

Chapter 5

Bo had an idea. Outside their parents' house in the middle of the orchard the girls grouped together under a sky lit up by a thousand stars. Bo had them link hands, and with her mshai attempted to contact Sobek.

Within seconds a luminous ray of green light pierces the night sky, flooding the cluster of girls and causing their bodies to separate from their consciousness.

The source of the light radiates from the end of a narrow, tube-like passageway, a channel of light so incredibly bright yet the girls are able to look straight into it. As they stream through the brilliant green light they see waves of deeper intensity light radiate and flash towards them. The first wave of light gives off a wonderful feeling. It appears in their consciousness as a *living light*, transmitting a sense of joyousness. Another wave of light passes through them, radiating a lovely calming feeling.

Sobek, their beautiful guardian angel, smiles before them, framed in her glorious aura. She fans out her vast angel wings and greets the group in her soft eloquent voice that enfolds them like a security blanket. Bo and her sisters become emotional as they see again their long-time caregiver and friend who selflessly gave up her life for them.

Beyond Sobek they see a dark blue lake with a spectacular waterfall backdrop. The countryside is painted with wild flowers everywhere, colours of blues, yellows, crimsons and purples; everything they perceive in a vibrant colour of shimmering light. Everyone is speechless. Sobek smiles at them, her aura giving off a magnificent ambience.

Bo breaks the silence. 'Sobek,' she says softly. 'We need your help. We've lost Jonie, Mosi and Talibah to Jovian and we need your help to get them back.'

Sobek takes in their anguish. Her response is not what the girls had anticipated. 'There is also Kenza whom you have lost to my brother on Jovian,' she states gently. The girls look at each other, only then realising that Kenza is not amongst them. This upsets them.

'Do not worry My Sweet Ones, she is safe with her sisters,' Sobek adds, then continues with more news. 'Planet Jovian contained the existence of life before Earth, from where our Egyptian forefathers were deployed to Earth, and whom built the great Sphinx of Giza. It is this founding influence that flows in the veins of my brother. Timos is cunning, outwitting me in my endeavours to keep you away from him, and for that I am deeply sorry. And his wish remains - that you and Nefertari should be rulers as one sovereign of Jovian.' Sobek waits for a moment before she continues. 'Yet, it is only part of his plan. Your purpose to my brother is not only for the existence of his planet, but he is grooming you all, he sees as *his* entity of clones, for something more. But first I shall explain the gift that Nefertari claims as hers and has passed on to each of you.' A heavy silence drapes the air as the sisters wait for her to continue.

'You receive intelligent energy from three entities: the spirit of *Ka*, the Egyptian Sun god *Ra*, and the soul of *Ba*. These three entities that you possess symbolise you as Starseeds. And as Starseeds of these three entities, you are able to comprehend *The Light of Ra*,' she says, pausing. 'It is an entity that is as old as the earth itself. You have had this gift since your creation. It was not transmitted to you by Megan's twenty-fifth clone; she has merely made it known it to you. The Light of Ra is a living

thing - an encoded light language, a social memory complex that views your present, past and future lives. It holds energy documentation; records registering life experiences of every human being since time first began.' Sobek observes the girls' astonished reactions. 'You have made several visitations via this vehicle already.' Realisation sweeps over the girls' faces. Sobek takes a moment to let the girls digest everything before she goes any further. 'The Light of Ra sits in a chamber at the end of a golden spiral, deep within the Sphinx. Our Egyptian forefather Thoth, Keeper of the Records, placed it there. Peril will come to all who try to seek it out. One hundred and forty-eight sets of three people will enter the subterranean chambers. One hundred and forty sets of people will perish in their quest. Eight will not. These eight sets of three people are you, my Sweet Ones, including your sisters on Jovian. You will find your path into the Light of Ra, but it will not be by physical channels.'

'How do we know what...' Bo trails off, trying to process it all. Sobek hasn't only this minute told them that their extrasensory abilities are as a result of their being Starseeds of ancient Egyptian royalty, but she has also revealed the secret of the Sphinx; a secret that it holds in a subterranean chamber - records disclosing the source of civilisation! It is the answer that millions of people throughout the world have persistently sought. It is the answer that has caused huge conflict between Christians and scientists throughout the ages. And it will only be made known to her and her sisters!

'Its physical form is that of a spherical diamond, the size of a small ball,' Sobek says, pausing once again before she explains to them the miraculous energy of its celestial transmissions. 'The Light of Ra receives energy from the constellations. From these celestial vibrations an energy barrier is also transmitted, an energy barrier that deflects the rages of weather from the pyramids and the Sphinx, and thus protecting The Light of Ra.' Fascinated, the girls listen and learn.

Sobek lingers, quiet for a moment, and then prepares to divulge something alarming, something that she thinks the girls now need to know. 'Timos intends, through you, to gain access to the diamond. His intentions are wrongful. My brother wishes to have the diamond in his custody and returned to Jovian. Beware my Sweet Ones, if he should achieve this, it will upset Earth's energy, such that could initiate a cataclysmic event.'

The girls are shocked. Bo calls for Sobek to elaborate.

'The Light of Ra is a supercapacitor that stores vast amounts of electrical energy. If the diamond is brought into the Earth's atmosphere, it will cause the air to separate into positive ions and electrons. An ionising of the air will cause a global imbalance of the atomic structure of Earth's electrical field. In other words,' Sobek warns as gently as possible, 'a ceaseless and violent electrical storm of lightning-strike over the entire surface of your planet, which will bring about world-wide destruction.'

Seconds pass before Jaqi breaks the silence. 'But they sent Jack back here to fix everything,' she says, her words sounding feeble against Sobek's staggering revelation.

'My brother has been living in human form for over a hundred and twenty years, and to him, achieving this is the most significant thing of his mortal existence. The genetic engineering mission is vital for the survival of his planet, but nonetheless it is designed merely as a preliminary measure, a ploy for his ultimate act.' Sobek expresses sympathy to the girls' shocked reactions. She fans out her immense wings of white and gold and speaks to them with great compassion, turning her attention to Bo. 'You, my Sweet One, will receive profound knowledge from an ancient Egyptian High Priest. He will expose to you the four secret laws and will guide you to discover the truth of creation. It is from learning the truth that your eyes will be opened to the creation of our universe and its

metaphysical makeup. You will also meet a higher being who can prevent the catastrophic events that my brother of ill-intention may cause.'

Sobek stays with them for a few more seconds, her remaining words backed by a resonance of song, like the heralding of angels.

'Sinestu-ipini-itxaro-ahalguzti,' she blesses them, and her image of light ebbs away.

The girls discovered themselves back in the orchard, spellbound and gazing up at the majestic, sweeping vault of stars. It all seemed so unreal. Firstly they were told they were Starseeds of ancient Egyptian royalty and able to comprehend The Light of Ra - the spherical diamond holding records of the source of civilisation, and in a matter of minutes had also learned of its worth to someone who could bring Earth's civilisation to its knees!

She hears hushed sounds of people talking, their voices muffled by the underground cavern. Bo has been projected into this setting from her slumber by some unknown force, and now stands wide awake, making out hazy shapes of people walking through underground channels. Her focus clears: Three English men holding torches, trekking along in single file and sweeping their beams of light back and forth in front of them. Bo knows that these men are heading into danger. They are a group of three out of the one hundred and forty sets of people that Sobek spoke about. She wants to warn them but she is not physically there; her body stills sleeps in her bed at home, and becomes fearful for their safety.

The men tramp in their heavy boots through the never-ending tunnels. They talk amongst themselves, the man at the back becoming increasingly worried about how far underground they are going. Ahead of them they see a thick, stone door. One of them goes up to it and pushes it open. The men cry out, thrilled to find the doorway that opens to the spiral staircase. The three trekkers descend it carefully, sliding their hands along the rough wall of bedrock as they step down. The men tread down the narrow and twisting staircase in silence, finding it harder and harder to breathe in the stifling, stale air. Nearing the base of the stairwell the man at the front calls out 'there it is!' Bo follows his gaze and spots a clay pot sitting in the corner of a chamber the size of a small room. She observes the men looking closely at the pot, trying to decipher its hieroglyphic instructions. Three tunnels lead off the chamber, dark endless corridors almost teasing the trekkers which one to pick. The hieroglyphics on the pot prove difficult to interpret so they argue, their voices deadened by the hollowed-out space. The man with the facial hair wins the argument and the three men take off down the middle tunnel. Bo knows what they want to find - the forty-eight sacred geometry drawings, illustrations of directions to the records. She also knows that they have picked the wrong passageway.

The trekkers descend deeper. To their anguish the walls become narrower, and realisation kicks in that they've taken the wrong tunnel. The men turn around and head back. The tunnel they thought they had taken earlier expands into a labyrinth of other tunnels, and the trekkers realise with alarm that they are completely lost. Claustrophobia sets in with one of the men and he comes to his knees, bellowing out a loud curse. This fuels anger in the other two, and each of them begins to yell at the terror-struck man to calm down.

‘Shine your torches to the floor!’ the one called Beni instructs them. ‘...track our footprints back.’

The faint boot marks, barely recognisable in the hard underground pathway, guide the three men back. They trek back towards the chamber that holds the pot. They reason that if they start from there again they will choose the correct channel and can set off down that.

Twenty-five minutes go by and the explorers remain no nearer to the chamber. Their boot-prints have gone and so has the fine dust that formed them. Still believing that they are on the right path they tramp on, progressing along through the tunnels of bedrock. Something up ahead stops them in their tracks. The men fall silent.

A snapping and clicking sound comes from the depths of another passageway. The men quickly shine their torches in its direction, startled to see little spidery-type shadows looming around the curve of the passageway and moving swiftly towards them. Hundreds of wind scorpions appear from nowhere, scuttling quickly along the walls and ceiling of the tunnel that the men stand in, frozen in shock.

‘Run!’ the front man screams, and they each turn and sprint in the other direction. The creatures scuttle thick and fast, snapping their pincer-like jaws as they scurry at lightning speed, closing in on the three panic-stricken men.

Bo cannot stand it. She holds her hands against her ears and cries out, trying to drown out the high-pitched screams of the three adult men who have been set upon by the spiny creatures. She is sickened by the sounds of masses of wind scorpions cutting into the men’s flesh, their pincers sawing into the soft tissue and digesting it, devouring their victims alive.

Suddenly Bo finds herself in Beni’s body feeling the attack first-hand; the overwhelming pain and revulsion of jaws slicing into her, the wicked smell of her own raw, bloodied flesh. She vomits on herself, her body doubled over in pain and her screams engulfing the underground cavern. Bo is stricken with terror and in total disbelief of how one can suffer such a hideous, grisly death.

It can’t be happening! She uses her ESA to get herself quickly out of there.

Through her hysterical sobbing, Bo frantically pats her hands around herself and realises that she is still in her bed. She has travelled in her sleep. There are no wounds, no cuts to her face nor rips in her clothes. Her body is intact and the pain has gone. Her heart breaks, however, for the three men who have succumbed to the rapacious appetite of hundreds and hundreds of Egyptian wind scorpions, their flesh gruesomely consumed until only their skeletal frames remain.

Bo reflects on Sobek’s words.

It became Bo’s first encounter in another human being’s body brought about by the compassion and empathy that she carried for others; able to physically transfer her psyche to vicariously experience their suffering.

And she wasn’t sure that she really wanted it.

The first thing that becomes apparent to them is the smell of the underground, the air thin and rank. Their headlamps light up a doorway. Bo knows exactly what to do.

‘Sinestu-ipini-itxaro-ahalguzti,’ she announces, and the door opens to the chamber with the three other channels leading off it. There in the corner she sees the clay pot. She picks it up, lifting it to the light to read its instructions. Bo knows that the hieroglyphics are designed to be a red herring, a diversion to the unsuspecting explorer. In her light grasp the pot transmits something to her. The sisters gasp in surprise as it sends off a colourful array of Egyptian symbols, a code that only they, as Starseeds of ancient Egyptian royalty, are able to read. Bo takes the lead and Claudine and Cecille follow her down a long stone hallway that instantly lights up of its own accord, reminding Bo of the sensory light system in the dark corridors of her university apartment building. Yet the luminous green lighting in the deep underground passageway does not emit from any sensory light system. It radiates from them. Beyond them is a closed door indicating they are at the beginning of the Golden Spiral, the vast halls that lead to the spiral’s centre, and to the chamber that contains the spherical diamond. A strip of bright green light hems the base of the doorway.

Bo stops in her tracks. ‘The others need to see this,’ she states. ‘I think we should go no further for now. We will let them exchange places in sets of threes, so everyone can each see this.’

Holding hands again, Bo instructs her mshai, then outside of the Sphinx, she, Claudine and Cecille shoot rays of light into the eyes of three of their sisters so they can see what the others have seen. Each group spends no more than a few minutes in the same spot until all the girls have had their turn. It is little a taste of discovery of the wonderful secret that the Sphinx possesses.

Jack was running out of time. The elections were coming up and he still hadn’t managed to get the genetic engineering program off the ground. He knew he needed the help of the most powerful country in the world to back him. He needed to be in talks with President Obama. He had to make it happen, though he didn’t know how. At present, it seemed, the political superpower was more focussed on the flagging Euro dollar and its effect on the US economy.

Jack thought about the strange moods he experienced while in the prime minister’s skin. What came out of his mouth sometimes turned out to be the opposite of what Jack really wanted to say. The polite, fair-minded prime minister and the demeanour he portrays, Jack realised, was a smokescreen. He has always maintained a strong respect for the New Zealand PM and would certainly not have doubted his political stance before today.

Jack found himself turning in his sleep, a world-weary weight on his shoulders. He, as the prime minister, had only a short time ago come back from bilateral talks in Sydney with the Australian Prime Minister. The Minister had then come across to New Zealand and had spoken with John Key on progressing the single economic market for Australia and New Zealand. More of a concern had been John Key’s words on television days before: that National will be looking to sell off some of its country’s assets to overseas investors.

It’s no wonder that iwi want to speed up settlement claims, Jack thought. He knew he had to steer the prime minister away from foreign influence in our economy and concentrate on the genetic modification program.

‘It’s not just New Zealand that’s at stake here, but the whole bloody world,’ he relayed to Megan who had been woken from his troubled tossing and turning.

Cecille Googled it: *Starseeds are evolved beings from another planet, star system or galaxy. Starseeds incarnate into the same conditions of total amnesia concerning their identity, origins and purpose as do Earth humans. However, the genes of Starseeds are encoded with a 'wake-up call' designed to 'activate' them at a pre-determined moment in life. Awakening can be gentle and gradual, or quite dramatic and abrupt.*

Personally, Cecille didn't believe in everything that Wikipedia put out. Besides, anyone can go in and edit the site as far as she knew.

She wasn't supposed to be thinking badly of her newfound identity, but discovered herself grappling to get her head around it. It made her feel like a freak, but at the same time inexhaustible. Immortal.

Yeah, that's it - an immortal freak.

While the others appeared to be handling it, even excited about being Starseeds, Cecille couldn't help but wonder what she did in her past life. *Or past lives.*

Lying on her bed in her hostel room she unconsciously rubbed her thumb across the screen of her mshai, contemplating how she can jumpstart this 'awakening'. She told herself she can't be stuffed waiting for it to happen by itself, at the 'pre-determined moment'. Saying a date into the mshai isn't going to cut it either, she knew.

'Of course!' she said aloud to herself.

Cecille spoke into her mshai and made a visit to Ain and Sabah at the Canterbury University campus in Tauranga. It didn't take much to convince them to accompany her as part of a threesome that Sobek had spoken about.

Sabah even let out an excited giggle. 'An interesting twist to gain my history degree!'

Ain laughed. 'Yeah, we should suggest it be part of the uni curriculum - do a thesis on your past life for six credits.'

Ain, Sabah and Cecille find themselves in a dark narrow passageway hollowed out of bedrock. Above them the ceiling concaves into an arch and Cecille wonders how they - whoever built it - could have carved it out of solid rock. Moving forward they return to the same spot where Bo had earlier made known to them, at the closed entranceway with the hem of bright light flooding the space in front of them.

Taking a deep breath, Cecille says the words out loud, 'Sinestu-ipini-itxaro-ahalguzti'. On her command the door swings open smoothly and quietly. The three girls gasp cries of astonishment. The dark, rank passageway transforms into a tunnel of gold, into a colour of shimmering green light as bright as the sun yet they are able to look straight into it, just as in the passage of light that had lead them to Sobek. The green light casts a wonderful, peaceful sensation, beckoning them to enter the long halls deep within, halls carved from solid gold. Captivated by the light as it changes into colourful shifting spheres, the three girls are spellbound. It is as if they are inside a giant kaleidoscope. They make their way along through the corridor of moving symmetrical spheres, walking a distance until the passageway formed into a gentle curve. Cecille reaches her hand behind herself and grasps Ain's hand. Ain takes Sabah's hand. The girls walk on nervously, elephant-style. At

this point Ain, Cecille and Sabah find themselves in the sweeping curve of the Golden Spiral, a hallway of gold that is shaped like a giant koru. The girls comprehend that they must be deep beneath the Sphinx of Egypt. High up on her left Cecille notices some carved-out geometrical drawings and points them out to the others.

‘They’re depictions of the chromosomes of Christ-consciousness,’ Sabah explains matter-of-factly. With a wavering finger she points out the first one with its perfectly formed, over-lapping circles, a beautiful flower-like pattern with sixfold symmetry.

‘It looks like the kaleidoscope pattern we’ve just come through,’ Cecille exclaims.

‘It’s more than just a pattern,’ Sabah says, smiling, ‘It is the Flower of Life.’

The light becomes more intense the further they walk on in. They sense something happening to them, a supercharge of energy followed by a light floaty sensation. A celestial flash strikes their bodies and radiates within, uplifting them. Sabah understands that what they are experiencing is known as spiritual weight-loss. Cecille braces herself on the subterranean gold wall as she feels her legs turn to jelly. Sabah staggers back as Ain crumples against her.

‘I feel like I’ve just been slain in the spirit or something,’ Ain says, looking at Cecille sheepishly. Sabah giggles, still pinned underneath Ain. Cecille sits against the wall with her knees bent to her chin. She wipes her flushed cheeks and beams. ‘I think we’ve all just been zapped, sis.’ She pulls herself up weakly to get a grip on what suddenly seems to her like a ridiculous situation. ‘We’re in the depths of the earth in a tunnel of gold, and we’re rolling around like drunken fools!’ she laughs.

Still feeling like they’re walking on air, the girls urge each other along around the vast curve. Slowly they approach the end of it. Ahead of them they see a short, low arched channel that Sabah believes will guide them to the centre of the Golden Spiral. Excited, the girls duck to clamber through the short tunnel and are taken aback once again. The short passageway opens up into a huge, broad hallway. Great columns of gold, around ten metres in height, line both sides of the gigantic corridor.

‘Wow!’ Ain and Sabah exclaim together. The girls realise they are in the final passageway. The long colonnade is an outstanding architectural work of art. Above their heads is a stairway that runs the length of the corridor and flush with the ceiling, yet to one’s eye it runs skyward. The extraordinary piece of structural design is an optical illusion. Cecille is bowled over at such fine workmanship made by the hands of these ancient people.

At the end of the great hall they see a light even brighter than what they’d minutes ago come through. It is the centre of the Golden Spiral. The intense white light pulls them in, enveloping them, giving off an amazing sensation more powerful than what they’d experienced earlier. Cecille cannot feel her limbs so she doesn’t know if she is still standing or sprawled out on the hard floor.

‘Ssshit,’ she drawls, her mouth numb. ‘I f’l ab..so..lutely wasted. This is tot’lly dope.’ Ain and Sabah start to giggle again. The three sisters find themselves amidst the power of a divine celestial energy transmission, receiving the full force of a higher dimension, and once again are completely overwhelmed in a culmination of love and great joy.

After a long period of being on a spiritual high, Cecille, Ain and Sabah slowly come down to earth and re-enter their senses. As they become lucid, they see something slowly emerging out of the white light, something no bigger than a cannon ball.

‘Oh..my..God,’ Sabah says, cupping her hands over her mouth. On a raised platform and levitated slightly above it rotates the spherical diamond. Its brilliance bedazzles them yet they can look

straight at it; an incandescent, round diamond of light spinning as if it is a ball on top of a water-feature. It is a symbol of divine harmony, and *physical evidence* of the existence of civilisation on Earth for the past five and a half million years. 'The Light of Ra.' Sabah's voice has gone husky in awe of it.

'Nefertari would be sooo pissed if she knew we were here,' Cecille hoots.

As the three sisters are drawn towards the diamond, they see numerous golden circles rotating within it, revolving spheres like they had passed through earlier. Inside the revolving spheres rotate prismatic spheres. The vision is spectacular.

Images of people's faces come into view in front of the spinning spheres, rotating slowly around the luminous globe. Beneath the faces are names and dates.

Cecille comes within reach of it. Without blinking an eye she shoots two rays of light directly into the diamond.

Before her is the face of her past. It bestows her primordial name, her original actual birth date, and date of death. It is her corporeal blueprint.

Queen Hatshepsut

Date of Birth - First month of summer, Day 23, Year 1516 BC

Date of Death - Fourth month of spring, Day 4, Year 1458 BC

Cecille sniggers. 'I knew I had to have been royalty. And the first great woman in recorded hist...'

Before Cecille finishes her sentence she drops to the floor. Sabah and Ain sweep down on her.

Ain screams. Their sister is dead.

Megan hadn't before been so grief stricken. The enormity of it caused her mind to be disconnected from her own body. It was as if she were living through an out-of-body experience and witnessing the tragedy in virtual reality. One of her clones was gone, her loveable tomboy Cecille, cynical and outspoken to anyone who tried to take advantage of her or her sisters.

'Why?' was all she could muster.

Someone had lead her to bed and everything had gone black. Dr. Guilford had administered a sleep-inducing drug that he said would only mask her pain short-term, and he felt genuinely sorry for Megan and her extraordinary family.

When Megan refused to swallow her Etizolam anymore as it was doing her head in, she became surprised as to how well she coped. She was no longer feeling disembodied from her bearings and was practically back to her old self again. The sadness remained, but Megan developed an understanding; an assurance that somehow Cecille was okay. The others, she knew, felt the same way, showing even more faith than she that they will one day again meet.

'I guess it's just like she's gone to join Talibah, Jonie, Mosi and Kenza,' she said to Jack that evening, trying hard to convince herself. 'And I can visit her if I want,' she added brightly, smiling through her tears. Jack looked sadly at his life-partner and took her in his arms. Her belief was heart-rending. He too grieved for Cecille but the love he felt for Megan outweighed his own grief. For Megan, the warmth of Jack's affection was especially comforting. Endorphins were the best, most natural drug in the world to fight sadness, Megan believed, and in that moment of Jack's embrace she remembered why she had fallen in love with him in the first place.

Mulling over a latte that she purchased from the university canteen, Bo was at odds with herself. She felt responsible for Cecille's death, and at the same time was angry with her. Angry since it wasn't the right time for Cecille to have gone down that track yet. She was also furious with Ain and Sabah for going along with her, and that none of them had even considered talking about it with her first.

It had been weeks since the funeral, and Bo hadn't had the space to think logically about it up until now. Cecille's funeral had swelled to around two thousand mourners. It threw the clones back into celebrity-status, a similar notoriety to which they had encountered on their arrival in New Zealand. Actually, Bo reflected, the funeral was a circus. TV news vans had stationed themselves outside, with television crews and their minions lining the entranceway of the funeral home where Cecille's service was held.

It's funny how everyone thinks recording a funeral is disrespectful unless the deceased is a famous person, Bo contemplated. *Not that Cecille was exactly famous.*

She had an idea but this time didn't pitch her thoughts to anyone else.

Bo greets the Pharaoh of Egypt with a bow. Hatshepsut stands before her wearing a nemes headdress with a reared-up spitting cobra, a strip of cloth wrapped tightly around her breasts, and a Shendyt kilt.

She wears a false beard! Bo says to herself in surprise. She then recollects that Hatshepsut lived formerly as a queen, married to her half-brother King Thutmose the Second, the king having died soon after becoming Pharaoh. Soon after his death she took charge, and had herself crowned Pharaoh of Egypt, taking on the image of a king.

Bo tries not to look directly at the unbecoming decoration, but it is like addressing a person who has a mole growing on the end of his nose. Instead she observes the queen's eyes, the corners elongated lengthways. They are exquisite Egyptian eyes, ones that close in a completely different position from those of any other race.

Hatshepsut stands before her, her stance authoritative. The former king's son Thutmose the Third, born to another wife, stands at her side. Bo thinks he looks to be around the age of ten. She sees a glint in his eye, an indignant, calculating air about him. Resentful perhaps, Bo wonders, of his stepmother/aunt's position, a position that he may consider should rightfully be his. She senses that

he will cause strife in a few years' time. The pharaoh's posture remains strong. While Bo refrains from blanching, Hatshepsut's gaze at her becomes disturbingly drawn out. Bo waits her out, waits to see if she expresses any recognition. She does not.

'Cecille?' Bo tests. The pharaoh says something in a language that even Bo's mshai doesn't recognise, which has, at this moment in time, put her in a very precarious situation. Two guards begin to move towards her. They are sure to strip her of her mshai, she is certain of it, and she appeals to Hatshepsut. Bo tries to speak to her in several different languages, but the pharaoh, now incensed, looks over Bo's shoulder. She is acknowledging the guards. With rising desperation Bo tries Arabic again, but instead, she speaks something that even she cannot comprehend. Rapid, rolling syllables slide off her tongue in a language that the pharaoh finally responds to. Hatshepsut claps her hands to call off the guards. Bo is speaking to the legendary first female pharaoh of Egypt in an unknown ancient Egyptian language. Her words flow from her lips in the beautiful but mysterious ancient tongue.

Hatshepsut indicates to Bo to come and eat with her. As her honoured guest, bowls of fruit and bread are brought in by servants and are laid on a small, elaborately carved table. Bo yields to her request, although perplexed. She is trying to get her head around this alien jargon that derives from her own lips. The pharaoh converses with her and she answers, and Bo is ignorant of what either of them is saying. On the other hand, she contemplates, this strange language seems like the most natural thing in the world; an innate language that has been stored somewhere long ago in her brain. Still, she wouldn't mind understanding the answers she is giving to Hatshepsut. She steals a glance at her mshai. Its screen is blank.

'Damn!' she says quietly. Hatshepsut falls silent. Did Bo just see a flicker of recognition?

'Cecille?' she tests again, this time in a quieter, softer tone. The pharaoh's eyes become focussed on Bo's, yet her expression remains blank and uncomprehending.

Bo's attention is momentarily diverted. From the corner of her eye she catches sight of a young girl fleeing behind the great palace columns. The girl approaches the group. Bo notices her eyes: deep, dark, liquid moons framed by prominent, arched brows. The young girl sidles up to Hatshepsut and takes hold of her hand. The pharaoh is prompted out of her reverie by her daughter's warm hand. Something changes in her demeanour while she seems to be taking in her surroundings, gazing at her daughter, nephew, then again at Bo.

'This is Princess Neferure, Lady of Upper and Lower Egypt, and Mistress of the Lands,' she says in plain English. 'And this is my husband's son Thutmose,' she adds. Then she smiles widely. Bo is thrilled and relieved. Her sister is back! Though, not sure whether to wrap her arms around her wildly or to strangle her, Bo chooses to remain collected in such an extraordinary situation.

Cecille grins through the countenance of the pharaoh. 'Hi ya sis,' she says quietly to Bo. Her teenage daughter and nephew are now gaping at her in alarm as they hear their mother and aunt speaking in an unknown language with this oddly clothed stranger.

'Welcome to the Eighteenth Dynasty. Together you and I will oversee the completion of King Thutmose's works,' Cecille continues, ignoring the children's shocked expressions. 'Two obelisks are at present being cut at Aswan and I am having them transported to Ipet-Isut.' She leans in to Bo. 'You and I will experience first-hand, builds of the eighteenth dynasty temples and other dwellings throughout Upper and Lower Egypt. And I have hundreds of construction projects planned.'

Bo laughs at the irony of it all. 'It so figures!' Everyone knows that Cecille has always been a tomboy and has always loved playing with ideas of the more mannish nature.

The first thing Bo did was report home. She didn't want anyone to think she'd gone missing, especially so soon after the devastating upheaval of Cecille's death.

She found Megan at the cemetery, with Jack hovering nearby. Megan sat cross-legged beside Cecille's grave with her head bowed. Jack spotted Bo and beckoned her over to him.

'Give her a minute,' he said. Bo could see that Megan's face had taken its toll over the past few weeks since Cecille's death, and she now looked much older than her early thirties. Right away Megan looked up and on seeing Bo, rose up her arms in a gesture of greeting. Delighted that Bo had come to visit, Megan cried again as they hugged each other. Bo saw her red and puffy eyes and felt a small pang of guilt. She steered her towards the puriri benchseat that Jack had made and had mounted underneath the pohutukawa tree, so that people who visited Cecille's grave could sit more comfortably and spend time with her. It had little sea-treasures imbedded in it that had belonged to Cecille.

'There's something I need to tell you,' Bo said to Megan. 'I want you to hear it from me first before I tell the others.' On overhearing this Jack tactfully moved away and walked down to the other end of the cemetery where a number of children's graves were, noticeable by the toys people had placed on them.

Explaining to Megan that Cecille wasn't really dead after all but living in another reality and in another lifeform, no matter how ridiculous it sounded, was a delicate undertaking. It still meant that they would not ever see Cecille again as Cecille. It was another bombshell for Megan, who didn't really know how to take it. Bo also had to break the news that she intended to live in Cecille's world for a few weeks, that she wanted to get to know what it was like in Egypt's eighteenth dynasty period.

'Cecille's the Pharaoh of Egypt?' Jamila asked, incredulous. As soon as Bo had told the others, they were elated, realising they would one day get to see their sister again. They had also felt somewhat envious that Bo had seen her already.

Bo sat her sisters down. 'There is something else that I've discovered.'

'What is it?' Chione questioned.

'If you look on Wikipedia it has been recorded that ancient Egyptian languages evolved from Old Egyptian to Middle Egyptian to Late Egyptian to Demotic, then to a Coptic language. According to my mshai she spoke to me in an unidentified ancient Egyptian tongue, though when I researched it, it suggested possibly Coptic in the dialect of Sahidic. Moreover, I replied in the unidentified language,' Bo stated.

Chione quizzed her. 'So what did it sound like?'

'I can't just bring it on,' Bo said. 'The thing is, I didn't understand a word of it, but I must've been making sense because Hatshepsut understood me.'

She felt the urge to get back to her. 'Anyway, I'll see you lot in a few weeks' time. By the way,' Bo cautioned her sisters, 'don't be too keen to find out who you were before, just yet, okay? Wait till I get back?'

The girls guffawed at this. 'We're good,' Chione assured her. The sisters certainly had no intentions to go delving into the depths of the Sphinx of Giza anytime soon.

Her sleeping quarters consist of a single bed with its mattress stuffed with straw. It is surprisingly comfortable, although during the night Bo needs to plump out the hollow her body has left in its centre.

She looks out the window, scanning her surroundings before settling back down. Because the glassless window is quite high up Bo stands on a stool, arms overlapped on its ledge. Moonlight drapes over the fields in a soft, silvery glow. The countryside on Nile's west bank looks surprisingly green, and although Bo had least expected it to be like this she takes into account the recent annual flooding of the Nile, which has transformed the barren terrain into rich, lush pastures.

She weighs up the incredibility of it, the unbelievable situation she finds herself in, and it takes her breath away. The mummy in the glass casing at Auckland Museum once shielded a fascinating mystery. She is now experiencing it - living in the era of that mummy!

Cecille had asked that Bo refer to her as Hatshepsut for the sake of her status and everyone around her, and also that it will 'help her act out her role in a more authentic manner'. In fact, it appears as if her sister is experiencing the same phenomenon of one who has multiple personalities, Bo deduces.

'It was the Oracle of Amen who pronounced it Amen's will that I should be Pharaoh,' Hatshepsut says absent-mindedly as they stroll through her palace at Deir el-Bahri the following morning. Bo becomes in awe of the beautiful temple with its walls decorated in bold, colourful designs. There is a mural depicting the pharaoh's trip to the land of Punt: potted myrrh saplings, sacks of frankincense, fish and other fauna and flora, all etched into the temple's limestone walls. Bo tries to imagine what it must be like in the lands across the Nile but is prompted out of her daydreaming by Hatshepsut.

'Rather than coming out as the pharaoh straightaway I did it gradually so I didn't freak everyone out too much.'

Bo looks at her and laughs. *Still our Cecille.*

'It is also his will that I should ultimately be called *His Majesty*, Hatshepsut, Foremost of Nobles.' Cecille doesn't notice her own inconsistencies.

Bo gives her sister a sideways look. 'Shall I call you Sheps for short then,' she says teasingly and they both laugh.

Another girl appears and Hatshepsut switches back to her ancient tongue. On cue, Bo slides back into dialogue with her and finds, with astonishment, she understands. The other two children have not spoken since of the earlier episode. Hatshepsut introduces her younger daughter as Princess Merira-Hatshepset, and Bo greets her with a smile and a nod, bearing in mind that a handshake at first acquaintance is not recognised in ancient Egyptian custom. The younger sister of Neferure is more friendly and polite, and asks her mother if she may show her bedchamber to Bo.

In the princess's antechamber stands a statue of the sacred cat Bastet with a gold ring through its nose. Gold jewellery and girly things dangle from its head. Merira-Hatshepset stops at its side and clasps the cat's head, rubbing noses with it before entering her room.

'It is a ritual of hers,' Hatshepsut explains. In her native tongue she tells Bo that her youngest daughter possesses a name that means Beloved of the Sun god Ra. She also explains that the sacred cat represents The Eye of the Sun god Ra and is believed to be the daughter of Ra, and the goddess of pleasure and motherhood.

'This is why she worships it so,' Hatshepsut says, slipping back into English.

'And born of a Starseed too.' Bo adds with a smile. Hatshepsut's face lights up as the obvious genetic connection suddenly dawns on her.

Around the princess's room Bo sees other crude figurines of the sacred cat made out of hardened mud. Merira-Hatshepset proudly shows them off as her own work.

Hatshepsut strokes her daughter's hair affectionately and converses to Bo in her native tongue again: *This little Starseed of mine will one day be a great sculptor and will carve magnificent statues for my temples.* Merira-Hatshepset tilts her head and grins pleasingly at her mother.

Bo sits in the rooftop loggia with her ancient Egyptian sister, admiring the view and enjoying the cooling winds, the children having gone off to bed. The end of the day's glow creates a spectacular vista over a lake that is bordered by date palms and papyrus reeds, and patches of lotus flower that embellish the lake's surface. A servant comes in carrying two short-stemmed goblets and an earthen jar on a serving platter. He pulls the stopper from the jar and pours wine into the two vessels, handing one to each of the two women. Although feeling a little weary Bo takes the goblet gratefully. She has had to become accustomed to the normal daily rhythm of being up at the crack of dawn and into bed soon after sunset. She has found this hard to get used to and lays awake for hours. Bo sips at her wine tentatively.

'Hmm...unusual,' she says, scrutinising the pool of silk in her goblet. 'Sweet and light and fragrant.' This, she says with posh pronunciation. 'It smells and tastes like freshly crushed white grapes. That's it! It's just like White Diamond, the wine that Jack bought a whole crate of last Christmas from that vineyard just south of Whangarei.'

Cecille remembers. 'You're right, it does taste similar. How can the Kiwi winemakers have gotten it so close to Egypt's most esteemed Mareotis wine? So, do you like it?' Bo gulps it down in answer and holds her goblet out for a refill. The servant yields to her request. It doesn't make her feel intoxicated but instead feels a lovely warm, restful sensation, which prepares her for something she's wanted to broach all day.

'So, sis, these daughters of yours. You appear to be encouraging activities of the male gender - Merira-Hatshepset as a sculptor? And you have shown me a sized-down version of your false beard that you intend for Neferure to wear. What is it that you're proposing for them?'

Hatshepsut gives Bo a fleeting, contemptuous look and wanders across the loggia, a terrace that opens to the air on one side. She stands alongside the intricately carved wall and looks out, not saying anything. Bo joins her side, marvelling at the dramatic sunset. It is the same stunning aspect that she has seen at home on the west coast and realises that it is the one thing that hasn't changed throughout the ages. Hatshepsut's glance hasn't bypassed her and Bo thinks she may have pushed it a bit far.

Still, she broaches it again, albeit a little more cautiously. 'Sorry Hatshepsut, I don't mean to be rude. Is it customary?' It is a few moments before Hatshepsut answers.

'I am grooming Neferure as a prince so that she too may one day reign as the Pharaoh of Egypt. It is Amen's will that my eldest daughter takes over sovereignty on my death. It is the will of my late husband and brother that his son Thutmose should rule. But my brother was a fool,' she adds fiercely. 'His son is only of quarter royal blood. He is not worthy of such power. I am acting as his regent under oath to my husband, but it is my pledge to Amen that Neferure will become king, not Thutmose.' She says her nephew's name like it had turned acidic on her tongue. Bo becomes aware that Hatshepsut harbours a lot of resentment towards her stepson/nephew, and vice-versa it appears. As Pharaoh of Egypt she perceives an uncompromising side, an inflexible, business-like trait.

Hatshepsut snaps out of her bitterness and squeezes Bo's arm. 'Come sister, we should go to bed. Tomorrow I shall take you on a journey.'

Bo bids goodnight to Hatshepsut, telling her she wishes to linger a while. Plus she hasn't finished savouring her Mareotis wine. After Hatshepsut turns in, Bo remains alone outside on the loggia. It is a beautiful evening. In the distance she catches sight of some little round thatched-roofed houses clustered together like button mushrooms. Some of the houses even have little fences around them. Positioned farther afield Bo spots several straight rows of oval-shaped huts with mounds of fire-stacks dotted around and in amongst them. She squints her eyes; the little village from this perspective looks like a cardboard tray of eggs. The two communities appear segregated and she wonders if they have been set apart deliberately, as if in some form of ranking.

In the morning Bo can hear voices and activity outside the palace. She washes in the earthenware basin in front of a sheet of highly polished silver that poses as a mirror, and dresses in garments borrowed from Hatshepsut's wardrobe. Breakfast is not eaten in the palace but servants present a later morning meal of bread and soup. Today however, a trek has been planned, and Bo hopes that a picnic lunch has been prepared for it. What their mode of transport may be has left her wondering. She hasn't seen any donkeys or camels around the palace grounds since her arrival.

Outside, standing like sentries, porters in five groups of four await the royal family. Inside each group of men sits a litter awaiting its occupant. Bo cups her hands over her mouth in surprise, daring not to say anything that might cause offence. She has read about these vehicles that were used to carry ancient Egyptian royalty. The litter at the front must be Hatshepsut's, she gathers; four-posted and curtained, and plated with gold. Four other uncovered litters sit directly behind the pharaoh's - one for Bo, one each for the two princesses, and one at the back, most likely for Thutmose, she guesses. It is made of ebony. Bo is being shown to her vehicle that sits on the ground behind Hatshepsut's. The scantily clad men do not acknowledge her. She becomes aware of their pleated linen skirts that barely conceal their private parts, and quickly averts her eyes in the hope that none of them has noticed her looking at them in *that* direction. Jerking from one side to the other Bo is hoisted up in her litter by the four men, and the procession begins to make its way out of the palace grounds. She is in a peculiar situation, almost creepy, she thinks, likening the men carrying her litter to a group of pallbearers.

And I'm the one they are carrying!

They pass by the dug out ponds of the waterlilies and she angles herself to look at them. Bo recognises the sacred lotus flower. At night, she'd read, they close up and sink beneath the water like a group of swimmers in an aquatic aerobics display. In the morning they re-emerge and bloom

again, showing off their lovely blue and yellow centres. The masses of flowers nearly cover the ponds' surfaces. Bo breathes in deeply, inhaling their invigorating scent as she passes by. The Sacred Lotus, she knows, represents the symbol of sun and creation, of purity and rebirth, and of the resurrection of Isis.

It's remarkable, Bo reflects, that its shape is like a satellite view of the River Nile, and the flower's head is similar to the river's delta where it spills out into the Mediterranean Sea.

She wonders where their convoy is heading, suspecting it may be to the banks of the Nile. The porters now keep in step with each other, which makes for a much smoother ride. The only sounds she hears are the swishing back and forth of the porters' beaded skirts, and their sandals slapping in time on the well-trodden pathway. She feels embarrassed, foolish even, sitting in a box while they endure the weight of her, and at being treated like royalty when she's not.

Surely they can't be marching us all the way to the river, she thinks, aware of the distance.

Bo can see the immensity of the great body of water looming ahead of them and realises that it is definitely where they're heading. Not only does she see the river but also dark, elongated figures along its banks. Only when they progress further does she make out what they are: Crocodiles basking in the sun. Huge crocodiles. Bo is terrified of them and has always been grateful that New Zealand doesn't harbour such predators. The procession gets closer and closer to the creatures and Bo begins to wonder when they're going to stop. She grips the sides of her carrier tighter, her feet pressing down on the nonexistent brakes while she anxiously eyeballs the enormous reptiles.

These animals must be over five metres long! One of them turns towards the convoy of people and locks its eyes on them. The way the creature is staring at her puts Bo on the edge of panic. She hears a distant rumbling of hooves and, still firmly in her seat, twists her body towards the collective thudding. From the north riders on horseback gallop to the scene. They dismount, and Bo watches in awe as they nimbly and quickly mount the sleeping reptiles and drive their falcon-headed spears into the creatures' heads. Other crocodiles slither back into the river and disappear beneath its surface. The men work fast, dragging the carcasses onto a long wide sled that is harnessed to one of the horses. The whole procedure takes no more than fifteen minutes, and even though she detests them Bo is sure she is going to have nightmares about it. The sounds of the creature's skin being pierced, its thrashing about in an attempt to dislodge the spear make her almost feel sorry for the ferocious and feared reptile.

'Tomorrow we shall feast!' Hatshepsut exclaims loudly in her native tongue. She has already alighted her litter and motions Bo to do likewise. 'This is what I wished you to see. It is the harvest for the festival of Heb-Sed - my Jubilee. Tomorrow we shall travel to Waset for the celebrations.'

This should be interesting, Bo muses, staying firmly in her litter.

She wasn't aware that they would have to go across the river for the celebrations though. It meant getting into a shallow boat that would pass close by the lurking crocodiles that will no doubt still be stirred up from the day-before's culling. For the entire journey Bo is fearful, terrified that these fearsome beasts might attack her rather flimsy canoe made out of bundles of bound papyrus reeds. Hatshepsut rides in another boat, a timber boat likely to be a lot more secure, Bo observes with some envy, with a companion that she had introduced earlier to Bo as Senenmut. 'Steward of and tutor to Princess Neferure and Keeper of the Palace,' she had told her. Bo had noticed after the introduction, the way this man Senenmut had looked at Hatshepsut. His expression showed more than solely having a business relationship with his young charge's mother.

Bo grasps tightly the handles made from loosened reeds while the men negotiate the boats amongst the hordes of crocodiles. With their long noses and beady eyes surfacing, the fearsome animals watch them sinisterly. With rising consternation Bo looks over to Hatshepsut for support. In her own canoe Bo's Egyptian sister is laughing and chatting with Senenmut. It seems that no one notices the creatures' menacing stares. On the contrary in fact, the groups appear to be in a celebratory mood. A number of women in escort boats begin to sing and shake their rattles while men blow into their double-reed pipes. Others in neighbouring canoes are singing and clapping their hands as their boats surge with each stroke of the oars. The river, the *Ar*, they call it, seems to Bo to be a lot further than the eight kilometre stretch across. The rowers, Bo discerns, appear to be having a hard time steering the heavy canoes going against the current, though the wind is blowing fiercely at their backs, offering assistance. She is pleased under the circumstances, that the men's clothing resembles large, tightly bound diapers which afford them the dignity that would not be possible had they been wearing the garments of the porter men.

It is a huge relief to her when they arrive on the eastern side of the river in one piece, even though the current has taken them further south than the royal party had intended, and they now face a longer journey on land before reaching the Temple of Amun.

Another jaunt in a litter, Bo supposes. She becomes pleasantly surprised, as awaiting the party this time is a fleet of horse-drawn chariots. Bo is motioned to stand beside the charioteer and hold onto the wooden frame. For Hatshepsut, however, her ride consists of a four-wheeled, elaborately designed chariot with a proper seat, cushioned and curved for her comfort. The front wheels, Bo notices, are smaller than the rear wheels and she wonders why. Senenmut also has the luxury of a cushioned-seated chariot. It appears to Bo that he is treated much in the same way as Hatshepsut; with greater respect than a tutor to royal children ought to receive, she considers.

Even before they had reached the huge stone complex precinct of Amun-Re, Bo can hear loud cheering coming from its interior. The people of the capital city of Waset are gathered inside awaiting the arrival of their royal party. Two long rows of soldiers have positioned themselves outside the entranceway, forming a human arcade. They bow with outstretched arms as Hatshepsut and her entourage pass slowly through them. As they enter the complex the loud cheering of the people quietens, and they too form an aisle for the royal party to walk through, bowing to the pharaoh as she passes by. Bo cannot understand why they need to move at such a snail's pace and wills them to walk faster. The party eventually makes its way to a raised platform where people of rank await them. They acknowledge their queen and wait for her to take her seat before seating themselves. Hatshepsut waits until complete silence presides over the compound, and then rises to address her people.

'My jubilee,' Hatshepsut announces in her native tongue, 'is to celebrate my success and continuity as Pharaoh of our great lands.' Loud cheering breaks out. Hatshepsut splays her hands in a motion to quieten. 'In addition, it is today that I give tribute to my dear father, Thutmose the First. This jubilee is also to mark the passing of thirty years of his death.' The crowd roars in response to the mention of the country's former ruler, a worshipped pharaoh who, during his reign, crusaded deep into the Levant and Nubia, pushing the borders of Egypt.

Hatshepsut bows her head and the people follow suit. She gives thanks to the god Amun, who symbolises the essential and the hidden. She unravels a papyrus scroll and reads from it a prayer that she has prepared. 'I have done this from a loving heart for my Father Amun; I have entered into his scheme for this first jubilee; I was wise by his excellent spirit, and I forgot nothing of that which he exacted. My Majesty knoweth that he is divine. I did it under his command; it was he who led me.

I conceived no works without his doing; it was he who gave me directions. I slept not because of his temple; I erred not from that which he commanded. My heart was wise before my Father; I entered into the affairs of his heart. I turned not my back on the City of the All-Lord, but turned to it the face. I know that Karnak is God's dwelling upon earth; the August Ascent of the Beginning; the Sacred Eye of the All-Lord; the place of his heart which wears his beauty, and encompasses those who follow him.'

The pharaoh looks up from her prayer. There is a brief murmuring amongst the crowd who had earlier bowed their heads, followed by a hush as Hatshepsut moves again to address them. 'I give you my word, citizens of Egypt, that I shall build a great nation, and it shall be rich with trade. I have a vision. Together we will build a fleet of ships. And there shall be bounteous trading between the ports of Elim, Quasir, and Eilat, the trading of goods such as fine woven linen, frankincense and myrrh. There shall be the trading of bitumen and natron. Nonetheless, our two most precious natural resources shall continue to be used in the preservation of our revered deceased in preparation for the afterlife, in readiness to meet our Father Amun-Ra.'

The crowd cheers again in response and the pharaoh continues with her discourse. 'I shall trade juniper oil for its medicinal properties; and lastly, I shall trade copper amulets for the tombs of our beloved deceased.' The pharaoh finishes her address and everyone applauds.

'Let the feasting begin,' she announces through the cheering.

The banquet consists of bread, wine and beer, mutton, beef, goose and duck, roast oxen and fish accompanied by green-shoot onions and other vegetables. Also on the table are trays laden with crocodile meat, Bo assumes, from yesterday's cull. The dessert part of the table is filled with bowls of dates and figs, and an array of different types of melons, apples, pomegranates and apricots. Smaller bowls, filled with almonds and pistachios have been placed in various spots. Lotus flower heads float decoratively in a large basin that is filled with an especially intoxicating drink, Bo soon discovers.

Seated are female musicians called shemayets, who begin playing harps, lyres, lutes, and one a reed mizmar. Accompanying them assemble a group of female singers, one in particular standing out amongst the rest.

'She,' Hatshepsut informs Bo quietly, 'is the chantress of Amun.'

A respectful hush falls over the thousand-strong crowd as they listen to the gifted singer. Her voice proves hard to explain, Bo deduces, as she has not before heard such an unusual tone. The closest she can describe it would be a cross between Celine Dion and Dido.

The shemayets are stunning to look at, dressed in white linen saris with long red sashes knotted around the waist that drop nearly to the floor. The chantress of Amun sets herself apart from the others, wearing a fitted white sheath dress that shows off her faultless figure. Around her waist she wears a gold sash that matches the hem of her dress. She wears black kohl makeup around her dramatic Egyptian eyes, the ochre makeup on her lips complementing her henna-coloured hair and fingernails. Bo considers that the inexpressive alabaster statues of ancient Egyptian women do not do justice to their true extraordinary beauty. The singer projects her voice effortlessly, to the delight of Hatshepsut's followers.

The celebratory milieu progresses into dancing, and people in costumes surround the royal party with sistrums, hand-held drums, rattles, castanets and tambourines.

How much beer and wine people consume takes Bo by surprise. Several young, scantily clad women in blue faience beaded fishnet dresses that leave nothing to the imagination swathe unabashedly amongst the guests. As the night wears on some people exhibit unabashed openness to one another to the point that Bo feels she has seen enough. Everyone around her is inebriated and lurches about in an unruly manner. She smells a strange scent in the air - a smell of perspiring bodies blended with a pungent, sickly sweet smell.

Cannabis? she wonders.

Great numbers of men and women stagger about recklessly, holding each other tightly and dancing together, dirty-dancing style, Bo observes, blanching. She has seen animals during mating season but even they don't lose as much dignity as this carry-on she is seeing now. Revelry goes on well into the night and although Bo has detached herself from the festivities she feels exhausted, and wonders where she is supposed to sleep. She wonders whether these people actually intend to sleep at all tonight.

Bo had been sound asleep moments before being woken up by a strange feeling. Sitting up in her straw bed she feels compelled by some sort of energy to take a walk through the palace. As she moves through its silent walls Bo realises her gait is not in a walk but rather a gliding motion. Something else transpires. The internal walls of solid white limestone she can see through and into other rooms! With x-ray vision she can distinguish a chair in the palace drawing room so clearly that she is able to make out its inlaid ivory pieces of tiny lotus blossoms. Bo passes by the closed door of Princess Neferure's bedchamber. She can see her clearly as if she herself is standing inside the room. The princess sleeps soundly with her head resting on a curved headrest made out of wood. Even in the circumstances Bo considers this. She cannot fathom how people can possibly be comfortable on those hard lumps of wood that pass for pillows.

She hears muffled voices that she finds herself gravitating towards. Bo freezes in her tracks. The stone wall of the pharaoh's bedchamber is completely transparent to her. It is as if she were a fly on the wall in her sister's bedroom. Bo is horrified by what she sees. She immediately feels guilty for violating the pharaoh's privacy and turns on her heels to head back to her room. Not only could she see through the solid stone wall, but through the occupants' bedclothes as well. Hatshepsut and Senenmut - the pharaoh's Keeper of the Palace and her daughter's tutor - were making vigorous and passionate love!

What's going on? she asks herself, in need of some fresh air. Bo ventures up the long colonnade of the palace and out into the night.

She doesn't know how she arrived at this grand temple, its pillars of gargantuan proportions. Furthermore, as if she is expected, a tall, lean young man with a beautifully chiselled face, a face that bears supreme intelligence, greets her. His powerful radiance complements his kindly demeanour.

'Welcome. My name is Issa,' he says, smiling and bowing his head at her. Self-consciously Bo tightens the sash around the overdress of her nightclothes that she realises she is still wearing. She bows her head in return and introduces herself, following him inside, relieved to find that her x-ray vision has disappeared. She would not have lived it down - the embarrassment of seeing through the clothing of this fine, innocent gentleman. Did she just see him smile? Issa leads her into the

antechamber and politely asks her to wait. Bo is left alone for a few minutes, giving her an opportunity to take in her surroundings. Curious, she looks around, and becomes captivated by the striking engraved wall art. She sees a pair of gilded lion statues. She goes up to one of the statues and brushes her fingers over the lion's head when Issa walks back into the room, surprising her.

'The High Priest will see you now,' he says to her.

High Priest? Bo thinks, mortified. She can't believe she is about to see an ancient Egyptian high priest - in her nightgown!

Issa catches her glimpsing worriedly at her nightclothes and smiles. 'Do not be anxious, for he will not see the garments that you wear. He will only see your inner being. It is your inner essence that interests him.'

Bo feels somewhat reassured. Then a disconcerting thought crosses her mind. *What if my clothes are transparent to this gorgeous man!*

She is lead into the priest's chamber. The priest stands before her in a silken golden robe and matching golden sandals.

Not unlike my nightshirt, Bo muses, feeling more at ease.

Issa introduces him as Imhotep, the High Priest of Amun. The priest doesn't say anything to her and Bo wonders if she is supposed to speak first. Unsure of how to greet him, she does a deep bow. During her bow it dawns on her that this temple bears the same name as the Temple of Amun on Jovian where her sisters are detained.

This is the ancient Temple of Amun! The coincidence surprises her, and also that she comprehends that she has somehow walked the two and a half kilometres stretch north of the palace in the space of a second.

In my nightie.

Bo straightens up to face the High Priest of Amun. His expression is one as if he is reading her thoughts, yet his eyes smile at her like a proud father. His deep, dark blue eyes appear bottomless, piercing her right through to the backs of hers and looking deep into her soul. At first she finds this unnerving, then suddenly feels this man's love go right through her, uplifting her, and she finds herself wavering on her feet. Bo needs to support herself and grabs hold of the nearest thing - a bronze-coloured staff that has magically appeared at her side.

'Welcome, my child,' the priest utters, and Bo smiles weakly at him.

'There is a reason for which you have come here. There is a great purpose that I have for you and your identical sisters, but for you to understand this reason I shall firstly enlighten you of who we are.' With that he motions his hands sideways, gesturing the temple's inhabitants.

Bo is taken aback. *How does he know about the others?*

'On earth as it is today, the people of its lands live in a three-dimensional world. Here in the Temple of Amun we live in divine harmony. I shall explain the differences between our temple-dwellers, initiates as we call them, and the peoples of Egypt that live in your world of today. We are a notably different race of people. We are teachers of a higher race, made up of the nine entities of Ren, Ab, Akhu, Khaibit, Ka, Ba, Khat, Sahu and Sekhem. We teach our initiates to learn and master their

consciousness of the nine entities so that they may achieve the highest plane of divinity - the Seventh Plane.'

The High Priest stops talking, Bo suspects, for a reaction. Although somewhat sceptical, she finds herself fascinated by what he is telling her. He carries on with his disclosure.

'As teachers of the higher race we are wholly different in physical appearance, as you may well have noticed. We have lengthened skulls, ones that are noticeable beneath our head garments.' Bo had, indeed, noticed Issa's, the fine-looking man who had greeted her, noticed how his head extended upwards slightly, as does the priest's.

Imhotep stares at her intensely. *Oh my goodness, those eyes are so piercing!* Bo observes, blanching. This man reads her like a book.

'We are conscious on a different plane. We do not have any physical aspirations or self-interested dispositions. And as teachers of the higher race we are androgynous beings who dwell in earthly bodies,' the High Priest reveals. On hearing this Bo is mixed between doubt and disappointment about Issa, and then immediately feels ashamed for even thinking about him. The priest notices, but carries on.

'As I mentioned,' he says, 'our physical appearance is different. Our forehead is not rounded like persons of the earth. Our brain is finely tuned in with consciousness on a higher plane. Our entire lives are based on our inner being, love, and selflessness. The philosophy of Buddhism is the closest to our concept of existence, although in Buddhism there is a misunderstanding of the everlasting legitimacy of the soul.'

Even if sceptical about their being androgynous beings, Bo is aware of what the priest is saying; she understands Christianity and Buddhism, but surely she hasn't come here to be lectured.

He looks again at her with his impenetrable gaze, and carries on speaking. 'You too possess a freedom of consciousness, recognised by your extrasensory ability. This is why you may travel at your will, why you have been able to physically visit places under various circumstances such as your trip to save a little girl from being murdered, and in Jamila's experience, the court case regarding the young woman discovered to be a chimera. In these cases you and your sisters have put yourselves in situations by a device known to you as a mshai. When your abilities are fully developed you shall be able to travel without the aid of your device. You are presently on a plane that is higher than earthly persons. However, your development of these abilities is still in its infancy. You have not yet reached the level where you will enjoy the freedom of consciousness that will ascertain the vital link to your eternal being.'

This completely bowls her over, gaping at the High Priest's words. *How on earth would he know their movements when he is not even in the twenty-first century!*

Imhotep folds his hands in front of him with his head bowed. He seems to be taking a minute to think. He then looks up at her in a fatherly-like manner. 'Earthly people live in time and space. They live out their days on the earthly plane, and for the most, die within the hundred-year period. Teachers of the higher race such as Issa and myself dwell in earthly bodies, but we also enjoy the freedom of time and space. We may move our consciousness to be in the past, in the present, or in the future. We may even be in the past, the present and the future all at the same time. You see, as teachers of the higher race we are omnipresent.'

Bo cannot hide her astonishment. *If this man is for real, she's just met another Jesus!* She then comprehends something else. *Of course! Jesus was a teacher of the higher race!*

Imhotep lowers his eyes. 'Jesus Christ was more than purely another teacher of the higher race. As I must remind you, you are in a period of time before the birth of Christ, but I shall explain as if speaking in your time. God passed through human stages, manifesting Himself only three times. They were born in the same period, as *one Christ entity*. Each of these men was exceptionally psychically gifted. Each of them knew the task they were required to perform, and they carried this out enthusiastically, communicating psychically with each other at all times. One of these men was known as John the Baptist, the another was, of course, Jesus, and the third I will let you know a little later on.'

The High Priest goes on to say something astonishing. 'We do, however, prefer not to refer to God as God, but as *The Dominant Ka*, and neither is It male nor female. The Dominant Ka is the *primary energy gestalt*. I will also offer an explanation for this in good time.'

These are fascinating revelations! Bo is left wanting to know right now, but tells herself she must be respectful of the priest's wishes.

Imhotep looks at her in a compelling manner, carrying on with the issue at hand. 'In the temple here we meditate not only in worship. We also teach our initiates the four secret laws - the Laws of Motion, the Laws of Consciousness, the Laws of Matter, and the Laws of Nature. And using them under the divine control of The Dominant Ka we have power over nature with all of Its great forces. It is with this pure energy that allows us to support the earthly inhabitants of our country.

'With Its divine control we do not need to earn a living with demanding, physical work as others do. Instead, we put the forces of nature to work. It is in this manner that we helped build the great pyramids of Egypt. Yes, they were built with simple manpower, but the workers did not have to suffer.'

This man is disclosing to me the world's greatest mystery! Bo deems, absolutely stunned. She wants the priest to tell her *everything*. He smiles knowingly but appears in no hurry to give her any further details, and carries on with his discourse.

'Sadly, the human race has become money-orientated. So much so that the higher race is greatly reduced. Even in this time of 1495BC our pharaohs have become in a world of their own. Pharaoh Hatshepsut has, regrettably, followed the earthly ways of her father, Pharaoh Thutmose the First; concentrating mainly on business and trade, hence our great country has become overly materialistic.

'In the Third Dynasty, however, before leaving the earth, my brothers of the higher race implanted their special powers in the peoples of the earth. To do so they married daughters of earthly parents and lived out their days alongside their earthly wives. This higher race of men, together with the daughters of earthly parents, produced a lineage of a high level of spiritually and psychically gifted children, and which eventually webbed into various other races of people. This lineage of spiritually created energy progressed down through the ages and into your world of today. As I said earlier, a greater percentage of the human race has developed materially and selfishly, leaving the people of the higher race an endangered minority.' The High Priest takes a moment, letting Bo absorb everything.

'There are over two billion people in your world today that claim to live on a spiritually aware level, and indeed some are. These are people who are on the fourth plane of divinity. Regrettably

however, amidst these devout holy leaders there are also wolves in sheep's clothing, and who have caused bloodshed in the name of their religions. It is but a smokescreen for political gain; they conduct their business behind the shield of their religious convictions. It is, regrettably, their religious ideology that is at the root of global conflict.' Bo definitely agrees with him in *that* regard.

'On the sixth plane there are people who radiate divine universal love. They have lifted their perception out of the world of possessions and into the plane of a divine source. They draw on this source and present this energy as intuition.'

The High Priest pauses again before continuing. 'There are a number of men and women whom are on the sixth plane of divinity, people whose lineage yields from the higher race, and whose spiritual and psychic powers are real. They exhibit themselves with perfect consciousness and exude creative forces with those of whom they come into contact. It is only these persons who are able to radiate such creative power. There is now an urgent need of an infusion of this high level of consciousness into humankind, before the essential pure energy radiating from within them withdraws and leaves the human race altogether.'

As the High Priest continues to speak, his expression turns grave. 'The people in your world of today have an awareness of only themselves; individuals who have an avid greed for wealth. Some are narcissistic governors. They are self-absorbed and crave for power, and bring about wars that lead to nothing but destitution and wretchedness. There are countries that have been fighting each other for hundreds of years. Some heads of state such as Adolf Hitler have used their intellect for madness, committing legalised murder of the masses. These leaders stay within the security of their homelands whilst they send their finest young men and women off to war, forcing these young people to fight against the enemy against all their human instincts, and likewise the young people of the enemy are being forced to fight against them. As long as every country continues to fight for gain and greed, there will be no peace. As long as one person causes bloodshed for the sake of peace, you will have war. If every man and woman shunned their government's command and refused to go to war, then and only then will you have world peace. Sadly, this will not happen for many years to come. Nevertheless, ultimately it will, when there is a global shift in consciousness. It will be only then that every human being will change, individually and en masse.'

Bo becomes less attentive while Imhotep lectures on about wars, and wonders what it has to do with her. She is, though, very interested in these divine planes and curious as to why he has said nothing about the fifth plane. Also, she can't stop thinking about Issa, even if he is out of her reach. But at present she is being addressed by this highly respected holy man, a man who implies that he is akin to *The Messiah*, and she must pay him due respect.

Imhotep again glances at her in a most penetrating way. Bo becomes conscious he is reading her mind and is immediately ashamed of herself. But instead of looking down his nose at her he awards her affection. He moves forward and takes hold of her hands. Bo is instantly filled with his divine power and feels herself wavering again, but this time, with his hands still clasped onto hers, she is held firm, and silently thanks him for that.

Not bad for an old fella, she muses.

The High Priest leads her to a chair with an elaborately decorated and curved seat and sits her down, taking a seat that has been positioned in front of hers. Again, he looks at her in a fatherly-like manner. 'You and your sisters are Starseeds of ancient Egyptian royalty, and thus you are inheritors of a high level of consciousness. This level of consciousness, indeed, is in each human being, but

more often than not lays dormant, for it is only the choice of the self to connect to higher planes. Let me explain.

‘For people who choose a higher level of consciousness, for most the highest level is the fourth plane. The level of consciousness that you and your sisters possess, on the other hand, is the fifth plane. Your intellect is that of a genius, coupled with your extrasensory abilities.’ Imhotep looks at her kindly and smiles. ‘Do you understand what I am saying my child, why I am explaining to you the shortcomings of humanity and the creative powers of the higher race?’

Bo now realises why he left out the fifth plane. She also becomes conscious that the High Priest has stopped speaking, and is staring at her with those eyes again. Suddenly it becomes crystal clear to her. She and her sisters must each take a husband who is progeny from the men of the higher race! Imhotep smiles and nods at her. She comprehends that she must return to the twenty-first century and seek out a husband even though she’d like nothing better than to stay back here and procreate with Issa.

‘How do we find them Your Holiness?’ she blurts, trying to mask her impure thoughts from being mind-read by this great man of the cloth. At the same time she tells herself she must keep bearing in mind that he *can*.

‘The answer to your question will be relayed via the spirit of Ka, the Egyptian Sun god Ra, and the soul of Ba.’

The Light of Ra, Bo realises.

Imhotep smiles warmly. ‘Yes, my child.’ Bo returns his smile and nods her head in respect. She thanks him sincerely. It is then that she remembers something, and gapes up at Imhotep.

Sobek’s words: ‘You will receive profound knowledge from an ancient Egyptian High Priest. He will guide you to reach the Truth of Creation.’

Bo is speechless.

The High Priest continues. ‘The Light of Ra contains records of past and future lives, records of whose lives were repeated because they failed to reach divine unity during their first incarnation. Your calling is to become one with the higher race, divine teachers who are incarnated on the earthly plane to help others develop their consciousness up to the level of the Seventh Plane. You will work alongside your husband, leading the way to bring forth the implementation of a new human race.’

In drawing to her attention that the High Priest is preparing to conclude his meeting, he gets to his feet. Bo follows suit, hesitating as she wonders about the timeline for this occurrence.

Imhotep takes her hands in his. ‘You will soon know.’

‘Sinestu-ipini-itxaro-ahalguzti,’ he blesses her.

Bo returns his blessing with a courteous bow, and leaves the temple. In his wake, waves of divine power cast over her, making her dizzy again. Bo closes her eyes. She sees symbols and images in her head; a message that she comprehends, telling her it will not be in her present lifetime that she meets the person Imhotep refers to, and neither will it be in her next.

It is morning. Bo wakes up feeling extremely revitalised. *Was it a dream?* She needs to find out. She washes and dresses quickly, and takes the same route to the temple as she did the previous night, except this time it is daylight and she goes on foot. It takes her fifteen minutes to arrive at the beautifully inscribed, soaring colonnades of the Temple of Amun. The person that greets her this time, though, is not Issa, nor does this man know of him. Bo's heart sinks.

'May I see Imhotep, the High Priest?' she asks him in his native tongue. The short, plump gatekeeper looks at her quizzically. The high priest's name, he tells her, is not Imhotep.

'It is Hapuseneb,' he says flatly.

Bo is bitterly disappointed, knowing that it must have been a dream after all. It amazes her, though, at the clarity of the dream, the detailed dialogue of the High Priest together with the emotions she felt. Bo stands there mulling it over, until the gatekeeper speaks again, informing her in his language of something astounding.

'Imhotep, ma'am, was a high priest of the Sun god Ra, and who served under the Third Dynasty king, King Djoser. He was also Egypt's first architect and engineer,' he adds.

Third Dynasty? But this is the eighteenth dynasty.

The man at the gate stares at her, deadpan. She thanks him and heads back to the palace.

Bo sits on her straw bed deliberating it. *It can't have been a dream - it seemed so real!*

Over the next few days Bo observes everyone going about their business. The lovely ambience that she felt that day in the temple was totally different from the atmosphere at the palace. The people - Hatshepsut's people - when she really thinks about it, are not that far removed from people living on earth today. Their culture is unique, but their manner, ambitions and desires are pretty much the same. Hatshepsut has the drive of a modern businesswoman, and even though she deals with produce, some of which is unheard of today, the methods by which she trades is still in force; the bartering system that is customary here in 1495BCE Egypt is still apparent in the world of business today.

No, she concludes, it's not the same environment here at the palace than in the temple that day. Nor did she experience the same vibes in the temple when she'd asked Hatshepsut to take her back to it a few days afterwards. Hatshepsut had introduced her to the High Priest Hapuseneb, who gave off none of the same saintly aura as Bo had experienced with Imhotep.

It mystifies her for days and keeps her awake at night. Bo becomes so exhausted from lack of sleep that she excuses herself straight after the day's midday meal. She falls into bed and drops off into a deep sleep.

Imhotep appears in her dreams and Bo is pleased to see him again, even though this time she is aware she is only dreaming. He tells her that he will be here for her always, and that he is present everywhere. His tasks, he tells her, keep him busy nonetheless, helping departed lost souls encircling the earth, people who have died and are in a state of limbo, stuck in the vortex between the earthly plane and the afterlife; roaming for days, months, sometimes for hundreds of years, before he and other entities of the higher race find them and guide them through.

He speaks to Bo so clearly it is as if she is awake and sitting across from him in the temple again. 'I have made known to you the Laws of Consciousness. I will make another visit before long, and will make known to you another of the four secret laws.'

She nearly cannot contain herself. Even Hatshepsut is puzzled by Bo's sudden change in character. It is as if she is on a constant high. The pharaoh takes Bo aside and asks if she has become acquainted with the *khush-khush* that had been circulating at the Festival of Heb-Sed. To Bo, this confirms that drugs *were* being passed around at Hatshepsut's jubilee. With a little more prompting the pharaoh discloses to her that as well as opium there was also lotus and cannabis flowing amongst the partygoers.

'No,' Bo says emphatically, answering her sister's question. 'I don't do drugs. And you didn't either, as Cecille.' She lets Hatshepsut know that she is really disappointed in her, disappointed that a queen of Egypt would condone such behaviour. Bo, in fact, can't believe that drugs are even known about in this era, and that ancient Egyptian royalty consume it!

Hatshepsut looks at her sister in a sideways glance, the corners of her mouth turning up slightly. 'Did you try the cocktail in the large ochre-coloured basin, the one with the lotus flower heads floating in it? Perhaps you may have tried one of the flowers?'

'No, I didn't,' Bo replies frankly, thankful.

'Did you drink any of the cocktail from the blue faience basin?' Hatshepsut presses. Bo becomes anxious and has to rack her brain. She remembers accepting a vessel of wine and sipping at it but didn't like its after-taste, and to her relief had put the goblet down.

'What was in it?' she asks cautiously.

'Cretic wine. A drink made from opium and herbs. I suppose I may have fairly indulged in it myself,' Hatshepsut replies, sniggering a little and averting her eyes.

You think? Bo says to herself. She is very relieved that she didn't consume any narcotic drink. Nor does she need to, she thinks. Stimulants generated from plants and fruits have no place for her, she regards, when she has experienced the incredible sensations given off by Imhotep.

The after-effects are way better. Bo keeps her thoughts to herself.

'Come, sister, let us have Koshary,' Hatshepsut says. Bo welcomes a cup of the delicate-tasting tea. She sweetens it with half a spoon of cane sugar and sips at it, savouring the unusual yet pleasant flavour. It affords her time to turn over in her mind why she is still here.

A few nights afterwards Bo falls asleep listening to the 'urnk, urnk' calls of the Ibis birds she hears fossicking about outside in the dark. She can't help but still be amazed at how much greenery there actually grows in a country that has always been known as an arid region. Here, in the period of 1495BCE, palm trees adorn the palace grounds and gardens flourish, drenched in colour and alive with honeybees. The reedy, shallow lake near the palace where the Ibis graze is also home to ducks and geese that Bo sometimes hears quacking and honking during the day.

Bo is prompted out of her slumber by the calling of her name. Although not actually heard beyond her own conscious-ness it nevertheless is a request for her to go again to the temple. The voice, she recognises, is Imhotep's. Bo dresses quickly and scurries out into the night, towards the temple. Only it isn't nighttime any more. The daylight surprises her. There, meeting her at the temple gates is Issa, and Bo can barely conceal her delight.

Stop yearning for what you can't have, she scolds herself. Bo reminds herself that this beautiful man is only here for God. *Or rather, The Dominant Ka*. And yet, she can't help her feelings for him. This, she knows, she must overcome.

Once again it appears as if he is waiting for her. Issa welcomes her and takes her to see the High Priest.

'My child, thank you for coming,' Imhotep says. 'I wish you to be shown something. I have arranged for Issa to take you on a little journey.'

Bo's heart skips a beat but keeps her cool. She is determined to preserve her self-respect and not be obsessed with such futile, impulsive desires. Together with Issa she goes outside to an area behind the temple. There, awaiting them is a chariot, similar to the ones she has already travelled in but this one, much to Bo's astonishment, is harnessed to two lions. Issa sees her surprised expression and assures her not to be concerned.

'Come, these are my friends, they will not harm you. This is Manu,' he introduces, tousling the lion's red mane, 'and this one is Bakhu.' The physically powerful animals shove him lightly, competing with each other like children vying for attention. Bo is amazed at how good-natured they are with him. Issa explains in detail how sensitive lions are to human character, and how they can tell the good apart from the merciless.

'They have such fine nerves and cannot tolerate the energy waves that emit from people of low moral fibre. Lions sense, and even smell the ignorant, the selfish and the greedy, and show aggression towards them. Just as we see truth in people with our inner sight, lions are sensitive too with this insight; they have supersensitive nerve centres. Although they do not have the intellect of human beings, on the animal scale they are on the highest plane of consciousness. They know immediately if a man approaching them has a low behavioural mind-set and self-absorbed with his own desires. In time, these creatures will move away from self-centred humans altogether and will become feral, as is the norm in your world of today. They will be looked upon as dangerous animals. This is because they *will* be dangerous and will not be able to be approached. The lion will see a poacher from a distance and will wrinkle its nose at the foul scent of his ill will. In the same way as the poacher views the animal for its hide in return for riches, the lion views him as the enemy who is only there to take its life, and will act in self-defence. As time goes on, the offspring are taught by their mothers that humans are to be regarded as prey, and thus it has become instilled in their nature.'

He knows the mentality of these magnificent beasts so profoundly, Bo marvels.

With Issa's encouragement Bo gingerly puts out her hand to pat Bakhu, who immediately lowers his head and nudges at her palm as if he were a domesticated house cat. Once Issa is satisfied that the lions have gotten to know that Bo conveys good energy he leads her to the chariot, advising her to take hold of the two wooden rails. Nervous and excited, Bo prepares herself. The pair stand, with Issa holding the reins and Bo directly behind him.

They start off quietly, then into a gentle run. The ground is not flat and Bo strives to keep her balance as the chariot bounces around. She feels every jolt through her feet and bends her knees, trying to anticipate the bumps. Issa, on the other hand, stands unaided, holding onto the reins. Bo can't understand how he can keep his balance so well. She glances at his feet; they are doing little dances to counteract the uneven terrain. What's more, he doesn't appear to be pulling on or guiding the reins at all. It is as if the lions intuitively know where their master wants them to go.

He has mind control over these powerful animals! Bo comprehends, impressed.

Issa does a little flick, ever so subtle, and the lions increase their stride, advancing into a powerful run. This alarms Bo at first, and then she begins to enjoy it. She laughs at her awkwardness and Issa laughs along with her.

'How do you do it?' she shouts at him. She can't believe the freedom she feels, the exhilaration of the ride, the adrenaline-rush of being on such a natural high. They cover a lot of ground, the lions appearing to have never-ending energy. They must have travelled a wide area, Bo thinks, going around in a full circle before they draw near the palace grounds again. The ride is over all too soon and she thanks Issa for an incredible afternoon.

As Bo walks back through the colonnades of the palace she sees an unusual vision. It is like she is viewing her surroundings from beneath the surface of water. It is only momentary, because when she takes another step everything reverts back to normal. Bo composes herself and goes looking for Hatshepsut to tell her about her day. Hatshepsut's response is not what Bo had expected. After telling her about the ride with the lions Hatshepsut laughs at her.

'Are you sure you're not partaking in any khush-khush? Perhaps some tea of the blue lotus?' Hatshepsut jokes. This irks her. Bo turns and heads back to the temple, going through to the back where Issa had previously taken her, where the chariots had been stationed for their ride. The compound is completely different. Any presence of activity of a lions' court is gone. She sees instead a colourful, cultivated garden being tended to by the inhabitants of the temple.

Confused by her state of affairs, Bo decides to walk down to the lake to collect her thoughts, where it is lovely and quiet. She crouches on her heels, focussing on the ripples running across the lake caused by a gentle easterly breeze. She lets out an audible sigh of recognition as it suddenly dawns on her that she has, without realising it, been passing back and forth between the Third and Eighteenth Dynasties.

Her head buzzes. She has learnt and experienced so much already from Imhotep and Issa, and yet there appears to be so much more to learn. Part of her wants to return home and get back to normality. She misses Megan and the others, and feels a pang of guilt. She knows that Megan will still be racked with grief over Cecille, that she will be aching for her clones who are being held captive on Jovian. Bo appreciates she has been gone far too long, and knows that Megan will be wondering if she is dead as well.

From her spot by the lake Bo concentrates hard, focussing on her ability to send Megan a message of love, reassuring her that she is okay, and that she will be home soon.

A glinting in the distance catches her eye. It derives from the Great Pyramid. Bo stands up to get a better look and is surprised at how shiny its eastern side appears. She has been at the lake for hours now and it is well after sunset. A full moon glows in the night sky, creating a clear view of the pyramid and date palms on the other side of the lake. Bo gasps in awe of it, astounded by its ethereal magnificence. It's exterior is entirely different to when she had taken Jack and her sisters to see it. On that visit the Great Pyramid exposed its raw block-work, the underlying core structure that was once sheathed in shiny casing stones. Tonight she sees it in its original glory; a beautiful jewel in its intact state, the polished white tiles so shiny that they reflect the light of the moon, forming a gigantic, pyramidal mirror.

All of a sudden she sees a strike of lightning followed by a clap of thunder. The jagged, split-second streak of lightning appears to have come out from the top of the pyramid. Bo sees and hears another. Moments later she is drenched in heavy rain and hurries back to the palace, wondering all the while how it could've happened on such a clear, moonlit night.

Instead of entering the doors of the palace, however, Bo finds that she is walking through the opening of the Great Pyramid! She sees the outline of two men; one holding a staff. They appear to be waiting for her. To her delight it is Issa and Imhotep.

'Come in my child,' Imhotep says. 'I pledged that I would make known to you the secrets of the Great Pyramid.'

As Bo enters through the heavy stone doorway she feels her body tingling, not brought about by emotion, but physically. Also, her clothes that a moment ago had been clinging to her skin now drape lightly on her body, completely dry.

She senses a huge revelation will be made known to her tonight.

Bo shivers, not from the cold but from excitement and anticipation, and from actually being inside the Great Pyramid in its original form.

Issa tells her that they are to trek down the low-ceiling passageway. She feels the onset of claustrophobia, when a green phosphorescent light appears from nowhere, lighting up the steep descending pathway, easing her concern. Stooped in single file they begin their tramp, Imhotep at the fore, Bo in the middle and Issa at the back. Bo braces herself on the walls of the narrow pathway as she steps down into the bowels of the pyramid, wondering all the while why the entry has been built so low. Gradually she becomes aware of a strange feeling that seems to be getting stronger the further she journeys in. The sensation is ethereal, she determines. Energy waves pass back and forth over her body like oscillating, invisible hula-hoops. She then encounters a bizarre sensation of her body enlarging, though not physically. She stops in her tracks and crouches, taking a moment to steady herself and even out her breathing. Imhotep and Issa wait for her, seemingly aware of her situation. Issa gently places his hand on her back between the shoulder blades, his touch sending an even stronger wave of energy throughout her body. She is moved by the contact, but dares not to show it.

The downhill path grows longer and steeper, but it is not long before they come to another pathway that adjoins the descending passageway, branching in an opposite direction and leading sharply upwards. Imhotep takes the first step up onto the ascending pathway and turns back to help Bo

undertake the first, rather high step. As she does so, she looks at the passageway she has just stepped off from and sees it disappearing into the depths of blackness. She wonders where it goes to.

‘We shall journey there for what I will need to show you at a later stage,’ the High Priest says to her, following her gaze.

The mysterious energy-wave has given her a boost of energy and she climbs the steps of the low-ceiling alleyway with ease. In a short time they arrive at another junction. This time they leave the ascending pathway and step onto a level passageway. Ahead of them, at the end of the low-ceiling corridor, a streak of light slices through a shaft, naturally illuminating their path. They make their way to the end and, watching her footing, Bo steps down into a larger room with a higher ceiling. She stretches her back, pleased to be able to stand upright. She looks up to the sound of the High Priest’s voice and the light momentarily blinds her.

‘This, my child, is one of the two chambers that we work from. It is known in your world of today as the Queen’s Chamber. From the forces of energy that we induce from this chamber we can regulate the weather, making clear blue skies or, when necessary, clouds and rain. Tonight, as you have already been subjected to, we caused it to rain, creating thunder and lightning. The rain permits our crops to grow and gives us water for drinking and bathing, allowing our people to live happily and healthily. If we did not bring about such weather our country would be a baked landscape.’

‘So *that* is why everywhere is so green,’ Bo thinks out loud. ‘But, how...’

‘Please...look to the sky. What do you see?’ Imhotep asks her. Bo cranes her neck up through a shaft on the southern side of the chamber, looking straight into the light that surprisingly no longer blinds her. The beam emits straight from a star south of the pyramid.

‘This star is called Sopdet. In your world of today it is known as Sirius. It is from this positive radiation, this luminous life force, that we amass energy into the instruments that we keep secret in this chamber. It is with these instruments of stored-up energy that we are able to control the forces of nature.’

From a red, highly polished granite box in the Queen’s Chamber the High Priest takes out some devices and shows them to her. Bo is outwardly baffled by the strange-looking pieces of equipment.

‘These tools are made from matter that originate from Sopdet. It is meteorite iron. They may look extraordinary to the human eye, but their performance under my control is quite remarkable,’ Imhotep explains, smiling at her. Bo is humbled by this great man of the cloth and the knowledge that he possesses. Another light, intense as the southern light, strikes through the northern shaft of the chamber. Imhotep moves towards it.

‘This light radiates from the northern pole star in the constellation of Draco, the Hippo as it is known by our people. It is also known as the soul of the goddess Opet, patron of childbirth and protector of all women and children. In your today’s world this star is known as Polaris in the constellation of Beta Ursor Minor,’ he points out. Bo is amazed how this man can be so clued-up on information that is three and a half thousand years down the track from him.

‘The northern star radiates negative energy,’ he continues, ‘vital energy to allow us to carry out our acts with the forces of nature.’

‘Come my child, for there is yet more to be seen,’ Imhotep advises her, leading her back to the junction of the passageways. From there they start to ascend again, entering what is known, Bo

understands, as the Grand Gallery. It forms a long, upwards stretch, but does not tire her. The steep, high-ceiling passageway is once again lit up by a phosphorescent green light, and at its topmost point Bo sees another bright shaft of light beaming into a chamber.

The King's Chamber, she realises. She recalls seeing it on a website of the Great Pyramid of Giza. All of this - her being here at this moment in time - seems so surreal, she thinks. She hadn't thought in a million years that she would actually be exploring the pyramid in its primordial form, first-hand.

On entering the king's antechamber Bo is flooded in bright light that stems from the northern side of the chamber.

'This light that you see,' Imhotep informs her, 'is emitting negative radiation from the pole star Thuban, also in the constellation of Draco.'

She follows the High Priest into the chamber, gaping at the immense size of it. Overhead she sees the large stone girder she had read about: *'Five layers of 70-ton stone beams covers the King's chamber, each one the equivalent weight of a modern railroad locomotive.'*

'I just hope we don't have an earthquake while we're in here!' she exclaims, much to the amusement of the two men.

'This great pyramid has withstood many an earthquake,' Issa responds. 'And will withstand many more. The structural design of the pyramid is prepared for an event of this nature.'

Imhotep then points to the light that beams into the chamber's southern shaft. 'This is positive energy radiating from the celestial manifestation of Osiris, god of resurrection and rebirth,' he explains. The High Priest goes into great detail of what the god of resurrection and rebirth means to the people of Egypt. Bo listens, fascinated, absorbing everything Imhotep tells her. She then notices another highly polished red granite box, covered by a thick granite slab.

The King's sarcophagus, Bo determines. She remembers googling it.

'No, my child, not in these times' the High Priest says, reading her mind. 'In fact, contrary to what has been documented, it will not ever be used as a king's tomb. This receptacle is a medium. It is used when initiates of the temple are ready for their initiation. The procedure of preparing for initiation takes years to learn, and is carried out by the teachings in our temple. It is dangerous to those who are not ready for it,' he adds. 'It is only the initiates who have undergone strict and lengthy training who may be converted into the higher level of consciousness without suffering damage to their main nerve centres. Powerful vibrations can burn out the nerves if an initiate is unable to cope with the extreme currents flowing into his body, in which case the initiate will suffer severe cramping and die a painful death.'

'Oh my God!' Bo cries out. She is shocked that trying to reach the seventh plane of divinity can be so dangerous. The High Priest overlooks her blasphemous choice of words.

'If an initiate passes all the tests and the time comes for him, or her, to be initiated, he will be placed in this medium, and will have this granite slab pulled over his body, enclosing him inside. He will then consciously start to receive potent creative vibrations from the higher race. The initiate will receive and undergo these powerful forces whilst at the same time directing the creative vibrations into his nerve centres. In other words, fine-tuning his nerves to the higher frequencies. This is what initiates are trained in advance to do in the temple. Each higher vibration and higher frequency stimulates an exhilarating feeling of bliss. It is through his spinal column that the powerful vibrations will surge into, taking over all of his seven main nerve centres one by one, and he will go through a state of

awareness on each plane. When he becomes aware of each realm that he is currently in, he will be in tune with it, and so it becomes real to him. When he has proved that he is ready to enter the next level he will become conscious on *that* plane, and at the same time comprehending that he had only been dreaming on the plane below. But if he consciously remains in that realm of his dream he will not advance to the next or Seventh Plane, and will have to undergo all of them as actual events. His body will die here in this medium and he will become incarnate again; in fact in numerous reincarnations, in the human world for hundreds, possibly thousands of years, while he slowly advances from the lower level to which he has fallen. His lives will be repeated until he has sought and attained the highest state of consciousness. During this time on the earthly plane he may even recall, deep within his memory, fragments of events that he may repeat during this time. This is frequently recognised to some people as *déjà vu*,' Imhotep explains. Bo is blown away. She curses, this time, under her breath, mouthing her lips in silence.

'On the other hand,' the priest continues, 'if he advances to the Seventh Plane he will awaken in the consciousness of his self in a divine state that will be free of time and space. It is then that he becomes a being of the higher race, and will become omnipresent.

'When you are ready, you too will experience initiation into the higher race,' the High Priest adds. On hearing this Bo feels her blood turn cold. She doesn't want to know that she will be placed in this stone *coffin* no matter what eternal riches it may bring. She shudders at the thought of what could happen if she experiences the burnout he talks about. Imhotep looks at her knowingly. He places his palm on her forehead and Bo instantly feels divine energy infiltrate deep within her inner being.

'Do not be troubled, my child,' he reassures her. 'When you return to your world this receptacle will be nothing but a tourist attraction that many people will climb in and out of for their photographs. It will be a superfluous vessel. Moreover, you are to have many, many years on the earthly plane, living happily and peaceably within your home and within the love of a family unit before you are ready for initiation into the higher race. When you are ready, my dear, your heart will be willing.'

Bo is so relieved, yet still puzzled. 'But what will be my medium?'

'My answer to that will be forthcoming in a little while - you will see,' Imhotep states, smiling again.

Issa then takes over and starts explaining about some incidents of the future that will happen in the King's Chamber. 'There will be men of rank who will visit this chamber, and during their visit in private they will be enlightened of their destiny, men who have lived between our periods in time,' he states.

This makes Bo curious. 'Who were these men?'

'One visitation shall be made by Napoleon Bonaparte. Alone in this chamber he will position himself in this medium, and he will see his past and future lives. But he will not speak again of his experience; he will carry it to his grave in the knowledge that if he discloses it no one will believe him and he will be regarded as insane. Another person of prominence who will spend time alone in this room is Alexander the Great. He will be enlightened of his past lives, his existing life that will lead him to great distinction, and his future lives on the earthly plane before he too finally enters into the higher race.'

'What did he see?...I mean, what *does* he see,' Bo questions, trying get her head around the time-warp thing. Issa takes a few moments to answer.

'He sees himself conquering Greece, Persia, Egypt, Armenia, Mesopotamia right through to the far reaches of the Indian and Himalayan borders. He will become King of Macedonia and a pharaoh in Egypt. He foresees building a city in Egypt in which he will name after himself - the city of Alexandria.' Bo gazes at the red granite receptacle, in awe of the power it possesses.

Imhotep walks over to the southern shaft where the radiant beam of light silhouettes him. Bo perceives a beautiful aura surrounding him. Her eyes adjust to it, seeing it clearly. The High Priest holds a staff, the same staff, Bo deems, that magically appeared at her side on their first meeting at the temple. At the top end its shape is in a form of a 'T' with a little circle on top of it. He dislodges the top end of it and holds it by its circle.

'This,' he says, 'is called an Ankh, and is the key of the Nile symbolising life. The Key of Life.' As he says this, the Ankh emits an energy of its own. Bo is immediately intrigued.

'The Ankh has the power of transmitting radiation that is consistent with my plane of divine unity. According to my will, it can transmit untransformed radiations that it receives through these shafts that project positive and negative forces from the northern and southern stars. With my Key of Life I am able to dominate all forces of nature, thus I am able to either intensify them or diffuse them.' Imhotep then hands the Ankh to Bo. She takes it gingerly.

'Please, be my guest,' the High Priest says as he gestures towards the medium. Bo holds the staff like a wand and performs a little movement like Hermione Granger did in the Harry Potter movie. She giggles, embarrassed, as Imhotep gently takes the Ankh from her hand and turns it around so that she is holding it the other way. With his guidance Bo makes broad, sweeping movements over the medium, and to her surprise a rich, deep, resonating sound fills the chamber, a reverberation similar to a chord being played from a huge church pipe organ, only greatly intensified.

'Oh wow!' she cries, thrilled.

'This is the divine sound of celestial vibrations,' Issa informs her. 'The medium receives and retains these high frequencies and vibrations for the channelling of initiations.'

'Wow,' Bo says again with an audible emission of breath.

Imhotep smiles and takes the Ankh from her. 'This has worked for you this way because you are already on the fifth plane of divinity. As such, with the aid of my Key of Life you are able to convert your positive and selfless powers into positive creative forces.' Bo is over the moon that she carries such powers.

Imhotep's expression turns serious. 'The Ankh will radiate power that a human puts into it. If a man of ill intentions were to get possession of it, for instance, he will transmit his own negative radiations.'

Like Timos, she thinks apprehensively.

The High Priest once again reads her mind. 'Certainly. It is the negative energy from a man whose eyes have not yet been opened to his inner being. He may transmit this energy, possibly in a more powerful form, which as you may appreciate, can wreak havoc to mankind. This is precisely why we need keep our knowledge of the four secret laws known only to us.'

'Yes, absolutely!' Bo agrees, shuddering at the thought of Timos getting his filthy hands on it.

'In your world of today the melodic sounds you brought forth from this medium with my Key of Life will remain, though in a much weaker form. Instead of what you heard this night, the sightseer will only hear a sound of a gong if he were to strike it with a hard instrument.

'There is something now I must show you,' the High Priest continues. 'Please follow me.' He goes through into the antechamber and down the Grand Gallery. They come to the junction where the passageway of the Grand Gallery joins the pathway from where they first entered the pyramid, but instead of ascending it, the High Priest turns down into the deep dark stairway, the one that Bo had seen disappearing into blackness, and had wondered where it lead to.

Now I'll find out, she thinks with rising apprehension, the dark, foreboding and steep alleyway sending chills up her spine. Her concern is short-lived. As soon as Imhotep starts to descend, the passageway illuminates with the same green phosphorescent light that had guided them earlier. This time their journey proves lengthy. Bo is told that she is being lead to a subterranean chamber that houses the *Ark of the Covenant*. She is once again intrigued.

At the opening of the subterranean chamber Imhotep turns to caution her of something. 'The Ark of the Covenant is not merely a piece of equipment. It is a capacitor that produces an electric discharge of over five hundred volts. So it is here that I must warn you. An earthly being that has not yet become initiated into the higher race cannot touch it without instant electrocution.'

Another surprise! 'OK, got it,' Bo assures him, clear in her mind that she will surely be keeping her distance.

When they enter the chamber Bo sighs in awe. Before her stands an exquisite piece of art. Again, the overwhelming sensation of blessedness envelops her, this time with such a force that it sends her to the floor. Issa helps her up and holds onto her gently.

'Your heart is young, opening up afresh for divine radiation. With time you will be able to sustain this radiation,' he says to her kindly.

Bo thanks him and composes herself. Her attention becomes drawn again to the beautiful gold chest. Two gold cherubim sit atop it facing each other with their gaze cast downwards and their arms crossed over their chests, their wings spread upward and over, meeting at the tips. Two poles on either side of the chest thread through four gold rings, Bo observes, and assumes that their positioning must be so the ark can be carried.

This is unreal, Bo says to herself. She can't take her eyes off it. *It's like I'm in love with the Ark of the Covenant!*

Imhotep is speaking again. 'Creative energy from the ark is transmitted into my Key of Life. The Ankh is the Ark of the Covenant in portable form, though energy is not stored up in the Key of Life as it is in the ark. Radiation of the ark is a thousand times more powerful than that of the Ankh; hence creative and divine radiation is transmitted in a greatly reduced form.

'Contrary to what has been documented in your world of today,' the priest continues, 'this great house was not built as a king's tomb. It was built for several reasons; one being that it is used to house the ark and the other devices I have shown you, and another to insulate the ark and our secret instruments from the world outside. In addition, it acts as an insulator *for* the world outside, protecting the world against the mighty forces that are stored up in the ark and my instruments.' Engrossed, Bo listens quietly as the priest discloses the pyramid's legendary mystery in great detail.

'It is through the shafts of the pyramid in which we conduct out the forces of the Ark of the Covenant. The positive - the southern shaft, and the negative - the northern shaft, are aligned as such so that when positive and negative forces flow through them the equalisation of these forces and the generated vibrations from the ark cause flashes of lightning which is then followed by thunder, and hence bringing forth the blessed rain.

'The devices which I have shown to you this night are not in existence in your world of today. As I mentioned earlier, we cannot allow them to get into wrongful hands. Worldly people are not ready for our knowledge of the four laws, and will not be so for a very long time. When we so deem it, the Ark of the Covenant will be taken out of Egypt and into a secret location. Before my brothers of the higher race and I leave the earthly plane, we will destroy all the instruments in the pyramid by dematerialising them. We will then block the shafts and entryway while still inside the pyramid, and then we shall dematerialise ourselves.'

'Holy crap!' Bo exclaims in astonishment then claps her hands over her mouth, ashamed again of her potty-mouth.

She thinks about Issa. *What a waste.*

The High Priest carries on calmly. 'While the ark is in its secret location, its charge that it carries will be transmitted into a new medium that exists within the Sphinx, a medium that will evermore be re-energized by the celestial vibrations of the northern and southern stars of Osiris and Sopdet. In time, the location of the ark will be discovered and it will be carried about in various countries, but as a result of the transmission of its charge, the ark's energy will have by then expired.'

Bo is absolutely enthralled as it suddenly dawns on her what the priest is talking about. 'The Light of Ra,' she exclaims.

'Yes,' Imhotep confirms. 'It is the new medium.'

It all makes sense to her now. She feels humbled and honoured that the High Priest has only a minute ago disclosed to her the truth of the Great Pyramid, truth that belies its legendary documentation.

'Now, the answer to your question is simple, my dear,' he says, bringing her out of her thoughts. 'Your channelling to the higher race will be through the new medium.'

'Excellent!' is all Bo is able to say, unable to stop grinning. She suddenly feels exhilarated at the prospect of living eternally in divine unity with the higher race, instead of the usual forecast of simply growing old and dying.

Imhotep indicates to exit the subterranean chamber. 'You have had enough for tonight,' he declares. 'Tomorrow you will learn the laws of motion and matter. You will learn the secret connected with the conversion of force into matter and of matter into force.'

Bo can hardly wait.