

August 3, 2002

The day after the meeting with Charon was of a decidedly different tenor. I had arisen early that Saturday, up with the sun as it rose over the San Gabriel Mountains flanking the eastern side of the San Fernando Valley and that would turn Stony Point bright with brilliantly glittering hues later, at mid-day, a significant contrast to the gray pall cast over it by the fog in the early hours.

My leg was hurting, the remnants of an accident the week before, sustained while climbing on my mountain. Fortunately, the pain of a pulled muscle had reduced to the discomfort of a feeling of soreness. I would continually massage the leg as I climbed that Saturday.

I arrived at the mountain at about 7:00 AM, found a seat and centered myself, called my energy to me and began my mental exercises. I started with reflection on the events of the day before, the episode that had transpired in the parking lot outside my place of business. My exploration of these fresh memories didn't proceed very far as my attention was engaged by the sight of a very large bird flying down out of the southwest. Large birds are not an infrequent sight around Stony Point. Many families of hawks and owls make their homes in the abundant rocks of the area and residents are used to seeing them, especially the hawks as they soar and circle majestically throughout the day. But this bird was no local fixture. As it drew nearer, its form and appearance made that all too apparent.

It was a harpy, straight out of Greek mythology, where they are generally portrayed as filthy, rather raggedy entities with the head of a woman and the bodies and limbs of birds. I had encountered these creatures before, such as in my vision of the trip to the underworld. Very similar to that one, the present apparition exuded hatred and anger, droplets fell from her blood soaked mouth and although these things were usually spoken of in stories as stealing food from people, there could be no doubt what this one had been feeding on or that her hunger had not been curbed.

I tried to leap up and try for the safety of one of the caves or indentations between rocks, but she was moving at far too great a rate for that. She swooped down and had a grip on me before I could even move. Her razor sharp talons penetrated my flesh, tearing out great chunks, fountains of blood gushing forth from my innards and drenching the rocks beneath me. The life force was flowing out of my body just as rapidly and I could actually feel myself dying.

Unexpectedly she released me and flew back up in the air in a maneuver that would have been sublimely graceful for a less hideous aerial being. I could see her circle around for another attack. I tried to scramble down the moss-covered rocks, covered in blood and wracked with pain. My goal was to reach the bottom of the ledge on which I had been perched. As I moved feebly, I caught the rays of the morning sun full in the face, their brightness temporarily rendering me unable to see. While my eyes came back into focus, I stood up to facilitate my reaching the ledge floor. But as a lightning bolt, she collided with me again.

This time the target of her unimaginably powerful claws was my head, her talons piercing my skull and entering my brain. A cascade of blood coursed down my face then down over my torso, becoming a raging torrent flowing over the land, flooding everything before, behind, and around it.

It was impossible to get this thing off of me. My head virtually exploded as the skin was torn away from the skull. Again, she let go and I was momentarily free from her infernal grip. I desperately wanted to run, but where? What remained of my consciousness loosed itself from me and I felt the last dregs of life ooze from me. Then all was darkness.

I awakened drenched in perspiration and totally exhausted. For a brief moment my mind was clear of what had just transpired, then it came crashing down on me. The harpy, the blood, the gaping wounds, the terror. I screamed then turned to examine the physical results of her unprovoked aggression. They were nowhere to be seen.

By this time morning was giving way to afternoon and the memory of the episode replaced with things more tangible. Once again, it would be up to me to investigate what had happened and piece together a story, moral, or other meaning from the experience.

The walk down the mountain was slower than the climb up and was accompanied by marked dizziness. Still unable to shake the full effects of the vision, I carefully scrutinized all possible approaches for the harpy as I made my way down the rocky cliffs. She may have been gone and the wounds may have been strictly metaphysical, but by very virtue of that last fact, my soul felt torn asunder and bleeding still.

The contrast between the events of Friday and Saturday was as obvious as it was disturbing. Yesterday's companying with Charon had helped alleviate my absorption with self but I had also felt that by leaving me alone on that desert planet, he had abandoned me to vastness.

I still hadn't been able to determine the symbolism of the sojourners over the planet's surface or my unsuccessful attempt to establish communication with them. I was completely in the dark as to who they had been and how they had related, if at all, to the conversation Charon and I had had. Nor did I know why Charon had not remained with me.

Consequently, I had sought out the mountain today of my own volition, rather than feeling drawn there, which perhaps had initiated the battle against the demented mythological beast. There must be a connecting link, but I was unable to find it, or recognize it if it were there. I could not shrug this one off; it was going to have to be squarely faced and dealt with in an honest, forthright manner. Whatever the lesson was to be learned, I had to discover it and make it mine.

On Friday, I had indulged myself complaining to Charon, bitching about my personal circumstances, adding insult to injury by over-intellectualizing my emotions and, quite frankly,

Hoping to manipulate my spiritual guide as to his reaction. His response was to brush aside my pontifications and transport me to a place where I had to stand alone then return with an absolutely blank sheet in regards to understanding the implications of the episode.

As my thoughts continued down this track, the desert landscape asserted itself in my memory, placing me back in that current of energy, feelings and all. I felt an instantaneous connection with it all once again, wanting to join those wondrous souls who still eluded my contact.

The harpy, for her part, had forbidden me to play fast and loose with my intellectualizing and she certainly did not provide any opportunity to manipulate the circumstances. Her strong talons had literally ripped away the façade of intellect and, because of the unspeakable pain, I was unable to do naught but feel my way through the experience. Emotion was all I had to go on, rational logic had been out of the question. Who can think clearly when their skull is being caved in?

My soul remained open and bleeding until day's end. I had bouts of uncontrollable weeping.

The harpy had been sent to make certain that the pain I felt was a perfect representation of the great longing of my mind of which I had spoken to Charon.