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The Tambolian Paradox

Book One

The Voyage of the Dream Maker

An Original Manuscript

by

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Acknowledgement

The insight tests and other meditational practices are based on personal experience and lineage traditions. The scientific details are contemporary, though the applications can be controversial. The Tambolian Paradox is not AI-generated.

Dedication

Maria Moskina
To those who know and know they know
A Tamboilan Map Master
Pilgrim Wanderers
Teacher Friends
Mystic Hermits
and
Shaman Healers

Odd Bits of Stuff

Most people wonder if Tambolia exists. It might be better to think, given all the time the universe has had to establish something like a Galactic Library, why wouldn't it exist? Of course, access is the key and the most challenging part. The Galactic Library has two initial conditions: one is the Mark of Emptiness; the other is Self-Secret. Once you understand these conditions, you can enter this library.

The science

The science and scientific ideas in the Tambolian Paradox are contemporary, though clearly fringe and controversial, and sometimes prove to be true. All the yoga and meditational practices described are authentic and have lineage from traditional Buddhist Masters. Applying these practices is also conventional, although there are numerous ways to utilize them, some of which are more controversial than others. You will be mostly disappointed if you think you can be taught these practices at contemporary meditation centers. If you think you can do these practices without getting into at least as much trouble as the people in this book, good luck!

All the people portrayed in this narrative are mythical, as we all are to some extent. Some of the information in this narrative makes consummate good sense. Also, speaking mind to mind is mentioned. The Lamas called this upstairs telephone. It is easy to do, and, mysteriously enough, once you figure it out, it becomes a challenge to avoid. What you figure out first is what you are, and then anything extra is someone else's busy noise mind. Roger Sorenson (a mystical character) has often been quoted as saying, "Reading minds is a problem of stupidity management."

Discovering the content-rich information in ancient,

symbolic, and even megalithic structures was neither apparent nor straightforward. Temples, Mandalas, Yantras, Stupas, Statues, Celestial Mansions, Lineage visualizations, the hidden lines of Tibetan Cosmology, and other esoteric artifacts. According to Dr. Solt from Harvard University's School of Japanese Studies, this could only have been done under these specific conditions. First, one needs a technical background in physics and mathematics to understand the mathematical arrangement of the various ancient symbolic components. Second, have lineage access to these ancient esoteric pictographs and meditation techniques.

Esoteric and Symbolic Architectures have endured for thousands of years, establishing their durability and confidence in their sustainability. Noting that the information is content-rich, accessible, and culturally neutral is convenient. Deciding that all this information is obvious is not obvious and has been overlooked in contemporary times for obscure reasons. If the symbolism seems ambiguous, you might appreciate our ancient ancestors' ingenuity in the original allegorical organization and Mapping Strategies for Sustainable Decision-Making.

The Silent Hand

There is no time, place, or culture that does not have a story about the Silent Hand. Martial Arts may be the most apparent contemporary application of the Silent Hand. The Silent Hand tells us the truth – relentlessly, especially when we least expect it.

The Greek letter Ψ

The Greek letter Psi was added to the Phoenician alphabet by about 800 BC, but we intend to use it symbolically as a pictogram. It includes an (I) in an invested emotional sense

and a shadowed (I) as a ‘one’ that represents the unity of awareness, a (Y) as an acronym for the question of why, and a chalice that represents the feminine quality of partnership equanimity, our only hope to save humanity from itself, and finally a stylized trident, a Tantric symbol for mystical insight. The Bodhicariyans wear this symbol somewhere on their body, not as a talisman but possibly as a provocative visualization.

The Bodhicariyan Dilemma

The Sanskrit words Bodhi, meaning enlightened wisdom, and Cariya, meaning reasonable action, are used as criteria to encourage people who have decided to become Bodhicariyan to remember that women and children are not the problem. In times of absolute despotism, those who have the ability to act must also bear the responsibility to act, regardless of the consequences. Unfortunately, the patriarchal delusions we currently suffer from mandate that men kill anyone who criticizes or disagrees with them. So, how do you explain to delusional men that they are delusional, without being martyred, a serious problem?

The Tambolian Book of Deeds

At the beginning of each chapter, there is a quote from the Tambolian Book of Deeds. Yamantaka, the enigmatic guardian of Tambolia, proposed them, saying this was a very naughty thing to do. When asked to explain, he said, “In journalism, it is said that if two people know something, it is not a secret. In mystical traditions, it is said that if one person knows something, it is not a secret. What the Tambolian Book of Deeds explains is that everything essential to the human condition is still secret.

The Story Tellers

The Paleolithic period was before writing and the pyramids, before hieroglyphs and petroglyphs, before settlements and politics; it was a time when storytellers and secret dances wondered about what we were and what we knew. The campfire was the stage, the ceiling of stars, the theater. The old and ancient ones were trusted and believed because they were the custodians of the memories. There were many memories about being here. How to be safe? How to be a good person? The strangest and most magical memory was ‘How to get to where you need to be.’ This memory was called the Map, which has had many names throughout the centuries, and has traveled far, perhaps to every possible place.

When we settled into agricultural villages, the storytellers became the Map Masters, Shaman-Healers, the Mystic-Hermits, the Pilgrim-Wanders, the Teacher-Friend, and the memory of the Map persisted. The appeal included masks, tattoos, and secret movements, as well as hand gestures, the rhythm and cadence of the story, spectacle, and drama. Storytime was a time of enchantment and wonder when the children were quiet, the dogs were quiet, the fire was warm, and everyone could hear. There was a mystery, and the mystery was the Map itself.

The most recent version of the Map is still 2500 years old and was hidden in the Mandalas and visualizations of Tibetan Vajrayana practices. It was not translated, nor even appreciated, until 1971, when it was discovered hidden under an altar in an ancient monastery. At that time, an unrecognized, strange, and hidden Mystic Terton stumbled across these ancient teachings and was fascinated. Forty years later, the Map was complete again. The journey was made fresh by adventurous pilgrims searching for the next place, the place they needed to go, a place where the solutions to problems were found, a place not hidden but deeply unnoticed - Tambolia.

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The Voyage
of the
Dream Maker

“Figuring out something has consequences, figuring out something obvious is socially and culturally dangerous, figuring out something essential to the human condition is suicidal...”

From the Tambolian Book of Deeds

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Chapter 1

A Gift from the Ocean

“You came here, you might as well be here.”

From the Tambolian Book of Deeds

I remember the moment clearly when my journey began. I can slip through the rainbow doorway into the distant past. It feels just like falling over the horizon on a comfortable cushion. The day was bright and fresh with early summer warmth. My excitement about the day was just beginning. I could feel it whispering from shadows, bubbling up into my bones and creeping into my mind, like the ocean fog probing around the local islands. But right then, my attention was not on the hilltops and the treetops of our local island, but rather it was on the dinghy far out in the sound, watching a seaman’s silent rowing, dipping, and pulling into the water. I could almost feel the oars pushing on deep mysteries that the oceans hide in their ocean dreams. I could feel in the mist that a compelling mystery was about to enter my life.

I watched the distant rower coming closer to the marina.

I looked down and saw my own hands. They were small, smooth, and a little dirty. They held onto the tricycle handlebars with confidence and control. I was the town warrior and explorer. As in me and my hands and feet and all the rest of me, we knew the fishing village of Palmer-by-the-Sea, as well as most kids, know their own refrigerator. I was born here. Every street, bump, hiding place, and viewing place was mine, free for the taking. Even though I was only seven, the streets were my yard, and every house was a place to wheedle someone out of a cookie, play with a cat or dog, or sit under a

tree. The town was my family, and my family was my friends.

Most of the town was related to me in one way or another, as my great-great-grandfather had founded this small fishing village. His name wasn't Palmer; it was Vladimir Illich Gorsky. He left Mother Russia about the same time as the California gold rush, but never made it that far. He wound up in the San Juan Islands in the Strait of Juan de Fuca, which is about as close to Vancouver Island, Canada, as you can get and still be a yank.

My distant grandfather seemed to me to be a marvelous character. He crewed on a steamer out of Vladivostok but jumped ship in Vancouver. He built a boat, started fishing, got lost in the fog, and came ashore in this little bay. He thought he was still in Canada. He had time on his hands, so he built a cabin and lived there until the end of his days. After the family had grown up some, they asked him to name the place. He thought Gorskyville was nice, or that even St. Gorsky would be good, expecting there was probably some Eastern Orthodox Saint by that name, but no one else thought either name would work. In a full-blown huff, he finally offered, "Why don't you name it after Palmer?" She was a scrawny mongrel pup that almost fit in the palm of his hand. He had found her wandering around the marina in Friday Harbor on a particularly nasty winter day. Somehow, the name got stretched a bit to Palmer-by-the-Sea and caught on.

As I watched the man rowing the boat into the marina, I could see he was a seaman of ancient traditions. He never looked back. It was as if he had memorized everywhere he had ever been. He was maneuvering around the islands and harbor in a waking vision where his eyes could see in all directions. The outcropping and currents seemed to be in constant communication with him. He rowed straight to the dock, rested the oars on a cleat, and climbed out easily. He tied up,

fore and aft, as casually as if he were tying his shoes. I could see the planks under his boots give way slightly, enduring the weight of his resolve to end his journey here.

By the sound of his steps, I knew, with some ancient part of my mind, that his journey was no ordinary one. He was full of mindfulness, a quality that only people who live near the deep ocean or in distant mountains are said to possess. They seem to have misplaced their ordinary selves. He was as fresh and alert as a sea captain who guides his ship by smells and shifting currents. Yet he was also steady as the west wind that blows the ship to mysterious ancient islands where dreams have no end. He was silent, clear, and as solid as the breakwater wall. He was completely present. At the time, I didn't know what that meant. What he mostly looked like was a mystery that had come into my life.

Some of the old duffers, Boris, Ivan, and old Igor, were on the dock watching him, too. I could see they had stopped talking to one another until old Igor pulled his 'homemade' cigarette out of his mouth because it started to burn his lips. He constantly cursed when that happened, which was often enough. It was almost like someone had thrown the switch that kept them all turned off. That was until old Igor started cussing.

The seaman turned around and looked at the duffers until their faces started to sag a bit, and old Igor began to burn a hole in his pants with what was left of his cigarette. The seaman didn't say a word.

Finally, Boris managed to stammer, "You look just like Misha Gorsky!"

The seaman just stood there and kept looking at them as if something was mildly humorous.

Ivan added, "Yep, you do! Older though. Are ya, Misha?"

He nodded with a fisherman's 'yes' that looks more like a

shrug to the tourists, and he replied in a clear and lazy way, “Ivan, I think you’ve been sit’en in the sun too long.”

Old Igor, clearly not wanting to believe what he was seeing, added pensively, “We buried you, oh, I’d say fifteen years ago or so; nice funeral, lots of flowers.”

Boris didn’t like being left out of the conversation, so he thought to add, “You were lost at sea in that bad storm in the winter of ‘41. At least, I think that’s when it was.”

“Nineteen-fourth,” interrupted Ivan, “You were never good with numbers.”

“We looked fer ya for days. Didn’t find even a loose knot,” added old Igor, rubbing out his smoking pants.

Misha just stood there listening; the humor of it all finally seemed to get to a word. I suspect that the old duffers would have gone on talking to themselves, trying to figure something out that was as far beyond them as the beginning of time, when Misha just said, “Yep.”

“Yep, what? Are you really, Misha?” asked Ivan.

“Yep, I’m as him as I can be,” Misha stated softly.

Now, it might seem strange that I should know what was happening so clearly at the age of seven. It will become evident by the time you get to the end of my story. The town was a little one, the day was quiet, I was a warrior, and it was my job to notice what was going on around Palmer-by-the-Sea. I spent long summer days looking for secret tunnels and hidden pathways where pirates could sneak into town for plunder. I suspected there was a secret landing place for flying saucers. This is scary to those who didn’t know about UFOs, which I and everybody else had recently read. I was never quick enough to catch one. Everyone seemed to think it was pretty bad to lure people into their spaceships.

I might have been picked up and had my brain worked on because I could see into people’s minds quite clearly, as

I suspected the Venusians were able to do. I knew what most folks were thinking and what they were hiding. It seemed that everybody kept quiet about such things, so I did as well. This was one of those times when I looked into the seaman's mind and saw him looking at the duffers as if they were rusty bolts on a broken pylon, too useless to even tie a crab pot onto. He just kept smiling and wondering; he mostly felt glad to be back.

“Well, I’ll be darned,” stammered old Igor.

“I wonder who’s going to have to scratch the date of’en that stone we planted on ya,” said Boris.

“Maybe we have been sitting in the sun too long,” said Ivan, thinking more than was probably good for him.

“Yep,” said Misha, thinking the statement wasn’t supposed to be taken literally, instead expecting the sun had probably roasted something important in these people’s brains. Smiling at himself, he turned and wandered up the marina.

He was coming straight for me, and I could see him walking in an easy, familiar stride. He was tall, although that wasn’t saying much because, at my age, everyone was tall. His face was clean-looking and kind, in a distant sort of way. His face looked as if he focused on the horizon between here and there, where nothing was hidden. It was a face you wanted to be happy around. As he passed me by, he gave me a wink and nodded his head. It was a hello that said, “This is a pretty funny place, don’t you agree?” I followed him up the street into Sally’s Restaurant. I stood by the door to watch him.

After a while, the duffers managed to break their hold on the bench and eventually followed Misha to Sally’s famous greasy spoon.

“Gracious be to Golly,” yelled Sally from behind the counter. She was about the size of the counter, and her voice could shatter glass. As far as I was concerned, she was the best

cook in the universe and as kind as summer.

Everyone first looked at her and then at who she was looking at, and I knew that anyone with food in their mouth would have trouble swallowing it.

“It’s Misha! By the Gods in heaven, you’re back. Come over here and sit down.” Sally hustled over and picked up a glass of water and the silverware of an island visitor who was sitting in Misha’s usual place and said, “How about moving over there if you would? This is Misha’s favorite spot. Thank you. Hot dang, it’s good to see you. I need some coffee and a waffle with two eggs over medium. It’s good to see you back.”

“No coffee,” said Misha, “but the waffles and eggs will do just fine. Been thinking about your waffles since, well, maybe forever.”

“I can’t believe it’s you. You haven’t changed a bit. You’d charm a girl right out of her pigtails,” she said, laughing with a kind of high-volume cackle that was known from here to downtown Vancouver. She turned and headed for the kitchen and looked at him like she missed him more than most. The waffles came soon enough. I don’t think anyone had a bite except for a few tourists who hadn’t a clue about what was going on.

The word got out right fast because Sally filled up with relatives and friends quicker than Sunday after church. There were all sorts of questions. Misha just sat there eating his waffle like he was in the middle of a desert, and this was his last meal before he was sent off to the next world. Since they couldn’t get anything out of him, they started asking each other questions. The duffers added what little they thought they knew.

“He just came in, in that old skiff of his, smooth as silk and silent as a shadow. It was as though the fog just spat him out, except there was no fog as far as I could see,” said old Igor,

building on the story.

“He looks older, but that skiff of his looks like it just came out of the showroom, like it always did,” said Boris, in awe and a little concerned. I think that moment was as close as Boris’s getting to wondering about anything in his whole life.

“You would think that he just rowed out this morning for a little ‘look-see,’ came back, and thought nothing about being gone for fifteen years or so,” said Ivan, getting more attention than he had for years and liking it.

About this time, Marcus Gorsky, Misha’s son, came in, still wiping the grease off his hands from working on his boat, which he had to do most days. When he saw his father, tears welled up in his eyes from pure happiness. He didn’t say anything. He just came over and sat next to Misha, watching him while he finished his waffle. They were a lot alike.

“Good to see you, son; you look like you’ve done well,” said Misha.

“Yep, pretty good, I guess,” said Marcus, about as happy as he had been for a long time.

Now, small fishing towns may be different from most places. All the local people stood there, tearful, and let out a sigh of relief. You might have thought that everyone was sharing the same breakfast. Even though Sally’s was full of relatives and friends, they all stayed respectful and patient. Perhaps the uncertainty of working on the ocean, which comes with being a fishing family, affects people.

“How ya been?” Marcus finally asked.

“Good,” said Misha, but his answer seemed to come from far away.

I felt Misha’s answer go deeply into my heart or soul or whatever it is that understands what is inherently right, although it wasn’t enough for most of the folks. When they finally got a chance, questions and comments started to come

from everywhere.

“Where ya been?” came from someone near the door.

“Good to see you back,” someone said from behind the counter.

“You still owe me twenty bucks.” This got everyone laughing, and things got pretty silly.

“Your kids have been behaving better since you’ve been gone,” someone else yelled.

“Fishing’s been better too, and so on...

After a while, Marcus said, a little concerned, “Well, maybe we had better take you back up to the house. You can see Edna, but I don’t know where we’re going to put ya?”

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Chapter 2

New Friends

“It is easy to accept the inevitable.”

From the Tambolian Book of Deeds

I decided to make my move and scrambled between some folks’ legs to get a better look. Suddenly, Misha was looking at me, and I couldn’t get away, and it seemed like the talking had died down as well.

“Who’s my new friend?” asked Misha.

“This is Shiloh, Janet, and Gilbert’s boy. He’s your grandson,” said Marcus with a kind of backdoor sound in his voice.

Misha squatted down and looked me straight in the eyes. “Just the person I came to see,” he said, and I felt like my world shifted around some hidden corner. No one seemed to have heard him except me. It seemed like a curious statement, though everyone continued as if nothing had been said.

“You might as well come along with us now that you’re here,” said Marcus, looking at me as he started out the door. Misha took my hand as if it always belonged there, and we followed Marcus into the street. All the folks just stood back and let us go without a word as we left; their talk picked up quickly. They sounded as if they had just found out there was a Santa Claus, after all.

As we walked up to Marcus’s house, I got to thinking about how things were. I know I said that I was a warrior and explorer, but mostly, I was a kid who grew up alone. There were several kids, a bit older than me, who didn’t think much of me, and some new ones had arrived from time to time.

Mainly, I was in the middle and left alone, which seemed just right as rain to me. However, I didn't have anyone to talk to because my mom was mostly absent; even when she was around, she wasn't really there. I don't think Palmer-by-the-Sea was the place she felt she belonged.

She married my dad while on vacation one summer. She thought it was a good place to run away to, "Gettin' away from my stupid family," she said.

My father died in a fishing accident before I was born, and my mom just got left here. She seemed to be constantly busy, often somewhere else. Folks here didn't talk to her much either. Someone said she liked men, whatever that meant. I never saw any of them. When she was nice to me, I really liked it. She wasn't much of a cook. Marcus once said that flies wouldn't land on her spaghetti sauce, and I thought the same. Occasionally, when she put her mind to it, she could make some great cinnamon rolls.

I never thought about how she worked to put food on the table, which she usually didn't. I often stopped for food at various points along a well-traveled route that took me to all the most exciting places in this little village. Sally was good for a milkshake a couple of times a week. I hit up Aunt Edna for breakfast most mornings because Mom slept in.

Going up the path, I saw Marcus's wife, Aunt Edna, standing on the porch with a smile on her face that would have melted a block of ice a block away. She was hugging and crying over Misha until I thought they might fall to the ground.

"Come along in; you look so good I hardly know what to do," said Edna as she wiped her hands on her apron and started up the porch stairs into the house.

Everyone wound up in the kitchen, sitting around the table, with me sitting on the side by the stove. It was warm, and something was cooking in it. There was a living room in the

place, but I'd never been in it.

"What happened to you all these years?" blurted out Marcus, his concern about his father finally overcoming his patience.

Misha sat back in his chair, put his arms behind his head, and looked around the kitchen. "This is one great kitchen."

See, you've changed the cabinets around, put a paint job on her, and converted the wood burner to propane gas; that's probably a good idea. It looks like you do good work."

Marcus and Edna were kind yet a bit anxious. I liked the way Misha was enjoying where he was and taking things at a slow pace. I even found myself looking around the kitchen and thinking what a lovely place it was, too, especially when Edna put out some food.

"Well, you deserve an answer," started Misha, and then he stopped for quite a while. It seemed as though he was trying to make sense of what had happened. "I know when I went out, the weather was getting bad, yet I needed to go. It seemed like something was calling me, or maybe something else was pushing me. Anyway, I went out, and sure enough, the weather got pretty bad. The boat was doing fine, and I liked the storm in many different ways. There's a way a massive storm has a way of getting your attention. I wasn't trying to get back in. I thought storms were like big, angry ideas that blew you about and rained in your face. Maybe it was nature's way of reminding us we were not alone. Suddenly, a calm spot appeared on the water, where the sun was shining. I rowed over and settled down right in the middle of it.

Now comes the bizarre part. It seemed that I was somewhere else; it was a different ocean in another place, maybe even at another time. What was interesting was how excited I was about being there. For a moment, I thought I had died, yet that didn't seem right. Then I thought that maybe this is why I had

come out into the storm. So, I waited to see what would happen next. And mostly, nothing happened. After a while, I seemed to come back. The storm had passed, and the water calmed. I suspected I had, somehow, been gone for quite some time. On the way back, I recalled a dream that was like a story.”

As if placing the needle on a well-worn phonograph record, the story began;

Forgetfulness

“There was once a man who forgot about himself. It didn’t seem to bother him much, but it bothered his friends and family. They kept after him to ‘get better,’ but he didn’t know what that meant. So, he climbed into his boat and rowed out into the sea. ‘This is better,’ was all that he could think. He stayed in the ocean and eventually came to an end. He smiled and felt a deep, ‘Thank you.’ He held that vision, and a message was shared with him, mind to mind:

You came from someplace – It’s still there.

When he returned to his friends and family, he was delighted to see them, although they didn’t think he was much better.

As I was listening to Misha tell his story, I watched him. To me, he was the only person in the world. There was more to the story than what he said to his family, and I will get to it soon enough. Nevertheless, when we got to the water part, I thought the house and the kitchen became slightly slouchy. The house started to ripple and shimmer. Marcus and Edna listened, too, but I don’t think they understood the story in the same way I did. I saw their heads nod up and down, yet it seemed they couldn’t figure out what he was telling them. I thought the story made all sorts of sense, especially the mind-to-mind part.

At that moment, Misha looked at me and smiled. In that smile was another story. He didn’t lie to his son and his wife. He didn’t tell them everything he knew about his journey,

either.

“That’s a strange tale, all right,” said Marcus, wondering what to think about his father.

“I have heard of many strange things happening to sailors who go out onto the sea. I never thought something like this would happen to us.”

“What difference does it make anyway?” added Edna, getting up and coming over to the stove. She took out some cornbread muffins and set them on top to cool. “You are back safe and sound. That’s all that matters. You look good and healthy. Maybe the angels took you to heaven for a look-see.”

Marcus smiled and said, somewhat concerned, “Do you remember anything like that?”

“No, nothing like that.”

“I think things are going to be strange enough around here with you just popping out of the sea without me having to introduce you as my dad who went to heaven and you had to come back because you didn’t pass the heaven test – or something,” then Marcus started to laugh.

Edna had been sitting and listening, and I don’t think she thought the idea of failing the heaven test was funny, and I was not so sure she was straightforward with it either. She came back to the stove and unloaded the cornbread into a basket lined with a towel to keep the muffins warm, except for the one she handed to me.

She looked concerned, then said to Marcus, “Where will we put Misha?”

Marcus looked at Misha, maybe more concerned than Edna. “I know, Dad, this is your house, and we have filled it up with ourselves. You don’t know about the twins Peter and Natasha; they’re fourteen. Gilbert was fifteen when you disappeared. Gilbert married Janet in the summer of ’46, but he died a couple of years later, caught in a storm. We could

move out if you want.”

“No,” said Misha quickly. “This is your house now. I’m sure I can find something.”

“Gilbert and Janet bought Martin’s old house,” said Marcus with a furrowed brow between his eyes. “He started to renovate it right away. He loved that girl, maybe a little too much; he couldn’t do enough for her. It was a pretty big job renovating that house, and I suspect he wanted a large family. His insurance paid it off, but that left them little else. I try to keep up with it some, but there’s plenty to do. Maybe you could stay there.”

“I don’t think Janet’s going to like the idea much,” said Edna. “She has a mind of her own, and she doesn’t think much about the people around here.”

“What do you think, Shiloh?” asked Marcus.

I was mostly working on my cornbread muffin, and the question caught me off guard. I couldn’t think of a thing to say, and my heart jumped into my throat with hope and excitement, but I managed to spit out, “Sounds good to me,” with an assortment of cornbread crumbs.

“She is probably up by now,” added Edna, not very nicely. “You can go down and talk to her. Perhaps you’d better take some muffins as an offering. You haven’t been doing any fixing-up over there for quite a while.”

“Misha, why don’t you stay here for a bit?” said Marcus, “Three of us might be a little too much. Shiloh and I will try to introduce the idea to her, gentle-like.”

“Sounds good,” said Misha, settling back into his chair as if he had been sitting in it his whole life.

It wasn’t an easy sell for Marcus to convince my mom to let Misha into her house, if I remember correctly. I wish I could remember more, but I was spending a lot of time thinking about how nice it would be to have a friend to talk to. Having

someone else in the house seemed as right as kicking a rock down a path. I was figuring out how I would be as good as I could be, whatever that was, and started cleaning up Misha's new room as soon as I got back from telling him he had a place to stay. As far as I know, Janet never asked me what I thought we might do.

There were a couple of extra bedrooms filled with stuff we picked up along the way. I started to clear out the nicest room and move everything out into the shed when Janet went off to do whatever she did when she was away.

Misha eventually came down and helped me finish the job. He seemed to want the room about the same way I figured to set it up, except for the bookcases, which I didn't know about. It appears that Marcus had kept all of Misha's books. He said they had been lonely since he had been gone, and he had better take the books with him. I thought we moved a whole library into his room. There were large leather-bound books and several editions of what looked like encyclopedias, but weren't. There must have been a mile of textbooks with University-sounding titles. There were the classics, which I recognized yet had not read. I was looking at *The Wind in the Willows* by Kenneth Grahame with greedy fingers, and he gave it to me with a smile. When Janet got back, we had the room set up and the kitchen all spick and span with dinner on the table.

"Looks like you two are getting along like socks and shoes," she said, moving into her seat and settling down for supper.

I recall her trying to be kind, helpful, and even a little bit caring. It was one of the few times I remember being proud of her for knowing just the right thing to do. After that, she seemed comfortable about leaving us mainly to ourselves.

I spent the next three days showing Misha around the

town, ensuring that everyone knew where he was living and how to contact him. Everyone seemed happy to see him back. They also seemed a little uncomfortable with his distant quiet. That's how it seemed to me, anyway. For me, Misha being around and living with us was like sunshine on the beach.

It never occurred to me that he had lived his whole life here except for the last fifteen years. We went to my favorite place last. There was a tree that hung over the water. To get there, you had to scramble down a rather steep rock face. The kids of Palmer-by-the-Sea were always told not to come here because the tide could be treacherous, and it had killed some kids years before. It would have been better if our parents had never told us about it; since then, the cliff has become a magnet for any kid who hears the story. I never thought of Misha as an old guy, either. As I went down the rock face, he was right beside me, grinning like this was summer vacation for him, and this little scramble was the icing on the cake.

“What do you think?” I asked, hopefully.

“Always liked this spot when I was your age,” he remarked as he was settling down into a niche in the rock someone had carved out to make a hermit cave. They stopped when it provided a great seat to look out at the bay.

“There was supposed to have been some kids killed here,” I offered, pushing the extent of my wisdom about the place.

“Yep, supposed to have been, but I believe that any kids that might have been missing from this place were probably missing for reasons other than this place,” said Misha, starting to get into a talking mood.

It took me a moment to digest this last message. I just supposed that every place needed a missing kid story just to keep the rest of us on our toes. I hadn't the foggiest clue that I might be the next missing kid story. While I was thinking and wondering, I slowly fell behind as Misha kept on talking.

“There used to be a rope swing tied to that high branch up there,” he kept on. “It was quite a ride out over the water, but if you didn’t get off soon enough, the swing got slower, and you just kept swaying farther and farther out over the water. Mostly, we kept a long stick over by that rock and a friend you could trust to haul you in if you got stuck.

Once, Sally, the owner of the restaurant, got stuck out there when she was just a youngster. Boy, did she yell? You could have heard her all the way to town. George Martin and I were on the cliff up yonder and came running. We thought an Orca Whale was trying to swallow her, which would have been quite a trick even then. We hauled her in and tried to settle her down. She was crying, and I suspect she felt pretty foolish. We told her this was no place to be without a friend. She said that she didn’t have anyone to come here with her. I felt sad about that. We helped her out over the rock. Don’t think either one of us ever said anything about it to anyone until now.”

“What happened to the rope?”

“Don’t know, but it’s a nervy climb to put another one up there.”

“Yep, there are better climbing trees; any more stories about this place?”

“Yeah, I guess there is another little one that happened when I was just a little older than you are now.”

I know I said that he was in a talking mood, but that didn’t mean he was in a hurry. I watched him sit back into that step in the rock and look out onto the water. I liked watching him watch things. His face just seemed to get involved with what he was seeing. When I turned around to look where he was looking, I never felt I could see things in the same way he did. It didn’t make me feel the same way. After a while, he returned from looking out at the bay and began this story.

“I was climbing down that same rock, and I slipped. I could

feel myself going and couldn't seem to do much about it. Then I hit my elbow on something. You know how you can hit a nerve, and it can hurt like it was broken. I can remember the feeling in my arm even now. Well, I flipped over, and I must have hit my head on something because the pain in my arm went away, and things didn't seem to matter much, yet I never seemed to lose consciousness in the way you might expect. I landed over there on my butt and got lodged in that little split. I was looking at the tree with the bay stretched out behind like a screen. It must have been foggy because I don't remember seeing Goat Island over there. What was strange was that the tree had taken on a different color and brightness. It was as if it had turned into a golden tree, and it spoke to me something like this, 'That's about the hardest way to get here as you can find.'

I thought that was probably true, yet I couldn't do much about it. I just sat there and looked at the tree. It was the most beautiful thing I had ever seen. I felt a big lump in my heart, as if I were thinking it would burst. I guess people would call it emotions, or love, or something else now. It still felt like my heart was going to break. I can think back now and imagine that this might have been a good time to ask a question; magical trees aren't something that pops up everywhere, but I couldn't think of one at the time. I couldn't think of anything except how beautiful it was. Eventually, my arm started to hurt again, and the tree remained the same as it had been. I've always enjoyed coming here; I've always felt at ease being here. It seemed like a place to be good in."

"This has always been my favorite place," I said. "But I never had anything like that happen to me."

"Maybe things seem unusual after they are experienced, or possibly how you tell the story, or even how you live the story, could be lots of things."

“Grandpa,” I guess the way I said it caused him to turn around and take special notice of me, expecting me to bring up some critical subject I’d been working on, which was true enough.

“When I first saw you, you said that – ‘I was just the person you came to see.’ It didn’t seem that anyone had heard you except for me or thought it was unusual, anyway; what did you mean by it?”

“I said it to get your attention.”

“Well. I guess you did,” I said, “Can’t seem to get it out of my mind.”

“We’ve got a journey to make together, although there is plenty of time, and this is not the time to hurry things along.”

“A journey? Wow!” I was very excited and right away started to imagine where we might go. “Are we going back to where you disappeared to?”

Misha seemed to sit there even quieter than the moss on the rocks. “What makes you think that?” he finally said.

I wasn’t sure why I thought that. It just seemed like a special place that might be worth visiting. What I said after working on it a bit was, “Some places have to be visited rather than talked about, like this tree. Talking about it isn’t the same as sit’en under it. There is a lot you aren’t saying about where you’ve been, so that it may be something special like that?”

“Well, you’re right, of course, about the place I went to; talking about it would only make it worse. It is better for people to think about what they will do, and organize it in their minds as something weird and unexplainable. If I were to describe what happened to me, then everyone would feel compelled to explain it in some formal or scientific way. It would not only make it more incomprehensible but, even worse, wrong. Don’t worry; we are still going to have plenty of trouble with what people think.”

“I know what you said to Uncle Marcus, and Aunt Edna wasn’t all you knew about what happened out in the middle of Puget Sound. I suspect they know it, too. It seems they are more willing to let it go. I saw something change in you when you were talking about it. You looked like Christmas morning, or like you were at a real surprise party on your birthday. Would you tell me what you saw?”

Misha hadn’t moved and was still looking out into the sound or even further than the sound. I couldn’t tell which it was at the time. I was hoping to learn something that nobody else knew. Then, he finally came to a decision or made a commitment to a previous decision.

“As I said earlier, we are eventually going on an adventure together, probably to Tambolia one way or another. Where we go will depend on many factors that are beyond our control. However, I can share some items with you before we leave that might help you understand the universe a little better. Starting with Tambolia, which is very much like a riddle that I still haven’t figured out. It goes like this,

The Secret Garden

First, you must find a quiet place in your memory. It is located at a time right after you have grown up some and just before you notice you’re somewhere. You’re maybe four or five years old. It is one of the few times in your life when you see forever. I was able to recapture this moment and open the door, stepping through; this is what I saw: I was riding the crest of a gigantic, rolling wave, looking out at a vast range of snow-capped mountain peaks surrounded by oceans upon oceans in every direction. Gray clouds were crouching in the valleys, and storm clouds were everywhere; there was lightning and thunder. My heart froze with the immensity of it all. I was tossed about, bewildered and dazed. There were vast continents with immense wilderness lands that supported

and nurtured large rivers, small rivers, and quiet ponds hidden in inaccessible forests. Large things did not diminish small things but added to the grandeur with subtle caring. I traveled through this vision for an age and a day until I came to an oasis. Within the oasis was a doorway, and on the other side of that doorway was a Garden. I knew I had only perceived a small fraction of what was there. In my bewilderment, I could not see the beginning because it was shrouded in darkness.”

Then he just went quiet.

I don't mind telling you that what Grandpa was telling me was both fantastic and mysterious, and of course, I hadn't a clue about what the riddle might mean or where the beginning might be. I loved every moment of it. I wish the story had gone on much longer. Then I thought about it for a moment and decided that this was just the beginning of what could be a very long and mysterious adventure after all. Telling anyone else about what I had just heard from Grandpa was out of the question because vast parts of me didn't believe it myself.

“Well, what do you think about the adventure now?” Misha asked with an insightfully humorous grin.

I wasn't watching the grin. I was busy working on how small I was, how small Palmer-by-the-Sea was, and how I wasn't warrior enough to plunder anything more threatening than Aunt Edna's cornbread basket. I wasn't ready to go just yet, and it might be just as well if he would help me with my spelling lists and maybe help with dinner from time to time. What I said after a while was, “The world's a pretty big place; maybe we should rest up a bit before we set out?”

Misha huffed a long, lingering laugh, which seemed like a good beginning, and what he said was pure music to my ears: “I suspect we will be more than tired of resting by the time we set out.”

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Chapter 3

The Inner Garden

“Only this The Water Wind Cascading to a hush”

From the Tambolian Book of Deeds

This message was written above the door of the Meditation Chamber of the Inner Garden Sanctuary in the heart of Tambolia. It was written a long time ago, as the Masters would say, a very, very long time ago, as ordinary people would say. It wasn't written in English or any other formal language. It was written before hieroglyphs and petroglyphs were devised. The message might even have been written before we climbed out of the trees on some distant continent. The message was conveyed through symbols translated into rainbow colors, sharing it from mind to mind, if you weren't too busy to listen. At the time of our story, things hadn't changed much in Tambolia.

A man was sitting propped up by the enormous roots of a vast, gnarled Valley Oak tree that had been growing in the inner garden for hundreds of years. Its bark was almost blue-black with age. His head lay back and to the side, his mouth open. He was very pale. His robes and body looked sunken, as if they had been rained on and forgotten.

“If you disturb him now, he will surely die,” said Yamantaka, looking cynically at the shrunken man, almost as if it didn't matter in any ordinary sense.

Nobody knew where Yamantaka had come from, although no one could remember Tambolia without him. No one knew why Yamantaka was so challenging to get along with. It might have been that he wore different-colored socks!

Although I'm sure it went much deeper than that. Yamantaka was the embodiment of doom and difficulty, a harbinger of hindrances. If there was something that could be made more difficult, Yamantaka thought it up. However difficult he got, he always told the truth, though in an obscure metaphysical way, and was never spiteful. Well, almost never. Sometimes, Yamantaka was rather pleasant and helpful, but it was better never to expect it, and you couldn't count on it lasting long.

A young man was with Yamantaka. He was a pilgrim from the city, possibly well-to-do, educated, and sincere, but a visitor nonetheless. He came from the "outside" and was expected to return there. The man nodded his head in wonderment and respect; still, he was concerned, saying,

"He looks as if he is already dead."

"No, not yet," said Yamantaka. "That's Misha; his body is back where he came from, in the little town of Palmer-by-the-Sea. His spirit is here in Tambolia, taking it easy, it looks like to me. He is practicing a deep Bardo Meditation, wandering about Letha, the River of Forgetfulness, wondering if he can cross it without touching it. He has been traveling there for several years now. He has always come back; however, someday, he won't."

The visitor just nodded his head as if the sight of Misha's spirit body was something he expected yet couldn't imagine.

They wandered off into the outer garden, where ordinary chanting is done and simple miracles are witnessed. The visitor turned back for one last look at the inner garden and saw only a simple doorway that shimmered with a rainbow-colored light. Part of him knew he had been someplace special, but it was difficult to touch or even imagine as a shadow of a shadow or wetness of water.

Yamantaka smiled slightly, remembering what he had told Misha only a few months before: "*Everything is everywhere,*

all the time, present, and sometimes you have to be there before you get there,” and sighed. The Bardo practices were ancient, challenging, and unusual rituals related to the transition between life and death. Death, like Tambolia, was somewhat easy to get into; it was getting back that made you interesting.

Yamantaka watched the visitor’s pensive expression, and being a wrathful deity by nature, he decided to stir up this pilgrim in a devious way, “They keep sending me people like you. Therefore, I would like to emphasize that it is the Inner Garden, situated under the trees, where the actual practices unfold. This is where you go to figure it out. Of course, you have a choice to do or not do. All those who have survived the preliminary practices return to the trees. Not the trees you see in your yard, or the trees you see in the park, or any common tree. The trees here are the old ones that grow with care and clarity, and whose roots reach across to the other side. I suppose you are like most people from the city who have forgotten about Tambolia. I will tell you a little bit about it.”

Yamantaka smiled a crooked smile, which the pilgrim misinterpreted as friendly, and then gestured to him to follow. They strolled to a vine-covered bench shaded by a large tree that overlooked the Sanctuary’s vegetable garden and settled in for a talk.

“Tambolia is real, though not in an ordinary sense. Tambolia is real because it is where forgotten things go. Think about it; you put your keys down and wander off to other projects. You’re not thinking about your keys; you already put them somewhere. When you need to use your keys again, you reach for them, but they’re gone! They went to Tambolia. To retrieve them, you must focus and concentrate. Eventually, they come back, but not to the place where you left them, because Tambolia is slippery.

Tambolia itself is a land of compelling insight and patience,

which are unusual qualities for our time. Nevertheless, you occasionally stumble into Tambolia yourself. If you manage to get here with even the slightest glimpse of awareness, you can discover the most amazing treasures. Unfortunately, once you find these treasures, you are only half done with your journey. Getting back requires wisdom, courage, and a tremendous amount of good luck.

Tambolia is not what you might expect. It is convoluted and twists and turns around itself in unexpected ways. You know when you're lost in Tambolia because you know you're gone, yet everyone else still thinks you're somewhere. It is a compelling riddle. When you expect to be free of it, you find yourself in a paradox or, even worse, a koan. A self-referential paradox is the best – *The following statement is true - the preceding statement is false!* This paradox even bothered the Greeks. This is only an example, but there are hundreds of paradoxes as there are hundreds of niches in Tambolia. It's possible to get out. But if you decide to go to Tambolia, take your lunch.

To get into Tambolia, you go through one of the many Tambolian Holes. I can understand why some of you are reluctant to believe in Tambolian Holes, so this is a good time to listen. They were created at the very beginning of time, right after the darkness and just before light. As a result, they have characteristics of both. The characteristics of the darkness are unexpected and unexplained. The characteristics of the light are reproducibility and endurance.

Tambolian Holes are trap doors through levels of awareness. They come in many sizes, shapes, colors, textures, and qualities because there are so many different things to keep separate. Unfortunately, Tambolian Holes are not entirely foolproof. It is the Tambolian Holes that make Tambolia slippery. One Tambolian Hole is forgetfulness, and one of the more slippery

holes at that. If you take a few moments to think about what forgetfulness is, you will remember that forgetfulness is not destroying or eliminating experiences; instead, these experiences are stored away in a special place - Tambolia, to be used again at some future time.

All the Tambolian Holes have names, but again, not in an ordinary sense. Because each hole represents a level of awareness, their names are more like complete abstractions than anything else. All Tambolian holes are excellent doorways.

All possible things are optional. Deciding where you are in a relationship with a Hole usually takes a moment. Determining the name of the Hole sometimes helps. To identify any of the Tambolian Holes, you need to stop your mind and wait. I think of these moments as Mindstoppers. The Mindstoppers that are remembered are accumulated from Tambolian Holes. Other Mindstoppers come from pilgrimages to various places, including some out-of-the-way destinations.

Different people from various cultures and societies have encountered Mindstoppers, but they are often referred to by other names. Mindstoppers and Tambolian Holes are sprinkled everywhere. Don't be confused; if you look, they can be uncovered anywhere. If you come across a hole and discover its name, be sure to write it down as quickly as possible, because they can be challenging to remember. There is another type of Tambolian Hole. It's a Meandering Hole. I can tell you from experience that you do not want one of these things in your life."

The visitor, overwhelmed by such an unexpected explanation, sat dazed and bewildered, eventually getting up and mumbling, "Thank you, Master, for such a helpful explanation. I am honored to be able to listen to your wisdom," and began to move away.

But Yamantaka was in no mood to treat this pilgrim,

however influential, with kid gloves. Besides, it was against his nature. “I suspect listening is something you think you can do. You are a fool of the first order. It is not that you don’t hear the words or even know their meaning. It is the filters you pass them through that distort your hearing. To avoid these filter networks, ask your childlike-quality to listen for you. If you have forgotten your childlike quality, you have no business here. Even if you have forgotten your childlike quality, sit down again anyway. Remember Misha, who was back there under the tree? You were in the presence of a Bodhicariyan. They do not come here often. If you feel a little mystified, take a moment to settle down and relax. If you had a question for him, he would have eventually answered it for you, and you would not even have to open your mouth, which is also a good idea.”

The pilgrim, completely humbled, just sat back and hoped for the best, wondering if he had wandered into someplace far beyond his comprehension. He knew that he had but was somehow consoled by Yamantaka’s words. He knew he was going to stay in the world and take over his father’s business. He also knew that he cared about the mysteries and was encouraged that someone was able to learn, understand, and practice them. He hadn’t the remotest clue that he had just opened the door to one of the most incomprehensible mysteries hiding in the insulated inner spaces of the universe. He, nevertheless, would support Tambolia in whatever way he could. If he ever figured out how to do that!

to be continued...