



chapter 119

THE GOLDEN ROD OF HOPE

by Virginia Mason Richardson

THE MAGIC GUIDE

May this help you remember how magical the world is.
May this help you remember that you too are magic.
May this help you work real magic so you never forget
that you are free, you are powerful, you are loved, and
magic is real.

VIRGO NEW MOON

September 14, 2023–September 28, 2023

A bell chimes.

It's a sweet, simple, single chime.

Right in my left ear.

But there is no bell in sight. There is no physical bell anywhere. Nevertheless, I hear a bell, and when it chimes, I feel as though I am being lifted up. Like some part of me is rising through the surface of my skin as my body stays seated on the blue velvet sofa.

My husband and I bought it two springs ago. We waited six months for it to arrive, and now, I sit here every day. Writing, drawing, sipping coffee, watching TV, petting my cat who likes to curl belly-up in the space between my legs.

This life is rich with sensation and sound. I have no desire to be anywhere else, and I am busy right now, working on my computer. Yet, the bell chimes, and I feel a pull on my body, and I know: I must go.

I set my laptop down. I sit up straight and close my eyes.

There isn't a gavel, but there might as well be. I feel as though I can hear it banging. Like someone is announcing: *Hear, hear. This meeting is called to order.*

And through my mind's eye, I can see that I have been transported.

I am sitting in a circle of thrones. I feel the pulsing of bodies as people arrive and every seat is filled. At the center of the circle, there is a hole in the floor, and through the hole, I see blue sky and white clouds, and I realize I am looking down at the earth.

My heart begins to race. I've always been afraid of heights, and as cool air moves through the opening and kisses my skin, I have to remind myself that there isn't any reason to be afraid. There's no way I can fall through that hole, for my body is still, safe and sound, sitting on the blue velvet sofa, and this is happening...somewhere else.



THE MAGIC GUIDE

Here, I move as though I know exactly what to do:

I bend my arms and raise my hands and face my palms towards the people to my left and to my right. They do the same. All around the circle, in unison, everyone raises their hands, and we all begin to chant.

We chant words I do not recognize, yet somehow, I know how to speak them, and as we speak, I feel energy move through the palms of my hands, and I see how it's moving through all of us like the words are traveling between our hands in the shape of a circle, like magic is spinning round and round, like some great power is being transferred and shared. It circles and circles, and then, it stops.

I lower my hands to rest in my lap. I feel something heavy and strong at the center of my palms, as if the energy that moved is anchored there, inside of me, and then, a flash of bright blinding light fills the center of the room — above the hole.

We bow our heads to shield our eyes. The light is radiating from a being so bright I cannot see it through the rays. Then, it descends — down through the hole in the floor, down, down, down, all the way down to the surface of earth — and with that, mechanical blades swivel shut, closing the hole in the floor, and the meeting is over.

We are all told to return to our posts, and everyone exits the room.



I fall back into my body and soften into the blue velvet cushions.

I take a deep breath, let the air spill out of me until there's nothing left.

My eyes finally flutter open when a text arrives from a friend: *I feel like something magical is going to go down today.*

And I wonder: *was she there too?*

Or does she simply know what I know: that high above us, out in space, *things are changing.*



A million miles above the earth, the James Webb Telescope has been collecting data for eighteen months. Upon analyzing it, scientists announce:

“The Story of Our Universe May Be Starting to Unravel”

Because if what the telescope tells us is true, then the story we’ve been telling ourselves...is not.

Physicists consider possible reasons for the discrepancies: perhaps physical laws aren’t so static. Perhaps what was once true isn’t what’s true now. Perhaps the laws we consider fundamental actually evolve and change over time. More so, perhaps *we are changing them.*



The theory of a “participatory universe,” set forth by John Wheeler, suggests that **our observations contribute to the creation of physical reality.**

“Wheeler's hunch is that the universe is built like an enormous feedback loop, a loop in which we contribute to the ongoing creation of not just the present and the future but the past as well.”

This theory helps explain strange realities — like the fact that the act of observing light changes where and how it moves (either as a particle or a wave). And I wonder: if all vision is the result of seeing and processing light, then every time I open my eyes, am I changing things?

According to Wheeler, the consequences of our participatory universe are far reaching, reaching all the way back in time.

For when we point a telescope out towards space and refract the light from a distant galaxy, the act of observing that light changes it. And that light? It is very, very old. It’s traveling to us from the past, and by watching it now, we are changing it...in the past.

That part isn’t just a theory. It’s been demonstrated.

And it’s not just our human observations that change things. It’s all sorts of matter and radiation, but to keep things simple, let’s just say that: Everything is impacting the world in which it exists, causing that very world to change.

And maybe this is why the data from the telescope isn’t matching the story science has been telling for years about the creation of our universe. Because, the thing is,

THE MAGIC GUIDE

what the telescope has been seeing (aka observing and...maybe, changing?) does not add up.



According to the Webb telescope, some really big galaxies came into existence far sooner and far faster than the current origin story of our universe suggests is possible.

When you take that and add it to the fact that muons aren't behaving as expected and general relativity is inherently incompatible with quantum mechanics, we're left with a moment in scientific discovery that, according to physicists Adam Frank and Marcelo Gleiser, just might be calling for a rewrite of our cosmological story.

And that story, if a participatory universe is real, is never static. We're never going to have just one story that is always true that can be passed down from person to person, generation after generation. If we're looking for truth, then the only story that's ever going to come close is one that keeps changing and keeps evolving, asking us not to stay true to what was but to stay open to what is.



See, this is why I don't even think it's worth trying to get answers. Just live your life.

My husband expounds on his life philosophy when I tell him the latest science news. And I get it. News like this can make all of life seem like chaos. And in a world where change is the only constant and uncertainty is so vast, so persistent, what else are we to do?



ENTER WITH REVERANCE
DEPART IN PEACE

THE MAGIC GUIDE

My feet are covered in flowers as my toes approach the stone paver marking the entrance to the garden.



I walk along the path, past the benches and between the birch trees, their branches reaching for each other as if to say, *Give her some shade.*

I pass a stone that reads, "God is love." And I think how maybe, in the very moment those words were written, the writer was observing God and so, in that moment, God became love.

The way light is a wave, moving in many directions until you look at it, and then it becomes a particle. Maybe God is like this, moving in many directions until you look at it, and then, sometimes, it's a man. Sometimes, it's a woman. Sometimes, it's an all

THE MAGIC GUIDE

expansive mysterious something and sometimes it's a blindingly bright body of light, and then sometimes, it's love, just love.

Tears flow down my cheeks as easy as water moves through the stream between the stones. Because maybe our stories are always changing. Maybe the world is changing. Maybe nothing can be pinned down for too long, but for now, right now, *I believe*.

I believe in the bell that called me. I believe in the radiating body of light that filled the room. And I believe what I saw in the weeks that followed.

For a while, every time I closed my eyes, I saw that big bright body of light...dancing.

Just, dancing and spinning around on the surface of the earth, sending waves of *something* rippling across our planet.

rippling

rippling

rippling

I walk over a small bridge, past a pond of blooming white lotus flowers where frogs are ribbiting and dragonflies are beating their veined wings, and I reach another stone paver. This one reads:

ENTER

THE LABYRINTH

A SACRED PRAYER WALK

I step forward, and as I begin to walk the pale stones between the lines painted green, a butterfly flaps its wings and takes off.



I make my way through the labyrinth. With every step, I feel how hard believing is for me. Despite years of visions and magical experiences and the part of me that

THE MAGIC GUIDE

stays in a constant state of allowance, granting life permission to move through me as it sees fit, my mind can always conjure reasons to doubt.

And I wonder: *How deep does my resistance go?*

And I hear: *As deep as your thoughts.*

And I ask: *How wide and wild is my soul?*

And something answers: *Wild? It is not.*

Then...what is it then?

Crafted, carefully. From every little piece of me. A mirror shining so you can see the beauty inside everything.

I repeat this exchange out loud:

How deep does my resistance go?

As deep as your thoughts.

How wide and wild is my soul?

Wild? It is not.

Then...what is it then?

Crafted, carefully. From every little piece of me. A mirror shining so you can see the beauty inside everything.

I speak it again and again. The words punctuate my steps as the labyrinth leads me to the center.

When I arrive, I stand looking at the stones beneath my feet. They've been laid to resemble a six-petaled flower, and they remind me of a quote, carved in stone, near the entrance to the garden: "And the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose."

My mind flashes back to when, years ago, I saw the desert in my mind. Its sand was soft and loose beneath my feet. It parted like the sea, and there, beneath the grains so fine, I saw the land was made of gold. I walked upon it, and high above the earth, I saw a flower bloom — *a rose*.

Five months later, the James Webb Telescope unfurled in space. "Like a flower blooming," journalists said, in article after article.

On January 8, 2022, it completed the process of opening its giant primary mirror.

A mirror shining so you can see the beauty inside everything.

And now, with eighteen months of data in hand, we know that things are not what we thought they were. They are not what we think they'll be.

THE MAGIC GUIDE

I close my eyes so I can see:

The bright body of light is sleeping now. Reclining on the surface of the earth. Eyes closed. Hands placed one atop the other so as to form a pillow. The light from its body is gently seeping down through the surface of the earth, like water flowing through the dirt.

It's time to rest. Let the rippling waves move through the world. Let them bring whatever change is coming next.



On September 14th, the moon lies hidden from view, but just to the right, there is a stony rock, 163 kilometers wide.

It's the asteroid Elpis, discovered almost exactly 163 years ago.

Elpis was named after the Greek personification of hope. The goddess whose very being took feeling and gave it form. Elpis. *Hope*.

And now, **the Spirit of Hope is high in the sky**. Its nestled next to the moon, aligning with the sun, bringing us a new moon...of hope.



The new moon peaks at 9:39 p.m. (EST) at 21°59' Virgo.

I learned that Elpis is nearby because in August, two days before the Leo new moon, I read [an article](#) that filled me with hope. I felt the Spirit of Hope inside me, and I wondered where she was.

There! I saw, right by this new moon.

Two days later, a friend texted me a picture of a heart graffitied on a New York City sidewalk and inside the heart was the word: JUBILEE.

It reminded me of the asteroid Jubilatrix, so I looked up. And sure enough, like Elpis, Jubilatrix is nestled right next to this new moon — *a jubilee*. **A celebration of hope.**

Because with change, there is always hope.

And so, another lunar cycle begins. Over the next two weeks, the sun will shine, brighter and brighter against the surface of the moon until on September 29th, the Harvest moon will rise.

This period now — from September 14 to September 28 — is the beginning of what's commonly called Harvest Season, and it starts with a bounty, a cornucopia...of hope.

It's easy to become cynical. It's easy to lose hope. It's easy to not believe in magic and miracles and real change, but there is more in this world than we are capable of measuring. And maybe, there even is a God, and maybe, God is right here...on Earth, taking a nap.



My husband advises me not to write about God. He tells me God is bad for business. And maybe he's right. Or maybe, in looking at the light, sleeping peacefully on the surface of the earth, we can observe something together. And maybe, **observing it changes things.**

So, let us look. Let us see. Let us not give in to the cynicism of the masses and to instead embrace the golden rod of hope.

Change is coming. Take hold.



God's waves ripple through the air. They are carried on the breeze. They travel through a crack in the window, and they move through the tips of your fingers. They spread throughout your body while you are sleeping, and when you wake, you GASP.

You bolt upright. You place your hand on your heart. You catch your breath. You focus your eyes. And slowly, you start to see: something's...different.

You inhale deeply. Even the air...smells...different.

THE MAGIC GUIDE

What is it?

What could this be?



A capsule falls from the sky and lands in the Utah desert. The parachute ensuring its slow descent collapses in the sand. Applause fills the air. Scientists have been preparing for this moment for years — ever since a spacecraft launched in 2016, touched down on the asteroid Bennu in 2020, and for the first time, collected a sample of an asteroid's dust.

The dust comes from some of the oldest rocks in our solar system and is believed to hold untold secrets.

“This is a gift to the world,” says researcher Dante Lauro.

And on September 24th, it arrives, and we collect our harvest.



To be continued...

LONG STORY SHORT

The Virgo new moon time takes us from September 14 to September 28. This is the start of Harvest Season, and everything is changing. Everything is always changing. But right now, we are acutely aware of those changes. We see how certain ideas we've been carrying we simply cannot keep holding. We must let them go. We must make room for what is — not what was. And through this, we receive something wonderful. We are filled with HOPE. The sample from the asteroid Bennu lands on the earth, and the harvest moon prepares to rise. *Get ready.*

SUPPORT THE STORY

The Magic Guide is a calling I answer every time I sit to write. Every month, I spend countless hours creating it, and I couldn't do it without you. If you enjoyed this story, please consider donating or becoming a member. *Thank you.*

[DONATE / BECOME A MEMBER](#)

©2023 Virginia Mason Richardson. All Rights Reserved. The Magic Guide® is a registered trademark and is registered with the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office. Please treat this as you would a book.