THE TESSERA METHOD

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Chapter One

Margaret knew it wouldn’t be a pleasurable trip to the doctor’s office. Or, home as it were.

Dr. Vassar didn’t have an office. He had a beautiful estate where stories of dark wooden walls, relics from distant lands, and indoor trees, were spoken by many of his patients and colleagues.

He was a unique individual who didn’t use traditional therapy for his patients. Some were even invited to stay at his home for short periods of time, all the while going through some secretive types of experiments. This seemed a bit strange to her, but at the same time the novelty of it seemed exciting.

Many thought of Dr. Vassar was single and living alone but some said that he not only had a wife, but also children.

Regardless, when it came to his patients, his home was theirs just as much as his time was.

As Margaret pulled up, she chose a spot to park her car under the shade of a massive pine tree. It was at least a hundred feet tall, and its branches reached far over her small sedan protecting it from the sun.

Dr. Vassar’s home was inviting, covered with dark windows, and hidden deep within the woods. It was a contemporary one story, flat roof house that seemed as if it was a part of the forest itself.

In a kind of strange way, it reminded Margaret of something you’d see in Lord of the Rings, but much more modern.

As she put the car in park and turned off the engine, she noticed something blue glimmering from just behind the house. Like a prism being struck by light, reaching out and touching her peripheral vision.
As soon as she could turn her head to see it, it was gone.

She shook it off, grabbed her purse, and began to exit her car. Just before she could close the door, she noticed Dr. Vassar was already standing on his front porch waiting for her.

He was wearing a grey cardigan with a light blue shirt with the sleeves neatly rolled up just before the elbows.

As she approached him, he greeted her with a warm smile and an open hand.

She climbed the two steps of the porch to greet him, then put her hand out to shake his. As she did, he embraced her hand with his right, and cupped it with his left. This gave her a warm feeling of welcome, as well as a deep sensation of caring. No matter the stories she heard, there was something special about being in his presence.

“Maybe this isn’t going to be as hard as I thought after all?” She thought.

Once inside, Dr. Vassar had her sit down on the longest of the three sofas, then left for the kitchen to get them both something to drink. The room was filled with paintings, relics, and sculptures of all kinds. Everything seemed out of place because of its incredible beauty and uniqueness. On the other hand, they all seemed to be in perfect balance with each other because of that same uniqueness.

It was a strange duality but comforting.

For the time being, this is the only part of the house she would see. Later, she’d have to find out if the rumors of an indoor tree were real. For now, everything else was leading to those stories being true.

After a few moments, Dr. Vassar returned from the kitchen with two glasses of water. He handed one to Margaret, then took a seat on the chair with his back to the stone fireplace.

“So.” He said with a warm smile. “Let’s hear about these dreams.”

Margaret stared at the glass cupped in her hands while trying to find the words.
“Well, you already know I’m not sleeping well.” She said rhetorically.

“Yes, I am aware of that Margaret. But can you give me a bit more detail about the dreams themselves? You mentioned something about vibrations, or a kind of frequency you’re hearing that’s causing some discomfort or concern.”

Dr. Vassar’s tone was both empathic as well as deep with wonder. Margaret had this strange feeling he wasn’t just there to help, but also to explore. To explore the journeys of his patients, as if they were going through them together. This made him feel less like a doctor and more like someone engaged and interested.

You know, like a friend.

This was so different than the other doctors she had seen. Doctors who seemed as if they were only there just to judge or fix her. She didn’t like that. She’d rather a doctor that was vulnerable.

Maybe it was because she liked to be truly listened to, not just figured out like a statistical puzzle.

Regardless, she was now beginning to see Dr. Vassar for whom she believed he truly was.

Someone who was sincerely interested in not only helping her, but also being with her upon her journey.

And she couldn’t have been more right.

“Well, first off, I’ve been sleeping twice each night.” She said as she took a sip of water then placed the glass on the coaster on the table in front of her.

“Go on.” Dr. Vassar responded. He then copied her movements with a sip from his own.

“What I mean, is that I sleep, then wake up, then go to sleep again. Normally I just wake up then go to work. But since the frequencies began, it’s been harder to fall asleep at night, so I’ve been staying up later.”
“So this is what’s making you fall asleep again after you wake up in the morning?” Dr. Vassar asked.

“Yeah, I think so.” Margaret replied.

“I sleep for about four to five hours, then wake up. Then I’m too tired to stay awake, so I fall asleep again. That’s when it happens.”

Her face turned grey as she realized the truth of what she was sharing. Instantly, she felt like a victim, like someone who had more problems than anyone wanted to deal with. Like an anchor to a ship that wanted to leave but couldn’t.

In fact, deep down inside, she was fearing that Dr. Vassar would just shake his head and pull out a script for pills. Or worse, start asking her to talk about her childhood and how F’d up that was.

But what he said next, completely threw her off.

And little did she know at the time, it was the beginning of journey that would change her life forever.

“Margaret, do these dreams have vision? I mean, can you physically see your surroundings, or the vibrations? Or can you only feel them?”

Margaret felt the goosebumps begin to push up the hairs upon her arms. In a knee jerk reaction, she tried to cover them up with her hands.

The realization of where he was headed with his questioning, was like taking a bite of lime with a dry mouth. Simply because it wasn’t from someone trying to figure out her problems, it was from someone who had been there and wanted to truly explore the possibilities.

In a jolt of excitement, she answered.

“Yes! I mean, yes. It’s like there’s no vision, I can’t see anything. I can just feel the vibrations, then everything goes dark. I’m awake, but I can’t see or move.”
Dr. Vassar stood up and walked over to Margaret, then sat on the beautiful mosaic table placed just before her. He then put his hands on top of hers and smiled.

“Margaret, this thing you’re experiencing isn’t psychosis. *It’s a gift.*”

“And I’m going to help you to master it.”

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**Chapter Two**

Dr. Vassar was uncomfortably silent as he sat contemplating Margaret’s words. It felt like several minutes had passed since she told him what had happened since their last session.

“Okay, I got it. It’s simple really.” He said finally.

Margaret looked up at him with determination and impatience all wrapped up in one.

He continued.

“You’re saying the fear is like a block, something hindering you from moving forward. I know a lot of doctors call this paralysis, but in your case it’s not. It’s simply a wall.

“And the good news, is that it’s a wall that is penetrable.”

“I’m not sure what you mean Dr. Vassar?” Margaret replied.

“Think of it like this. Imagine that your consciousness has levels, kind of like an office building. The waking state, like the one you’re experiencing with me right now, is the ground floor. With each new level, you’re moving into a new state, a higher state, of consciousness.”

“Now, the problem you’re having with sleep, you know, how you wake up then fall asleep again, is what’s actually pushing the button to that elevator. In short, you’re allowing your brain to wake up just enough to be one step ahead of the body as it drifts
off to sleep. This then allows you to get on the elevator and move up towards the next level.”

“But how can I do that if I’m experiencing the inability to move or see?” Margaret asked.

“You push the button or, you push through.” Dr. Vassar replied.

Margaret adjusted herself on the couch as if it would help her to understand what he was saying.

“Push through?” She asked as he cupped her hand over her knees.

“Yes, you push through.” Dr. Vassar answered.

“Right now you’re trying to resist the vibrations. This is why you’re not gaining your vision.”

“Tones.” Margaret corrected him.

“Fine, tones. What you’re doing is resisting the tones. Maybe it’s fear, or maybe it’s some kind of childhood trauma. That doesn’t matter. What does, is that this resistance causes you to think that you can’t move. The trick, is to allow them to come over you as if you were a rock in a stream. In other words, just allow them to pass.”

“I know it seems counter-intuitive because of the feelings of fear, or maybe even the fear of being smothered or drowning, but it’s how you claim your vision within this state. You must move forward with courage regardless of the possible outcome.”

Now Margaret knew he had been there before. No one could have known there was another level to this, nor describe it in such a profound, yet rational way.

This instantly brought her back to an experience about three months ago. She woke up, but her body remained asleep. She couldn’t move a muscle, only a fingertip, and that’s if she willed it with all she had. But it was also that same experience that she noticed the light from the dark hallway just outside her bedroom door. As she sat up to see who was in the hallway playing with the lights, that’s when she heard someone next to her breathing. In horror, she looked down to see her own body lying motionless.
This is what he was talking about, the second floor. The state between waking consciousness and some kind of etheric experience.

“Okay.” She said as if losing the battle of keeping a secret.

“What happens next?”

“I don’t know.” Dr. Vassar said as he got to his feet.

“But if you’re willing, let’s find out.”

The next morning Margaret work up early right on schedule.

She emptied her bladder, then returned to bed.

As she did, she sat up pondering the day before with Dr. Vassar. How he talked about pushing through the vibrations, or tones, which she called them.

So, it was time. She laid her body back down and snuggled up with the soft pillows.

Within minutes, the tones came over her. And once again, there was no vision.

But this time, instead of fearing the paralysis, she allowed the tones to embrace her like a rock in a stream. And in that very moment, she thought of the tones as a doorway.

This is what she was looking for all along.

At first, there was no light. But only after a few moments, the light came. Then, the tones changed in sound.

“Maybe a waterfall.” She thought.

The light was becoming blinding, less blurry, and more clear the longer she allowed the tones to control her awareness.

Then it happened, full sight.

It was an overwhelming, beautiful, and inescapable landscape.
That’s when she saw it. A single tree, right in the center of this hidden paradise with light casting upon its top.

As she began walking towards it, she lifted her hands towards her face in awe.

“I’m dreaming, but it’s so real.” She said out loud as she stared at her hands.

She could see every line, every wrinkle, the detail was absolutely amazing.

But it was hard to stay focused as the blur continued to take away the light, then return it without warning. Staying in this conscious state, was like trying to stay focused upon a complex mathematical problem while juggling oranges, all at the same time.

She focused harder and allowed her other senses to take in this beautiful environment, not just her eyesight. And that’s when the light returned and everything came fully back into focus.

Now, just a few feet from the tree, she began to see something carved upon its trunk.

She could clearly make out the letters, but it wasn’t a word she understood. Maybe her mind was all jumbled about from the experience. Or, maybe she was making the whole thing up.

She didn’t know.

But that one word was so clear. Each letter in perfect form, as if created by the tones dancing across her mind.

As beautiful as the experience was, it was too difficult to remain focused. Within seconds, she began to hear something coming from the dark pine forest just off to her right.

It was like a groaning, or howling sound. Something you’d hear in a horror movie.

And it frightened her.

Then, the light began to vanish. And with it, the sound became louder, and louder.

A powerful fear came over her as she now felt torn between two worlds.
It was also in that moment that she remembered Dr. Vassar’s words.

“You must move forward with courage regardless of the possible outcome.”

She then took a deep breath, relaxed, and remained in the darkness.

The sound became even louder as the sensation of this beautiful place began to leave her.

Then finally, the sound began to make sense. It was snoring. Her, snoring.

She opened her eyes, looked at her bedroom ceiling, and began to laugh.

Chapter Three

“Travectio, it’s Latin for journey.” Dr. Vassar said as he sat down upon his chair.

“How do you even know that?” Margaret asked sounding bewildered and a bit sarcastic.

“It’s a long story. What’s important is that you’re making progress Margaret.”

“Progress?” She responded a little confused by his choice of words.

“That’s an understatement.”

Before she could say anything else, Dr. Vassar continued his quarry.

“So tell me, was there anything else written on the tree? Or was it just that one word?”

“That’s all there was.” She answered as her cheeks turned a slight shade of red.

“Well, nothing more other than hearing myself snoring.”

Dr. Vassar gave out a friendly chuckle. Then Margaret went silent for a few moments as he patiently waited for her next words.

They didn’t come. Instead, she sat back hard in the sofa and dropped her shoulders.
“What is it Margaret?” He asked.

“What is this real, is it?” She replied.

“What none of is real?”

“This whole experience. It’s just the mind, or, my brain playing tricks on me. Isn’t it?”

The words echoed in her mind as she carefully studied Dr. Vassar’s body language. She wasn’t sure if she was seeking validation of this potentially unfortunate truth, or if there was something else hopeful to latch onto. Of course, she wanted him to say something that would knock her socks off, something that would make her feel special, unique, and truly gifted.

But the continuing silence was unnerving. And worse, she could tell he was trying to find the words that would probably lead to a letdown.

Then, he spoke.

“Margaret, it’s anything you want it to be. This is why I called it a gift. It’s also important for you to know that you created it. So yes, it very real. But no, it’s not real in the sense you’re asking.

Just as Margaret felt hopelessness begin to set in, she was thrown off by what Dr. Vassar said next.

“However, there’s a problem with that too, simply because whatever you believe is real, is also something made up within your mind.”

Margaret could feel a pit in her stomach as Dr. Vassar’s words seemed to be making no sense. And to make things worse, she didn’t know if this was a good thing, or a bad thing.

“So nothing’s real. Is that what you’re saying?” She asked.

“Yes, and no.” He replied.
“Here’s what’s most important for you to understand.”

“We have reached a place where words no longer serve us. This is the dangerous ground where the mind begins to trick itself.”

“You may think your awakenings aren’t real, but the real manipulation isn’t your brain playing tricks on your experiences during that awakened state, it’s your brain trying to falsify, or justify those experiences, as if they never happened.

Just like when you said that you believed this isn’t real. That’s false assumption, simply because your mind is comparing it to something that only it knows.”

“And this is wrong.”

“Look at it this way. You need to become that very word you saw upon the tree. *Travectio*. And then, after you’ve become the true meaning of that word, that’s when the brain/mind will come to realize the truth of the words you choose to express your experiences.”

Margaret noticed Dr. Vassar had tensed up as he was sharing this explanation. It was a display of body language that screamed; *I want you to get this.*

But the truth was, she didn’t. And as much as her emotional and/or logical resistance fed that pit in her stomach, she wasn’t going to allow it to win.

So, without holding up any more resistance, she complied.

“Doc, just tell me what I need to do, and I’ll do it. I know this is leading somewhere, and it must be better than sitting here losing hope, or worse, thinking I’m nuts.”

She could tell by the warm smile now staking a claim upon Dr. Vassar’s face, that this was a step into the right direction.

“I’m glad to hear that Margaret. Here’s what you need to do.”
Over the course of the next fifteen minutes, Dr. Vassar explained to Margaret that she simply needed to become the tones themselves, just like she needed to become the word carved upon the tree.

He wanted her to think of the tones as a messenger, and to deeply believe there was something they were trying to share with her. Within those precious fifteen minutes, Margaret had already begun to see the possibilities and potentials of the journeys to come. And this excited her beyond measure.

All hope had returned.

They then continued and talked about returning to the place with the tree, seeking more information from it, as well as becoming much more aware of the surroundings that the tones brought her to.

For Dr. Vassar this was the absolute (and even metaphorical) sense of what she had already found.

*Travectio*

It was this first message that would be responsible for the entire road paved before her.

So, she did what he asked.

And for every night for more than four straight days, she waited for the experiences to continue her upon her journey.

But instead of experiencing an awakened state within her dreams, something else happened entirely.

And nothing could have ever prepared her for what was to come.

Not even Dr. Vassar.

On the fifth day as she stepped out of her car parked securely under the large pine, she made eye contact with Dr. Vassar as he stood upon his porch waiting for her.
And within that one look, he could tell something had changed.

_Dramatically..._
“So, tell me what happened. You look different.” Dr. Vassar asked as Margaret stood looking out his living room window.

“You were right.” She said.

“Right about what?”

“You were right about becoming the tones. You don’t need eyesight for them.”

Dr. Vassar could tell that her transformation had begun. And soon, she would be ready for the final test.

For him it was like a breath of fresh air to see someone experience the power of their own inner awakening. Of course, everyone was different, and with each new experience, came a new outcome.

This is what drove him to do this work. He wasn’t just a psychologist, he was a fellow traveler. He knew there was much more beyond the scope of what the body sees.

In the beginning it challenged everything he believed in. It took years. Years of etheric exploration, wonder, and the continual bombardment of skepticism and battling of denial.

But now, through this very work, he was now a part of a community of fellow travelers that lived between the worlds, just as he did.

“So tell me.” He said. “What did you experience? “Her answer brought a warm breeze within his mind. It was the one word he had been waiting for ever since she showed up on his doorstep. A word that would move her from victim, to something else entirely. Something with power and in control of its own fate.

“Everything.” She said.
“Good. It is time that you became the teacher.” Dr. Vassar replied.

“Come with me, I have something to show you.”

As they walked through the house they came upon a dark hallway, with what appeared to be natural light illuminating a glass entrance towards the end.

Sure enough, the rumors were true.

Within the glass enclosure, right there in the center of the house, was an atrium. And within it, was the same maple tree Margaret saw in her vision.

“But how....” She said, as her voice began to trail off.

“Oh, the tree? Yeah, I know. It’s the same one in your vision isn’t it?” He asked smiling.

“Yeah, but..how....?”

Margaret’s jaw dropped in awe as they walked passed the tree then further down the hall.

Dr. Vassar looked at her once more with a smile.

“Don’t worry, answers are coming. We’ll save the tree for later. But for now, I have something more important to show you.”

As the exited the hallway and entered the kitchen, she could see the dull light reflecting off the marble countertops and dark mahogany cabinets. It was absolutely beautiful. That’s when she lost her suspicion about Dr. Vassar being single. It was a massive dark wooden table with six chairs. Not two, not even four, but six. Sure, maybe he entertained, but most single men she knew didn’t live like this. Especially when four of the chairs had placements in front of them.

Just beyond the table, was an enclosed sunroom with two sets of sliding glass doors. One to the left that look as though it exited to the side of the house, and one to the right which, seemed to go into a lush garden. He slid the right door open and invited Margaret to join him outside.
As she walked through the doorway, she was met by a beautifully manicured garden, full with vine covered trellises, bridge walkways that lay over small streams filled with Japanese Coy, and a lavish set of fluffy white cotton furniture with a stone hearth between the two large center chairs.

“It’s absolutely beautiful.” She said, as she took it all in.

“Thank you Margaret. It has taken years of work and maintenance.”

As they continued to walk over at least three small bridges through this outdoor paradise, that’s when it caught the corner of her eye.

It was a beautiful ten foot marble statue of the God Pan. And within his hands, was a flute containing the most brilliant blue stone she had ever seen.

It sparkled within the light from the sky above, and radiated its vibrancy in every direction.

“This must have been the light that caught her eye the other day.” She thought to herself.

She had only seen color like this in pictures from National Geographic magazine, displaying the frozen waters of Greenland. Like the color of an iceberg just beneath the dark water’s surface as it radiated back towards the sun.

“Is this some kind of cut glass, or crystal?” She asked, having no idea what she was looking at.

“No.” Dr. Vassar answered.

“It’s a blue diamond. One of only four like it in the entire world.”


“Yes, I know.” Dr. Vassar proudly answered.

“This thing must be worth a fortune. Aren’t you worried about someone stealing it?
His next words floored Margaret. Not because she was about to learn the true price of this precious stone, but also because Dr. Vassar’s philosophy of why he didn’t worry about it.

“It’s worth millions.” He answered. “Around forty, give or take. And no, I don’t worry about it leaving, because it’s not actually here.”

Margaret’s mind was running in circles, wondering what kind of trick Dr. Vassar was trying to play.

“It’s not here?” She said out loud.. “Of course it’s here, I’m looking right at it.”

The diamond captivated Margaret’s attention as she stood just feet away from its splendor. She could see every cut, every angle etched to perfection, and all of it glimmering light upon the plants around them.

“There’s no way it wasn’t here, it was too clear, too real.” She thought to herself.

“Dr. Vassar, what do you mean it’s not here?” She asked.

“I mean exactly what I’m saying. Go ahead, touch it.”

As Margaret reached out her hand to touch the stone, her mind almost caved in. Not only did her hand pass right through it, but it also passed through the statue itself. The entire thing, all ten feet of it, was an illusion.

She then turned to Dr. Vassar with a look that could only be described as a lost child.

“I don’t know what’s happening right now.” She fired back as though it was a plea for help.

“If you want to touch it, you must close your eyes.” He said.

Once again, his words were beginning to overwhelm her sanity. None of this was making any sense. But she trusted him, with every ounce of her being.

“So, just close my eyes and reach out? Is that what you’re saying?” She asked.

“Yes, that’s what I’m saying. Just reach out and touch the diamond.”
Margaret then closed her eyes, took a deep breath, and reached out to touch the diamond. But nothing happened. In fact, she began to even feel foolish. She could hear the fountain just behind the statue, as if it was right in front of her. But she could feel nothing.

At one point, she even opened her eyes to see if she was maybe reaching in the wrong direction, only to see her hand penetrating the statue, the flute, and the diamond itself once more.

With a deep exhale, she pulled her hand back to her side.

“Dr. Vassar, this is making me uncomfortable. I can’t feel anything.” She said.

“Exactly.” He answered. “It’s because you’re trying to feel with your hands, not with your mind.”

He continued.

“You see, when you believe something strongly enough, the mind will follow along with it, no matter the true nature of its reality. So, if your eyes tell you the statue is there, then common sense says that touch should follow. But when you reach out to touch it and your eyes deceive you, then your reality begins to shift. This is why you can’t feel it. Simply because its existence is still living within nothing more than your mind.”

“Now, try again. But this time, don’t reach out your hand, reach out with your mind.”

Margaret took a moment to let Dr. Vassar’s words soak in. She then stood before the statue witnessing it as if it was really there, but not in the physical sense. Instead, as if it was there only in her mind.

Then, she closed her eyes.

But this time, instead of physically reaching out her hand, she imagined her etheric hand reaching out to the statue. Within a single second, she could feel the marble, then the flute, and finally, the brilliant blue diamond.

To any onlooker, they would see a woman standing motionless with her eyes closed.
before a statue in the shape of Pan. But for her, she was now in a different world. A world where her body was beginning to embrace a new truth.

As she opened her eyes, she turned and smiled to Dr. Vassar.

“You could feel it couldn’t you?” He responded returning the smile.

“Yes.” She said. “But it’s not like I thought it would be.”

“That’s because you matched its vibration. This, is the lesson of Tessera. Now, it’s time for you to create your own.”

As the two turned to leave, Margaret looked up at the beautiful statue one more time.

And, in the most subtle of gestures, whispered the words...

Thank you.
Margaret thought her eyes were playing tricks on her as they went in and out of focus due to the sun’s rays which, were beaming through the tall trees.

At least once or twice, she had to correct her steering as the car almost went off of Dr. Vassar’s long winding driveway, into the deep ravine.

Then, an irrefutable fatigue began to set in. It was all she could do to stay awake in order to make the final quarter mile journey to the doctor’s house.

Her mind was dancing with the last several days experiences, as she began to question her current state of consciousness.

What put the most fear in her mind, was the possibility of not entirely knowing what was real anymore. Yes, she wanted to experience much more of this gift, but not at the expense of her sanity.

Or, was it already too late? Was all of this leading to a mental breakdown regardless of these etheric explorations?

Her thoughts began to take a back seat as she finally made it to Dr. Vassar’s house. As she pulled in, she parked her car in the usual spot under the large pine tree.

When she got out of the car, for a brief moment, she felt as though she was going to faint. She could feel her heartbeat accelerate as if to compensate for the dizziness, but that didn’t help the world from kind of fluctuating around her.

Then, all clarity came back, as she took a deep breath and slammed the card door.

But something was still off as she noticed the reflection of herself in the window. Her silhouette seemed fuzzy, as if it were someone else looking back, and not her normal self.
Then with a second deep breath, she gathered herself and looked up towards the porch to see if Dr. Vassar, as usual, was waiting for her.

But there was no porch. In fact, there was no house, and of course, no Dr. Vassar.

Margaret’s jaw dropped.

As she walked towards the dense foliage where the house should have been, she noticed an overgrown lattice towards the far back right. By its location, this is where the garden beyond the kitchen would have been.

After spending a moment collecting herself, she cautiously made her way towards the house.

That’s when she heard it.

At first it seemed like a dull tone. Kind of the like ones in her dreams. But then, it sounded like crystals dancing in a waterfall.

As she edged her way closer to the sound, she suddenly saw the same blue flash of light when she first met Dr. Vassar. In a jolt of excitement, she rushed over to the foliage following the light’s radiance, dropping her purse in a fern bush in the process.

Now standing just before the origin of the light, she found the statue of Pan.

But it wasn’t standing.

Instead, it was crumbled to the ground, broken into a thousand pieces. The only thing that remained was the flute with the beautiful blue diamond embedded within its center.

As she reached out to touch it, the world around her seemed to come alive. She could instantly hear the birds more vividly, the wind through the trees, and even the sound of the stream although it lay bare.

That’s when a little voice appeared within her head.
“You know it’s just a dream right?” It said matter of factly. “Even if you do succeed at touching the diamond, you will never be a part of its world.”

The voice made her heart thump harder inside her chest.

“If this is just a dream, it sure is an awfully real one.” She thought out loud.

She finally made the choice to touch the diamond regardless of that voice. But as her fingers reached its surface, once again, they went right through it.

“Dammit!” She said out loud as she withdrew her hand.

“Told you so.” The voice replied mocking her failure.

Margaret then turned towards the voice to scold it, as if it were standing right behind her.

“Look, I don’t give a shi……”

That’s when she saw it, and it stopped her dead in her tracks.

Resting upon the stone wall like a dark painting, was her very own shadow, cast by the light of the diamond. And within that shadow, was a perfect silhouette of herself kneeling before the diamond, both, seemingly connected as one. There was no separation, no difference in contrast, just herself and the diamond, united in a single shade of grey.

This incredible symbol of unity caught her so off guard that she couldn’t stop staring at it.

That’s when the thought that would changer her life forever, came into her mind.

“I’m not trying to be a part of the diamond’s world, I’m trying to make it a part of mine.”

Chills went up her spine as right before her eyes, she could see the shadow of her other self, begin to move on its own. In absolute disbelief, she witnessed her shadow pick up the diamond, and hold it out as if beckoning her to come towards the wall and take it.
In that moment, the light from the diamond behind her, shifted to the hand of the shadow.

With shaky legs, she picked herself up and walked over to the shadow. As she did, the crystal like tones began to get louder, and louder.

Now standing just within reach of her second self, she took a deep breath, and moved her right hand towards the stone. In a flash of light, the shadow was gone, and the diamond was now in Margaret’s hand.

She couldn’t believe the amount of vibration and the energy it was giving off. The sound it made was radiating through her entire body.

“No longer just a tone.” She thought, “More like a song waiting to be set free.”

As a tear rolled down her face, she looked back to where the shadow was just standing, and noticed something carved upon the wall in its place.

*ignotum per ignotius*

She had no idea what the words meant, but it didn’t matter. She and the diamond were finally one.

As she held the beautiful stone tight within her hands, she remembered Dr. Vassar’s words.

“*Become the tones.*”

Just then, the diamond began to radiate even stronger, causing a numbing sensation within her right hand. Then, it got brighter and brighter, until she could see nothing but the light itself.

Within a moment of blinding light, her hearing seemed to magnify in order to compensate her lack of vision. First, it was the sound of a crow off in the distance. Then, her eyesight came back just in time to see it drop a single feather upon the ground.
As she approached it, she continued to lose the sensation in her right hand as she gripped the diamond. Its vibrations were continuing to slowly move from her hand, then to her forearm, causing her to lose her focus. But just before the vibrations took over entirely, forcing her to lose consciousness, she reached over and picked up the feather.

Holding the feather in her left hand, she took one last look at the diamond. She realized for the first time, *none of this was a coincidence.*

When Margaret opened her eyes, she noticed she fell asleep on her right side, with her left forearm resting upon her right wrist. She began to chuckle out loud, as she realized the truth of the numbness of her right hand.

But it didn’t matter, she now had new Latin words for Dr. Vassar, as well as a new story.

After breakfast, and after spending time with the incredible sensation of what was truly the beginning of a new journey, Margaret found herself in the bathroom brushing her teeth.

As she stood staring at the mirror, she couldn’t help but to wonder what other worlds awaited her. She knew without a shadow of doubt, that Dr. Vassar was right. If you become the tones, anything is possible.

*Even taking a diamond from a shadow.*

While she was leaning over the sink to wash the toothpaste from her mouth, the clouds gave way to the sun in the mid-morning sky. The sunlight then breached the bathroom window, casting a dark silhouette upon the wall behind her.

When she saw her shadow in the mirror, she turned around, closed her eyes, and reached out her hand as if still holding on to the diamond.

“*Go ahead and take it. It’s your turn now...*”
Chapter Six
Mysterium

Part One

“And what about that phrase *ignotum per ignotius.*” Margaret asked.

“The unknown by the equally unknown.” Dr. Vassar replied.

“How do you know these things doc?” Margaret asked, giving Dr. Vassar a bewildered look.

“That’s the wrong question.” He replied. “The right question Margaret, is where are you coming up with all of these Latin words?”

He was right. Dr. Vassar was well studied, but she wasn’t. Yet she continued to go on these etheric adventures and come back with all of this profound Latin. It just didn’t make any sense. It was like she was tapping into something far beyond her own comprehension, then handing it back to him on a silver platter, for the sole purpose of gaining clarity.

Regardless, these experiences and adventures were becoming more powerful as she continued to have them. And, if Dr. Vassar was having any thoughts of disinterest, he sure wasn’t showing it.

“So what’s next?” She asked.

“Well, that’s a mystery isn’t it. I guess it’s completely up to you.”

Dr. Vassar then proceeded to ask Margaret more about her experience with the shadow that gave her the diamond. As she continued, he walked over to his bookshelf, reached
under the collar of his shirt, and pulled out a necklace that held a brass key. He then placed the key into the cabinet at the very bottom right of the bookshelf.

Margaret was too far away to tell of its contents, but she could at least see a few folders, a small box, and something that appeared to be a round human-like statue.

As she wrapped up by sharing the final experience with her shadow in the bathroom, she seemed to lose her words as Dr. Vassar walked towards her with the box.

“What’s that?” She asked completely fixated on the box.

“These are very important pictures.” He replied, holding the box as if it had treasure inside.

As he opened it, he pulled out several small pictures. All but one had wavy trim around the edges. The first thought Margaret had, was that she hadn’t seen pictures like that since her childhood.

After sifting through most of them, Margaret could tell by the look on Dr. Vassar’s face that he had found the one he was looking for. He then closed the box, and sat down beside her.

“Take a look at this.” He said, as he handed her the photo.

It was a black and white picture of a mountain covered in snow, and had what looked to be a sun flare on the bottom right corner.

“Look at the back.” He said, as Margaret carefully examined the picture.

As she turned the photo over, she read the words out loud.

*My two worlds. By John Easton*

“What does it mean?” She asked handing the photo back to Dr. Vassar.

As he took it from her, he held it out and pointed to the sun flare in the bottom right corner.
“You see that little flare there? The one that looks like it’s the sun reflecting on the lens of the camera?”

“Yes.” Margaret replied. “I can see it.”

“That’s not a sun flare.” Dr. Vassar said, forcing Margaret to squint as she looked more closely at the photo.

As if a window sprung open letting in a cold burst of winter air, Margaret felt her skin crawl. No, it was not a flare, and she instantly recognized what it was. It was the same thing she had repeatedly seen since her and Dr. Vassar began these explorations together.

Without even answering him, Margaret looked over towards Dr. Vassar, who was already smiling.

“Is this the ...... ?”

“Yes. It is.” He replied before she could even finish her question.

“You see, in 1889, John Easton was on an expedition in northern Alaska. He was there as a photographer helping to map out the region with a team of geologists. During the following years, there was a massive gold rush. But this region remained untouched. However, the image you’re seeing right now, produced one of the rarest finds in history. In fact, the find was so rare, that many have said the image itself is a fake. Or, to put it more clearly, if it is real, it’s a complete mystery.”

Dr. Vassar then stood up and walked towards the window on the left of the fireplace. He raised the photo to his eyes one last time, then dropped his hands and looked out the window towards the beautiful pine forest covering his estate.

“So yes, the flare you are seeing in this photo, is from the same blue diamond resting within Pan’s flute, within my very own garden.”

Margaret could feel the goosebumps on her skin rise even more.

“You see, Mr. Easton thought he was there only to take pictures. In fact, no one even knew what that reflection was until years later. And that’s a whole other story.”
“Regardless, John Easton was onto something when he wrote his memoirs, even before the diamond was ever realized. He not only talked about the gold that many would spend their lives seeking, but he also discussed the true value of Coal, and how it impacted his visions within a place that he was taught to call Tessera.”

Dr. Vassar then looked at Margaret with what she could only describe as serious intention.

“What’s most intriguing my dear.” He said staring her directly in the eyes.” , is that Mr. Easton’s memoirs made it to the hands of someone very special. Someone that would crack the code of the photograph, and bring the diamond back to the states almost 60 years later. That person, was my father Michael. And lastly, the most intriguing part of my father’s explorations, is that diamonds, especially blue diamonds, aren’t normally found in Alaska, they’re found in Asia. So how does one find a rare diamond in such a strange place?”

“That, is the million dollar question.”

Margaret’s head was reeling. She was having a hard enough time trying to explain her own experiences, yet here was Dr. Vassar throwing another iron in the fire. A photographer named John Easton, who just so happened to take a picture that would help someone find a forty million dollar diamond. Or, was it the fact that he wrote My Two Worlds, upon that very same photo which, made it relate to her own story so intimately?

This is what had her most interested. Did he experience the same things she had? Was he able to hear the tones? And if so, what happened after his expedition in Alaska?

Before her thoughts could carry her away, Dr. Vassar would challenge her clarity even further with a single sentence.

“Margaret, I want you to go there and find the stone.”

“Wait, what?” She replied feeling as though she was about to fall off the couch.

“Oh, not in this world.” He chuckled. “But through your second self. Through Tessera.”
Margaret’s eyes were as wide as golf balls, as Dr. Vassar walked back to the bookshelf, then placed the photo box back in the cabinet. But before he shut the door, he picked up an old book and dusted it off.

Margaret didn’t know what to think. She just sat there staring at the mosaic table, as she began to wonder if this too, was just another one of her lucid dreams. But there was no blurring, no dizziness involved in this experience. So, she did the best she could to remain focused. And the good news, with Dr. Vassar physically present, that wasn’t hard.

Dr. Vassar then shook her attention by putting the book on his lap, and sitting back down on his chair.

“Let me get this straight.” Margaret said skeptically. “You want me to go to a non-physical place, and find a diamond that’s clearly already been found?”

“Yup.” Dr. Vassar replied. “That’s exactly what I’m asking you to do.”

She was now more confused than ever. But in that very moment, the strangest of feeling came over her. It was like that same chill in the air that embraced her earlier, but was now calling to her, telling her it was okay to embark upon this new journey, which clearly only a few have ever travelled.

To say this was confusing was an understatement. But to say she wasn’t excited beyond expression, was an even greater understatement.

Without wasting another second, she replied the only way she knew how to.

“Hell yes, I’m in. Tell me what I need to do.”

Dr. Vassar smiled and got back up from his chair. He then walked over to Margaret, and handed her the journal he removed from the cabinet.

“Here’s how you get there.” He said, as he handed her the old book.

As she reached out her hands, she could tell by the cover that it was in fact, very old. A hundred years at least. Then, she looked up at Dr. Vassar as if awaiting final instructions.
“Go ahead.” He said. “Open it.”

Her eyes lit up as she opened the cover revealing the words written on first page. Words so powerful, that she involuntarily let out a gasp.

*My Journey into Tessera. By John Easton 1890*

**Part Two**

That night was surreal for Margaret as she sat quietly eating her dinner. It was salmon, dabbled with light pepper, oregano and sage, while accompanied with a side of red skin potatoes.

As she looked over Easton’s journal in her right hand, she scrolled through the notes that had been written over a hundred years ago.

*How to get to Tessera.*

*Step One: Sleep once, wake up, and prepare for sleep again.*
*Step Two: Listen for the tones within the chosen location.*
*Step Three: Once you embrace the tones, see with more than your eyes.*
*Step Four: Document any findings.*

“Oh my God.” Margaret said out loud as she read the words.

“This is exactly what I’ve been going through!”

She then set the journal down, and picked up the beautiful blank book she had bought earlier that day for herself. It was a lined journal titled “The Universe” by Peter Pauper Press.

As she opened the book to the first page, she sat for a few moments contemplating her own legacy and what words would help to define that legacy.

“If anyone is going to read about my explorations”, She thought to herself, “It must be memorable.”
Then, as if spoken to her as plain as day, the one word that summed up everything until this very moment entered into her mind.

With pen in hand, she carefully began to write what would be her eternal words, upon the journal’s first page.

*Uncharted by Margaret Anderson 2018*

**Part Three**

When she awoke the next morning, she was too excited to go back to sleep. Instead, she found herself diving deeper into Mr. Easton’s journal.

Throughout it, she continued to read stories of a second journal by a man named Jack Fletcher. The journal, or memoir, was titled; *Without the Water*. And, it was the first work to mention a word she was becoming quickly familiar with.

*Tessera*

As she continued to read, she began to hear the first birds of morning waking up and letting their presence be known.

That’s when she read the last sentence by Mr. Easton before falling asleep holding his journal.

“As I listen to the wind surrounding the hidden paradise before me, I can begin to hear the tones embracing this etheric plane. I close my eyes, and allow them to carry me away.”

“Away, into Tessera....”
Chapter Seven
Magis Mare

Margaret’s dreams carried her deep into John Easton’s journal.

At first, she was with him at his cold Alaskan bunker as he read Dr. Fletcher’s memoir. It was a section about when Jack Fletcher travelled to Australia on a ship called The Mireya.

Upon the ship, were inmates from England, preparing to help colonize a city that eventually became known as Perth.

But the journey had become much more than anticipated, as the ship was caught in a wild storm just off the shores of Africa’s Cape Horn. This is when Margaret’s Second Self decided to show its face once more.

It began with waking up, then falling back to sleep within thirty minutes. The coming dream state then moved her towards the sensation of wooden boards beneath her feet. Then, the sound of waves as they crashed against the side of the ship. And finally, it was the unmistakable feeling that she had been there before.

In that moment, her eyesight finally came to and matched the clarity of the rest of her senses.

Within an irrefutable moment of panic, she found herself in the epicenter of a massive storm upon the very ship John Easton was reading about in Jack Fletcher’s journal.

It was the same ship, the Mireya, that this particular etheric experience pulled her to. She didn’t know how, or why, but she was fully awake in the middle 1800’s, upon a ship she had only read about.

As she braced herself upon the deck of the swaying ship, she watched the men frantically climbing up the masts and trying to get the sails lowered. This was crucial, so that the ship wouldn’t capsize from the strong winds of the storm.
Then, a scream, as one of the men fell from the foremost mast and came crashing to the ship’s front deck. At the very least, he had a broken leg and was knocked unconscious.

At the worst, he was dead.

As Margaret watched the sky blackened by the tormenting storm, that’s when she saw him for the first time. Her mind raced as she tried to understand how she knew it was him, or how she could be so certain that this was all a dream. But it was him, and she knew with all her heart.

Dream or not, it didn’t matter.

She could see him clear as day through the sporadic flashes of lightning. But his name refused to leave her lips as it echoed within her mind.

*Jack Fletcher.*

There he was, standing steady in the pouring rain as the ship heaved and swayed by the raging storm. But he was unnaturally calm. Instead of running around frantically like everyone else, he stood still, staring off into the sky, as if mesmerized by something no one else could see.

Within all of the commotion going around them, Margaret wanted to know what Fletcher was staring at. In that moment, she moved towards the starboard side of the ship, and placed her right hand on the rail in order to sturdy herself.

As her hand touched the rail, she felt a series of grooves within the wood’s grain. And just like her experiences before, she could also feel a nagging sensation like a voice made from pure vibrations, tell her to look beneath her grasp upon the rail.

She then turned her head and lifted her hand from the rail in order to see what was beneath her grip.

Her jaw dropped as she read the carved out words within her mind.

*“Margaret, look up.”*

Not just *look up* carved within the rail, but also a name before it.
Her name ...

She then lifted her gaze above the final sail fluttering fiercely in the gale force winds. It was a woman. Or, to be more precise, a ghost that resembled a woman. The figure was floating just inches away from the final sail that must be taken down, or the Mireya would be lost.

It was as if the ghostly figure was beckoning Jack, telling him it was okay to make the climb, bagging him to save not only the other men on the ship, but more importantly, himself.

Without warning, a wave crashed over the bow and pulled several men with it towards the dark depths of the sea.

That’s when she saw Jack Fletcher leap into the darkness and begin climbing the tallest mast.

Then, a flash of lightening, a crackle of thunder, and a loud thud just a few feet away from where she was standing. It was the same sound as the man’s body crashing upon the deck just moments before.

In horror, she quickly turned towards where Jack Fletcher had made his climb. She couldn’t see beyond the darkness of the storm, nor could she tell if the sail had been cut down. So she did the only thing she could do. She looked towards the deck for a body.

But that’s when everything began to get blurry.

“No, not now.” She pleaded out loud. “I just want to know what happened here!”

“Don’t let me leave....”

These were her last words before she was thrown back into her physical body.

Awakening

As Margaret opened her eyes, she was quickly relieved to discover the true cause of the thud.
It wasn’t a body hitting the deck of the Mireya, it was John Easton’s journal. It had fallen out of her hands as she slept, and crashed to the floor pulling her from the dream in the process.

Her body fell back upon the bed accompanied by a heavy sigh of relief.

In her mind, she could still hear the waves as they crashed against the Mireya. It was as if she was still there, but now staring at her bedroom ceiling instead of the sails of a mid 1800’s clipper ship.

She gathered herself, and took a look at the clock resting on her nightstand. It was flickering as if the power was about to go out.

It read 8:39 AM.

She then got to her feet, and picked up Easton’s journal from the floor next to her bed. Now setting it back down upon her sheets, she opened it.

As it released itself from her grip and fell from the bed, it must have landed on the page she was reading before she fell asleep. However, she was shocked to see what was written upon that page.

Yes, Easton talked about the Mireya, but he didn’t share all of the details that Margaret experienced in the dream. He only talked about the storm, and that Jack Fletcher had climbed the mast to cut down the main topsail.

There was no talk of a woman (or a ghost) written anywhere upon those pages. There wasn’t even anything written about if Fletcher actually fell or not. But if Easton was reading Fletcher’s memoir, then it would obviously appear this wasn’t the end of Jack’s story.

If it was, *Tessera would have never been found.*

Margaret spend the the next several minutes in a blur while trying waking up. When suddenly, the phone rang. As she reached to pick it up, her mind seemed to skip a beat as she read the clock sitting on the nightstand next to it.

It was now reading 12:22PM.
“That can’t be right.” She thought to herself as she picked up the phone’s receiver.

“Hello?”

“Is this Margaret Anderson?” The man’s voice asked in a serious tone.

As Margaret listened to the voice, she thought her eyes were playing tricks on her as she looked through her bedroom doorway towards the living room. For just an instant, she thought she saw a maple tree standing in the center of the room. She then rubbed her eyes, and looked through the doorway once more.

*But the tree was now gone.*

She shook it off, then put her attention back upon the stranger on the phone.

“Yes, this is Margaret. What can I do for you?”

“Margaret, this is Dr. Wright at the hospital.” The man said as the phone seemed began to crackle with static.

“I’m afraid I have some bad news for you. Your father ....”

The phone seemed to be losing its reception, as if the line was being tampered with or if the power was beginning to surge. Because of this, the man’s voice kept going in and out until finally, she could clearly hear what he was trying to say.

“I’m sorry Margaret, but your father passed away about an hour ago.”

Margaret felt the world around her begin to spin. The memory of the dream on the Mireya, the experiences with Dr. Vassar, the loss of almost four hours within an instant, and now, her father ...... *wait a minute*....

She felt the blood leaving her knuckles as she gripped the phone hard and pulled it closer to her mouth.

“Wait a minute, who is this! *My father passed away more than ten years ago!*”

But before she could begin her next sentence, the voice on the other end of the phone had changed. It was no longer the doctor, or someone she didn’t recognize.
The voice, in fact, was hers.

And, it spoke words she would never forget.

“Margaret ... wake up. Without the water there are no islands.”

Margaret woke up a second time in a blaze, as she felt Easton’s journal still resting safely under her right hand.

“It never fell off the bed. I was still sleeping!” She thought to herself in a panic.

Immediately she looked around her room and questioned if she was finally awake.

First, she made sure the furniture was in place. Then, she looked through her bedroom door to see if the tree was there. She then paid close attention to her senses, her hearing, her smell, her sight. Finally, she even pinched her arm which, caused her to begin laughing out loud.

After she came to the conclusion she was truly awake, she looked at the clock on the nightstand.

It was reading 9:27AM.

“I’m losing my shit.” She said out loud as her chest raised and lowered with several deep breaths.

**Point of No Return**

Later that day as she pulled up to Dr. Vassar’s house, she let out a smile as he was already standing on the front porch waiting for her. It was like he had a sixth sense knowing if someone was coming.

*It would almost bother her if his presence wasn’t so reassuring.*

She then closed her car door and began to approach the porch. But before Dr. Vassar could even say hello, she stopped and hit him with a single question.
“People say you have a tree in the center of your house. That it’s some kind of doorway for this whole Tessera thing, and that there’s two worlds in which we live in.”

“Tell me. Is this true?”

Dr. Vassar stared into Margaret’s eyes like a parent would to a child who had just figured out Santa Claus wasn’t real. Without saying a word, he reached his hand out and offered it to Margaret.

As she placed her hand in his, he leaned over and whispered into her ear.

“When I show you this, there’s no turning back. Do you understand me?”

Margaret could only answer by nodding her head yes, as Dr. Vassar’s grip began to tighten around her hand.

“Good.” He replied with a serious look on his face.

“Because after this, you’re no longer my patient ...”
“So this is it?”

“So, this is it.” Dr. Vassar answered, as if more than well acquainted with the view before himself and Margaret.

She stared at the tree deep within the center of Dr. Vassar’s home. “It’s all true,” She thought to herself.

The entire indoor atrium was surrounded by glass. It was about twenty-five feet square in diameter, and from what she could tell, was the hidden centerpiece of the home, minus the tree sticking out at least twenty or thirty feet from the roofline.

The hallways outside of the atrium were lined with beautiful dark wooden paneling. One hallway led to the kitchen, while the other appeared to lead back towards the bedroom area. But she wasn’t sure, simply because it was hard to tell when looking through the atrium, what exactly was on the other side without walking around the glass.

Accompanying the tree, was a small pond with a wooden bridge which, arched just a foot or so above the water. Swimming within the pond were Japanese Coy, and several other rare species of fish. Surrounding the tree and the pond, was a nicely landscaped section of sand, fern bushes, and even a small waterfall that dropped from the ceiling, then was recycled at the base of the pond.

What seemed so strange, beside the fact that this outdoor display was hidden indoors, was that there was no visible way in which to enter it. Sure, it was beautiful and made for an amazing addition to an even more amazing home, but how did one get inside in order to enjoy this inner sanctum? Or did it have another purpose altogether?

“So, what’s the purpose of the tree?” Margaret asked getting right to the point.

Dr. Vassar looked at her as if he had no idea what she was talking about.
“This tree?” He said pointing jokingly.

“Yes, Dr. Vassar.” Margaret said unamused. “This tree. The one oddly growing in the center of your home.”

He smiled, then looked back towards the tree.

“It’s got nothing to do with nothing.” He said as lowered his head towards the ground.

Now she was getting annoyed.

“Then why did you say that if I saw it, I would no longer be a patient?”

Within an instant, Dr. Vassar regained his serious composure.

“Let me ask you a question Margaret.”

“Sure, go ahead.”

“Do you believe in God?”

The question threw her off. What did God have to do with the tree encased in glass before them? And why was he dodging her original question?

“No. I mean, yes. Or, kind of. Ugh, I mean…” Margaret wrestled with the answer, but it was apparent it was getting the better of her.

It wasn’t that she didn’t know the answer, it was that she was worried Dr. Vassar would judge her if she said yes, or worse, if she said no. The conversation about God was a tricky one with her, as growing up with religious parents wasn’t easy. Simply because in her eyes as a child, she never saw them happy as a direct result of their faith. Content at times yes, but truly happy the way their faith had promised them, never.

Instead, she watched them harbor their faith out of fear, as well as their personal lack of strength.

And this always bothered her.
She then thought about the obvious ignorance that faith makes you adhere to. The loopholes within the stories, the easy-to-disbelief lessons which, were filled with an obvious lack of resolve.

Then, there was the control issue. The need for answers, brought on by something that wouldn’t even allow you to question the very thing it confused. *Yourself.* So yes, she believed in God. But not the one she felt man had made, out of his own ignorant attempt at making the world a better place. She didn’t realize it until now, but she was staring directly at the tree as she was drifting off into her thoughts.

“Oh, sorry.” She said, as she pulled herself back into the present.

“So, is that a yes or a no?” He asked.

She simply gave Dr. Vassar a look of uncertainty and continued.

“It’s not that I don’t want to, or even don’t. It’s just that ... I can’t escape the voice in my head that tells me to doubt it. And it’s that same voice that I believe has the right answers. Or at least, the right answers for me. If that make any sense.”

Dr. Vassar’s face changed from interrogator, to empath, as he loosened his shoulders and gave Margaret a warm smile.

“Just because you do or don’t believe in God, or question her or his existence, doesn’t make you a bad person. That is clearly your reason for hesitation. You think that if you don’t answer me correctly based on my own beliefs, I will judge you. This is not the case Margaret. I am not looking for a codependent answer, nor am I here to persuade you in any particular direction. I am simply asking you a question before I begin to explain why this tree means nothing, and why it means everything.”

Margaret loved the way Dr. Vassar took hard subjects and made them more plausible, more tangible, and easy to swallow. His empathy and understanding was overwhelming. *And she couldn’t get enough of it.* These were the exact humanistic traits that made her believe in God in the first place. To see such caring, such wisdom and resolve through the eyes of someone so clearly intelligent, was humbling.

She took her gaze off the tree, and returned the same warm smile to Dr. Vassar that he was giving to her.
“Thank you.”

“So,” He continued. “I think it’s time I explained the tree. But I need to ask you something else first. Something that may be a bit more involved. So, let’s head back to the front room and see where this takes us.”

As they returned to the front room, Dr. Vassar took a sip of the sweet tea he prepared for himself and Margaret. He then set the glass down on the small table next to his chair, took a deep breath, and rested his hands upon the chair’s arms.

“Now, before I answer all of your questions, I need to ask you this one first. Why did you ask me about the tree? How did you even know about it in the first place?”

Margaret was relieved they were getting back on track to her original question.

“I’ve heard others talk about it. I mean, there’s rumors about you and this house all over town,” She said slightly blushing. “Plus, I just needed some answers. I know we’ve shared a lot of things, about how my sleep paralysis isn’t what I thought it was, and how instead, it’s a gift of some kind. But I’m worried now that I’m not prepared for what’s to come. I just want to make sure I’m safe and that all of this means something.”

“Why are you worried if any of this means anything?” Dr. Vassar asked.

“You know. I mean, I want to know that this is real and that it’s important. I have doubts that it’s all just in my head. You know, like I’m creating all of these experiences out of thin air, and that they’re not real.”

Dr. Vassar went silent contemplating everything Margaret had just shared. Then, he tightened his lips before he spoke.

“Do you want to know why I said that after I showed you the tree, you will no longer be my patient?”

“Yes, of course I want to know. What did you mean by that?” She asked excitedly.

“Because everything you’re experiencing Margaret, is real. All of it. There’s nothing here that is made up in your head, or artificial in any way. But in order for you to see it for what it truly is, you must adhere to the laws of its world, not just the laws of this one.”
Margaret seemed clearly confused, but at the same time felt overwhelmed with anticipation. His words were rolling over and over within her mind, tumbling with the visions of possibility that accompanied them.

“This is all real?” She thought to herself. “Impossible.”

“I want to know everything then.” She said without caution. “Show me everything!”

Dr. Vassar stood up and walked over towards her, then sat down next to her on the couch. He then placed his elbows on his knees, and leaned forward towards the table before them.

“I want you to imagine something for a moment. Imagine a person fighting tooth and nail for their survival. Their world has fallen to pieces, and has now gone beyond the realm of money, and all other ordinary comforts, due to the fall of society. Their sole purpose is to care for their children and their spouse, simply by fending off the evil doings that continue to place their cold grip upon them. All this person knows, is that she survives through her own resourcefulness, self-reliance, and her will to carry on. Her days are met with nothing but challenge. But when she rests her head down at night, she knows she has reached her highest possible potential. Not only has she learned to trust herself, but she has also earned the trust of others.”

“Next, you have someone meandering through life trying to find their purpose. They live each moment between seeking easier ways of creating more abundance, while at the same time, trying to locate even the slightest amount of significance. Their uncertainty is overwhelming, and they solely live from one dopamine rush to the next. In their lives, they are unfulfilled. They don’t know which is the best course of action, nor which action is the best direction, in which to evolve themselves.”

“Now tell me. What’s the difference between these two people?”

Before Margaret could answer, Dr. Vassar gave her the outcome. And it wasn’t what she expected.

“Nothing.” He said. “Not a damn thing.”

“What do you mean nothing? Margaret replied sharply by his apparent ignorance.
“Clearly the person fighting for survival is significantly different than someone just sitting down at a coffee shop pondering their purpose?”

Dr. Vassar shook his head.

“No. No they’re not. And this is why the tree is so important, and why it doesn’t matter.”

Margaret went silent waiting for what was coming next. Clearly, Dr. Vassar knew something she didn’t. And by hell or high water, she would do anything to know what that was.

This paradox needed clarity, simply because she was beginning to see herself as the second subject. The one meandering through life, trying to figure it all out. And this wasn’t someone she wanted to continue being. She wanted adventure, purpose, and the thrills she’s been experiencing to continue. She felt now more than ever, a part of all of these people’s story. John Easton. Albert Vassar, and now Jack Fletcher. But it all must have more meaning, or it would all be for nothing.

While deep within her thoughts, Dr. Vassar hit her with another question.

“Margaret, what happened to you that made you ask about the tree?”

The question was so direct; it took her off guard. But in that moment, she was instantly brought back to the Mireya. She remembered the storm, seeing Dr. Fletcher, witnessing the ghostly figure that appeared towards the top of the mast.

Then, the message. “Margaret … wake up. Without the water there are no islands.”

She shared everything about the experience upon the Mireya with Dr. Vassar. Then, she talked about being pulled out of the dream when Easton’s journal dropped from her grip and hit the floor.

Next, the phone call about her father’s passing. And finally, she told him how she found herself waking up again, only to realize that the journal never left her possession.

Dr. Vassar stood up and walked back to his tea and picked it up. He then turned around and asked Margaret about the ghostly figure as he took a sip.
“That’s the part I don’t understand,” she said. “It seemed so real. The message on the ship, then the voice on the phone. I didn’t even know I was still asleep the second time. This is why I asked about the tree. I guess I’m doubting the experiences, like I said. I’m beginning to think I’m just making them all up in my head. I mean, there’s no talk about a figure in Easton’s journal. I must have made it all up right? Why else would I see these things?”

In that moment, Margaret looked up and locked eyes with Dr. Vassar. It was like the air had been pulled from the room. His stare, there were no words to describe the seriousness stretched across his face.

“Right, there’s no talk about a ghostly figure in Easton’s journal. You are correct.” He said, as he slowly set his tea back down on the small table.

He then turned his back towards Margaret, and spoke as he looked out the window.

“However, there is talk of this ghost in Jack Fletcher’s journal.”

Margaret’s heart sank as the words left his lips.

“Wait, what?! What do you mean? Are you telling me that Fletcher talked about the same figure I saw in my dream? Does his journal even exist!?”

Margaret felt herself wanting to stand to her feet and confront Dr. Vassar. The thought of any of this being real was far beyond the limits of her mind. Or, was this just another dream? She could feel her eyes pacing the room, frantically searching for clues that she was truly awake, truly conscious. It was like blazing through a tunnel of thought, hoping to find something, anything, to grab hold of. She needed to slow her mind from spiraling out of control.

But now it didn’t matter. Even if this was a dream, the implications of a new possibility were enough to keep her attention. Awake or not, she was all in. No more cards to show, no more demons to hide from, and no more locked doors harboring more questions than answers.

*Everything was unfolding right before her eyes.*

Dr. Vassar now facing his back to the fireplace, crossed his arms and raised his chin towards Margaret.
“Margaret, this is why you’re no longer a patient. I’ve been waiting for this moment ever since you first came to me.”

Now, she was even closer to the edge of her seat. These were the same words Easton had used right before he gave Fletcher’s journal to Albert.

“Wait a minute,” She thought to herself. “Albert’s last name was Vassar! Was this Dr. Vassar’s father? No, he said his father’s name was Michael. Plus, the timing was all wrong. Easton wrote his journal in the late 1800’s.”

Finally, the words echoed in her mind; “I’ve been waiting for this moment ever since you first came to me.”

“What does that even mean?”

She could feel the spiral pulling her deeper down the tunnel. She then asked the only question that seemed relevant.

“How did you know about the figure?”

Her heels were now off the ground with toes dug deeply into the floor. But instead of answering her question, Dr. Vassar steered her towards the answer of her first question, once more.

“The tree has significance because it’s a doorway Margaret. It’s a doorway to a place that has all the answers to all of your questions. Even questions you’ve never thought to ask. While at the same time, it has no purpose, simply because the place that the doorway leads, doesn’t actually exist.”

“I don’t understand.” She responded obviously confused.

“I want you to think of the two people again. The one fighting for their family, and the one fighting to find their purpose. Their situations are completely different, yet they are a part of the same world. This, is the doorway to a place that seems separate, but also isn’t. This is why the tree is important, but at the same time, it’s just a tree.”

Dr. Vassar walked over towards the bookshelf and picked up a small wooden box. He then walked over towards Margaret, opened it, and took out a small piece of white cotton cloth.
“To you, this is a simple useless piece of cloth. It has no value because in your eyes, it is not a part of anything you currently understand. It is not part of a shirt, a pair of pants, or even a blanket. These are all things we are familiar with inside the realm of the physical. However, to me, it is an archetype. And in the right hands, it too, is a doorway.”

He then moved closer to Margaret, and held out the cloth in order for her to take it. As she held it in her hands, she instantly felt a surge of energy move throughout her entire body. It was like holding an ancient book that you knew a thousand people before you had read.

“So, the tree is an archetype too then?” She replied.

“Yes. Exactly. But only to those who have the eyes to see its true value. For all others, it has no significance, other than generating oxygen within our environment. Just like the two people in the example I shared that seem so different. To themselves, they are unique. But to an outside observer, one who is no longer captivated by the laws of this world, they are simply two pieces within the same mosaic of life. Again, no different, and completely the same. Yet, they are separated, based on the illusion of the human condition.”

“This is the truth behind why you say you’re not sure if you believe in God. It’s not that you don’t, but instead, it’s because in your mind, you’re not separate from God. This is why it’s hard to buy into the beliefs of others, as they separate you from your own experience. And, for the record, this is completely understandable. It’s not that you don’t believe in God, it’s that you can’t accept anyone else’s version of your own experience of God. That’s the beauty of faith, you only need your own version in order to embrace it.”

As hard as all of this was to take in, it was beginning to make sense. It wasn’t that she felt manipulated by religion of the faith of others, it was that she wanted to believe in herself, of God, without the need for external justification.

Yet here she was, being brought directly into a new world she had not known existed. But it wasn’t one being taught to her or persuaded by others. Instead, it was one based on her own experiences. To her this was perfect, simply because Dr. Vassar wasn’t teaching, or persuading her. He was simply offering validation to what she had already witnessed on her own.
In that moment, another question arose within her mind as she held the cloth.

“You said there’s talk of the ghostly figure in Dr. Fletcher’s journal. Is it similar to my experience?”

“No, it’s not similar. It’s exactly the same.” He answered.

And then he said the words she had been waiting to hear.

“And yes, I have Fletcher’s journal. It’s real.”

He then turned towards the cabinet he pulled Easton’s journal from, reached under his shirt for the key, unlocked the door, and pulled out another box. This one, was clearly much older than anything he’d shown her thus far. It was solid mahogany, and was fitted with brass fixtures surrounding each corner of the box.

He then walked over to Margaret, set the box down on the table, and took a step back.

“Go ahead, open it.”

She could tell by his smile that he had been waiting for this moment. And, he wasn’t the only one. Ever since she met him, she felt with all her heart that something magical would come from their relationship. But she had no idea it would be this profound, or this significant.

Slowly, she removed the lid from the box and set it back down on the table.

There it was. And old leather-bound journal. It was like something straight out of a movie. Something so precious, it should be guarded in a museum by lasers and armed guards. But here it was, just within reach. And she was honored beyond words.

As she lifted the journal from its mahogany resting place, she carefully set it on her lap. On top of its cover, was a beautiful etched image of a tree. She could feel the air in her chest get heavy as she slowly opened the journal to the first page. Now, it was like the air had left her lungs, as she read the words with a whisper.

*Without the Water*

*My Journey to Tessera*

*By Jack W. Fletcher*
“My God.” She thought to herself. “This is it. This is really happening.”

As she stared at that first page, she began to hear something off in the distance. Something familiar. And it was trying to get her attention. But she couldn’t quite make it out, until its hand grabbed her shoulder.

It was Dr. Vassar.

“Margaret, are you okay?” He asked, almost laughing as he could tell she was speechless.

“This … this is real isn’t it isn’t it?” She asked still whispering.

“Yes Margaret, you are now the fifth person in the entire world that has ever held that journal.”

As she remained stunned within the moment, Dr. Vassar asked her to turn the page. As the page slowly turned, something seemed off. She then turned another. Then another.

Nothing, the journal was blank.

“Wait … what’s happening? Why is the book blank?!"

Her mind felt as though it was falling into a panic. How could he have her come this far, only to be tricked into being given a blank journal?

As she looked up towards Dr. Vassar, desperately in need of answers, she noticed him smiling.

He then spoke with words that only she could understand.

“Remember the blue diamond Margaret?”

She looked back down towards the journal, and began to laugh ...
Michael tried to control the tears as he held Major tight, watching him take his last breath.

His father stood over his son with the smoking barrel of his Springfield M1903 service rifle. The cougar didn’t have a chance, but it was too late.

As Michael held Major, he couldn’t help but to think of how he may have seen this coming. He had been barking much more than normal, and quite possibly saved Michael’s life while trying to warn him of the imminent threat.

Michael was only a few feet from the river when he heard the crack of the pines behind him, then just seconds later, Major growling, paws dashing into action, then, the first yelp. By the time he got to Major, the cougar had his jaws locked around his neck, pinning him to the ground.

Then, just before Michael screamed for help to save his companion, out of nowhere, he heard the violent explosion of his father’s rifle. With a single shot, the cougar was sent straight to its death.

As Michael sat in the tall grass with Major’s body lying limp in his arms, he felt his father’s hand upon his shoulder.

“Michael, it’s okay.” He said.

“No it’s not!” The young boy cried.

Albert then took the rifle off of his shoulder, and carefully placed it on the ground. He then sat next to his son and placed a loving hand upon the back of Major’s head.

“This isn’t what it seems.” Albert said in an almost stern voice.
“What do you mean?” Michael asked as his body began to shake.

“I know you’re too young to understand, but this isn’t death. This is a circle.”

Michael wiped away a tear from his cheek, and looked up towards his father.

“I don’t know what you mean. Major is gone, he’s dead. How is that a circle?”

Michael began to cry even harder as the words left his lips. Nothing was more real to him than the tragedy of this moment. The reality, the truth of Major’s death, was too much to handle. But it was real. And that, was something he was certain.

But Albert knew the truth now. He knew what Jack Fletcher had found. And, if he was any kind of father at all, he would share that message with his only son.

He reached for Michael’s hand, and held it within his. He then looked his son directly in the eye, and began to speak words Michael had never heard before.

“Son, I want you to listen carefully to me.” Albert said directly.

“There is a secret to this world that only a few are aware of. This cherished secret, can be summed up in a single sentence. But you must be ready to listen, to truly listen to what I’m about to tell you. Can you do that for me Michael?”

Michael was exhausted from the emotional impact of losing Major. But it was also this seemingly tragic event, that would change his life forever.

“Yes father, I am listening.” He said with a somber voice.

Albert then repeated the words written by Jack Fletcher himself. Words so powerful, and so profound, that it took his family almost two full generations to understand the depth of their meaning.

He then looked Michael deep in the eyes.

“Without the water, there are no islands.” He said, in a calm, but deliberate voice.

He then lifted his left hand into the air, and showed it to Michael.
“This my son, is an island son.”

He then pointed towards Major.

“He, is an island too. And the space between us, is the water.”

Then, in a moment of incredible wisdom and empathy, Albert slowly lowered his hand until it was once again, resting upon Major’s head. He then looked towards Michael, and repeated the words as his lips began to tremble.

“Without the water, there are no islands. Without the water Michael, we are all a part of each other.”

“There is no death, there is only the cycle of what already is.”

The Remnant

Margaret found herself weeping, trying to hide the tears from Dr. Vassar, as she read the words in the book before her.

It was titled The Jewel of Pandean, and was written by Dr. Vassar’s father, Michael. The same man who was the boy in the story she just read.

Within the book, were other stories relating back to his father Albert, and his experiences with John Easton, as well as much further and detailed work based on the patterns of Tessera.

It was Michael, who had cracked the code of the blue diamond. It was also he, who was the one who had developed the systems that brought Tessera’s perspectives back to this world. Everything from understanding people, to building great wealth.

As Margaret returned the book to Dr. Vassar, she noticed his empathetic smile.

“There’s a lot to take in isn’t there?” He asked.

“Uh, yeah, that’s an understatement.” She answered, as she continued trying to hide the tears from streaming down her face.
“But I need to know something. That phrase, *Without the Water*. How did Fletcher come up with this? I mean, I know Albert says Fletcher used those words when he discovered Tessera. And I heard them when I had my visions on the Mireya and my dream. But I don’t understand how he came up with the phrase? What’s its significance?”

Dr. Vassar’s grin began to leave his face, as he looked away from Margaret and turned back towards the window looking out over his estate.

“Margaret, my father was a great man. He not only took Fletcher’s work and made much more sense of it, but he did so in such a way that it changed the lives of everyone he met. That phrase, *Without the Water*, was something you’ll learn as we progress through our lessons together. However, what my father did that was so special, was he found and learned how to explain the patterns of Tessera itself.”

He then turned towards Margaret.

“Do you know what a remnant is?”

“Yes, I mean, kind of.” Margaret answered. “It’s a piece of something larger, something left behind, or something like that.”

Dr. Vassar walked back over towards the bookshelf and pulled out the cloth from the box.

“Margaret, this cloth, is a remnant. It’s a piece of something greater than itself as I’ve already shared with you. To mean, it’s an archetype, a doorway. But it’s also a Tesserae.”

Margaret’s skin tightened when she heard that word. It felt like a secret about to be shared, some kind of forbidden knowledge, and it was a very cool feeling to have.

Dr. Vassar continued.

“To keep things simple, a Tesserae is a piece of a mosaic. In short, it’s a mosaic tile. Because of this, it is also a remnant. However, when you look at us as a part of the whole, then we in fact, become the Tesserae. We are a small piece of the world, but we are also the world itself.”
Margaret’s mind was racing. There was so much to learn, so much to understand. But all at the same time, it made sense. But before another thought could go through her mind, Dr. Vassar said what was on the tip of her tongue.

“Margaret, we, are the islands. And without the water, we are all a part of each other. You’ll learn just how this phrase came into existence as you learn more about Jack Fletcher. But for now, this is the meaning of the metaphor itself. And to live through this truth, is to produce unimaginable change and opportunity.”

The room went silent as Margaret and Dr. Vassar sat quietly within the moment. It was a beautiful silence, one that sparked the light of oneness, potential, and possibility. She felt a deep comfort, a deep sense of belonging, enter into her entire being. Not only was this making sense, but it felt so right.

Maybe it was because she liked the idea of such profound belonging, or, maybe it was because she was beginning to see the potential behind the experiences of these men. For now, she was happy with the feeling of Tessera, even without the complete understanding of it. And maybe that was the point too. To believe through feeling, and not through words alone.

Yes, this, was the part that made it all feel so right. As fantastical as it all was, this was the missing piece. Her own life, her own self, the Tesserae.

This last thought made her unaware of the fact that she was grinning from ear to ear.

“You understand, don’t you?” He asked.

“Yes, I mean. No, but yes.” She responded, sounding torn with her response.

They both chuckled by her answer. Then, Dr. Vassar closed his father’s book and set it on his lap.

“Margaret, have you ever wondered why my house is the way it is?”

The question threw her off guard. However, it was a completely reasonable question giving the mystery of an inaccessible atrium sitting in the middle of it.

“Yes, I guess. I mean, it’s a beautiful home, but it’s also mysterious too.” She said awkwardly.
Dr. Vassar smiled, placed the book on the table next to him, and stood up. He then put his hand out and motioned for Margaret to follow him.

“Here, come with me. I want to show you something.”

As the two walked back towards the hallway leading towards the atrium, she noticed Dr. Vassar touch something on the wall just outside the first pane of glass. With a small click, and the sound of compressed air being released, the wall opened up revealing a staircase that went down to a hidden lower level.

“Are you ready Dorothy?” He said smiling, as he motioned for her to follow.

As the two walked down the spiraling dark wooden stairwell, Margaret begin to notice a faint light coming from below. Now reaching the final step, her jaw dropped at the scene before her.

It was a large opening with hundreds, if not thousands of artifacts, paintings, and an array of other seemingly priceless objects. But what caught her eye the most, was the massive object in the very center of the room. It was a gold inlaid circular wooden centerpiece, directly under the tree. In fact, there was no doubt by the carvings on the wood and the placement of the cylinder, that it was what held the tree’s roots.

“Go ahead, take a look around.” Dr. Vassar said, as he sat down on a beautiful wood and leather chair, stitched with burgundy symbols.

She continued to look at all of the objects and paintings. Most of them seemed ancient, but many were also modern. Or modern in appearance at least.

As she approached the wall closest wall, she stood in front of a painting of a very large bird within a circle. In the background, just outside of the circle, were eight stars and what appeared to be an Earth like planet.

“It’s an Albatross.” Dr. Vassar said, describing the painting.

“The stars are based on the transformational journey of emergence. The ninth star, is the planet Earth. It is the embodiment of Source returning home to become human.”
She had no words as she continued to look around this hidden room. And after several minutes of looking over artifact, priceless artworks, and beautiful objects, she was stopped dead in her tracks by an object that caught the corner of her eye. At first, she thought it was simply a light reflecting off a metallic surface. But then she realized it was the object itself that was giving off the light.

She looked back towards Dr. Vassar for confirmation, as if what she was seeing, wasn’t really there.

“May I ....,” She swallowed hard as she continued with her question. “May I, pick it up?”

“Of course you can.” He answered in a more emotional than usual voice.

“I’ve been wanting to show it to you ever since you first saw it in the garden.”

Margaret’s hands trembled as she reached for the beautiful blue diamond. It was resting on a small concrete and velvet statue of the God Pan.

Just inches away now, she could see the diamond glow brightly as her fingers, for the first time within the realm of their physical existence, touched the incredibly rare gem.

Its vibration was so intense; it was like music resonating from it as it rested in the palm of her hand. It was so beautiful, so incredibly majestic. She had no words to describe it. Or maybe, it was its story that made it so special.

“I was beginning to think this wasn’t real.” She said, mesmerized by the beauty of the diamond.

“Oh, it’s real all right.” Dr. Vassar answered “All fifty-seven million dollars’ worth.”

Margaret’s jaw dropped as Dr. Vassar shared for the first time the diamond’s true value.

“You’re kidding right? How could you let me touch it!”

Margaret quickly strengthened her grip around the diamond and was noticeably uneasy by the truth of its value.

Dr. Vassar simply laughed and told Margaret that although it was so valuable, she earned the right to know its secrets.
Margaret carefully placed the diamond back upon the statue, as if it was a bomb about to go off with even the slightest of movements. That’s when she looked up and noticed a set of small circular mirrors working their way up like a funnel, into the ceiling. As she looked closer, she could see the reflection of the diamond within the mirrors as they travelled along to the surface.

“Yes Margaret.” Dr. Vassar said as if reading her mind. “That’s how the diamond appears in the garden. It’s a reflection that causes it to appear as a hologram within the flute of the statue above. This is why it cannot be stolen. Because it’s not actually there.”

Margaret smiled as she contemplated the brilliance of such a simple display of illusion. But regardless of that illusion, here was the physical diamond, so precious, and so vulnerable.

She then turned to Dr. Vassar and dropped her hands down to her sides.

“You want answers.” He said, once again as if reading her mind.

“Yes.” She answered.

“You see Margaret, everything in this room is a result of the patterns my father had mastered because of Tessera. In fact, even the house itself, is the result of the methods he applied because of those patterns.”

“I’m not sure I understand.” She said.

“Let me explain.”

“Most people go through life based on predetermined conditions. These conditions, or behaviors, are based on several factors. One, they are based on the genetics given to them by their parents and ancestors. And two, they are societal, or social. In other words, they become the things taught to them which, make up the majority of who they are, who they believe they are, as well as who they limit themselves to become.”

“Limit themselves to become?” Margaret asked confused.
“Yes. If I teach you something based on my own experience, then your behavior may be determined by what I have taught you. It’s not that you don’t have control over your choices, it’s that you’ve allowed those choices to be made for you. This, is the limitation. The more we allow others to make our choices, the more we are limited to become who we truly are destined to become.”

“I understand.” Margaret replied.

“Now, what my father had found that was so powerful, was that outside of the realm of genetic and social conditioning, were also hidden perspectives that we aren’t necessarily conditioned to see. Perspectives such as manipulation, persuasion, and so on. And the way he gained the vision to see the truths behind these things, was through his work with Tessera.”

“So what did Tessera show him that gave him this vision?” Margaret asked, hanging on Dr. Vassar’s every word.

“It’s simple. Plus, you already have the answer.” He replied.

“I do?”

“Yes, you do. Would you like me to show you?”

“Yes, please.” Margaret said sounding excited.

“Turn around Margaret, and face the diamond.”

As Margaret turned around, she could feel her heart begin to pound in her chest. She wasn’t sure what was coming, but she felt this was an integral moment in her development of understanding Tessera.

Dr. Vassar then walked over towards her, and stood at her right side.

As the two of them stared at the diamond, he placed his left hand on her right forearm.

“Now, I want you to pick the diamond up.” He said.

As she began to lift her left arm up to touch the diamond, Dr. Vassar stopped her.
“No.” He quickly replied. “Not with your left arm, you must use your right.”

As she began to lift her right arm up towards the diamond, Dr. Vassar strengthened his grip forcing it to remain still.

“But how can I touch the diamond if I can’t move my …”

As the words left her mouth, an incredible rush of emotion and clarity came over her. It was like a light came straight down from the heavens and struck her in the center of her head.

As Dr. Vassar held her arm, she closed her eyes and saw her right hand touching the diamond. She began to sob. It was one of the single greatest moments of release that she had ever known.

To see a truth so vividly, so profoundly, and so powerfully in a single moment, was beyond any measure of gratitude that words could describe.

“So you understand then?” He said, as he slowly released her arm.

“Yes, I understand.” She said as the tears rolled down her face.

“Good, then it’s time you met someone very special.”
Chapter Ten

Solatium

It was night this time, warm, with a strong breeze coming in from the southwest. The tree stops of Dr. Vassar’s home were beginning to sway more heavily with each new gust of wind. This combined with the flickering lights bouncing from the clouds off in the distance, meant there was an approaching storm.

Comfortably inside the dimly lit front room, Margaret and Dr. Vassar sat discussing the project he had set out for her to accomplish.

“I don’t understand what these are for?” She asked.

“Did you choose your four?” He asked in response.

“Yes. But I’m still interested in meeting this special person you’re talking about.” She replied.

“Don’t worry Margaret, we’ll meet him soon enough. In the meantime, let’s continue. Which were the four variables that you chose?”

Margaret looked down at the small square pieces of paper she was asked to write the four most important things in her life upon. The first was money. For her, this meant to be the foundation of where she wanted to go, what she wanted to do, as well as the things she wanted to obtain. But secretly it meant even more than that. It meant control. Not just control over the things that she lacked, but the control over lack itself.
The second, was personal achievement. Like money, this one was also based on the principle of ambition. But it too, had its own hidden elements. For one, it was heavily tied to her experiences with Dr. Vassar and Tessera. She wanted to learn more, become more, and find new ways to be more self-reliant and resilient. She didn’t like being weak, and didn’t like being uncertain even more.

The third, was spirituality. She wanted to believe the experiences she was having weren’t only real, but somehow connected to the Divine. As much as her peers persuaded her towards or against the notion of there being one particular God, she felt a presence within her by her own resolve that she couldn’t explain. It was a deep inner peace, a feeling of connection, clarity and worth. And she wanted more of it regardless of how it came to her.

The last piece of paper had the word family. Although she didn’t see her family much, she loved them dearly. This not only included her parents and siblings, but also their spouses and children. More importantly than just loving them, she wanted to learn how to become more of service without her own judgements getting in the way. In short, she wanted those she cared about to be happy, without the constraint of her own ignorance or biased opinions based on their shortcomings.

As she laid out the last card, Dr. Vassar walked over towards the table and took a closer look at the four variables that Margaret chose. If there was any time he had ever sounded like a psychologist, it was now. And all it took was his subtle reactions of “ahh”, and “hmm”, as he looked over the pieces of paper.

“Well? Is it a test or something? What’s this for?” Margaret asked.
Without answering her, he simply walked over to his chair and sat back down. Just as his body rested itself upon the red leather upholstery, a crash of thunder struck Margaret’s ears making her jump.

_The storm had finally arrived._

“Margaret, do you remember us talking about the word Tesserae?”

“Yes. I remember. You compared it to a remnant, like a piece of cloth.”

“Yes, yes I did. So, you remember me talking about how each tesserae is a piece of a larger mosaic. Like the table in front of you. How each piece of glass is a tesserae within the mosaic.”

Margaret looked beyond her pieces of paper and glanced at the table. It was a mosaic of blue and purple flowers, with green leaves and an earth tone colored background. She’d sat in front of it at least a dozen times since she had begun seeing Dr. Vassar.

Just then another crash of thunder rang out in the sky, but it was much deeper this time. It was like it was rumbling within her, within her mind, within her heart.

She could feel chills resonate throughout her body, as she looked at the table and her pieces of paper simultaneously. It was obvious where Dr. Vassar was heading with all this.

“The pieces of paper, they’re my tesserae aren’t they?”

“Yes and no Margaret, but you’re definitely heading in the right direction.

Dr. Vassar then stood up and asked Margaret to follow him. He told her to bring along her four pieces of paper.
As they walked back towards the atrium, they passed the secret passage that he had shown her yesterday. The memory of the blue diamond was still fresh in her mind as well as the other artifacts, and the painting of the Albatross. 

She then turned her head to the right, and glanced into the atrium as a flash of lightning lit up the tree in its center. The glass was getting soaked with rain as another flash of lightning, then thunder, echoed just beyond the atrium's hold. 

They then passed the atrium and continued walking towards a part of the house she had never seen before. 

On their way to their destination, they must have passed at least four or five doorways as lightning from various windows continued to illuminate the hallway. She wondered if they were bedrooms, or other passages leading to more of the house’s hidden secrets. 

Now at the end of the hall standing next to a table with a small amber colored lamp resting upon it, Dr. Vassar looked back at Margaret and smiled as he reached into his pocket, pulled out a key, and placed it into the brass lock just underneath the final door’s handle. He then placed his right hand on the handle, turned the key with his left, and pushed the large wooden door open. It was only then that the light from the lamp illuminated the door, revealing the symbol that laid upon it. 

It was an engraved image of a tree. In fact, it instantly reminded her of the one in the atrium, but with a circle around it making it a stunning display of craftsmanship. 

As the massive door creaked open, they two entered into the pitch black room and Dr. Vassar stopped Margaret as if in a sign of warning. He then slowly led them into the darkness down a steep flight of stairs. As they were about halfway down, another flash
of lightening illuminated the skylights high above high above them, resting within the center of the ceiling.

Margaret’s jaw dropped at the vastness and sheer size of the room, as it was awoken by the lightning. As it lit up, she was given a tiny glimpse of the room’s contents before everything went dark again. Just then, Dr. Vassar flicked a switch, and sprung to life more than a dozen pearl glass sconces, which wrapped all around the cathedral sized room.

At first Margaret thought it was a library, but that was before she saw large tables with perfectly modeled landscapes, kind of like those made as the background of a toy train set. Then, her attention was beckoned towards the towering walls, as she saw more artifacts, paintings, and bookshelves as high as twenty feet tall. All, reaching towards the skylights encircling the center of the room.

“This would explain the staircase.” She thought. And how this room seemed to be more than two stories without disrupting the outer structure. From the outside, this room wouldn’t even be visible, simply because Dr. Vassar’s house was only one story. Or, at least it seemed that way from the outside. But again, just like the secret chamber under the atrium, here was another room partially underground with more secrets to be explored.

As she continued looking around the large room, she was blown away by the craftsmanship. The trim around each corner was meticulously carved, and beautiful in every detail. There was also another fireplace set within the center of the left wall. But this one was almost three times the size of the one in the front room, where she and Dr. Vassar did most of their talking.
Around the fireplace, were two carved marble sculptures resting upon the massive mantle. The first, was a figure that appeared to be half man, half wolf. Not quite a werewolf, but more like a harmonic representation of both species, all wrapped up within a single beautiful sculpture. The second, was simply a wolf, which had eyes that seemed to follow you as you moved within the room.

Just in front of the fireplace resting upon the floor, was a beautiful Persian rug that seemed to be an exact copy of a quilt framed in a massive oak frame hanging on the wall just towards the right fireplace. As Margaret took a step closer to examine it, she noticed it was made of a series of small square tiles. Each tile told a story as if a representation of someone’s life.

As she stood there in awe, she noticed that Dr. Vassar had not moved from the light switch. Maybe he was giving her time to soak it all in, or maybe he was just relishing in the moment of sharing such a beautiful room.

Either way, it was his voice that got her attention as she turned back towards him.

“Are you ready to meet the person I told you about?”

Margaret didn’t know how to answer the question as her brain was in excitement overload by all of the beautiful objects surrounding her. But then, Dr. Vassar flipped another switch, and a light came on across the room. The light revealed another door made of bluish metal, which seemed to resonate like a prism, depending on what angle you looked at it.

As they approached the door, Margaret noticed other doors hiding off in the darkness. She couldn’t quite make them out, but they were all different. Each, with a symbol above its threshold.
“There’s seven.” Dr. Vassar said, as if reading her thoughts.

“Seven doors?” She asked.

“Yes. Each leads to somewhere very special. But we must save them for another time.”

Margaret respectfully acknowledged his request as they continued.

As they finally made their way to the blue door, Margaret gasped as she looked at the symbol above it. It was a diamond. A blue diamond. However, it was not in the shape of the blue diamond she had come to know so well. But more like a traditional diamond that pointed down like an upside down triangle.

Now standing in front of the door, Dr. Vassar smiled as he reached for its handle.

As he turned the handle, he spoke.

“Margaret, you’re about to meet my father, Michael.”

As they entered room, Dr. Vassar reached towards his left and turned on the lights. This room was much smaller, but still unbelievably large compared to what was expected from looking at the outside of house.

The first thing that caught her eye, was a design that seemed to wrap around the room. It was a series of squares, just like the ones in the quilt and rug. In fact, each one reminded her of the four pieces of paper that currently rested in her hands. However, each one of these squares was blank. There were no images on them, just a single world above each one. She believed the words were Latin. As she got closer, she noticed a series of three images beneath each square. The images were like hieroglyphics, but much more modern. In fact, she recognized each one of them
without any trouble at all. Before she could ask any questions, Dr. Vassar motioned for her to follow him towards the end of the room.

At the very end, was portrait of Dr. Vassar’s father Michael. He was a good looking man, sharp eyes and a strong jawline. He appeared to be in his late fifties, maybe early sixties.

“Is this...” Margaret began to ask.

“Yes, this is my father, Michael Vassar.”

As the two stared at the painting, Margaret noticed the way Dr. Vassar looked at his father’s image. Without a doubt, she could tell he respected him deeply. But there was something else too, something she couldn’t quite put her finger on. It was like time stood still, just for a moment, like he was revisiting a memory of when his father was alive.

After a few moments, she looked towards Dr. Vassar and asked when his father had died. It was in that moment, she understood the look she was witnessing.

Just before he answered her question, he smiled and let out a chuckle, as if the question itself was preposterous. If this didn’t put a chill up her spine, the look he gave her combined with his response, surely did.

“Died? Margaret, my father never died....”

Part of her wanted to run straight out of the room and away from the house. It seemed as though every moment with Dr. Vassar gave her more breakthroughs, but now, standing before a portrait of a man that was supposed to be deceased, only to be told he wasn’t, was too much.
“What do you mean he’s alive?” Margaret asked trembling, shocked by the tenacity of her own questioning.

Dr. Vassar then took a step towards Margaret raising his shoulders. His demeanor forced her to take two steps back.

“Look, if you’re going to understand any of this, you must realize that your questioning is only from your current state of awareness. And that’s the entire point of this room. We must move beyond you, so that you may witness the truth.”

Margaret could feel a lump beginning to form in the back of her throat as Dr. Vassar continued.

“Do you have the pieces of paper from the table?” He asked, as he reached out his hand.

For a moment Margaret fumbled with the realization of what he was asking.

“Oh, my pieces of paper.” She said startled as her mind had finally awoken to the moment.

She then reached into her pocket and handed the four pieces of paper to Dr. Vassar. He then took the pieces and looked them over carefully, as if working to put them in some kind of order.

“Now, I want you to listen to me carefully Margaret. What I am about to show you is just a fraction of what my father had learned about Tessera. The first part deals directly with these pieces of paper that I had you have created for me. Like you said, they are like the tesserae of a mosaic. So yes, you are correct. However, the part that you have wrong, is what the mosaic itself truly is.”
As he finished talking, he took a few steps towards the wall that had the squares wrapped around it. He then looked down at one of the pieces of paper that Margaret had given him, and read the word written upon it.

\textit{Money.}

He then carefully walked around the room until he found the corresponding word he was looking for.

\textit{Pecunia.} Which meant money in Latin.

As Margaret stood looking over his shoulder, he lifted the piece of paper up to the square, and placed it within the blank carving upon the wall.

“You see, here’s the word money which, matches the desire you placed upon your piece of paper. Now, below each corresponding desire, is a series of three unique perspectives. Each perspective is universal in that is shows you, and only you, what you’re meant to see.”

As Margaret listened to Dr. Vassar’s words, she looked down to see the images below the square. There were three of them.

The first, was two people who seemed to be exchanging something between them. The person on the left, had what appeared to be an apple. The figure on the right, had what appeared to be sword. The second image, was the sun rising above a field. The third and final one, was an image of four men, each with a different tool in their hands. The first had a scroll, the second had a trident, the third had an axe, and the fourth was holding a harp.

Dr. Vassar then began to explain what the images represented and why they were there.
“You see Margaret, what my father understood about Tessera, is that the motivations of man, or beast for that matter, aren’t always what they seem. What he discovered, was that when you’re able to look beyond the confines of your own judgement, the truth of the realities before you, begin to break apart and change. He then realized that the most common denominator of all desires, resulted in a formula that is commonly based on these three variables. Each variable is just enough to give the individual looking for clarity, enough insight to determine their own resolve.”

He continued as he pointed towards the first image.

“For instance. This image is of mutually beneficial exchange. The apple is a symbol of the figure’s workmanship and effort. It is the representation of what he does and who he is. However, the figure on the left is holding a sword. At first glance, these two have absolutely nothing in common. And that’s why this method of interacting images through a symbolic desire is so powerful.

“The point, is that these two images tell a story, but a story that can only be translated by the viewer. And yes, these translations will change over time, just as the viewer will change too.”

“Here’s an example.”

“As you look at the figure holding the apple, you may see the apple define this person as someone who has labored in order to sustain their living. But the fact that he is exchanging the apple for a sword, may be a sign of pride as well as protection. It could then tell us that his deepest desires aren’t just to provide for his family’s well-being by food or nourishment, but also by force if need be. This brings us to the figure with the sword. His gesture may be a sign of proving himself strong, but also as someone with
means. He may be offering protection, or simply willing to trade with his craftsmanship in order to support himself or his family.”

“Again, this is what’s most powerful about this first symbol. It isn’t just about trade or barter as a normal onlooker may deduce. It is about mutually beneficial exchange, by finding the truth behind the desires of the other person. And, the most important part of this, is that YOU are the other person, even if the question you’re asking is how to be of service to someone else. In fact, you are ALL of the figures within the symbols. Tessera has simply given us the foundation and clarity by offering a particular set of variables. But it is up to us to master this vision so that we may see the potential outcomes.”

Margaret could feel an entire story as she stared at the first image. She imagined a farmer working in the orchards with his wife and children. She could see them finding new ways to retrieve their harvest of apples from the trees. Next, she could see and almost feel, the beautiful warm weather and clouds rolling in after each night’s harvest.

Then there was more. The feeling of fall, family, pumpkin pie and apple cider, as friends and family would gather to celebrate and prepare for the coming winter. It was as if she could feel Tessera trying to tell her a story, but using her own memories, her own senses, and her own possibilities as fuel to decorate the scenery. As much as it was a feeling over logical reasoning, it was beginning to make more sense the more her imagination played within the images themselves.

“Please Eli, I want to know more.”

The word came out of her mouth so fast and so naturally, she didn’t stop it in time to correct herself. It was the first she had called Dr. Vassar by his first name. But to her,
this accidental slip of the tongue was a sign of absolute trust. The feeling of wanting to flee, of being afraid, was completely gone. It was now replaced with the purpose and trust, of what Dr. Vassar had set out to fulfill from the very first day they met.

And that of course, was to make her a partner and support her in not only learning the lessons of Tessera, but also by sharing its messages with the world. But there was still so much to learn, to experience, and to understand.

“I’m glad to hear that Margaret.” He said, as he continued with the lessons of the other two symbols.

“If you look here, this one is of the sun above land of which a man or woman, may own. For me, it is a symbol of personal value and self-reliance. It is the investment made by the hands, in order to sustain hard times, or relish in the fulfillment of abundance through sacrifice and perseverance. The sun represents possibility and positive outcome. In short, it is what my father realized is the driving force behind man’s ambitions.”

“Self-worth, purpose and pride.”

“Because of this, Tessera has shown my father that a person’s experiences, drive, or accomplishments, must not be acknowledged by any ill will, or selfish attempt to win them over. It is not the flattery of another that shall hold itself as an account of a good deed, but the altruistic execution of selfless validation that tends to win the hearts of others.”

“Now, as we look at the third and final symbol, this one is the one that Tessera has shown us is the most important. And, it’s the one that made me tell you my father was still alive, when in fact, he is not.”
Margaret let out a gasp.

“In short Margaret, this image represents societal betterment and evolution. This, is one of the greatest purposes and values of Tessera.”

As Dr. Vassar continued, he rested his hand upon the symbol as if connecting to its energy.

“If you look at these four figures, you’ll notice they represent the balance of man’s purpose. The figure with the scroll may represent the documenting of man’s accomplishments, or he may represent the spiritual doctrine of man’s faith. The second figure with the trident, is a master of the sea, both element and creature. For me, he represents the extension of abilities man has, even within environments his body seemingly has no purpose being in. It is a symbol of risk, courage, and the reward that follows ambition.”

“The third man is holding an axe. This is a sign that he is the master of all environments upon dry land, and everything between sand and snow. For me, this is a symbol of wisdom and strength, both given as a gift from our ancestors. And finally, the man holding a harp, is the master of emotion.”

“What you need to know, is that these symbols are not only signs of man’s purpose and his strive to survive and thrive, but they are also the tools of evolution. They show that both woman and man, are much more than a guided instrument, but also a single unit working towards harmonic fulfillment.”

“Does this make sense to you?” Dr. Vassar asked, as he took his eyes off the wall and put them back upon Margaret.
“Kind of.” Margaret answered. “I understand that these symbols will allow me to see things I am not seeing, so that I may find answers to questions I do not have answers to. But what I don’t understand, is exactly how they work? I mean, what if I get a translation wrong, or see something that doesn’t make sense?”

“It’s simple.” Dr. Vassar replied.

“The symbols are here to show you the synchronicities already available to you within your unconscious mind. They show you what your physical eyes are not capable of seeing, and instead, they show you the story your subconscious is already aligned with. They are exactly what they appear to be. The tiles, or tesserae, within a mosaic. And you, are the mosaic that cannot see itself through its own tiles. You must become the tesserae themselves, in order to witness the whole of what’s missing.”

“So what you’re saying, is that even if the current image doesn’t make sense or seems to align with my question, I will eventually understand how to read even the most unclear of images, in order to support my particular situation?”

“Yes, exactly. Tessera is here to show us the obscurity within our vision. And even if something doesn’t make sense, the more we practice the vision of Tessera itself, which, is a series of profound awarenesses and lessons, the more we can learn to witness resolve and purpose within even the most obscure things. An apple will no longer be an apple. It will be the result of someone’s pride and purpose. This will show you that moving forward with respect and validation, may be more valuable than simple monetary exchange. A sword will no longer be a sword, it will be the representation of someone’s workmanship, personal journey, or protection. And because of this vision, you will have the advantage of becoming the highest of service to an individual, and ultimately, to yourself. And yes, as you progress through life, your interpretation of the
images or symbols, will continue to change, right along as you and your life situation changes as well. This is how you will continue to grow, as you develop Tessera’s vision and apply it within your own world.”

Margaret stood staring at the wall as she contemplated Dr. Vassar’s words. The tiles around this beautiful room were all different, but she felt their alignment with one another, like a beautiful organized series of answers waiting for the right questions to be asked. That’s what this was, a room of answers. Like an oracle just waiting for its first student to begin their journey.

Each carving was now silently calling out to her, whispering in her ear and beckoning for her attention. She felt through their wisdom and Tessera’s vision, she could find the answer to anything she wanted to know.

In that moment, she glanced over towards Dr. Vassar’s father’s portrait.

“I do have one more question if you don’t mind Eli.” She said as she stared at the portrait.

“Why did you tell me your father was still here, when he has actually passed?”

Dr. Vassar smiled as he began to walk back over towards his father’s portrait. He stopped just a few feet away, looked up at his father, then turned towards Margaret.

“You see Margaret, for me, sadly, he has passed. In human form, he was my father. I loved him dearly and he taught me more than I can ever express the gratitude for. But for you, you’ve only just met him. This means that for you, he is like a newly born child, exerting his impact upon you through the energy of his memory and accomplishments
alone. In other words, he is not a human to you, he is an energy, and that makes him eternal. And when something is eternal, it is immortal.”

Dr. Vassar took a deep breath and looked back towards the portrait.

“However, there is more to this than you are currently able to comprehend, and it will take a bit more time before you’re ready to tackle that vision. In fact, the word time itself, is a part of that comprehension.”

Margaret accepted Dr. Vassar’s response and simply nodded and thanked him. She knew it was okay to not know everything at this moment. She had learned enough for now, and this was comforting all by itself. It was obvious there was much more to learn, and she was determined to be the best apprentice she could be. And that’s exactly what this was. A patient who was now becoming an apprentice. Even in her wildest dreams, she never would have seen this coming. Maybe this was where all the rumors came from. So much mystery within this house, and even more so with the man named Dr. Elijah Vassar who occupied it.

As she thanked him one last time, she noticed he was holding something in his left hand. He must have picked it up when she was staring at the painting, or maybe it was already hiding in his pocket. That didn’t matter. But before she could ask him what it was, he simply held it out and showed it to her.

“Do you know what this is Margaret? He asked.
The sight of it made her heart began to pound desperately within her chest. It was the one thing that began this journey and made it so special. All she could do in that moment, was respond with a simple yes.

Dr. Vassar then reached his hand out further towards Margaret, motioning for her to take it.

“Go ahead, it’s yours.” He said as she reached for the beautiful blue diamond resting within his hand.

For a split second, she thought about her experience with the diamond hologram. How she finally realized the truth of the shadow, and that this world had no bearing over Tessera’s. But as she held the diamond firmly in her hand, that all changed.

It was beautiful, heavy, and just holding it made her skin crawl with energy and excitement. She instantly imagined all of the things she would buy. A new house, a new car, a plane ticket to anywhere she wanted to travel in the world. And the daydreams didn’t stop there. She then thought of sharing this new wealth with everyone she loved. How it would help them with their bills, finally releasing them from the claws of debt and struggle. But then, a little voice in her head, the same one that showed up before she broke the code of the diamond and the shadow in the first place, began to absorb her with doubt.

“This is a trick, isn’t it?” She asked.

“No Margaret, it’s not a trick. I promise you that. It’s a choice.” Dr. Vassar somberly replied.
As she looked at him with wide eyes, she noticed he had something else in his other hand. It was a brass key with the symbol of a tree within a circle upon its grip. In fact, it was the same key that opened the door to the main room in which they were now standing in.

“I don’t understand.” She said, as her forehead began to show signs of confusion and despair.

“Margaret.” Dr. Vassar said, as he stood humbly before her. “The choice I am giving you is one hundred percent sincere. You can either have the diamond, or the key. But you cannot have both. Everything about this opportunity is real, this is not a trick. If you take the diamond, you will be rich. You may never have to worry about bills for the rest of your life. The diamond will be yours to do with whatever you choose. But if you take the key, you must exchange it for the diamond.”

Margaret stood motionless as the war within her mind began to unravel within a desperate rage. She imagined so much by owning the diamond, but she was just beginning to feel the truth of Tessera. And to think of all it had already done for her in such a small amount of time, was truly a miracle. All she could do in that moment was ask a single question.

“Eli, if this is for real, I must know what else that key opens. Does it open another door within this room, like the one with your father’s portrait? Or does it open something else?”

Dr. Vassar slowly took a step towards Margaret, then lifted the key so it was directly between them.

“No Margaret. *This key opens you …… “*
The dress was beautiful. It was made of the most vibrant purples and teals, combined with a golden wave of embroidery which, wrapped all the way around the bottom.

In fact, the gold itself, was real. And, there was so much of it that it raised the cost of the dress to over fifty thousand dollars.

Just being able to afford something so beautiful, so expensive, warmed Margaret’s heart. Yes, she loved the diamond and all that it represented, but what she could afford after cashing it in, meant many more options, as well as opportunities, to live a much fuller life.

This last thought brought out her inner voice once again.

“I told you so didn’t I?” The voice said in a matter of fact tone.

Margaret had to catch herself from responding out loud. Otherwise, people on the sidewalk would think she was crazy.

In that brief moment, she could see her own reflection in the glass as she peered into the dress shop’s window. It was a moment of true depression brought on heavily by the realization that she had made the wrong choice.

It was now October and the skies were as gloomy as the barren trees that lay beneath them. There was no better environment to match her feelings within this moment.
She was lost, confused, and felt nothing less than damned by her choice that fateful evening with Dr. Vassar.

As she stared at the dress, she knew she would never be able to afford it. In a synchronistic moment, she slipped her hand into her coat pocket and grabbed the key. As she pulled it out, she began to curse it.

“I wonder if you’re even worth anything.” She said, regretting its very presence.

As she arrived back at her home, the first thing she did was look over to see if the answering machine was blinking. Of course, it was not. *It never was.* This ritual had been happening for the better part of five months since she last saw Dr. Vassar.

It all began the night she chose the key over the diamond. He had abandoned her, plain and simple. What she thought was a moment of reckoning and transformation, was now more like a prison sentence within her mind. His silence, his failure to return even a single phone call without explanation, had done nothing less than destroy her emotionally.

Over the last few months, she had not only lost her will to trust anyone, but she was also losing her sanity. She couldn’t sleep, couldn’t concentrate, and worse, she no longer trusted any decisions she made for herself. This led to the inevitable failure to perform at work. And because of that, she was let go without even a single day's notice.

As she returned home, she set her car keys down, then stopped and took a deep breath. Her entire home was in disarray. There were papers everywhere, the dishes weren’t done, and the garbage could be smelled all the way to the front door. But a part of her didn’t even care. She was so far beyond caring now that she simply took her jacket off, and plopped her body down on the couch and turned on the TV.
Tossing and turning while trying to sleep was now a common activity. She would get no more than two hours of sleep, only to be awoken by some distraction. Whether it was the refrigerator in the kitchen cycling, an animal thrashing about outside, or simply her mind cursing her with thoughts of despair and regret.

Ultimately, these distractions were welcome. At the very least, they caused her to avoid dreaming. Or as she would put it, *not to be compulsive over the nightmarish truth that Dr. Vassar had abandoned her like a stray cat.*

In the beginning she thought it was a test. When she chose the key over the diamond, she thought everything would be brought to light. She imaged Dr. Vassar showing her what lied behind the seven doors. Or, at the very least, what the key’s true purpose was, and how it connected her to Tessera.

“No Margaret. This key opens you.” He said.

She had no idea that those final words would haunt her for the rest of her life.

As the days turned to weeks, she remained strong by keeping an open mind. She found herself spending countless hours sitting in the park, holding the key, and waiting for a sign. But as the weeks turned to months, the key itself, began to seem tarnished. Just like her ability to keep a faithful outlook on the possibilities to come.

The next morning, she stepped on the bathroom scale. And once again, it showed that she had gained a few pounds. *But she didn’t care.* At least something brought her comfort, and food was that something.

“What does it matter anyway?” She thought to herself as she prepared for another day of job hunting and wondering if Dr. Vassar would ever call.
The search for work had been pathetic to say the least. Yes, she was more qualified than most people in her field. But her attitude was what was stopping her from getting hired. It was the same each time. She’d enthusiastically call a prospective company, setup an interview, then show up and see the same look in everyone’s eyes.

They could tell that she was defeated. Her drive was gone, and no one wanted to employ someone who wasn’t going to be an asset to their company.

So, each day she came home and sat on her couch and watched TV until the stress of running out of money would leave her mind. Then, she would simply fall asleep, and repeat the process all over again.

One toss, one turn, at a time.

**Daylight**

The sound was coming from her kitchen as it jolted Margaret awake. She quickly launched her body from the couch, and cautiously moved towards the sound.

As she peered into the kitchen, she half expected to find an animal rummaging through the trash. After gathering her wits, she took a deep breath and flicked on the light.

That’s when she noticed the origin of the sound. It was the key that Dr. Vassar had given her. As she bent over to pick it up, a rage went off inside her the second she touched it.

“GOD DAMN YOU!” She said cringing her teeth as her mind exploded with anger.

“That’s it, you won’t return my phone calls, fine. You won’t tell me why you abandoned me, you won’t come to see me, fine, I’m coming to you!”
Within five minutes, she had cleaned herself up, changed her clothes, and stormed out the door with her car keys as well as the key Dr. Vassar had given her in exchange for what should have been the best decision of her life.

The drive to his home seemed like it lasted for hours. Her mind raced, played different scenarios of how she would confront him, yell at him, and scold him for ruining her life.

Now, just a quarter mile or so from the house, her mental arguments were stopped dead in their tracks as she noticed the bluish glow emanating within the forest. She looked up, and there it was. The diamond’s light, radiating, from just behind the house.

The memories all came rushing back. The journals, the stories of John Easton, Jack Fletcher, and Albert and Michael Vassar. Then, the atrium with the maple tree, the hidden doorway in the wall that led to the secret chamber underneath the tree and, the auditorium-like-room with the seven doors. Finally, the garden that harbored the diamond within the statue of Pan. The very diamond that could have been hers. That should have been hers.

Instantly her anger returned as she thought of what could have been. Losing the diamond was like playing the same lottery numbers each week, then missing a week, only to have your numbers win the grand prize the only week you didn’t play.

Just as this last thought wrestled itself through her mind, she was forced to slam on the breaks in order to avoid the parked car sitting underneath the large pine tree. As her car came to a thundering halt, she tightened her grip around the steering wheel so tightly, that the blood left her fingers. She then put the car in park, grabbed the key, and slammed the door. That’s when she noticed Dr. Vassar standing on the front porch of with a look of confusion in his eyes.
Behind him was a man with blond hair in his early thirties, peeking over his shoulder. He too, seemed to be wearing the same look of confusion upon his face.

As she approached Dr. Vassar, he turned and said something to the man, then slowly closed the door leaving Margaret and himself alone on the front porch.

“Can I help you?” He said as if acting like he didn’t recognize her.

“Help me? You’re joking right?” She replied angrily.

“I’m not sure I understand miss.” He replied continuing the same act of confusion.

His false ignorance was getting the best of Margaret which, was forcing her anger to rage like a storm.

No raising her voice, she screamed; “How can you act like you don’t know me!”

She then took three steps towards him as her feet hammered against the wooden planks of the front porch.

“Miss, please.” He pleaded desperately now raising his hands.

“I’m sure this is just some kind of mistake or misunderstanding. How can I help you?”

Margaret’s eyes widened. She couldn’t believe his tenacity. *How dare him treat me like this.* She thought to herself. She then reached into her coat pocket and pulled out the key. She then raised it so that he could get a good look at it.

“If we’ve never met, then how do I have this?” She said, as she held out the key until it was almost touching his face.
As Dr. Vassar’s eyes fell upon the key, his face went dark. It was only in that moment that Margaret began to see something she had never seen from him before.

_Fear._

There was no doubting it, he was clearly startled, if not confused.

“How ... how do you have this?” He asked, sounding dumbfounded. Or, at the very least, giving a truly convincing performance.

“I don’t know what you think you’re doing here.” Margaret said gritting her teeth. “But I don’t find it very amusing. Where the hell have you been? Why haven’t you returned my calls?”

“Miss, I can assure you, I don’t know what’s happening here either.” He said now sounding apologetic. “But I’m sure we can figure this out.”

He then extended his arm towards her.

“May I please see the key?”

“Fine.” She replied, practically throwing it at him.

As he held the key, the look in eyes was one of complete and utter awe. It was like he was witnessing something that wasn’t possible.

“I simply don’t understand.” He whispered to himself as his thumb rubbed the circle around the tree.

“It’s the key you gave to me. Don’t you remember? You gave me a choice between the key or the diamond.”
“The diamond?” He asked still staring at the key.

“You know, the one in the statue behind the house. Or, should I say, the real one that is underneath the atrium. Oh hell, why are you continuing to act like you don’t know what I’m talking about?” She snarled.

Dr. Vassar was beginning to visibly turn pale, as if he couldn’t believe the words he was hearing. He then looked up directly into Margaret’s eyes.

“I think you need to come with me miss.” He said, as he turned around and opened the front door motioning for her to enter the house.

For a split second, she wanted to turn and walk away, or at the very least, slap him in the face before she left. But there was something in the back of her mind reaching out to her, something telling her that as crazy as he was acting, he was telling the truth. How, she didn’t know. Why, she couldn’t understand. But she needed answers, so she cautiously followed him and waited for the punchline to this very cruel joke.

As she entered the front room, she saw the man that was peeking over Dr. Vassar’s shoulder when she first arrived. But before Dr. Vassar could introduce him, she couldn’t help but notice the look in the young man’s eyes. It was as if something about her frightened him, or at the very least, made him uneasy. That’s when she noticed he was staring at the key Dr. Vassar was still holding.

“Who are you?” Margaret asked, trying to get a response from the man.

In that moment, she noticed a sketch upon the mosaic table. It was hard to make out at first, because it was only halfway exposed due to the scattering of pencils that were apparently just used to make it. But something about it seemed familiar.
Before she could ask what it was, Dr. Vassar interrupted her with a question.

“If what you say is true, and I’m the one who gave you this key, then I need to know exactly how that happened.”

But instead of answering his question, Margaret’s mind was forced towards the mosaic table. She needed to know what that sketch was. As she walked over to it, both Dr. Vassar and the young man stepped aside allowing her to pass.

Now standing over the table, she reached down and slowly moved the pencils off of the sketch and picked it up. As she looked it over, a single word left her lips in a whisper.

“Albatross.”

Just then the young man looked over towards Dr. Vassar and spoke.

“How did she know that?” He asked sounding puzzled.

“I’ve seen the painting.” Margaret replied, now unsure if he too, was in on Dr. Vassar’s little prank.

“What do you mean painting?” The young man replied now visibly disturbed.

“I mean, painting as in, painting. You know, the one under the atrium in the secret room behind the wall. It’s called The Albatross, with the eight stars and the ninth planet which, is a representation of Source returning to Earth to become human.”

Just then Dr. Vassar looked over towards Margaret, his eyes as wide as golf balls.

“Miss, that’s nothing but a sketch. He’s never made it into a painting. In fact, he literally just drew that picture a few minutes before you got here ...”
As Margaret sat on the couch listening to Dr. Vassar, something seemed off. It wasn’t the room per say, but something about its energy, like if something she normally didn’t pay attention to was moved while she had her back turned.

Her thoughts were then interrupted by Dr. Vassar.

“So you’re saying I gave you this key while down in the corridor room, is that correct?”

“Yes.” She replied. “You gave me a choice, the key or the diamond. I chose the key.”

Margaret then got up from the couch and walked over towards Dr. Vassar, as he sat in his chair with his arms crossed. His posture made her feel as if he were hiding something.

“You’re telling me this isn’t all a trick.” Margaret asked with a combination of seriousness, confusion and anger. “You honestly can’t remember giving me the key.”

“Miss ...”

“Margaret.” She corrected.
“Yes, of course. Margaret, I promise you with all my heart, I am telling you the truth. I have never seen you before in my life, and especially not in the capacity that you’re suggesting.”

The young man with the sketch responded with the same conclusion. He too declared that he had not ever seen her before which, made her intimate knowledge of his forthcoming work feel very uncomfortable.

Over the next few minutes, she would get to know him as Tom. A brilliant artist who created his work out of sheer empathy and compassion for seeing things most people didn’t. He too, was a patient of Dr. Vassar’s, but a very special one. Not unlike herself, or at least herself with the real Dr. Vassar, she could tell their relationship was also grounded by Tessera. She didn’t know how, nor would have any idea how, until much later. But for now, her dilemma was to rid herself of the uncertainty of this moment. The next moment could wait.

Dr. Vassar uncrossed his arms and placed his hands on the chair, and stood to his feet. He then began to walk around the room as if looking for something, like a child would on Easter Sunday searching for eggs.

“Please tell me Margaret, is there anything else that you think could help you remember your alleged visits with me?”

The word alleged instantly made her angry. If there was one thing for certain, it was that she didn’t like to be called a liar. How could she know so much about this house, if she had never been in it? How could she know so much about its hidden passages, its history, and its contents just by walking in the front door and standing in this room?
This last thought jogged her memory about the other key. The one around Dr. Vassar’s neck.

“You have a key that you wear around your neck.” She said excitedly.

“It goes to the cabinet on the bottom right under the bookshelf. Inside the cabinet are several journals. One of them, is the journal of Jack Fletcher titled *Without the Water*. The pages are blank.”

As she spoke, she noticed that Dr. Vassar had unconsciously placed his hand on his chest. By the time she was done, the key was out from behind his shirt and resting within the palm of his hand. As he held it, he smiled and walked over towards the bookcase and opened the cabinet.

When he reached in, he hesitated for just a moment as if something jogged his memory or, sparked a thought. He shook it off, and grabbed Jack Fletcher’s journal then set it on the mosaic table before the three of them. As he opened the book, Margaret’s jaw dropped. She couldn’t tell if she was horrified, amazed, or both. For the pages were no longer blank. She could now see words written in beautiful calligraphy, words written by the very hand of Jack Fletcher.

“What is it?” Dr. Vassar asked, as she sat staring at the journal like a deer in headlights.

“The book … it’s … it’s no longer blank. I can read the words!” She responded.

Her eyes were like a child’s as they opened a gift they had been longing for. Just then, she noticed Tom and Dr. Vassar staring at each other like they were secretly sharing some kind of hidden knowledge. But before she could wonder what that secret may be, Tom gave it away.
“What do you mean you can read the words?” He replied, as if asking the impossible.

His eyes were desperately scanning the pages. And, by the look on his face, she could tell he couldn’t see what she could.

“Tom, can you see words?” She asked almost sympathetically.

“No, I’ve never been able to ... I mean ...”

He stopped mid-sentence and looked up towards Dr. Vassar with a sense of validation.

“She’s telling the truth about all of it, isn’t she Eli?”

“Yes, it appears so.” Dr. Vassar replied. He took a deep breath and exhaled while sharing his next sentence.

“It certainly appears so.”

Part Two

Margaret thumbed through the incredible journal. Each new page was a series of insights like she had never seen. There were many sketches too. But the one that grabbed her the most, was a sketch of a door that appeared to be on a ship. Her skin went frigid with goosebumps as she read the words underneath the sketch.

“So, what does it say?” Tom asked anxiously.

“It’s taking about the cabin door.” She swallowed hard before saying what was to come next.

“It’s about the cabin door, ... of the Mireya.”
As the name of the ship left her lips, the memory of the dream came rushing back into her mind. The storm, the ghostly figure floating above the mast. Then, Jack Fletcher, as he seemed to be the only one noticing the figure.

It was all coming full circle. Why was she the only one in the room who could see the writing? What kind of hallucination was this? Or, was this even really happening?

In that moment it finally occurred to her. *Time.* That’s what could be the answer for all of this. Dr. Vassar told her it was the word time itself, which was part of the comprehension for understanding the immortality of his father. Was it true? Did she somehow go back in time? Was this how Tom learned about his painting before making it? Or, did he already know about the stars, and how the Albatross was about Source transforming into human form?

“Wait, this doesn’t feel right.” She said under her breath, but loud enough for Dr. Vassar and Tom to hear her.

“What doesn’t feel right?” Tom asked.

“What year is this? I mean, what’s the date?” She asked feeling foolish.

“It’s Thursday, October 18th, 2018.” Dr. Vassar replied.

“This isn’t making any sense. *I thought maybe...*”

Dr. Vassar finished her sentence.

“You thought maybe you travelled back in time.” He replied with sympathetic eyes.

“Yes, but I haven’t.” She said sounding deflated. “That’s not what is happening here is it?”
In that moment Margaret’s world began to come crashing down around her. This wasn’t a case of time travel, this was something else, something much more difficult to explain. The last five months of hell, really happened. There was no escaping that reality now. She was simply trapped in a world in which she didn’t even know how she came to be in. And the only thing that mattered now, was getting answers. But instead of getting answers, as usual, she was gaining more questions. The more she thought about it, the stranger it seemed. And, the stranger it seemed, the more the questions tugged away on her sanity.

“I don’t understand what is happening. Everything in my world has remained unchanged. Except for…”

“Except for us.” Dr. Vassar finished.

The room went silent as the three of them sat there staring at the journal. Margaret took a deep breath and continued to read the words on the page, while Tom and Dr. Vassar stared off into space. Then, Tom snapped out of it and put his attention back on Margaret.

“How did you know about the stars?” He asked curiously.

Like a crack of thunder, there it was.

“The stars in the painting?” Margaret replied.

“Yes, my sketch. How did you know that’s what it was about? Or, going to be about? I never said anything about that.”

Margaret’s mind instantly drifted off, as she imagined the painting under the atrium. The concept of Source coming to Earth, becoming reborn. Becoming ....
“Oh my God.” She said as she gripped the journal and pulled it closer to her face.

“This isn’t about the door, it’s about the hinges on the door!”

She quickly asked Tom if she could use his sketchpad and pencils. As he handed them over, she began to frantically draw what she was seeing in Jack Fletcher’s journal. Within less than a minute, she had a crude mockup of the Mireya’s cabin door. She then drew a circle around the hinges that Fletcher himself, seemed to take such a keen interest in.

“Oh, look at the picture.” She said as she sat back into the couch making way for Tom and Dr. Vassar to see her work. “I know it’s not great, but at least you have an idea of what I’m seeing.”

As the two men took a closer look, she could feel their energy begin to rise like the hairs on the back of her neck.

“Oh my God Eli, it’s the same as the door in the ...” Tom stopped himself before allowing the last word to slip from his tongue.

Dr. Vassar simply smiled, reached into his pocket, and pulled out the key that Margaret had given to him when she arrived.

“Margaret, take this, and bring Fletcher’s journal. I know what we need to do.”

Part Three

Margaret’s heart raced as Dr. Vassar flicked the switch that illuminated the sconces by the door she was now standing in front of. It was a beautiful wooden door with hinges
in the shapes of trees. *Exactly like the cabin door on the Mireya sketched by Jack Fletcher.*

“It’s the same door!” She said, as her throat began to tighten with emotion.

“Yes, well, kind of” Dr. Vassar replied. “At least the hinges are the same.”

“This is what he meant then.” She replied.

“What do you mean what he meant?” Tom asked beginning to feel left out.

“In Fletcher’s journal,” Dr. Vassar added, “He had written that the key to a door wasn’t the true lock. But instead, it was the hinges that allow you through. A door without hinges was nothing more than a wall one could not transcend.”

“Wait, how did you know that? I thought you couldn’t read the journal?” Margaret asked sounding suspicious.

Instead of answering her question, Dr. Vassar read the words etched upon the door itself.

*To find a world within a world, you must first look beyond the confines of the self. Once there, you will find an unlikely salvation. For it is a key. A key that will not unlock any door. But instead, the promise of the hidden world itself.*

Margaret could feel the lump in her throat begin to rise. Although she didn’t quite understand it, it was like the words were written for her.

“It’s a metaphor.” Dr. Vassar continued. “But in this case, it’s also a very real fact. And yes, I can read the journal Margaret, but it’s not what you think. You see, once we learn how to see what’s in that journal, it’s still different for all of us. What you see will be
interpreted your own way vs. what I see. This is what the sentence “you must first look beyond the confines of the self,” means. What you may see as an obstacle, I may see as an advantage. This is why the journal is so invaluable. Simply because although Fletcher was the first one to document Tessera, he wasn’t the last to discover it.”

Dr. Vassar then pointed towards the door where the lock should have been.

“It doesn’t have a lock.” Tom said acknowledging his gesture.

“Or, a doorknob for that matter.” Margaret added.

*Then it hit her.*

“We are the unlikely salvation.” She said getting choked up over the words.

“Exactly.” Dr. Vassar replied with a smile. “We are the key.”

Dr. Vassar then reached for the hinges and pulled one of them towards himself.

As he pulled the first black tree-shaped hinge, the top of the door broke free and released its grip upon the threshold. He then pulled on the bottom hinge, and watched as both Tom and Margaret looked in amazement as the door swung open. But the door didn’t open normally, *it opened backwards*. For on the opposite side of the door, there was another set of identical hinges.

Now with the door wide open, they could see a large antique mirror standing in the middle of the room.

Dr. Vassar then motioned for Margaret and Tom to enter.

Just before entering the room, Margaret noticed the symbol above the door. It was an image of two forms, one animal, one human. However, they were both posing the exact
same way as if mirror images of each other. It was like a symbiotic reference of two totally separate entities acting as one. There was also what appeared to be a piece of wheat, or some other kind of grain, resting between the two forms.

“Come.” Dr. Vassar said ending Margaret’s gaze upon the symbol. “I can explain that later, this is more important.”

As they entered the room, she noticed nothing more than the mirror and a dim studio light embedded in the ceiling illuminating it. The mirror was about six feet tall and three feet wide. The frame itself, made the mirror look as though it belonged in some seventeenth or eighteenth century castle. The wood was brittle and falling apart, but impeccably crafted in every detail.

“What is this?” Margaret asked in deep awe by the mirror’s presence.

“You tell me.” Dr. Vassar replied. “What do you see?”

“It’s a mirror. A beautiful one, but just that. A mirror.” She replied.

“Are you sure?”

His query made Margaret look deeper at the mirror. First, it’s frame, then, the reflection itself.

“All I see is a mirror and us in its reflection.” She replied unsure.

Tom then butted in with the same conclusion.

“What is it we’re supposed to be seeing?” He asked.
Dr. Vassar then walked towards the door and pulled it close. As he did, the room went even darker and blackened out the wall behind them. Now, they could see nothing but themselves in the mirror’s reflection.

Time seemed to stop as they all stared into the mirror. Eventually, Tom began to lose his patience.

“So, can you just tell us what we’re supposed to see?” He asked.

“I have no idea.” Dr. Vassar replied.

“What do you mean you have no idea? Haven’t you ever been in here?”

“Yes, but that doesn’t mean I know what you will see.”

“So is this like the journal? Are we all supposed to experience something different?” Tom asked in a final act of desperation.

Just then Margaret took her eyes off the mirror and removed the key from her pocket with her right hand.

“Do you think this has something to do with this room Dr. Vassar?”

“I don’t know, why don’t you turn around and see.” He replied.

As she turned around, her eyes began to widen as she stared at their reflection.

“What is it?” Tom asked. “What are you seeing?”

“It’s … not what I’m seeing. It’s what I’m not seeing.” Margaret replied as if looking at a ghost.
As she stood there staring at her reflection, she noticed her right hand as it held out the key. *It was empty.* Or to be more specific, *it was empty in the reflection.* She continued to look at her physical hand holding the key, then back at her empty hand in the reflection of the ancient mirror. It was exactly like the diamond, but completely opposite.

“What are you seeing Margaret?” Dr. Vassar asked.

“It’s like I’m looking at two separate worlds.” She replied as she approached the mirror.

*Part Four*

As Margaret approached the mirror, she began to feel a chill in the room. Slowly, she lifted her left hand and reached for the mirror. A part of her wanted it to go through, another part of her didn’t. But as her fingers touched the hard surface of the glass, her emotions were instantly conflicted.

“I thought ....”

“You thought your hand would go into the mirror.” Dr. Vassar said as he once again finished her sentence.

“Yes.” She replied. “Just like when I figured out how to touch the diamond.”

“What do you mean by that?” Dr. Vassar asked.

“I’m sorry, I keep forgetting you’re not him. *I mean ...*”

She trailed off into thought before finishing her sentence. It was like there was a thickness in the air grabbing hold of her mind. A thickness that tried to make this all a
dream, while at the same time, doing its best to sift through the clarity within the uncertainty of this moment.

“What I mean, is the diamond hologram in Pan’s flute in the garden. You know, the one radiating the blue light.”

A look of confusion ran across Dr. Vassar’s face as if he were trying to find words that weren’t there. He then took a couple of steps back from the mirror, and placed his hand on the top of his head.

“I think we have another misunderstanding Margaret.” He said before motioning to Tom.

“Tom, could you please tell Margaret where that key came from?”

Tom turned towards Margaret and fashioned a crooked smile.

“Well, um, first off, I’m the one who made that key. I designed it a few years ago for Dr. Vassar. The key opens the atrium in the middle of the house, there’s …” He stopped mid-sentence worried that he was saying too much.

“Go ahead Tom, it’s okay, tell her everything.” Dr. Vassar said encouraging him to continue.

“If you look at the key, you’ll see that the tree design is based on the tree in the atrium. That’s where it came from. It’s an archetype of the tree of Tessera. However, I only made one key. And the one I made is resting in the statue in the garden. That’s what’s giving off the blue light you’re talking about. There is no diamond, only the key.”
Margaret felt her world begin to blur like a muddy pond in a rain storm. There was simply no way to collect herself as her mind raced to justify both worlds at once. One world with the diamond in the flute, the other with the key.

She then heard Dr. Vassar’s voice try to bring clarity back to this puzzle.

“Margaret, if you say that this diamond was in the statue of Pan, and you had a choice between it and the key, but within this place, it is the key that is in the statute and not the diamond, what does that mean to you?

A chill went up her spine as the revelation embraced her. It was like a flash of lightning rushing through her very being, illuminating, and enlightening her with perfect clarity.

She raised her now shaking hand with the key, and lifted it towards the mirror.

“It means that I didn’t choose the key.” She said as she stared deeply into her reflection.

“How can you say that?” Tom asked confused. “It’s in your hand, I’m looking right at it.”

“I didn’t choose it Tom, because there never was one.” She replied as her lips began to tremble.

She then turned around and faced Tom and Dr. Vassar with her back to the mirror.

Thank you for all you’ve done and for allowing me to witnessing this truth. I’m sure I’ll see you both again soon.

*She then closed her eyes, and began to walk backwards towards the mirror...*
The darkness swept through Margaret’s mind like a fog after a midnight storm. With it, the realization of time. Not time as it was intended to be in its natural state, but time that only a part of us, the hidden part naturally swallowed by its own fear, knows so well.

She took a deep breath before opening her eyes.

Part of her expected the whole thing to be a dream. She’d wake up staring at her ceiling. Then, she would look at the calendar for validation. But the problem was this journey didn’t begin while lying down for a night’s sleep.

*It began with a choice.*

Before the room with the mirror, her last location was in the room next to it. The one with the diamond over the doorway and, the portrait of Michael Vassar hanging on the back wall like a prized trophy. It was then that this journey into darkness truly began. For that is when she chose the key over the diamond, her truth over her illusion.

Slowly, she opened her eyes to see the mirror she had just passed through. On the other side was Tom and Dr. Vassar looking through it as if staring off into space. It was clear they could see only their own reflection.

At first, she stood in the darkness watching the two ponder what just took place within their world. *A world she was no longer a part of.* Then, she closed her eyes and thought
of the truth of her situation. The truth, was that she was now trapped. Or, had she finally been set free?

She took a deep breath, closed her eyes once more, then turned around to see what was behind her lurking in the darkness. As she opened her eyes, her jaw dropped in utter disbelief as she found herself back in the mirror room. But now she was alone, facing the hinged door with her back towards the mirror. As she turned around to look at the mirror half expecting to see Dr. Vassar and Tom in the reflection, a thud of panic rushed through her veins. For what she saw looking back, was not her.

Her mind raced as she watched the figure mock her every move. With her hands reaching for the mirror, the reflection reached back.

“What the hell?” She whispered as she touched the reflection of the little girl no older than seven.

She had long blond hair, was wearing a torn blue and gray dress, and had no shoes. Her eyes were almost unnaturally large for her head and were the brightest shade of green Margaret had ever seen. They were stunning to say the least. So stunning in fact, that she almost forgot the truth of this moment. That she, was staring at herself. Not a younger version of herself, but a completely different person connected by a simple reflection.

That’s when she noticed something about the girl that gave her even more chills. Hanging from the left side pocket of her dress, was a small piece of cloth. As Margaret stared at it, she instinctively shifted her eyes away from the mirror and towards her own pocket. Sure enough, the same piece of cloth was hanging from her own pocket.
A rush of energy entered the room as she began to move her hand to touch it. As she did, she felt a spark of light explode within the air. Just before the room went dark, she saw the girl in the mirror begin to smile as she faded into the darkness.

The Homecoming

It was like rushing through a tunnel of pure energy. She could see nothing but lights, both acting as waves and colors encircling the environment within her now magnified field of vision. She could not see her body, for it was not present within this moment.

Then, everything came back into focus as fast as it had gone.

As her vision was regained, she noticed she was standing just in front of Dr. Vassar’s bookshelf. One hand resting on the ledge, the other embracing the piece of cloth as it hung just outside its wooden box. As her hand released it, the rest of her senses began to kick in. First touch, then smell, finally, sound. She quickly turned around to see the rest of the room. It was empty.

In that moment she felt like she was home. Just being present within the room that herself and Dr. Vassar had so many conversations in was instantly comforting. But when was this happening? Was this the real Dr. Vassar’s house? Or, was this the Dr. Vassar that seemed to parallel her confusing and emotional journey beyond the mirror?

While pondering this last thought, something caught her eye laying on the mosaic table. It was a drawing. A sketch to be more precise. But it wasn’t the Albatross image that Tom drew just a short time before. It was something else.

As she walked over to the sketch, she could clearly see that it was the key Tom had made for Dr. Vassar. The one that she had chosen over the diamond.
Just then, she remembered something that jolted her senses. It was what Tom said about the key. How it was this key that opened that atrium. She also remembered there was no obvious way to get into the atrium from her previous experiences. With this thought still fresh in her mind, she reached into her pocket, then exhaled deeply as the key was no longer there.

Obviously, whatever this was, was still happening.

She then remembered something else Tom said. That there was no diamond in his world, and that the key that she believed she had, was actually resting in Pan’s flute in the garden.

Quickly, she made her way towards the back of the house then outside to the garden. A sigh of relief came over her as she witnessed everything resting in its proper place. The statue was there, intact, and, even the blue light radiating from its flute was present. But what she saw, as predicted, wasn’t the diamond. It was the key, exactly where Tom said it would be. As she went to reach for it, she hesitated realizing that if it was anything like the diamond then it wasn’t actually there. She knew right then and there that she would find it within the hidden room beneath the atrium.

With this last thought, she quickly turned back towards the house and headed for the secret room. As she arrived, she found the hidden latch, opened the door, and made her way down the dark staircase. As if being guided by her own intuition, she immediately looked up towards the wall on her right. There it was in full detail.

*The painting of the Albatross.* Just being in its presence made her feel as though it was welcoming her home. Although *this home*, still wasn’t quite the one she was looking for. She then looked over towards her left to where the diamond originally sat within the small statue of Pan. But this time, there was nothing there, *not even the key.*
“Dammit.” She thought to herself, as she continued to look around the room for clues. Her eyes dashed from artifact, to object, to painting, in search for anything that could help her make sense of this moment.

“Why was there a blue light resonating from the statue outside if there was nothing in the statue down here?” She thought to herself as she continued her search.

After what seemed like hours, she could find nothing to help her improve her situation. This made her think for the first time that there may be no way back to her normal world. The world with the original Dr. Vassar, and the deep promise of Tessera.

Then, within that very moment of surrender, she looked down beneath her feet. Almost in shock, she jumped away from the image carved into the floor. It was a silhouette of a human figure, like a shadow, holding the diamond.

Her jaw dropped as she realized it was an exact representation of when her own shadow bestowed upon her the diamond itself. Surrounding the image, were words written in a circle.

This time, they were written in English. They read:

_I am the mountains, I am the sea, and within Tessera your song is set free._

“A rhyme.” She said to herself as she whispered the words out loud. As she read the words, she heard the creaking of door as it began to open behind her. She then turned around and could see that it was part of the cylinder shaped room that surrounded the roots of the tree above in the atrium. Quickly, she walked over towards the door.

The first thing she saw inside the room was the roots of the tree itself. They were hanging straight from the ceiling and embedded into the dark earth and gold colored walls, making the tree and the room one. As she walked around the tree’s massive
roots, she noticed small lights illuminating the circular wall that encompassed the room. Upon the wall in all directions, were drawings like that of a cave, but etched in black, blue, and gold. Everyone one of them was a representation of this very moment. Images of people just like herself, standing within the cylinder surrounded by the roots of the tree.

There were dozens of them, all different, and all seeming to transcend towards somewhere beautiful up above. But there was something she couldn’t see in the room that was in many of the carvings. The people appeared to be walking up a kind of circular staircase towards a blue light. This caused her to walk around the tree’s roots and investigate the back of the room.

And there it was. A circular staircase leading right up towards the center of the atrium.

As she ascended the stairs, she could see the radiant blue light from the sky above. But something was off. The sky wasn’t fully open like it was when she saw it from inside the house. Instead, the light seemed to be radiating from a large hole surrounded by a rock ceiling high above.

She then lifted her body onto the last step of the stairs and quickly realized that her suspicions were correct. This was not the atrium within Dr. Vassar’s house that she expected to be inside of. No, this was something entirely different. It wasn’t until she was now standing beside the tree and saw the symbol upon it that she realized where she truly was.

_Tessera._

As she looked around, she could see a waterfall flowing in from the rocks high above, then finally landing into a beautiful emerald green pond about a hundred feet in front of
her. As she looked towards the right of the waterfall, she let out a gasp as there was a large dome like structure made of glass and oxidized iron.

It was an atrium. *The true, atrium.*

Towards the right of the atrium, was a house bore deep into the rock wall. So deep in fact, that only its face was visible. It was a two story Bavarian style home with a balcony on the second level that overlooked this beautiful inner Eden. There was no glass in the windows, and no doors occupying its thresholds. It was obvious by the enclosed serenity that surrounded her, that there was no need for them as everything here was hidden from any outside world.

As she took her gaze off the house and looked further towards her right, she could see a lush forest of pine trees that reached far into the darkness. Just barely out of sight within that same darkness, she could see small flashes of light, like fireflies, all dancing within and above the pines.

Finally scanning the remainder of this hidden paradise, were rock walls that led up to the single hole high in the ceiling. This is where the light was coming in from. The beautiful blue light that matched the sky of the outside world. As she stared at the sky, she could see snow falling through the hole, then melting as it ascended into the warmth of Tessera’s embrace.

“This must have been a live volcano at one time.” She thought to herself.

“This would explain how everything inside was so lush with life, while outside it could be so cold. But where is this place really?” She thought to herself as she stared at her surroundings in bewilderment.

As her eyes and mind struggled to take Tessera’s beauty all in, her attention was once again placed on the tree standing in the very center. As she approached it, she noticed
something very peculiar about it. *It seemed to be moving.* Not just the leaves on the branches from the warm wind circling about, but the trunk of the tree itself.

Carefully, she moved closer until she was just a few inches from it. As she looked at the bark, she could see it expand and contract *as if it were breathing.* At first this startled her, but then a calm sense of connection took hold and her mind went completely clear.

As she moved her hand closer towards the tree’s surface, she slowly touched the bark as it raised and lowered with every breath. The second her hand rested upon the tree, she was startled as she felt someone touch the small of her back. She quickly turned around to see who was behind her half expecting to see Dr. Vassar or Tom.

*But there was no one there.*

Then, a flash of clarity was gifted to her helping her move beyond her senses and towards something far greater. Everything Dr. Vassar had said about archetypes, how they are remnants of ourselves, how we are the tesserae within the mosaic and, how the painting of the Albatross was about Source returning home to become human. It all made sense now and, it was clear what was happening.

Margaret was now experiencing herself as the shadow of the diamond, and was placing her hands upon her very own archetype.

*The Tree of Tessera.*

She began to cry as she reached out her hands and placed them both upon the tree. Right as she did, she could feel a pair of etheric hands embrace her on each side of her body. It was like the sensation of being given the diamond from her very own shadow, all over again.
As she held the tree, tears rolled down her cheeks and fell to the ground. As they did, she could feel a tingling sensation dancing upon the top of her head.

“It’s not just the tree.” She said laughing through tear filled eyes of gratitude.

Now she knew why Jack Fletcher had called it Tessera. It was his own way of naming something that was so intimate to the self, but also so connected to Source. And more importantly, she now understood the phrase Without the water there are no islands.

As she embraced the tree, she felt as though she never wanted to leave this place. There wasn’t anything else in the world that had offered so much promise, so much love, and so much hope. But because of this very connection, she was also given the wisdom that could lead her back to the home she so longed to return to.

With this last thought, she knew the choice had already been made and that this bond could never be broken. Just before leaving this majestic place, she uttered a single phrase.

“To become the hinge is to transcend the key, I am the song setting itself free.”

She then closed her eyes and embraced the tree the exact same way she did the first time she touched the diamond.

And that, is when her two worlds became one...

Within Time

As Margaret stared at the reflection of herself in the mirror, she saw Dr. Vassar enter the room from behind her.

“How long have I been here?” She asked still foggy from the experience.
“Just a few minutes.” He replied.

Margaret exhaled deeply as she stared at her reflection in the mirror shaking her head.

“How did you know? I mean, the key. How did you know?” She asked as her voice began to crack.

“It’s not about knowing Margaret, it’s about witnessing.” He replied with a smile.

“Do you want to talk about it?” He asked as he motioned for her to leave the room.

“Yes.” She replied.

She then handed him the small piece of cloth resting snug within her grasp as she exited the room.

Another World Awaits

“There was another you.” She said uncomfortably. “And a man named Tom. He was the one who created the Albatross painting. But I saw it before he finished it. It was only a sketch.”

“Interesting.” Dr. Vassar replied.

Margaret looked exhausted as her body sat deep into the couch. She felt like she had been up for days. And, although her journey seemed like months in her mind, it only lasted minutes in real time. Right after she chose the key, or the piece of cloth as it turns out, Dr. Vassar took her to the first room. The room with the mirror. He then closed the door allowing her to be alone. For what seemed like a multitude of journeys in her mind, her body never left the mirror’s reflection. Not even for an instant.
She then took a few minutes to talk about how she was left all alone after choosing the key. And, how she lost her job, as well as began to regret the decision of not choosing the diamond.

“This was the entire point of the exercise Margaret.” Dr. Vassar said. “Tessera offers a promise to experience the self within its true form. This is why you experienced suffering, job loss, and of course, meeting me and having to deal with what seemed like betrayal.”

“So it was all made up.” She asked sounding defeated.

“Yes, and no. Yes, in the sense that you created a story that caused you so much grief. Maybe it was a story already given to you by family and early life experiences. Or, maybe it was simply a story you accepted out of the illusion of your assumptions. Regardless, the experience may have been different if you had chosen the diamond over the cloth. However, the promise of clarity, purpose and legacy, is a far greater gift to have. And you and I both knew this.”

“So what was the part that I didn’t make up?” She asked as she slowly moved her body closer to the edge of the couch.

“Tessera.” He answered directly.

“You see, there is an etheric energy all around us at all times. If you want to get scientific, you may consider this energy a remnant of what is, what was, and will become. Simply because there is no such thing as time. This is a man made illusion. This also explains why you experienced things you could not have previously known about. For example, Tom. You are correct, a man named Tom is the one who created the Albatross painting. However, even as you took on the role of your own shadow, you
also became a part of Tom’s experience as Source returning to Earth. In this case, it was Tom’s version of Tessera through his Albatross painting that you became a part of.”

Dr. Vassar got up from his chair and walked over towards his bookshelf. He then pulled out a photo album that was lodged between two Chinese dog statues. Finally, he turned to a specific page, then laid the album in front of Margaret on the table. As she looked at the photograph, she covered her mouth with her hand.

“It’s him isn’t it?” Dr. Vassar asked while pointing to the photograph of Tom.

She could only nod in the affirmative as her hand was still covering her mouth in awe.

“Now, I know you experienced a lot of other things that contradict your reality. But what’s important is there is one commonality that we all share. And, what you’ve experienced is just the tip of that commonality iceberg. Tell me, what was your final experience before you awoke in front of the mirror the last time?”

“The tree.” She said swallowing hard.

“I found a symbol on the floor of the room under the atrium. When I saw that symbol, a door opened from behind me revealing the room with the tree’s roots. I thought it would lead me into the atrium in the house, but instead, it led me into Tessera. When I was there, I saw several things. A waterfall, a house in the wall, and, another atrium but much bigger. Then, I saw the pine forest. After that, I was drawn back to the tree.”

“What happened next?” Dr. Vassar asked.

“When I walked over to it, I could see it breathing.” She replied beginning to get choked up.
“And, when I touched it, I ... I could feel my own hands upon my body.”

“And how did that make you feel?” He asked clearly interested in hearing more.

“It made me realize that it was an archetype for ... myself.” She answered now beginning to wipe away the tears.

“Very good Margaret.” He replied. “So, as you can see, this was your Tessera, not just Tessera itself.”

“I don’t think I’m following you.” She responded confused.

“As you now know, the tree is an archetype of yourself. But so is Tessera. They are one and the same. The entire experience you had, the good with the bad, was all a great big reflection of what you’ve come to accept as your true self. However, Tessera has been proven to be universal too which, is something far greater than any single experience we may have. In other words, there is also one true Tessera beyond the one that is an expression solely of you. This is why Tessera is different for everyone, but also the same. Simply because your thoughts, feelings, and emotional expressions, will continually change and transform your version of Tessera. It’s like applying your own etheric footprint. This is why we call Tessera, Our Tessera. It’s not just a singular gesture or impression of self. It’s also universal, as well as communally accepted as something in which everyone has the capacity to experience together.”

Margaret’s mind began to unravel. But in a good way.

As the two sat with each other going over the details of her experiences, she shared when she told Tom that she realized there was no key. For some reason it all made sense in that moment. She didn’t realize yet that Dr. Vassar had actually offered her the cloth opposite the diamond, but she knew instinctively that there was something beyond her illusion of the key. This proved to her that the key was something more
than what she was able to see within that moment. So, if she were to deny herself her own reflection, like the mirror was with the key, then maybe she’d see what the mirror was seeing and gain its clarity. That’s when she knew to walk backwards through it.

“When I did it at the time, it made sense.” She said reminiscing over the moment.

“It was like revisiting a place in a dream you’ve never actually been. But now, the more I think about it, it’s almost absurd to think there’s any logic behind walking backwards through a mirror.”

“But there is.” Dr. Vassar replied.

“You see; a mirror can be a reflection of our inner selves. Just as it was for you during this entire process. But what we see within that reflection can be distorted by what the mind tells itself it thinks it’s seeing. So when you looked into the mirror and didn’t see the key, it was like an object that wouldn’t cast a shadow when the eyes can clearly see the sun. Just like the diamond in the statue of Pan. You can see it as if it’s there, but with all your heart, you know it’s not. Eventually your brain catches up with the facts, and is willing to accept what it sees, or cannot see, as truth. So, although you didn’t know you had actually chosen the cloth at the time, it didn’t matter. You inherently made a choice regardless of that vision or lack thereof. And that choice, was to stop time, then reverse the experience, until it all made sense.”

“So what you’re saying, is that because the mirror didn’t cast the reflection of the key, or the cloth I should say, it’s because it was the only thing in the room that was real?”

“Exactly Margaret.” DR. Vassar replied enthusiastically.

“I know it sounds confusing, but your higher-self got it. It realized that if you were to deny the mirror a reflection, then you’d become the reflection itself. Hence, this is why
you chose to walk backward through it. You knew that by doing so, you would be returning home by taking the same path that you felt got you there.”

Margaret got up and walked over towards the bookshelf and stood in front of the box with the cloth. After a moment, she looked out of the window in deep contemplation then spoke.

“There’s something else about the mirror. Something that doesn’t make sense.” She said.

“What’s that?” Dr. Vassar asked.

“When I returned, I mean, after I walked backwards through it, I then found myself back in the same room. This was before my final arrival that led me to here, now.”

“Go on.” Dr. Vassar said eagerly.

“Well, as I was standing there, my back was towards the mirror. I then turned around and looked into the mirror once more. At first I thought I would see you, or, the other you with Tom. But instead, I saw my reflection. And, my reflection was ...., it wasn’t me.” She said as her lips began to tremble.

“What did you see Margaret? What was in the mirror?”

“It was a little girl. Not myself as a little girl, but someone else. And she had the cloth hanging out of her right pocket.”

“And you touched it.” He replied without skipping a beat.

“Yes.” She responded. “How did you ...”

“Like I said Margaret, although we all share intimate parts of ourselves with Tessera, they are also universally shared with each other. The cloth is no exception. And, I’m
sure you already know this deep in your psyche, but there’s a story behind the cloth that involves that little girl.”

Dr. Vassar walked back over towards the bookshelf. He then reached for something just to the left of the box with the cloth. As he pulled out the neatly stapled folder, he spoke.

“Several years ago an archeologist made a very rare find. It was a very deep well located in the middle of the desert. It was far deeper and older than the technology was able to drill at the time. Within this location, was rich flourishing vegetation.”

“Like Tessera.” Margaret interrupted.

“Yes.” Dr. Vassar replied. “The point Margaret, is that there is a story behind this well that involves the cloth. It is a story backed by impossible science and how something so fragile could remain intact for over two thousand years.”

Margaret's mouth opened wide.

“You mean the cloth is over two thousand years old?” She asked shocked.

“Yes, and no.” Dr. Vassar replied.

“The point, is that everyone who has ever touched this cloth or witnessed the story behind it, has felt the true power of its embrace. Just like your experience with it and the little girl. This is why I have so many artifacts around my home. You see, they are all archetypes of Tessera. Even the cloth in the box right before you. It’s from a blanket my mother made for me as a child. But what’s important, is that it represents the non-physical version of the cloth that Tessera has shared through its lessons and experiences. Like I told you before, this cloth is a remnant that directly links my
experiences of this world, with the experiences of the world of my Tessera. And now, it has extended itself beyond me, and to you.”

Dr. Vassar’s words seemed almost impossible to comprehend. But if it were not for her experience touching the cloth while standing in front of the mirror, then winding up right back here, she wouldn’t have believed any of it.

“So let me get this straight.” She said. “What I saw when touching the cloth was another world. Or, Tessera. Is that correct?”

‘No Margaret, what I’m saying, is that when you touched the cloth, you were already there.’”

She let out a deep sigh as she played with these new lessons within her mind. That same voice that she found during her reflection period within the mirror, was torturing her to deny it all. And, she was barely able to keep it at bay.

“I just ..., I just can’t believe all of this. There’s so much.” She said as she exhaled deeply again.

“I know, trust me, I know. But the more you experience and build Tessera, the more you’ll understand it.”

“Wait, build Tessera?” She instantly sat erect as if trying to hear better by these last words.

“Yes, build Tessera. That’s what this is all about. You should realize that by now. These aren’t just stories Margaret, they’re instructions.”

Her mind was now racing as she saw images of the tree, the waterfall, and the house embedded within the wall. They all came rushing back as if she were there within this very moment.
“I thought these were just, a series of experiences.” She said swallowing hard.

“No Margaret, this is much greater than that.” Dr. Vassar replied.

“I cannot imagine how I would build such a place on my own.” She said unsure of herself. “And even if I did, what is the result, or purpose of doing such a thing?”

Dr. Vassar sat back into his chair and smiled. He then scanned the room, and finally laid his eyes upon Margaret’s.

“My dear friend, you think what you’ve just experienced was farfetched. But boy oh boy, you have no idea what’s in store for you.” He said now almost laughing.

“You see Margaret; we all work to better ourselves. In life, in our relationships, and with our finances. It’s almost cliché to use words such as these. But the even greater problem, is when we focus upon ourselves and our betterment, the focus turns deeply inward. This is why we struggle so much. Simply because the more we try to work on ourselves, the more of a task it becomes. Do you understand what I’m saying so far?”

“Yes, more than you know.” She replied firmly relating to him. “This is what Tessera has already shown me through my anger and self-loathing apparently. I just wanted it all to stop, but by doing so, I found myself in a never ending cycle of searching for answers. As this continued, I became more and more aware of that suffering, then finally became it. That is until ...”

“Until you realized what the key truly was.” He interrupted.

“Yes.” She answered as she dropped her head into her hands. “Yes...that’s when I realized that the key was actually the cloth.”
“Listen Margaret, it’s easy to blame others. It’s even easier to blame ourselves. But there is a better way. The way Tessera shows us is simply this; The true path to enlightenment, or clarity for that matter, is to be connected with everything around you. And, when you create a world that is built directly by the source of that connection, the self has no choice but to become a part of it. So, whatever makes you suffer, lack, or feel less than, will be discarded during the process of creating your Tessera. This is typically the opposite of what we have been taught by our peers.”

Dr. Vassar then got to his feet, pulled the key out from underneath his shirt, and opened the cabinet on the bottom right of the bookshelf one final time. He then removed a familiar looking book and handed it to Margaret.

“Here, if you are going to build your own Tessera, you’re going to need some instructions.”

A smile ran across her face as she read the book’s title. The Jewel of Pandean by Michael Vassar.

Her eyes then welled up with tears as she placed her hand upon its cover. Instantly, it felt like an old friend.

“See Margaret.” Dr. Vassar said as he tucked the key back underneath his shirt.

“It seems you chose the diamond after all....”
A Message From Adam

Uncharted is an experience that ties in many of the Tessera Method stories and ideologies. Also, each chapter (beginning with Chapter Six) include two special audios. A 20 minute Orchestral Atmospheric which, is to be used as a reflection tool for each chapter, and a 60 minute Tonal Atmospheric. (In some cases these audios may be replaced by a shorter and/or orchestral score.) This audio is to be used (safely) for deep contemplation, applying the Second Sleep technique, for sleep itself, or deep meditation.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me directly at mosaicadam@gmail.com

Warmly,

Adam King
The Tessera Method

For more of Adam’s work, please visit http://innereden.com and signup for his newsletter.