, but formalizing his vows by putting on a marriage ring meant a deepening of commitment to his art.

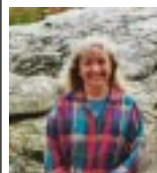
Personal vows to Self were offered. "Stay present - Move forward - Be Love," said a Mystery. "I vow to be my authentic self - no pretenses," said another. "I marry my personal integrity. It contains all of my previous marriages and more. Could it be a permanent bond?" asked another Mystery.

One Mystery could not initially see that she had a world vision, then she began to cry as she felt her global hope - her global Camelot. Her hope is that we stop hurting and killing each other as human beings. Her vision is for world peace, as well as an end to interpersonal violence. She concluded her post by renewing her vows to her Camelot. "I vow to be your faithful partner in sickness and in health, in good times and bad, and in joy as well as in sorrow," she wrote. I felt touched in a new way while reading these well-worn vows now made to a global vision of the end of violence.

I was struck deeply by a Mystery who told of vowing to dedicate her life to the Goddess, if the Goddess would allow her to be childless. At least that is how I heard the Mystery's vow, because I made a similar vow some 20 years ago. I didn't, at the time, grasp the concept of the Goddess but I deeply grasp gender difference, so I made my somber personal vow to myself...as a woman. Like the other Mystery, I, too, felt my vows were irrevocable and at a cellular level.

In 1982, I vowed in my journal that I would be childless as part of the global effort to lessen overpopulation. I secondarily vowed that I would be positive about my choice and the anguished manner in which it was made. And finally, I vowed that I would maintain my feminine perspective, despite not having the physical experience of child bearing and infant rearing. I wrestled with my choice from one Spring Equinox to the next. My first vow seemed distant and intellectual when I made it; my second vow respected my partner and our intimacy. My third vow became my lifelong quest.

Standing in that archetypal moment of marriage when hope is at its pinnacle and vows are expected, may all we Mysteries make the wisest vows we can to the biggest vision we can see at life's horizon. And, may we make wise vows again when or if we need to reconsider our personal and global visions.



Lorely Lather is a wide-visioned woman who writes; and she writes whether published or not. Lorely loves the earth. She explores caves and has hiked on the Appalachian Trail. She lives in central Missouri, three hours from Diana's Grove.

Interview with a Mystery: Pandora Alora

by Shaun Moffit

This month, please meet Pandora Alora, a second-year Mystery from Wauconda, Illinois, who works as a software instructor and creates websites for micro-businesses. She enjoys contributing to various Reclaiming communities, working in her garden, and spending time in the elements with her sweetie and her pups.

Can you share a particular experience from your past that illustrates the kind of person you are or that maybe helped shape your identity?

I was adopted by my folks when I was 6 weeks old. My biological family members were activists, crusading for the right to die. Perhaps it's genetic; I have been an activist all of my life. In pictures of me as a child, I am proudly giving the peace sign.

My earliest memory of my own activism was during the Nixon reelection. I think I was in first grade and already a fierce peace activist. I remember begging folks to vote for Nixon, as he promised to end the Vietnam War. As our school was a polling place, I remember the principal coming out to tell me that I had to move to the end of the school sidewalk if I was to be campaigning. Standing down at the end of the walk by the street, I was alone. Undeterred, I continued to campaign, pleading to the passersby to vote their conscience and help to end the war. When Nixon was impeached, I was utterly betrayed. I learned for the first time that there are folks who will do and say anything to get what they want. This betrayal helped to foster a questioning attitude in pursuit of the truth as I see it.

What drew you to Diana's Grove and what are you finding of value in the work?

I heard about Diana's Grove through classes that I had taken in the Reclaiming tradition of Witchcraft and thought the idea of continuing my work online was intriguing. I find the questions and discussions on the list valuable and look forward to reading what others have written. Reading the thoughts of others reminds me that I am not alone in my journey. Each post I read lends insight and wisdom that I would not receive otherwise. What a wonderful gift this community is.

You have been active on some of the Mystery School lists. How do you feel about doing some of the Mystery work via the Internet?

I really enjoy doing the work on the Internet. When I began, the computer offered me a measure of perceived anonymity that I could never achieve face to face. This anonymity facilitates an openness in some areas that would be far more difficult for me in person. Being able to respond whenever I need to is just invaluable. The media provides an ability for time travel that could not be achieved in regular conversation. I can answer a question months after it was posed without having to worry that the topic has passed.

You said in your Introduction on Interact that you were looking forward to growing your edges this year. What are some of those edges?

Some of the edges that I am growing are those of trust: to trust others with my thoughts and core values and know that they will be honored; To open up to community and trust that I will be accepted. I have done a lot of work in relearning to trust others and the communities of which I choose to be a part.

Could you share one of those experiences of relearning trust?

My experiences of relearning to trust manifest in a million little ways. Being able to share my experiences of past woe in a safe place and receiving support to process these experiences has gone a long way in and of itself. Recently, I was really ill at

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Witchcamp. A camper came in the middle of the night bearing medicine because she heard I was suffering. The next day I found she had to wake another camper to get the medicine to offer to me. Another woman gave me body work, which was also really helpful. These acts of love and care were so immense to me. It showed that folks still DO go out of their way to help others. By these acts - and many, many more I haven't mentioned - I am beginning to learn to trust community to care. I will always be eternally grateful for these experiences and the beauty of spirit that still grows within community.

Are there any characters from Camelot or Avalon that are calling to you this year?

Guenevere has always resonated with me. I can understand how you can love more than one person with all your heart. Her story seems to take place at the beginnings of patriarchy. What was it like for her to balance her own spiritual beliefs with the need for peace she must have so desired for her community?



Shaun Moffit is a lifelong Okie, a teacher and writer, who enjoys a good merlot, speaking with her teenage son when he still allows it, sitting on the porch, and writing poetry about driver's ed students parallel parking in front of her house. She can be reached at okieload@aol.com.

Community Arts: The story of the invisible knight continues

by Cynthia Jones

In the distance, horses hooves thunder.... Louder and louder, closer and closer; Balin turns to look behind him. Nothing. Nothing but dust rises on an empty road. Louder and louder, from nowhere, horses hooves, a scream. There is no fight. There is no defense. The passing knight grabs his side and falls to the ground. The sound of hooves moves on. A laugh fills an invisible wake. Balin jumps from his horse. He holds the dying knight in his arms. Blood, red blood, spilling onto the thirsty earth. Balin's shirt turns red. He tries to hold the life force in the dying man's body. His red hand presses to his side. This is the man he swore to protect. Balin's confidence, his arrogance, pour from him. His life, too, is spilling on the ground.

"I am so sorry," he wails. "I am so sorry. I could do nothing in the face of an invisible foe."

"Now," the passing knight says, "now you know why I weep. As did you, I offered a friend protection from this foe. As did you, I failed. Then I became this invisible demon's next obsession. First, I lost my credibility. Then I lost faith in those who I believed were my friends. How...? Why...? Why are people so quick to discount their personal experiences and embrace the passionate opinions, the violent rumors and accusations that are

thrown like lances by those who won't face the ones they accuse?"

With that question, the passing Knight died. He knew his fate. He never reached Arthur's pavilion. No one could protect him. Gossip and slander are powerful weapons. Many who use them become skilled at invisibility. They know how to strike without being seen. They take others into their confidence. "Now, just between you and me..."

Balin was not quick to learn the potency of this invisible attacker. He vowed to find the invisible Knight and destroy him. An ally joined him in his passionate pursuit. That ally too was struck down by the invisible wounder. Gossip, slander, the attack that cannot be addressed, a perception shared about someone who can't respond to the confidential accusation; sad, yes, but really...gossip isn't deadly, is it? The McCarthy hearings, the Salem witch trials...lives destroyed, reputations destroyed, a community teeters, friendships die. In the great dream, in humanity's dream, the invisible knight is deadly. In the most mundane world, he is deadly.

Jobs are lost, a person's livelihood is damaged. It not such a big deal, after all, if people believe it there must be some truth to it. Wait. What will you say when you hear those hooves thundering toward you? I agree with the dying passing knight...why? Why do people throw out their own experience and listen to, perhaps even ride with, the Invisible Knight? Is it because we are bored? Is it because slander is so juicy? Is it because issues quicken our pulse; righteous accusation makes us feel good about ourselves?

As Balin moved on with his quest, he met a king whose son lay wasting away. He was in terrible pain from a

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wound given by the invisible foe. Perhaps you know this son? Only the blood of the Invisible Knight can restore his health. Balin finds that Knight when he is showing himself at a party in his brother's castle. He slays him and the consequences are great. A Kingdom falls, the Grail King is wounded, Balin is known forever as Balin the Terrible. "It isn't fair. It isn't just," Balin cried to Merlin.

"Misfortune isn't fair, fate is not just, they both exist," Merlin said. "I bid you farewell, Balin, for we will not meet again in this world."

Balin rode out through a destroyed land. He knew his death was his destiny. Sometimes the truth and right action have terrible consequences. Those who have told the truth and, by so doing, destroyed their company or community, live lives not imaged by those who read the headlines. Balin's story is a dream and a dream is not as simple as the telling of it might make it sound.

But, back to that Invisible Knight. How do we stop him? How do we care for those under our protection? Five knightly virtues, all of them are practices that slander and gossip don't use. Integrity demands that we address our issues and grievances as visible knights. Compassion, generosity, courtesy and fellowship, when these are our practices, we will find ways to address our issues with the people that we have issues with. We will address our dissatisfaction with those who can respond to our concerns. We have all been wounded by an Invisible Knight and...we have all been Invisible Knights. We have all thrown the lance of our opinion into the heart of someone whose humanity we no longer see or value.

As Teri said in her article, *The Invisible Attack*, "There is a problem with shame; it gets in the way of atonement."

Perhaps the invisible Knight prays for the courage to be visible; may he find that courage. May he...no, may we pick up our lances and give our blood, our healing life force, to the ones we have harmed. The only way to stop this Knight is not to join him. The only way to stop this Knight is not to be him. May we have the courage, compassion and generosity to be visible Knights who are accountable for what we say.



Cynthia offers the Community Arts path with Elizabeth Wilson, and you will find her in many other Mystery School sessions as well. She weaves the Camelot/Avalon stories into philosophy, philosophy into discussion, discussion into challenge and challenge into the stories. Cynthia founded Diana's Grove with Patricia Storm in 1994.

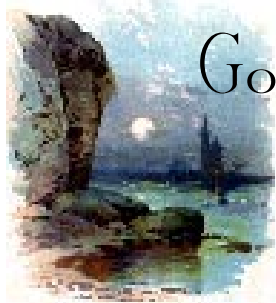


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Going Deeper

By Synnove

I'm still exploring the June story, which illustrated the idea of love and betrayal through the story of Lancelot, Guenevere and Arthur. I'm sure you already know about their love triangle. Lancelot is Arthur's best friend and companion and his wife's lover. Guenevere is torn between her love for Arthur and for Lancelot. Did Arthur know? Perhaps, but their vision of Camelot required that no one be above the law. When Lancelot and Guenevere were discovered, Lancelot ran and she was condemned to death. Lancelot returned later to save Guenevere from death, taking her away to a convent. Afterward, he lived in exile in the forest.

But love is larger than betrayal. Guenevere lives her remaining years in service, choosing neither man. And at the final battle, Lancelot fights and dies by the side of his king, Arthur.

With which of these characters do you identify? The betrayer? Or the betrayed? Can you be both at once?

As I explore my relationship to betrayal, a question from the June workbook, titled "Lancelot and Guenevere: Love and Betrayal," seems to jump off the page and demand an answer.

"Have you ever believed yourself to be purely one thing, and failed to see its shadow side? When have you said, *I am peaceful*, only to have your hidden aggression sneak out and harm another? When have you said, *I am open-hearted*, only to have your critical judgment guide your ways and words from the shadows? When have you refused to see all that you are and, so, given up the capacity for choice?

How might your life have been different if you could have acknowledged all that you are?"

I made a vow as a child that I would never physically abuse another person or allow anyone to be abused in my presence. This came from early childhood experiences of being punished physically whenever I disobeyed my father. I have always insisted on controlling my own body, deciding what I will eat and the amount of touch I would allow. Each time I set a boundary, my father interpreted my behavior as being willful. He also believed that it was his duty as a parent to break my will.

For years, bullying behavior would trigger memories of abuse. I was torn between a strong need to stand up for my values and fear that I would be hurt physically.

Many times throughout my life I have taken a stand against behavior I judged to be bullying, in spite of my fear. As a teen, I stood up to both of my parents when their anger and physical abuse escalated. In my first professional job, I stood up to a man who seemed to take delight in delivering teasing sexual innuendos that left a female co-worker in tears. At my next job, I stood up to a female senior manager who wielded sexual demands like a weapon, threatening the men who worked for her, confident that they would not complain. Each time I

changed jobs, I found a new aspect of my nemesis, the bully, waiting for me.

I stood up for my values by retaliating with my quick wit, cutting to the bone, damaging pride to create negative consequences for bullying behavior. The methods I used were as destructive as the bullying I was trying to stop. I had learned to identify

vulnerability from the first bully I confronted. Once I found a vulnerable place, I exploited it very successfully. The bullying behavior stopped. I justified my actions by pointing to the results. My parents were afraid of me. That teasing male co-worker was courteous in my presence.

But can I really justify retaliation? Do I really want to live in a world where people are controlled with fear of consequences? My approach presumes a world in which there are fixed notions of right and wrong, where I can label certain behavior as "bad" and deserving of punishment and feel free to deliver

"How might your life have been different if you could have acknowledged all that you are?"

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that punishment myself.

Over the years, I have reframed my thinking. Instead of labeling behavior as bullying, I am developing my skills in thinking well of others. Making the assumption that there is a reason for the behavior I observe: perhaps a difference in values, perhaps an underlying need that is unmet or perhaps a lack of social skills.

I still set clear boundaries around the types of behavior I will tolerate. I'm working on creating boundaries that are blame free, established from a place where I make choices for myself but do not attempt to punish others.

It is a struggle and I still find myself lashing out in anger. I'm working on changing my behavior so that I contribute to creating a better world.

Do you have a blind spot? A behavior that seems to serve you well, but upon deeper reflection, you can see where it betrays the values you hold dear? I wonder if you can begin to make conscious choice about this behavior.



Synnove is passionate about empowering others. She has over twenty years of Management Consulting and Executive Management experience with an emphasis on building effective teams. She also teaches rock climbing for Passages Northwest "Girls Rock!" — a program dedicated to inspiring courage in women and girls.

Cover Artwork Order Form

The cover art is an original watercolor by Shauna Aura Precourt, painted specifically for this magazine. Shauna has been designing the covers all year long, and is now offering archival-quality prints of her work. Proceeds will go to support Diana's Grove Dog Rescue, as well as Shauna's work as a freelance artist and web designer. Contact Shauna at ShaunaAura@gmail.com for more details.

Print	Cost	Quantity	Total Cost
Sword in the Stone (February)			
Women of Avalon (March)			
Lady of the Lake (April)			
The Marriage of Arthur and Guenevere (May)			
Lancelot and Guenevere (June)			
Gawain's Wedding Night (July)			

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Make checks payable to: Shauna Precourt
 Mail to: 6241 N Claremont, #2
 Chicago, IL 60659

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My Favorite Places: Bridget's Grove

by Canyon

A few years ago, when I was a new Mystery, there was no Bridget's Grove. With a tractor, bush hog, and determination, residential staff carved out a new space in the woods, just northwest of the Main Ritual Area. We have used this little nook on the land infrequently – usually for small rituals with 20 or so persons, such as the Ancestors' Fire at Samhain. An intimate grove within a circle of slender trees, a tiny fire circle, a park bench...that's all there was to Bridget's Grove for several years until its transformation this spring into an outdoor cathedral.

Now, large stones pried by loving hands from the ground and hauled by now-muscled arms from the nearby spring branch and Sinking Creek create an almost solid and level floor. These stones, with tamped gravel between, make a circular area that extends six or more feet out from the central stone altar, which is an elevated fire pit...or is it a deep well, full of wisdom and memory?

With no solid walls to hold them, stained glass windows in Vesica Pisces frames seem to hang in midair among the trees, as do three larger-than-life paintings of Bridget, two with the same graceful top arches as the windows. At the earth altar, Bridget pounds a sword's fine edge on her anvil. At the fire altar, her hand cradles a flame, while at the water altar, a clear stream cascades through three small pools and flows beyond the painting in a river of blue mosaic tile and glass pieced into the rock floor. This spiraling river of stone encircles the central fire altar and flows beyond to join the liquid water of Spring Branch creek. All around this small circle of art in the woods, faceted crystals sparkle in the shifting sunlight and cylindrical chimes tone as breezes shift them, creating a song with the whispering leaves.

Standing in this living, breathing chapel, I am intimately aware of my connection with the divine. Surprised that something so obviously constructed by human hands can appeal to my sense of the sacred as much as raw nature has always done, I let wisdom trickle into my heart from Bridget's fiery well. I hear a whisper: *The love is what makes the sacred.* Was that the voice of the trees and the chimes?



"Standing in this living, breathing chapel, I am intimately aware of my connection with the divine."

The love...yes....The love is what makes the sacred. I think I know what that means; I think that phrase explains my connection to the divine here. The vision of a temple in the woods rose, I believe, out of love – love for beauty, love for Diana's Grove, love for the Mystery School community, love for a hard labor that brings vision to life, and love for the way communion with the divine touches even the most hidden of hearts. Here human hearts gave birth to the mystery that is art; the newborn lies cradled in summer's heat and smiles at the woods.

Since first it was gently carved from the land, I liked Bridget's Grove. But the echoes of that labor of love - the reverberations of pants, pushes and pulses that still hang in the heavy July air - have made it one of my favorite places at Diana's Grove.

Author's Note: The transformation of Bridget's Grove into an outdoor temple was envisioned and primarily executed by Anne Pyterek and Shauna Aura. They had significant help from Diana's Grove residential staff and members of the Mystery School community during the May and June intensives. Many thanks to them all.



Canyon's life mission is to offer others opportunities that enable them to step into their destinies. Her programs and publications support you as you strive to become who you truly are, who you were intended to be. Canyon is a staff member at Diana's Grove and is currently writing a book, [A Labyrinth Journey: Seven Paths to Living Fully](#).



This month, the film I'm exploring is Robert Bresson's *Lancelot du Lac*. A French film from 1974, the story opens during the twilight of the Arthurian age as Lancelot and the knights return, unsuccessful, from the Grail Quest. Lancelot feels that his relationship with Guenevere has ruined the mission, and has taken a vow to God to atone.

I've been struggling with this month's theme since the pattern of the year was released, simply because what would I, as a man, know about what women want? And while this film does explore, in some detail, the relationship between Guenevere and Lancelot, I was actually able to answer that question by watching some other films I've presented this year.

Before we progress further with a discussion of the film, I must give a little personal context to the discussion. I spent seven years in film school, and the program in which I was enrolled required equal parts production and theory. Although we had exposure to most published film theories, the University of Wisconsin leaned strongly toward feminist theory, and as a result, I have a very strong tendency to analyze film in the context of the gender roles and stereotypes presented. That framework is how I chose to analyze this film. Granted, we must consider the historical context of Arthurian-era gender, but despite that, this film provides some excellent discussion points for gender roles, and ultimately a possible answer to the question of what women want.

When Lancelot returns from the Quest, he goes to Guenevere to tell her that he can no longer continue their relationship due to his vow. She's not happy, of course. Where was she in this unilateral decision of Lancelot's? Did he stop to consider how she might feel about this? She won't stop loving him, even if he stops loving her.

When Mordred exposes the affair, Lancelot spirits

Guenevere away and divides the round table. After a series of battles in which Gawain is mortally wounded, Arthur, in an effort to eliminate further bloodshed, offers a truce. He will take Guenevere back, consider her innocent (after all, there's no definitive proof), and Lancelot must go into exile. He agrees, for Guenevere's sake, to the terms of the surrender, and turns her over to Arthur.

The first thing that struck me about this retelling was how little Guenevere really mattered to the story. Lancelot returned from the Grail Quest, having made a decision about their relationship on his own. Arthur heard Mordred's account and assumed Guenevere's guilt of adultery without speaking to her. Lancelot took her away with him after Mordred's accusations. Where was Guenevere's voice in all of this decision-making? This fact alone really helped drive home my idea of what women really want.

Nowhere in the story did anyone think to ask Guenevere what *she* wanted out of the situation. Did she want to be with Arthur? Lancelot? Neither? Both? All options were available to her, but she was an unwitting pawn in the friendship-turned-rivalry of the two men in her life.

Of course, I can't begin to answer the question about what women want, but I think that women want the same things that everyone wants: to be heard, to be valued, and to be able to live authentically within that context.

I can't begin to conjecture what was what going through Guenevere's mind during the course of the film, because of her character's minimal involvement in the story, but I can say that if a story were unfolding around me, involving me, but not involving my input, I would feel quite betrayed and angry.

In turn, if I were doing something that could affect others, I'd want to be able to discuss those actions with them in a safe, open and honest environment where we could make a decision about how to proceed based on our communications.

What do women want? I think that women want the same things that everyone wants - to be valued and understood as their authentic selves. I believe that the path to that understanding is nothing more than open and honest two-way communication. First with ourselves, to achieve a high self-awareness of our wants and needs; and second, with others, to learn how to best and most effectively interact with others in the world around us *as* our authentic selves.

Perhaps Lancelot's, Guenevere's and Arthur's fates

Continued on page 22

Moving Images... Continued from page 21

would have been different had the three been able to articulate themselves to each other better. Who knows how the story would have been retold?

Perhaps you've been involved with interactions like Arthur's and Lancelot's—making decisions regardless of another rather than with that person. Perhaps you've had decisions made about you that never involved your input. Consider how healthier communication or an environment fostering effective and healthy communication could have changed the outcome of those communications. I believe that's the ultimate lesson that can be gleaned from *Lancelot du Lac*.



*Dan Wilson. Milwaukee, WI.
INTJ. Art. Music. Film. Scorpio
Sun, Leo Moon, Scorpio Rising*

Imaginary Gardens

by Shaun Moffit

For one of June's poetry exercises, I took an idea from the *Mystery School Book of Shadows* on page 120, which describes how to find your life card. "It represents a dynamic and purpose that move through you, as you." The *Book of Shadows* suggests: "Pull that card from the deck and look at it to discover: Your mystery. Your gift. Your strength. Your tool."

The exercise was to study the card—either an actual one or an image online (tarot.com has many) and write a poem that shows how this card might inform your life in some way. The following poem is one that came from that exercise, and it is reprinted with the poet's permission.

Two Opposing -- by Scarabella

Sagittarius Sun, Cancer Moon
Signs of fire and water
Each yearns for the other's caress
Yet they cannot touch
without dramatically changing.
Transformation

Bridled compassion
unyielding passion—
both rise up.
They clash as waves on the shore.
Emotion's undertow
to and fro.

Outward, inward
Travel and nesting
Opposite attraction

I stand with a lion in the lush meadow
near the shadow of powerful mountains.
Tame the strength, I do.
Keep it tamed till time is ready
to mount the future feat.

An un-quivering hand holds fast
near the mouth of eminent danger.
Weighing the matter at hand
scales barely tip in favor.

When to take action
When to hold back
Strength and adjustment
Come from within

Wounded healer Chiron
Emerging in my cloud-free night sky
Strength and un-compromised adjustment
Adjustment and un-daunting strength
Power and justice

Balance and alignment
Controlled balance
Flexible rigidity

Gracious savageness
Balance of opposites
The Lady and The Lion

Lonely Hearts

by Cynthia Jones

This month, Sir Gawain, the faithful knight and servant of King Arthur, rides off to answer the question: What do women really want? I thought about being Gawain and asking the dogs what they really want, but that quest is too simple. Dogs want to be with their people. Dogs want companionship.

Once they have companionship, they want to serve. They want to work, to herd, to hunt, to comfort and, of course, to play. They want to be dogs and use the power of their bodies to run and jump and explore. They want to do what dogs do.

What do dogs need? Care, love, respect, food, medicines that will maintain their health, a comfortable place to live, a safe yard - fenced or in the country - so they can meet their need for exercise - that is what dogs need. What they *want* is to be with their person, their family.

But as I tell talk about Gawain, I realize that I am not Sir Gawain, faithful servant of Arthur. My dog is Gawain. It is the dog who is the loyal servant of the king and kingdom. It is the dog who rises to face the Giant who threatens the king. Some Gawains are mighty and fit for the job of defender and protector. Some are not. Twenty-five pound Mindy would die to protect her home and her Patricia; no danger greater than her love for her person. Surely it is the dog who wanders and wonders: What do people really want?

In each home, the answer differs. We want dogs to be our friends, our companions, our protectors, and



*What do I really want?
Out of this pen!
That's what!
It's time for a walk!*

the answer to our need to be loved. We want them to be good listeners, to be obedient, to love us no matter what we say or do to them. We want them to make the kids happy and teach them responsibility - a job we couldn't do and, so,

we leave it to the dog. We want them to be our running companion, a skilled hunter, fierce with the people we fear and delightfully friendly with everyone we know and like. Some people want a dog to accent the decor, to match the living room and of course, to do so without shedding. The dogs I know have been given all of the answers above. Many of

them have done their best to give their owners just what they asked for and, still, they are here praying for a home. These dogs will find people who only want the privilege of loving and caring for them and being loved in return. It happens every day. We get to see some of our dogs find that kind of home. I pray this will be the answer that every dog finds at the end of her or his quest.



Puppies like Karl, shown here, need to chew!

"To love a dog, allow a dog to be a dog."

To love a dog, allow a dog to be a dog. That is what dogs do; they allow us to be the people that we are. Dog are such vital creatures, each one has her or his own personality. Breeds have similar tendencies and traits, but the new Schnauzer can't fill the paw print of her beloved predecessor. Dogs will bark, shed, have moods and needs. They will run, digs, play with the wrong toy....*I didn't know it was your new shoe.* Your dog will have his own preferences. He might not like one of your friends. She might be your dog and not your child's best friend.

Puppies will pull on your socks, untie your shoe laces, potty in the house, bite your hand as they learn to play and, even, chew on the couch. A puppy is a puppy. Teething means chewing. Being under 16 weeks means the owner needs to be more housetrained than the pup. Imagine demanding that a baby be done with potty training when she is 4 months. Little is little and some things require time. A puppy has to grow up to be a dog.

To love a dog, give a dog what she needs to be healthy and happy. Give him your time, attention, and care, and learn how to communicate with them so he can find the answer to the great question that is on every dog's mind: What do people really want?

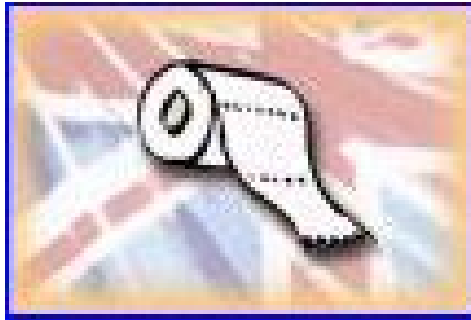
Cynthia Jones (not pictured here... that's Rex), founded Diana's Grove along with Patricia Storm in 1994.



Want to help?

It takes a great deal of time, energy, and resources to keep an organization like Diana's Grove afloat. We are eternally grateful for the generosity of our community members. If you have the means and inclination to help, here are two of our "wish list" items for the month of July. And of course, financial contributions that we can put towards our areas of greatest need are always welcome. Thank you so much for your continued support of Diana's Grove, which allows us to continue our personal growth and leadership development programs, as well as run an independent dog rescue operation.

Please call us with any questions at 573-689-2400.



Yep. We always need more paper towels. It might surprise you to know that the Dog Rescue business at Diana's Grove literally goes through 2 cases of paper towels a month. That's almost 100 rolls!

If you have a spare roll or two around the house - plain white, nothing fancy - then we would love to have them. This will be a very worthwhile and well-used donation!

One of the hallmarks of the Diana's Grove Dog Resuce operation is our commitment to helping dogs who are literally at Death's door by giving them a second chance at life. One of the ways we do that is routinely disinfecting the pens with bleach in order to help deter illness. A donation of a bottle of bleach will go a long way towards helping us save lives!*

*Please do not send bleach through the mail! Either bring it with you to the next event you attend, or send it with a friend who is coming to the Grove. Thanks!

