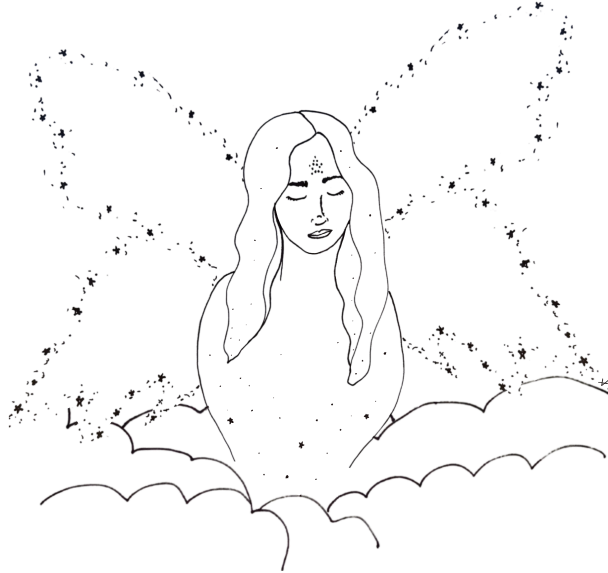


CHAPTER 127

A Castle in the Clouds

The story for the new moon time:
January 11 – January 24



MOON DETAILS:

New Moon
20°44' Capricorn
Jan. 11, 2024
6:57 AM EST

REFLECTION DATES:

March 23, 2023
May 3 – 18, 2023

17 MINUTE READ

The clouds hung low in the sky. So low they filled the air around us and covered the tops of the Pennsylvania mountains.

I could still feel the power pulsing through my body from the full moon the night before, the vision that came after standing in the rain and being encircled by seven feral cats. Their coats thick and shining in the moonlight as they begged for food.

I cooed at them before walking back to the hotel where my husband and I were staying the night.

In room 115, I opened the mini fridge and filled it with remnants of Christmas dinner before crawling into bed.

Cream sheets scratched against my skin as I tried to fall asleep, and in my mind's eye, I saw the black expanse of space. A swath of dark sky wrapped itself around me as rivers of stars began flowing from my back like wings, illuminating the space with light.

Everything is like this. I thought. We see clouds and mountains and cats and cake, but beneath the surface, *It's all starlight.*

I felt like Neo seeing the code in *The Matrix* or Pythagorus realizing "all things are number." And maybe there are numbers beneath the stars, but I wasn't seeing that far, wasn't wired for that. All I could see was light.

It's all starlight, and that's when I realized that even when I'm not explicitly writing about the stars, I am. Because ***it's all starlight.*** The epiphany echoed in my mind as I fell asleep.

Eleven hours later, as I sat in the passenger seat, watching fog enshroud the mountains and rain fall from the sky, I thought, *It's not fog. It's not rain. It's starlight.*

Again, I saw rivers of stars winging from my back. I felt them reaching out beyond me and connecting with all the world. I felt power in that light and thought, *If it's all starlight, maybe I can clear this fog and stop the rain.*

I envisioned the stars twinkling past the walls of the car, encircling the vehicle and placing my husband and me in a protective bubble of starlight. One capable of deflecting all fog and rain and delivering us safely home.

When there wasn't an immediate shift in the weather, I felt silly for my wishful thinking. *That's not how the world works.*

But soon, the fog cleared, and my husband sighed. Admitted how terribly anxious he'd been driving through it.

Now, we just had to contend with the rain. It splashed off the tires of the cars in front of us, and we took a deep breath as we made our way around them. Safely, slowly driving. Soon feeling the relief of sun through the clouds and space between us and the other cars on the road.

I thanked my husband for getting us through that hair-raising stretch and looked at the map on the dash. Just ninety minutes to go. *Almost home.*

Smooth sailing from here.

Then, a sharp stuttering gasp hit my ears. I looked to my left and saw my husband lift his hands off the steering wheel as the car was lifted off the road and the wheel started turning to the right. We spun, we spun, were carried by water through three empty lanes until the car slammed against a stone wall at the edge of the mountain. A strip of black plastic soared in front of us like a bird as we faced oncoming traffic and were whipped back around and shoved off a Jersey barricade before finally coming to a halt at the entrance of exit 13.



Are you okay? Are you okay?

We quickly confirmed that we were both okay, but the car couldn't move. We were stuck. My husband hit the red SOS button above our heads that I'd never even noticed before. Within seconds, the word **StarLink** appeared on the dash and a woman named Rita was on the phone, detecting our exact location with GPS and coordinating emergency assistance.

Our car was turned sideways, blocking the exit completely. I looked out my window and realized that if a car tried to get off, they might not see us in our black car, our lights facing the wrong direction. I imagined a big truck slamming into me, but thankfully, that isn't what happened.

A woman in a sedan pulled onto the exit ramp and came to a stop. Through fogged glass, I pleaded with her to stay where she was, knowing her lights provided a veil of protection. I don't know if she saw me, but I know she turned on her emergency blinkers and stayed right where she was.

A line of cars formed behind her as we waited for the tow truck to arrive.

The volatile spinning from minutes earlier was slowly settling into my body, and in the stillness of waiting, I burst into tears.

A car door opened from three cars back in the exit line. I rolled down my window to see a woman with long red hair and black glasses approaching. When she arrived, I said, *I'm sorry, I'm sorry*, apologizing through tears for blocking the traffic, for being such an inconvenience, for endangering everyone.

Don't be sorry, she said. *I just wanted to make sure you're okay.*

My eyes met hers as I fought back sobs, and she told me, *You're okay. You're okay. Breathe.*

I drew my attention to my breath, encouraged it to move slowly and deeply through my body.

You're okay. You're okay. God's got you.

I nodded yes and thanked her as she walked away. I wondered then if she noticed the peculiar fact that I too had long red hair, black glasses on my face. There was a way in which it felt like an older, wiser, calmer version of myself had come to my aid while another person — a man — knocked on my husband's window to check that he too was okay.

And just a few minutes later, more help had arrived.

Our car was towed, and we were driven to a nearby Super 8 motel. I'd always stuck my nose up at hotels like these, but in that moment, I couldn't have been more grateful for its existence and surprised by how pleasant it was. The concierge gave us a free room — refusing any payment — while we waited for my sister-in-law to come and drive us home. (Thank you forever Super 8 of Beaver Falls.)

I gingerly sat on the bed, afraid to ruffle the blankets I didn't feel I'd earned, and turned to the last chapter of *The Magic Guide*, to the words I'd published just the day before:

“We are ending 2023 on the wings of luck and grace. Regardless of how the wheel spins, may we trust in the grace of it, for GRATIA EST PERPETUA.”

Wings — I saw wings. I hadn't even thought of that until just right now (while typing this story), and the wheel, *it spun*. Beyond my control. Beyond any control. Those few seconds of spinning on water were the most extreme experience of complete and total physical surrender I've ever had. There was nothing I could do. There was no fighting back. There was only lifting your hands off the wheel and letting it spin.

I couldn't believe how okay we were. Not a scratch on us. Not an airbag deployed. A totally wrecked back tire, but otherwise, no visible damage to our car. By the grace of Something, a tremendous amount of good luck, and perhaps even thanks to an invisible protective bubble of starlight, no other cars were in our path. No one was hurt, and from Rita on StarLink to the woman in the sedan who put on her blinkers to the people who got out of their cars to make sure we were okay to the state trooper and the Pennsylvania Turnpike man and the concierge who comped our room and my husband's sister who drove two hours to pick us up and the car rental

place that later upgraded us to a luxury SUV for free — the whole world seemed to rally around us in one of the most awe-inspiring outpourings of human benevolence I have ever received.

And of course, there were the decisions my husband and I had made years before — the ones that were in our control — to drive a safe car and purchase incredible insurance, which just about fully covered every bit of damage and the cost of the rental car we've been driving while our car is being repaired.

The fact that we were so okay still feels surreal. Almost like such luck shouldn't be possible. It shouldn't be as simple as *people rallied to help us, we got home just a couple of hours later than expected, and were sitting on the couch with a fancy car in our garage and pizza on our plate just six hours later*. Yet when I told my story to family and friends, many of them relayed similar experiences — on black ice and rain — where they spun in a circle, miraculously didn't hit anyone or anything, and were able to keep driving.

We hear all the time about the terrible things that happen when luck is not on our side. But most of the time, I think, we are swaddled in a dizzying amount of luck.

Lucky to wake up every day. Lucky to be breathing. Lucky that our organs keep working. Lucky that somehow, things work out, and we are safe. Even in the face of a harrowing accident, *I was safe*.

You'd think this realization would make me feel safer. But my body seems to have only learned: *You can crash unexpectedly at any time. Beware sleet, rain, and snow. You never know when your luck will run out, and next time, you die*.

In the first forty-eight hours following the crash, I heard my husband's sharp stuttering gasp every time I closed my eyes. In my mind's eye, I saw him take his hands off the wheel and let it spin. I felt the impact of the car against the stone wall and saw the black plastic flying through the air again and again.

I was so exhausted that I grew winded doing a load of laundry. The muscles in my back and arms ached and throbbed. An incessant headache gnawed at my brain, and I just kept hearing the sound of my husband gasping and screaming next to me.

That's when I realized that in my memory, I never heard myself.

Did I scream at all? Did I make any sound? I asked him in the morning.

I think you just said, "Oh my God, oh my God, oh my God."

My instinctual prayer.



I rested. Watched TV. Allowed my nervous system to settle.

Every once in a while, I felt strange tingles across the bridge of my nose and up through my third eye, but as the pain in my arms and wrists dissipated, I started feeling something different, like power, in my hands.

On New Year's Eve, I was reading in bed, and I could feel my heartbeat in my fingertips, resting against the pages, vibrating the whole book.

Then, 2024 arrived. I returned to work, and life started to feel normal again. The accident further and further from my mind. Until on the evening of January 5, I was sitting in the passenger seat, looking at something on my phone, when suddenly, my husband gasped again. We were stopped at a red light. He was simply surprised by something he'd seen. We weren't in any danger, but in that moment, my body forgot all about how safe and held it was. I struggled to breathe. My muscles clenched. I spent the rest of the night alone, gathering my senses, and that's when a name popped into my head: **Pomona**.

Out of nowhere, I heard the name of an asteroid that lives some hundreds of millions of miles away.

And that's when I saw that on January 11, 2024, the asteroid Pomona will be perfectly aligned with both the sun and the moon.

It's all starlight:



That night, I woke at 3:30 in the morning. The vibrating sensation I'd felt in my fingertips five nights earlier was spreading inside me. My whole body felt like it was pulsing, like it was about to burst, and in my mind's eye, I saw that I was filled with stars. Where before I'd just seen starlight moving around me, now, I saw it inside me, filling me up.

How can one body hold this much energy? I wondered. How can you?

Inside each of your cells and throughout your body is an electric playground. Electricity is constantly zipping around your body, sending information from your brain, healing your wounds, pumping your heart. In some ways, the whole interior of your body can be seen as electric. And where there is electricity, there is magnetism.

Tiny electromagnetic fields create sensation, touch, and are constantly telling us where one object stops and another starts.

As I lay in bed — buzzing — I heard the words: *a pulsar pulsing*. But what's a pulsar? I looked it up: a pulsar is a highly magnetized neutron star that has beams of electromagnetic radiation shooting out from its body.

My hands got hot, so hot. They were pulsing stronger now and reminded me of when I first learned Reiki and felt the energy moving through me.

Pomona.

She popped in my head again, and I suddenly remembered that I'd written about her last year. For the Scorpio full moon eclipse on May 5, 2023.

I turned to [chapter 113 of The Magic Guide](#). And that's when I saw that in that chapter — the chapter for the last moon that was conjunct the asteroid Pomona (just like this moon now) — I'd written all about near-death experiences.

New research had recently been released documenting a rush of energy that's mysteriously released after death. *My body pulsed and pulsed*. And I kept scrolling. I scrolled past the picture of Pomona — the goddess of orchards, a bounty of fruit in her hands — until I arrived at the final section of the chapter. There, I was reminded of a dream I'd had on May 3, 2023:

I dreamt that I was standing in a clearing in the woods, facing a large tree stump. A new tree was rising from the stump and blocking my view. When I stepped to get a closer look, I was suddenly lifted from the ground and floating in the air. To my left, I saw a bird fly beside me and transform into a large sea bass. At first, I was frightened. I seemed to have lost control over my body, like it was moving by some force far more powerful than I. I sensed that I had been transported, and that's when I was told — in my dream — that I was on a vision quest. That this whole thing was a vision quest and to just relax.

*I softened into the experience. I floated there and watched as the fish curved towards me through the dry air that was now behaving like water, and that was it. **That was my vision quest: a dove turning into a fish. Land behaving like water.***

As I read my own words back to myself, I couldn't believe it. *Land behaving like water.* That's what happened. That was the accident.

And I hadn't been thinking about this vision quest at all when in the fall, I sketched an image of a large tree stump in a clearing in the woods. I drew The Magic Guide resting on top of the stump and used this image as the header for the last four chapters of this story. But here we are, post-accident. I surrendered to the land turning into water, and now, the stump is gone, and all that's left is that something new that was growing from it.

The Magic Guide has changed.



Back in May, my "vision quest" led me to the goddess Ishtar and the asteroid named after her. It led me to see that the asteroid Ishtar was, along with Pomona, conjunct that full moon eclipse on May 5...

And, that's also what's happening on this Capricorn new moon.

This moon is conjunct Pomona, marking the start of fruitful endeavors, while simultaneously, the asteroid Ishtar is just eleven degrees away, conjunct the planet Mars.

Ishtar is an ancient goddess, believed to have inspired the development of many later divine feminine figures, including Isis, Aphrodite, and Mary. (For those of you who've been here a while, you might remember the connection between this divine feminine line and [the number 13](#). You might be similarly awed by the fact that I landed at Exit 13, that the chapter from May was #113.)

Translated, Ishtar’s name means “Queen of Heaven.”

And on this new moon, we walk beside her. We are held in her protective gaze while Mercury crosses the center of the galaxy, and communication is restored.

This is a time of incredible fortune, or really — *the start of bringing great fortune.*

The asteroid Fortuna is also conjunct this moon (so I realized when the number 19 — aka the asteroid Fortuna — kept showing up everywhere I looked).



As I crossed the threshold from 2023 to 2024, I was recovering from the closest to death I believe I’ve ever been. Simultaneously, I was pulsing and being filling with messages of power and plenty.

What does it mean? Where is it leading us? **This is only the beginning. This is only the beginning.**

This new moon time is building to a full moon on January 25 and another full moon in June. **We are growing a ripe orchard of fruit.**

As, on January 20, [Mercury completes its retrograde cycle](#), and Pluto, the planet of death and rebirth, conjuncts the sun while moving into Aquarius for the first time in 245 years (save for a temporary stint in the sign last year). Pluto will stay in Aquarius for most of the rest of this year before briefly returning to Capricorn yet again (in November). This is all part of a long cycle of Pluto eventually fully moving into Aquarius, where it will stay for decades to come.



As the new moon approaches, the destiny point (for the first time in twenty years) returns to the exact place it was when I was born.

I wake in the middle of the night and wonder what's happening with the [ethereal castle](#) I saw in my mind at the end of 2023 — before I grew wings of stars, before land started behaving like water, before my car slammed into a wall.

I close my eyes, and in my mind, I feel my fingers atop an ivory brocade woven with dark blue specks. The feel of the fabric and size of the room are all I can sense — *my new ethereal chambers*.

Squinting, I make out a door in the distance and walk towards it. I wrap my hand around its handle, and as it opens, my body is suddenly slammed with energy, light, and all I can see is the black expanse of space as starlight rushes towards me and fills my body with such force it almost knocks me off my feet.

I lean over to catch my breath, and I can feel the light pulsing inside me. It pulses and pulses and pulses. It's too much. I can't hold it all, and I scream — releasing the stars back into the void of space where they land in rivers of stars forming the outline of steps and the walls of rooms.

The clouds have cleared, and it's all starlight. *It's all starlight. It's all starlight.*



To be continued...

LONG STORY SHORT

During this Capricorn new moon time, which takes us from January 11 to January 24, we are gifted a profound opportunity to initiate a cycle of good fortune. Things can happen magically, unexpectedly. Like a miracle. Pay close attention around January 20, before the full moon comes on the 25. Changes are afoot. The initiation is settling. And all of this is readying you for the Capricorn full moon in June. *Seeing in my mind: a constellation of stars in the shape of a tree where new stars are twinkling into existence, forming ripe, juicy fruit.*
