

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the Magical World of Rens and Skeats. This world began a long time ago, when an ancient race of beings called Morian's came and settled on this distant planet.

The Morian were tall, angular, three fingered beings that lived off light. They were an immortal race with a highly developed culture and civilization.

The Morian were drawn to this planet because it had two suns: a red one and a gold one. This color combination was especially favored by this culture because of its great energy output.

The Morian created great cities of shiny metals. And were know for their great achievements in art and music.

Slowly over time, the red sun began to get brighter. At first the Morian thought this was good. They had more energy to run the factories and to live off of. But then their people began to get sick and die. The Morian were not

used to anyone dying. They had always been an immortal race. The Priestesses voiced concern that something was out of balance in the red sun. But the leaders who were Magicians themselves ignored the warnings of the Priestesses. So the Morian continued to die.

The Priestesses realizing the desperateness of the situation, came together secretly in council. They decided to hide some of the most sacred Keys and Gates to the Morian culture in an attempt to keep their culture alive and the ancient knowledge intact. They also searched to help those dying and researched the use of plants and herbs to help the sick. They meditated on the cause of this strange plague hitting the people. They could see that the Red Sun was radiating out a negative energy. They believed that the Red Sun was about to explode. If this happened there would not be enough light left for the Morian to survive. The Priestesses knew that they were looking at the end of their race as they knew it. So they began to research ways to keep their knowledge intact and to help create a being that could survive in the density after the explosion of the Red Sun.

The Priestesses learned how to talk to the land, and the Stones told them the Red Sun was causing the Morian to change. The negative energy was causing them to disown certain dark emotions from themselves. The way the Morian were immortal was related to the full range of all the emotions placed in balance within them and within the light. The light was no longer in balance and neither were the Morian. The more the emotions were disowned the more it created the experience of death in the body. The split in the sky was causing a split in the soul of the Morian. The Magicians were disowning their fear and anger. So they were dying more quickly. The Priestesses knew to try to feel everything because of the knowledge of the Stones.

The split was becoming so severe that the Magicians were outlawing certain emotional experiences for the people. The more laws that were passed the more the Morian died.

The Priestesses tried to talk to the Magicians but they were already consumed by the dark light and wanted only more power, to maintain their illusion of control.

The Magicians had the ability to pull light into the planet with their magic. They reached up with their minds

and pulled the solar wind coming off each Sun. That energy was projected to the factories and the people. But they were also pulling in the dark energy hidden in the bright light of the Red Sun. Many of them were dying.

The Magicians deranged minds could only focus on more light. They thought if they had more light they would live. Instead it was killing them. They became so obsessed that they did not notice what the Priestesses were doing until it was almost too late.

The Priestesses were sure that the Morian were going to die and were using their skills as healers and connectors to the land to hide the Ten Keys to Immortality. These Ten Keys were hidden in forms of art and music and protected in sacred places in the land. The Stones helped to find the safest places. And certain guardians were placed in charge of each Gate.

So that is how the Prophecy of the Morian was created. The Prophecy was to be the guide to the people when they evolved enough to understand and follow the signs left by the Priestesses for the Merging.

But the Magicians had other ideas. The few remaining pulled together and tried to use the power of the Great Vision Stone. They thought if they pulled the light of the two Suns through it they would be able to find the lost Keys of Immortality. Their minds now believed that the Priestesses were causing the deaths by hiding the Ten Keys.

They did not realize that in this last distorted effort of greed, that they would destroy not only themselves but also their world.

The Stones had told the Priestesses that this was going to happen and so the Priestesses took some of their DNA and used the knowledge of the Stones and the L-Lews (the two most ancient natural creatures of this planet) and created two forms they hoped could survive the destruction of their world. These two forms were Skeats and Rens.

So while the Priestesses were creating Skeats and Rens, the Magicians were frantically searching for the lost Keys. But the darkness had taken hold of them.

A great battle erupted among the remaining Magicians. Every one wanted the control to find the Keys. One arrogant

Magician, Za-loc was thrown out of the council chamber by the others. He was the most out of control and believed only he knew how to save the planet and find the lost Keys.

Twelve Magicians now remained to attempt to find the Keys using the Great Vision Stone. In a great ceremony watched by the Morian the twelve Magicians pulled at the solar wind with their magic, and focused it through the Vision Stone. But in that moment the Red Sun exploded and the power of an exploding Star was brought into the planet through the minds of the Magicians. The searing heat and light exploded through them and shattered the Great Vision Stone.

In a few seconds all the cities were destroyed along with the Morian.

The Priestess had escaped to the highlands and were trying desperately to complete their work. They were dying slowing from the lack of light and the planet became colder. The Red Sun was now a Black spot in the Sky. They called it the Night-mir-Sun. But they needed to complete their work. The Stones, trees and L-Lews did everything they could to

help the Priestesses. Some felt that at least now the threat was over as the Magicians were dead.

But one Priestess Lethiel knew that one Magician had survived the Great Collapse, Za-loc.

Za-loc had also gone to the mountains to observe the other Magicians from a distance. He stood horrified as the cities were destroyed. But the darkness had consumed him and he blamed the Priestesses treachery for the destruction. He vowed to return the Morian to Immortality and Power. His sick mind believed he was the savior for his people. But Za-loc was also dying. He knew he had little time.

His mind searched for a way to again control the solar wind and the light that remained. He believed if he could find the remaining fragments of the Great Vision Stone he might be able to pull light back in.

But the explosion had left a gray atmospheric fog high up in the atmosphere. This fog was not allowing the light to fully penetrate through to the land. Animals and plants were dying from the cold and lack of light. Za-loc knew he was running out of time.

Za-loc was not the only one looking for the fragments of the Great Vision Stone. Lethiel the High Priestess knew if Za-loc found the fragments before her that he may be able to find the lost Keys and then all their plans would be lost. So now it was a race to find the Fragment Stones.

Lethiel knew that the Fragment Stones were dangerous, as they held all the disowned emotion of the Morian. She knew that they must be thrown into the Pit at Da-Nan-Da-Li. Only then would the Gates be truly safe. The darkness in the Stones needed to be released as energy in the Pit so the Rens and Skeats could begin to understand emotion without all the density. Lethiel knew that until the Fragment Stones were thrown into the Pit the planet could not be healed.

Lethiel managed to find four of the Fragment Stones, and was about to throw them into the Pit when behind her Za-loc emerged with the largest of the Fragment Stones. A great magic battle ensued lasting for days. Lethiel finally exhausted was tricked by a simple spell and Za-loc turned her into a rose bush at the edge of the Pit.

Za-loc seized the five Fragment Stones and returned to the city to create his masterpiece.

He created a machine using the five Fragment Stones. His intention was to focus the power of the Stones on himself. Then he would pull with his magic up into the remaining sun's solar wind. In his arrogance he believed he could control the light and rebuild the great cities.

But when the energy from the fragments Stones focused on Za-loc, all the negative power pulled into him. As hard as he tried he could not penetrate the fog high in the atmosphere to reach the light.

So he then decided to pull the fog through his body to clear the atmosphere, maybe then he could capture the light.

What Za-loc did not know was that the Fog in the atmosphere was a living energy. It was the child of the Red Sun. It was an enormously powerful energy that was designed to live in space. It was the energy that created new worlds and galaxies. And this energy was trapped by the Magicians magic in the atmosphere of this planet.

When Za-loc pulled the Myst into his body, the power of its creative force changed Za-loc and merged his soul with the Myst. Now the Myst and Za-loc were locked together in a strange dance. The negativity of Za-loc with the power of a Star. Thus was born the Myst of Za-loc-mir.

This Myst was very heavy and fell into the area of the explosion called the Great Rift. The Priestesses were frantically trying to control the Myst and keep it in the Rift. The Stones and trees helped to create holding Gates so the Myst of Za-loc-mir would not filter into the highlands or the lowlands.

But now the world was divided. In the highlands there was more light and the Rens were capable of existing. They were given the gifts of the Morian Prophecy and the knowledge of the sacred singing language and the understanding of magic.

The Skeats could exist below the Myst, where there was less light. They were sturdy and capable of surviving here. The completion of the Prophecy depended on the Skeats making their way through the Myst to the Rens. The upper world was called An-wyl; the lower world was called Argamae. The only

creatures capable of going between both worlds through the Myst were the L-Lews. The Priestesses hoped, as they died, that the Skeats would break through the density of their world to find An-wyl. Only then could the Merging begin and the land become whole.

But it was going to take longer than the Priestesses thought. The combined force of the Myst with Za-loc would keep the worlds separate for Yoranium.

One non-physical star creature caught in a physical world with a mad Morian.

So begins the Prophecy of the Morian.

Prologue

A long time ago, before anyone can remember, was a place we tell stories about still. It was lost, when a great Myst took it from us, above the hills of Argamae. They say, even now, Skeats still disappear if they wander too far into the Myst. Many have been lost over the Yoranium, never to return. But my story is about some bold Skeats, who did.

It was said that from the beginning, there was something unusual about Re-Nan. His daughter, Ky-Rena, was the most beautiful Sa-Keat in the land. So beautiful, that Re-Nan kept her hidden away in the forests of Du-Blaine. No one ever knew who her mother was. Re-Nan was known to wander off into the forest for long periods of time. He was a solitary man, and most Skeats found him hard to talk to.

So, few Skeats knew much about Ky-Rena. Until one day, Prince Ge-Off wandered upon her while hunting Thools. He had never seen such a beauty, and at first, wondered if she was one of the tricky ghosts of the Du-Blaine Forest, called Za-phiras. But she was alive enough, and soon they fell in

love. They were married the next Yan. They lived happily above the town of A-Zora in his family's ancient castle.

One day, the Skeats in the town noticed that the Myst of Za-loc-mir seemed to be descending toward the town. Shortly after that, Ge-Off announced that Ky-Rena was pregnant with their first child.

The Skeats in the town were so happy that they forgot about the Myst, which kept descending slowly toward the castle, yaro after yaro.

In fact, no one seemed concerned until Aryl-le, a powerful healer, appeared one day at the castle Gate.

Aryl-le was one of the largest Skeats ever seen. She had a bowed leg that made her limp as she walked. Even with this, she had an imposing presence. But Aryl-le had the kindest of hearts.

However today, her face was serious, and when the Skeats looked at her, suddenly the happiness they had been feeling drained away. They were left feeling like they had been drunk and giddy from too much Zolian wine.

Aryl-le walked through the town, lifting the spell of the Myst and bringing the Skeats back to their senses. Immediately, she was summoned by Prince Ge-Off and Ky-Rena. As Aryl-le entered the court, she realized that she had arrived just in time.

She asked for a chair to sit down. It was brought to her. She hobbled over to it and eased herself gently into the chair.

As Aryl-le sat down she looked sadly at the Prince and lovingly at Ky-Rena. Then she spoke;

My fellow Skeats, I am here to tell you that the quiet and solitude of Argamae is about to be changed forever. The Myst of Za-loc-mir has been suspended in the Rift above our land, as long as any can remember. But the time of the Great Merging is upon us. I know that most of you think of the Great Merging as just a story, told by Re-Nan's Grandfather a long time ago. But it is not a story, it is a Prophecy. Ky-Rena and Ge-off are going to have a son. This child is part of the completion of the ancient Prophecy of the Morian. The Prophecy says that this child is a

warrior and a messenger, the child soul of the Night-mir-Sun.

The Prophecy says that one-day the Myst of Za-loc-mir will begin to descend toward Argamae. The ancient Gate that had kept it in the Rift, would release the Myst and allow it to come into physical form. As it did, the energy of the Myst, would make the Skeats confused. It could eventually draw all of them into the shadow world of Za-Loc, never to return.

However, there would be one soul born who had the power to battle the Myst and save Argamae forever. This is the soul that Ky-Rena is carrying. Aryl-le explained.

I have the power to keep the shadow of Za-loc away from Argamae until this child is older. I will teach him the magic needed to go through the Myst of Za-loc-mir back to the ancient land of myth and legend, An-wyl. There, he will battle the shadow Za-loc one final time. If he losses, the world would be caught in Za-loc's shadow forever. If he wins, the world will be transformed and healed.

At the mention of the name, An-wyl, there was an audible gasp in the court. Ky-Rena looked over at her husband concerned. He was a good Skeat from a powerful royal family, but he was a realist.

Ge-Off spoke thoughtfully. ***Aryl-le! That land is only a myth, and no one has seen it. Besides, no one has returned from the Myst. It is too dangerous.***

Aryl-le smiled and looked Ge-Off directly in the eyes and said, ***Oh, there have been a few. Myself included! And I am here to tell you that the land of An-wyl does exist.***

Shock murmured through the court. Ge-Off quieted them with a gesture of his hand. Aryl-le could see that he did not yet believe her. He was a man of proof. She knew that he would be unwilling to put his son in danger without it. It was time for him to know the whole story.

Aryl-le looked now at Ky-Rena. Their eyes locked and Aryl-le nodded her head towards her friend. Ky-Rena took a deep breath and glanced down for a moment. Then she gathered up her courage and spoke in a clear voice so the

whole court could hear. ***This land does exist. I have also been to An-wyl.***

The court went silent, stunned. There had always been rumors about where Ky-Rena and her father, Re-Nan would venture. But until now, they had only been stories, told to keep the children from straying too far into the forest.

Ky-Rena turned toward her husband and gently took his hands. She peered up into his shocked face and began the story.

Chapter 1 - Re-Nan and the search for the L-Lew

Ky-Rena's father, Re-Nan, had been a wanderer much at his younger life. He had been raised in the forest and knew the hidden ways of the animals there. He had always been shy by nature, and preferred the company of the forest to other Skeats. It was normal for him to disappear for long periods of time into the forest. His family didn't worry because when he returned, he always seemed to have the ripest and sweetest lumfruit in his pack. These yellow oblong shaped fruit had black seeds in their center and had a flavor somewhat like sweet, pulpy custard. His father would sell these at the market to help support the family. His family wanted him to marry, but the lure of his forest adventures kept him a bachelor.

One day, he was following a trail that was unfamiliar to him. The markings around the trail were different and he was not sure what kind of animal had made the trail. However, since he had been a child he remembered his grandmother telling him stories of An-wyl and the magical creatures she called L-Lews. He had always believed her stories and wanted to see one of these illusive creatures at

least once in his life. Many times as a child he had felt something watching him from the deep brush, but he never saw anything there.

The markings on the ground were unlike anything he had ever seen. His curiosity pulled at him to keep searching. Maybe, this time he was actually close to a L-Lew.

Just as it got dark, he heard a sound on the trail ahead. Knowing it would not be light much longer, he ran ahead on the trail. With the last of the light he saw the back end of a strange creature disappear into the dark Myst ahead.

Could it really be a L-Lew? he wondered.

The thrill of the chase was pounding in his chest and he did not hesitate as he ran deep into the Myst. As he entered it, he noticed that the ground became more spongy and moist. He could no longer hear his boots on the hard trail. The trail seemed to disappear and something suddenly seemed different. The smells were musty and there was no wind, only a thick humidity filled his chest.

Immediately, he came to his senses. He had never entered the Myst this far. What could he have been thinking? The tracker in him knew danger when he felt it. The Myst gave a false sense of security. The hunter in him recognized that something about the Myst was alive. It seemed to beckon him to come deeper into its clutches. It pulled at him in a numbing way. It also took away the loneliness inside his soul. The feeling clutching at him seemed to promise freedom from pain if he would surrender. But the Myst also felt lonely—so lonely, so sad.

He could feel his mind slipping. He heard something inside say, **Focus, you need to focus!** Then he began to remember, he had been following something. **What was it? Ah yes that strange animal.** He could feel it was very close. Somehow focusing on the animal calmed him and the grip of the Myst lessened.

All at once, he saw three eyes staring back at him. The breath of this creature made him feel more alert, more like himself. He looked up into the intelligent face of an animal that matched his grandmother's description. Some part of him knew that the animal was a female L-Lew. She let out a low whistle, seeming to confirm his thoughts. Through the

fog in Re-Nan's mind, she seemed to be calling someone. But who? Then he realized that she was trying to speak to him. The close proximity of her was keeping the Myst at bay. Somehow the Myst could not envelope the L-Lew.

Re-Nan struggled to stand. With his hand on the back of the L-Lew, they moved slowly through the Myst together. Time seemed to stop. Re-Nan could only keep his mind focused on moving one foot in front of the other. Always the Myst was urging him to lay down and let it take all the struggle and pain away. But he knew that meant death. The voice of the Myst was seductively trying to drain the strength out of his very bones. If he started to slip with his mind, this unique animal would let out that low whistle. The sound would pierce his brain and strengthen his resolve. Always upward they seemed to go. Struggling to get above the Myst. Finally, at what seemed forever, the Myst lessened and they came out onto a high clearing.

Sun! He could feel the heat warming his body from the chill of the Myst. Re-Nan felt disoriented. They must have spent the whole night walking through the Myst. By the position of the sun it was about ten in the morning.

Around him, the rocks were light granite with blue and white crystals reflecting the sun. They felt strangely safe. Somehow these rocks were reflecting the light and driving back the Myst. They were on a pinnacle of a ridge jutting out into a sea of Myst.

His head slowly began to clear in the fresh air and he could finally see his rescuer.

The L-Lew was the size of a small deer, two eyes in the normal places but one directly in the middle of the forehead. It had a long graceful neck, and the soft paws of a wolf. Its coat reflected the sun in a soft flutter of opalescence. They were standing in front of a Stone structure with a low, opening to go inside. As Re-Nan moved toward the hut, his companion let out a trilling sound that radiated low out of her belly. Then suddenly in the door of the hut appeared a female. Her countenance became concern when she saw Re-Nan.

Chapter 2 - Meeting Ky-Lyra and the Lyre House

As she drew a quick breath, she ran into the hut. She then came back with a small bag made out of an unfamiliar burgundy skin. On the outside of the bag was the symbol of a star. As the female's hands reached out to him, Re-Nan saw the same star painted on both of her hands. The left one was in black and the right one in gold. The breeze at the top of the hill brought the smell of roses to him. The soft fragrance was coming from the woman.

As he looked up at her worried face, Re-Nan knew he had never seen such a lovely female.

But what was she? he wondered, ***Could she be a Ren?***

His grandmother had told him how the people of An-wyl were called Rens. That they were somewhat different than Skeats because of their adaptation to living above the Myst.

She was the size of a Sa-Keat, but much more willowy, as if her bones were half the thickness of his. When she moved, her feet seemed to touch the ground lightly. Her

skin was the faint purple color of Idalias. She was in a burgundy dress made out of the same skin as the bag. The fabric somehow radiated a magical power he did not understand, but her presence let him know that he would be fine. As his mind was finally able to let go and feel safe, he collapsed and fell into a deep hypnotic sleep.

Re-Nan could hear the Myst calling to him as he slept. His dream body wanted to walk down the hill back into the Myst. But every time he tried to move, the star would appear in front of him and he could not walk past it. Then he would hear a gentle female voice calling him back to sleep, telling him that he must rest. And two small hands would guide him back to the sleeping niche.

Re-Nan was not sure how long he slept. The luring voice of the Myst tortured his sleep. The Myst was inside of him. His body was a battleground for some ancient conflict he did not understand. Pictures of an exploding Red Sun and destruction filled his dreams. He tossed and turned in his sleep.

His mind desired more of the Myst, as if it were a narcotic Stealthweed pod. Yet his soul knew that even a

little more of the Myst would never be enough. And so, the internal battle raged on, breaking only when the voice of this female came back into his mind, soothing him into real rest.

When he awoke, his eyes opened to a crystal ceiling, formed with Stones and shaped into a star. As he turned his head he could see that the sleeping niche was surrounded on three sides with Stone. On each side was embedded the same star, but made out of a different colored Stone. At the center of each one was a small hole. As light from outside passed through the hole, the stars became connected to each other in prisms of color and energy.

Re-Nan stared in amazement at the light radiating in the niche, and he remembered his grandmother's stories of An-wyl and the magical healing chambers. This looked remarkably like her tales of old. But that seemed impossible, An-wyl was but a myth. Maybe he was just dreaming still.

As he lifted his head to sit up, he heard a soft trilling sound below him and to his right. The sleeping niche was raised off the floor. The palate he was lying on

had been placed on top of Stones that had been carefully and artfully fitted together. Below him he saw the same three-eyed animal that had rescued him from the Myst. She was lying curled up on the rug below. She raised her head sleepily and her eyes whirled as she made the sound. The tone soothed Re-Nan's head, and he felt comforted.

As he sat up, Re-Nan carefully viewed the room. It had five sides made out of the same blue and white granite from the hilltop. The inside was simple, like a Shepherd's cabin. There was a fireplace with five pots hanging around the outside. One table with two chairs, made also out of Stone, were in front of the fire. There were many unusual herbs and roots drying on the ledge around the ceiling. Stone bowls of all sizes, and pouches to hold herbs were scattered along the floor. In a corner was a small Lyre. The Lyre seemed to draw his attention and he moved toward it.

Much to his amazement, as he got closer, the Lyre began to make a sound. Re-Nan stopped moving towards it and the music stayed soft. If he moved closer, the sound became louder. If he moved away it would stop completely. He was very drawn by the sound. There was something so familiar

about the music. He knew he had heard this song before, but he could not remember from where. As he looked closer at the Lyre, the tones seemed to radiate inside his body. It felt as if the music was inside him, opening him to something hidden inside himself. It felt as if the Lyre was playing the song of his soul. The music seemed to remind him of some forgotten lineage he carried. It was welcoming and hopeful.

He could see the Lyre was made of gold, and the craftsmanship was remarkable. He knew he had never seen metal worked this beautifully and smoothly. Yet, it seemed very old and the strings appeared to be made of thin strands of crystal. He looked closely at the strings. They did not move to the music like they had been plucked. Instead, it seemed the crystals were vibrating to some unseen energy. An energy coming from Re-Nan.

Re-Nan marveled at the symphony of sound coming from the Lyre. He was sure it must be alive. But how? Just as he was about to pick up the instrument, the animal chirped three times and the female walked in the door. She smiled at him and Re-Nan noticed she must be about his age. She was dressed the same, but over her shoulders was a cloak

made out of fur much like the animal in the room. The animal bounced over to her and nuzzled her shoulder. Re-Nan felt certain the animal was a L-Lew.

The woman said suddenly, *Yes, she is called a L-Lew.*

Re-Nan jumped. *What?*

The animal. It's called L-Lew, she replied.

Re-Nan's eyes went wide. *How did you know what I was thinking?* he asked.

Rens can be telepathic with Skeats. Stories say that we have evolved differently because of our location above the Myst.

The Prophecy says that a long time ago we were more similar.

By the way, my name is Ky-Lyra. You were lucky to make it through the Myst. You would have not made it, if it wasn't for L-Lewminous here.

At the mention of her name, the L-Lew stood up and chirped at Ky-Lyra.

Ky-Lyra looked at the L-Lew and said, *I thought for a long time that when L-Lewminous disappeared she was going below the Myst. Every time she returns, her breath smells like she has been eating lollins. Above the Myst there are no lollins, so I was sure she was going below.*

Re-Nan wondered how she knew so much about his world, like the lollins, when he knew so little about hers.

Ky-Lyra patted the L-Lew's head saying, *If she wasn't so important to us, I wouldn't mind her wandering so far. But I'm afraid some zealous Skeats might capture her. Or worse, kill her! Like they did all the other L-Lew's below. A few escaped through the Myst to us, but they don't reproduce well here, and we do not know how long they live. The L-Lew's cannot be caged or domesticated. If they are, they die. Our best healers do not know why. So we are forced to let them wander.*

But this particular L-Lew is quite special. Her power is much greater than all the other L-Lews. continued Ky-Lyra.

Re-Nan remembered how this L-Lew seemed to be able to keep the Myst at bay when they were in it. Somehow her trilling cleared his mind when the Myst was sucking him down. Recalling that thought, made him feel the pull of the Myst. He became light headed.

He came too hearing Ky-Lyra's voice saying softly,
Follow the sound of the L-Lew's song. The trilling of L-Lewminous popped him out of the fog in his mind. He found himself sitting on the floor feeling weak.

Ky-Lyra was bent over him shaking her head. *I must get you away from the Myst. At least for a while, so I can teach you the magic. You Skeats let your minds wander so. Here, the lure of the Myst will be too tempting. Tomorrow we must go. I must get you to Thera-wyl.*

And with that thought, she guided him back to the sleeping niche.

Re-Nan thought as he drifted off to sleep, **An-wyl! Am**
I really in Anwyl?

Chapter 3 - The Lesson of Focus

The next morning Re-Nan awoke to the strong smell of herbs cooking in a pot. The pungent aroma snapped his mind alert. He could see Ky-Lyra bent over the pot cooking. He noticed that she had packed all the herbs in the pouches. Small, full backpacks were leaning by the door, ready to go.

Ky-Lyra stood up and poured a hot liquid from the pot into a cup on the table. She motioned for him to come and drink the strong liquid. She said, *I know this doesn't smell very good, it is Spikewort tea. It will give you strength and keep your head clear of the Myst until I get you to Thera-wyl. There is one small patch of Myst that cannot be avoided between here and Thera-wyl. But this drink will help you.*

The thought of the suffocating Myst made Re-Nan gulp the liquid down quickly, slightly burning his tongue.

Ky-Lyra laughed, *If I had known, you would drink the tea that easily, I would have let it cool a little.*

With his mouth still stinging, she handed him a pack.

I know you are still weak and I'm sorry to make you carry a pack. Ky-Lyra explained, *But these herbs need to get back to Thera-wyl. I normally would have made two trips. But your presence, must be told to the Sa-Ma-Ky, as soon as possible. And once we are there, I will have a lot of explaining to do. In a few days we will start the season of Hal-wyst. During this time of the yoran, the Myst rises up to be even with the Walls of Serron. It is the time of sickness. Once the Myst rises, I will not be able to come back here in until the following season, Sa-wyst.*

Re-Nan nodded his head, as if all she had said made sense to him. The liquid worked quickly, he felt the strength coming back into his legs. He was ready to go.

L-Lewminous was outside the cabin looking down at the Myst. Ky-Lyra motioned to Re-Nan saying, *Try not to look at the Myst. If you do the effect of the tea I gave you will diminish more quickly. I do have more with me, but I'd rather not use it unless I have to. The herbs are very strong and will weaken your body over time if used to frequently.*

With that, they set off. Re-Nan felt strong and there was a lightness in his step. He tried to match Ky-Lyra's pace. As he watched her ahead of him, he noticed the lightness of her feet and realized how heavy his footsteps sounded on the trail.

Her gold hair was in one long braid down her back. As she walked along the trail, her braid swung in such a way that he knew what the trail was like in front of him. He focused on her braid instead of the trail or his feet. His mind seemed to slow. His feet felt lighter and the calling of the Myst faded from his mind. For a time there was peace inside. As the quiet settled in, he became aware of subtle things happening around him. He wondered if it were the effect of the herbs.

It seemed strange that as he focused on Ky-Lyra's braid, his mind freed up and his awareness sharpened. Everything became clearer in his mind. In many ways, Re-Nan felt as if he had just awakened from a very long dream. Here, in this place above the Myst, he felt that he understood himself better. He felt as if he belonged.

Argamae seemed a slow, numbing, and dense place compared to An-wyl, this was a land of light.

Ky-Lyra telepathically responded, ***Yes, you are in the land of An-wyl.*** For a moment, Re-Nan was not sure if he heard her physically or telepathically. But a split second after thinking that thought, she said in her clearer ringing voice, ***Yes this is the land of An-wyl.***

Intuitively, still reading his thoughts, she turned with a surprised look on her face. She asked, ***Did you just now hear my thought before my words?***

Re-Nan nodded his head affirmatively. Ky-Lyra stepped closer to him probing his eyes with her mind. He could feel her thoughts but could not quite understand them.

Ky-Lyra asked, ***What were you thinking about right before you heard my thoughts?***

Embarrassed, Re-Nan looked down at his feet. He had never felt comfortable around Sa-Keats. He haltingly told Ky-Lyra of noticing the lightness of her step and how heavy his feet sounded on the trail. Then he continued telling

her how he was focusing on her braid and seemed to be aware of the trail without looking at it. He recalled the sense of peace that came into him, and then hearing her thoughts and thinking she had really said it, until she actually spoke right after.

She smiled with understanding. *You will be easier to teach the magic than I originally thought. The challenge for you, will be to learn to focus your mind on pleasant, neutral things. You seem to have a natural talent. No wonder you made it through the Myst. Most Skeat's minds are chaotic inside, but yours is different. Have you spent much time alone?*

Yes, Re-Nan said, wondering how she knew so much about Skeats.

Hearing him again, Ky-Lyra replied, *I have been watching Skeats for a long time. Our Prophecy says that very soon, we will be coming to a time where a Great Merging will begin.*

Chapter 4 - Lessons of the Morian

Ky-Lyra began to explain, *Thousands of yoran ago, there was a powerful Magician named Za-loc who desired to control all the land and its people. He was the last of the Morian Magicians left here after the explosion of the Night-mir-Sun. His people had slowly died out over the Yoranium. The Morian at one time were immortal. Za-loc's mind became obsessed with power and finding a way to become immortal again. He wanted to keep his memories and knowledge alive for eternity.*

It has been said, that the Morian came from another place far beyond here. They had great magic and once made large cities of reflective metals. They had somehow learned to harness the energies of the solar winds with their magic. This energy powered the factories that made the metals for their great cities. As the Morian's skills grew, they began making magnificent temples of sound and light. Their culture generated incredible pieces of beauty, music, and art before the Great Collapse.

The Great Collapse? said Re-Nan. *What was that?*

Ky-Lyra explained patiently, *It was the time, long ago, when this planet had two suns in the sky. It was the reason they had come here. There was a Red Sun and a Gold Sun. The Morian had learned to harness the energy from the winds of two suns. At some point, the Red Sun began getting brighter and brighter. At first they thought this was good. The crops did better. There was more energy for the cities. Even the temples of sound and light, began generating music far beyond anything anyone had ever heard before or since. It seemed a Renaissance for art and culture. The people seemed happy, until the Priestesses began to worry that the Red Sun might be getting ready to explode. Many had been seeing it in their meditations. The Morian art began to reflect the acceleration of the energy that was accumulating.*

Ky-Lyra continued with the tale. *However, the Magicians wanted the energy to keep going. They began to be influenced by the enormous power of the energy. The Priestesses knew that there must be a balance in everything. They wanted to harness less of the energy from the solar winds. They sensed a dark energy behind the light of the Red Sun.*

The Magicians would not heed their warnings. They became more and more obsessed with the power of the light. They kept creating more ways to harness the solar wind. Thus, the Magicians became controlled by the dark force in the light. Their minds became polluted by dense thoughts of greed and power. The Magicians then began fighting amongst themselves. The Priestesses started secretly moving the valuable instruments and pieces of art out of the Temples. These were moved to protected places. A series of Gates were created so only people with specific gifts and clear intent could enter.

When the Magicians discovered what the Priestesses were doing, their rage pulled them together. They decided to use the energy of the solar wind to find the lost treasures. The Magicians began to focus their energy into the Vision Stone at the center of the city.

The Magicians knew the power of the Priestesses was strong. They would have to work together to recover the Keys and find the lost Gates. The Magicians thought that the Gates were being protected by the energies from the solar wind. But the Priestesses knew that this power source could

not be trusted anymore. The Priestesses had found ways to tap into the energy of the land to protect the treasures. They placed certain animals and earth energies to be the guardians, markers, and guides to the Keys.

The ancient Prophecy call these, 'the Keys of Consciousness.' The Keys teach the knowledge necessary for the Gates to be entered. Once the seal on the first Gate has been broken, all the Gates are more vulnerable to be penetrated by the dark magic. The Prophecy says that only one soul will be able to penetrate all the Gates and merge their collective energy to create the healing for the land. This soul will be part Skeat and part Ren. He will carry the understanding of the Myst inside him, and the power of the Night-mir-Sun. His challenge will be to find the lost Gates, and bring them together. Then, he will challenge the Magician Za-loc one final time in the Shadowlands of the Nemian. If he fails, the negative magic will have control of the sacred knowledge and this land will be lost forever.

One part of my work is to search for the Keys and Gates in Argamae, said Ky-Lyra.

Curiosity forced Re-Nan to ask how she searched for them when she had never been to Argamae.

She replied, *Unfortunately, when the Magicians pulled the energy through the Vision Stone, they didn't know what the Priestesses had discovered about the earth energies. The Morian had been so focused with their minds one-way, that they did not understand the Stones and rocks were alive.*

She continued with the story, *According to the legend, one Priestess, named Lethiel, spoke to the Vision Stone before the Great Collapse. Lethiel explained to the Stone what the Priestesses were doing and why. The Stones talk to each other by some unknown means and the Vision Stone had been watching their progress. Lethiel warned the Vision Stone that its power might be used to override the protection of the Gates. Because it was earth energy, this Stone could penetrate their defenses. The Priestess explained that the Magicians did not yet realize that this Stone was a living entity. The Magicians believed it was their power, plus the energy of the solar wind that made the Vision Stone work.*

Lethiel explained that it was imperative that the Magicians did not uncover their secret Gates.

The Vision Stone was quiet for long time. No doubt it was speaking with the other Stones. Eventually it spoke softly to her. The Vision Stone's name was Vorian. Vorian said that the consensus was for him to be sacrificed. The plan would be that as they pulled the energy into him, he would allow himself to be shattered, ending his existence as he knew it. The Vision Stone explained that the explosion of energy would create a great destruction, and most of the cities would be destroyed. He said after the explosion, the fragments of the Great Vision Stone would be powerful, but a part of the dark energy of the solar wind. Most of him would become dust. But a few pieces might be used by a dark Magician remaining. After the explosion she must find those pieces and throw them into the Pit at Da-Nan-Da-Li. Only then would the Gates be safe.

Lethal agreed to this. Then Vorian made a heartfelt request. He asked her to break off a piece of him so that a small fragment of his seeing power could remain and be of service. He would place this part of him in her protection, but it was imperative that none of the dark energies come

into contact with it or even know of its existence. Vorian said that only one Priestess should know of its existence. The knowledge of it would be passed down from Priestess to Priestess. This smaller Stone would retain the ability to see. It must be encoded with the Gates and Keys. The Stone should remain a secret until the time of the Great Merging. With that thought, Vorian ask Lethiel to look inside him and see her future.

Chapter 5 - Lethiel and the Vision Stone

Ky-Lyra continued her story as Re-Nan listened.

Lethiel looked deep into the Vision Stone and saw the Magicians gathered around it. She saw a great surge of light that seemed to brighten the entire room. She then experienced the pull of their magic on the solar wind. But as they pulled on the wind, the sun began to explode. The force of their pulling combined with the outward solar explosion drew the energy in so quickly that the heat and force erupted through the Magician's bodies, enveloping them in fire. This happened so quickly the Magicians had no time to withdraw their magic. The full force of an exploding sun was pulled into the room. She saw the Vision Stone become white hot and shatter. The Vision Stone had become the focal point of the searing heat and light.

Viewing this almost made Lethiel faint. As the light and dust cleared in her mind, she saw all the cities of the Morian flattened for hundreds of octal. The devastation shocked Lethiel. It seemed no Magician had survived. Then she saw one, Za-loc, standing on a mountain far away from the cities looking down upon the destruction.

Through the power of the Stone, she was able to see that he thought the destruction was because of the Priestesses and the loss of the Keys. Za-loc vowed in that moment to find a way to rebuild the lost power. As she looked into his eyes, she could see so much pain and darkness. It made her blood go cold. She knew he had refused to come together with the other Magicians to pull the energy of the solar wind. His ego wanted to be in charge. He wanted to retain his separateness and power. But now he was alone.

Lethiel saw through the Vision Stone that a few of the Morian had survived, and their magic was fragmented. Many wandered about like hollow shadows of their former glory. Za-loc felt this pain, but buried his in anger and revenge. Lethiel could see he would look for any fragment of the Vision Stone to pull energy from the remaining sun.

Lethiel then saw herself searching for the fragments of the Vision Stone, but so was Za-loc. She managed to find four of the five Stones. However, Za-loc found the largest one. Just as she was about to throw the four into the Pit at Da-Nan-Da-Li, Za-loc came up behind her and a great battle

of magic ensued. The battle lasted for three days and in the end, Za-loc used his magic to turn her into a woody, rose bush on the edge of the Pit.

With despair, Lethiel watched him pick up each of the four Stones and put them separately in a pack. Together they had an ominous feeling to them. Having been transformed into a bush, she was unable to move from her spot. She was trapped by his magic. Her power drained, she had no choice but to wait for another Priestess to come so she could let them know the danger. Za-loc's power would now be considerable, but the form it would take was unknown.

Lethiel then viewed Za-loc trying to master these dark Stones. He did not realize that he could never master them. That Morian or not, nothing living could control them. They held too much power and that was the draw for Za-loc, unlimited power. What he had never obtained before.

After the explosion of the Red Sun, the upper atmosphere of the planet was covered in a grayish fog, further diminishing the light. Where the Red Sun used to be there was now a dark malevolent spot. It generated a strong magnetic pull on the planet, creating wider and wider cracks

into the earth where the cities once had been. The bodies of water would rise up and flow into the expanding cracks creating new seas where there had been none. All the low-lying towns had to be evacuated.

Za-loc became more and more obsessed with himself. His mind searched and hungered for the power to become whole again and return to his place of power among the Morian. He did not realize that the Stones were holding all the displaced negative energy from the explosion. The longer they were in his possession, the more the Stones affected his mind, creating a constant state of loss and disruption. His mind looped continuously in the negative energies, until he too became black, like the malevolent force in the sky. The pain kept him from feeling the loneliness. And his revenge was fueled by the darkness in his soul.

His twisted mind devised a plan to link the five Stones with a machine of his creation. He hoped to find the lost treasures and tools of power that the Priestesses had hidden. He decided that his magic and ability to see would be strengthened if the machine focused the power of the five Stones on him. They would pull the energy through him and he would try to connect to the remaining Gold Sun's solar

wind. If he succeeded in creating the link, and finding the lost treasures of Light, he believed he would be the most powerful Magician ever. Then he could command the other creatures of the planet to do his will. He would receive the respect and power that he had felt deprived of by the other Magicians. He would feel vindicated by them leaving him out of the great circle that created the Collapse. His mind now believed the reason the Magicians had failed was because of the treason by the Priestesses, as well as, him being left out of the circle.

The Stones continued to pull him deeper and deeper into their power, until he completely forgot the experience of love and compassion. He became addicted to the continuity of the pain and despair. The familiarity of the numbness made him believe he was safe.

Finally the day came when he was ready to try out his experiment. He had used the remains of one of the energy factories as his base, and he placed the five Stones into separate energy chambers. The Stone's energy would be focused and then sent to Za-loc in the center of the chambers. He would then reach up with his magic and draw in the solar wind. Hopefully, he could then see the locations

of the Keys and the Gates. As he stepped into the chamber, his deranged mind believed that the dead Morian Magicians were watching him, amazed at his brilliance.

He flipped the switch to activate the machine, and the Stone's darkness surged through him. He felt a hundred times more powerful, but it was a dark power. He reached up with his magic, but could not quite penetrate the gray energy high up in the atmosphere. His soul was now more dark than light and instead of pulling in the Light, he began pulling the grayish atmospheric Myst through his mind and soul.

At first, he thought if he pulled the Myst through, the light would follow. But the Myst was so dark and dense that it enveloped him and his soul imploded in a shriek of horror and pain. His soul merged with the Myst and his body disintegrated into nothingness.

Lethiel's vision ended. As she stepped away from the Vision Stone, her mind was reeling from the power and information of the Stone. As she took in a deep breath, she asks Vorian, what was to become of her? The image of her turning into a woody rose bush was quite a shock.

The Stone spoke softly, but gave no images, 'A Priestess to whom you give my fragment will search for you. She will find you and through the power of the earth magic in the Stone, will be able to speak to you. You must teach her how to use the Stone to connect all forms and all things so she may speak to you and tell your story. This is how the Prophecy will be passed down. The scent of the rose that you will become, is a Gateway of consciousness and protection. If the knowledge is ever forgotten the information is encoded in the scent of the rose. The rose will be called Lethia. It will be used by the Priestesses for meditation and initiation.'

Vorian continued, 'These flowers will only grow on the edge of the Pit at Da-Nan-Da-Li. Only those strong in focus, pure in heart, and willing to face their fears, will be able to pilgrimage to Da-Nan-Da-Li and gather up the flowers on the first passing of the Night-Mir-Sun over the apex of the mountain.'

'The passing of the Night-mir-Sun will bring illness and madness, the Vision Stone explained, 'to those who are weak and death to others. But the scent of certain plants will clear the mind of the madness and other herbs will heal

the illnesses. All the Priestesses must be taught the language of the land so the Myst will not completely envelope the whole planet. With this knowledge, the land will be safe for thousands of Yoran.'

'But there will come a time called the Great Merging, when the Myst will begin to rise up, pulled by the Night-Mir-Sun's close orbit to the planet. At that time, a bridge will be created between the land of An-wyl and the land of Argamae.'

'The gifts of these two lands will evolve differently. An-wyl will become the land of mystery and light, placed as it is above the Myst. Argamae will become the land of work and toil. The Rens will be protected by their knowledge of magic and energy. The Skeats will be protected by their steadfastness and determination, they will be a practical and down-to earth people. Those of Argamae will develop great strength by living constantly below the Myst. The Myst will make their lives hard, but they will learn to find joy in hard work and develop satisfaction for jobs well done. Their strength will be needed during the Great Merging.'

'One day, before the Great Merging, there will come a Skeat from Argamae. He will pass through the Myst with the help of one the Gatekeepers. When he comes, he must be taught the magic of An-wyl. The fragment of the Vision Stone will help the Priestess teach him what he will need to know. He will have a hidden magic that he will be unaware he holds. This will save him during the battles along his journey. He must return to Argamae before the second passing of the Night-Mir-Sun over Da-Nan-Da-Li. Za-loc will be searching for him always. As long as he is in An-wyl, the Rens will be in danger. The Rens will not have evolved the strength to handle long term exposure to the Myst.'

Thus was born the Myst of Za-loc-mir, Ky-Lyra explained. *All the atmospheric darkness was pulled into the area of the Great Rift and lodged in the low-lying areas. The Myst separated the planet into two parts. The Highlands became the area of An-wyl. The Rift held most of the Myst. Yet, there would be certain high points that remained clear. The lowlands that remained clear became Argamae.*

Ky-Lyra explained, *The Rens were uncertain what kept the Myst from descending lower and enveloping Argamae. They believed some of the Keys must be at the edges of the Rift. The Keys must be creating some sort of protection stopping the Myst from descending. The Rens had discovered some of the Keys but they could not completely decipher the meaning of the Gates.*

She continued, *Once a Yoran, the Myst, pulled by the dark energy in the sky, would rise up and try to enter An-wyl. The people had built walls out of sacred granite from one of the places they knew to be one of the Gates. The Stone repelled the Myst and kept the people from becoming too sick. But recently, the Myst seemed to be moving higher up the walls and the people were becoming more ill. Some of the old and weak were dying.*

The Prophecy, said Ky-Lyra, claims that at the beginning of the Great Merging, the Myst would rise up the Walls of Serron. The next sign would be that one of the Skeats would manage to penetrate the Myst with the help of a L-Lew.

Re-Nan breathed in sharply, *That's me, isn't it?*

Ky-Lyra nodded in agreement. Then she continued, *Now you see why I'm going to have a lot of explaining to do. There is more of the Prophecy to tell you. But for now, suffice it to say, that I understand the Skeats so well because I am the Priestess in charge of the One remaining fragment of the Vision Stone.*

Ky-Lyra continued the story, *Before Lethiel left the Vision Stone, she turned it upside down and broke off a small piece. She placed it in her dress and turned the Stone back over. If the Magicians had not been in such a hurry, they would have noticed the light reflecting differently on the Stone. Vorian told Lethiel that the existence of the fragment of the Vision Stone could be revealed only to the Skeat that penetrated the Myst and came to An-wyl.*

So, now you know. But only you and I may speak of this.
Agreed? asked Ky-Lyra.

Agreed, confirmed Re-Nan.

Good! Let us continue to Thera-wyl. We must be through the Myst before darkness sets in, explained Ky-Lyra. *The Myst is much stronger at night, more intoxicating. Remember to stay focused. I will give you a sip of the tea before we enter the patch of Myst.*

So off they went down the trail, L-Lewminous leading the way, Ky-Lyra and Re-Nan matching step and pace, loping along the ridge.

Chapter 6 - Lessons in crossing the Myst

As they walked along the ridge, Re-Nan felt as if they were suspended above the world. With the strong sunlight, the Myst did not seem as foreboding. The light penetrated the Myst reflecting rainbows of color back to them. Above the Myst, it seemed to him that the Gold Sun spoke to the land in its radiance. The voice of the light had a vibration, a song. He felt, as he walked, that he became a part of the dance of the light. In Argamae, the light seemed more diffused, less brilliant. He wondered why.

They had been following the ridge for quite some time when up ahead they could see a break in the ridgeline. They came upon it, Re-Nan looked across and saw that the span from the valley to the next ridge was approximately half an octal. As he looked down, the land seemed to disappear into the dark Myst below. He could not determine where the bottom was. Even the rainbows were not penetrating through the Myst. Re-Nan felt his heart go heavy.

Ky-Lyra had already put her pack down and was searching for something, when L-Lewminous came over to her and chirped

a sound. Ky-Lyra looked up at the L-Lew and Re-Nan knew there was some communication exchanged. Ky-Lyra's face became more serious and two lines furrowed her brow. She reached into the pack and pulled out a small pouch with some of the tea in it.

As she handed the tea to Re-Nan, she said, ***We do not have much time. Drink this quickly. L-Lewminous says there are Wall-a-dons below in the Myst. She says that they picked up our sound a few ridges back and have been following our progress. They know this is the only place they can stop us to capture you. If I had brought the Vision Stone with me, I could see where they are hiding. But it is not permitted to bring the Vision Stone near the Myst. We will need to rely on L-Lewminous to guide us through. She is very clever. But I am concerned that the Wall-a-dons know already of your presence. That will make it more difficult.***

Re-Nan drank the tea, listening, and then asked, ***What is a Wall-a-don?***

Ky-Lyra answered while re-packing the packs, ***When the Myst of Za-loc-mir enveloped the Rift, the animals and plants there were forever changed. At first many died and***

the decay of these life forces created a void in the energy of the Myst. It is an incomplete ecosystem. A lonely dying force permeating the dankness. However, certain animals and plants adapted to the energy in the Myst. They were actually mutated into the service of Za-loc by the Fragment Stones. It is amazing that you did not come across any on your first trip through the Myst. L-Lewminous is good about knowing where they are and avoiding them. For some reason they cannot track her as she moves through the Myst. It is as if she is invisible to them and all the negative vibrations in the Myst.

One time she and I were moving through the Myst, and we came upon a group of Wall-a-dons. They were searching for me. L-Lewminous had me lay down next to her. The Wall-a-dons walked so close I thought they would step on me. But they passed, as if they could not see us. It was the first time I had seen one up close. It stood on two legs and was three times the size of me. It had a horn like a protuberance above each shoulder that curved and pointed backward. Its head had a long snout that pointed down with long teeth extending below the jaw in the front. Its eyes were an eerie yellow-green color. Its ears angled back off its head and yet moved with every new sound. It seems they

find things through sound and their eyes cannot detect light, only shadow. They have a musty smell, pungent yet raw. Even though they seem primitive, they are intelligent and hear sounds octals away. They move quickly and if L-Lewminous lets us know they are close by, we must be still and wait until they pass before moving on.

The Myst has a disorienting quality to it. It enters your body and seeks out your weaknesses. Then, it seductively hooks you with empty promises that are designed for you to give up your will. It longs for control and power, still. The Myst feeds off disowned emotions such as hatred, lust, greed, fear and pain. If you want to escape from yourself or a part of yourself, that is where it will eventually drag you in. You have to be willing to face all your pain, own who you are, and accept what you have created in your life.

The Prophecy says that one day there will come a soul that will represent the bridge between Argamae and An-wyl. He will possess the strength of both lands and only he will be able to face all the challenges presented by the Myst. He will listen from and be guided by his heart and have the

***strength to heal and forgive the great pain held in the
Myst. Only then will the land become whole again.***

Re-Nan had finished his tea and felt strength coming back into his body. They gathered up their packs and Ky-Lyra brought out two long ropes. She attached one end of the first rope to L-Lewminous' neck, the other end to Re-Nan's waist. Then she attached the second rope to Re-Nan's belt and the other end to her waist.

Ky-Lyra explained that it was important for Re-Nan to stay as close as possible to L-Lewminous. Preferably, keep one hand on her at all times. Ky-Lyra would follow; making sure Re-Nan did not stray from the L-Lew. Ky-Lyra also explained she would be chanting a magical prayer the whole time they moved through the Myst. If Re-Nan heard her chant in his mind he could focus on the sound. It would keep the Myst thinner around them. She explained that once in the Myst, all trails would disappear. But L-Lewminous knew the way.

And with that, they descended from the ridge into the Myst.

CHAPTER 7 - The crossing to An-wyl

As Re-Nan got closer to the Myst, he could feel its presence. The herbs kept his head clear, so he was much more aware when they entered the Myst. The force of the Myst's presence was almost suffocating. The L-Lew boldly entered apparently unconcerned by the Myst, but aware of something lurking further in. L-Lewminous' eyes were sharply focused up ahead and her ears were straight up searching for sounds.

At first, they seemed to head straight down the hill into the valley. Re-Nan fell into a hypnotic state of consciousness. He focused on the energy coming off the L-Lew. The herbs were doing their job. The Myst seemed a faint noise in the background of his mind and his body was not getting as drained.

Suddenly, he felt the L-Lew's back tense up and her feet seemed to dig into the soft soil. Then, she took a sharp turn to the left. Her pace picked up and he began to strain in his breathing. As he began to breathe in more of the Myst, the intoxicating effect in the Myst began to take more of a hold inside.

His mind started to wander and he found himself thinking about his life in Argamae. He didn't notice he had let go of the L-Lew until the rope pulled him out of his mind dreaming. He heard Ky-Lyra speak almost in a whisper behind him.

Are you all right? she asked.

Re-Nan snapped back into the present moment, ***Yes, Yes, I'm OK.*** As he walked back to the L-Lew he noticed she was staring behind them. Her nostrils flared and he felt a message of warning go from the L-Lew to Ky-Lyra. Then they were off again.

At some point they began to climb upwards. The Myst felt heavy and it pulled at his legs making each step an effort. Finally they emerged above the Myst. His lungs took in the lighter air as if he had been submerged under water too long. Re-Nan was gasping so much that the L-Lew practically pulled him up the hill to the ridge. As they finally sat down, Re-Nan looked back across the valley. But the ridge on the other side seemed different than the one they had left.

Ky-Lyra responded once again to his thoughts, *L-Lewminous knew there was a trap set by the Wall-a-dons on the other side. She had to take us down the valley a ways and brought us back up. And, just barely in time. Look!*

Still gasping, Re-Nan saw the sun setting over the mountain in the distance. In the darkness the Myst seemed to loom more ominously.

Ky-Lyra now said, *We will need to find shelter. There is a protected Gate a short distance away. We are now a long walk from Thera-wyl. L-Lewminous had to take us a distant way around to get past the Wall-a-dons.*

Let us keep moving. The Myst here is unpredictable, until we get to the Cave.

It got darker, and they continued on. Re-Nan never saw a trail but within a short time they came upon the base of a cliff. It could be seen even from a distance. The cliff seemed to glow. At its base was a small opening from which a small stream was coming out.

Ky-Lyra said, **Watch your head.** She bent down and entered the cave.

As Re-Nan entered, he saw that the cave opened up inside and became as high as a Klerrok tree. It was so wide; he could not make out the width in the darkness. The moss in the stream reflected a soft light and they followed the stream deep into the cave.

Chapter 8 - The cave of Garn

The trio reached what seemed to be the back of the cave. Re-Nan looked up and saw a shimmering cascade of light. It was a spring coming out of the wall high overhead. The water whispered out of the wall forming the stream they had been following.

Putting down her pack, Ky-Lyra said, ***We can rest here.*** The cave vibrated with her words.

The L-Lew went up to the spring and drank deeply. It seemed to Re-Nan in the strange light, that as the L-Lew drank, her coat became more luminous. The brightness began radiating outward from this remarkable animal. The cave appeared brighter and the spring seemed to softly welcome them.

Ky-Lyra brought Re-Nan some of the water from the spring. He drank deeply. The water held a crystalline quality. It tasted heavy with minerals. As he drank, he felt himself calming down. This water had a soothing quality to it. He could feel it pushing the density from

the Myst out of his body. He looked down and could almost see a slight fog coming off his skin and disappear into the ground.

After many cups of water, he felt better and his spirit picked up again. Re-Nan now looked more thoroughly around the cave. It was shaped somewhat like a large mushroom. Sheer cliffs, yet high up, a ledge was running the entire upper circle of the cave. Something drew him to want to go up there. He did not know what.

Ky-Lyra answered his mental question once again, ***That whole upper ledge is a Gate. We know that but we cannot figure out how to get up there. The cliff face is too sheer and the rocks are slick and damp with the moss. We know part of the opening of this Gate. Watch!***

With that, she stood up and walked over to the spring. L-Lewminous followed. She lifted her hands, palms upwards, above her shoulders and began to sing a tone. The sound began reverberating throughout the cave, echoing. As the sound hit each wall, the tone subtly changed reflecting back to the originating wall. The sound grew in volume and Re-Nan could feel the sound penetrating his body. The cave

seemed to be talking to him. At the same time, it seemed to be scanning his soul to see who he was. In a strange way, he felt as though the cave knew who he was deep inside. The water he drank, reflected Re-Nan's energy back out to the spring. Somehow, the spring recognized him.

Suddenly, the L-Lew began to make a hooting sound and it combined with Ky-Lyra's song. The room began to dance with light and the sounds became colors of light, bouncing off the reflective angles.

The cave pulled at him to sing, also. Re-Nan had often sung in the woods by himself. He let out a low resonant tone. The sound blended with the others and a place in the spring began to change. The water changed course, creating an arch around something in the wall about an arms length up the wall. The toning had focused Re-Nan's mind again, and he suddenly heard Ky-Lyra think, ***Wait, this has never happened before!***

The L-Lew stepped toward the wall where the water was no longer flowing. L-Lewminous placed both front paws up on the cliff trying to get a look into a small hole.

With that, they all stopped toning and the light dimmed in the cave. Ky-Lyra ran over to the spot where L-Lewminous was. She tried to reach into the hole, but could not quite reach it. Now, Re-Nan stepped forward drawn by something.

Skeats are taller than Rens, he said, ***Let me try.***

Re-Nan reached in and felt the moistness of the moss in the hole. The space was deep. His arm reached in and then down almost the full length of his arm. His fingertips felt something. He put his hand around it and pulled. There was the sound of Stone sliding and then unlocking. It seemed as if the cliff was moving!

All three of them jumped back. Seams in the Stone erupted in light. The sound of moving Stone reverberated in the cave and a song of untold beauty enveloped them. The cliff opened revealing a hidden chamber bathed in soft light behind the wall of water.

The song was coming from the chamber itself. The three of them walked cautiously up to the room being revealed. It was carved circularly into the cliff. The Stones in front had been perfectly placed and fitted as a door. The

mechanism for operating the door, still hidden. Re-Nan thought that some master builder must have designed this a long time ago. He had never seen this type of masonry before. It was a marvel to him. In the center of the room was a pedestal carved into a star. On top of the pedestal was a large red crystal, as tall as the L-Lew. Around the room were engraved letters. No doubt explaining this place. Ky-Lyra began looking closely at the letters on the walls. Re-Nan recognized that she understood what was written there. As Ky-Lyra focused on the letters, the L-Lew went up to the singing crystal. The L-Lew and the crystal seemed to be communicating.

Then the L-Lew turned towards Re-Nan and he knew the crystal wanted him to come closer. His hand instinctively reached out to touch the crystal. Then, he felt and experienced the soft song of the crystal himself.

Welcome Father of the One
Who will give birth to the Son

Today your life will be known
To the Rens and to the Stones.

*Remember that your life is blessed
And with Sa-Rens you will find rest.*

*A great sacrifice will be the cost
Of the Merging once thought lost.*

*I am the First, my name is Garn
You are now a part of this yarn.*

*Unworthiness, you must face
Trust your heart and follow grace.*

*Innocence is the Gate
That you hold and is your Fate*

*Your presence opens my song anew
The other Gates will hear you, too.*

*Now your journey will begin
Follow L-Lew, and all will win.*

*She knows the path from long ago
She connects Light from high to low.*

*Take the path to Thera-wyl or
Before Myst will it fill.*

*Remember, there will come a time
When inside, you will pine.*

*This great loss will seal your fate
The only way through the last Gate.*

*Do not despair! A time will come
Where what is lost, returns home.*

*Love leaves not—it changes form.
Remember this and do not mourn.*

*You will come again to be with me
Before you are old with frailty.*

*Your grandfather was a Ren
Lost to us for many Yoran.*

*You hold his knowledge deep inside
Search yourself and you will find*

*The Keys he held are in you
Follow your heart and the L-Lew.*

*In the future, you will come
At that time, will be plus one.*

*Begin your journey again, here.
Remember, when you are old in yoran*

*Where you start, must you end.
Come full circle back again.*

*With you comes a grandson
His name will be Am-Eron.*

*He is the secret to the Whole.
Merging is born with his soul.*

With that, the crystal still sang, but Re-Nan could no longer hear words, only beautiful music. Re-Nan looked at the L-Lew and her eyes were whirling in excitement and wonder.

As he stepped away from the crystal, the song continued to repeat in his head. He realized the repetition of the song would imbue it in his memory forever.

Now he saw Ky-Lyra step towards the crystal drawn by its music and power. Re-Nan saw her hand touch the crystal and her face visibly relaxed. The singing was such a personal experience for him that he stepped away to give her a private moment with Garn.

This gave Re-Nan an opportunity to explore the cave. In the center of the circular chamber the floor was also engraved with a star. At the tip of each point in the star, it looked like there was a space to place an object at the tip. In the wall opposite each point was a small hole in the wall. Re-Nan had no idea what the holes were for.

Hearing a sound behind him, he turned back to Ky-Lyra. Her face was in her hands and she was crying. Surprised, Re-Nan went over to her and put his hand on her shoulder. Her breath shuttered in her small chest and he realized how tiny she was. He felt delicate like a bird.

The spell of the crystal seemed broken and she looked up into Re-Nan's face. Their eyes locked and in that moment a feeling deep in Re-Nan's chest was touched. He had seen her as so strong before. In this moment, she seemed vulnerable by the depth of her experience with the crystal.

Briefly he saw her essence in her eyes. Then he saw her gather up her courage with a deep breath, and she gently stepped away from him.

Re-Nan felt uncomfortable, like the first time he tried to ask another Sa-Keat out when he was younger.

Not knowing what to say, he simply asked, ***Ky-Lyra are you all right?***

She answered, ***I am tired. Let us rest. Tomorrow we will be in Thera-wyl.*** With that thought, they stepped out of the small chamber. The walls closed the opening and the waterfall returned to its original pattern. They were back in the dark shimmering light of the cave. L-Lewminous curled up on a soft patch of ground and was asleep before Ky-Lyra or Re-Nan had unpacked their blankets. The silence

of the cave kept them to their own thoughts. No doubt they were both hearing their own songs from Garn in their heads.

As Re-Nan fell asleep, he knew that this life as he knew it would never be the same. That night he dreamed of the Myst descending on Argamae.

CHAPTER 9 - Journey to Thera-wyl

Re-Nan awoke to L-Lewminous nuzzling him. He opened his eyes and saw that the cave was lighter. Sunlight streamed into the cave from the opening. The angle of the light coming in through the doorway let him know that the sun was barely rising. He woke up more refreshed than he expected. After spending so much time in the Myst, he wondered if he would even be able to move. But the cave had given them their life force back. He could feel the water of the cave enlivening his bones—somehow making them stronger.

He felt present, grounded, and ready for the adventure. The song still rang in his head, though more softly. Some of this song he did not understand. He wondered what the great loss would be.

As he sat up, he saw Ky-Lyra had made them some tea. She smiled at him in a shy glance. And, he felt uncomfortable again.

They quietly drank the tea and ate some of the food supplies they had brought with them. Re-Nan felt famished. He realized that since his first trip through the Myst he had not eaten very much. The cave seemed to calm his fears and as the fears abated, he noticed his hunger more. He thought how much the Myst was like a narcotic. It made you think you were fine, but it really was weakening your body. The Myst promised to fulfill your greatest desire, but could not give it to you. Yet, the lure of the promise seemed so real while under its power.

Re-Nan's thought was broken by Ky-Lyra saying, ***There, we are ready to go. It will take us half a day to get to Thera-wyl.*** They shouldered their packs and the three set off across the meadow towards a high peak in the distance. They followed the ridge for a time, but then cut-off towards the mountain directly. Soon they found a good Stone-lined path, and Ky-Lyra seemed relieved.

She said, ***All the paths to Thera-wyl are protected with magic. Special Stones are placed along the side to keep the path clear of Myst. This was a precaution told to the Vision Stone Priestess by Lethiel. Now the Myst is far below, but Lethiel spoke of a time before the Great Merging***

where these pathways will be the only way to get from city to city. If you see any trail that periodically has these blue Stones along the side, it is protected and you will be safe. But you must not dawdle if the Myst is close. It can still lure you off the trail.

Once they found the trail they seemed to move more quickly toward the mountain. The Myst was further away and its effect lessened on Re-Nan.

Up ahead, Re-Nan could see a mountain surrounded by a great wall. A city covered the whole top of the hill. There was one Gate and four other trails connected in front of it.

The Gate was arched with five great Stones holding the arch up. Re-Nan sensed the Gate's power, and he wondered how anyone got those huge Stones up to the top of the arch. His eyes saw energy around the Gate, but he had no idea how he saw it. The energy emanated outwards from the opening. As they entered, the Gate's field, he felt as if someone had placed warm arms around him.

Ky-Lyra spoke three words in another language and the energy of the Gate softened. As they walked through Re-Nan

looked back and thought just for a moment that the Gate was staring at him. Then a whispering went through the ground up towards the city.

Ky-Lyra said, ***The Sa-Ma-Ky will be waiting for us at the Temple.***

Re-Nan sensed the Gate had sent the message

.

They continued up the path, and when they went around a bend in the mountain, Re-Nan saw the city ahead. The buildings were made out of blocks of Stone. Where there were any joints in the Stone an odd vine- like a plant grew. Re-Nan knew this plant was unfamiliar to him, so he asked Ky-Lyra about it.

She said, ***It is called E-yoke. It protects the weak joints in the Stone. It prefers to live high up on the mountains. This type of Stone and this vine are symbiotic. They are always found together. The Stone is called, Botak. The Stone nourishes the plant and the plant in turn protects the Stone.***

Re-Nan took a closer look at the wall. The plant seemed to have no roots, unless they were buried in the Stone itself. Its leaves were green and red. The Botak Stone was green and white. He reached out to touch the E-yoke plant and the vine enveloped his hand like a handshake.

Surprised, he felt the plant's warmth. He expected it to feel cool, but it was warm like an animal.

Ky-Lyra laughed, ***E-yoke is such a flirt. It is by nature a happy plant and prefers lots of company. That is why it thrives in cities.*** The E-yoke released his hand and the threesome continued on.

They crossed paths with other Rens on the street. Quite a crowd began to follow them. Many were carrying empty baskets and seemed to be heading out somewhere. But on seeing the trio, they turned around and followed them up to the highest point and the Temple.

Re-Nan noticed how much taller he was than any of the Rens. They were all slight and bird-like, as Ky-Lyra was.

Ky-Lyra spoke to him, *Please forgive them they have never seen a Skeat before. At least not up close. Some of our artists paint them in pictures though. This is the end of Sa-wyst. It is harvest time. They bring the crops in from the lower valleys. When they empty their baskets, they go back out again. The farmers are going to wonder what has happened. But this is an exciting moment for the Rens. Some day they will tell their grandchildren that they were there when the first Skeat entered Thera-wyl. I don't have the heart to tell them to leave. I hope you don't mind.*

Re-Nan smiled and said, *No, it's fine. I think I am as fascinated about your world as you are with mine.*

He looked up and saw that they were almost to the end of the trail. The Temple before him was probably the largest Stone structure he had ever seen. The Stones were the same as the other buildings but they were made from much larger blocks. The vine growth of the E-yoke was more prolific.

At the base of the stairs stood many Rens, males and females, dressed as Ky-Lyra was, with the same unusual fabric.

The throng of Rens following them went silent and Ky-Lyra said, *Greetings, Sa-Ma-Ky! I bring you the beginning of the Prophecy. This is Re-Nan, a Skeat from Argamae. He was brought to me by L-Lewminous while I was preparing herbs at the Lyre house.*

Everyone in the crowd drew a deep breath and then went silent again, not wanting to miss any of the words spoken.

Re-Nan looked up and the smallest, oldest Sa-Ren spoke. *Greetings, my Daughter, she said. Your journey has been whispered to us by the land these last few days. We are all anxious to meet with you.*

Then the Sa-Ma-Ky spoke to L-Lewminous, *Gentle one, go see your friends. There is food and bedding for you in the shelter. Ky-Lyra, please show Re-Nan to the De-Myst chamber.*

Speaking now to Re-Nan she said, *I am filled with gratitude and wonder for your coming and I wish greatly to know your story. But you are all tired and the Prophecy says that upon your arrival, you must be replenished with your*

*life force as a great adventure awaits you. Allow us to
serve you with our magic and nurture you with our food. We
will meet on the Yaro.*

That spoken, the Priests and Priestesses parted and the
trio passed into the Temple of Sa-Ma.

Chapter 10 - The Kaz-i-mir Stone in the Temple of Sa-Ma

Upon entering the Temple, L-Lewminous bounded up some stairs towards a large door that opened onto a green lawn. She chirped as she went and Re-Nan heard a resounding trilling answering her. The sound made him happy inside.

Ky-Lyra took him down some stairs towards a large ornate door below. It was made of a reflective black Stone. The black was so black, it became purple in the light. They entered and Re-Nan saw in the center of the room was a large Stone shaped into a bowl, somewhat like a shallow tub. The Stone was the same color as the door, a blackish purple.

Ky-Lyra explained to him that this Stone, Kaz-i-mir, absorbs the Myst. It is strongly magnetic. When any one lays on the stone, time seems to stop. The Stone changes the magnetic pull in your body to the opposite end of the spectrum. That is why time will seem stand still. For a moment, you will be suspended between this reality and another. There is no danger to you. While suspended, there is a possibility of visions and answers to questions. If you remember to stay focused, the images will be clear and

concise. The Myst sometimes holds chaotic images of pain from the past. Do not focus on them. They will pass as the Stone does its work.

Ky-Lyra said, *I do not know how long the Stone will keep you suspended. But when you revive, go to the door and a Priestess will be there to serve you food. This process must be done alone. Remove your clothes and place them on that other Stone. They too will be cleared.*

I must leave now, she said. *Enjoy your rest. I will meet you on the yaro.* Ky-Lyra turned and walked out the door.

Re-Nan wanted to say something to her as she went away, but before he could think of what to say, she was gone. He felt strangely lonely, but then thought that it was silly to feel that way. She was only in the next room. No doubt trying to explain his appearance to the Sa-Ma-Ky. The room seemed so quiet, it was almost uncomfortable. His head felt very loud in this room. When they were walking and talking, he did not seem to notice all his thoughts. But in this room of silence, his thoughts seemed deafening.

He took off his clothes and placed them on the smaller Stone. To his amazement, the Stone seemed to soften under the weight of the clothes. To the touch it was soft and giving, like a bed, yet shiny black-purple on the outside. It molded to his clothes and his hand.

He then went over to the large Stone and sat down on its edge. It gave under his weight. He expected the Stone to be cold, but instead it picked up the warmth from his body and radiated it back to him. He laid back and instantly felt himself be transported somewhere else...

Blackness enveloped his mind. But the color was inviting, quiet, and peaceful. He felt his mind relax its normal protective control. The black was so empty, so vast.

Then Re-Nan saw space. The blackness of space with the stars glittering above him. He looked back and saw the planet below him. In front of him loomed the Night-Mir-Sun pulling at him; its magnetic force drawing him into its darkness.

He could not resist the pull of it, and he felt himself surrounded by the crushing weight of its implosive energy.

Downward and deeper inward he went. Fears from his childhood started flashing in his mind, so many of them, that he felt himself reeling. Like the time the boy at school teased him. Instead of facing the boy, the young Re-Nan, ran away into the woods. pretending like it didn't matter. Re-Nan wondered at the many times he had run from fear rather than facing it. He felt the density of his own fear, how it immobilized him, and kept him separate and alone. Then the aloneness overwhelmed him. That was the great hook of the Myst. His own denial of his pain had hooked him in it.

Suddenly, the energy of the Myst once again called out to him. He saw the arrogance and pain of Za-loc, trapped in the Myst, searching like a hungry Dol-lof for light and power. He noticed how the Myst felt separated from it's home. The Myst wanted to go home. Such pain and loss in the Myst. Re-Nan realized that the Myst was simply searching for a way to go home. Searching for someone to have the power to send it back to the Night-Mir-Sun.

He sensed that the Myst was a life force unto itself, trapped here unwillingly, separate from Za-loc, yet conjoined. First, it had been trapped by the Magicians in

the atmosphere of the planet. Then it had been brought all the way in by Za-loc's need for power.

Re-Nan realized that the Myst kept trying to communicate to the people of An-wyl and Argamae. But when they denied any of their pain, the pain in the Myst would overwhelm them and they would be defeated by the vastness of its pain. Below the pain in the Myst a voice beckoned him toward wholeness, and balance. Only then could the energy of the Myst be freed from the cage created by Za-loc in the Rift.

Then a shape began to take form in his mind. It was the essence of Za-loc in the Myst. His eyes were red hot with the greed and hunger in his soul. The form was menacing and permeated with hatred.

Again, Re-Nan felt the fear again rise up inside him. Someone would have to separate the energy of Za-loc from the Myst. He did not know how he knew that, but he did. Then he saw how Za-loc's connection to the Myst was from the remaining fragments of the Vision Stone. Those Stones had to be found and thrown into the Pit at Da-Nan-Da-Li.

Now he could see the Stone fragments dark and polluted with the negative force of evil. The fragments were in the center of the Rift at the deepest point in the Myst. He knew somehow they had to be reached and brought out to Da-Nan-Da-Li. But how?

He could feel their heavy, fearful energy. He did not know anyone capable of carrying them that far without getting seduced by the energy of Za-loc. He saw how these fragments still focused Za-loc's darkness, and anything that came near them became a dark soldier of Za-loc-mir.

That was what had happened to the Wall-a-dons. They were lured by the voice of the fragments into its service. But Za-loc and the Myst were separate energies connected only by the Stones.

Re-Nan realized though that even with the Stones gone, he still did not know how to help the Myst get back to Night-mir-Sun.

Then he realized that he, Re-Nan, was to destroy the fragments of the Vision Stone, by throwing them into the Pit

at Da-Nan-Da-Li. The thought overwhelmed his senses. Him?
How could he do this?

Then he heard the song from Garn again singing in his
head.

*Welcome father of the one
who will give birth to the sun.*

*Today your life will be known
to the Rens and to the Stones.*

*Remember that your life is blessed
and with Sa-Rens you will find rest.*

*Five challenges awaiting you
to complete the old create the new.*

*A great sacrifice will be the cost
of the merging once thought lost.*

*I am the first my name is Garn
you are now a part of this yarn.*

*Unworthiness you must face
trust your heart and follow grace.*

*Innocence is the Gate
That you hold and is your fate.*

*Your presence opens my song a new
the other Gates will hear you to.*

*Now your journey will begin
follow L-Lew you will win.*

*She knows the path from long ago
she connects the light from high to low.*

*Take the path to Thera-wyl
or the Myst will take its fill.*

*Remember there will come a time
When inside you will pine.*

*This great loss will seal your fate
only way through the last Gate.*

*Do not despair a time will come
where what is lost returns home.*

*Love leaves not it changes form
remember this and do not mourn.*

*You will come again to be with me
before your old with frailty.*

*Your grandfather was a Ren
lost to us for many yoran.*

*You hold his knowledge deep inside
search yourself and you will find.*

*The Keys he held are in you
follow your heart and the L-Lew.*

*In the future you will come
at that time will be plus one.*

*Begin your journey again here
remember when your old in yoran.*

*Where you start must you end
come full circle back again.*

*With you comes a grandson
his name will be Am-Eron.*

*He is the secret to the whole
merging is borne with his soul.*

Re-Nan thought, the five challenges are the five Stone fragments. Each one is holding at different challenge, a different lesson. The L-Lew would know the way. How he was to carry them to Da-Nan-Da-Li he did not know. Then the impact of some loss on the journey overwhelmed him. He could not see it, but the pain was great. Leaving him empty and spent. Then he saw himself holding a small, beautiful, girl-child - part Ren, and part Skeat. Light than filled up the darkness inside and there was hope. As the hope came in, he felt it was coming from the Myst itself. The Myst he realized was not bad, but simply yearning to go home. Itself a child separate from its parents.

He felt more strength come into himself. He would destroy the fragments and help release the spell of Za-loc on the Myst. That was the purpose of his journey here. It now was clear. As the Stone Kaz-I-mir began to release him he saw himself as an old Skeat walking with a young Ren/Skeat through the Myst towards the Cave of Garn.

Chapter 11 - In the council chamber with the Sa-Ma-Ky

Re-Nan opened his eyes and felt refreshed. So much seemed clear now. He felt anxious to learn the magic needed to go through the Myst. He no longer felt afraid of the Myst. However there was still an ominous feeling inside when he thought of the soldiers of Za-loc and the fragments of the Vision Stone. He knew he needed to ask the Sa-Ma-Ky how to handle the fragments. Maybe there was a magic to help him carry them to Da-Nan-Da-Li.

Re-Nan got up and dressed, then went to the door. Standing in the door was a Priestess dressed as Ky-Lyra had been. Re-Nan noticed his disappointment that Ky-Lyra was not the one to greet him.

The Priestess said, ***Greetings Re-Nan. My name is Ky-Ryc, I am to escort you to the courtyard where we will bring you food.***

As they walked up the stairs that L-Lewminous had so happily bounded up, he saw a beautiful courtyard, in the center of which was the oldest tree he had ever seen. He

judged the age of the tree not by its height, but by its width at the base of the trunk. The tree was knotted in its bark and had small soft leaves that reached up to the sun, on limbs that arched almost to the ground. Playing and jumping around the tree were many L-Lew's, of all the colors and sizes. Their eyes would whirl as they looked at the tree and for a moment he felt as if the tree were playing with the smaller L-Lew's.

The Priestess now spoke, ***This is the mother tree, her name is Sa-Ma. We call her the baby sitter. She is very good with the young L-Lew's.***

We do not have many L-Lew's that reproduce, but if they give birth around the tree, the baby L-Lew's almost always survive. The L-Lew's are very connected to Sa-Ma. We think the L-Lew's and Sa-Ma are probably the oldest surviving creatures besides the Stones.

Suddenly L-Lewminous bounded up to Re-Nan, chirping and nuzzling him. He felt a deep affection for the L-Lew. And she seemed already to understand the journey they would soon begin.

Ky-Ryc sat him in a place next to the tree, then she went off to get him food.

Re-Nan looked closer at the tree and saw that the bark was knotted and bumpy because the tree bloomed from its bark. Spaced out about a hands breath apart were tiny white and yellow flowers, the size of his small finger. They had a mossy-woody smell to them. They seemed like hundreds of eyes staring at him, evaluating his abilities.

The sunlight felt good and he relaxed into the ground beneath him. The L-Lew's bounced and chirped around the tree while the mothers of the babies fed nearby.

Soon the Priestess, Ky-Ryc, returned with a plate of unusual food. It looked like fruit and some type of cake.

The fruit was better than any Lumfruit he had ever tasted. Not too sweet but refreshing. The cakes were made out of a light grain, slightly nutty to the taste. He again realized how hungry he was, and ate four plates full.

Soul refreshed and stomach full, Ky-Ryc returned to escort him to the counsel chamber of the Sa-Ma-Ky.

L-Lewminous bounded along with them. She always seemed to know when her presence was required. They went down long hallways that went around the outside of the courtyard. They passed many doors and came to a simple door at the backside of the temple.

Ky-Ryc opened the door for them and they went inside. The room had many pink Stone seats at the back of which sat the Sa-Ma-Ky on a slightly larger stone chair. Sitting beside her was Ky-Lyra and Re-Nan felt his heart jump in his chest. On the other side of the Sa-Ma-Ky was a male who introduced himself as a scribe, named Sim-Ka.

There was a chair placed in front of the Sa-Ma-Ky for Re-Nan, and a pallet for L-Lewminous. L-Lewminous curled up, and Re-Nan sat down and looked at Ky-Lyra. She smiled at him saying, **You look refreshed now.** Re-Nan nodded his head in agreement.

Then the Sa-Ma-Ky spoke, **Ky-Lyra has informed me of your journey. However, I am anxious to hear what the Stone of Garn said to you as I believe it has a direct connection**

to the Prophecy, as well as your journey with the Kaz-I-mir Stone.

So Re-Nan recounted the song Garn gave to him and shared his experience in the De-Mysting chamber. Re-Nan got caught up in the telling of the story, so much that he did not see the shocked face of the scribe during parts, or the smile of the Sa-Ma-Ky or Ky-Lyra. When he was done everyone was silent till the last words were scrawled out by the scribe.

Then the Sa-Ma-Ky spoke, *Re-Nan you're grand fathers name was Re-Nan-Da-Ky. His name meant 'Great One of the temple at Da-Nan.'* *Da-Nan is the birthplace of the Stones.* She continued, *there are ten sacred sites in An-wyl. We expect there are ten in Argamae. This is the temple of Sa-Ma. The temple of the mother tree. The temple of Da-Nan is above the Pit at Da-Nan-Da-Li. It is the final resting point for any priest or priestess as a pilgrimage before they face the Night-mir-Sun, on the first passing of it over the apex of the mountain each Yoran. Re-Nan-Da-Ky was the head of that temple and during one of the initiation's he went to the Pit and then was never seen again. The Lethia*

told the Priestess that he was called by the Myst to find a way through to Argamae. No one ever knew if he made it.

The Sa-Ma-Ky continued with the story. *The reason the pilgrimage happens on that night, is because the closeness of the Night-mir-Sun separates the Myst slightly from the energy of Za-Loc. The power of Night-mir-Sun suppresses the negative energy of Za-loc, and for that night only Za-loc is contained in the five Fragment Stones. Even the creatures of the Myst return to their original form and are no longer under the spell of Za-loc*

The Sa-Ma-Ky said, *Now I understand that during that night, your grandfather could have passed safely to Argamae with the help of the Myst. You have been given part of his name to remind you and to tell us who you are. The name holds magic and power. So it will be our challenge to teach you your own magic, and to guide you to the dawning of your own awareness. You are already very advanced for no training and being in An-wyl has stimulated some of the magic to begin to open. No doubt, it is being helped along by the Stones. As you entered An-wyl, we all felt a great vibration from the Stones. They were talking so fast to each other we were hard pressed to understand them. Stones*

are rarely excitable but your coming has caused quite a shifting of energy in the land and rocks.

The Sa-Ma-Ky spoke more, *You see your grandfather's temple holds the Father Stone. This Stone is the oldest and Wisest in the land. It remembers times before we existed. The temple at Da-Nan is the highest temple in the land. And at the base of that mountain is the Pit of Da-Nan-Da-Li. We do not know how far down the Pit goes, but no one can see the bottom or has ever been there. Hot steam and gas come up from the Pit making it an inhospitable place to stay for very long. The Da-Nan Stone tells us that the Pit is the birthplace of old Stones. It is a huge caldera 13 octal's across. The temple at Da-Nan sits high above the caldera at the top of the greatest mountain in An-wyl. It is called simply, 'An'*

The Fragment Stones from the ancient Vision Stone have been darkened by the negative energy of Za-loc and the old Magician's, not to mention some of the pain and loneliness of the Myst, separated from its rightful place. Until the Fragment Stones are thrown into the Pit at Da-Nan-Da-Li the rest of the Prophecy cannot take place. The Land Stones are so excited by your presence, because they feel the pain of

the fragments and want them to be free. They know you hold the magic of your name and you can work with these fragments and carry them to Da-Nan-Da-Li. The Land Stones want you to free their brothers from their pain. Once the fragments are thrown in, they will go back to the center of the planet and become new Stone. Only then will the Myst have a chance to be freed. The five Stones hold five disowned emotions of the Morian.

- 1. Fear-largest Stone*
- 2. Pain*
- 3. Lust*
- 4. Greed*
- 5. Hatred*

The only way to be able to pick up and move the Stones to Da-Nan-Da-Li is to have faced these emotions inside yourself and to be whole and balanced. The energy that will balanced out the Stone of Fear is Love. For the Stone of Pain, Peace. For Lust, Acceptance of Creativity. For Greed, Knowing Abundance. For Hatred, Forgiveness of the Past.

Our job is to help you open to your gifts and talents so you can free the Fragment Stones of their pain. We will

teach you what we know of the magic, but the journey will be yours. Magic manifest differently in all, so you have begun the journey of the initiate. You will know when you are ready to go. No one but yourself can make that choice for you.

The Prophecy says that on your journey, you will travel with a L-Lew and one Priestess. You have begun with L-Lewminous and Ky-Lyra, but if you wish on your journey to change, you may. L-Lewminous is our brightest and strongest L-Lew. We still do not know the extent of her magic. Ky-Lyra is well versed in the magic of plants and the power of songs and music. This Stones tell us, you are well versed in the voice of the land and all its creatures. L-Lewminous believes that you often hear voices of many of the things around you. This is good. There are places in the deep Myst that evaporate sound. So, the only way to communicate sometimes will be telepathically. Ky-Lyra hears you very well in her head. And you have begun to hear her as well. We will guide you to more clarity with your abilities. These gifts are emerging quickly because you are above the Myst now. Below in Argamae the density numbs the mind. But being raised there, you have somehow mastered the density and still retained an intuitive connection to the land.

This gives you a great advantage. You will need that strength when encountering the fragments.

You will use this power to call the Fragment Stones back into the light. To do that you must go into the energy of each Stone. Pass through the overlying density and reach its core essence. Only then can the Stones be handled. Ky-Lyra and I will be your guides while you are at Sa-Ma. Eventually you must follow your own guidance and journey to the temple at Da-Nan. The Prophecy speaks that the journey must be experienced not necessarily understood. The pieces of the puzzle makes sense at the end of the journey. So release your mind and follow your heart.

Ky-Lyra has arranged for you to have quarters on the east side of the temple. Each side of the temple has an initiate room. One to the East, South, North, and West. As well as below the temple. This room you have already been to. That is where the Stone of Kaz-I-mir is. You may journey there again to get more clarity. Also the Sa-Ma tree is a meditation place. Listen inside to know where you journey to next. Order matters not, all paths lead to the same place.

You will see symbols in our land that appear to be a language. You have seen it at the Cave of Garn. This language is not mental it is a language of the land. The only way to translate it is to feel it in your body and journey with the sounds written. The letters are not words but tones of nature and life. Vibrations of energy. It is a language of mystery. The voice of the planet, of all things living here, and all things that have lived before now. Knowledge is passed down this way, and allows us to see the future. Therefore the Prophecy is to be experienced not read. You have begun this process with the Kaz-I-mir Stone and Garn. Ky-Lyra will help to teach you this language.

With that the Sa-Ma-Ky concluded the meeting. Her parting words to him were, *Listen to the Stones, they will be your best teachers, as they were your grandfathers'.*

Re-Nan stood up and even though he towered over the two Sa-Rens, he felt small around their knowledge and abilities. But his soul hungered for the journey. He knew somewhere inside was the answer to himself, and he was ready.

Ky-Lyra bowed to the Sa-Ma-Ky and Re-Nan tried to follow suit. L-Lewminous skipped out the door chirping and trilling and she went.

They exited the chamber and walked down the halls to the east side. Re-Nan could feel Ky-Lyra feeling his thoughts. His brain felt like a sponge filling up with water and expanding. Ky-Lyra's presence calmed him, and when they got to his room they still had not spoken a word. She opened his door and they entered a small chamber with a window looking out on the mountain to the east. The room was simple but comfortable. On the bed were clothes made out of the bluish/white skin of the temple initiates. In a bowl next to the head of his bed were dried flower petals smelling of Lethia.

Ky-Lyra now spoke, *The clothes will protect you can help you listen to your heart. They are made out of the skin of a Quil-a-bok. It is a large roaming animal that lives at the edge of the Myst. It has great inner strength and majesty. It is a quiet peaceful animal. When one dies, the Stones tell us where it is and we retrieved the skin and honor the death of this gentle creature. The Stones say that when the Myst of Za-loc-mir was created and the*

fragments were in the Rift. The Quil-a-bok came upon the fragments, yet somehow was not mutated into the service of Za-loc. Its peaceful nature could not be turned by the negative energy in the Stones; therefore it's skin is a great protection. Wear it with honor, she said.

Ky-Lyra continued, *The smell of the Lethia in the bowl will help your journey. Have some with you at all times. It can be rubbed on the skin, smelled, or eaten. If you need me, tell the Stones and I will come.*

Ky-Lyra then turned to leave. But this time Re-Nan felt something prompting him to say something to her.

Ky-Lyra?, he said. She turned and looked up at him quizzically. *Yes*, she responded.

I want to thank you, he managed to stutter out.

She smiled, and her eyes softened a little. *Your welcome. I am grateful to be chosen to assist you on your journey.*

Suddenly he wondered, what Garn had said to her to make her cry so in the cave. Hearing him in her mind, he saw her face darken for a moment. The quiet felt heavy, then she spoke.

I will tell you all, but in the right time. *My journey is part of a great plan. The completion of which I will have to wait a long time for. But do not worry. It is not the first time I have seen this vision. Ever sense I was a small Ren, I dreamed of it. The Stone of Garn just made the reason more clear. Sometimes you have to be willing to give up something in order to help a greater good. That is my path. You to will have to give up something. Remember what Garn song sang to you.*

'Love leaves not it changes form,' and

*'A great sacrifice will be the cost,
of the merging once thought lost.'*

What seems lost always comes back to us in other ways. Now, you need rest. I'll speak to you on the yaro and we will begin the instruction of your journey to find your magic. With a sudden impulse she took his hand. Looked

down and then turned and left the room. Re-Nan was left with many confused feelings running through his body. He thought how when he was near her, more questions came up in his mind than answers. He turned and looked out the window to the mountain and wondered where all the questions would lead him.

Chapter 12 - Dream, Re-Nan-Da-Ky and the Library of Song

That night as Re-Nan dreamed, he saw his grandfather standing, looking out a window toward the Pit at Da-Nan-Da-Li. As he watched Re-Nan-Da-Ky, he felt himself pulled into the body of his grandfather. Then Re-Nan realized he was looking out his grandfather's eyes, feeling his feelings and sensing through his magic, the struggle between the Myst and Za-loc.

Re-Nan looked up at the mountain and saw the Night-mir-Sun cross the apex. Filaments of light reach down from the Night-mir-Sun towards the Myst. He observed the animosity in the Myst lessen and a sense of peace return to the land. Then the Myst rose up from the Valley and flowed over the window ledge into the room where he, as his grandfather, stood.

The Myst curled around his feet like to sleeping L-Lew. He bent down to touch the Myst with his hand. Then he heard the Myst speak:

Great one, please this night

here the voice of my plight

*I wish only to go home
in the sky I should roam.*

*Walk with me through the Dale
I promise I will not let you fail.*

*To Argamae you must go
tonight the Stones will let you know.*

*How to pass and not get caught
by the pain still in Za-loc.*

*Your magic must be brought below
to help the Skeats know and flow.*

*Beyond the density of this time
show them their strength and open their minds.*

*There minds have slept for very long
they need your light and your song.*

He then saw his grandfather gather up a few things in a small pack and walk out into the Myst. His mind focused and unafraid, toward an unknown future.

Re-Nan woke up still feeling his grandfather's resolve. His mind was clear and focused, for a moment he noticed a soft rustling in the ground below him. He closed his eyes to focus on the sound. It sounded like leaves blown over dry ground. The Stones of the floor were whispering to each other. He felt himself sink into the whispering. As he became one with the Stones, the whispers became voices. Many voices of all varieties. He realized that the Stones heard dreams. His grandfather's dream had been heard and remembered by the Stones and they were giving him the experiences of his grandfather through the dreams.

Re-Nan thought back to when he was a child in Argamae. He remembered how he would sneak out at night to sleep under the stars. His dreams during those outings would be vivid. And those dreams would help him solve problems and answer questions in his life.

Suddenly, it dawned on him that he had always heard the Stones. They had taught him how to track animals, and how to resolve conflicts. He used to think it was his imagination talking to him, but now he experienced a wisdom that had always been with him. His parents spoke proudly of how self taught he was. He remembers his grandmother's smile when she would say, **No, he is like his grandfather.**

Re-Nan felt sad that he never knew his grandfather. But he fondly remembered hanging onto the words of his grandmother's stories of An-wyl. She had so much wisdom in her eyes, and he always felt she told him more stories than the other children in the village. Now he knew why.

He remembered sneaking up behind her one day while she was picking the herbs. At first, he thought she was talking to herself. But as he got closer, it seemed as if something was talking back to her. Just as he was about to surprise her, she said loudly, **I know you are there Re-Nan.**

He always wondered why he could never sneak up on her. He used to believe she had eyes in the back of her head. This thought made him laugh. No. It was more that she had ears in her feet. He felt the Stones laugh with him.

Re-Nan got up and got dressed. He picked up some Lethia and smelled it. It was very soothing to his senses. The clothing felt soft and comfortable. The leather was well worked and malleable. It fitted well to his body. Then the Stones tone changed, and he knew Ky-Lyra was on the way to his room.

He opened the door to her surprised face, her hand still raised to knock. He smiled saying, ***I think I'm going to like it here.*** She laughed.

Ky-Lyra said, ***I see the Stones have been busy once again.***

Yes, he replied.

They went out to the courtyard and ate breakfast with the L-Lew's. Re-Nan did not see L-Lewminous there.

After eating, Ky-Lyra took him to the library. It was on the west side of the temple. The walls were covered with books and when he opened one, there were no words, just those same strange symbols on the pages.

Ky-Lyra explained, *This is the library of natural history of An-wyl and Argamae. The books explain through vibration and experience, different plants, animals, and places of this land. Let's start with the book in your hand. Open the book slowly and follow the sound into the page. As you do follow my breath pattern. It will help you.*

He heard her breath, matched it, and slowly opened the page.

His awareness noticed a softly expanding symphony of sound and light. The song told the story of an animal from the beginning of its time. And as he allowed himself to fall into the music, a picture unfolded in front of him. He had never seen this animal in present time, but he felt its existence before the coming of the Morian. It was beautiful, long necked, and graceful. L-Ari it was called. Then the book took him into the animal, flowing and moving through its existence with it. The passage of time continued until the animals experienced the great collapse of the Morian. He saw the animal changed by the Myst into the present day L-Lew. He saw and experienced the great

help of the L-Lews had been to the Morian Priestesses; and, how they were the great connecting light through the rift. He saw the slaughter of the L-Lews in Argamae, a great tragedy that made him ill. Yet, some had escaped back to An-wyl. It had taken them yoran to recover their numbers. They lived a long time and matured slowly. He saw how they kept certain corridors open through the Rift for a time in the future, that only they understood completely. He experienced their great wisdom and their connection to the Sa-Ma Tree. Their magic seemed unlimited throughout this dimension and into the Nemian.

Re-Nan had not even realized he had turned the pages of the book all the way to the end, until they came back to real-time. Ky-Lyra was saying, ***There! You are a natural at this. I'm amazed how easily you flow into energy, other than your own. I now think that is what saved you the first time going through the Myst. You must have flowed your energy into L-Lewminous. Her strength kept you going.***

You are welcome to read all the books here if you wish. The more you understand this land, the easier it will be to follow your own path. As you journey, certain animals, Stones, or plants will vibrate more naturally to you. These

will align with you and be your support. They can make the difference between life and death when in the Myst. I recognize Stones are a large part of your power, but there must be balance in all things. Even the ghosts of animals and plants that no longer exist, can be a strength in you. Remember, you are an embodiment of all that has come before, and a support for what will be created in the future.

Re-Nan spent much time in the library. Some books called on him to pick them up. Others, he just wanted to see what they contained. As he read, he understood himself more and more. He felt many things were living and experiencing through him. His eyes were opened to the wonder of life and he began to see the energies connecting all things.

Chapter 13 - Learning the Morian Language of Song

Re-Nan was voracious in his appetite to learn and understand this vast world his mind had been opened to. To him it seemed that below the Myst, the minds of all things focused more on survival and were numb to the wonders and magic around them. Above the Myst, the possibilities opened and the true nature of himself and his power seemed easier to grasp.

As he continued his journey through the library he found a small section of books on Argamae. He asked Ky-Lyra why there were so a few books on the lands below the Myst.

She replied, *After the great collapse and the beginning of the Myst, the Rens were cut off from the land on the other side. It was only through the seeing Stone that they were able to understand about the development of some of the*

plants and animals on the other side. She explained that the L-Lew's also brought back bits of information on their forays into Argamae. But most of their knowledge was based on seeing through the Stone rather than the greater experience of the songbooks.

Re-Nan realized that he had much knowledge of the plants, animals, and places from Argamae. He asked permission from the Sa-Ma-Ky to learn how to write the singing language so he could share his knowledge with the Rens.

The Sa-Ma-Ky agreed, and led him to the North Wing, a room of a Stone tablets, with walls, ceilings, and floors full of symbols. The Sa-Ma-Ky explained, that this room held all the symbols of all the sound vibrations in the language of song that were known to them. A scribe was brought in to help him record the songs of Argamae. She explained that he was to think of an animal, plant, or place and the Stones would begin to ring a certain order, which the scribe would write down. Words were not necessary. She said that these Stones and symbols recognized that all life vibrated differently and as it moved through time and space it had a galactic signature that could be recorded by

tapping into his experience. As he thought about the subject, he must become the object and experienced it by being it. Then the song would be recorded.

Re-Nan and the scribe spent many weeks experiencing and recording the songs of Argamae. Often other Rens would come into witness the songs as they were being recorded. But Re-Nan was so engrossed in the process he rarely noticed.

Being above the Myst, he appreciated the subtleties of his land and he began to be more aware of hidden places that he had walked by, but for some reason had not further explored. He spoke to the Sa-Ma-Ky about these places and they both agreed that those were probably the lost Keys in Argamae.

They took special notice of these and kept them in a separate book for further study using the seeing Stone.

Ky-Lyra told him one day that the books he was writing were creating quite a stir in An-wyl. That others were coming from distant points in An-wyl to experience the new knowledge.

She told him that he unknowingly was fulfilling another part of the Prophecy. That the Skeats would share knowledge with the Rens, and the lands would begin to be reconnected to each other through song.

As Re-Nan continued to remember and create, he felt more and more connected to everything. He could feel the Stones listening. The E-yoke plant was so curious it was growing through the Stone and inside the room of sounds, wrapping itself around his feet. The air in the room became charged and vibrating, energetically moving towards some crescendo.

Then, one day it happened. Re-Nan had finely run out of things to experience and sing. So he decided to record his life from the beginning of his awareness to this point now in An-wyl. He focused and began. Again he was so immersed in the process that he did not notice that the sound vibrations began to change, subtly at first. The scribe ask him to stop as there were complex patterns happening that would require additional scribe's. Before he knew what was happening every scribe in the temple was busily writing different segments of the song. It was as if each scribe became one instrument in the symphony of sound.

The room began to vibrate differently. The Sa-Ma-Ky hurriedly gathered up all the Priests and Priestesses and focused their energy toward Re-Nan. The scribe's were dripping in sweat trying to keep up with the song. But the song was no longer about Re-Nan; it had turned into a song of the future.

Light began to radiate out of each person and through Re-Nan. He became so bright that no one could see him inside the light. It radiated through the Stone ceiling arching and connecting to all the sacred sites in An-wyl. Then it pierced through the Myst in trails of light. Connecting to unknown places in the Myst. Then through to Argamae and the sacred places there, and then directly up to the Night-mir Sun. The Night-mir Sun dipped low towards the planet and the blackness began to change. Flecks of multicolored light speckled its surface and the light was reflected back down to the Pit at Da-Nan-Da-Li.

Re-Nan felt himself be drawn mentally into the Pit. Deeper and deeper. It seemed endless. The walls were sheer, shiny blackness. Suspended in the dark came the voice of the Pit.

A voice rose up from the Pit saying, *No part can be left behind. Energy is energy. Energy cannot be gotten rid of, only transformed. Are you willing to sacrifice your personal desires for the greater whole of this land?*

Re-Nan felt the power in the statement. His core had already chosen and said, *Yes! I am ready!*

The voice of the blackness spoke again. *Your mission is to right the imbalance in the Myst. To bring the Fragment Stones to me to transform the negative energy held in them from the Morian and Za-loc. To carry the Stones you will experience the greatest fears and pains held in this land. To hold them, you must except your own pain and walk through your personal fears. If you cannot face the darkest parts of yourself, the Stones will trap your soul, and all will be lost. You have been chosen for your courage and physical and mental stamina. Plus the power that runs through your line every other generation. Your grandfather began this journey,... your grandson will complete it. Your place is to transform the negative energy of the Morian and restore the balance to the land. Your grandson is to free the Myst and send it back home to the Black Sun. To do*

this, he must find all the Keys and bring them back to the Cave of Garn. The negative must be healed before the light can be re-borne. The Stones will guide you. Listen to them. They want to help. The Fragment Stones speak lies and fallacies. Do not be seduced by their call to power. They can fulfill nothing. Bring them to me and the pain will be healed and the density will lighten. The fragments will give you negative powers. Do not follow their voices or calls to attack. They want to destroy. Do not listen to them. Choose from your heart.

There will be a time when everything will feel hopeless, and pointless. Know that when you feel this, you will be very close to something that will save you. Keep the hope, then you will succeed. Hear your song and you will be free. Do not forget yourself in the pain. Remember you are more than what you feel. You are connected to all things. Let that help you. In the pain you'll feel alone. But you are not. Remember your song and come home. Now, it is time to learn the magic to move through the Myst. To be tested you must go alone into the Myst. Your protectors will be many on this journey. In the Myst, things are not what they seem sometimes. Enemies may be helpful and friends may be dangerous. L-Lewminous can always be

trusted. She sees beyond this time. A part of her is always in the future. Ky-Lyra will be your companion. She is to ground you with her knowledge of the past. You are to be in the present moment. Only with all three of you can the merging begin.

When everyone is ready, you will meet at the temple at Da-Nan. I await you there. Finally I give you a gift to help you gain the strength for this journey. Sometimes a gift is a great challenge. I give you this with love.

With that, the voice faded into the blackness once again. Somehow the blackness now held light and Re-Nan felt something pierce his chest. Pain opened inside his body like an explosion. He collapsed in the room, shuttering and sobbing. His chest felt like a gaping wound. The pain was so strong he had no choice but to let himself feel it. All the Priests and Priestesses tried to help him but nothing worked. The pain left him gasping for air. Yet each breath was painful. The Sa-Ma-Ky could only say simply, ***Your journey has begun.***

Re-Nan walked out of the Song room with the help of L-Lewminous and Ky-Lyra. They guided him to the Sa-Ma Tree

and he lay on the ground trying to focus on anything but the pain. The Sa-Ma tree wrapped her limbs over him attempting to comfort him. As the yaro's passed, the pain did not lessen but he began to learn how to move with the pain, rather than resist it.

He realized that the pain was a parting gift of the Pit. To help him learn how to cope and move with the energy of the fragment Stones. Yaro after yaro he slowly improved. Ky-Lyra was constantly at his side, trying all of her herbs, and feeling helpless to ease his pain. L-Lewminous now slept with him every night and somehow that did comfort him.

The smell of the Lethia helped him relax and sleep. He became thinner and his eyes got deeper. In a strange way, he felt more real, wiser, and older. Eventually he was able to focus enough to begin to learn the magic of the Myst. Ky-Lyra taught him slowly. Repeating things often to make sure he understood. When he looked in her eyes he saw the worry. But the pain made all his shyness go away. He had no extra energy for things that did not matter. Re-Nan felt more comfortable with her and they would stare into each other's eyes for long periods of time. He felt a great

opening in his heart that managed to breakthrough all the pain when Ky-Lyra walked into the room.

A new energy began to emerge through the pain, and hope returned. The pain made him slow down and he realized how often he had been running. His whole life, he had been missing life. The pain made life seem more precious. Eventually he became grateful for the pain and the challenge it presented to him. He knew he could no longer hide from himself or his feelings. And, his feelings told him that he loved Ky-Lyra. When he finally realized it, L-Lewminous practically hummed.

Chapter 14 - Tracking in the Myst with Tol-lin,
Preparation to leave

The love between the two of them was obvious to everyone in the temple. The E-yoke bloomed. Small yellow and white flowers proliferated everywhere. The songbooks spoke of the flowers of the E-yoke. They had great healing power for all types of pain. No one in their lifetime had seen the E-yoke bloom. The E-yoke normally grew on the outside of the buildings. But since the experience Re-Nan had in the song room, the E-yoke was growing and blooming inside as well. It was flowering most in Ky-Lyra's and Re-Nan's rooms. The Cuddlebees were coming from far and wide to collect the pollen and nectar from the flowers. The Priestesses were also collecting the flowers to add to their collection of medicinal herbs. It was a time of joy, and Re-

Nan was learning the magic of the Myst. The quest seemed far away in this happy place. The pain Re-Nan felt was becoming bearable, and when he looked into Ky-Lyra's eyes, it vanished entirely

They would often go for walks in the meadows outside the Walls of Serron to practice magic. Even with the pain, he felt like he belonged to this place. Argamae faded from his mind as if it were a dream, and this was the only real place to him.

Ky-Lyra taught him how to keep his focus as he moved through the Myst. He had been pleasantly surprised to see that he had a good basic understanding of the technique. She told him how focusing on any of the Keys or Gates helps channel the mental energy out of the Myst to points of strength and power. He learned how to separate the negative, power-hungry energy of Za-loc, from the seductive, dream like, wistful energy of the Night-mir-Sun.

Each energy was dangerous in a different way. The Night-Mir-Sun's energy made things seem to be not as they were. It was like sleep walking but being awake. Things seemed to move more slowly. It created a not unpleasant,

numbing feeling, much like when Re-Nan had drunk too much Zolian wine. But like the wine, it impaired judgment and slowed physical response time. Even sounds were delayed; a danger if Wall-a-dons are coming upon you.

This part of the Myst seemed easy for him to cope with. As a hunter, he paid more attention to small sounds than most Skeats. Ky-Lyra would try to sneak up on him in the Myst. But his hunter instinct could always out maneuver her.

She finally got a hunter-tracker named Tol-lin to train Re-Nan. Tol-lin was an aging Ren, with bright eyes and quick smile. His joints were bent from old age, but his mind was sharp and he could move a speed that surprised even Re-Nan.

Re-Nan and Tol-lin would track each other at the edges of the Myst for days, as time would seem to stand still there. When they weren't tracking each other, Tol-lin and Re-Nan would talk in depth of strategies in dealing with the Wall-a-dons in the Myst. Tol-lin had had many close calls with them.

The Wall-a-dons main sense was their hearing. So Tol-lin taught Re-Nan how to walk as silently as possible through the Myst. Re-Nan had taught himself in Argamae how to be silent while tracking, but in the Myst, sound echoed slightly. Tol-lin taught him how to use this to his advantage. The trick was to make an obvious sound, then go back to the silent walking and move very quickly away from the louder sound. Back track around what was tracking you and come silently up behind it. This technique had saved Tol-lin more than once from the Wall-a-dons.

Tol-lin taught Re-Nan that the only area he had found on the Wall-a-dons to be vulnerable was directly below the ears. The rest of the body had created a scale like protection that repelled most weapons. He did not know the effect magic had on them. He was only hunter. But below the ears, is a soft place where the ears rotate over a 180 degrees. Tol-lin had managed to kill one that way. But he explained, it is preferable to avoid them altogether as they stand a head higher than even a Skeat. Tol-lin had tricked it by making a sound like a dying animal. As the Wall-a-don bent down to check, Tol-lin managed to put his knife in the soft spot below the ear. Tol-lin warned that even in

death the Wall-a-dons are dangerous. Their blood is like acid and it can burn through anything but metal.

Re-Nan took all of Tol-lin's information to heart. He was grateful to the old Ren for spending so much time helping Re-Nan practice and become more skilled.

One yaro, Tol-lin came and told Re-Nan he had taught him as much as he could. They shook hands and Re-Nan went back to the Temple to continue his study of magic.

Ky-Lyra now focused on teaching Re-Nan the harder task of learning to cope with the energy in the Myst of Za-loc-mir.

Ky-Lyra explained that the energy of Za-loc is tricky, cunning, and crafty. The five Fragment Stones focused different energies of Za-loc and the other Morian Magicians. It is many voices of many fragmented, power-hungry minds. But the coalescing factor is the energy of Za-loc. His body may have been destroyed, but the energy in his mind remained, especially in the deeper areas of the Myst. His force is strongest around the fragments. His deranged mind is still extremely protective of the Stones.

Ky-Lyra told Re-Nan that the Prophecy says, the first battle is with Za-loc, just to get the Stones. The second battle is with the Stones. The third battle will be with himself. To let go of the fragments Stones, and throw them into the Pit at Da-Nan-Da-Li.

These three battles are why he must have companions to help him on the journey. To help him keep his sanity in the presence of Za-loc, and help him complete the process. As a Priestess, her job is to make sure that no matter what, the fragments must be thrown into the Pit.

When she said this, her eyes look directly into Re-Nan's. He felt a wave of cold, gut-wrenching energy move through him. And he felt afraid. For the first time Re-Nan felt afraid of some dark part of himself. He wondered, in the grip of the fragments and Za-loc, what could he be capable of. He shuttered at that unknown dark thought.

Softly in his mind he heard the song of Garn running through his head. The song said there would be five challenges. Reading his mind Ky-Lyra responded, ***The fourth battle is to forgive yourself and to leave An-wyl!***

Re-Nan thought, *Forgive myself? For what?* Ky-Lyra continued without explaining, eyes down cast. *The fifth battle is with your grandson Am-Eron!*

Re-Nan took a deep breath. He turned to Ky-Lyra that she was looking out the window. A dense silence filled the room. Re-Nan's mind felt overwhelmed. The first three battles seemed tough enough. The fourth seemed hard to comprehend. He had never done anything he ever needed to forgive himself for. And besides he never wanted to leave An-wyl. This felt like his home now. *No!*, he thought, *My home, is Ky-Lyra. I can never leave her!*

Re-Nan walked up behind Ky-Lyra and put his arms around her small waist, as she looked out the window. Ky-Lyra said with the slight crack in her voice, *The Prophecy says that you must leave An-wyl before the second passing of the Night-mir-Sun. The act of throwing the fragments into the Pit will de-stabilize the Myst. The Myst will follow you. If you stay in Thera-wyl the Myst will overtake the cities and our people will die. We cannot handle the density of the Myst. The people of An-wyl would go mad and die painful deaths. You must return to Argamae after the third battle.*

You must go back and help your grandson Am-Eron. Only your grandson can complete emerging. You must help us Re-Nan!

She turned and Re-Nan saw the tears in her eyes. There was something so deeply sad and lonely in her face. A picture flashed before his eyes. It was of himself standing at the edge of the Pit at Da-Nan-Da-Li sobbing in despair.

Words rushed out of Re-Nan's mouth before he could think. ***But I cannot leave you. I love you, Ky-Lyra!***

He felt pain ripping through his body again. He wanted to double over, but his mind would not let him. Through the pain, he opened his eyes and for a moment saw the energy of the pain move from Re-Nan to Ky-Lyra and back. He realized he was feeling both of their pain. He knew by looking at her face she felt it too, and his soul could think of nothing else but to stop her pain. He loved her too much to let her feel such pain. He wanted her to feel his love, not his pain.

He took her face gently in his hands and caressed her cheek. She said softly, ***Re-Nan, promise me that no matter what happens, you'll go back to Argamae after the third***

battle. Re-Nan felt unsure. He replied, *Only if you come with me.* Her eyes held fear when she said, *What if I can't?*

The image re-appeared of him sobbing at the Pit at Da-Nan-Da-Li. He replied, *I want you with me always!* Ky-Lyra now reached out to soothe his furrowed brow. She said, *I promise a part of me will always be with you. Remember what Garn sang, 'Love leaves not it changes form.' What if something in the Myst changes me, and I cannot come?*

Startled, Re-Nan's mind searched for some unknown answer. He replied, *But if you can, will you come with me to Argamae?*

Yes, she replied.

Re-Nan's mind felt relieved, but his guts told him that there was something ahead that needed to play its self out. He would not know the answer until he sat at the edge of Da-Nan-Da-Li after the third battle.

Re-Nan had not realized he a picked Ky-Lyra right off the floor to hug her. The smell of the Lethia in her hair made him nuzzle her neck more deeply. She felt soft and

warm in his arms. Ky-Lyra felt him not know what to do next, so she reached up and kissed him on the mouth. Her kiss was soft and inviting. Her breath held the sweetness of Lethia.

He looked into her eyes and she said, ***I love you also Re-Nan. Tonight, let us forget the battles. Be with me and love me now, for there may be no tomorrow.***

Re-Nan nodded his head. As he carried her to the sleeping niche, the moon rose full over the Temple, and the Myst rose up and touched the Walls of Serron.

Chapter 15 - Hal-wyst and Learning the Lessons of Healing

They had entered the season of Hal-wyst. As the Myst rose up of the Walls of Serron, the sickness began. All the Priests and Priestesses were busy attending people. Many of the Rens remarked how valuable it had been, that the E-yoke had blossomed the season before. For some unknown reason the Myst brought more virulent diseases than normal to people of An-wyl. The flowers of the E-yoke were keeping the death level down, considering how sick many were. The flowers had a great strengthening effect on the mind. E-yoke had only bloomed in Thera-wyl. So many messengers were being sent to other towns to take the valuable flowers there.

The reports came back that in a few places the Myst was all away up to the Path Stones. The Stones they had placed at the edges of the trail were protecting the paths. The Lethia had once again saved them. In a few places, the Myst tried to invade the whole path. The Stones protected it and the Myst went over the trail creating a tunnel of clear air for the Rens to walk through.

A section leading to the temple at Da-Nan was the most difficult. The Myst arched the trail at a low spot for one full octal. Only the most powerful Priests and Priestesses were allowed to attempt the trail. Two had been lost trying to get through. The Myst had lured them off the trail.

The Sa-Ma-Ky had sent L-Lewminous to try to find them. When she returned, one looked told them she had been unsuccessful. Her head was down and she did not even chirp a greeting. She went directly to Ky-Lyra.

Ky-Lyra and Re-Nan were tending sick children by the Sa-Ma tree when L-Lewminous came up the stairs.

On seeing the L-Lew, both dropped everything and rushed to her. L-Lewminous telepathically transmitted her message to Ky-Lyra. Re-Nan felt the impact of the message. The Wall-a-dons had torn the two messengers to shreds.

A shutter went through the ground. Re-Nan could feel the Stones suffering also. The message was a blow to all the Rens. The magic of the temples had protected the lands for so long, that it was rare to lose anyone in the Myst. Losing two the same yaro was a great shock.

Re-Nan could not help but think that the Myst was so thick because of his presence in An-wyl. He knew that Za-loc would try everything to get to him and destroy him.

The Sa-Ma-Ky instituted new rules, to safeguard the messengers. No one was to go alone. All would take the Spikewort tea with them and drink it as they came upon the Myst. Whenever possible, it was also suggested to take a L-Lew with them on their journey. But there were not enough of them to go around. Besides, the L-Lew's needed breaks also.

Re-Nan was learning much about the healing magic. Necessity forced all to jump in. The Priestesses had their hands full, and Re-Nan learned much by watching and asking simple questions. The knowledge of herbal medicine was extensive in An-wyl. There were many plants here that did not exist in Argamae, below the Myst.

Re-Nan looked over at Ky-Lyra. She felt his gaze and turned smiling at him. The energy between them was still so strong. She could read his thoughts, and Re-Nan could feel her emotions. It was as if they were two halves

of a whole. They could work together in almost total silence.

During this time Re-Nan discovered a hidden talent. For some reason, he was beginning to see Myst coming subtly up from the ground and creep into Rens' bodies. This type of Myst was not as strong as it was below the Walls of Serron. Re-Nan could detect the weakness in a Ren's energy field, and it was as if the weakness lured the faintest amount of Myst to the Ren, making them sick.

Re-Nan told the Sa-Ma-Ky of this discovery and the Sa-Ma-Ky ask him to use his ability as a preventive measure so they would know whose life-force needed bolstering. So he went around pointing Rens out and helped minimize the amount of illness by catching it before he got to severe.

He could also deal with the sickest Rens. Most of the illnesses in An-wyl affected the mind, which in turn affected the body. So most sick Rens were often quite mad.

As Re-Nan helped them, it was as if a tortured spirit had entered them with the Myst. To Re-Nan, this tortured soul felt like it was watching him, searching for his

weaknesses. One day he had five severely ill patients, his back was to them and he felt a tingling feeling along the back of his neck. He turned and it was as if five demons were staring back at him. For a moment, it took his breath away. He shook his head to clear the dense thoughts out of his mind. When he looked again, the Rens had their eyes closed and the feeling was gone.

At first he tried to ignore the energy. He was afraid someone might think he had the illness. But as it kept happening, he realized he needed to talk to the Sa-Ma-Ky.

When he spoke to her, her face became concerned. She said, the Prophecy spoke of how the Myst of Za-loc-mir would seek out the Skeat that came to An-wyl, and how the people of An-wyl would have a difficult time handling the density of the Myst. She pointed out that this had been the most severe Hal-wyst on record, and there was no sign of Hal-wyst coming to an end.

Sa-Ma-Ky said that the Prophecy spoke of a time of trial for the Skeat. She felt inclined to prepare him for knowing that he may need to leave Thera-wyl and travel to the temple at Da-Nan. The journey would be difficult, but

necessary to give the Rens a break from the energy of the Myst. The Prophecy said that there would be a time that the Sa-wyst would not returned until the Skeat began the journey to Da-Nan. Re-Nan realized that from this point on, the Myst would follow him wherever he went. To help the Rens and make Sa-wyst return, he would have to leave.

They were coming up on the time of initiation at Da-Nan-Da-Li. Even though the Sa-Ma-Ky felt Re-Nan was not quite ready to go, she warned him that this passing of the Night-mir-Sun was what he needed to step into his place as the son of Re-Nan-Da-Ky, keeper of the sacred knowledge at Da-Nan.

Re-Nan felt himself hesitate. He felt he was not ready. He knew on this stage of the journey, L-Lewminous could go with him to the temple at Da-Nan, but the initiation must be done alone. Ky-Lyra would be needed too much here for her to leave, and he did not want to leave Ky-Lyra.

He felt the pain coming back into his consciousness. The thought of not being with Ky-Lyra was always so painful. With the pain, came those images of him sobbing at the Pit

at Da-Nan-Da-Li. Such disturbing thoughts. He shook his head, trying to put them out of his mind.

The Sa-Ma-Ky waited for the pain in Re-Nan to pass, then continued. ***The passing of the Night-mir-Sun is in 30 yaro.*** She suggested he prepare himself to leave in four yaro, as it was a long walk to the temple at Da-Nan. The Stones would relay the message to the Da-Ky there. They would be expecting him for the initiation.

Re-Nan numbly nodded his head in agreement. There was nothing to do but prepare to go. Sa-Ma-Ky reminded him that he must be back in Argamae by the second passing of the Night-mir-Sun. The reality began to hit him. The journey was about to begin.

As he walked out of her chambers, Re-Nan was filled with doubt and dread. Was he strong enough to make it through the initiation at the Da-Nan-Da-Li during the most dangerous Hal-wyst on record? His confidence was waning. Had he learned the control of his mind enough to make it through? Could he throw the Fragment Stones into the Pit as the Prophecy stated? A small voice inside whispered that he was not good enough to do it. Who did he think he was

anyway? He is no hero - just a simple Skeat that lost his way. He could barely save himself, so how could he save the whole planet? Maybe the Prophecy was meant for someone else. He could feel the part of him want to runaway with Ky-Lyra.

As he looked down at his feet, he saw the faintest of Myst entered his body. That brought him back to his senses. He took a deep breath and for some reason heard the song the Lyre had played as he approached it at the Lyre House. The sound filled his mind and he noticed, again, the familiarity of the music. It soothed and comforted him. Through listening to the song, he could feel the pull of the Myst lessen as he walked to the Kaz-i-mir room.

He had not been back to this room since his original de-Mysting. The room was as he remembered it, sparse and with the two black pillow-like Stones.

He took off his clothes and laid them on the smaller rock. Then he laid himself down on the large soft black Stone. In seconds, he was drifting through the Myst hearing the many voices caught there. He saw an opening in his mind and followed it. He popped out onto a mountaintop. Below

him was the temple at Da-Nan and the Pit. He heard someone call his name and he turned and saw his grandfather, Re-Nan-Da-Ky.

Re-Nan-Da-Ky said to Re-Nan, ***It is time.***

Re-Nan took his hand and they went forward into the Nemian, (the world between times).

Chapter 16 - Journey with Re-Nan-Da-Ky into the Nemian

Re-Nan saw the light and his grandfather Re-Nan-Da-Ky held his hand, as they moved through the tunnel. Re-Nan felt himself being pulled by the light from ahead and the Myst from below. Re-Nan's feet felt like lead. The Myst was slowly suffocating him from the inside out, and the cold of the Nemian was paralyzing his bones. Then he was out of the tunnel, and standing next to Re-Nan-Da-Ky, deep in the Rift. The air was thick and muggy. The heaviness of the Myst compressed Re-Nan's body like a diver in the ocean. He looked around and saw the desolation that remained of the great cities of the Morian. The Myst hung like tentacles off the remaining spires of the destroyed buildings. Creating images of floating ghosts throughout the dead city. It looked as if the ground was reaching up still, to grab something out of the sky, shapes forming and un-forming in the gloom. He turned and saw an indentation in the ground. It looked to him as if such a hot fire had scored the ground that it had become black and smooth.

The ominous presence of this hole drew him ever closer. As he stood at the edge of it, below him the Myst was like a

veil preventing him from seeing what was below. Re-Nan-Da-Ky waved his hand and the Myst evaporated, leaving the scorched ground below.

Re-Nan leaned forward and saw the five Fragment Stones. Each one glowed in an eerie colored light.

Finally Re-Nan-Da-Ky spoke:

*The Stones lure you with the pain
That lives inside your mind again.*

*The pain of mind is your doubt
The tells you there is no way out.*

*The Stones cannot be picked up in fear
Hatred, Greed, Lust or Tears.*

*Be the beginning of their song.
Where innocence saw a hopeful dawn.*

*The seeing Stone must come with
To remind them what was before the Myst.*

*Za-loc will not want to go
From the Stones to an unknown.*

*The battle will be raged in you
The library has shown you what to do.*

*Their song must be played through
See inside their beginning tune.*

*Each Stone is a different tone
You must blend the rhythms home.*

*Find the thread that bonds them all
Only then can Za-loc fall.*

*Ky-Lyra can break through the song
Her heart will not lead you wrong.*

*Za-loc's mind can still exist
Without the Stones in the Rift.*

*The Myst is still a child being
Za-loc's control an evil thing.*

*Befriend the Myst, it is sad
Lonely, lost, and without a land.*

*The Myst must learn to trust you
Za-loc will tell it not to.*

*L-Lewminous is the Myst's secret friend
The Myst likes her songs and longs for them.*

*That is because the Myst knows not
It's own song it has forgot.*

*Listen carefully to the Black Sun
As it calls to you over yon.*

*Za-loc is ready to strike out
To any place you have doubt.*

*Go alone on the Yaro
Your friends will know when to follow.*

*Inside of dreams hear my voice
guide you to another choice.*

*Trust my voice not your eyes
That is how Za-loc tells you lies.*

*Go now, Destiny awaits
Everything depends on your fate.*

As Re-Nan-Da-Ky finished speaking a shriek came out of the Stones and formed itself with the Myst into the shape of a dark Morian. There stood Za-loc stood towering over them both.

The Morian were tall beings with black eyes and three fingers. Their skin was grayish in hue, with a tight mouth and a large cranium. Re-Nan sensed how Za-loc could be a master of illusion. Then the shadow spoke:

*With your soul, I will take
The energy I need, for that I wait.*

*Your soul is mine even before you begin
Your weakness will not let you win.*

*I brought you from that Darkest Sun
To destroy me is to destroy your own.*

Your planet was blown into nothingness

Souls caught in the exploding Myst.

In this time you should not exist

A Priestesses trick, so now hear this.

Check your songs and you will know

You did not exist before that blow.

If I go, so will you

The fate of one entwined with two.

Sparks of black light erupted from him as he spoke. Re-Nan felt dazed by the information. It was true the library held no information of the Skeats or the Rens before the explosion of the Black Sun. It was as if the Morian destroyed themselves and suddenly another species appeared. Re-Nan had inferred from the libraries' information that the Skeats and Rens were descendants of the Priestesses that had hidden the sacred Temple objects and created the Gates.

But Re-Nan had to admit that he himself, though different and slightly taller than the Rens, they did not look anything like the Morian.

Well, yes, they both walked on two feet and had conscious thoughts. But the Morian were so insect-like in their length and thinness. They also had a tightly held and controlled cunning. Za-loc had this quality to an extreme but Re-Nan sensed it throughout the energy of the dead city.

Re-Nan's inner contemplation was broken by Re-Nan-Da-Ky's voice. He said:

*The Priestesses wanted to create new life
Integrated with pain, grief, fear, and strife.*

*Their time was limited, this they knew
The Stones helped them create me and you.*

*They did not know which one would last
Rens and Skeats they then did cast.*

*Skeats were sturdy, strong and few
Rens were spiritual and light as dew.*

*Our souls did come with the Myst
The Stones gave us form and purpose.*

*To help this place be whole again
We must not feel that we are foreign.*

*To belong, we must help
Complete the circle left unfelt.*

*You see we are not so unlike
The Morians who left us our plight.*

*Our planet died with out a chance
For us to heal our own past.*

*The Priestesses gifted us with love
The strength of Stones, the souls of Lethia.*

*Our gift is to give back
Whole consciousness intact.*

*Deny not darkness in ourselves
Then free Za-loc from his hell.*

Once the Myst goes back home

Our true form will be shown.

By the Gates and the Keys

When we are in harmony.

Re-Nan, you must embrace the past

Emotions faces, all the masks.

Only then will Za-loc go

Light will come with the shadow.

As Re-Nan-Da-Ky finished, Za-loc swore.

I will unmake you!

You will not succeed!

You think the Myst is something born,

It is only energy without form.

This energy can uncreate

Skeats and Rens, anything I make.

If you will not follow me

Uncreated you will be.

Heed my words, your end will come

By the passing of the Night-mir-Sun!

Electricity crackled in the air around Za-loc, then with a flash of dark light, he was gone.

The vision ended and Re-Nan awoke to the soft voice of Ky-Lyra calling his name. At first she seemed far away. Then he felt the Kaz-i-mir Stone release him and he was back in the temple. Ky-Lyra was bending over him and he heard the soft cooing of L-Lewminous.

He opened his eyes to the worried face of Ky-Lyra. Her voice was calm but her eyes betrayed her concern. Five other Priestesses were in the room. As he came back, there was an audible sigh of relief in the room. Even the Stones seemed to relax.

Re-Nan spoke looking around at everyone. *How long have I been under?*

Three days, said Ky-Lyra.

Shocked Re-Nan sat up. *Three days?*

Yes, she replied again.

L-Lewminous alerted us shortly after you began your journey.

We have been holding your essence in this time so you could find your way back. Journeys to the Nemian are not to be done alone. Of course, you didn't know that. The Stones confirmed that you were there with someone as a guide, but guides are usually on the physical not only in the spiritual.

After the first whole day in the Nemian we were concerned. Most do not come out after a day and the body dies. But you Skeats our so strong. How do you feel?

Fine, Re-Nan replied. *Though, I am hungry.*

Relieved, Ky-Lyra handed him a plate of dopples.

The fruit was tart and refreshing. He felt himself grounding more in his body.

After he finished, he looked up at her knowing he needed to tell her.

She spoke before he could respond. ***I know. You must leave on the yaro.***

Chapter 17 - History of Rens and Skeats

Re-Nan lay in his bed thinking. How was he supposed to complete this formidable task? He could accept the fact that his soul came from another place; that the magic of the Morian pulled all that was energetically part of the explosion of the Red Sun into this planet, and even this dimension! He could accept that before the last of the Morian Priestesses died, they created a new life form to continue their work. They created the Skeats and the Rens, separated by the Myst.

Was it possible that the Myst separated two dimensions? That Argamae and An-wyl were two dimensions in the same time? Could the Fragment Stones have somehow created a dimensional doorway? His mind wondered what would happen when the Stones were destroyed in the Pit at Da-Nan-Da-Li? Would the two sides (Argamae and An-wyl) merge as Re-Nan-Da-Ky said? Or would they all be destroyed as Za-loc had decreed?

Well, Re-Nan thought. Za-loc wants to destroy something. Hopefully it won't be me!

He continued to think. The L-Lews seem to be a bridge between the two sides. So do the Stones. They seem to understand some sequence in time that we cannot.

Re-Nan wondered, what caused the last Morian to die out. The Stones spoke one word to him. **Lethia.**

He sat up and went to the bowl of petals, crushed some in his hands and inhaled the soft fragrance. The Stones instructed only to follow the vibration of the smell. The scent melted into him and he felt himself again at the Pit at Da-Nan-Da-Li.

He was standing in front of a Lethia bush, when it transformed into Lethiel herself. She smiled and opened her hand. In it was the last Fragment Seeing Stone. He knew he was to look inside. His eyes followed a blue beam of light into the past.

He knew the time was after the creation of the Myst and destruction of Za-loc. He could see the menacing energy of Za-loc in the Myst was changing and mutating many things in this time.

The few surviving Morian were having trouble keeping up with changes in the environment as well as the loss of energy from the exploded Sun. The Morian were beings that lived off light. The light was now diminished by half, as this planet had lost its brightest sun. The Myst had split the dimensions, and the Myst under Za-loc's command was spreading.

Re-Nan could see the meetings of the Priestesses who were committed to not losing themselves in this dwindling light or the Myst. But the loss of light made them weak and sickly. They knew the Myst must be contained.

The Stones and the L-Lews tried to help. But eventually the Priestess knew they would die. The Morian Priestesses decided to unweave their genetic makeup, and rebuild it into new forms. Hopefully, something would be created to continue their work and heal this place from the destruction of Za-loc. It was their only hope.

The Morian Priestesses used their gifts to create tonal patterns, as yet unheard, and combined the energies of the sacred Gates to generate new songs. Those songs were then

given life by the Stones. The L-Lews were to watch over them both, the Skeats and the Rens.

The Prophecy was left with the Rens, because they were given the gifts of art and healing. If the Skeats survived, they were given the knowledge of the earth and the ability to follow the signs to the sacred Gates. Hopefully they would also find their way to the Rens through the Myst. But the Priestesses had miscalculated the density below the Myst. Even though the Skeats had thrived, the density kept their consciousness focused on survival. That mentality had caused them to unconsciously kill L-Lews on their side for food and conquest. That upset the balance, so the Skeats had not crossed the Myst to find the Rens. The L-Lews had kept the bridges open between the two sides at the cost of many L-Lews' lives. Finally it was the power of Re-Nan-Da-Ky that decided to breakthrough and listen to the soft voice in the Myst under the rage of Za-loc. The Stones guided him to Argamae to open the consciousness of the Skeats by bringing the knowledge of An-wyl there.

Many Skeats simply thought he was a good storyteller. But the stories gave them hope, and they began to dream of more than survival. But the density eventually killed Re-

Nan-Da-Ky. His frail bones eventually collapsed in under the weight of the Myst, and his body let go. But not before he had managed to have a daughter, Sa-Drine.

Sa-Drine had been Re-Nan's mother. She had died when he was young. But he saw her now beautiful and flowing, singing songs that made beautiful pictures in his mind. After his mother's death, his father had remarried, and his new mother had been a loving, grounded, and practical Skeat. But he had still felt alone. His grandmother became his best ally. She knew when to give him space. She told him the stories of An-wyl, and about how much he was like his grandfather. That somehow gave him hope, and he had continued to search. Now he understood what he was searching for - wholeness. The circle completing itself was inside him. And, on the yaro the journey was to begin.

Where was he to go? What was he to do first? The Stones whispered to him, ***Skeats know the way to the Gates and to the fragments. Listen inside.***

Frustrated Re-Nan spoke out loud to the empty room.
How can I listen when my heart is breaking from leaving Ky-Lyra!

The melody of Garn came in again. *Love leaves not it changes form.*

What does that mean! Re-Nan yelled. *Am I to lose love just when I have found it?*

Exasperated he looked out the window toward the mountains.

A ripple went through the Stones and a soft knock came from his door. He opened the door to Ky-Lyra's gentle face. Immediately upon seeing her, he collapsed into her arms sobbing and saying, *How can I leave you?*

She replied, *My love, you must. I will be with you soon, I promise. But I am needed here. The sickness is strong this Hal-wyst and the Myst is almost coming over the Walls of Serron. You must find a way to keep the Myst from coming into the towns. The roads are being covered with Myst. Soon we will be cut off from each other. You are strong. You must re-activate the Gates. They keep the Myst at bay. That Gate is not in An-wyl, so search in Argamae. The Gates must be kept open and clear. Your people have*

probably forgotten how to care for them. Go quickly, there is not much time. I'll meet soon at the temple at Da-Nan. Take L-Lewminous as she can guide you through anything. But you must go, or all will be lost. Za-loc will seek you out. I had a dream this night and a voice told me that you will find an unusual ally at the Gate keeping the Myst in the Rift. Do not let your eyes deceive you. Your heart will recognize that something is alive there. Your eyes may see something very different than anything on this planet. Trust your heart.

I will, Re-Nan replied. But please stay and lay with me this last night. My heart tells mean nothing will be the same on the yaro. She nodded and they lay awake part of the night, listening to the song of their love vibrating into the very Stones of the temple.

Chapter 18 - The Blooming of the E-Yoke and Ky-Lyra

When Re-Nan awoke, Ky-Lyra's head was resting on his shoulder. He gently stroked her hair and tried to imprint the feeling of her into every cell of his body. As he listened to the song and the energy they created together, a new pattern softly emerged underneath the main vibration. He turned to look out the window and in a corner of the window the E-yoke had bloomed. But instead of a yellow flower this flower was red, deep red. The fragrance was also different, sweeter yet timeless. The new pattern in the song was somehow tied to the flower. He focused his energy on the two, flower and song; and an image came forward in his mind of a young girl. Her bones were small and fragile, yet she was tall and beautiful, so beautiful. Her mind spoke to him.

Where you go, come I will

At the place where time stands still.

What you cherish

Will not perish.

*My life helps to heal the loss
And the grief you have been tossed.*

*Take me with you home again
In Argamae my path begins.*

*With my son you will come
Back to An-wyl, bring Am-Eron.*

The image began to fade. Then amazingly, it turned into the red flower and when into the body of Ky-Lyra. Re-Nan realized with a shock that Ky-Lyra was pregnant! He could not allow her to go on this journey. It would be too dangerous.

His sudden movement woke Ky-Lyra and she looked sleepily up at him, and immediately saw the worry on his face. Then she read his thoughts and blushed all most the color of the red E-yoke blossom.

Re-Nan ask her, *How long have you known?*

She were replied, *From our first night together.*

Re-Nan was stunned. He had been so involved in the lessons and the songs. He had not seen the subtle changes in the energy between them.

Why didn't you tell me?

She replied, ***I didn't want to distract you from this journey. Everything rests on us getting the Fragment Stones back to the Pit at Da-Nan-Da-Li.***

But will the child be safe around the Fragments Stones,
Re-Nan ask?

I don't know, Ky-Lyra said, looking down.

In silence, they watched the sun rise over the mountain. They realized that the Night-mir-Sun beside it loomed with a new urgency.

Re-Nan could sense how the close passing of the Night-mir-Sun separated the two energies of the Myst. The energy of Za-loc dropped down into the depth of the Rift. The child like part of the Myst, the Star part, floated upwards from the Rift and moved up the mountain to the highest point

it could reach. The highest point seemed to be temple at Da-Nan.

An image entered his mind of a small child trying to crawl out of the Rift to reach the hand of a mother in the sky. Just when the child could almost crawl out of the Rift, Za-loc's energy would grab the leg of the child and keep it stuck in the Rift. The child continued to try to get away. The black mother Sun had continued to reach down to the child. But the fragments made it impossible for the mother and child to connect. Such despair and longing was the Myst. Lonely and frightened for so long, trapped in a density it could not understand. But this child did learn and it knew much about suffering and pain. It had watched the slow rebuilding of the land and its creatures for centuries. And the Myst had not been without its own impact. Slowly over the centuries, it had learned tricks to out maneuver Za-loc. Za-loc tried over and over to pull the Myst into his total control, but could never quite succeed. The Myst could not be forced to do evil. The Myst had been tricked a few times, but it learned the ploys of Za-loc quickly.

So the standoff had continued for Yoranium. The Myst began seeking out allies so it could be released. Za-loc sought to destroy it's every attempt.

The Myst was from such a different place that until Re-Nan-Da-Ky, the only ones who understood it were the Stones, plants, and the L-Lews.

The Myst had taken a huge risk that night when it entered the room of Re-Nan-Da-Ky. It knew that if it connected to Re-Nan-Da-Ky, it would put him at risk. The Myst had been trying to get home by itself, but now it recognized the hopelessness of its situation. It needed the help of the Rens and Skeats. However, these two beings were divided and could never win over Za-loc's power alone. Only by joining together could they create the change that would allow the Myst to be free.

The Myst had urged Re-Nan-Da-Ky to trust it and to go to Argamae. Re-Nan-Da-Ky needed to move quickly while the energy of Za-loc was compressed into the Rift. The Myst had learned how to distract Za-loc for short periods of time, and with the help of the L-Lews and the Stones, it had managed to get Re-Nan-Da-Ky to Argamae.

Unfortunately, change is slow in the density below the Myst. Re-Nan-Da-Ky soon learned that the Skeats had no understanding of magic. And besides, in this density, magic did not work anyway. The strong-boned Skeats saw him as weak and frail, unable to do a decent day's work, for a Skeat. Fortunately, at the edge of the Myst lived a healer named Da-Reia.

She had seen the skittish L-Lews periodically eating the lollins around her hut. Overtime, the L-Lews knew her to be friendly and so it was to her that they had brought Re-Nan-Da-Ky.

Out of the Myst, the L-Lews had practically dragged Re-Nan-Da-Ky, gasping from the suffocating energy in the Myst. Za-loc had almost won that day. Da-Reia had heard the frightened chirps of the L-Lews and had run out of her hut to see Re-Nan-Da-Ky barely clinging to life. It had taken four turnings of the Night-mir-Sun and all of Da-Reia's healing abilities, plus some, for Re-Nan-Da-Ky to recover.

The L-Lews would go into the Myst and come back with plants she had never seen before. They would drop them into

pots of water by the fire and trill when the tea was ready. She learned much more about herbology during this time due to their help, and many Skeats' lives were saved because of her new knowledge.

Re-Nan-Da-Ky also taught her what he knew of An-wyl and the Myst.

His strength never fully recovered, so he became known in Argamae as the storyteller. Children and adults would come from far and wide to listen to his stories. His stories brought hope and opened the minds of young and old alike. Through these stories the Skeats began to dream for the first time.

Da-Reia and Re-Nan-Da-Ky fell in love and had a daughter, Sa-Drine (Re-Nan's Mother). Re-Nan-Da-Ky had died shortly after Sa-Drine's birth. At least, that is what the Skeats believed. Re-Nan's grandmother, Da-Reia kept the stories alive and told Re-Nan that the L-Lews had come and taken him back into the Myst. She knew not where. After that she had rarely seen the L-Lews, but in the night she sometimes heard their chirps.

It was Re-Nan's desire to see the mythical L-Lews that had first lured Re-Nan into the Myst. Thus, had began his journey to find An-wyl.

All of the sudden, these images disappeared from his mind and Re-Nan became aware of Priestesses bustling in his room. His focus returned to this reality and he could see Ky-Lyra readying his bags and placing them in packs on L-Lewminous. L-Lewminous chirped excitedly and her eyes whirled with joy. Everything was being readied for him. It felt as if a wind was gently blowing him off a cliff, and whether he felt ready or not, he was going.

The E-yoke had grown around him and was nuzzling itself around his feet. Re-Nan noticed scrolls from the library being placed in the packs. He wondered what they contained. He would have to check them later when he was camped. For a moment he wondered where he was going, but that moment was broken by the feeling of Ky-Lyra kissing him goodbye. It all seemed like a dream! Maybe he was really dying in the Myst, dreaming of this lovely place and the love of Ky-Lyra.

But then she spoke clear and bright.

I will meet you when the time is right. Go to Argamae and find the Gate that keeps the Myst at Bay. L-Lewminous knows the way. Trust the Stones, they know what to do. Remember you will meet a guide. Trust your heart. I will find you. Don't worry.

As Re-Nan walked out of the Temple, the streets were lined with Rens. In silence they bowed to honor him on his journey. Then, he was outside the Walls of Serron on the trail leading back to Argamae.

Chapter 19 - Leaving Thera-wyl and meeting Dra-kar

Outside the city, Re-Nan turned and saw the Myst high up the Walls of Serron. He could feel the Stones and E-yoke working hard to contain it, but he knew it would not be enough. Many were already sick. From the library, he remembered the diseases of the Myst. It affected each Ren differently. Most often, it caused lung and breathing problems; after prolonged exposure, came the madness and illusions. The Myst could overcome the Rens at any time. Proximity to the Myst was a factor. But, even far away, the Myst could find the weak points along the ground, and flow along these fissures, coming out a great distance from its main body.

The Kaz-I-mir Stone was a great help to the Priestess's and Priests but it took so much time that it could only be used occasionally for the Rens who were the most ill. The priority was to keep the Priestesses and Priests healthy so they could use the herbs to help the people.

If the Myst overcame anyone when they were alone, they would become disoriented and wander helplessly back to the

Rift where they would die, often suffocated by the madness or attacked by the distorted creatures in the Myst.

If a Ren was overcome in the towns, the Priestesses could lessen the madness with herbs and keep most Rens' lungs from deteriorating. The old and the weak died first.

Sometimes the Myst would overcome someone young and strong. If it did not kill them, they often returned with amazing understandings from their visions. These Rens then entered the temples to continue work as healers.

L-Lewminous's chirp reminded Re-Nan it was time to go. But before he turned away he saw Ky-Lyra standing at the top tower of the temple. His heart yelled at him to go back to her. But his soul knew everything depended upon this journey. He etched the memory into his heart and turned away from the town.

L-Lewminous was happy to be on the trail. The Myst never really bothered her. But Re-Nan noticed how much of the trail the Myst was touching on at least one side. The protection Stones were doing a good job keeping the trail

clear. But the Myst called with such longing that if a Ren let his mind wander, it could still lure him into it.

Keeping his hand on L-Lewminous, he walked feeling the formlessness of the Myst. He wondered how the Myst communicated its intentions to Re-Nan-Da-Ky. The library held no songs of the Myst. He felt for a sound, but found only silence. What would be the sound of formlessness? How does silence speak?

Re-Nan suddenly laughed at himself. ***My, haven't we become the philosopher. Remember your job is to re-activate the Gate and to get the Fragment Stones into the Pit at Da-Nan-Da-Li. Let's just focus on that.***

His mind wandered now to Ky-Lyra. He so wanted to be with her and to stay in An-wyl. But the path seemed only to point to Argamae. Maybe after this was over she could come back with him to Argamae. No, the visions were clear. But why could she not come with him? The Skeat part of him searched for way out of this predicament; the higher Ren part of him told him that his fate had all ready been cast a long time ago.

L-Lewminous suddenly rolled a low tone in her belly. That brought Re-Nan back to consciousness. They had somehow gotten off the trail and they were deep in the Myst. The Sun was setting and glowed purple as the last of the light was lost in the Myst. L-Lewminous rolled that low tone again and this time Re-Nan felt the sound travel under his feet. It traveled through the rocks spiraling outward like a stone thrown in a pond. A few moments later, three sounds rolled through the ground back to them. L-Lewminous stomped her left front leg and waited.

Suddenly three L-Lews appeared in the Myst. One was so black all you could see in the Myst was his eyes glowing slate gray. Re-Nan had never seen a black L-Lew. It was a male, and he had a wild unpredictable quality to him. He stood the furthest away. Re-Nan became very aware that this L-Lew was unsure of Re-Nan. The feeling from these L-Lews was that they were escorts. He felt that these L-Lews had organized themselves somehow for this journey. The three communicated their introductions to Re-Nan. The black one's name was L-Learamore. A serious fellow, cautious and crafty. He was the leader of the last group of L-Lews in Argamae. His caution had kept his group intact despite the hunting from the Skeats. Then there was L-Leipinore, an old

L-Lew with wise eyes and a short temper. And last was L-Leulie, a young male with a talent for creating realistic illusions through his middle eye. This seemed a unique talent even for the magical L-Lews. And, though L-Leulie was impulsive as all young L-Lews were, he was given a gentle respect from the other L-Lews.

After the introductions, the L-Lews were anxious to continue the journey through the Myst.

The L-Lews created a protective shield around him. L-Lewminous was in front, L-Leipinore behind, L-Learamore disappeared like a scout far in front. And L-Leulie was to Re-Nan's left. Time seemed to standstill as Re-Nan moved through the Myst. The energy from the L-Lews protected his mind from the madness. They were a calming influence in the vacantness of the Myst. Many times Re-Nan felt a presence watching him, as if he were being observed through one of the Fragment Stones by Za-loc.

Yet, ever downward they went deeper into the Myst. There were places where he felt completely out of breath. But then, L-Leulie would breathe into Re-Nan's face, and the clarity of the L-Lew's would bring him back to reality.

In the moments of clarity, Re-Nan wondered where the L-Lews were taking him. They had been in the Myst a long time, much longer than ever before, he was sure. Then up ahead, he noticed a light shining dimly through the Myst. A single point of light in the blackness. As they approached, Re-Nan saw the light was coming from an opening, in a great pile of mountainous rocks. They looked as if a giant had placed them in this haphazard way, piled on top of each other making unusual shapes and edges.

As they approached, the L-Lew's went into single file, with L-Lewminous in front and Re-Nan hanging onto her tail. Her instructions were to step carefully only where she stepped. The ground was unstable here, and glass-like under foot. It crackled as they walked. Normally in the Myst there is a void of sound all-together. But as they approached the light, a sound, like a crystal being rubbed with water, came to his ears. The light ahead seemed to illuminate everything right through the walls of stone. The light appeared to be passing through dark water as it escaped the mountain. In the dense and thick rock some light came through. Where it was thinner more light could be seen.

When they entered the mountain, the edges and walls seemed like a great maze of mirrored reflections. The Myst lessened in here, but the play of light still confused the mind. L-Lewminous seemed clear as to which way she wanted to go. Many times it looked as if she was going to walk them right into a wall, but it was an opening instead. Into the mountain they went, until finally the passage opened to a great cavern.

The light was coming from a doorway in the rock. Renan could see it was a magical passageway. It looked like a tunnel going back to Argamae. When you looked at it from the side it seemed flat. L-Lewminous explained telepathically that the doorway was the only entrance to the Gate in Argamae controlling the Myst. She explained that this Gate could only be passed through by a being with both Ren and Skeat blood, and that the light on the other side is coming from the energy matrix that controls this Gate. She and the other L-Lews have noticed over time that the light seemed to be dimming. They were not able to pass through to find out why. There seemed to be a song that will increase the energy to the Gate, and that the Priestesses had placed scrolls from the library into your pack that might help

reactivate this Gate. However they do not know which one will open it, or if any of them would open it.

Finally, she added one critical last detail. She and the other L-Lews are certain that the energy on the other side was alive. The L-Lews could sense that whatever was over there is very old, and not from this planet.

Re-Nan realized that there was nothing left to do but to go through the Gate. The L-Lews would wait for him here. They cautioned for him not to take too long, because the creatures of the Myst were sure to find him if he dallied. These creatures did not like the light, but Za-loc was determined to stop Re-Nan at all costs and the Wall-a-Dons might be forced by the Myst to come into the cave.

Re-Nan took a deep breath and entered the passageway. The crystalline sound increased as he entered the Gate, and he found himself standing in front of a great ball of liquid crystal. It moved and undulated with the sound. An intense heat came from the Ball and Re-Nan quickly walked around it to find a place where he could observe it at a distance.

There was a chair formed out of the crystal near the furthest wall and when he sat in it, it seemed that the chair fit his body perfectly. He set his pack down and began to pull out the scrolls. When he looked up, there was suddenly a small table next to him. His mind remarked to himself that something in here was definitely alive and it would generate things as he needed them. He could feel himself being observed and when he glanced at the liquid crystal ball, it reflected his image back to him in a hundred reflections. Mesmerized he stared back at his reflections and they began to change. The crystal began recounting through pictures flashed very quickly, Re-Nan's life and adventures. Then, it began tracking his lineage back through time. He saw Re-Nan-Da-Ky briefly as the history continued backwards. Then, the crystal went quiet. He felt that he was supposed to do something. The crystal was waiting, but for what?

He opened one of the scrolls. It contained a beautiful song of praise and homecoming for the Rens. He began to sing it and the crystal almost harrumphed. The sound was obviously of displeasure. He put that scroll down and picked up another. This one contained a song of the land

before the Great Collapse. If the crystal had an eye it would have shut its eye, apparently bored.

Re-Nan began to get a sense that this was not working. His intuition told him that this crystal was not interested in hearing anything from the past.

Knowing that time was critical, he put all the scrolls down and began to hum a tune. It was nothing he had ever heard before and he made it up as he went along. At first the crystal seemed still bored, but as the song continued the crystal actually seemed to turn around and began to cautiously listen. Re-Nan's mind for some unknown reason, began to focus on the Myst as separate from Za-loc. Some voice inside his head called for him to find the song of the Myst, as if to sing the song of the Myst would give it form, and only if it had a form, could it fit into this world.

Za-loc had it trapped in formlessness. Without form it could never transcend its present existence. It existed, neither here nor there, with the Night-Mir-Sun. The Myst wanted to become something, but it did not know what.

It had observed the many creatures of this world and had been used by Za-loc to change creatures to live in the Myst. But, it did not know what it was, that it was separate from Za-loc's greed and control. The Myst knew it had great power, but it had partially believed itself to be something not completely good. The self-doubt in the Myst made it difficult for it to choose a form - or a life. It felt as if it did not belong here, and it longed to leave this world. Re-Nan's song reflected that, trying to leave had never worked, Yoranium after Yoranium.

The song began to guide the Myst toward another choice. The possibility that the only way to transcend this place, was to completely embody in this place. As the song continued, Re-Nan could feel the resistance in the Myst. It was holding on to something deeply painful. Some tremendous loss.

Re-Nan began to wonder if he could draw the Myst with the song to formfulness. Something in the Myst was afraid to dream again. It felt to Re-Nan that some dream had been ripped away from the Myst as it had been torn out of the sky and resulted in the destruction of the land of the Morian. Something so glorious had been shattered in that moment.

It's potential and confidence destroyed. It now felt it existed in an endless experience of self-punishment and unworthiness. This pain had, of course, been cultivated by Za-loc and was the main way he controlled the Myst.

Re-Nan realized that this energy in the Myst did not have understanding of the emotional realm here. It deducted that pain of any sort was a punishment. Feeling was a punishment. Anything that did not feel positive was a punishment. It endlessly tried to recoil from this dense emotional realm.

The Myst did not come from this realm. No wonder Za-loc needed the Fragment Stones to control it. The Stones contained all the negative emotional experiences from the Morian, and of the Myst being yanked here by them. It did not want to re-experience that deep pain and so tried to get away from the Stones. But some of the pain in the Stones belonged to the Myst; and so, that was why Re-Nan would have to carry the Stones to the Pit at Da-Nan-Da-Li.

As Re-Nan carried them to the Pit, Re-Nan would have to feel all the pain held in them. Re-Nan was supposed to show the Myst, by example, that the pain could be transcended,

but only, by feeling it. The Myst needed to be shown the way through. The Myst needed to see that pain is not a punishment, but a part of being whole.

In that moment, Re-Nan saw that the planet was not whole. It had been fragmented by the Morian ignoring the Priestesses and trying to pull the consciousness in one direction. Za-loc had pulled the land even further, so that the energy had been greatly mutated into two separate worlds with exaggerated extremes. Throwing the Fragment Stones into the Pit would help consolidate the split and bring the world back to center. But, it would only be through the Myst finally becoming form, that the world could be healed.

Re-Nan could sense that the Priestesses had hidden the tools of good and light. They had to be protected while the imbalance was so great. The Myst had experienced and known so much darkness and pain that the Myst need to embody in form and quest for the beauty and light. If the Myst would be willing to find out what was good about itself, and this place then it could be whole. The Myst would have to confront its illusions about deserving to feel "the good." It would have to realize that beauty and love can exist in the same place as pain and loss. Denial of beauty creates

pain. Denial of love creates loss. The Myst felt ugly and unloved.

Re-Nan continued his song and could feel a great pull coming from the liquid crystal ball. It was magnifying his song sending it out on a vibration unfamiliar to Re-Nan. He knew that the song was going out to the Myst. Hopefully it would understand.

Then suddenly, out of the crystal came the picture of a young man, part Skeat and part Ren, walking with an old man. Re-Nan knew this to be Am-Eron and himself, yoran into the future. The form that the Myst was to take would be his grandson. Am-Eron was to find the lost Keys and bring the world to wholeness and peace. How ironic it seemed to Re-Nan the Am-Eron was to find the peace he sought by seeking out the joy and love. Re-Nan was to find the peace inside by facing his fears. They would have much to teach each other.

Re-Nan could sense that Am-Eron would have a hard time not feeling caught constantly by the pain of the past. He would have to let much go. The Myst/Am-Eron was almost comfortable in the negative energy. It had been there for

so long that he almost could not remember what it would be like without the pain. He would try to run away from the positive things in life not wanting to feel the loss of love. Am-Eron would think it would be better to never have love then to feel the pain of loosing it again. The negativity would be an addiction for Am-Eron. An addiction of self-negation that would have to be overcome if Argamae and An-wyl were to come together.

The crystal reflected that the outcome of Am-Eron's battle and quest for the completion of the Keys was not certain. This uncertainty was how Za-loc would try to control Am-Eron.

The sound from the crystal began to lessen and Re-Nan realized that he had stopped singing. The song softly died away through the ground and the crystal became molten, changing its shape into the form of an unknown creature. Re-Nan was sure he had not seen a creature, such as this, in the songbooks.

The creature was still crystalline but had a long neck and a long tail. Its four legs were clawed and its teeth shown sharply in a long snout. The creature introduced

itself as Dra-kar the last of the Dracaws, Keepers of the Split in Time. He explained that he was an immortal type of creature from the Origons. The Origons were a series of planets close to this one. In the great explosion of the Night-Mir-Sun he was sent to record and to help create balance and bring this planet back to wholeness. He had been waiting for a long time for a Ren/Skeat to come and create a song that the Myst could hear. Dra-kar explained that the Myst had heard and understood his song with his help as a translator. Now it would be up to the Myst to decide what it really wanted.

Re-Nan then ask, ***Dra-kar, how do I reactivate this Gate so the Myst does not enter the cities of An-wyl and Argamae?***

Dra-kar answered, ***I am the Gate and I will attempt to keep the Myst out as long as possible. However, when the time is right for Am-Eron to embody, I will release the Gate and allow the Myst to enter Argamae. The Myst can then enter into the developing body of Am-Eron. Za-loc will be very angry and will retaliate by inflicting much pain and death on both sides of the Rift. Unfortunately, this is inevitable. However, remember the song of the Myst you will need it many times on your journey. The Myst is becoming***

more and more your ally. You must now return quickly; your L-Lew friends are in trouble. Follow my voice as you re-enter and I will guide you down the passage with no Wall-a-Dons. Remember, you are in the Rift and in this section you need to go up. But here, up is down. Follow the lower trails and you will get out. Here, take this knife; you will need it on your journey. Do not let it out of your sight. It has a power you will understand only at the end of your journey. With Am-Eron. You will speak to me again through the seeing Stone. Hurry now, there is no time to loose. Remember Tol-lin's lessons.

Re-Nan gathered up the scrolls into his pack and stepped through the door.

Immediately on the other side, he sensed an immediate need to drop to the ground. Snarling sounds surrounded him. Three Wall-a-dons were trying to come close to the portal. The light was bothering them and fortunately they could not sense him completely, disturbed as they were by so much light. One was the leader and was urging one of the lesser closer to the Gate. For a moment Re-Nan was afraid the Wall-a-don was going to step on him, when suddenly he heard L-Lewminous chirp angrily at the Wall-a-dons. Their ears

were so good that they immediately spun them towards the sound and began charging off in the direction of the sound.

Re-Nan thought, ***Great, now which way!*** Immediately upon thinking that, Re-Nan heard Dra-kar in his head say, ***Go to the left and take the far passage. It will seem as if you are going down, L-Leulie is down that passage waiting for you. Move now!***

Crouched where he was, beneath his hand he felt a small Stone. Remembering the trick Tol-lin taught, Re-Nan threw the Stone away from the direction of the passage he wanted to take.

When the Stone hit he heard the Wall-a-dons snarl and one moved towards the rock, but the leader sensed a trick and was still moving toward Re-Nan.

Moving as silently as possible, Re-Nan crept up on the large Wall-a-don. It was sniffing and listening intently. Bent over, its foul breath almost made Re-Nan faint. The Wall-a-don was almost on top of him when he remembered the Wall-a-don's weakness, its ears. Re-Nan made a slight scratching sound with his fingers on the glass-like surface

of the cave. When the Wall-a-don bent down to investigate, Re-Nan plunged the knife deep into the soft part of the Wall-a-don's ear slot. The Wall-a-don screamed in pain, the sound reverberating throughout the cave in a surreal fashion. Re-Nan felt the Wall-a don teeter and then fall.

Re-Nan scrambled to get out of the way of the falling giant. A gasping sound told Re-Nan that the Wall-a-don was dying. Quickly he grabbed the knife, careful not to let the blood of the Wall-a-don touch his skin. He remembered what Tol-lin had taught him about the caustic quality of a Wall-a-don's blood. He turned and went in the direction of the far tunnel. Then he was through going down a long passage.

The mirrored images of the walls in this mountain were confusing, but he steadily heard Dra-kar, guiding him down passages that appeared, with his eyes, to be dead ends. Always going deeper, Re-Nan sensed one of the L-Lews ahead, and one of the Wall-a-dons behind. Their ears were better than he anticipated, and they were enraged at the loss of their leader.

The Wall-a-don was catching up to him and Re-Nan could hear his rasping breath getting closer. The scales on the

feet of the Wall-a-don were making a scraping sound on the glass-like surface of the tunnel. Re-Nan searched for a spot where the tunnel was not so narrow. Even if he got very still and dropped to the ground, the Wall-a-don would probably step on him here.

Finally the tunnel seemed to make a fork, and to the left he sensed L-Leulie, pulling Re-Nan into a small opening. Re-Nan practically dove into the low hole. L-Leulie then focused his mind and created an image of a wall through his third eye. The opening appeared to disappear and even the sound of the Wall-a-don vanished. L-Leulie telepathically communicated that they needed to be very still while the Wall-a-don passed. The illusion would only last for a short time, but if it returned and they were quiet the power of the L-Lew would make Re-Nan invisible. The only way the Wall-a-don would find them is if they made a sound. L-Leulie then lay right next to Re-Nan and Re-Nan attempted to control his breathing.

The Wall-a-don passed and the illusion faded. As the illusion faded, the sound of the Wall-a-don returned, it sensed that Re-Nan was no longer in front of it. It had stopped ahead and was listening. It began retracing its

steps, grunting and sniffing along the way. L-Leulie became very still and as the Wall-a-don was just about to peak around the corner, where they were hiding, L-Leulie threw another illusion of them curled up together becoming a rock. Re-Nan felt the void of sound again as the illusion enveloped them. The Wall-a-don came right up to them and it seemed to Re-Nan that this second illusion was less thick. Re-Nan could see right through the illusion of the rock and the Wall-a-don's teeth seemed uncomfortably close to his neck. Re-Nan willed himself not to move or breathe.

The Wall-a-don seemed confused and returned to the main tunnel backtracking its way along the tunnel. They could hear the sound of it fading into the darkness. L-Leulie still did not move for a long time. The L-Lew seemed to know exactly how far the Wall-a-don need to be before it was safe to move. Re-Nan was grateful for the moment to rest. A soft rolling sound came through the ground to them and L-Leulie returned the call and within a few moments all the L-Lews were standing at the front of the small opening.

As Re-Nan crawled out exhaustion caught up to him and he could not believe how tired he was. L-Lewminous told Re-Nan telepathically to put some Lethia in his mouth as they

needed to move quickly out of this area. The new leader of the group would be back to check this tunnel again.

Re-Nan placed some petals under his tongue and they continued down the tunnel, until they came out onto a landscape that was just slightly in the Myst.

Re-Nan felt the less dense air around him and he took gasping breaths. After a few moments he felt better and the L-Lews moved him higher up the ridge.

Above the Myst finally, Re-Nan noticed that they were on a lone peak of clear air. All around them was the darkness of the Myst. He could not even see other peaks from here, because they were so deep in the Myst. The sun had set and there was only a slight red glow in the far distance. Re-Nan longed for his bed in Thera-wyl, but he was so tired the ground eventually invited him to sleep.

That night the Stones told him, in his dreams, stories of Ky-Lyra and her life. His body relaxed as he remembered her. And through the dream their souls touched.

Chapter 20 - The Firestone and Re-Nans capture

Re-Nan awoke as the sun was just barely rising. The L-Lew's were still asleep, except L-Learamore who was standing guard looking down the hill into the Myst. Re-Nan sensed that the L-Lew knew he was awake and was still keeping his distance. Re-Nan wondered if L-Learamore ever slept. Re-Nan began to make some tea but then realized that there was no wood for a fire. The hill was barren except for the Stones and a few sparse grasses. Just as he was about to put the tea away L-Learamore came up behind him and nudged Re-Nan with his nose.

Re-Nan turned around to see the L-Lew with a Stone in his mouth. The L-Lew turned and walked to the highest point of the hilltop. The sun had not quite reached the summit yet. L-Learamore looked to the angle of the sun and carefully placed the Stone down in alignment with the first rays of the sun.

Re-Nan watched fascinated as the sun's light gently touched the Stone. Re-Nan then realized that the Stone was heating up. Somehow the Stone was holding the light in. In amazement he realized that the Stone was a firestone. Re-Nan's grandmother had told him the stories of the rare firestones. Shocked Re-Nan quickly grabbed the pot and the tea. Within minutes, the Stone was red-hot and the water was boiling.

Re-Nan turned to thank L-Learamore but the L-Lew had disappeared down the hill into the Myst. Re-Nan thought as he drank his tea that L-Learamore was the most distant L-Lew he had ever met. L-Learamore rarely communicated telepathically. As he drank, Re-Nan decided to ask the Stones why L-Learamore acted the way he did. The Stones brought a song to him of L-Learamore. The song had a sad, melancholy tone to it. The pictures created by the song

were of Skeats killing his mother and father when he was young, and of frightened L-Lews running the deep into Myst to get away from the killing.

L-Learamore refused to give up. He gathered up the few remaining L-Lews and taught them how to out smart the Skeats. To Re-Nan's surprise, he learned that L-Learamore was very telepathic. His skill was that he knew what a Skeat needed or thought before the Skeat realized it. That was how he kept ahead of them. The Stones allowed Re-Nan to experience L-Learamore's incredible telepathic abilities. L-Learamore was indeed the best scout available for this journey. Re-Nan wondered how long the L-Lew had carried the firestone in order for it to be used in the moment Re-Nan needed it.

The library recorded that there used to be firestones but many had been destroyed in the explosion of the Great Collapse. Re-Nan had never seen one. He sensed it would be incredibly valuable on this trip, he suspected it would be needed for more than tea.

Each of the L-Lews was unique, Re-Nan could feel that something was taking place outside of his consciousness. It

was as if this sequence in time was being orchestrated by the Stones and the L-Lews'. Somehow that made him feel better. He knew he needed to allow the flow to continue and the journey would complete itself.

He finished his tea, and placed his pack in such a way to shade the firestone. Sunlight is what makes the Stone hot. Re-Nan hoped that in the shade the Stone would cool enough to pack it for the rest of the journey.

His bustling woke the other L-Lews and they stretched and drank some water that Re-Nan put out in a bowl for them. L-Learamore returned and the four of them stood with heads together deciding the next course of action.

Re-Nan looked up and saw the Night-Mir-Sun overhead. Re-Nan knew that it was getting closer to the Initiation time. Soon they needed to head back towards the Temple at Da-Nan. Re-Nan was anxious to see the home of his grandfather. During the first passing of the Night-Mir-Sun, Re-Nan had been busy learning in the library at the Temple of Sa-Ma.

Somehow, between now and the second passing he needed to do the Initiation, get the Fragment Stones into the Pit at Da-Nan-Da-Li, and return to Argamae. His mind was confused. How could he do everything that was being expected of him?

He looked out from the hilltop they were on and in the daylight it appeared that they were a small floating island of land above a moving river of Myst. To the north the river of Myst seemed to get narrower until far in the distance he could barely see a high mountain. It looked as if the Myst flowed right out of the mountain, and down to them. Next, he looked to the south. The river of Myst seemed to widen with the Rift and drop down into a dark gloom that seemed bottomless. Re-Nan sensed that down there the Fragment Stones were calling to him, taunting him, luring him to his inevitable fate. Within them lurked Zalloc, always watching, seeking out any weakness within Re-Nan.

His thoughts were broken by the Stones telling him the L-Lews were ready to go. Re-Nan gathered up his things and placed them all in the packs, carefully wrapping the firestone so no light would hit it. Then the L-Lews' lead

Re-Nan back down the hill into the Myst, as they headed north towards the mountain.

Each time Re-Nan experienced the Myst, it seemed different. Some part of him was adjusting to the Myst and he felt more alert each time. It seemed as if the Myst was aligned with him more and was trying to help keep the negative effects of Za-loc away from him. He hummed a song of gratitude, hoping that somehow the Myst would hear it. He recognized that the Myst and him were intricately woven together in a dance. Energy and light connected them, and energy and light could destroy them.

As they continued cautiously through the Myst in the Rift, Re-Nan began to notice the landscape more. The angle of the morning sun allowed the light to penetrate enough for him to feel more confident that what he was seeing was real.

Where light penetrated the Myst, the ground was covered with a mossy grass. The land underneath his feet seemed spongy and moist. Some odd vines grew, as well as thorny bushes. The bushes almost seemed afraid of reaching up and so their branches grew close to the ground. The landscape was peppered with large, sharp edged boulders and sheer

cliffs. The rocks would change from time to time as they went through different layers of the land. But as they went deeper the plants disappeared in the darkness. Eventually there was not enough light to sustain any plants. The Myst would then cling to the rock faces and undulate with the energy coming from deep inside the Rift. There was no wind, only an unseen force that always moved the Myst always toward the deeper area south of them.

The energy tugged at Re-Nan also and he would watch as he tried to take a step and the force of the wave would try to pull his feet backwards. He had to constantly be aware of where each step landed, or a step forward would really be a step back. The L-Lew's kept their many eyes on him, and so they made slow steady progress towards the mountain.

In the Myst the mountain was lost to sight, but he could feel it also pulling at him. This was what was causing the Myst to seem like a current in the ocean. One wave would come in, and another wave would pull out. The Myst seemed to dance slowly in this dreamlike place.

The motion was very hypnotic and it lulled him into a numb stupor. Thank goodness for the awareness of the L-

Lews. Re-Nan realized he could have wandered in this landscape endlessly until his death, if it weren't for them.

He unconsciously patted L-Lewminous and she softly trilled back to him understandingly.

Re-Nan wondered what else could exist in the Myst. The skin of the Quil-a-bok that he was wearing still protected him from the Myst. He had yet to see this animal in real life. But the songs in the library spoke of a large grazing animal, gentle in nature and unstoppable as it moved. Even the Wall-a-dons left it alone. The peacefulness of this creature was moving to him. He tried to keep the feeling inside.

But Re-Nan did not feel peaceful in this moment. In fact, as they continued a uncomfortable feeling crept into his bones. They were heading uphill still, when suddenly L-Learamore returned from the scouting position in a full run. His nostrils were flaring and the L-Lews broke formation and changed direction. L-Leulie and L-Lewminous guided him in a new direction. They were splitting up. L-Learamore looked Re-Nan directly in the eyes and telepathically communicated,

*The Myst is your friend, talk to it through song.
The firestone a lure, something that Za-loc longs.*

*Za-loc needs your power inside,
To sing to the Stones and harmonize the light.*

*He does not wish to have you die,
Together with him he desires an ally.*

*His weakness is he cannot do this alone,
You have the songs and he has the Stones.*

*He heard your song to the Myst,
He wants you to immortalized him also with this.*

*The Stones are strong, so be aware,
As you are taken into Za-loc's lair.*

*The longer you are with the Stones,
The more they control your very bones.*

*You cannot resist what you do not know,
Surrender into the pain and sorrow.*

*To refuse your pain is the trap,
Held in the Stones is the map.*

*Light can exist within the dark,
Hold the firestone to your heart.*

*The firestone holds the key to the light,
The only way to carry the fragments right.*

*Lure Za-loc into this Stone,
Part the Myst by singing its tone.*

*Then the light will burn through.
Hope is borne with your doom.*

*For then the master you will be,
Of the Stones until Da-Nan-Da-Li.*

The song was still ringing inside his head, as they moved off very quickly into the deeper area of the Rift. Re-Nan looked back to see where L-Learamore had gone. But, he was nowhere to be seen. His black coat blending completely into the darkness.

Then he heard them, the Wall-a-dons coming from many directions. Grunting and sniffing loudly in the darkness. Re-Nan felt the panic climb up into his throat. They were very close! L-Leulie suddenly split off and Re-Nan was left following L-Lewminous. Her ears were scanning the area around them. Her back was tense and her breath deep. He could feel her searching for some safe spot but they were in a open area in the Rift with little to hide behind. She communicated to him that they were going to have to run, and they bolted together towards something that only she could see in the distance. As soon as they began running the Wall-a-dons heard them and a loud commanding sound organized the Wall-a-dons in their direction. The sound of the Wall-a-dons combined with the heaving of Re-Nan's own breath, echoed back to them in the Myst. Everything became surreal, and as the Myst increased in his body, he felt more and more heavy and dreamlike in the moment.

L-Lewminous's thoughts merged with Re-Nan and the other L-Lews. He could see L-Leulie throwing some of the Wall-a-dons off with illusions of Re-Nan running in a different direction. But those illusions lasted only a short while; and with each illusion L-Leulie's magic got weaker. L-

Leipinore was trying to make as much sound as possible to throw the Wall-a-don's off track. L-Learamore raced off to gather more help from somewhere. Re-Nan knew that L-Learamore was focused on some strategy the L-Lews had already agreed upon. He prayed it would work.

He could feel the Wall-a-dons behind them, their steps reverberating through the ground as they walked. Re-Nan could also feel the power of Za-loc urging him to stop running. His feet felt heavier and heavier. Doubt invaded his mind and he began to feel hopeless.

L-Lewminous's trill kept snapping him out of it, but she needed to do it more and more frequently to keep his attention, and the Wall-a-dons heard her. This kept them in pursuit. L-Lewminous kept changing directions trying to lure the Wall-a-dons off their trail. But the Wall-a-dons ears were so good that any sound made them turn back towards them.

Za-loc's whispers of hopelessness and surrender undermined Re-Nan's strength, until finally he could no longer move. L-Lewminous tried to cover him with her energy and then he learned some of L-Lewminous's magical skills.

He felt her gather up her strength and right when the Wall-a-dons were on top of them, he felt them both suddenly go into the Nemian.

The freezing cold of the Nemian shocked Re-Nan back to reality. How did she do that? The cold pulled at him in a different way than the Myst. Re-Nan thought only the Kaz-i-mir Stone could take anyone there. Re-Nan thought, **No wonder L-Lewminous alerted the Rens that he had gone there with the Kaz-i-mir Stone.** Somehow this was different though.

In front of them were two doorways into two different futures. One door lead to Za-loc's ultimate win and the loss of the Keys of Consciousness and the flooding of the Myst into all the areas of the planet. Re-Nan saw the Rens and Skeats dying and finally even the L-Lews. The sadness and the pain of the picture made him want to turn away, but not before he saw himself standing with Za-loc, co-commanding the Myst.

A scream came into his ears from a far away place. He realized it was himself yelling **No** in the Nemian.

He turned to the other doorway and he saw once again
himself crying and in deep pain at the Pit at Da-Nan-Da-Li.
This time he thought, ***No, not again Is there no other
alternative?***

Neither seemed worth the fight to Re-Nan. Both doors
held pain. L-Lewminous's voice came to him softly in the
Nemian.

***We believe your heart can only go
To the wholeness that you long so.***

***The first door is the illusion Za-loc cast
To make you give up your dream at last.***

***The pain you must, to go through
Show the Myst, it can do it to.***

***When you go back you will be caught
Wall-a-dons wait at the same spot.***

***Give you to them now I must
But in this moment remember to trust.***

We will be back to help you

L-Learamore is already gathering up L-Lews.

I will return you now, but I must go

Back to the Temple to let them know.

We trust you now to go alone

Through this phase of Za-loc's home.

The first door is not really true

Follow the feelings and go through.

All the feelings are new doors

That open on to a new course.

With that last thought, she breathed on him and he was back in the Myst surrounded by Wall-a-dons. The closest one grabbed at him and he could feel its claws tear at the fabric of his robe. Snarling erupted between the other Wall-a-dons. Each wanted to take credit for capturing Re-Nan.

L-Lewminous was nowhere in sight and Re-Nan felt frightened. Then one large Wall-a-don came up to Re-Nan and the others fell silent. The leader grunted orders to the Wall-a-dons and then they tied Re-Nan's hands and feet. Then he threw Re-Nan over his shoulder and they all loped deeper into the Rift.

Hopelessness overcame Re-Nan and the numbing quality of the Myst enveloped him. He allowed himself to lapse into the nothingness of the Rift.

Chapter 21 - Into the Rift and the Fall of Re-Nan

Re-Nan lost track of time in the Myst. Ever downward they went. The darkness seemed to spiral around him, consuming all hope. It pulled him into the despair of the broken land. An-wyl seemed far away and Ky-Lyra was a fading, lovely dream. Even the memory of light darkened in his mind.

The deeper they went, the blacker the Stone, and the more unworldly the landscape became. Re-Nan tried to muster up courage, but the constant jostling and bumping of the Wall-a-don that carried him made it difficult to think, much less create a plan to escape from Za-loc.

They were close to the Fragment Stones; Re-Nan could feel their pull. The energy of Za-loc was trying to grab his heart and rip his soul apart. Re-Nan had never felt so alone. He tried to remember when he had traveled in Argamae. He had been alone then. Why did this feel so different?

He had become so accustomed to traveling with the L-Lews. Their energy was like a soft radiant light in the Myst. He tried to feel the energy of the Wall-a-dons, but something controlled them beyond his understanding. They felt like hollow shells. Every time he tried to find the deeper essence of the Wall-a-don, their original song, Za-loc's energy would slap him away. The closer they got to the energy of Za-loc, the more Re-Nan was aware of his weaknesses.

He thought to himself, *What was I thinking! Why did I think I could save anyone? I cannot even save myself. Now what good am I to anyone. My family in Argamae must be wondering what happened to me. They probably think I'm dead by now. I should have never left Ky-Lyra. I will never see our child. I have been foolish and irresponsible. And for what? To fulfill some ancient prophesy. But the outcome is not certain. Even in the Nemian there were two outcomes. I know L-Lewminous said one was created by Za-loc to confuse me. But how can I face such a powerful wizard? Even without form he is powerful. He controls all that enters the Myst. Few escape his grasp. I was probably just lucky the first time. This journey was hopeless from the beginning. I should have never left Argamae. Maybe this is*

all a dream, and I'm simply dying in the Myst in a delirium. Well, good, if that is the case at least this nightmare will be over soon then.

Slowly Re-Nan realized that the land seemed to be leveling out, and the Wall-a-don carrying him relaxed somewhat. Re-Nan looked up and saw the remains of ancient buildings in the darkness. They still reflected some light off the ancient metals they were made out of. But, the reflection showed only destruction.

In the distance he could see they were heading towards a group of partially destroyed buildings. The Stones would be there. He could feel it.

As they got closer, to his amazement, there was a myriad of strange creatures, working and carrying debris out of the area. Re-Nan saw that Za-loc had these creatures working to recreate the lost city of the Morian. The work seemed slow and tedious, as the creatures were weak and small, with the exception of the Wall-a-dons. These creatures seemed afraid of the Wall-a-dons but that did not stop them from staring at Re-Nan being carried towards the tower. By the time they entered the Gate, these creatures

were jeering and pointing at Re-Nan. Re-Nan thought how different this entrance was from the time he entered Thera-wyl. Fear was mounting inside Re-Nan; no doubt, close proximity to the Fragments was having an effect. He tried to keep his mind clear. **Focus!** He needed to remember the skills he had learned in An-wyl.

He took some slow breaths, trying to calm his nerves. Nothing seemed to help. The next thing he knew, the Wall-a-don was placing him ungraciously on the ground. His feet were so numb from the position that his legs collapsed underneath him, and he ended up in a puddle of black water on the ground.

Laughter surrounded him and he looked up into the shadowy eyes of these non-creatures. They had become slaves of the Fragments. Some reflected the pain of some great loss, others primal fear. The Wall-a-dons lusted after power and greed. And, all of them seemed to hate anything from the light. The hate twisted inside their bodies contorting their faces with vile loathing.

The look on their faces sparked some lost light inside Re-Nan and he felt a great Pity for them. But that moment

was broken by the crowd going silent. They stared blankly with fear at something behind him.

The bindings of his feet and hands were cut and he struggled to stand and face the monster he could feel forming behind him. . . .Za-loc.

The energy made his skin crawl. As he turned, a hissing came from in the ground and he saw a black figure emerge from the Myst. Za-loc's eyes were shiny and gleaming from the victory of capturing Re-Nan. Za-loc breathed in great gasps of power. It was as if there was not enough air to fill his sense of pride. His voice echoed out in a hiss, condescending and arrogant.

Za-loc spoke:

Minions, this is a great day.

My victory is not far away.

In front of you stands a Skeat.

The one I have tried so hard to beat.

For two generations I have chased his blood,

Between two lands, and two loves.

*Now my power will be fully formed,
Into this world that had me scorned.*

*He can create form from a song.
The fragments have called to him for very long.*

*Listen Re-Nan now to me,
Allies we are, can't you see.*

*The Stones have the power to recast,
My ancient cities from the past.*

*The broken lands that you see,
Must be merged to create Me.*

*You are an error, a mistake to be
Made by the Priestesses, from infinity.*

*The coming together of your lands,
Makes me again a happy Morian.*

You see, you are not supposed to exist,

This is my land, my power, my Myst.

In my land, now you are.

It is pointless to go very far.

You could not find your way out,

Your mind is cluttered with too much doubt.

No one will come here or even try,

To rescue you or say goodbye.

No Skeat or Ren has ever come this far.

Ridiculous to hope there is a rescuer.

What do you say, come with me,

Together we will be allies for this merging.

With my hand that I wave,

See the Stones within the cave.

Za-loc waved his hand and the Myst parted. Below him Re-Nan saw the five Fragment Stones laying in a great hole in the earth.

The power from them was strong, almost deafening. The Myst seemed to block some of the density of the Stones. With the Myst removed, the pain of the Stones surrounded him in a suffocating embrace.

Re-Nan held his ears trying to quiet the pounding pain in his head. But to know avail. Above the pain, he could hear the laughter of Za-loc and the creatures of the Myst. Re-Nan tried to gasp for air, but his chest felt as if a Wall-a-don was sitting on it. Tortured emotion invaded his body; he was a helpless stick riding a raging current in a mad river.

Re-Nan did not know how long the pain immobilized him before he passed out. It really didn't matter anyway. Unconsciousness seemed a blessing. But even unconsciousness didn't stop the tugging of the energies inside him. It seemed that the Myst pulled at him one way, and Za-loc another. He felt like a boat being buffeted by pounding waves in a narrow canyon. He felt hopelessly lost in a

storm of howling pain and grief. Occasionally he thought he dreamed, a soft song being carried by the wind to him. Just when he thought it might be real, a gust would take it away from him. Hope seemed to fade with the music.

Every part of Re-Nan cried out in pain. No part of his body seemed immune. His breathing was labored and heavy. Each breathe a struggle just to exist. Amazingly, he began to notice that if he did not resist the intensity of the breath, the breath began to create pictures and a sensation of movement. He felt himself a small boat in a raging ocean with no land in sight. Tossed and torn at by the waves of sorrow, and greed. Everything was trying to tear him apart, break him. Each wave ripped at some unseen layer of his ego, shattering his perception of his identity, stripping him of his illusion of control.

Even in the depths of despair, it humored some part of himself to see his own shallowness. How numb he had become to life. He did not feel numb now. Parts were becoming alive that he had never consciously known. His skin crawled with the pinpricks as those parts awakened. But even in the pain he could sense aliveness returning; life, even painful

life returning, seemed somehow good. Some part of him was birthing. But the pain of this process was unbearable.

Re-Nan was no longer in control of this part of the journey. He could not even remember what the control felt like; his reality had become so ripped apart. Emotions burst forth in overlaying mosaics of painful images and memories of destruction. Past events, future possible occurrences all seemed connected in a woven tapestry of loss and dissension.

It seemed to Re-Nan the only force of energy capable here was chaos. But the chaos was unharnessable, clashing sounds and vibrations out of harmony with this place. Somehow that caught Re-Nan's attention even in the density of the pain. The harmony was not from this place; that was the secret. The unharnessable chaos was from the Black Sun. It was the raw, creative energy of the universe, formlessness brought into formfulness. But it was displaced.

The pain came from the attempts to contain something designed to be uncontainable. Or to be contained only within space's boundlessness and untethered expansion. The

agony of the Myst's plight suddenly touched Re-Nan's soul. The Myst was designed to be a expansive evolving unlimited creation.

Somehow, this touched the part of himself he knew to be created by the Priestesses. They had tried to create hope from imminent death of their species. Uncertain of the outcome, even with their seeing abilities, they had created two options - Skeats and Rens. Something peaked Re-Nan's curiosity. What if there was a third. The Morian did have the ability to channel energy from the dark sun.

Had the Priestesses created a third option? Was the Myst the original experiment? But what would have been the purpose? Why would they intentionally create a experiment that would create their own destruction? Re-Nan felt lost in a maze of spatial displacement. Why create something that would kill the creator? Why create something that would kill your own world? It seemed to make no sense to Re-Nan!

Re-Nan became so caught up in the experience, that for a moment he was unsure if the chaos was trying to expand or if something else was trying to expand inside him. The Myst

suddenly seemed everywhere inside, outside, pushing against limitations of physical form. Re-Nan finally saw the problem. The Walls of Serron were trying to contain the Myst. The Stones on the protected paths were trying to contain the Myst. Dra-kar at the sacred Gate was trying to contain the Myst. But Dra-kar knew that the Myst must be freed. He warned that the Myst would be released into the developing body of Am-Eron. But wouldn't that be the same problem again? Formlessness into a contained form. The agony would still be there for Am-Eron. Would the agony turn into the mindless pain of the diseases shown to Re-Nan in Thera-wyl? What if Am-Eron were cursed with all the madness of the diseases of the Myst? What if his mind were tortured by thoughts beyond this dimension and place? What if the chaos of his mind did not have enough discipline to find the lost Keys and Gates?

But all that seemed far away, Re-Nan could not even move, so caught in his own pain, was he.

The laughter of the minions of Za-loc continued to haunt his mind. But their laughter held fear, uncertainty, and loneliness. It did not seem so shaming through this lens of pain he was caught in. How often he had run away

from life because of feeling shamed by the particular circumstances, or others judgments of him.

Re-Nan now ran those past scenarios in his mind. How petty his own fear seemed in the depth of real pain and misery. Yet that pain he could no longer judge, as that was as much as his soul could bear at that time in his life.

How ironic that pain could teach him about living. Pain pointed out where there was the absence of life inside and out. He noticed that pain was an expanding energy when not judged or held back in any way. Cutting it off and not allowing it to move created the hopelessness, not the pain itself. Cutting it off succeeded in containing the energy of the pain. Energy is energy, and that is what Za-loc wanted. To somehow contain all that power. How insane Za-loc must be to want to control and rule a dead world!

Re-Nan marveled at the Myst's ability to test all the boundaries of Za-loc control. It lapsed into hopelessness often, but tenaciously kept seeking a door. Its first real door was Re-Nan-Da-Ky hearing its call and trusting the Myst to lead him to another land. Re-Nan wondered how long it had taken the Myst to understand enough of this density's

language to communicate, and then to trust someone other than itself. Re-Nan was clear that it had never trusted Za-loc. The Myst had allowed itself to be used by Za-loc to understand his thinking and the ways of this density. It could never really be controlled, befriended possibly, but not controlled, no matter what Za-loc thought.

Then it came to Re-Nan, the music. The music was the key. Maybe the music was the closest language to its own that the Myst understood.

Re-Nan remembered the Cave of Garn and how music coming from Ky-Lyra, Re-Nan, and L-Lewminous opened the entrance. He remembered the music of the libraries and the ancient scrolls. The music of the Lethia. The music that made Drakar pay attention to Re-Nan in the Gate. Even the music wafting in on the waves of the storms of agony, hinting at some forgotten possibility. Re-Nan's own ability to sing the songs of things to come. The chaos had no song, the pain had no song, and the hopelessness had no song. The Myst needed a song.

But that seemed strange. The universe should have its own song, so why not all the emotions. Maybe the lost Keys

and Gates were forgotten or disowned emotions, the emotions needed to make this world whole again.

Pictures began flooding into Re-Nan's mind, from a long time ago.

Light, that was the great desire. More light, more energy. The Morian wanted to move faster and to be more productive. Light was the key.

Re-Nan saw that to the Morian, the slower, denser emotions were considered a waste of time. In fact, the Magicians considered most Art a waste of emotional energy and valuable resources. Slowly laws were passed outlawing certain emotions while working. At first you could do them at home, on your own time. But over time, the Morian became accustomed to disowning them. No one wanted to be accused of being greedy, hurt, lost, or angry. Unfortunately, the more disowned the emotion, the more conflict it caused. And since it was unlawful or shaming to admit to having the emotion, the Morian got very good at justifying their behavior and suppressing these emotions.

Re-Nan observed the Morians becoming so disconnected from themselves and their deeper feeling that power struggles erupted and the power of the disowned emotion began creating or un-creating their world. The tapestry of their reality began to unravel around them, but their level of denial left them unwilling to do any constructive changes. Their society became a show of what was the next greatest thing they could accomplish and prove once again that they were the most highly evolved species.

The Priestesses and artists merged forces and quietly began to bring the disowned emotions into musical form so they could never be forgotten. At first they were put into museums for everyone to see. But soon the government was telling the people that these experiential museums were dangerous. Some music was outlawed because it triggered emotions that were considered unproductive and a waste of valuable energy resources.

The Priestesses knew the message was clear. Eventually if there was nothing done, there would be none of the shadow emotions left to experience. They knew it would cause the destruction of their land. The Morian's would loose touch with the land and eventually over use it. Their egos would

get so grandiose that they would eventually destroy each other.

The Priestesses knew they needed to act quickly. So involved the Magicians were with themselves that they did not even notice that the Priestesses had a plan of their own.

Keys and Gates were created to hold and remember all the emotions of their existence. They were unwilling to exist without the exquisiteness of a full emotional life. They understood that this was what had made them immortal.

In truth, none of them could exist without the full spectrum of emotions. The Priestesses knew they were a dying race. All their life force was being used up by trying to contain unacceptable emotional and behavioral patterns. Before this they had been an immortal race. But as the new laws were implemented Morians began to get sick and die. Their race had never experienced such a thing.

The Priestesses knew that this was their first warning. They tried to let the people grieve and open up some of the lost emotional experiences. But the Magicians, through

anyone in prison who openly grieved. The Magicians blamed the deaths on the loss of the energy from the fading sun. The Morian afraid to show concern or fear, pushed themselves more and more into work and productive applications. So now the stage was set for the final calamity.

The Priestesses knew they would probably live longer than the Magicians simply because they were more openly expressing their emotions. They also had the help of the Stones and the L-Lews.

But the key was the great Vision Stone at the temple at Sa-Ma. Lethiel did not even understand the significance of the sacrifice of the Vision Stone. Re-Nan now saw it from the perspective of the Stone itself. The Stone realized that the split in the emotional realm was so strong and so deep that it would take a long period of time to merge the emotional realm. The L-Lews helped the Stone communicate as much of the plan to the Priestesses as possible.

The land would have to be divided into lower, shadow, and upper worlds. The shadow world would be aware of upper and lower. The upper would be aware of the shadow and the

lower. But the lower had to create its own awareness to find the upper and the shadow.

The Stones knew that the upper had a great spiritual connection, but the possibility of it becoming ungrounded and superior was high. That would perpetuate the same problem as the Morian. However, they would be given the information of the Morian so they would not make the same mistakes. They would become the teachers and healers.

The shadow world would constantly challenge the upper and lower worlds to remind both that there are things beyond their control. The upper world would take the strongest of them, and through initiations, help them face fear and grow through challenges.

The shadow would also plague the lower world. But the lower world would want to conquer, have power and overcome through force of will. It believed it could do anything but did not think creatively. The shadow plagued it with constant survival and struggle. The fear was so paralyzing that the possibility of the Skeats even confronting the Myst would be unlikely.

That was why the Skeats would be the marker. When even one Skeat broke through the fear of his conditioning and made it through the Myst that would signal the beginning of the merging. Fear would be the biggest block and also the largest Fragment Stone. The Stones and L-Lews made sure that the fragmented souls of the Morian would have help. What they had not quite counted on was the power of the Myst and the insanity of Za-loc. Those two together had created quite a block that had lasted a millennium. The Fragment Stones had magnified the intensity of the polarity, delaying the merging.

The Myst was raw expansive emotion. Za-loc was controlled, manipulative, mind. And so the battle had raged on.

And here was Re-Nan caught up in the middle of the dark emotional pain of the Rift. Re-Nan felt he was being pulled over the rocks and thorns towards an emotional time bomb that had but a few seconds remaining. Inside he knew he had always heard the ticking of the bomb. He almost wished he could finally explode and be done with all this pain.

Re-Nan did not know how to handle the pain and fight Za-loc at the same time. Za-loc was so calculated and controlled.

That was it, thought Re-Nan. The more I can make him use energy trying to control his negative emotions then the weaker he will become. The only way he can control me is if I'm controlling myself first. If I play his game he has me. But if I refuse to be controlled emotionally then he will exhaust himself eventually. Besides he is also controlling the Myst. Two things at once may overwhelm him. But three would be better.

Then Re-Nan remembered the firestone. L-Learamore told him to entice Za-loc with the firestone. But there was no light this deep in the Myst. How could he activate the Stone?

Hopelessness invaded his mind again. But this time the hopelessness turned to anger.

Where were the L-Lews? Why wasn't someone trying to help him? Ky-Lyra probably didn't love him anyway. For all he knew he had been in the Myst far past the second passing

of the Night-mir-Sun. Yeah, he had probably failed already and so why bother. It was too late.

That thought made him sad and Re-Nan cried for all the loss he felt. The most painful thing was letting everyone down. But then, he started to laugh at himself. He had always been selfish if he was to be brutally honest with himself. And since it was too late he could finally admit to himself that he had always been more concerned about what he wanted than what others wanted.

He had been afraid to settle down, the wanderer in him never wanted to have to be accountable to anyone else for his own foolishness. Truth being, he never really felt good enough, and was terrified of being made out to be a fool. So he had always kept his mistakes to himself. It seemed better that way, less embarrassing.

Then it hit him. He was doing exactly what the Morian had done. No wonder Za-loc wanted him as an ally. His attachment to looking good was a hook for Za-loc to grab a hold of and manipulate Re-Nan.

In that moment, Re-Nan didn't care if the world got saved or not. Instead, he decided to truly care and love himself. He could do this for himself but not for anyone else. Besides he was too late for saving the world but he could still save himself. And maybe if he pulled himself out of this he could be with Ky-Lyra and their child.

Hope finally replaced the hopelessness.

Fear of failure was replaced by surrender to the now.

Grief was replaced with acceptance.

Anger was replaced with determination.

Re-Nan began to feel the hold of the Stones change. It was subtle, but he began to feel as if the Kaz-i-mir Stone was releasing him. His mind forced him to drag himself up from the dark ravine in his mind.

As his consciousness emerged, everything seemed more silent. Sounds of dragging Stones seemed far away, as he sat up.

No one was around. The Myst completely enveloped him.

He knew he was sitting in the center of the Fragment Stones. Za-loc obviously expected the Stones to mutate him with the help of the Myst. Za-loc's confidence and arrogance had left him unguarded. Re-Nan began searching for his pack and the firestone. The Myst parted and he saw it lying on the ground in the dark puddle where he had been so unceremoniously dropped by the Wall-a-don.

Re-Nan dragged his body towards the pack, his body so weak that the slightest scratch on the rocks made him bleed immediately. For several minutes he inched towards the pack, until finally bruised and battered he lay his hand on it. It took him a minute to open the pack because his hands were so swollen and sore. But he finally managed, and ate some Lethia and opened the pouch with the firestone.

But, as he suspected, the Myst was so thick, no light penetrated to allow the Stone to do its job. Even so, just holding the Stone felt good. It reminded him of the light and those times with Ky-Lyra in the sun at Thera-wyl.

Then to his surprise, for a moment the Stone became warm. He almost dropped it. What had made the Stone warm. Well, he was thinking of the sun. This time he closed his eyes and imagined the feeling of the warmth on his skin. The Stone became warmer yet again. Then something spoke to him.

*Za-loc cannot exist in the light,
Though he desires it with all his might.*

*Let the light shine from this Stone,
The greed will entice Za-loc home.*

*Let him lick his lips that thirst,
On this Stone before it bursts.*

*In his hands must he hold,
The firestone will make him bold.*

*He wants to prove that he can to,
Hold the Stone as you do.*

*Do not give to him at first.
Let him covet, long, and lust.*

*Power he cannot deny,
Believe not any of his lies..*

*Once the Stone breaks forth,
The Myst is then yours to escort.*

*Coming soon is some help,
Sing a song of Za-loc's hell.*

*He wants immortality,
In song for all eternity.*

*Trap him in the firestone
His energy cannot feed itself alone.*

*Powerful still he is,
Do not underestimate him in this.*

*When he is caught, you become him.
Urgent caution is needed then.*

*Power is reckless with the Stones
Go then quickly back to home.*

Uncertain as to what had just spoken to him, Re-Nan picked up the firestone and strengthened by its energy walked back to the Fragments and began to practice with the firestone. He knew the light penetrating the darkness would get Za-loc's attention and within minutes he felt Za-loc watching from behind.

Chapter 22 - Turning the Table on Za-loc

Re-Nan played with the firestone, leading out bits of light to tantalize Za-loc with. Finally he heard Za-loc snarl:

*Try hard as you might,
Not much can happen with such light.*

*Intriguing though it might be,
Light down here cannot be seen.*

*Hand me now this little stone,
Immediately or you will groan.*

Re-Nan could feel Za-loc trying very hard to contain his longing to touch light in the darkness. This was the lure Re-Nan had hoped for.

Re-Nan replied with venom. The emotion poured out of him in uncontrolled loathing. And a lifetime worth of pent-up anger spewed forth.

You, Za-loc are very weak.

Only I command this Stone to speak.

Of the light you no longer know,

You control only shadow.

That is why you failed before.

And why the Stones did not let you score.

You remember not, songs of the light,

Forgotten are you in the night.

Za-loc could not bear the thought of being forgotten. Re-Nan felt the fury building inside Za-loc. Re-Nan noticed the Fragment Stones burned red hot. Za-loc searched Re-Nan's energy to find an advantage.

Re-Nan spoke before Za-loc regained his control. Taunting Za-loc even more he said:

If I let you touch this light

Remember you will the tender sight.

*Of this land, whole and strong
Before the Priestesses turned it wrong.*

Za-loc now believed Re-Nan had been possessed by the fragments. Za-loc leered in closer to Re-Nan, anxious to get a glimpse of the Stone. Certain of victory.

*Yes, Yes,
This I like.*

*Give me the Stone
And I'll give you your life.*

*I know you want to be set free,
To be with Rens and family.*

*Without me as your scout,
There really is no way out.*

*Just give me this little Stone.
I know you hate to be alone.*

Re-Nan laughed and covered the Stone with his body. He replied:

Never, will I let you see

This gentle light of eternity.

Re-Nan felt as if Za-loc would explode in anger. Za-loc tried every manipulation he could think of with the Fragment Stones. But Re-Nan would not lessen his grip on the firestone.

Re-Nan did not resist the pain, fear, or anything Za-loc tried to throw at him. The Fragment Stones could not waiver his resolve to feel. Even the pain felt good at this point. The release was in finally being alive. Nothing was blocking Re-Nan's emotional body. It felt like a great relief to not hide his loathing of Za-loc. He felt delightfully insane.

He could feel the Myst closely observing him in this tantrum of emotion.

Za-loc lunged towards him, finally fully addicted to seeing the firestone.

Re-Nan fed his desire by saying:

*I have thought, perhaps this Stone
A forgotten fragment from long ago.*

*Maybe the reason you did not succeed,
Was you forgot this Stone in your greed.*

*So when attempted, you lost the fight,
And yourself in this plight.*

*You cannot find, what you cannot see,
Something so bright with inner beauty.*

Shocked Za-loc stared at Re-Nan. Uncertain and thrown off center, Za-loc's mental grip on the Mysterium lessened.

In his omnipotence it had never occurred to Za-loc that he had missed a Stone. Doubt crept in for the first time and shattered his control. Za-loc's mind reeled chaotically.

Re-Nan knew this was the moment. It would not come again.

Re-Nan reached out to the Myst. Beckoning it with a song of desperation. For a moment Re-Nan feared the song was lost in the vacuum of silence in the Rift. But then the Myst seemed to thin.

Za-loc's desperateness responded to the song and grabbed for the firestone. To Za-loc his success or failure was in Re-Nan's hand. But not for long!

All of Za-locs' energy focused on retrieving the Stone. And he let go of the Myst for the first time in Yoranium.

The Myst suddenly parted to allow a focused beam of light from the sun to reach the firestone.

The Stone's blazing energy disintegrated the form of Za-loc. Light melted the shadow. A surprised understanding was the last look on Za-loc's face before his energy imploded into the firestone.

The sizzling Stone hit the ground.

Now, more and more light penetrated the Rift. A circle of light enveloped Re-Nan.

Veiling his eyes from the unaccustomed brightness. He did not see the energy cord break between the Fragments and Za-loc.

Then in one moment, the Fragments connected to him.

The full impact of the Morians' disowned emotions poured like a searing hot liquid into Re-Nan. He dropped to his knees.

Re-Nan realized the Fragment Stones had connected to Za-loc believing that Za-loc had the power to release the pain. But Za-loc had only deflected the emotion to the creatures caught in the Myst. Za-loc enjoyed inflicting pain onto others. The fear was used to control others, not to clear the Stones. The Stones had no choice in the Myst but to stay connected to Za-loc.

But now there was another powerful Magician, Re-Nan.

Re-Nan felt the blackness envelope him. He had not expected the power of such shadow. It consumed him in its desperate attempt to release.

Suddenly Re-Nan remembered, he needed to find the song under the pain of the Fragment Stones. The power of Re-Nan-Da-Ky inside made him move towards the closest Fragment.

He reached out and picked up a Stone. It was the Stone of Hatred.

A cold chill went through his body. His heart became like lead. Images flew through his mind like an ever-changing Kaleidoscope. The held resentment in the Stone was palpably dense. The images moved forward like a symphony being played ridiculously fast.

Re-Nan knew he needed to reign in the tempo of the Stones' song. He began to breathe in the anger. Trying to regulate the flow of energy through his body.

The anger was explosive in its hatred. But the cunning coldness of Za-loc twisted it disrupting the flow of the song.

Slowly he felt the song unwind and the coldness release his heart.

He had no choice but to sing about the Hatred. Sounds came out of the darkness inside, clashing conflicts, unsaid words. *Too many!*, he thought, *I have to focus!*

He began to think of all the times he had hated or held resentment and anger. And a melody began to emerge.

*The hatred cast,
Is from the past.*

An un-resolving dream.

*The dream became
This awful pain.*

Torn from the souls of life.

*How can you feel,
This part until.*

The dream comes back around.

The pain still holds

My dream untold

A tragic causality.

We felt us tossed

Away and lost.

Our home inside of you.

You kept away

Our field of play

We asked for healing too.

You ignored and changed

Away the pain.

But still we're standing here.

Forgive the pasts

Immortal cast.

You are locked in this Stone too.

*You must release
The judgment piece.*

About the lies you told.

*To keep the face
Of good in place.*

Denying what you are.

*Become a Skeat
A true great feat.*

Caught in the density.

*Below the Myst
The light was missed.*

Forgiving lost its way.

*Admit your guilt
Of hatred felt.*

And buried deep inside.

Take the theme

Of tomorrow's dream.

And let us back inside.

Account for you

Accept us through.

Then hatred melts away.

We wish to be

One family.

Of life in all its depth.

You cannot heal

What won't be feeled.

Hatred must be reborn.

Into a new

Energetic too.

How can we come as one.

Hatred mourned

Makes knowledge form.

To understand the pain.

The pain once felt

Will quickly melt.

Your superiority.

Hatred comes

When we aren't one.

With who we really are.

We are the past

But the futures unmasked.

The possibilities.

Please take us home

We're tired alone.

The Pit calls out our name.

The real surprise

Is hatred lies.

About yourself, not them.

You focus out

To deny your doubt.

About the loss of self.

Wholeness asks

Release the past.

And let us live again.

Please take me out

And cast no doubt.

Into the Pit below.

The light has shown

The way back home.

Carry us to the top.

The way it seems

Is lifting dreams.

Back up into the light.

Hope is reborn

The more you mourn.

Admitting is the key.

Re-Nan now recognized a discordant external tone outside himself thread its way inside his body. Once inside, the tone blended with other tones and a softening happened. His breathing relaxed and Re-Nan fell asleep his hand still on the Fragment Stone. The clouded energy of the Stone had become clear.

His dreams overlapped times and places. It seemed he was in a great library organizing and putting into place some lost books of knowledge.

When each book found its right place, a gold light surrounded the book for a moment, then dimmed. It felt god inside and Re-Nan understood the value of himself, pain and all.

He awoke to a confused sound. The light was broader and the Myst was changing somehow.

The creatures in the Myst could not come into the light, so they stood disgruntled at its edge.

The Wall-a-Dons were furious. They wanted to grab the firestone and release Za-loc but could not enter the light. Those that tried, burned their skin when the light hit it. They would shriek in pain and pull away. The smell of burning fur and the fear blended together. The stench reached Re-Nan and he could see that he was still trapped.

The one Fragment Stone was in his hand, he was able to hold it comfortably, so he placed it in his pack.

The Fear Stone was generating great chaos. All the Stones were in the light, but it almost seemed that the light magnified the intensity held in each Stone.

The creatures of the Myst were consumed with the feelings the Stones were creating emotionally within them.

He was surrounded.

His only thought was to continue the process with the Stones. Within the light he was safe. He looked down and saw small shoots of grass were coming up around him. He knew he had to continue.

He reached for the next closest Stone. It was the Stone of Greed.

Once again overwhelming feelings and need enveloped him. Hunger, such deep hunger, such longing. He could feel all kinds of Greed, though the most noticeable were power and control.

Re-Nan untwisted Za-loc's filaments from the Stone, calming the energy and slowing the pulse of the song to a proportion that the essence could be heard.

The Stone enabled him to remember how many times Re-Nan tried to not look as if he had needs. Needs that are unfulfilled turned into neediness, which became greed. Greed tries to get its needs fulfilled through other means. For instance, if you didn't believe the original need could be filled, you would be compensated in another way. But it didn't work. The hunger would not go away.

What ever made me think I could not get my needs met?

Then he remembered, the loss of his mother. She had died when he was but a small Skeat. He tried to push her memory away and that created the gap inside himself. He then went on his own, alone into the forest. Pretending he didn't need anyone.

Nothing was further from the truth. He was afraid to need anyone again for fear the loss would crush him.

Ky-Lyra! The thought of her not being with him seemed devastating. The feeling made his world crumble. The fear of losing her had hooked him.

Then he understood how the Fragment Stones were actually interconnected. After all they were originally one Stone.

Fear of the pain of loss equaled Greed.

Denial of the interconnectedness of things generated Fear.

To deny the interconnectedness of things meant you had disconnected from your love of yourself and others. This was the mistake of the Morian.

You lust after things outside that were really lost inside.

We want the external to fulfill an internal lacking.

To be in pain, they had to deny the peacefulness inside, and deny themselves on all levels, especially love.

Re-Nan realized that each Fragment Stone was like one instrument in a symphony. They had to work in harmony. Harmony is where the love lives. The Morian had fragmented the harmony. Za-loc had kept it separated.

Re-Nan took out the Hatred Fragment from his pack, and placed all the Stones touching each other in the light. He realized the answer was simple. The Stones had been kept separate; separation creates discord. To allow them to come together he needed to be but the conductor of these instruments in their symphony of light and shadow.

He did not have to find their song. He needed them to be their song together.

Sounds and sparks erupted from the Fragment Stones. The clashing of sound with light vibrated discordantly, until the heart of the Stones began to beat as one.

The light expanded so much that the Stones could not be distinguished in the brightness.

Light and time merged transforming everything around him. Then the creatures of the Myst began shifting back to their original forms.

Many were recognizable to Re-Nan from the library at the Temple of Sa-Ma. These creatures had not disappeared, they had been transformed in the Great Collapse by the Fragment Stones and the Myst.

A sound so beautiful came from the ground where the Stones lay. Re-Nan could feel the Stones releasing the dreams of the Priestesses, and calling back the hope of a time feared lost.

Re-Nan saw their vision. In a flash it made sense to him. But then it was gone like the broken Vision Stone, and an emptiness lingered in his heart.

Everywhere the light was penetrating through the Myst. Though a haziness still hung in the Rift, light was able to move through it.

Astonished ancient animals stared back at him. These creatures of the Myst were enemies no longer.

Then he heard a thunderous sound coming towards him.

And with a trill, L-Lewminous charged through the remaining Myst with the other L-Lews and an extremely large Quil-a-bok.

The L-Lew's immediately took charge of the stunned crowd. Each type of animal was placed in the charge of a L-Lew. Many groups were being sorted out. There was much bustling and noise as the L-Lew's sorted everyone into manageable groups.

L-Lewminous ran up to Re-Nan trilling and prancing about. In her mouth was a golden E-yoke blossom. He knew it was from Ky-Lyra. He gently took the flower from L-Lewminous. His heart longed for her. He longed to touch and feel her presence. He held the flower to his heart. Breathing in its sweetness.

Celebration was everywhere as old enemies connected again, but this time as friends.

Re-Nan looked over to the Fragment Stones, the darkness of the Stones had cleared and he saw how these Stones fit together, like pieces in a puzzle. When placed together, some of the old power of the Vision Stone could be seen.

L-Lewminous urged Re-Nan to quickly wrap the Stones up and place them in the pack. As he did Re-Nan looked up and saw the Night-mir-Sun ominously close to the apex. Re-Nan placed the firestone in his pocket.

Then he climbed onto the Quil-a-bok and they headed out of the Rift up to the Temple at Da-Nan.

Chapter 23 - The Rush to the Temple of Da-Nan

As Re-Nan relaxed into the rhythm of the Quil-a-bok, Re-Nan noticed how tired he was. He could not remember the last time he ate. He didn't even know how long he had been in the Rift. The fragments still radiated eerily in his pack.

He had put the firestone in his pocket. Re-Nan was uncertain whether to place the Stones in the same pack with Za-loc's energy in the firestone. A voice inside told him to keep them separate.

His intention was to throw all of them into the Pit at Da-Nan-Da-Li together.

As he looked at his surroundings he noticed they were steadily climbing out of the Rift.

The Myst felt less threatening and he knew it was following him.

The firestone still sounded like it was sizzling in his pocket. The hissing reminded him of Za-loc. He tried to put the thought out of his mind.

Re-Nan felt as if he were missing something. But he was too exhausted to think clearly.

The Quil-a-bok was a calm gentle creature. He did not realize any of them were tame enough to carry a Skeat.

The Quil-a-bok responded disapprovingly with a snort from his long snout.

L-Lewminous told Re-Nan that the Quil-a-bok understands Rens and Skeats perfectly, even if you don't understand them.

Re-Nan quickly apologized to the Quil-a-bok. Whose name was Dor-Tish.

Dor-Tish was one of the oldest Quil-a-bok's. A Quil-a-bok was so massive in size that it deterred even the Wall-a-Dons from attacking. Dor-Tish stood three times higher than a Wall-a-Don. Its four legs were like tree trunks, but its

feet were soft and sensitive to the touch. Quil-a-bok's' could hear through their feet and were very connected to the Stones. Dor-Tish had big long eyelashes above his burgundy eyes. His long snout was used to feel his way in the thickest of the Myst, especially at night. Re-Nan sensed the wisdom in the gentle movement of this beast.

Dor-Tish relayed through L-Lewminous, that the difficulty was in carrying the Fragment Stones, not Re-Nan. Quil-a-boks, even though they had not been mutated by the Fragment Stones a long time ago, still tried to stay far away from them. Dor-Tish was anxious to get them to the Pit at Da-Nan-Da-Li.

Re-Nan was confused and said, ***Aren't the Stones peaceful now that the energy of Za-loc cannot control them?***

No!, was the adamant reply from the L-Lew and Dor-Tish. ***They are dangerous uncontrollable power from another dimension, from the Night-mir-Sun. And do not underestimate the cunning of Za-loc, even if he is trapped in the firestone. He is a great Magician and understands more about magic than you. Until they are in the Pit at Da-Nan-***

Da-Li, the world is not safe and the split not healed.

Power such as the Stones should not be in anyone's hands.

Re-Nan paused in thought. He did not realize there was still a danger from the Fragment Stones.

Re-Nan sensed the urgency in the Quil-a-bok and L-Lewminous.

Overhead the Night-mir-Sun was passing the horizon line. Re-Nan wondered how close to the Apex it was. From this angle he was not sure, but it seemed close.

The Rift now held filtered light and he could see for greater distances. In the new light he could see how the Great Collapse had destroyed everything in the area. Much of it looked like melted rock weathered by time and erosion.

The new light coming through was already having an effect. The ground was beginning to show green. Seeds from ages past were germinating and shooting upwards.

The rebirth of the land felt joyous and Re-Nan played with the light and sang songs to the new awakening.

L-Lewminous told Re-Nan that they had many days of travel to get him to the Temple at Da-Nan. As they rode, L-Lewminous shared how when Re-Nan had left the Temple at Sa-Ma, the Myst seemed to dissipate and it had not come up so far on the Walls of Serron.

It had given the Priestesses a moment to pause and catch up on their own healing. The Sa-Ma-Ky had seen in a vision at the Kaz-i-mir Stone that treachery still lurked in Za-loc and that Re-Nan must be careful.

But Re-Nan was feeling euphorically high from his success. Although he heard the L-Lew's words, he did not quite believe them. Throwing the Stones into the Pit felt anticlimactic at this point.

Re-Nan did not realize that the firestone in his pocket was slowly transforming him. Each day they rode, Re-Nan grew taller and appeared more angular. Each night the firestones' energy invaded his sleep. His dreams began to tell him that maybe he should keep the firestone. It would remind everyone of his power and accomplishments. He

dreamed of placing the Stone in a crown of gold for all to see. He awoke always feeling stronger and more confident.

But L-Lewminous was concerned. Re-Nan wasn't eating much. She knew he would need all his strength to battle the Stones. She tried to tell him but the firestone and Za-loc were having an effect.

Re-Nan became more and more arrogant the taller he got. He could no longer see reality separate from the illusions in his mind. The transformation was subtle but continuous. He was becoming Za-loc!

L-Lewminous had expected this. The Stones had warned her. She would make a sound softly to the Stones and Re-Nan would have moments of clarity. But as the days wore on it was working less and less.

The Quil-a-bok stopped speaking completely and sped up his walking. Dor-Tish knew they had to get Re-Nan to the Pit as soon as possible, before Za-loc took total control of Re-Nan's body and soul.

Finally, they emerged above the Myst and found a trail to Da-Nan.

Re-Nan could not see that day after day he was looking more and more like Za-loc. His eyes were narrowing and an inner cunning was developing.

Re-Nan thought constantly about how clever he was to have outwitted Za-loc. His desire for power was growing inside like a tumor that was out of control. He thought only of himself and forgot about the love of Ky-Lyra. But still, the gold E-yoke flower that held her love continued to thrive.

Za-loc was creating exactly what he had always wanted. To be able to leave the Rift and live in the light again.

Re-Nan was becoming more and more like Za-loc. Za-loc's energy was slowly seeping into Re-Nan's blood. At a certain point Re-Nan became so much like Za-loc that the Fragment Stones in the pack turned dark again.

Now Re-Nan began to think of re-forming the Vision Stone. When the Stones were together the pieces fit

tightly. If he could re-melt them they could be one Stone again. Then he could be the Keeper of the Vision Stone and he would have great power.

He wondered if he could make the firestone hot enough to melt the Fragments together. In his deranged mind, anything seemed possible.

L-Lewminous kept gently reminding Re-Nan that the Stones had to be thrown into the Pit. That no Skeat or Ren could control the Stones. Not even a Morian.

But Re-Nan thought, ***Am I not better than most? I am part Skeat and part Ren. I have already accomplished so much, more than any of you. I have the power of the songs and the Stones. With them, I can create anything I want!***

L-Lewminous became more and more concerned. Re-Nan was becoming his own shadow. Everything Re-Nan had not gotten from his solitary life in Argamae, he now wanted. Greed and Lust for power consumed him.

Inside he feared going back to Argamae. There was nothing for him there, but here, the possibilities seemed endless.

Re-Nan began to conspire inside to figure out how to stay in An-wyl. The thought of going back to Argamae caused him so much pain inside that he buried it. Unknown to him, Za-loc was winning.

And in Re-Nan's desperation. . . the Fragment Stones claimed his soul.

Chapter 24 - The Possession of Re-Nan

They continued on the trail to Da-Nan. The thickest part of the Myst seemed to follow them on the left side of the trail. They crossed paths with other L-Lews and messages were exchanged.

Re-Nan began to feel paranoid. Fear was creeping into his mind. He was sure someone was trying to stop him. Rens

were looking at him strangely. But Re-Nan could not see how much he had changed. Yet now, he looked totally like an ancient Morian. He had three fingers instead of five. His skin had become gray and his mouth had become small and tight. The Rens were afraid of him because they saw Za-loc, although underneath they sensed it was Re-Nan.

Bright white Stones marked the way and confirmed they were getting close to the Temple at Da-Nan. As they rounded a bend in the trail, Re-Nan caught a glimpse of the Temple nestled high up on the edge of a large crater.

The buildings were made out of a white Stone that was smooth yet reflective. It was called Marblelite. This Temple was made by the Morian Priestesses. No one knew where the Stone had come from, and no one had found it anywhere else. It was only found here. The buildings and path to Da-Nan were also made out of it. The temple Stones were fitted so closely together that it was a marvel of construction.

The crater on which the Temple sat was a black sheer, lined edge of cliffs. The Temple stood out in stark contrast to the Pit at Da-Nan-Da-Li. It must have taken the

Morian yoran to build the road up that sheer cliff face. There was only one trail in and that trail was treacherous and steep.

Re-Nan felt confused. He had been looking forward to coming to Da-Nan. But now he felt uncertain of himself.

He was supposed to throw the Stones into the Pit. But his understanding of the Stones and his ability to sing their song was all the power he had. If he let the Stones go, it seemed his purpose for being in An-wyl would be over. He could not bear to leave.

Deep in his subconscious he began creating a way to keep the Stones for himself, yet he did not want to see how much like Za-loc he had become.

He would justify it in his mind that he was just trying to contribute his gift. Ky-Lyra needed him here. He was afraid to let go of his newfound identity. What if he became nothing again in Argamae? He clutched at his own fear like it was a security blanket. Fear had been familiar to him his whole life. He did not know who he would be without it.

Let go of the Stones? He thought. His is body shuttered at the concept.

L-Lewminous continued to softly remind Re-Nan that he could let the Stones go; that he must let them go. His true destiny had not yet been fulfilled. Part of his destiny was still in Argamae. Only the first opening of his essence was in An-wyl. He must go back to Argamae and see how the changes here, changed things in Argamae as well.

Someone would need to guide the Skeats. Re-Nan had a unique understanding of both sides of the Rift, as well as the Myst. He was the one to go back and help in the continued transition of the planet.

You must throw the Stones into the Pit!, implored L-Lewminous.

Something in the gentleness of L-Lewminous finally touched Re-Nan. The love he felt for this L-Lew burned through the chaos of the Stones and Za-loc. He realized that this wise animal had stood by him through so much. The love

melted the hardness in his heart and he regained some of himself.

L-Lewminous sensed the opening and said simply, *I know you will succeed. It has been written. My job is to help you succeed as painlessly as possible. I will strengthen your resolve with my complete belief in you. I exist also in another time. And in that time this has already been completed. You have already succeeded. To let go of all that you have been to allow yourself to become something new is very difficult. We, the L-Lews understand that. Anything you feel is fine with us. Don't hide from yourself. Only all of your emotion running will you be able to throw the Stones into the Pit. In that moment, this world transforms. It will be different afterwards, I promise.*

The gift of allowing yourself to feel all of you in this dense realm is a difficult one. No one has for thousands of Yoran. Wholeness cannot be taught, it must be experienced. You have lived in an isolated world for so long that your soul is starved for feeling. But just like in saving a starving Ren or Skeat, it is unwise to give too much food to them at once. It would overload their system

and they would die, because they were unable to assimilate that much.

So it is that the Stones are too much energy for you all at once now. That is because they don't belong here. The energy trapped in them is old. It needs to be regenerated into the newer form evolving. These Stones are a tool. The tool holds the power. But to be willing to let go of the power and walk away, is the greatest power of all. Power is addictive. You know you are truly powerful if you can walk away and not be tempted.

Za-loc tempts you now with his confusing chaos inside. He keeps you off center so you cannot decide. Yet the decision had already been made. Forces you do not understand yet still course through your blood. So much has been sacrificed to get you to this point. You cannot fail, if you but believe in yourself. Your grandfather believed in you before his journey. He exists even now in the Nemian, trusting and guiding you. You have heard him in your mind. Follow his strength and he will lead you to your destiny.

L-Lewminous became quiet and looked deep into Re-Nan trying to pull the strength of Re-Nan-Da-Ky out of the mask of Za-loc. A glimmer of Re-Nan's old self emerged. He did not know how long it would last. They had to get the Stones into the Pit.

His new awareness opened to see that it was night, they were at the Gate of the Temple at Da-Nan.

Music sounded to announce the initiation was beginning. They had arrived just in time. Re-Nan saw the Night-mir-Sun sitting forebodingly at the highest point of the mountain. It seemed that you could almost reach out and touch it. This was the moment.

He got down off the Quil-a-bok, grabbed his pack and headed towards the Pit. L-Lewminous and Dor-Tish solemnly watched him go.

In his hurry, Re-Nan did not see Ky-Lyra standing in the top tower of the Temple, looking down at him, with tears running down her face.

Chapter 25 - At the Pit at Da-Nan-Da-Li: The Third Battle

An unseen energy now compelled Re-Nan forward. His footsteps were heavy and he felt the pull of the Night-mir-Sun. Its magnetic pull practically carried him to the edge of the Pit.

Thank goodness the smell of Lethia was everywhere helping to clear his mind.

The Stones radiated power and he could feel no separation between himself and them.

The firestone in this pocket clamored to be heard. He tried to ignore it. The evilly seductive voice of Za-loc, pulled and manipulated the shadow in Re-Nan's soul. He did not know how he kept going forwards, but he did.

The closer he got, the heavier the pack felt. The pocket with the firestone seemed to drag on the ground.

The climb to the edge of the Pit was treacherous. The rocks were sharp and steep. Even in daylight it would have

been dangerous, but at night one false step could make you fall to your death far below.

Re-Nan's knees and hands were bleeding and torn by the time he got to the first ledge.

Below him a vast crater swallowed up the landscape. As the Night-mir-Sun moved over the crater something unseen seemed to pull up from the depths of the Pit. The wind whistled hollowly around the edge.

The Night-mir-Sun pulled at the Myst. The Myst responded and came up from the Rift and overflowed the edges of the crater, only to be engulfed in the blackness of the Pit.

Re-Nan felt the Pit breathing in the Myst, trying to absorb this caustic energy that was paralyzing the land. From Re-Nan's angle it looked like a steaming caldron. He felt like a wizard trying to create a giant potion for the planet. The key ingredients hidden still in his pack.

The firestone was attempting to burn a hole in his pocket. Za-loc was not done yet.

As Re-Nan scrambled over the second ledge the firestone fell out of his pocket and was unnoticed by Re-Nan in his struggle up the embankment.

Re-Nan continued exhausted and tired to the third ledge.

This ledge was a rocky pointed outcropping of black Stone that jutted out into the center of the crater. It was only as wide as a Ren was tall.

Re-Nan looked down into the nothingness below and felt afraid.

He decided to focus only at the rock in front of him. One small step at a time he approached the edge of the finger at the center of the Pit.

Fear was making every step an effort. Re-Nan was painfully aware of his feelings. The Night-mir-Sun followed his progress out to the point.

Finally, as if in a slow moving dream, Re-Nan reached his goal.

Blackness surrounded him on all sides. Myst poured into the crater and some of it followed him out to the peninsula.

Re-Nan set his pack down. Only then noticed that his hands had only three fingers not the usual five! He looked at his arms and realized he had become a Morian. He finally understood that he looked like Za-loc!

Horror invaded his mind. What had he done?

Some inner strength began pulling out the Fragment Stones out of his pack, while another part was frozen observing his own evilness.

The Stones now lay in front of him reflecting the dark and broken parts of himself. He reached into his pocket for the firestone.

It was gone! Fear ran through him, completely throwing him off balance. He whirled around, desperately searching with his last bit of strength for the firestone.

As he did he nearly fell off the narrow finger into the chasm below.

Blood was pounding in his head, so he grabbed the ground trying to steady himself.

The firestone! I must find it!

He felt only tenuously in control of himself. There was not much time left.

He retraced his steps searching for the Stone. He knew he had it when he got off the Quil-a-bok. But there was not enough time to go back that far.

Fear was choking off his throat. He was using up his remaining energy too quickly. Darkness was closing in on his mind.

He instinctually grabbed some Lethia petals, and stuffed them in his mouth. That calmed him somewhat. But then he heard a sinister laugh. The laugh of Za-loc. To his horror the laugh was coming from Re-Nan!

He felt as split as the Fragment Stones - a divided soul in one body. He had to get the Stones into the Pit. He needed help!

With all the strength he could muster he called out a song to anyone or anything that could help him. He could not do this alone! He had to find the firestone!

Then something spoke to him in a language of pictures, not words. Strange images flooded into his mind. Then he saw the firestone. It was under the second ledge.

Re-Nan bolted for the ledge. The Myst was covering the ground everywhere. With all the feeling he had in his body and soul, he called to the Myst. Nothing! Then, in front of him, the Myst parted and he saw the firestone.

Re-Nan rushed toward it and grabbed it with his left hand. It burned him. Re-Nan had become so much a part of

the darkness that the firestone was now burning him. Hot pain seared through his nervous system. Everything in his mind was saying to let go of the Stone.

But Re-Nan would not. It was only pain. The physical pain did not seem as bad as the emotional pain he had already been through. He did not have any time to loose.

Holding the firestone firmly, he ran back to the third ledge and inched his way out onto the narrow peninsula where he had left the Fragment Stones.

The pain was so intense his eyes were watering. There was a strong possibility that he was truly going to fall off the narrow peninsula.

But still he would not let go.

Finally he made it back. He dropped the firestone near the Fragments, and grabbed his hand, reeling in pain.

He opened his eyes and the firestone was sparking. The sparks were touching the Fragments. When they did, bolts of energy burst forth from the Fragments and attacked Re-Nan.

Re-Nan lay on the ground electrocuted by the energy bursts from the Stones. He could only hear the hissing laughter of Za-loc and the explosions from the Fragment Stones. He was sure he was going to die.

Inside he heard the voice of Za-loc say, *If you submit, all of the pain will go away.* But Re-Nan knew that wasn't true.

The pain was still in Za-loc, and he intended to put others through the pain. Re-Nan knew he could never be totally like Za-loc, even though the torture now was making him unable to move. He somehow had to get the Stones into the Pit.

Suddenly he felt himself float out of his body. Now he was watching himself being electrocuted to death. It felt hopeless.

There really was no point, he thought. *I might as well give up; I've failed. No one can touch these Stones except me and look at me. I am powerless against them. How foolish I was to think I could control these Stones.*

Then from his view above he saw someone come out of the
Myst onto the point. It was Ky-Lyra!

Her face was focused and serious. She looked like she was going to give birth at any moment. Her tiny frame looked so fragile over her swollen belly.

The way she walked conveyed the strain it had taken for her to climb to the Pit. Beads of sweat covered her forehead, and waves of pain shown in her face.

She saw what was happening to Re-Nan, but went past him, totally focused on the Stones.

Za-loc sensed Ky-Lyra's intention and shifted his focus from Re-Nan to Ky-Lyra. Za-loc momentarily released his attack on Re-Nan and turned his full fury on Ky-Lyra.

Re-Nan felt a surge of energy and he was back in his body, gasping for air.

He could feel Ky-Lyra's mind. He knew she would try to throw the Stones into the Pit.

Weakened as he was, he would not let her pick up the Stones. What would that type of pain do to their unborn child?

He lifted his head just as she was reaching down to pick up the first Fragment Stone.

Re-Nan saw a surge of energy go from the firestone to the Fragments and the Fragments simultaneously fly at Ky-Lyra, embedding into her, burning her skin.

A scream, **No!**, erupted out of Re-Nan's mouth.

He struggled to his feet. Ky-Lyra was flailing about, pain breaking her clarity. The Stones were burning themselves into her skin on various parts of her body. Confused and dazed, she ran blindly towards the edge of the Pit and fell.

Re-Nan lunged at her and grabbed her hand as she went over the side.

The force of her fall nearly pulled him over the edge too.

He held to her with all his remaining strength. She was his life and he could not bear to let her go. But his hand was bloodied and she was slipping away. He called out her name.

She looked up at him, and for a moment the love replaced the pain. Time stood still as their hearts connected.

Ky-Lyra spoke:

*Love leaves not it changes form,
Remember that and do not mourn.*

*This is my fate, I've always known
Its time for me to be let go.*

*One last thing of you I ask,
The firestone you must now cast.*

*Only when you do it throw,
Can something new inside you grow.*

I love you now and always will

Our lives entwine a bit yet still.

With those last words, her hand slid gently out of Renan's and she fell silently into the blackness of the Pit.

Chapter 27 - All is Lost: The Return Home

Re-Nan stared in disbelief, into the Pit.

This could not be happening!, he thought.

But it was. Ky-Lyra was gone.

Sobbing, he crawled off the edge and rolled over trying to stop the waves of pain and grief. When he finally opened his eyes and could see through the tears, he saw the Night-mir-Sun directly overhead, staring back at him.

He screamed at it, ***Why do you have to take everything away from me. My love, my child, my work, my life!***

As he sobbed he felt compassion coming to him from the Myst. He realized the Myst had wrapped around him like a gentle blanket.

He looked out across the crater. The Myst hovered on the edge waiting.

I know, I know! Re-Nan grumbled.

He crawled over to the firestone. It seemed small and insignificant now.

It whispered great lies of glory and power to him. But they did not interest him anymore. Everything that mattered to him had fallen away with Ky-Lyra.

Za-loc's desperate pleas fell on deaf ears. To Re-Nan nothing mattered anymore. In his grief he realized that love was all he was really looking for anyway.

He picked up the firestone and crawled to the edge. The Stone seemed to burn less now, not that it mattered. His hand no longer had three fingers, it had the normal five once again.

He held the Stone over the blackness for a minute, and then let it go.

The scream of Za-loc fell away with it.

For a moment Re-Nan faced the thought of a future alone. He looked up at the Night-mir-Sun and it was passing the last lip of the crater.

Re-Nan now realized that he had not enough time to get back to Argamae.

Even with the help of the L-Lews, it would take half a day. The sun would be rising in a few minutes. A glow was already on the horizon. He would never get back to Argamae.

He quietly apologized to the Myst. He would not be having any grandson for the Myst to embody. Everything had been lost in the Pit. There was no time left.

Dejected, he sat down looking into the blackness.

He was so consumed with his own thoughts, that he did not hear L-Learamore and L-Lewminous come up behind him.

L-Learamore spoke, ***There is a way back to Argamae.***

Re-Nan looked into the Black L-Lews' eyes. **How?** Re-Nan asked.

L-Lewminous whistled a sound and Re-Nan saw L-Lews spaced out on the crater rim.

L-Learamore spoke again. ***If you can find the song of your home. We can open a portal to that place. We need the song to all focus on. Reach into your heart and sing to us. We will connect the threads and weave a doorway for you to walk through.***

Re-Nan closed his eyes and pictured his homeland. A sad song burst forth from the Skeat. The L-Lews picked up the tune and silver threads began connecting across the crater to Re-Nan.

L-Learamore told Re-Nan to open his eyes. When he did, he saw that the crater had become a great liquid pool of energy and light. Re-Nan saw his home in the pool of light.

L-Learamore continued, ***This crater is more than it seems. Step off the ledge and you will find yourself back home. This portal transcends them and so things may appear***

different on the other side than expected. Don't worry, things will be as they should. We will come and visit you when the time is right. Be at peace my friend, you have done well.

L-Lewminous radiated lovely golden bubbles towards Re-Nan. He reached out to touch the love of the L-Lew. Then he turned and walked off the ledge into the pool of the Pit.

There was a great rush of cold air, and then Re-Nan was standing in front of his cabin holding something.

Surprised, he looked down and saw a bundle of blankets in his hands. A gentle cooing sound came from underneath.

His hands were shaking as he uncovered the small child. Next to her head was a gold E-yoke blossom.

It was a little girl Skeat, or was she a Ren? Then he realized, she had Ky-Lyra's eyes and Re-Nan's chin. There was a small scar on her arm. This was their child.

Tears welled up in his eyes and he smiled at her.

So, he said, ***It's just you and me for a bit. I shall call you Ky-Rena.***

The child squirmed in his arms, totally comfortable and at ease.

He turned and saw through the forest some Myst was still clinging to the ground.

Thank you!, he said to the Myst.

In truth, he did not know whom to thank. He was just grateful to hold this remaining spark of Ky-Lyra's love in his arms.

With that, Re-Nan and the child turned and went into the cabin, ready to begin their new journey together.

Epilogue

As Ky-Rena completed her story, the court was completely silent. She looked up into Ge-off's eyes. He was staring tenderly back, uncertain of what to say.

Aryl-le hobbled forward looking at Ky-Rena with concern. She spoke, ***Ky-Rena needs a rest. I will tend to her. You now know that the first part of the Morian Prophecy has been completed. We will continue tomorrow. There is much that needs to be done.***

Prince Ge-off saw to it that the room was cleared.

Aryl-le and Ge-off gently guided Ky-Rena up the stairs.

Ky-Rena knew the child would soon come. As she fell asleep, the Myst poured into her bedroom and into the body of her child, Am-Eron.

That night she dreamed her mother, Ky-Lyra, was walking towards her with a small blond boy.

Glossary

L-Le-L-Ari- prehistoric animal, long necked, graceful,
forerunner to L-Lew.

Argamae- country that exists below the Rift and the Myst.
This land is the keeper of five of the Morian Gates and Keys
to the Prophecy.

Aryl-le- a giant Skeat with a bowed leg from a difficult
birth. She is a healer and friend to the Za-phiras. She is
the last Sa-Ma-Ky in Thera-wyl, during the time of the Great
Merging

A-Zora- main center city for Argamae, place of government.
Place of the palace of Ge-Ron.

Botak- Stone that the city of Thera-wyl is made of.
Together E-yoke and Botak are symbiotic. The Stone
nourishes the plant which intern protects the Stone. This
Stone is green and white.

Cave of Garn- one of the ancient Morian Gates. This is the
Gate where all the Keys must be brought for the Merging. It

is a large cave with a narrow opening. Inside it opens up and there is a waterfall coming out of the rock. The waters here are sacred and help clear the darkness of the Myst off anyone. Singing opens a secrete chamber that hold information about the Prophecy. The Crystal in the center of the Chamber is named Garn. It is a singing crystal and foretells parts that will happen in the future. It is a deep red color.

Cuddlebees- small bees that have no stinger. They pollinate many of the flowers in An-wyl. They are gentle and have a humming sound.

Da-Reia- grandmother to Re-Nan. Healer that lives in Argamae at the edge of the Myst. The L-Lew's knew her to be friendly and they brought Re-Nan-Da-Ky to her. She falls in love with Re-Nan-Da-Ky and they marry. They have a daughter Sa-Drine, Re-Nan's mother.

Dol-lof- packed like animal that feeds on other animals, wolf-like.

Du-Blaine- reputed haunted forest in Argamae. Ancient forest that lines the edge of the Rift Zone. Known for

ghosts called Za-phira's that live there. Skeats are usually afraid to go into this forest, and avoid it.

E-yoke- protection plants used in buildings to help set Stones in place and generates strength at weak points on the building. Plant of An-wyl. Red and green leaves. Yellow and white flowers. Curious plant. Warm to the touch. Grows right through the Stone. Likes to touch Rens, its flowers signal changes within the Temple at Da-Nan.

Feracon- a three layered winged bird. It is a small bird that can fit in the pocket of a Ren. It is used as a messenger by the Priestesses. It understands the Rens and Skeats language. The top wing is turquoise blue, second layer is emerald green, and the lower layer is sunset pink. It hovers in the air and undulates its wings in figure eight.

Fragment Stones- the broken dark remaining parts of the Great Vision Stone of the Morian. These Stones are used by Za-loc to try to regain his lost power and glory. Instead they trap him and the Myst in the Rift, because to Za-loc's misuse of the Stones. These Stones hold all the negative disowned emotions of the Morian. Each Stone represents a

different energy. There are five Stones: Fear, Pain, Lust, Greed, and Hatred.

Garn- the red singing crystal in the Cave of Garn.

Great Collapse- the time referred to by the Rens when the Morian Magicians pulled the energy from the exploding Red Sun into the atmosphere of this world. It created total destruction of the Morian cities. The force of the explosion created a great gap in the earth dividing the planet into upper and lower worlds. The Myst is trapped in this gap called the Rift Zone.

Great Merging- a time of the Morian Prophecy when the planet will begin to come together and the upper and lower worlds will begin to merge. It is started by a Skeat crossing through the Myst in the Rift Zone and making it to An-wyl with the help of a L-Lew.

Hal-wyst- the season when the Myst rises up the Wall of Serron, in An-wyl. This is the season of sickness for the Rens. The Priestesses are very busy as the Rens are not able to handle the density of the Myst well and go mad and die. Equivalent to Fall.

Idalias- purple, lilac-like type of flower.

Kaz-I-mir- black soft Stone that dispels the Myst in the Temple of Sa-Ma, dream Stone. Used by the Priestesses in the temple for clearing and healing. Access to the Nemian.

Klerrok tree- high as a redwood but shaped like a Banyan tree. Roots come off the branches allowing it to support the weight and height of the tree. Blue-Black leaves, red trunk. Largest tree in Argamae.

Ky-Lyra- mother of Ky-Rena, Temple Priestess in Thera-wyl, keeper of the Seeing Stone, teacher/ companion/ love of Re-Nan. She is a great herbalist and healer.

Ky-Rena- mother of Am-Eron, daughter of Re-Nan and Ky-Lyra. She is part Skeat and part Ren. She has a scar on her forehead from her mother's encounter with the Fragment Stones. When she is near shadow the scar throbs and gets red. Raised in Argamae by her Father Re-Nan. Keeper of the Seeing Stone in An-wyl.

Lethia- Woody Rose Bush, sacred flowers used by the Temple's in An-wyl. It is actually the Morian Priestess Lethiel. She was turned into this bush during a great magic battle with the Magician Za-loc, at the edge of the Pit at Da-Nan-Da-Li. These flowers are found only at the Pit.

Lethiel- Morian Priestess during the ancient times, turned into a Woody Rose Bush during a magic battle with Za-loc. First keeper of the sacred seeing Stone.

L-Lew- Lama-like creature, stands as tall as a Skeat, light white and purple wool, three eyes, they cannot be detected in the Myst, they live in more than one time period, they are not affected by the Myst, one of the guardians to the sacred Morian Gates, they eat lollins in order to become pregnant to reproduce, they cannot be caged or they will die. They keep energy filaments open between the upper world of An-wyl and the lower world of Argamae. They are very wise and talk telepathically.

L-Lewminous- savior for Re-Nan, guide on his quest, most powerful L-Lew, telepathically communicates with Ky-Lyra and Re-Nan. Can move through the Nemian with someone.

Lumfruit- yellow ridged oblong, shaped fruit with black seeds in the center, very sweet. Has a flavor of sweet, pulpy custard.

Lyre House- the building closest to Argamae but it is in An-wyl. This Stone structure is where herbs are prepared for the season of Hal-wyst. It holds an ancient Morian musical instrument, a Lyre. The Lyre sings the song of the person closest to it. It is made out of gold and the strings are made of crystal. The Lyre is one of the Keys in An-wyl.

Marblelite-a white reflective Stone. The Temple of Da-Nan is made out of the Stone. It is the only place it is found. The Temple was built by the Morian Priestesses after the Great Collapse.

Morian's- the original people of this planet. They feed off light and can from a far away place because of this planets perfect light. They liked that this solar system had two suns. These beings were very advanced and created great cities and factories. They were tall, angular beings, with gray skin and slanted eyes. They had three fingers but were very artistic and knowledgeable. Originally they were immortal beings, but when they began being negatively

influenced by the dark energy held in the Red Sun, they disowned their denser emotions and began to die.

Myst- the energy of the exploding Red Sun, pulled into the planets atmosphere by the Morian Magicians because of their desire to find the lost Gates and Keys, taken by the Priestesses. The Morian used their magic to pull the solar wind from both Suns when suddenly the Red Sun exploded and they were destroyed. The Myst is the child energy of the Red Sun, trapped in this density by Morian magic. It is an energy that does not really belong in a physical form. It is designed to expand into the galaxies. This energy is not evil but extremely powerful. But it has a suffocating quality. It likes the L-Lews and is their secrete friend.

Night-mir-Sun- A black magnetic exploded Sun. It was the Red Sun during the time of the Morian. This world originally had a Red Sun and a Yellow Sun. This Sun is actually alive and the mother of the Myst. It comes once a year to try to reach its child (the Myst).

Octal- approximately 7.4 miles, form of measurement in Argamae and An-wyl.

Pit at Da-Nan-Da-Li- this is a great black crater at the top of a mountain. It is a portal into the Nemian, the birthplace of the Stones. It is a bottomless Pit where things are regenerated and brought back to the planet in new forms. The great battle between Lethiel and Za-loc was here. Also the personal battle for Re-Nan to throw the Fragment Stones into the Pit to be regenerated.

Prince Ge-Off- father of Am-Eron, Royal house of Ge-Ron.

Quil-a-bok- large Bison-like animal, lives at the edge of the Myst in An-wyl. Great strength to live on the edge of the Myst. One of the few animals that wasn't transformed by the Myst. It's skin helps protect the initiates.

Re-Nan- father of Ky-Rena. First Skeat from Argamae to cross the Myst into An-wyl. Took the Fragment Stones to the Pit at Da-Nan-Da-Li. The grandson to Re-Nan-Da-Ky. Guide to his grandson Am-Eron. Father to Ky-Rena.

Rens- males of the land of An-wyl, light boned beings created by the Morian Priestesses after the Great Collapse, smaller than Skeats. They have a faint purple skin color. They are the keepers of the Prophecy and great healers with

knowledge of magic. This race is aware of the Skeats in the below world. They live in the highlands above the Myst. They are not able to handle the density below the Myst. They are very delicate and sensitive. Keepers of the Prophecy.

Rift Zone- area that divided the upper world of An-wyl and the lower world of Argamae. Created by the power of the explosion from the Red Sun being magically pulled into this planet by the Morian Magicians. This area would have been uncrossable without the help of the L-Lews.

Sa-Drine- mother to Re-Nan. She dies when he is a young Skeat.

Sa-Keat- females in the land of Argamae.

Sa-Ma- the Mother Tree. Has a broad trunk, the trunk blooms white in yellow flowers, and has small green leaves that are on the branches. The branches touch the ground. Nursery to the L-Lew, one of the guardians. The last remaining Sa-Ma Tree in the land. This tree is protected by the Botak Stones and the E-yoke. It sits in the center of the Temple of Sa-Ma. Each flower on the trunk represents and holds the

energy of each Sa-Ma-Ky that has lived and protected the Tree since the Great Collapse. The symbol of unconditional love in this world.

Sa-Rens- females in the land of An-wyl.

Sa-wyst- season when the Myst goes away from the Walls of Serron. It is a warm season, good for planting and healthy for the Rens. Equivalent to Spring.

Skeats- males that live in Argamae. Larger boned and taller than Rens. They were created by the Morian Priestesses to hold the area below the Myst. They were to live in the lowlands. They are strong and sturdy. Their minds are somewhat more dense as they focus mostly on survival because of the density below the Myst. They are only aware of Rens and An-wyl as Myths and stories. They are sturdier and able to handle the density of the Myst better. But they do not understand magic and do not know about the Morian Prophecy. Their skin color is a dark bluish purple.

Spikewort- a strong medicinal herb used for the most severe cases of memory loss from the Myst of Za-loc-mir. It can bring the soul back from the Nemian but it is so strong that

the body may still die. It is a hallucinogen in healthy Skeats or Rens. It is usually powdered. Has a strong smell. It is a grayish root.

Stealthweed pod- pain killer herb, narcotic. One can become addicted to this herb.

Talisbark- and herb used for ritual entrance into the Nemian by the Rens. It has a spicy, pungent smell. It is burned and the smell of the smoke guides you into the Nemian.

Timmels- cubed seeds kept in the herbal rooms of the Rens. The Morian Priestesses used them to create Morian Prophecy. The L-Lews are the only ones that know how to use them. They are to be used by Ky-Rena in her quest. They are used as a type of Oracle.

Temple of Da-Nan- built by the Morian Priestesses after the Great Collapse. It is the Gateway to the Pit at Da-Nan-Da-Li. This temple is the Temple of the Stones.

Temple of Sa-Ma- this temple was built by the Morian Priestesses to protect the oldest Sa-Ma Tree. All the other Sa-Ma Trees will be destroyed by the Great Collapse. The

Priestesses knew this and created the Temple to keep the last one alive.

Thools- animals that lives in the forest of Du-Blaine. Four cloven hoofed animal with back claw for grabbing and stabilizing . Much like a boar, but furrier.

Tol-lin- the best tracker in Thera-wyl. He teaches Re-Nan how to deal with the Wall-a-dons in the Rift.

Vision Stone- ancient powerful Stone of the Morian. Used to see the future. This Stone was destroyed by the Morian Magicians as they pulled the solar winds from the two Suns through it. As the Red Sun exploded the Vision Stone brought the full energy of the explosion into this world. Causing the destruction of the Morian cities and the Magicians. This Stone is alive and its name was Vorian. A piece of it was broken off by Lethiel to keep after the Great Collapse to give the Rens insight and understanding. The piece broken off is called the Seeing Stone. After the explosion the fragments of the Vision Stone hold all the dark negative energy of the Morian. There are five fragments all together. They hold much power, but uncontrollable.

Wall-a-dons- creatures in the Myst that act as centuries to search and find. They cannot see light. Their ears are their sharpest sense. Wolf light creature that stands on two legs with bony protuberance off the shoulders. Scale like skin. Weak area the skin just below the ears. Even their blood is poisonous.

Walls of Serron- the walls that keep the Myst from entering Thera-wyl. The walls are made out of a protective Stone that repels the Myst. One of the markers for the Great Merging.

Yan- refers to turning of the season. There are two seasons in Argamae.

Yaro- equivalent of one-day.

Yoran- equivalent of one year.

Yoranium-equivalent of centuries.

Vorian-the name of the Great Vision Stone of the Morian.

Za-loc- last surviving Morian Magician after the Great Collapse of the Red Sun. Trapped by his greed and quest for power in the Fragment Stones. His magic keeps him and the Myst trapped together until the Great Merging time of the Prophecy.

Za-loc-mir (the Myst of)- the evil Myst created by the implosion of the Morian Magician Za-loc by the Fragment Stones, and the Myst pulled in by the exploding Red Star. This is really two elements caught together in this world by magic. It can lure Ren and Skeats to their death if they venture too far into it. The Myst can cause illness, madness, even death. The Myst of Za-loc-mir is kept in the Rift Zone by the magic of the Morian Priestesses. They created ten Gates and Keys to keep the Myst from reeking havoc on the land. Once a year during the passing of the Night-mir-Sun over the apex of the Temple at Da-Nan, the Myst is separated by the strong magnetic pull of the Night-mir-Sun. At that point the energy of Za-loc is caught in the Fragment Stones. The Myst moves up the mountain to the Temple at Da-Nan trying to reach up to the Night-mir-Sun.

Za-phira's- ghosts of the ancient forest of Du-Blaine, Spirits of ancient Morian Priestesses transformed by the

Myst of Za-loc-mir by the evilness and revenge of Za-loc. They stay in the Forest of Du-Blaine in Argamae, to keep an eye on the Skeats. Za-loc made them look frightening but their souls are still good and light. The Skeats are afraid of them. So they created another dimension in the forest to observe Skeats and not frighten them. They keep great knowledge and understanding of herbs. They have a great impact during the time of Am-Eron.

Zolian wine- alcoholic beverage made from barley like seeds and honey.