

Chapter 10: Splash in the Pond

Taylor had been spending a lot of time with Etruceana in her courtyard. But she wasn't quite sure if she kept visiting Etruceana because she like the singing, or if she was really just trying to avoid Queen Nyla, the library, and anything, or anybody who reminded her of the *real* reason she was there in Telos.

Eventually, Taylor mastered all of Etruceana's secret sounds and tones. Luckily, for her no other body part opened up to empty its contents onto the floor of the stage. She was quite relieved. During this morning visit, it was time for Etruceana to begin teaching Taylor how to combine the original sounds for more advanced purposes.

"What we must do," explained Etruceana, "is teach you how to enter the realm of pure sound, vibration, and energy. To do this, we need to mix the tones that you have already learned into a variety of melodies. By varying the order and rhythm of these tones, the energies of the body will be made to link together. This will invigorate you and raise you up into a very elusive realm. This is one of our most productive strategies, and it is also one of our most difficult. The state of pure sound, vibration, and energy is not easy to achieve."

"Was this what you were doing when I first visited you here in the courtyard? Were you in this . . . realm, then?" asked Taylor.

"More or less," answered Etruceana. "But you never really saw the full effects of this technique."

"So you really have applied a type of science to all this, haven't you. It's not just whimsical singing is it?"

"Not just," said Etruceana. "So enough of all of this explaining. Let's get started. Are you ready?"

Taylor was hesitant. With everything new that Etruceana had to offer, it always seemed something unexpected and not so pleasant tended to happen. "I guess so," she said finally.

"I'll demonstrate first," said Etruceana, while placing herself center stage. Etruceana launched into a lengthy series of tones. Most of the sounds she used were ones that Taylor could identify, but it didn't take long for Taylor to become mesmerized by Etruceana's voice. Taylor was taken away, drifting in some faraway, ethereal place.

Standing at Etruceana's side, Taylor began swaying with the sounds. Most of the time, her eyes were closed, but once she opened them to look upon Etruceana. Surprisingly, Taylor noticed that the old lady's body and clothes were vibrating, humming. It actually looked as though Etruceana had become transparent. At first, Taylor couldn't take her eyes off of her, but when Etruceana's beautiful voice captivated her attention once again, she closed her eyes and continued swaying. Sometime later, while still listening, Taylor opened her eyes only to find that Etruceana had disappeared. At least, that's what Taylor thought until she looked upward to find the old woman floating in the air! This caught Taylor completely by surprise and sent her stumbling backward off of the stage and into the pond with a splash.

Standing up, unharmed but soaking wet, Taylor wiped the hair out of her eyes and watched Etruceana descend to the stage. "Why didn't you tell me you were going to do that?" shouted Taylor, while slapping the water's surface with both hands. She began making her way through the pond toward the stage. While climbing the roots out of the water, Taylor continued shouting, "Well! Why? Why didn't you tell me?"

Etruceana, who was now standing on the stage, shrugged, chuckled, and said, “I don’t know, honey. I certainly didn’t expect you to go falling off the stage once you found out. But now that you ask, I guess I’ve become quite fond of watching your reactions. You’re really quite amusing, you know.”

“Well, thanks a lot,” said Taylor as she turned and stormed off down the stairs. “Glad you find me so entertaining.” Making her way through the tall grass of the courtyard, Taylor shouted over her shoulder. “I’m going to work in the gardens.”

“Since you’re already wet,” Etruceana was still smiling, “you may as well.”

Chapter 11: Talking Tomes

After a full day of working in the hydroponic gardens, Taylor found herself back in the pod, at the kitchen table. She was relaxing with Monka after another delicious meal. The dishes had already been washed and put away. They were watching the sunset, sipping on some tea, enjoying the view from the kitchen. When the sun was gone, and the dark outside was sufficient enough to expose the stars, the walls of the pod took on a small luster of hidden light deep under its surface. Eventually, the arched walls took on a full shine as it brought a soft nighttime light into the room. Like the cascading waterfall of light pouring down the walls in the great central atrium, the light of the walls in the pod did the same.

Monka got up from the kitchen table, walked over to bookshelf and grabbed a full stack of books and set them on the table. A beam of bright light shot out of the ceiling, brightening the entire table.

Taylor looked first at the books, and then Monka, all the while wondering what she was up to. Monka didn't say a word, but rather opened a book and began to read, silently to herself while taking an occasional sip of tea. "So, what are you doing?"

"Just reading, is all," said Monka not looking up from the book.

"What are you reading?"

"Oh, some old texts."

"Why? Why are you reading those?"

"To prepare."

"Prepare for what?"

"For when we enter the temple and do the dance, and..." Monka stopped herself short.

"You think I'm the one, too, don't you?"

Monka looked up from her book. "Yes I do. Since the first time I set eyes on you." She pushed the book away and reached for Taylor's hand. "Before you arrived, word had gone out throughout Telos that someone from the outside had seen the light during one of our dances in the temple. When I saw you, standing there after you made your way in, turning all around in awe of this place, all dirty and scraggly, and tired... I knew. I could see it in you. I knew then that you were the one. The one everyone had been talking about. The one with the gift."

Taylor stared at the table and all the ancient books.

"You see, Taylor," continued Monka, "we've all been waiting for you. All of us. We've been here, all our lives, waiting, studying, preparing, getting ready for the time when the one arrives. So, I'm here in my pod, studying and waiting for the time when the one will come to lead the team of seven."

“The Sacred Seven,” Taylor paused for a moment to think. “Queen Nyla mentioned that to me the other day when I visited the library. What’s that all about?”

“When we enter the temple and perform the Dance of Divinity, groups of seven dancers will form. Dancers will be breaking up and forming new groups, but even after breaking up and creating a new group, they will have to get into position according to the Divine Design. And the group that you are in, Taylor, will be the legendary team of seven.”

“What’s the Sacred Seven supposed to do?”

“The Sacred Seven will be sent back in time to set our future right. That is why we all study the books in our library. For we need to know the stories people lived by.”

“But, besides *the one*, how do you know who the others will be?”

“We know that the one is supposed to be in our temple, and we will all be dancing, but nobody knows for sure if they’ll be part of the Sacred Seven. Therefore, we *all* need to be prepared. We need to know these books if we are to set the story right. So we study, wait, and hope. That is what we do.”

Taylor stared out the window into the darkness. There weren’t very many stars in the sky that night. “But how do you know where the Sacred Seven will be going? I mean, where in history will we be placed?”

“We don’t know where you’ll take us. So we have to be prepared to leave for almost any time and place. That is why we have gathered so many of these great books throughout the ages.” Monka took a sip of her tea and looked down at the open page of her book.

“Where *I’ll* take us?” asked Taylor incredulously.

“Yes.” Monka then looked up from her book. “Where *you’ll* take us. You see, when the Sacred Seven leave our temple and head back into the future, whatever place and time you have in

your mind when the moment arrives, is where you'll take the Sacred Seven." Monka paused for a second. "As long as it is someplace in the past."

"I get to decide where we're headed?" Taylor asked. "*Me?*"

Monka looked out at the darkness. "Yes, *you*." Then she turned toward Taylor. "But first, I think *you* need to decide whether you are the one, or not." Monka took a deep breath. "Because, until you decide, there won't be any traveling for any of us. We'll still be here studying, preparing, waiting for the one to arrive." Monka then looked down at her old book, and began reading its tattered pages.

After it became apparent that there would be no hope of disrupting Monka's studies, Taylor got up from the table and started walking back toward her room. When she reached the hallway she stopped, turned around and stood there for a long while, watching Monka turn page, after page, after page. It wasn't until she realized how much she admired the woman's resolve and unwavering devotion that the tears started to roll. Monka, Queen Nyla, Etruceana, Pelleur, *everyone* living here in Telos, were focused on fulfilling this one, particular, final aim. The Lemurians had moved here, built this place, survived all this time, collected all those ancient texts to read and study, and trained continuously by dancing, singing, and drumming, for the singular purpose of accomplishing this one and only goal. And now, all their efforts hinged entirely on her.

The next morning after a silent breakfast with Monka, Taylor found herself back in the great Lemurian Library.

She immediately went to the rear of the library beyond the reach of the shelves, waiting to witness more of the Akasha Chronicle. But this time, the chronicle eluded her. The shelves, however, seemed to be more accustomed to her travels through their aisles. They didn't shrink away from her when she tried to get close. After Taylor had been up and down a few aisles, they started allowing her to take, and survey, a scroll, tablet or book from their cradling arms.

Finding texts and tomes from nearly every culture from every time, it was hard for Taylor to decide which one to take. Finally, she picked a large book with a wooden cover and brass hinges and took it to the rear of the library, for she still didn't want to miss the Akasha Chronicle should it appear once again. She found a shelf that didn't rock so much, and sat on the floor, propped her back up against it, and poured through the text, turning page after page of parchment decorated with colorful borders and illustrations. She wondered how the Lemurians had gathered such treasures. Then, while focusing on the mysterious handwritten symbols and scrolling from left to right, the book started talking to her. In a voice that very well could have come from the scribe who wrote it, the book actually started speaking.

Taylor slammed the book shut. She turned, first left, then right, looking down the aisles to see if anyone were there, nearby. She was still alone. She cautiously opened the large wooden cover again, but heard nothing until her eyes focused on and then scanned over the symbols. Again a mysterious voice began reading the text. After tossing the book down, she jumped up and ran into an aisle, grabbed the handle of a cylindrical ivory case, lifted it off the shelf, brought it back to the rear of the library, gingerly rolled out the papyrus scroll, and again scanned the symbols. It also spoke to her, in yet another language.

That's when she tore down an aisle and began taking down and then scanning through book after book, script after scroll, tablet after tome, testing each one to see if they too would speak the words. When she had a pile all spread out around her on the floor in the aisle, she felt the presence of someone nearby. Out of the corner of her eye, she saw Queen Nyla, standing at the end of the aisle, in the shadow, watching her.

"You hear the voices, don't you?" The queen stepped forward into the light. "The voices of the scribes."

Taylor nodded.

Queen Nyla walked up the aisle toward her. "As I suspected. You see, you have many gifts."

Taylor looked down at the books scattered all over the floor. "But I don't understand what they're trying to tell me. The languages are all foreign."

"You'll learn some of them, in time." Queen Nyla offered a hand to Taylor. "Come with me. I want to show you something." The queen lifted Taylor off the floor with relative ease and then led her up the aisle toward the front of the library. When they reached the big, round tables, the queen brought Taylor to a seat where an enormous book was resting on the table.

Queen Nyla pulled out the large, cushioned chair in front of the book and then settled back into the seat. "This," started the queen with a dramatic pause, "is the Lemurian's Divine Design."

Taylor could tell from the worn and ragged edges that the book *had* to be incredibly old. When she finally stood next to the queen, she recognized the inlaid design on the front cover. "I've seen that before. It's carved into the doors of the Temple of Light."

"Indeed it is," said the queen. "This is the ancient Naacal text that I was telling you about the last time we were in the library together."

"The one that tells the story about the outsider?"

"The one and only," said the queen. "It's all written here."

"What's the design on the front cover mean? To me it looks like a shuttlecock." Taylor noticed that the queen didn't quite understand. "It's small object we hit over a net with a racket in a game called badminton. The shuttlecock flies through the air, leading with the round part, followed by the tail feathers."

"Hmm," said the queen, "I can see how you might think that. You're wrong about the getting hit over the net with a racket part, but you *are* right about the flying part."

Taylor looked closer at the cover of the book. “Does this design have anything to do with the Sacred Seven traveling back in time?”

“Very perceptive, Taylor. You have a sharp mind. You’ll definitely need that for your journey. This design has *everything* to do with the team of seven traveling back in time.”

“Tell me about the design.”

“The Naacals call it the Divine Design.” The queen hesitated and swept her hand over the design, caressing the cover. She stared at the book for a long time. “There are many secrets hidden inside this book. But it is not yet time for them be revealed to you.”

Taylor looked around the library at the rows and rows of shelves and thousands of books and tablets and scrolls. She understood then that within these books there were probably a countless supply of secret, and therefore, sacred words. And here she had been, pulling down book after book, opening the covers, exposing the coveted words. How careless and selfish she had been. “I can understand that,” she said. “After all, it holds the secrets of your people.”

The queen lifted her eyes to Taylor. “There is a way to learn, however.”

“How?” asked Taylor.

“First, you must commit to leading the Sacred Seven.”

“I’ve already made that decision.”

If Queen Nyla was happy or satisfied with Taylor’s announcement, her expression certainly didn’t show it. She stared, stone-faced without so much as a trace of emotion. To Taylor it looked as if all the long years of the queen’s life had somehow just hardened in her face. She stayed that way, her eyes fixed on Taylor without saying anything at all for a very long time. Taylor figured she was probably reading her mind, trying to decide whether she was being honest, or not.

Taylor took a chair next to the queen. “Last night I watched Monka sitting at the table in her pod, reading, studying, waiting. It got so late I had to go to sleep. She told me that she and everyone here have been doing that all their life. For all I know, *you’ve* been doing it all *your* life. And, I can’t even imagine how long that’s been.” This time Taylor reached out and took Queen Nyla’s hand. “If it’s that important to all of you... and, if something horrible *is* going to happen to the world... and, if you really believe that I’m the one that’s supposed to lead the team... then, that’s what I have to do.”

Even after saying it, Taylor still had a hard time believing that she did. She had just committed herself, telling Queen Nyla exactly what she wanted to hear. Taylor knew how to tell people what they wanted to hear, and how to go along with things the way they were. But she still didn’t quite know if she believed. She would do the work, study, learn what she needed, try her hardest, but not quite, totally believe that she was the one. Not yet, anyway.

Taylor noticed that Queen Nyla hadn’t pulled her hand away, but she also hadn’t returned the gesture in-kind. Her face was also still set in stone. Taylor wondered if she knew what she had been thinking. If she did, she didn’t mention it, and her face sure didn’t show it. With the queen’s prolonged silence, Taylor then stared at the book without saying another word.

The queen’s hand pulled away when she rose from her chair and pushed it in. “Second, you have lots of studying to do. Eventually, if you come to understand the story of your own becoming, and penetrate the fabric of your narrative, you may learn *the word*. And if you know what *the word* means, the Divine Design will open and its secrets will be divulged. So, read as much as you can. The books are talking to you, and that’s a good sign. That doesn’t happen to many. They must trust you. You don’t know the languages yet, but you will learn. There are also other books here that are written in English for you to study. We have translations of everything.”

Queen Nyla began walking toward the door. Before exiting, she stopped and turned. “Finally, to learn *the word*, you absolutely must know and understand... *that for the sake of which* you do it.”

The Divine Design stirred. It actually seemed to stretch and groan, almost as if struggling to open.

While Taylor remained seated, still staring at the now quiet book, the queen exited the library.

Chapter 12: Earth Moves

From then on, every spare moment Taylor had was spent in the library, devouring book after book, script after scroll, tablet after tome, trying to make sense of what they were saying. She read other books, too; books that the Lemurians had acquired that were written in English; even a few books that were written by the Lemurians themselves. And as she spent more and more of her time in the library learning as much as possible about the ancient civilizations from which these books had obviously come, Taylor began to wonder why she could hear the voices. Maybe, she thought, these new gifts—the Akasha Chronicle and the voices from the books—had more to do with Telos, than with her. Maybe it was just the environment that allowed all these things to happen. Then again, she did have the dream, and she did meet Zanadar. She didn’t know if she really had any *gifts*. But still, she couldn’t completely give in to the belief that she was the one. Taylor had become curious and intensely focused on trying to understand all of what the Lemurians were attempting to teach her, and she was learning a great deal, but, from time to time, her skepticism of the powers of the Lemurian’s mystical world, and her so called gifts, would still get the best of her.

Late one evening, Taylor stood against the balcony on the third level, looking out onto the floor of the central atrium. It was dark in the dome. Night had fallen upon Telos. And even though the temple was at rest, the golden ceiling of the great dome, still glowed ever so slightly. It was also expanding and contracting like a great ribcage, breathing new life into the sleeping body of the city. Everyone had long ago returned to their pods, yet Taylor, unable to rest, remained in the atrium. She thought she was alone, until noticing a light, nearly hidden, under a thick canopy of leaves and branches on the base floor of the atrium. Immediately, she bolted through the dark, ran down a winding staircase, and didn't slow down until reaching the bottom.

She was in a jungle now, for all the plants had come alive and grown since the temple's light had subsided. In spite of the thicker brush, there was a thin path leading into the dense growth. She took it, but after traveling only a short distance the path ended abruptly. From then on she had to push through tall grass and bushes, jump across small running streams, duck under vines and branches, and climb over logs and rocks. Eventually, she saw the light filtering its way through the tangled woods. Picking up speed, becoming like the panther she had met on the mountain, Taylor stalked her way toward the source. She didn't stop until realizing who it was.

It was the queen. She was facing Taylor, standing at the far edge of a stream in the middle of a large, fairly open space. There were a few rocks, logs, and tall trees with outstretched limbs providing a dense canopy above, but the brush was much thinner throughout the area. And as for the queen, she was emitting the golden glow of light that Taylor had seen from above. Queen Nyla was sweating and breathing hard.

While remaining at the border of the opening, hiding behind a tree, Taylor found it impossible to contain her curiosity any longer. "Where does your light come from?"

As if she had been aware of Taylor's presence all along, the queen gave her answer calmly. "It comes from inside. From the full expression of one's inherent divinity. It comes from resonating with Divine Immanence."

Taylor, moved into the clearing, approached the queen, and sat down on a large rock on the opposite side of the stream. Taylor scratched her head and made her face bunch up. "You know, I've got to tell you, I'm not sure I get all of this. Etruceana talked about Divine Immanence, about lifting or raising our consciousness upward. Pelleur, on the other hand, during the short time I was able to talk to him, mentioned Divine Transcendence, and the pulse, and giving up our will, to receive the powers from above. And now you're talking about Divine Immanence and the light that comes from our expression of it within. It's all very hard to understand. How is all of this supposed to work together for the dance in the temple?"

The queen raised her long, muscular leg and placed it up on a log to stretch her hamstring. "Try to think of all of this as... well: Up, down, all around, over, under, even."

"Huh?" Taylor cocked her head to the side. "I don't get it."

The queen continued stretching. "In our temple we do many things. To accomplish our purpose, we need to combine things. We need Etruceana's songs, which will raise our energy, carry Divine Immanence *up*, and help us to get *over*. We also need Pelleur's drumming, which will bring Divine Transcendence *down* and ground it here, *under* our mountain. And we need to dance; this will help us *all around*; it blends the two—up and down, over and under. The dancing keeps things *even*, if you will."

"So the dancing blends the singing and drumming together?"

"It does. It moves things around like a whirlpool. Or like an upside down tornado." Using her long, strong legs, Queen Nyla lunged onto the log, reached upward and grabbed a hanging vine from the branches above, pulled it down, and like a cowboy with a rope, twirled it around.

"*Oh!*" said Taylor, looking as though a light had just turned on in *her* head.

"But to get the light to emanate from oneself takes a lot of work, and quite a bit of time," said Queen Nyla, while taking the vine and weaving it back through the branches above. "Are you ready to get started?"

Taylor sighed heavily. "If it'll get me into the temple, I am."

"It will," said the queen. "But aren't you interested in the dancing?"

"Yeah, sure," said Taylor. "It's just that there seems to be so much to learn, so much to do, and hardly any time to do it in, too. Everyone seems to think the dance in the temple must happen soon."

Queen Nyla hopped down and leaned against the log. "If it's any help, Taylor, all you have to do is believe in yourself, and all good things will come."

Taylor smiled at the queen and thought, but probably not just to herself, Easy for you to say.

If the queen had read Taylor's mind, she sure didn't show it. "So, are you ready to begin?"

"I am," said Taylor while almost standing at attention.

"Good," said the queen. "First, we will need to merge your feeling and thinking. We must integrate your body with your mind. Yet, we must progress further still, because if that is as far as we proceed, this light, this *fire*, will not be sustained; and it will be dim, to say the least."

Taylor nodded her head and continued listening. "If you say so."

Queen Nyla started pacing. "To sustain the light of Divine Immanence, we will also need to integrate the environment into your dance, as well."

Taylor looked confused. Her recollection of dance involved a dancer moving his or her body through empty space. People either danced alone or with a partner. How was the environment going to be involved here? she wondered.

"To do this, you'll need to explore various elements in the environment. This should help you to express the feelings you're keeping all bottled-up inside. By exploring the elements, you will come to know yourself."

"I'm not sure what you mean." Taylor thought back to the time when she was planting with Monka. Was this dancing going to be like that?

"For example," said the queen, as she turned to look around at her studio, "you may want to pick a rock, or water, soil or a plant, or you could choose the air, or even fire."

"Why?" asked Taylor. "What's a rock going to do for me?"

"The goal here is to discover the specific qualities of a substance that resonate with your personal experience. Your task will be to make contact with the physical element of your choice and then explore the various movements that are an integral part of that element."

"And what is this supposed to do?"

"From the connection you make with the element of your choice, you'll begin to discover certain movements. These movements give emergence to feelings that are escaping you at the moment. The feelings will be uprooted by your connection with the element and your movements. And, most importantly, all of this will provide you with a certain power or inner force. This power will come not *from* nature, not from a position of power *over* nature, but from a position of cooperation *with* nature." Finished with her explanation, Queen Nyla sat down on the log, and fell silent.

Taylor walked around the clearing, studying the various objects lying about, thinking about all that she had just heard. She had no idea what to choose. This was all so weird, she thought. “I’m supposed to become one with an element?” she said out loud.

The queen did not answer.

Nothing really captured her attention, so she found herself a soft, cool place on the bare ground and sat down on the slightly damp dirt. Within no time at all she began swirling it around with her hands as if playing with sand on a beach. This was familiar territory for Taylor. But this time, instead of groveling in the dirt as she had done in her room, while trying to hide and heal, now her hips began to swivel and sway. Taylor thought her movements were coming involuntarily at first, like a reflex reaction from her pelvis, but then she realized that the earth, the dirt, was actually moving with her. From her sitting position, she was having an intimate, sensual dance with the earth. Quickly, she rolled over onto her side, turned onto her belly and became like a coiling snake, slithering in the moving, musky loam.

After dancing with the dirt, Taylor found herself crawling up the trunk of a large tree. When she was fully upright, she turned her back to the trunk, leaned and pushed hard against it. The tall, sturdy plant bent slightly giving her a place to rest. Like being engulfed by a blanket of bark, the tree’s trunk curled around her, covered her, comforted her. From the tree she felt the deep compassion and understanding she had been searching for. She felt as if the tree—only the tree—was capable of excavating her sorrow, absorbing it and sharing it with her. She believed that the tree had an ancient sadness of its own and, therefore, could join with her in hers. In this condition of support, Taylor did not fear her own emotions; she did not believe they would overwhelm her. With the trunk of the tree, soothing her, rocking her, Taylor rested and cried.

When she was done, with a trail of tears running down her dirty cheeks, Taylor emerged from the trunk of the tree, opened her eyes and looked into the powerful, witnessing eyes of the queen. Exhausted, she fell into Queen Nyla's embracing arms.

With her first dance lesson with the queen complete, Taylor began to seek ways of receiving comfort, finding private places under the mountain where she could think, meditate, soothe, and further restore her sense of balance. One day, late in the afternoon, she found herself under the trees, up on a small hill in the atrium. She took a seat on the ground and leaned up against a large, gnarled log. Clearly, she felt then, there *is* a close and ancient rapport between humans and the natural environment. In her old world, she had become separated from this innate relationship.

Looking back on her earlier years, she remembered all those endless hours spent locked away in her classroom or in her bedroom staring into a computer, while all the time wishing she were on the outside enjoying all that nature had to offer. She then thought back to what her old world must look like now. Had things changed? Or were they better? Or worse? Were people still staring incessantly at computer screens in their air-conditioned rooms separated from nature? Maybe, she hoped, somebody was having an intimate relationship with nature.

An image of Kyle immediately popped into her head. He was sitting alone on a hot, sunny day in the middle of a large, grassy field staring off toward the horizon. A warm breeze playfully tossed his dark hair.

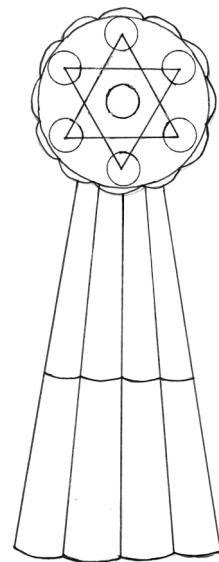
Chapter 13: Fried Roots

It had been a full year since Taylor first arrived in Telos, and she was now seventeen. Healed from life outside the mountain, her body had been growing stronger and her mind sharper every day. Her muscles were more defined, her stride bolder, her gaze more penetrating, her demeanor calmer. And with all the studying that she had been doing, she was now much more informed, as well. Yet, here she was, standing with Monka at the railing on the third floor in the central atrium directly across from the doors of the Temple of Light, still only resigned to fulfilling her purpose. It was morning and everything was just beginning to come awake. The temple was putting out more and more light, and people were beginning to appear in number on the walkways striating the walls.

Monka turned and faced Taylor. “I’ve asked you to be here this early morning because it’s time for you to become more familiar with our Divine Design.” Monka turned toward the temple, placed her elbows on the railing and stared off toward the doors and the design. “Do you remember when I was telling you about how we were all going to form into groups when dancing in the temple?”

“Yeah,” said Taylor. “You said the dancers always would form into groups of seven in positions according to the Divine Design.”

“I guess you *were* listening.” Monka was smiling. “Well, let’s see how well you listen, now.” She pointed toward the doors. “Hidden in the design you see on the door are many sacred shapes. In the center is the circle, which represents the aim toward which consciousness evolves. It is the ultimate level of complexity. The Omega Point. That



represents you. The dancer in the center of the design.”

“Me, huh?” Taylor placed her elbows on the railing and leaned her shoulder into Monka’s.

“So, what’s the design that looks like two triangles? They make a six pointed star, right?”

“That’s the star-tetrahedron,” said Monka. “The six points establish the position of the six other circles. You see those circles on each of the six points of the star-tetrahedron, right?”

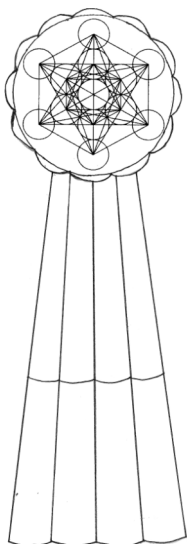
“Yeah, I see them.”

“Well,” said Monka, “that’s where the other six dancers will be positioned around you.”

“Ah,” said Taylor. “A total of seven circles for the Sacred Seven. Now I get it.”

“But we’re just getting started,” added Monka. “Now for the secrets. If you were to add another six circles in between...,” the six circles appeared in the design, “...you get a total of thirteen circles. That forms the Fruit of Life design.”

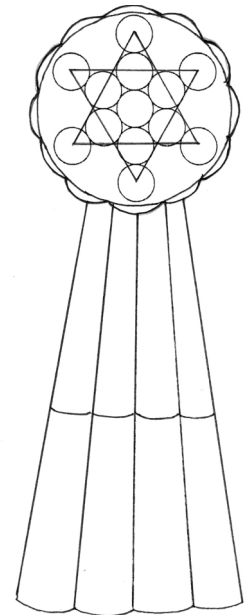
At first, Taylor wasn’t sure if her eyes were deceiving her. “At least you didn’t call it the Fruit of the Loom design.” Taylor winked playfully at Monka.



Monka ignored her. “During the dance, when everything is right, the six dancers must move from the outer six circles, to the inner six circles closer to you. When they do, Metatron’s Cube will appear.”

At that moment, straight lines shot out from the center of each circle to connect with the center of each of the other circles, causing a strange cube with all kinds of intersecting lines to come into view.

Taylor leaned over the railing to get a closer view. “I see it,” she said.



“And if all conditions are right,” added Monka, “eventually the Flower of Life will appear.”

As if on cue, the entire pattern changed and came alive, proceeding through a number of transformations and transmutations to create the intricate design called the Flower of Life.

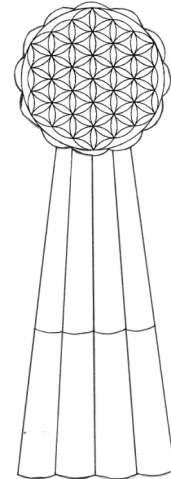
“Wow,” said Taylor, “that’s pretty.” She stood mesmerized by the sight, wondering how the wood of the doors could change so easily like that. “And what are all those feather-like things coming out of the bottom of the design?”

Monka pushed herself off the railing, stood up straight and folded her arms over her chest. “That’s what happens when the Sacred Seven departs. I guess you could say those *feathers* are the trail of light left behind in the Divine Design’s wake as it travels back in time.”

“Right,” said Taylor. “Thanks for the sacred geometry lesson, Monka.” Taylor then abruptly pushed herself off the railing to escape all that travel back time, save the world stuff, and took off running deep into the mountain, where she would be sure to find Pelleur's pit. She was going to plant herself in his pit until the Lord of Drums finally realized that she was serious and indeed ready to drum.

When she reached bottom, she jumped down into the pit, sat on the ground, and crossed her legs. Taking what she had learned from Monka, Etruceana, and Queen Nyla, she began practicing her tones, melodies, and stretching, waiting for Pelleur to arrive.

After nearly an entire day of waiting, Pelleur appeared. "So I see you are ready to begin."



Taylor had been sitting with her eyes closed, stretching her hamstrings, toning a melody. While coming out of the stretch, she stopped humming and opened her eyes to see Pelleur, now standing under the hanging roots. She said nothing.

While smiling at his patient pupil, Pelleur stepped down into the pit and took a seat directly across from Taylor. "First," he said with an expression that quickly grew serious, "you'll need to start with the body of the drum."

Still, Taylor said nothing.

"Now," continued Pelleur, who seemed quite satisfied with Taylor's state of mind, "for our purposes, the body should be made of wood. Obviously then, you'll need to look for a tree that you'd like to convert into a drum. I am not going to explain to you what kind of tree, or what it should look or feel like. That'll be for you to discover." Pelleur paused for a moment as if giving Taylor a chance to ask a question. When Taylor said nothing, he continued. "You should begin your search as soon as you can. When you have found what you believe is a good tree, you must let me know, and I will decide if the wood of that tree is good for a drum. We will see what you find."

Pelleur then stood up and promptly left Taylor sitting alone in the pit. Taylor was just a little surprised. "That's it?" she said to herself out loud. He sure doesn't provide much help. Guess I'm on my own. Might as well get up and start looking.

After searching for days, Taylor finally found the roots of a tree she believed would work. Immediately, she ran all the way back to the drum pit to notify Pelleur. Pelleur, who was sitting in the pit, quietly meditating and listening, stood up slowly, without hesitation, and accompanied Taylor to the rooted tree. Hitched to a belt that he was wearing around his waist, he carried an axe.

Pelleur followed Taylor through a variety of tunnels and caverns to a location deep within the bowels of the mountain. When they arrived at the sighting, Taylor stood next to the exposed roots,

displaying her find. Pelleur walked over to the roots like a hunter approaching a kill, not fully certain whether the wild animal was indeed dead. He ran his huge, calloused hands over the length of the large, thick roots. "This is an extraordinary find," he said, while looking at Taylor approvingly. "Do you know what you have found here?"

"I just know that I like the feel of the roots. I think the tree is dead, too. I didn't want to use the wood from a living tree. It just wouldn't seem right."

Pelleur nodded his head and smiled. "This *is* the root of a dead tree. And this tree has been dead for a very long time. Do you have any idea how it died?"

Taylor took a closer look at the tree, hoping to get a clue. She thought that maybe some disease may have been the cause, or maybe it was taken over by some kind of insect. When she found no signs leading to a conclusion, she said, "I have no idea."

"It was struck by lightning."

Taylor looked confused. "Why would that be a good thing?"

"The best of drums come from the wood of trees struck by lightning. Lightning is a very powerful force. A tree struck by lightning will already be carrying the pulse of Divine Transcendence."

Pelleur then examined the roots carefully again until he found a specific location to cut a root. Pulling the axe from the belt around his waist, he handed it to Taylor and instructed her as to where she should chop the roots away to obtain the proper size and thickness for the body of her drum. "It has to be a large, round part of the root," he said. "Do you know why it should be round?"

Taylor nodded her head, saying nothing.

Pelleur smiled, seeming proud of Taylor's silent ways. "Why?"

"A drum is round to represent the wholeness of the universe and the experience of unity."

Taylor nodded once, firmly, and then took a good strong swing at the root.

When Taylor finished cutting away the part needed, she and Pelleur began the long trek back to the pit. Taylor carried the heavy root and examined it along the way. She was excited about her find and grateful for the significance of the highly charged wood she had chosen.

Once they arrived at the pit, and after some simple instructions from Pelleur, Taylor began the laborious and time-consuming process of hollowing out the thick root. As she carved away, day by day, using the tools that Pelleur had provided her, occasionally the Lord of Drums dropped by. He would look over her work, give Taylor a few more directions, and then leave.

When finished, Taylor presented her work to Pelleur for final inspection. On the outside of the circular body, she had carved her rendition of the exterior of Mount Shasta. Pelleur was impressed.

"Do you know why the drum is hollow?" he asked, while holding the body of the drum upright.

"To carry the sound, I'd imagine," answered Taylor, temporarily forgetting that Pelleur would be searching for a more profound answer.

"Yes, this is true. However, the body of the drum has been emptied to give space for Divine Transcendence to spread its teaching downward, in our direction, into our temple. When we drum, our hands come down on the head of the empty drum, and this serves to bring Divine Transcendence down. Once it is in our temple, it spreads its mighty force and energy out into Telos, then the mountain, then, further still, into Earth."

Taylor looked at Pelleur and realized for the first time that this man was a very serious fellow. Pelleur was a quiet man, a man with a job to do, a man obviously aware that he knew how to do it, a proud man, a man who *loved* drumming.

Chapter 14: Pouncing Panther

"It is time for you to attend to the head of your drum," said Pelleur one day while holding the carved body of Taylor's drum. "You must have a skin."

Taylor and Pelleur were sitting at the edge of the small creek running adjacent to the pit. The water was trickling along, quietly. "Where am I going to get a skin?" she asked. "You're talking about an animal's skin, right?"

Pelleur nodded his head, saying nothing, while staring at the moving water. Taylor's drum body was sitting in his lap.

"Am I going to have to kill an animal to do this?!" Taylor was just a little concerned. In no way did she want to sacrifice an animal for her drum.

"How you come by the skin is entirely up to you. The power of the drum, however, will be affected by how the skin is acquired."

Taylor looked down at the water in the creek. She didn't want to kill any animal living within the mountain. She loved all the animals in Telos and couldn't imagine why anyone would want to do such a thing for a drum. In fact, she really didn't want to kill *any* animal. She was beginning to have serious doubts about this whole drumming thing. If drumming meant that she would have to take the life of an animal, she wasn't sure that she wanted any part of it.

"You see, Taylor," continued Pelleur, "the combination of the animal's skin, with the drum's body, when struck by the drummer, will release its earthly existence. Only when all are in alignment, will we be able to call on Divine Transcendence. And so, the drum's voice is not only the voice of the tree as with the roots, but also the voice of the animal as with the skin... and the voice of the drummer as with the hands."

Taylor nodded, yet she was apprehensive and somewhat disengaged from the entire conversation. She was still wondering where she'd get the skin for her drum, questioning whether or not she really wanted to go through with this, imagining herself killing some poor animal, all for *her* drum.

Some time after her conversation with Pelleur, Taylor had been walking along, wandering mindlessly through the network of tunnels under the mountain, trying to come to terms with her assigned task. Unexpectedly, she found herself on the outside. How she got there, she had no idea. Apparently, she passed through some portal leading to the outside. At first she was shocked. It had been so long since she had been on the surface. Worried about how to get back in, she turned around and tried to determine where the opening was, but couldn't find any sign of it. Then she began to panic, but only for a second. Fortunately, she remembered the time when she first arrived here on Mount Shasta. She made it into the mountain back then, so there should be no reason why she wouldn't be able to do the same this time.

Taylor calmed down and turned around to take a look at where she was. She was below the tree line in a rocky area of the mountain. The sun was low on the horizon, setting for the day. It was warm, yet the breeze was fresh and light. Much of the life on the mountain was beginning to slow down. It was that time of day when twilight was fast approaching, and all the animals knew they had precious little time before the light would fade away. It was a tranquil time, a time for enjoying the setting sun, for being thankful for making it through another day, a time for the animals to find places to bed down for the coming night.

Taylor decided to get a better look at her surroundings. And then, just as she was walking around a tall rock, a huge, cinnamon-colored black bear appeared directly in front of her. The bear

was up on its hind legs, and twice her height! And now it was less than five feet in front of her and ready to take a swipe.

From above Taylor's head, a huge cat, lion, leopard, cougar—something!—gave out a menacing growl and leaped onto the bear's enormous chest. The bear was knocked off balance. But as he fell to the ground, he swung his huge paw at the cat's back. The bear and cat both rolled on the ground. Surprisingly, the bear was almost as nimble as the cat. In less than a second, the bear was back on his hind legs. The claw marks from the cat were visible on the bear's chest. The cat, with blood oozing out its muscular back from where the bear's mighty claws had ripped at its skin, went after the bear again.

Taylor ran off around the tall rock and began climbing to a place higher on the mountain. As she climbed she listened to the horrific screams and growls of both the cat and the bear. While rounding a big boulder, she glanced back and saw that the bear had the cat firmly under control. Its huge jaws were wrapped around the poor cat's throat. The cat clawed frantically at the bear's head and belly for a few short seconds and then went limp.

Taylor looked down below her, and noticed the bear surveying the area, standing over the dead cat, looking for her. The bear was badly hurt. Blood was running down its neck, chest and belly. His right eye and nose also were cut and bleeding. The cat had not gone easily.

Taking a closer look at the cat lying on the ground below the bear, she realized that it was the same panther that she had met with Saint Germain when she first arrived on the mountain. She remembered scratching its soft belly while he rolled around on the ground under her like a playful kitten. Taylor's mind then quickly returned to her original task of acquiring a skin for her drum. Now was not the time to mourn. She needed to get to the cat.

Wishing she had some of Saint Germain's energizing potion, Taylor picked up a handful of rocks and threw them down on the bear. Her only hope was to lure the bear up the mountain on one route, while she ran down a different, faster route to pick up the carcass of the dead cat, drag it to safety, and perhaps escape into some other portal leading into the mountain.

The rocks hit the bear directly on its chest and head. It growled and clawed at the air not knowing from where they came. Taylor then called to the bear, taunting him, attempting to coax him over to the more difficult climb up, on her right. When she saw that she was successful and that the bear was firmly committed to coming the way she had planned, Taylor ran down the slope on the easier path to her left. Scared like she had never been scared before, she practically flew down the mountain. When she reached the cat, she looked up and noticed that the bear was still climbing. She looked behind her and found a small trail leading down the mountain. She bent over, grabbed the cat by its hind legs and began dragging the heavy carcass down the trail. She only made it twenty feet, when the bear saw her and started coming back down after her.

As she continued dragging the cat down the trail, she noticed an opening under a large bolder. Taylor slid through the gap and pulled the cat down into a hole after her. Within seconds, the bear came pounding down at the edge of the hole. Dust and dirt were kicked up in Taylor's face. The bear's head then pushed through the small opening, but luckily for Taylor, the enormous animal wasn't able to get his shoulders through the gap. Taylor and the cat were just out of reach. The bear growled exposing its long fangs, and twisted its huge head, trying to get at her. Taylor could feel and smell the bear's hot, foul breath filling the small, tight hole.

The only way out for Taylor would be downward. She looked down at her feet, trying to determine if there was room to get down further. Then, she looked back at the bear. The bear's head was gone, but now it was digging away at the dirt. Luckily for Taylor, the bear could only dig so far,

because it ran into another rock just beneath the surface of the dirt. But with the small amount of dirt out of the way, the bear was able to get its head, and one front paw through the hole.

Just as the bear was about to take a swipe, which certainly would have been the end of Taylor, she and the cat fell downward deeper into the hole. Pushing through a bunch of roots, Taylor and the dead cat landed in a small room. Taylor found herself lying on the floor in a Yaktavian's home. And the Yaktavian wasn't too happy about her unannounced intrusion, either. Apparently, the furry little creature had been enjoying his dinner and now Taylor had fallen right into his kitchen. The small Yaktavian stood up and with his arms wailing overhead, began shouting something totally incomprehensible. Taylor tried to apologize while pulling the bloody body of the panther through the Yaktavian's home toward a doorway. While the Yaktavian followed her to the door, still waving his furry arms and shouting, she opened it and squeezed herself and the cat through. As Taylor tried to apologize again to the angry Yaktavian, he slammed the small door in her face. She then collapsed in exhaustion, leaning against her dead panther.

Somehow, Taylor managed to get up but then hit her head on the low ceiling. She was in another small tunnel deep in the mountain. Stooping, she began to drag the cat's body through the tight passageway. Soon, this tunnel opened up into a much larger space. That's when Taylor decided to hoist the heavy panther up over her shoulder. With a struggle and a few failed attempts, she finally managed to lift the warm, bloody carcass of the dead cat, and with great effort began making her way through the intricate maze of tunnels back to Pelleur's pit.

These were the Yaktavian tunnels where they kept their mighty bells. Taylor was amazed. Here they were, all the bells, lining the tunnels, strategically located near small cracks in the wall that separated the Yaktavians and Lemurians from the outside. As Taylor labored with the heavy carcass of the cat draped over her shoulder, she passed one huge bell after another. They were shaped like

spheres, cylinders and cones. And stationed at each bell were always a group of small, furry Yakies. When she approached each new bell, still carrying her heavy panther, the little fellows would come scurrying up to her and bow, allowing her to pass. They seemed to know who she was and accepted her presence.

When Taylor finally arrived back at the pit, Pelleur was sitting quietly, listening for the pulse, as he often did, readying himself to begin a solo session of drumming. When he saw that she was carrying a dead animal, he sprang to his feet and ran over to help her carry it to the edge of the pit.

Together, Taylor and Pelleur placed the big panther on the ground above the pit. Then they stood over the amazing creature to inspect the remains. Its skin was ripped open both at the neck and the belly. And its fur was heavily stained with blood and dirt. Taylor herself was also covered with blood and dirt. Her chest was still heaving from the exertion. Dirty, blood-stained sweat poured down her drooping shoulders.

"This is an excellent animal," said Pelleur looking reverentially at the body. "How did you get it?"

Taylor explained her entire ordeal. From unknowingly wandering out of the mountain, to wondering why there had even been an opening allowing her to do so in the first place, and finally concluding with the part about her falling through the hole into the kitchen of an angry Yaktavian.

"This animal has sacrificed his life to save you," said Pelleur while looking at the dead carcass. "This is the very best of circumstances. Plus, it's a panther. This is good. This is *very* good. I sense much good energy here. It will be interesting to hear the voice of your drum."

Pelleur jumped into his pit, grabbed a bowl of sage, then stepped back up on the ground where the body of the panther was lying, and set the bowl down. He walked over to a fire that was burning in a corner of the cavern, picked up a burning stick, and returned. After lighting the sage, he knelt down

on the ground next to the panther. "Come," he said to Taylor while padding the ground, "we must pay our respects to the animal."

Taylor took her position next to Pelleur and the cat. She expected Pelleur to say a few words, or perhaps to pick up one of his drums. But instead, he simply knelt silently over the amazing cat, admiring its beauty. Eventually, Taylor stopped concerning herself with what Pelleur was doing, and focused her attention on the panther. She remembered his playful, cuddly ways and how soft and clean his fur had been when she first scratched its belly long ago. As the smoke from Pelleur's sage poured over her, it finally began to sink in that this panther had indeed sacrificed its life to save her. With that awareness pouring over her, like the smoke from the sage, she let go of all restraint and allowed herself, at last, to cry.

While Taylor sobbed, Pelleur put his long, muscular arm around her shoulders and held her tightly against his side.