

# The Crossing

Be larger than life, Manifest your destiny!



James Bowers Johnson



Also by James Johnson

*The End of Justice*

*The Ledge*

*The Rebutted Presumption*

*Splintered to Federal Folly*

*Into The Deep*



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*For Emma, My “Little Package” and philosopher*

*Special dedication to Pim, a warrior and a Paraguayan  
treasure*

*The world is full of cowards who point to the warrior  
and say, "What a fool!"*



# Preface

What does it mean to *be*? If life is to *be* lived, we must ask how and to what end? Great men and women have transformed their lives to achieve a purpose—purpose that manifested a destiny. They became testaments to those who do not know how to be or will not be into a more meaningful context.

Regrettably, many do not consider that they either have no purpose or are *being* contrary to what is good, true, and just. Rather, they are being selfish, sinister, and petty. This is an important distinction. Whether it is realized or not, to *be* within the micro or smallness of life, invariably, leads to defeat.

The antithesis is to be within the macro—the large—and to seek what is good, true, and just. This is accomplished by being extraordinary. This is no easy endeavor. To achieve a noble end, our state of *being* is vital. Consider an illustration. A tree upon a mountain that is pummelled by violent storms must be what it is until it is either toppled or dies. It must be strong. It must be a tree.

Is humanity any different? One may be heroic through the most trying of times; yet, he may eventually capitulate and seek refuge within the micro. Is he being when he chooses to acquiesce? Is he being if he fails to enter the fray? Yes, he is being fearful and cowardly. He does not manifest a life of purposeful distinction. Why? He does not leave the micro for the macro.

The contrast should be apparent. If we are being small or unable or unwilling to be large in any circumstance, we will not

be virtuous with purpose and transform into possibility. We fall short of the threshold of a lone tree weathering the harsh elements. Is this a ridiculous observation? After all, a tree must be a tree. Well, this is exactly the point. What is your purpose?

If you have a purpose, do you have the will to achieve it? Will you endure what is arduous in order to prevail? To what extent is your will dependent upon your mind and heart? If you are unable to answer these questions, is there a likelihood that you gravitate to or exist within the micro?

The Crossing explains how and why people are in and remain within the micro and, conversely, how and why people may be into the macro. This is what the main character learns. Emma meets an old man she refers to as “**Sabio**”, which means “**wise**” in Spanish. Sabio refers to Emma by the endearing expression, “**Mariposa**”.

When Mariposa asks Sabio a defining query, he takes her on a journey into the wisdom of the ages. Her perspective about life is profoundly altered. She learns how to avoid being small and how to be centered with purpose. She learns how to cross into destiny. For Mariposa, this is the end game, to *be* with distinction.

Mariposa comes to appreciate that the greatness of a Nelson Mandela or Mother Teresa is not without sacrifice. She learns that such iconoclasts are few, if only because few are willing to be sacrificial. If we are unwilling to be with purpose into the macro, regardless of the circumstances, are we not being ordinary and small?

We have a noble aim: to be with purpose, to be larger than life, and cross into destiny with distinction.

To your purpose and possibility,  
James Bowers Johnson

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## THE CROSSING

## The Probe



In a village at the base of Mount Cerro Tres Kandú, Paraguay, Emma watched children play. She was excited to be in a foreign country. She observed everything.

Nearly hidden from view, to the far right of the joyful scene,

Emma saw an old sign with the word: DESTINY.

Intrigued, Emma walked to it and, upon inspection, noticed a hand-scrolled arrow.

When she looked in its direction, a boy approached and said in his best English, “**Sign** mean nothing. Ancients no share wisdom. They **gone**.” He smiled and motioned for Emma to play with them.

Emma thought for a moment. She was drawn to the path and wanted to follow it.

With a final glance at the boy, Emma made a choice and stepped into the dark foliage.

Guided by the few signs that remained, Emma was emboldened. “**What** will I **find**?” she asked herself. She imagined as if she were on a treasure hunt.

As the hours passed and the sun settled in the darkening sky, the temperature dropped and long shadows lunged into the forest. All appeared ominous. Emma doubted the wisdom of her choice.

When she neared the peak of Cerro Tres Kandú, she saw a flickering light. “**Is** it **real**?” she wondered. Emma stopped and listened. She was scared. Amidst the eerie noises of the night, she summoned the will to proceed.

Silently, Emma circled to the right, and, with no further trace of a path, she traversed a shallow stream. With the use of a vine, she pulled herself over the crest of the bank and saw the unimaginable.

To the left, an old man sat upon a straw mat in front of a lighted candle. As the flame danced in the night breeze, the man raised his arms and drew his hands toward his face. Emma was fixated; she did not dare move.

Motionless for what seemed like minutes, Emma was startled when she heard, “**You are late.**”

Emma hoped someone else was near. She was alarmed at the idea that the old man had spoken to her. Alas, she saw no one.

Emma cleared her throat and asked boldly, “**How** am I late if you are not supposed to be **here?**” She added, “**The** villagers said the ancients are gone and no longer share **wisdom.**”

Clothed in a white robe, the old man opened his eyes. With a deep gaze, he replied with a seriousness befitting **Emma’s** query, “**Those** in disbelief never **arrive.**”

The old man stood and gestured for Emma to follow him to a hut with a hammock that swung ever so slightly. “**Sleep** well, brave one. Your journey begins early in the **morning.**”

Emma obediently and silently entered the crude shelter and lay down for a restful night. As she closed her eyes, she thought of the sign which pointed to Destiny and whispered, “**One** must believe to **arrive.**”

In the morning, a shaft of sunlight lanced the stick-built structure and caressed **Emma’s** eyes. She was jarred back to consciousness. “**Where** is **he?**” she thought.

In the stillness of the morning, Emma found the man sitting with his legs crossed in front of the candle. He was exactly as the previous night.

The man beckoned Emma to a mat opposite him. She trusted him implicitly. She was excited. Emma felt as if she were going over a waterfall; yet, she was as calm as rowing across a pond on a windless day.

The old man raised his hand and extended an invitation few

receive. “**You** may ask one question, only one. Your question may lead to the wisdom of the ages, which will precipitate a life-long conversation, or it will be answered with the brevity it was posed. Take your time. Eternity is never **rushed.**”

Emma was sobered by his words and the gravity of her pending query. She hoped for a grand conversation and to learn the wisdom of the ages. The prospect of trekking down Cerro Tres Kandu within minutes humbled her.

Emma thought with keen intent. When she was confident of her question, Emma spoke with the determination of a time-tested apprentice. “**Sabio,**” she began, “**the** signs which guided me here say, ‘**Destiny**’. Yet, this place is not destiny and I am sure it is not your name. I am also sure most people do not aspire for or reach their destiny. If you please, I do not want to be as the masses. I believe that I will arrive at destiny, but I **don’t** know how. My question is as simple as it is profound. What will keep me from **destiny?**”

The old man, who listened with an ease and intensity unknown to Emma, conveyed the hint of a smile. “**Mariposa,**” he began, “**you** seek an insight that is rare. The flood gates have been opened. Let the conversation **begin.**”



## The Problem



Emma was relieved. After she bowed her head in silent gratitude, the old man asked, “Who are you?”

Emma thought for a moment. “I am me,” she replied.

“Yes,” the man chuckled lightly. “Consider that you are one with a

mind, heart, and will—a soul.” He continued, “**The soul is integral for you to cross destiny.**”

Emma weighed his observation. “**Why?**” she asked.

“**Mariposa,**” the old man replied, “**You** are a spirit being. As a spirit, you will not arrive at destiny if your soul is trapped within the ways of the world or you remain as a **child.**”

When he saw that Emma understood, he explained, “**One** must expand the capacity of the mind and heart so that his will may achieve the noble aims of the **spirit.**”

Emma responded. “**If** the mind and heart are not tested, there will be no growth and the will is not challenged. The will is incapable of greater **feats.**”

The man nodded in agreement. Given the wisdom Emma displayed, the old man asked her a vital query. He knew that if unable to discern or accept the answer, she would not embrace deeper insight.

“**Mariposa,**” he began. “**Do** you believe one is solely responsible for the dilemmas in his life, whether small or great? Is he the source of what grieves **him?**”

Emma never considered such a difficult question. Her countenance changed.

Emma replied, “**Since** man has a choice to be in every struggle, a choice that would solve rather than perpetuate a problem, he is the source of his own **pain.**” She paused momentarily. “**The** opposite must be true. A **man’s** choice to be is the reason he receives joy in the best or worst of **times.**”

The man was delighted. “**Mariposa,** most men and women die without possessing the wisdom you have expressed. Yes, a

man's triumph or turmoil is sourced **within**," he said. Then he asked, "Is a husband whose wife was murdered any different than a mother who gave birth to her first **child**?"

Emma was alarmed by the potency of the query. She felt incredible pressure and asked to be excused.

"As you wish, *Mariposa*," the old man replied. Emma went for a walk.



She made her way to a nearby cliff and saw threatening storm clouds to the left of the mountain. She imagined the force of the winds and rains that would batter all in its path and the sun that would shower its warmth afterward.

Such contrast underscored Emma's previous answer and validated her pending response. She returned with a speed that revealed her confidence.

"**That** was a brief **walk**," the man said.

Emma replied excitedly. "**Nature** has the uncanny ability to validate **life's** most perplexing **queries**." She looked assuredly at her mentor. She breathed deeply and explained, "**There** is no distinction between a husband of a murdered wife and a mother who gave birth to her first **child**."

The old man stared silently at his student to test her resolve. Emma did not falter. "**Explain why**," he directed.

"**The** husband has a choice to be. The mother has a choice to be. The contrast of their circumstances is as the storm clouds and the radiant sun. The husband and mother choose to be in life, whether in triumph or **turmoil**."

With her answer, the old man knew Emma had the ability to explore a concept that would give her even greater understanding.

"Why is history peppered with heroes who sacrificed everything and endured significant loss, suffering, and **death**?"

Emma sensed she was on a bridge to a worthy distinction. She considered people from history, their resolve to be, and subsequent impact. She weighed the repercussions of their untimely deaths and the revolutions unleashed within the minds and hearts of those they influenced. She noted fundamental attributes consistent among them.

Emma said, "**Men** and women of renown chose to be and, as a result, they accomplished unfathomable feats. They knew their circumstances were inconsequential. They accepted suffering equal

to joy.” Emma continued, “**With** purpose, they willed and transcended all to reach destiny and affect the **eternal**.”

The old man raised his hand to affirm Emma’s conclusion. “**Then** you agree that an iconoclast is not born with a purpose; rather, he discerns purpose by whatever **means**.”

“**Yes**,” Emma responded. She quickly added, “**Sabio**, I do not fully appreciate the means by which heroes **prevail**.” She was pensive for a moment. “**This** is why I asked my original question: What will keep me from **destiny**?”

The old man confirmed what was self-evident. “**Mariposa**, few discern and even less cross into destiny. Those who do cross use a means that is unorthodox or even unknown. Sadly, humanity suffers from a lack of warriors and **heroes**.”

“I agree, **Sabio**.” Emma added, “**Humanity** craves inspiration from mavericks that could be, but never will **be**.” She proclaimed, “**Man** believes he is living life when, in fact, his life is not worth living. He does not even know that life is empty and meaningless—except for the purpose he could fulfill and relationships he could **cultivate**.” Emma added, “**To** manifest a purpose in life, **one’s** **perspective** must be altered. One must wisely embrace times of trial equal to times of joy and acknowledge everything as circumstantial. The warrior leaves the ordinary and breaches the extraordinary. He shuns all and embraces extremes of being. He is tested beyond **understanding**.”

The man nodded and said, “**Now** support this conclusion with an **illustration**.”

Emma replied immediately. “**The** husband whose wife was murdered may choose to be a warrior and forgive and redeem the

perpetrator. He may discern that self-pity, condemnation, and reclusiveness are ignoble distinctions to a worthy **life.**”

Emma winced at her next thought, but she uttered the words anyway. “He may choose to reconcile that his **wife’s** death is circumstantial. He does not miss her any less. However, he knows the folly of adding meaning to his life that leads to **destruction.**”

“Oh my,” the old man whispered. He marveled at the depth of Emma’s answer. He shared a comparable example.

“Ana is a courageous lady who lives in Asuncion, Paraguay. She was diagnosed with cancer. Humbled like no other time, Ana assessed her life against the **doctor’s** diagnosis of death. She made a choice to be positive in all respects. Ana rejected negative thoughts, feelings and acts. Instead, he laughed and rejoiced and gave thanks in all things. Her optimism favorably influenced her health. She knew cancer was only a circumstance and that being negative was her greatest **nemesis.**”

“Mariposa,” he emphasized, “Ana is now **free** of cancer. She crossed into the extremes of being and manifested a destiny. Most of humanity would have been laden with woeful prospects of death. They would have **buried a life worthy of distinction.**” The man added, “Circumstances do not **define a man’s life.** No. He may transcend them and be with **purpose.**”

## The Premise



Emma asked a salient question. “How does one acquire the resolve to be as Ana?”

The man stated, “There is a practical means to achieve life-defining resolve. To understand, we must delve deeper into the

significance of the **soul**.”

The old man hesitated. “**Mariposa**, I am going to ignore certain topics that you have obviously mastered. Heed my words, **though**.” Emma consented.

He asked, “**Should** greater priority be granted to the mind, heart, or **will**?” Emma deliberated and confessed that she could not make a distinction. “**That’s fine**,” the old man said reassuringly. “**This** query is not answered as easily today as in the past. Many are either uninformed or confused about the soul. Let me share an **illustration**.”

“I once loved a lady in a faraway land. We were **blessed**.” Emma was surprised at this admission. “**We** were devoted and lived into what was possible. I was foolish, **though**,” he confessed. “**My** life was difficult. I had neither a boat nor resources to travel the seas. While she was willing to share what little she had, I did not want her to **suffer**.”

“I did not accept her help. Since we did not know when or if we would be together, I released **her**.” He paused to regain his composure. “I was selfish to love her in the first **place**.” Emma wrapped her arms around her chest. She felt the old **man’s** pain.

“**Sabio**, what **happened**?” Emma asked respectfully. The old man bowed his head. “**She** was devastated. She wept and pleaded for what was and what could **be**.” He paused. “I loved her enough to let her go. She loved me enough to endure indefinite **separation**.” The man looked into the trees and then at Emma. “**In** the end, we did not accept each **other’s** choice or how our circumstances occurred to the **other**.”

Emma sensed the inordinate struggle from the **man’s** past. “**Oh**,



Sabio!” she exclaimed.

The man continued. “Her love turned to anger and hurt. She built defensive walls and ceased communication. Months later I sent her a message: ‘I am leaving all behind. I will be smuggled upon a boat. We will be together. I love you.’ I still did not know when or if I would get to her country.”

Emma sat in disbelief. “Did she respond?”

The man paused. “She said, ‘I do not love you anymore; you are no different than other men who caused me pain; you are without honor and character.’ She told me to stay away.” Emma sighed in despair.



The old man looked at Emma and stressed the relevance of his story. “Mariposa, we spoke of the mind, heart, and will. If we master the soul, the spirit may lead us into destiny.”

The old man asked, “**Would** you prefer to have understanding or to be a victim of your **emotions**?”

Emma felt the impact of his query. “**The** answer is obvious. If I do not have understanding, my emotions will control me beyond **reason**.” Emma pursued this thought. “**Sabio**, you asked whether priority should be granted to the mind, heart, or **will**.” The man listened intently. “**The** mind must receive **priority**,” she declared.

He nodded in agreement.

Emma explained. “**If** a lady received sound reasons why a man could not continue in a relationship and she became distraught and ended all contact, we must conclude that emotions clouded her judgment. She could not reach destiny. In such a case, she must renew her mind as a means to govern her heart.”

The old man spoke. “**Emotions** destroy. Famous works of literature are noteworthy because authors depict how passion prevails over reason and leads to tragic **endings**.” Emma thought of the old **man**’s story.

“**I understand**,” Emma said. “**The** lady you loved reacted harshly to your choice. Instead of seeking discernment, she felt shame, pain and sorrow anchored in her past. She then passed judgment and assigned **blame**.”

Emma could not resist an intrusive query. “**Sabio**, did you give priority to your mind when you should have given weight to your **heart**?” He glanced away as if to avoid the hurt from any answer that would validate this question.

“**Mariposa**, if possible, parents do not allow a child to suffer hunger. A stranger does not allow harm to come upon the innocent. The heart then confirms the clarity of the mind and it

does so with emotive **power.**” He asked, “Do struggles end tragically with understandings that lead to being in the extreme? Suffering is often borne by a choice of the mind and the heart carries the **burden.**” He assured Emma. “My choice was selfless which allowed me to persevere. I lost my true love knowing I could not join her anyway. This truth eased the pain in my **heart.**”

“Well, I do not have much experience with matters of the **heart,**” Emma admitted.

The man cautioned her. “**The** key is to elevate the mind and not fall prey to emotional deceit. Purpose may be achieved when the heart confirms the coherence of thought. The mind and heart may then compel the will to decree for a noble **end.**”

Emma understood. “**Even** with unbelievable **suffering,**” she added.

“**Yes,**” her teacher replied. “**Even** with unimaginable **loss.**”

The old man reached into his past. “My father did not care about my heart. He told me, ‘I care about your mind. If your mind is true, your heart will be **true.**’”

Emma was amazed at the beauty and simplicity of this wisdom. She applied this new perspective. “If the lady whom you loved had discerned your intent, she would have embraced a truth and forsaken the **lie.**”

“**Yes,**” he said.

Emma added, “**Since** she accepted a lie, she jeopardized what was and could be. She riddled her mind and heart with what was unhealthy. She prevented her will from achieving purpose. She denied and defied destiny. How circumstances occurred to this lady dominated her heart. She did not resolve to be differently. She fared worse than a husband of a murdered wife. She became a

victim cloaked in self-pity. Her mind never had a chance; her emotions **reigned.**”

Emma forged on. “**She** lived into the contrived and spurned what was credible. She did not discern truth. The disparity between her mind and heart caused confusion. Within this dynamic, she willed a lie into **existence.**”

The man underscored **Emma’s** thoughts. “**The** world is replete with those who exist within the unreal—the machinations of the heart. They live and die believing and even coveting deceit. They protect maligned emotions sourced within **lies.**” He said firmly, “**Being** with integrity, regardless of circumstances, is what **matters.**” He looked at Emma intensely. “**If** you love and forgive in the most unimaginable pain, you may cross into destiny. Are you willing and able to be loving and forgiving regardless of the **circumstances?**” he asked.

Humbled by his words, Emma answered thoughtfully, “**I** hope **so.**”

The man shared, “**The** sacred writings speak of renewing the mind as a means to the **divine.**”

“**Sabio,** your observation is profound. We may guard and direct the heart by renewing the mind, which empowers man to will with **purpose.**” Emma rejoiced in this distinction. “**You** care about my heart because you care about my **mind.**”

The old man laughed softly. “**Mariposa,** discernment does not happen in a vacuum. I hope you struggle into discerned purpose. Never forget, my dear child, the power of thought is a power to **behold.**”

The old man knew they had discussed a significant topic and

Emma needed complete understanding.

“**Discernment** occurs within and despite the storms of life as powerful emotions destroy. Mariposa, we become our own worst enemies when we follow the formidable forces of the heart rather than defer to **reason.**”

Emma suggested, “**Whether** a boy covets his marbles in the school yard and refuses to share or a lady shields herself from the contrived pain of a lost love, both illustrate how and why the will is rendered **futile.**”

“**Yes,**” the man said with renewed energy. “**The** will must be empowered if one is to cross into destiny. The will must be congruent with the mind and heart or all is done in **vain.**”

Emma had a revelation. “**Sabio!** If the boy with the marbles and the lady who lost her love do not discern what is, they will not be into a larger context of life. They are their own worst enemies. They avoid **destiny.**”

The man replied, “**We** do not appreciate the tragedies we bring upon ourselves. We fail to recognize **man’s** inhumanity to man, which includes what he does to himself or fails to do for **himself.**” He used an example.

“**Maria** was a mother who lived a negative and destructive existence. She manipulated and blamed others. She never truly loved; for, she did not know love. Did patterns formed in her youth serve as a catalyst to a reckless life and preclude purpose and distinction?”

“**She** did not share her proverbial marbles; she lacked the true love of her parents; she shunned the true love of her husband and failed to love her children. She was consumed by her

emotions. She did not renew her mind. She lacked understanding. She could not cross into **destiny.**”

Emma felt the gravity of **man's** plight.

“**Sabio**, if man must relinquish all so that he may be all, it appears the micro of life defies the macro, as if man is trapped within cycles that limit, cycles which deny the possibility of being with **purpose.**”

When he heard these words, the old man knew Emma was ready for the next stage of their conversation.

## The Practical



Without hesitation, the old man asked Emma to visualize a vortex in a tornado. “**The** vortex is one of the most powerful forces in the natural world.”

“**The** vortex has a base, middle, and top. For our purpose, we will

use Latin terms to define each: Parvus—small, Medietas —medium, and Magnus—large. In the vortex of life parvus, medietas, and magnus have similar attributes, but different **applications.**”

The old man motioned with his hands. “**Parvus** is the base of the vortex. It is small and tight. It spins quickly, forcefully, and often moves erratically. Parvus draws all that is within its path into its volatile and destructive **nature.**”

“**That** which is within parvus is trapped in a vicious and furious cycle and unable to ascend into medietas and **magnus.**” The man stressed, “**Without** notice, parvus indiscriminately jettisons by centrifugal force what is not near its center. That which has no purpose cannot be centered with integrity and will be **defeated.**”

The old man continued. “**Magnus** spins slower with a much broader range. It is calmer and more discriminating. Yet, what crosses into magnus may be cast out if it has lost its purpose or has no **purpose.**”

Emma asked, “**Sabio**, does magnus have a **center?**”

The man smiled. “**Of course,**” he said. “It is a structure; its vast range does not make it any less consistent with engineering **principles.**”

Emma replied, “**So**, within the vortex of life, what is not centered cannot have purpose and will be defeated, whether at the base, middle, or **top.**”

“**Yes,**” the man said.

She continued. “**Those** who exist within parvus invariably lack the character and hope to persevere into medietas, much less track a course centered with a purpose into magnus and **destiny.**”

“**Yes,**” the man replied. He emphasized a key aspect.



“**Mariposa**, notice that **magnus** stretches above, as it yearns for what is beyond, while it wisely avoids the trappings of **medietas** and **parvus**. Do you see that **magnus** serves as the threshold to **destiny**?”

Emma nodded without saying a word.

The old man hesitated. He chose his next words carefully. “**The** majority of humanity exists within the base of the vortex. Most are in and remain within **parvus**—the realm of the micro—the petty and insignificant. They do not aspire for **medietas**, much less **magnus**.”

Emma was struck with the **man**’s conclusiveness. He had no doubt of this revelation. “**Why**?” she asked with urgency.

The old man blinked as if paying homage to a just probe and said, “**Man** is largely complacent. Most peddle small thoughts and express selfish emotions. They thrive on the trivial, empty, and **meaningless**.”

Emma replied. “**In** the realm of **parvus**, the mind and heart are within the small, fast, and erratic. They are in a state of desperation, a vicious and destructive cycle. **Man** is not ready, willing, or able to be any different. He is oblivious to all except that which consumes him or he **consumes**.”

The man added, “**Parvus** is where hate, ignorance, jealousy, apathy, gossip, sloth, gluttony, wastefulness, haste, judgment, blame, and their ilk fester and quarrel for dominance. The possibility and wonder of **destiny** do not abide **there**.”

Emma said, “**Smallness** of mind and heart keeps one from **destiny**.”

The man raised a finger to caution her. “**Smallness** of mind,

heart, and will. The will is integral to **one's** crossing into **destiny.**"

Emma sought an essential contrast. "If the small and insignificant are within parvus, where most waste their minds, hearts, and wills, magnus must be the **antithesis.**"

"**Absolutely,**" he said. "**Magnus** offers a perspective from the highest plane where one discerns all; for he thinks and feels all. In magnus, man is able to be and will all. **Furthermore,**" the man said, "**with** a broader reach and slower speed, magnus represents an understanding and state of being that is not possible at lower levels. This is why wisdom is found in **magnus.**"

Emma tested her understanding. "I know people who seem to have big minds and hearts and strong wills. Are they within **magnus?**"

"**Not necessarily,**" the old man replied. "**Mariposa,**" he added, "**we** cannot judge by outward appearance. Ironically, those who are successful and revered should be pitied. Whether realized or not, they often avoid destiny and fear **eternity.**"

"**Why?**" Emma asked with surprise.

He explained, "**While many achieve the seemingly remarkable,** they are riddled with insecurity and doubt. They lack self-awareness. They are not centered. They are without **true purpose.**" He continued. "**They spend life in an empty and meaningless pursuit.** They know little to nothing of integrity or how to be centered with purpose. Although successful, they are in and shall remain within parvus. They know little of love, selflessness, and sacrifice. They equate stature and possessions as valid measurements of success. They rarely choose to be in the **magnus sense.**"

Emma saw the correlation to parvus. “Success is not a reflection of one’s discernment,” she said.

“Most assuredly,” the old man replied.

“Mariposa,” he added, “love, mercy, grace, meekness, self-control, long-suffering, forgiveness, and more are virtues which must be embodied if one is to manifest a purpose and cross into destiny.”

Emma pondered. “There must be attributes which prevent the fulfilment of purpose from the outset.”

The man acknowledged her point. “You have a discerning spirit, Mariposa.” He asked, “What would impede purpose?”

Emma thought about her life and those in her sphere of influence. “Deceit,” she said. “People deceive themselves.” She added. “Ignorance is another.” The man nodded. Emma wrestled with other causes. “Please help me, Sabio. I want to know.”

The man closed his eyes and reassured her. “There are many reasons. Consider man’s failure to struggle and his abject unwillingness to be.”

Emma looked actively at him. “Failure to struggle?” she asked. “What does this mean?”

The old man answered. “One learns, truly learns, when he is in the throes of testing and contends with loss. If he avoids such trials, he does not grow. Struggle reveals character that is vital for greater trials and triumphs.”

Emma understood. “If a man is not tried, he lives in relative ease. He is accustomed to what is comfortable. He resists what is good for him and his fellow man.”

“Yes!” the man confirmed. “A life of ease offers no contrast. A life without contrast is a life of weakness, a life riddled with what is convenient and known. The unknown is rejected. This is a **travesty**.”

Emma relished the simplicity and profoundness of the lesson. “If we are not tested by the storms of life, we fail to grow, much less understand and accomplish our **purpose**,” she opined.

Emma inquired about the **man’s** other observation. “You referred to **one’s** unwillingness to **be**.”

After her teacher looked at the ground, he spoke. “**Man** is governed by two dominant principles: fear of loss and **greed**.” The man paused for emphasis. “**Mind** you, Mariposa, these principles apply both positively and **negatively**.”

“**Now**, if man follows deceitful emotions, he invites what is incongruous with his soul. If he pursues certain emotions and only those, he is **limited**.” With **Emma’s** agreement, he proceeded. “**When** man ignores a higher state of being and remains within what is base, he not only fails to be with purpose, he does so **willingly**.”

He could see that Emma needed guidance. “**Let’s** consider another example. If a man exists within parvus and is consumed with the immediacy of life, he will not be a number of attributes. He will not be courageous, patient, and merciful. Rather, he will be petty, jealous, and spiteful. Man either controls or is controlled. He operates, knowingly or unknowingly, by what he will lose or **gain**.”

Emma interjected, “**Fear** of loss or **greed!**”

The man nodded and continued. “**Even** if one is within medietas, he will not cross into magnus if he is unwilling to relinquish his perceived hold on life. If he is not stretched into extremes of being, he cannot and will not cross **higher**.”

Emma saw his point and said, “If one believes he is being generous giving a dollar to the poor, he will never be truly generous when he fails to give ten thousand dollars. The contrast is striking. Heroes sacrifice their very lives for the sake of **humanity!**”

The man responded. “**Heroes** within magnus contend with purpose and cross into destiny. Why? They know that they are not their own; their very lives are circumstantial. Their purpose alone is an end worth seeking. This is true **benevolence.**” He added, “**Those** who do not appreciate meaningful sacrifice **won’t** ever be truly generous. To the contrary, they are utterly comfortable being comfortable giving little, serving no purpose **whatsoever.**”



With these words, Emma began to cry. The **man’s** observations, similar to ice in the crevice of a rock, shattered a lie she believed for years. She confronted truth.

“**My** father is a hero. Until this moment, I regarded him with

a degree of **shame**.” She struggled to explain. “My father was imprisoned when he fought for truth about tax law that most refuse to acknowledge. In his quest for justice, he learned the courts were an even greater scourge to humanity. The system hid the truth in order to perpetuate a **lie**.”

The old man waited for Emma to express more.

“**Most** of the people in my life exist within parvus. I listened to them and believed my father was a criminal. I believed he was wrong. I refused to see the truth. However, he has been and is being in magnus. He seeks destiny. I never realized that he renewed his mind which is why he was at peace under such adversity. Caged like an animal in solitary confinement with murderers, he had integrity. He was centered with purpose in truth. His circumstances did not matter. He willed for his **destiny**.”

After a weighty silence, the man spoke. “**Mariposa**, the innocent have been incarcerated and killed since the dawn of time. In the name of religion and government, man has used ‘**justice**’ to perpetuate and preserve lies at the expense of **truth**.”

He waited for Emma to look at him. “**Your father**,” he said, “**is** an honorable man. He sacrificed all for truth. There are few like **him**.” He looked at Emma earnestly. “**Your father** had a purpose. He crossed beyond magnus to manifest a **destiny**.”

Emma could not prevent a watershed of tears. “I hope to be as my father, to be larger than life, to know and embrace sacrifice as the price for what is purposeful and eternal. I **don’t** want to fear as the masses. I hope to be as he was and **is**.”

Emma sensed the immense dignity of life, which is why she wanted to know more. “I understand what you shared. Yet, how

does one get from parvus to medietas and, ultimately, to magnus where my father abides? How is this done? An incomplete understanding will prevent my journey into **destiny**,” she expressed with exasperation.

The man was humbled. His student sought what few appreciate, to be with integrity and centered with purpose.

“**Be** patient, Mariposa. You are almost **there**.” He paused to select his words. “**Man** avoids what is tough and disquieting, that which wrangles or crushes the **soul**.”

Emma replied. “**Yes**, being involves degrees of intensity, often through inordinate effort and anguish, until one knows what it means to be. I now know this about my father. He is able to genuinely be with **purpose**.”

“You are **correct**,” he said. “A man will not gain his life until he is willing to lose it. This requires one to be in magnus in every **respect**.”

Emma nodded again. “**If** man is unwilling to suffer loss or accept struggle, he will not **be**,” she surmised.

Emma stretched and looked into the sky. She wanted to distill the essence of all she had learned before they proceeded. “**If** you please, Sabio, **let’s review**.” When her teacher consented, Emma began. “I am regardless of any circumstances. I, and only I, am the reason for any problem and solution. I have a choice to be. My choice to be leads to the micro or macro of life. However, with discernment, I may be into the macro and centered with purpose into **destiny**.”

When the old man affirmed her words, she continued. “I am a spirit being. I have a soul comprised of a mind, heart, and will. The

mind must be renewed for the benefit of the heart. Thoughts and emotions precipitate the acts of the will. Struggle is needed for growth as I will to be regardless of the **cost**.”

When Emma finished, the old man did not speak for some time. He thought of **Emma**’s trek up Cerro Tres Kandu and her journey to discover the wisdom of the ages. He acknowledged her query: What will keep me from destiny?

He weighed some concerns. He did not want to give Emma a step by step guide. This would preclude her intuition and initiative. He did not want to focus on the negative—that which prevents.

After discerning how to proceed, as if in the final lap of a race, the man spoke with a sense of urgency. “**Mariposa**, I will answer your query. However, you must accept two **conditions**.”

Emma was attentive.

“**First**, consider that if you are detached from your spirit and not sensitive to its leading, you will be aimless. You **won’t** be centered. You will be without purpose. Second, I will not provide a list of what will prevent you from destiny. However, consider this alternative. Regardless of the sacrifice, to cross from parvus to magnus, your soul must discern and then persevere with character and hope into wisdom and **truth**.”

The old man smiled thoughtfully. “**This** is what mavericks have done. This is one unique characteristic among heroes of **old**.” He looked at her and said, “**Just** like your **father**.” Emma sensed an internal elation. She was moved by his words. She had a newfound respect for her father.



## The Possible



Emma posed a key question. “Sabio, what do you mean when you say ‘cross’ the vortex of life?”

“Ha!” he exclaimed. The old man was overjoyed. “You asked the fundamental question. Crossing is vital to one’s journey into

destiny. I do not share this wisdom unless one understands enough to ask.”

The old man did not waste time. “Let’s examine the vortex again. As it spins, we know that if man is not vigilant and centered with purpose, he will be defeated. As one spins recklessly, it is more difficult to ascend when he is away from the center of the vortex. The centrifugal force is stronger toward the periphery and, as such, one is pulled **outward.**” He pondered and offered an illustration.

“**Mariposa**, those who have knowledge are close to the center of the vortex of life. Those who are ignorant live erratically along the perimeter. Now, overcoming ignorance requires energy, time, resources, and more than most possess or are willing to **expend.**”

“**Certainly,**” Emma said. “**What** is required to be knowledgeable so that one may move to the center and out of parvus is **significant.**”

The man asked Emma to weigh another example. “**Those** who are positive are **centered.**” Emma agreed again.

He gave an example. “**Dennis** is a man who has been selfish since childhood. He has low self-esteem. He thrives on gossip and ill will. He does not see value in people. He is negative and controlling. He is nowhere near the center of the vortex of life. The effort required to defeat his way of being is great. Dennis only knows what it means to be small and manipulative. He is comfortable being miserable and unwilling to be **otherwise.**” The old man added, “**People rarely make genuine change.**”

The old man prepared to lead his student into further enlightenment. “**Mariposa**, do you recall Ana, the lady who

defeated **cancer**?”

“**How** could I forget **her**?” Emma responded.

“**Ana** expended extraordinary effort to cross the vortex of life. She sought a way of being that manifested a destiny. Her crossing mitigated a way of being that would have led to certain **death**.”

Emma shifted her legs with excitement. “**Please explain**,” she said.

“**When** Ana learned of her sickness, she could have been negative and given up. Yet, she reached out, against the motion of the vortex, and pulled herself to the center. She then scaled up and into medietas. Ana crossed into magnus and destiny to defeat cancer and defy death. She acquired wisdom beyond understanding. She manifested her purpose to be a wife, mother, daughter, sister, and **friend**.”

Emma interrupted. “**Sabio**, there is a distinction between Ana and Dennis, Maria, and the ignorant and negative—those who will never cross at any level, much less arrive at **destiny**.”

“**Explain this distinction**,” the man replied.

Emma shared, “**Ana** was passionate, even if it was about something to avoid. She willed herself to be into sacrifice in order to prevail. She feared a loss, the loss of her life; so, with greed, she coveted her life. Ana saw her circumstances as inconsequential. She was motivated to be the antithesis of what ailed her. She chose to be I am—a positive I am. She acknowledged herself as the source of her own problem and solution. Ana was willing to be in a struggle that was both death-defying and life-giving. She made a choice to be with purpose. By contrast, Dennis is comfortable being pessimistic. He uses the word ‘**drama**’ because his life is a ‘**drama**’. His life is a self-fulfilling prophecy. He thrives on negative emotions. His antipathy

forecloses any passion to be sacrificial for a worthy **purpose.**”

“**He** is not ‘I am’ in a redemptive sense. He does not see that he is the source of his problem or solution. He reacts angrily to all who disagree; for he seeks to control people and situations. Circumstances define him. They consume him as he consumes them. He enjoys dissension and condescension. He is unwilling to be differently from what is known and comfortable. He exists far within parvus and far from the center of the vortex, oblivious to the tight and fast cycle as he recklessly spins to his inevitable **ruin.**”

Emma added, “**Renewing** his mind is the equivalent of recycling defeat. This is what he knows. Uninitiated, he is without purpose and hope. He will not listen to spiritual advisors or objective guidance if the advice is contrary to his own. He will not cross to the center or up against a force that condemns him to an ignoble **distinction.**”

The old man intervened. “**Mariposa**, consider what one must do to cross from the exterior of parvus to the center or into **medietas.**” He paused briefly. “**They** must identify a problem, admit to the problem, seek a solution, and then apply the **solution.**”

“**Oh my,**” Emma exclaimed, “while within the power of the vortex!”

The man delved deeper. “**To** identify a problem, one must have the capacity to clearly discern. He must be able to hold his emotions in **abeyance.**” Emma listened intently. “**To** admit to a problem, one must genuinely accept truth. This requires brutal honesty, which many will reject. To seek a solution, one must be engaged and resourceful. Finally, to apply a solution, one must earnestly and arduously exert his will.

“**Mariposa**, this is a simple overview of what is required to cross within the vortex of life. However, I caution you; human nature is complicated and much more is often involved in any given **situation.**”

Emma replied that she understood.

“**Now,**” he explained, “**we** must correlate the mind, heart, and will with this simple **overview.**”

“**The** mind must have clarity, the heart must be free of deception, and the will must accomplish two acts. One must willfully relinquish a destructive way of being and make a choice—a decree—often with blind faith to do the **opposite.**” He continued. “**Life** mandates that, in times of need, one must help himself. Failure to do so is a disservice and dishonoring to **one’s** life and life **itself.**”

Emma weighed the effort required to prevail against overwhelming circumstances. “**Sabio**, it is no wonder that most are complacent with their meager lot in **life.**”

The man agreed. “**Hopelessness** is a common staple within parvus. Mariposa, I implore you to open your mind and heart for the next **observation.**” The old man, not unlike choosing an effective strategy, aligned his intent.

“**When** one identifies and admits to a problem, and seeks a solution with the intention to apply it, we must reconcile the degree of resolve amassed at that **instant.**” He created a compelling visual.

Before he proceeded he asked, “**Mariposa**, do you recall that man operates out of fear of loss and **greed?**”

“**Yes,**” she replied. “**You** said that fear of loss and greed may

apply positively or **negatively.**”

“**Yes,**” he said. “**Now** picture a man within parvus who has identified and admitted to a problem and found a **solution.**”

He looked at Emma. “**Listen** closely, my **child.**” Emma was engrossed. “**Imagine** a man spinning in a tight and fast cycle for decades; this is all he knows. Imagine as he chooses to free his hands from the only security he has ever held, fearful of letting go, fearful of failure. Do you sense his **bravery?**”

The old man pressed on. “**Mariposa,** do you sense his fear of loss? More importantly, do you sense his yearning for something bigger and better, the possibility of a life centered with purpose? Do you sense the initial strength, courage, and faith he must possess to release his futile grip? Do you sense the hope required to prevail into what is **possible?**”

Emma grasped the power of the illustration.

“**Finally,**” he said, “**imagine** this man as he relinquishes his grasp and stretches for the center and pulls himself higher against battering forces with the hope to manifest being in the extreme. Imagine his fear and exhilaration amidst the winds and howling. Imagine the testimony he establishes after he confronts the unknown for the first time. **Imagine!**”

“**Oh!**” Emma exclaimed. “I imagine Ana as she as released her hold on life and stared down death so that she might live with purpose. I imagine my father anchored in truth in his quest for destiny. **Sabio,**” she hesitated. “I imagine your pain when you released **her.**”

## The Pensive



The old man was pensive. He deliberated for good reason. When he learned that Emma was eighteen years old, he was assured of his intent. He looked to the right and rested his chin upon his hand. He made a choice.

“Mariposa, follow me,” he said. She looked at him with curiosity. The man grabbed his walking staff and started for the cliff she visited earlier.

They turned to the left and navigated a narrow passage. Once they cleared the edge, he pointed and said, “**That** is the town of San Agustin.” Emma looked as he said, “San Agustin is home to 62,000 souls. Mariposa, I need your utmost **attention**.” Emma was alarmed by his serious tone. “I have never invited anyone so young to this **spot**.” He paused. “**You** acquired much wisdom today. My hope is that you gain complete context from your journey.”

He cleared his throat for emphasis. “**You** must vow that if you are not able to cope with what I will share, you will cease **immediately**.” Emma did not know what to say. She was scared, but hoped and trusted him no less.

Emma looked at her teacher and said, “**Sabio**, I vow as you **requested**.”

“**Now**,” he continued, “I must establish a premise before we **proceed**.” He looked to San Agustin and back to Emma. “Mariposa, have you ever considered how and why brilliant thinkers have keen **awareness**?”

“**Yes**,” Emma laughed lightly. She tried to release tension. “My father calls me ‘**Philosopher**.’”

“**Very well**,” he replied. “**You** will appreciate what I am about to share. Great thinkers acknowledge that they do not know. They seek what is unknown. The unknown either confirms or contradicts what they **know**.”

Emma said, “I understand, Sabio. They are not satisfied with what is generally **accepted**.”



The old man looked at his student and winked. “**Thus,**” he said, “**what** you learned today must be **validated.**” Emma knew she was on the precipice of a profound revelation. “**My** dear child, it is not enough to recognize that man suffers. It is not enough to believe that suffering is universal without seeking a root cause and **solution.**”

The man tapped his walking staff for emphasis. “**We** must discern that man suffers for his failure to **be.**”

Emma could do nothing but stare at her mentor.

The old man stepped closer to Emma and lowered his voice. “**If** we do not appreciate the pervasiveness of parvus in life we will never appreciate its vast **impact.**” He raised his finger and added, “**We** will not appreciate the contrast between parvus and magnus **either.**” The man waited for Emma to respond.

“**We** should not be satisfied simply knowing that man **suffers,**” she said. “**We** must understand the cause, scope, conclusion, and, wherever possible, compare and contrast suffering within micro to suffering within macro.”

“**Beautiful,**” the man whispered. “**You** are **ready.**” He looked at her and said, “**Look** upon San Agustin and close your **eyes.**” He placed his hand upon Emma and blessed her in his native language. In a low and encouraging voice, he cautioned Emma. “**My** child, when you look below, San Agustin will appear quite differently. Do not react quickly or **harshly.**” He added, “**Be** courageous.”

As Emma opened her eyes slowly he repeated, “**You** must be **courageous.**”

When she looked below, Emma stumbled backward. She was devastated. Her eyes were wide. She raised her hands in an attempt to ward off what she saw. She tried to breathe. She shook her head

in a futile effort to escape the sight and murmurings she heard.

“**Mariposa,**” he reassured her, “**this** is context. Be **strong.**” In the valley which cradled San Agustin, Emma saw thousands and tens of thousands of parvus vortices. They covered the area. Some were as black as a moonless night. Others clashed with those nearby. The scene was austere.

“**Humanity!**” Emma screamed. “**No!**” She was distraught by the sight and exclaimed, “**What** we do to ourselves!” Emma dropped to her knees, “**What** one does to his fellow **man!**” She gasped, “**All** for our failure to **be!**”

The old man came to Emma’s side. “**The** scale of suffering in this tranquil town is **significant,**” he said. “**However,** the scope of suffering in the industrialized world is much **worse.**”

Emma suddenly realized the purpose of this exercise. “**The** world is overwhelmed by and with **micro!**” she exclaimed. “**Sabio,** I never imagined the magnitude of **man’s** failure to be centered with purpose into **magnus.**”

“**Share,**” he said.

Emma collected her thoughts. “**Antonio’s** mother is consumed with worry over debts. Marco lacks courage to hold his friend accountable for pursuing a married woman. Anita suffers from addiction. Maria is consumed with gossip. Coco spouts, “**The** Lord will **provide!**” without purpose or true belief. David is fearful of receiving a beating when his father comes home. Christina has never met her father. The wealthy rancher counts his cattle over and over again. The priest steals from the church. Raul is thinking of suicide for a third time. Jorge will not forgive himself for the death of his son. Ricardo belittles his wife incessantly; she wants a **divorce.**” Emma

could not continue. “Misery, apathy, and destruction abounds!”

The old man acknowledged Emma’s observations. “Now,” he directed, “consider another perspective.” The old man placed his left hand under Emma’s chin and raised it gently until her gaze was above the horizon. “What do you see?”

Above the bewilderment within parvus Emma saw hundreds of medietas vortices. Emma was noticeably more at peace. She surveyed the sights and sounds. She saw a striking contrast.



“Sabio, they suffer as well, but their state of being is different. They have understanding, acceptance, and solutions. They are balanced. They have purpose.”

The old man squeezed Emma’s hand. “Yes,” he said.

“Oh, Sabio,” Emma said with a smile. “The distinction is incredible.

But for their failure to be, those within parvus may cross into medietas. Those in medietas suffer no less. However, they are able to be in life in a much larger **context.**”

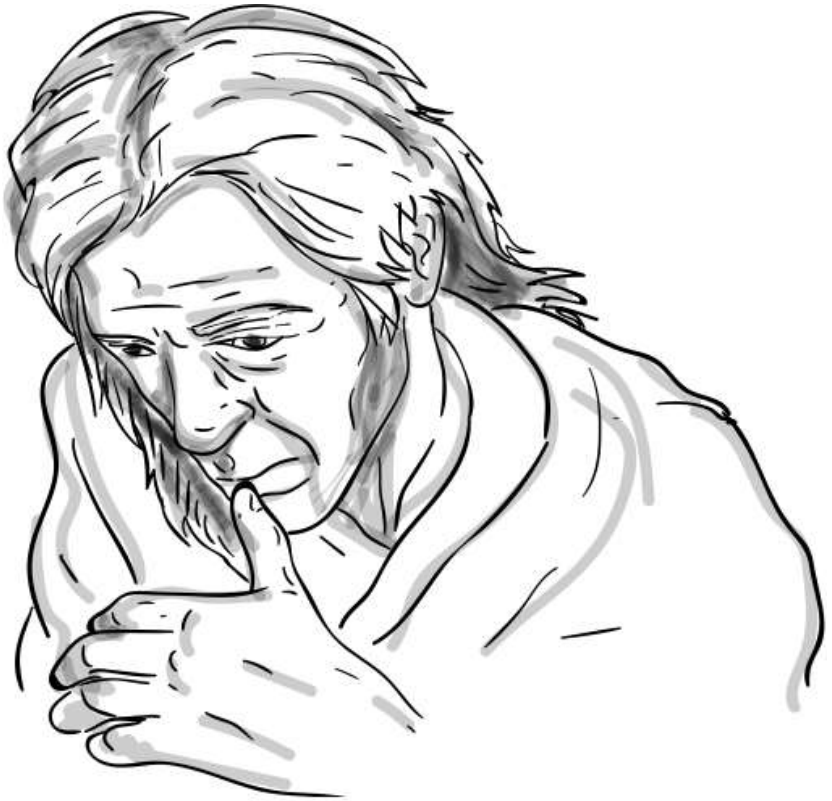
The old man raised his staff high above. “**What is there?**” he asked. Emma saw large circles. There were only a handful of them.

“**Magnus!**” Emma shouted. “**Those** who fought with purpose are on the verge of **destiny.**” Emma smiled “**What** is the contrast, **Mariposa?**” Emma looked and listened.

“**Sabio,** these mavericks are being through the most trying of times. Everything is circumstantial to them. Then she uttered, “**They** are at **peace.**”

The old man was relieved. “**Yes,** my child, they have peace beyond **understanding.**”

## The Precarious



Emma was silent as she gazed at San Agustin. She searched for an elusive distinction. “**Sabio**, few reach **destiny**.” She paused to find the right words. “**It** seems as if man does not want to be powerful and purposeful in **life**.”

The man asked, “**Mariposa**, do you know the ‘80-20 Rule?’”

“**Yes**,” Emma replied. “**This** is a principle whereby eighty percent of effects come from twenty percent of the causes.”\*

The man affirmed her answer and said, “**If** few are initiated, whether they are in parvus or medietas, what percentage enters magnus? How many cross into **destiny**?”

Emma considered that most were in parvus. She looked at the negligible few in magnus in San Agustin. She could not escape the relevance of the old **man**’s point.

“**Sabio**, I **don**’t know the answer, but I imagine the percentage is quite **small**.” Emma then offered, “I imagine the number is frighteningly **low**.”

The old man conceded so. “**Mariposa**, if 20 out of 100 prevail, the possibility that any of the 20 will manifest a destiny is marginal. This should demonstrate an important distinction. If 1 in 100 will not cross into destiny, we must broaden the search. If 5 in 10,000 cross, we must question to what extent mavericks influence their **communities**.”

Emma weighed the impact of this truth as the old man provided context. “**If** the leader of a country exists within parvus, he will not influence his people with a revolution of the mind and heart. Rather, he will perpetuate the micro and avoid **destiny**.”

Emma stated, “**Political** leaders seek power and control and people are accustomed to the pedestrian nature of government. They are without vision or hope. Parvus is where they remain. If citizens of a country do not see virtuous examples of selfless leadership, the impact is incredible. They will persist within the **micro**.”

The man quickly added, “Yes, until the 1 in 1,000,000 crosses to manifest a destiny. Mariposa, consider the inescapable. If only 1 in 100,000 inspire a community toward magnus, how many heroes are within smaller segments of **society?**”

Emma replied, “If a culture breeds antipathy, society will gravitate to the micro. Mavericks will not be as **prevalent.**”

“Exactly,” the old man replied. He offered illustrations. “Churches of the same faith espouse different doctrines. This adds to the confusion across a spiritual **culture.**”

“I understand,” Emma said, “**this** invites division and underscores a lack of principles and truth. The micro unduly influences the **macro.**”

“Consider the dynamics within **families,**” the man said. “When serious challenges surface, who will discern and stand for **truth?**” Emma was intrigued by this thought. “**Brothers,** sisters, mothers, fathers, and others contend with **another’s** poor decision. Some within the family know the whole truth; others perceive it. Yet, they accept the **lie.**”

“Why?” Emma asked.

“**They** fear the repercussions. If we fail to be in the macro in our most intimate relationships, the cultural impact is **great.**”

Emma then injected, “If we fail to defend truth within families, we fail to love. Love of truth is vital. The defense and expression of truth is an act of **love.**”

The man embraced Emma’s conclusion. “If we are not willing to risk our strongest and most valued relationships for truth spoken in love, just how strong and valued are these relationships in the first **place?**”

Emma was shocked at this obvious, powerful, overlooked, and avoided conclusion. She added, “**If** a sister does not share the whole truth with a brother in need, the brother will live without truth. Why? The sister is unwilling to love selflessly because she does not **love completely.**”

The man was pleased. “**Yet,**” he warned, “**we** must appreciate the cause of **one’s failure** to **love completely.**”

Emma thought for a long time. She finally tendered an observation. “**Sabio,** I recall the fear of loss and greed principle, but I **don’t** know the **answer.**”

The man pointed his staff to the village. “**Whether** in Agustin, Asuncion, Anchorage, or the Aleutian Islands a sister will fail to love completely for no other reason than self-**preservation.**”

Emma looked at her teacher with curiosity.

“**My dear child,**” he emphasized, “a man will balk at expressing truth in order to preserve what he **has.**”

Emma was surprised. “**Fear** of loss and greed! A sister is not willing to be courageous or loving when she seeks to avoid a perceived or actual **loss.**” Emma pursued the end of this premise. “**When** a sister does not account for truth, the harm caused or the benefit denied to her brother reinforces a lie. The sister does not relinquish her perceived hold on life. She does not live into extremes of being. She does not contend with the most arduous. She does not reconcile that her conditions, to include her relationships and her very life, are merely **circumstantial.**”

Emma continued. “**The** sister does not act in love when she fails to express truth. Although she may cross into magnus, she avoids destiny. She fails to be with **purpose.**”



The man agreed. “A culture dies a slow death when man is unmoored and lacks the will to be with purpose in truth. There is no transformation within the lives of a sister or those in her sphere of influence when she fails to love selflessly and completely. Cultures grope toward relativism. Confusion is accepted. People justify inaction or unwise choices with slogans that appease their souls: ‘Freedom is free;’ ‘Live and let live;’ ‘Whatever will be, will be;’ ‘God will provide.’” Emma listened intently. “Mariposa, do you appreciate why so few enter magnus? Do you understand why humanity suffers a lack of warriors who seek purpose and destiny?”

Emma sighed heavily. “Man will not be inspired or aspire for better when cultures are apathetic at every level. Culture disintegrates and man remains mired within parvus.”

## The Paring



Sabio?” Emma queried. “Those who are within parvus may enter medietas instantly, could they not?”

“Absolutely!” the old man replied.

“We must refer to a basic tenet. Man chooses to *be*. Man is in

parvus by choice. He may leave by choice **instantly.**”

“**Well,**” Emma said, “**it** is ridiculous to exist within the micro. In fact, it is insane.” The old man tempered her frustration with an explanation.

“**Mariposa,** most of humanity is too close to what consumes them. They see with little breadth or **depth.**” The old man searched for a comparison. “**From** this spot, we can see the towns, rivers, mountains, forest, plains, sky, clouds, and so much **more.**”

“**Yes,**” Emma said. “**We** see all from this vantage **point.**”

The old man pointed toward San Agustin. “**Philippe** lives on the edge of town. His life is fraught with strife. He cannot see anything but the four walls of his living room and the sundry problems that plague **him.**”

“**He** has an excuse for any reason to change his life for the **better.**” Emma was confused. “**Sabio,** I **don’t** see the connection between our vantage from the cliff and **Philippe’s** perspective within his living **room.**”

“**Very well,**” the man replied. “**Mariposa,** if you lived next to Philippe, would you get there by going over the rugged mountain, through the dense forests, navigate each river, traverse the vast plains, and take the long road around the village before heading to your **street?**”

“**No!**” Emma shouted with a smile, “**that** would be foolish and impractical, as if I intended to avoid my home in the first **place.**” Emma was dismayed. “**Sabio,** why would you propose such an outrageous **scenario?**”

The old man was deathly silent and waited. Emma became uncomfortable with the long pause.

“**Oh my, Sabio!**” Emma exclaimed. “I know the **reason!**” She

was excited. “**Philippe** travels the proverbial route you just described and he does it every day. Yet, he never gets anywhere different. He remains in **parvus**.”

The old man gave his approval, but cautioned her. “**Consider** another perspective. To cross the vortex of life, man must pare the extraneous and focus on the essential. Mariposa, to go home, you would pare off the forests, the rivers, the plains, and all that add no value to your purpose. Instead, you would travel down this mountain, turn right on Saratoga Avenue and left onto Los Feliz **Boulevard**.”

The man added, “**If** Philippe wanted an empowered life, he would have a destination or purpose, whether great or small, and focus on **essentials**.” The old man raised his voice for emphasis. “**Philippe** would pare anything that was not constructive.”

Emma grinned slightly. “**Paring** rids one of impediments that thwart his ability to have clarity and purpose. Philippe may decide to walk a mile every morning and pare away self-doubt and any excuse that would prevent him from prevailing. He may form a **citizen’s** organization and courageously confront the corruption within city council and pare the advice of naysayers who say such an effort is futile. For that matter, Philippe may run for Mayor and pare any belief that he is not worthy or **capable**.”

The old man was pleased. “**My** dear child, being powerful in life is a matter of doggedly pursuing a purpose without self-imposed obstacles or obstructions from any **quarter**.”

The old man underscored this point. “**If** a wolf were about to attack a child, would self-doubt inhibit you from being **courageous**?” Emma was alarmed with this example. “**Would** you

waste time listening to a **friend's** counsel that you could not prevail against such a ferocious and wild **animal!**"

For Emma, the simplicity of paring the extraneous in order to expose underlying purpose was never so clear. "My father, Ana, and the mavericks who resolved to be without impediments only saw purpose. Distractions had no *sway*."



The old man added, "If your father or Ana were waylaid by unmerited influences, they would not have crossed into destiny. Their singular purpose would have been compromised early in the battle. If we dissected their choices in the thick of their contests, we would understand what they pared and why.

"Mariposa, rest assured, your father was repudiated by his friends, family, and church leadership for his choice to be with

purpose in truth. He pared such condemnation. He knew these naysayers did not know tax law, just as legal professionals do not know tax law.”

Emma was amazed. “**They** only know what they know; what they know is their fear of government and its taxing **authority.**”

The man continued. “I am certain that, once your father spoke with his defense lawyers, he pared their automatic inclination to accept a plea agreement. Why? His lawyers did not care to research truth; they wanted to settle the charges and have him accept a guilty verdict and a prison **sentence.**”

Emma said, “**The** contrast is incredible. Without the requisite research, people condemned my father. Why? They believed the tax law applied to him. Churches spout the need to submit to government in all things without paring their ignorance of the law and flawed representations of the fundamental role of government.”

Emma was quiet for good reason. She finally shared, “**Sabio**, I cannot even imagine the pressure my father endured at every stage of his twelve year **ordeal.**”

The old man spoke with deference. “**Your** father had to embrace purpose from the beginning. He pared more in twelve years than 10,000 men do in a **lifetime.**” The old man shook his head. “I cannot imagine his life if he had caved at any **point.**”

Emma could not resist expressing her next thought. “It seems as if man willingly accepts distractions that delude and prevent him from being with purpose as easily as mavericks pare **them.**” She laughed in disbelief. “**It** is as if most want distractions, since they refuse to pare or **don’t** know to **pare.**”

## The Parsing



Delighted with Emma's conclusion, the old man said, "Imagine the choice to follow one of two paths. The path to the left is chosen after much discernment. The path to the right is used when distractions cater to emotions and lead the blind astray. This path is

without purpose and fills a void. Mariposa, we have used simplified examples of paring. However, situations that envelop man are often more complicated and have multiple layers of confusion that impair the mind, heart, and will. These layers of confusion deny the soul of clarity. This culminates in unhealthy and competing agendas that pull those who are susceptible into multiple directions and lead to inaction or unwise choices and, eventually, **defeat.**”

Emma said, “You just described life within parvus. In these complicated scenarios, the ability to pare is critical, but difficult—even if one knows how to effectively pare from the **outset.**”

The old man sighed. “**Yes,** when one is involved in **life’s** most precarious predicaments, emotions are powerfully deceitful. One would be wise to seek objective counsel of friends, family, and professionals. Sadly, even with such guidance, man will be unwise and choose **foolishly.**”

“**Well,**” Emma added, “**we** discussed that one may be his own worst enemy, especially given what he does to himself or fails to do for **himself.**”

“**Yes,**” the man replied. “**One** of **man’s** greatest failings is his inability to discern and follow the simple path—the straight and narrow path. Destiny is invariably reached by a direct route, absent **distractions.**”

Emma said, “**So,** the direct path is ignored when one contends with confusion and the allure of options that are perceived to be credible.”

“**Yes,** my wise **philosopher,**” the man replied.

Emma giggled.

“**Mariposa,** the means to distinguish between the clear and the



confused is known as ‘**parsing**.’” Emma leaned her head to the right. “**Parsing** is the analysis of words, tone, actions, behaviour, and all means of communication. Parsing allows us to discover the deeper and often veiled meaning of **one’s intent**.”

“**Ah**,” Emma exclaimed. “**Parsing** is reading the tea leaves of man with the hope that one may arrive at the correct and objective understanding of his motives and **choices**.”

“**Exactly!**” he replied. “**We** must be able to observe and dissect genuine motives. When man speaks, moves, acts, or communicates in any way, we must discern. We must parse.”

Emma was intrigued. “**Parsing** is the investigation of human **nature**.”

The man nodded. “I will share an illustration which will explain the power of parsing and why it is vital to separate multiple layers of a complicated situation filled with distractions that deny **destiny**.” He paused for emphasis. “**I will** narrow the scope of the distractions for ease of **understanding**.” He cautioned Emma. “Although I am not going to reveal much detail, you must consider the characters involved, what they say, and how they say it. Be mindful of their motives. Once you parse, you may pare.” Emma nodded in agreement. “**This** lesson is important. Listen **carefully**.”

The man pointed his staff and spoke. “**In** the distant city of Asuncion, a family contends with a life-defining crisis. Sally was once married and had three children. Her husband had an affair and they divorced. For decades, Sally entered relationships with men who did not value her. One day she met Gaston in another country. He loved her and she was never happier. They committed to be husband and **wife**.”

“**Sadly**, since Gaston lived far away and could not be with her easily, he released Sally in March with the hope they would be united again. Sally was angry. She reacted harshly to Gaston. She said mean things and refused to speak with him. She said that he was like all selfish **men**.”

“**Sally’s** sister, Pam, observed what happened. She knew Gaston made a tough and loving choice. She knew Sally was blind to the truth. Pam told Sally that she was deceived by her past **suffering**.”

“**Months** later, when Sally finally texted Gaston, he told her that he was moving to Paraguay to be with her forever. She was surprised and excited; but she was speaking with another man named Dennis. Gaston knew Dennis. He lived in his city. Dennis had contacted Sally by dubious means. **He took Sally’s contact information from Gaston’s** social media page. When Dennis contacted Sally, he said that he was a friend of a mutual acquaintance, Marco. Sally met Marco when she was with Gaston.

“**Dennis** knew that Gaston was in a relationship with Sally. Gaston knew Dennis was not a good man. He warned Sally and Pam. Sally would not listen. Pam did. Pam loved Gaston and she wanted her sister and Gaston to be together. Pam knew Sally loved **Gaston**.”

“**Gaston** became more concerned when he learned Sally was in the care of a psychiatrist, doctor, and pastor. She was coping with decades of hurt. She was trying to clear her mind and heart of deceit. She wanted to be healed and make wise **choices**.”

“**Gaston’s friend, Marco, was Dennis’** counselor. Marco loved Gaston and Sally. He knew they were a beautiful and blessed **couple**.”

“**When** Gaston told Marco that Dennis was interfering with their relationship, Marco told Dennis to stop. Dennis did not listen. He

ignored both Marco and **Gaston**.”

“**Even** though Dennis knew very little about Sally, and although he knew Sally was struggling with life and was married, he only thought of himself. Dennis flew to see Sally. After six weeks of talking by phone and a week of being with her, Dennis pushed her to marry him. Dennis reasoned that since she and Gaston made vows before God alone, and not before others, they were not legally husband and wife. Dennis, supposedly a Christian, ignored his alleged spiritual **beliefs**.”

“**Sally** called Pam and asked for her advice. Pam reminded Sally that she promised not to make any decisions while Dennis was there. Sally agreed and told Dennis she would not marry him. Days later, Dennis asked again. After consulting Pam, Sally refused a second **time**.”

“**Pam** spoke with Sally and asked why she would not honor **Gaston’s** choice to move. Pam explained that Gaston never harmed her. Sally agreed. Yet, Sally would not admit that she had a flawed interpretation of what happened with Gaston. Pam had every reason to help Sally see clearly with her mind and **heart**.”

“**When** Pam asked why Sally would even consider marrying Dennis, a man she did not know, Sally responded by stating, ‘**Gaston** forced me to leave him. He forced **me**.’ Conspicuously absent was any expression of her love for Dennis, a man she met by phone two months **earlier**.”

“**In** fact, when Gaston told Sally that he was moving to Paraguay, she sent him a text which stated, ‘**Had** not Dennis appeared I would have been waiting for **you**.’ Yet, ironically, when Pam told Sally that Gaston would mail her a “**Certificate of Divorce**” so that she would be free to marry another man, Sally

rejected the idea. She told Pam that she would send it to the Ministry of Information to slow the process. Pam knew Sally was still in love with Gaston.

“**Meanwhile**, Sally’s brothers refused to answer her phone calls. They knew Sally’s situation with Gaston. They knew she made unhealthy decisions with Dennis. They knew her past. They did not support her. In the end, though, the one brother Sally trusted most told Pam that ‘**Freedom is free.**’ He said Sally was free to do as she wanted, even though it was unwise.

“**When** Dennis pushed Sally to marry him a third time, Gaston asked Marco to intervene. Marco called Dennis; but Dennis refused to speak with him. So Marco spoke with Sally and asked her a question. She responded with a lie. Marco knew the truth about her marriage with Gaston.

“**Since** Marco stated that Dennis had ‘**special problems**’, Gaston asked Pam to speak with Marco. Strangely, though, when Pam called Marco, he was disingenuous. He did not convey the harsh words and warnings about Dennis he had shared with Gaston. He did not tell Pam the whole truth.

Tragically, when Sally agreed to marry Dennis, Pam latched onto her **brother’s** shallow reasoning that Sally was ‘**free**’ as justification to support her sister. Pam told Gaston that she would never speak to him about her **sister’s** union with Dennis again.

“**Gaston** did not understand why Marco refused to share the truth with Pam. He told Marco that he dishonored Pam and Sally.

“**Gaston** knew Sally was in a difficult place and that no one was willing to do what was right and honorable. He knew Dennis preyed upon Sally. He knew Dennis was deceiving everyone. As such,

Gaston hired a private investigator.

“**The** investigator discovered that Dennis had been divorced for only six months after a twenty-six year marriage. Dennis had four older children who no longer speak with him. Dennis has three grandchildren he has never seen. He is not allowed to see them. He learned Dennis had a psychological evaluation which reveals he is mentally and emotionally unstable. Dennis asked the court to seal the records from public scrutiny. The investigator learned that the court placed a restraining order against Dennis. He is not allowed to discipline his youngest son or even raise his voice.

“A psychologist wrote to the court that Dennis ‘**has** a horrible temper, gets irrational, becomes very verbally abusive and demeaning, and becomes very physical,’ and that his children’s antipathy toward him ‘**goes** against a natural bias and speaks volumes.’

“**The** investigator stated that Dennis physically abused his children. He physically accosted his ex-wife. He was violent and often destroyed the family home. He threw food across the dining room when he did not like the taste. He was verbally and emotionally abusive. His family lived in fear.

“**Dennis** pursued two other women while he was married. He is addicted to pornography. The investigator discovered another depraved behavior. Dennis plants information and creates situations to destroy those he despises in personal and business relationships.

“**For** example, he was arrested for disparaging a policeman and his wife after a traffic stop. In another incident, he worked for a politician and lied about the existence of an entity and ran an ad in its name. He broke the law. Even the politician condemned his actions as reckless. The day after Dennis ‘**married**’ Sally, he sent

emails stating that Gaston was ‘stalking’ Sally. When Dennis returned home, he sent Gaston two other emails and accused him of ‘cyber-stalking’ Sally. He fabricated the appearance that Gaston was committing a crime.

“**This** is behavior Dennis demonstrated toward his marriage counselor. When he did not like the **counselor’s** conclusions about him and his behavior toward his ex-wife, Dennis filed an ethics complaint. Unbelievably, as justification, he cited that the counselor did not post his credentials and diploma on the wall.

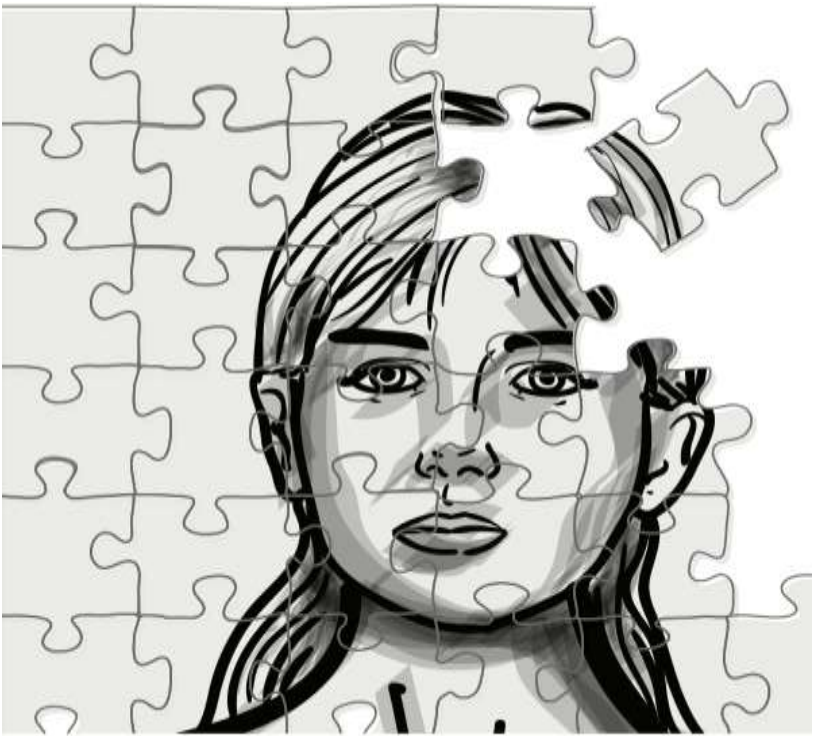
“**Recently**, Dennis took his youngest son to **Marco’s** house to reveal that he had married Sally. This allowed Dennis to neutralize **Marco’s** response; he knew Marco would not express dissension in front of a child. This was the first time Dennis spoke with Marco since refusing to accept Marco’s calls while in Paraguay.”

“**This** is similar to how Dennis handled a telling episode within weeks of meeting Sally on the phone. Sally and Dennis had an argument about religious issues. When they did not communicate for two weeks, Dennis came up with a scheme. Dennis called Sally and agreed that she was right. He changed his religious views. Now, why would a rigid and dogmatic religious fanatic alter his beliefs at his old age? This was how he furthered his crafty scheme to dupe Sally—a small puzzle within a larger puzzle to deceive **everyone**.”

“**The** investigator spoke with friends, family, associates, and church members who knew Dennis. They described him as toxic, predatory, angry, selfish, vindictive, manipulating, and abusive. Dennis lives a lonely and angry life in his country, something Sally did not know and refused to **explore**.”

The old man looked at Emma and fell silent.

## The Puzzle



Emma reflected heavily. This was a tragic story. She weighed what she learned from the old man since the conversation began in the morning. She saw the complexity of the mind and heart, especially when more than one person was involved.

“**Sabio**, I need your help. I **don**’t know where to **begin**.” The old man placed his hands upon his knees and assured his student there was a straight and narrow path. He encouraged her to pare the inclinations which did not serve her purpose.

Acutely sensitive to any tendency that would color this tragedy with her own interpretation, Emma focused on facts and offered objective analysis. Emma thought about the people involved, their ways of being and any macro or micro motives, good or evil. She imagined vortices within parvus which consumed or collided with others. She saw people centered with purpose, those who crossed out of parvus and into medietas and magnus.

“**Sabio**, I accept the foundational truth that Gaston and Sally loved each other and committed to their spiritual union before God as husband and wife. I accept that Gaston wanted to be with **Sally**.”

“**Why** do you conclude **so**?” the man asked.

“**Pam** is an honest broker and **Sally**’s best friend. Sally shared with Pam just as Pam shared with Gaston. She knew Gaston gained nothing with his tough decisions. Sally was foremost in his mind and heart. Gaston chose to release Sally in March and leave everything for her in August. His circumstances did not matter. His love for her was all important. Pam knew this and she believed Sally knew it as **well**.”

The old man was pleased with **Emma**’s answer. She continued her analysis.

“**Sally**’s reaction to Gaston in March was telling. She judged and placed blame. Such indicators impede truth. In fact, this is the first layer to this complicated tragedy. Secondly, she ended



communication with Gaston, another unhealthy indicator and an additional layer.

“Gaston was centered with purpose. He did not succumb to the micro. He loved Sally to the end. He risked losing Sally forever when he exposed Dennis. He wanted to protect her from a predator.

“Gaston did not add layers or impose anything artificial. Rather, he pared distractions for the benefit of Sally and her family. He tried to provide them with clarity.

“Though Sally was scarred by past relationships, she has the capacity to reconcile the lies she believes. Yet, she is unwilling. Rather than pare deceit from her mind and heart, she embraces what she knows. She believes she is unworthy.”



The old man affirmed this truth and said, “This is why she refused to learn about Dennis and his history. She did not want to know truth. She ignored all indicators. In a rash hope to fill a

void in her life, she did the unthinkable. She accepted a fiend that lacked the ability, dignity, or wisdom to honor her from the **beginning.**”

Emma added, “**Sally’s** lies furthered her inability to love and be loved. When Dennis contacted her, she willingly fell for his trap. She was desperate, which motivated her to reject Gaston for an angry and violent man. **Dennis’ deceit** was untimely and appealing given the false pain she gratuitously attributed to **Gaston.**”

Emma considered the impact of emotions. “**Sally** was deceived by her heart. She will never be whole and healthy in a relationship, especially with someone as dysfunctional and corrupt as Dennis. Sally did not renew her mind and rightly discern for the benefit of her **heart.**” Emma paused and considered a profound premise. “**If** like attracts like, Sally was doomed the first time she spoke with Dennis. It is easy to understand given **Sally’s** way of being in the micro, especially since Dennis lacked the character to cross into magnus.

“**Dennis** did the opposite. He conned an already devoted woman who was weak and under the care of health professionals. Sally was incapable of paring her own deceit, much less paring the deceit of one as mentally ill and emotionally disturbed as **Dennis.**”

Emma paused and thought of Pam. “**Pam** is a central character to this tragedy. Regrettably, she adds more layers to a traumatic dynamic. Pointedly, Pam could have crossed into destiny, but she did **not.**”

“**Pam** loves her sister, but not without reservation. She was unwilling to sacrifice her relationship in order to protect Sally. As

such, their relationship was a circumstance that was more important than Pam expressing the truth about **Dennis**.”

The old man asked, “**How** do you discern this **conclusion**?”

“I pored the disparity between **Pam**’s reaction to **Gaston**’s warnings and her only conversation with **Marco**. While **Pam** loved **Gaston**, she took the easy path. She wanted the easy path. **Pam** did not ask **Marco** to be candid with her, as candid as he was with **Gaston**.”

“**Pam** ‘loved’ **Sally** to a point, which is why she did not fully explore and expose **Dennis**’ scheme. **Pam**’s mind and heart rightly divided the situation, but her will balked at being vulnerable and truly loving. She lacked a willful decree. One cannot cross into destiny without a willful decree.

“**When** **Pam** spoke with **Marco**, she heard a softer and less truthful message. This was consistent with the path she preferred, especially since her brother capitulated and said that **Sally** was ‘free’ to do as she wished. In the end, **Pam** avoided any outward conflict with her sister. **Marco**’s cowardly response enabled **Pam** to choose the path she wanted to travel after all.

“**Pam** added another layer of confusion. When she rationalized her eventual support of **Sally**, she reinforced the lies **Sally** embraced. **Sally** had the support of her sister. **Pam** relinquished her hope that **Gaston** and **Sally** would be reunited. She no longer had a will centered with **purpose**.”

**Emma** looked at the old man and shared a revelation. “**Pam** was a warrior. She crossed into magnus as she fought for **Sally**. Yet, **Pam** could not cross into destiny, if only for her unwillingness to lose everything. **Sabio**, **one**’s will is essential to cross magnus into destiny with **purpose**.”

The old man nodded.

“I must mention Sally’s brothers. They had a small but powerful role. They were mavericks who fought for truth. They saw lies and deceptions in Sally’s life. They chose not to be complicit. They did not support her.

“They easily pared the distortions of others and, notably, had no need to pare any confusion within their own minds or hearts. They discerned Sally’s plight and told her so by their non verbal actions and reactions. Sally’s brothers saw all from magnus. They were centered with purpose in truth.

“However, the one influential brother who did not have enough information caved. He dismissed the indicators that caused him concern. He cavalierly consented. His reaction had an adverse impacted on Pam. He and Pam could have joined forces and intervened. Since he did not, he failed to cross into **destiny**.”

“Tell me about Marco.” the old man said.

Emma sighed. “He is a deeply flawed character. Marco suffers from profound insecurity. He has a disturbing attachment to his own beliefs. He is reluctant to be brave when bravery is **relevant**.”

The old man was intrigued. “Please explain,” he said.

“I pared the implausibility of Marco counseling Dennis for years without knowing the depth of his illness and character **flaws**.” Emma saw that her teacher wanted more. “If one is unable to discern facts after extensive counseling with another, if he is not able to distinguish truth, he deceives himself.

“Marco obviously did not ask tough questions and he blindly accepted as true what Dennis told him. Moreover, Marco did not confirm what he learned with other resources. Marco recklessly

projected his own thoughts and feelings so that he would be in agreement with Dennis during counselling sessions. This allowed Marco to excuse his own personal thoughts, misery, and failings.”

The old man was floored. “Why do you make this strong **assertion?**”

“**Sabio**, if Marco had known the information about Dennis that Gaston uncovered in only days, and if Marco were a decent man, he would never have allowed Dennis to be so reckless with Sally in the first **place.**” Emma reached a defining conclusion. “**By his own acts** of omission, Marco condoned **Dennis’** deceptive scheme.

“**Let** me validate this conclusion. I pored the distortions within **Marco’s** one call with Pam. A wise and honorable man would have dignified the inordinate struggle Pam confronted. She was the one warrior close to the situation fighting for truth. Marco would and should have shared the truth with Pam as he did with **Gaston.**”

“**Marco** attempted to pacify Gaston while marginalizing his own culpability. He then tempered his response to Pam. These are cowardly choices and acts. A coward caves to pressure when a friend and sister want to keep a predator from harming a loved one.

“**Ironically**, Marco spoke with Pam in the same manner he counseled Dennis. Marco was not accountable to truth. He offered Pam and Dennis what they told him. Marco simply agreed with each and appeared wise and **honorable.**”

“**Marco** has an unhealthy need for approval. As shameless as Marco views Dennis and his evil actions, Marco will break bread with Dennis in the future. He will overlook transgressions that Dennis committed against Marco and lies Dennis told him for years.

“**Marco** adds a rather dark layer to the entire tragedy. He knew Gaston and Sally were married. He knew Sally personally. He spent

time with Sally and Gaston. He knew she was coping with issues and he knew and admitted that Dennis had ‘special problems’.

“Marco was a potential power broker. He could and should have encouraged Pam to rally her family in defense of Sally.” Emma stopped to consider a somber point. “Sabio, tragedies like this should be stopped by heroes.

“Marco could have been a hero; but, he neither discerned the scope of the problem nor how he added to it. His maligned judgments blinded him from purpose and truth. He was not centered. He did not and will not cross into destiny. He will remain in parvus as long as he deludes himself of his perceived value and effectiveness.”

Emma prepared her explanation of Dennis. “Sabio, do you recall the dark parvus vortices over San Agustin?” The old man nodded. “Those were people filled with anger, rage, envy, and manic tendencies with the intent to control and destroy. This is Dennis.”



“I need only weigh the destruction he wrought in the lives of his children. Not only did he harm them, his evil acts ended his relationships with **them**.” Emma then shared, “**Any** lady who knew of the carnage Dennis inflicted upon his family would avoid him like the plague. Sadly, Sally did not know.

“**Dennis** was in the perfect position to dupe the unsuspecting. No one in Paraguay knew him—not even Sally! No one had the ability or inclination to check his background. If Sally or her family knew of his history, they would have turned him away. They allowed a wolf to enter the **sheep’s** pasture.”

Out of anger, Emma underscored her previous comment. “**Sabio**, if a discerning woman heard, even in passing, that Dennis was violent and abusive to his children and wife, she would intuitively and instinctively reject him. She would never give him credibility.

“**When** you add adultery, pornography, mental and emotional illness, and extreme social anomalies to the equation, no healthy lady would date much less marry him. Sally trusted blindly with filters made of her own past pain and deceit. She could not see her own failings much less **Dennis’** nefarious past and current **practices**.”

Emma looked at the ground and said rather softly. “**We** cannot expect normal behavior from abnormal **people**.” She paused and added, “**We** should not expect healthy choices from unhealthy people.

“**Dennis** is unhealthy. He preyed upon an unhealthy woman. Dennis is consumed with the micro and the micro consumes him. He destroys all in his path. If Marco genuinely and forcefully challenged Dennis, Dennis would reject Marco as well. Since Marco acts cowardly, this will never happen.

“No,” Emma considered, “people like Dennis will destroy until they are held to account for their depraved acts and deception.”



## The Poignant



The old man looked at Emma and then to San Agustin. “Mariposa, distill the essence of this complex tragedy. Who is in parvus? Why?”

Emma thought of the characters and replied. “Sally is in parvus

for her failure to forgive herself. She will not be healthy or make wise decisions until she heals from the pain in her past. She must be willing to listen to those who know and love her.”

“Gaston is in magnus and crossed into destiny. He sacrificed all for Sally.” Emma hesitated. “Pam is in magnus. She fought valiantly for her sister; but she was unwilling to cross into destiny. She relinquished her purpose when she listened to her brother and Marco.”

“Sally’s brothers are in magnus. Marco is in parvus for his failure to be courageous. Dennis is in parvus for his failure to be authentic and healthy. He is a devious and troubled soul who will ruin lives until he receives desperately needed therapy.”

“Good,” the old man said. “Now, share about the relationship of the vortices.”

Emma knew this was a key element. “Sabio, most vortices gravitated to the baseness—the micro of humanity.”

“Explain this point.”

“Well, humanity stoops emotionally to the pedestrian. For example, Sally was emotionally drawn to Dennis’ scheme, just as he was to her emotional weakness. Like attracts like. Marco conceded to both of their emotional plights; for he suffered from an equally crippling emotional frailty. Pam was emotionally tied to Sally and acquiesced to the unthinkable when her brother and Marco lacked the mental, emotional and willful resolve to intervene.” Emma tried to make sense of this entire dynamic. “Emotions are everywhere, to the very brink; emotions are everywhere, not a mind did think.

“Dennis was the dark vortex that drew Sally in and destroyed her. He acted out of greed. Sally was not centered with purpose; she acted out of greed as well. She coveted something elusive that

she believed Dennis, an unhealthy man she did not know, would provide.

“**Dennis** coveted Sally, someone he never dreamed of duping, a lady he would have had little chance of winning upon his own merits within his own community. Sadly, Sally wanted to satisfy her need to be loved regardless of the maniac she blindly accepted.

“**Notably, Marco** acted out of greed as well. He craved the acceptance of those who sought his help. Pam, however, acted out of fear of loss. She did not want to jeopardize her relationship with Sally. This motivation foreclosed the possibility of enhancing their bond and reuniting Gaston and Sally.

“**Gaston** was not motivated by fear of loss or greed. He accepted the potential loss of Sally. He had nothing to gain other than peace of mind that she might be safely far away from Dennis. Gaston acted in love. He loved Sally at an extreme of being in *magnus*. He was selfless.



“**Gaston** was truly benevolent. His circumstances did not matter. His life did not matter. He would willingly die for Sally. Protecting her from Dennis was not even a sacrifice to **him**.” Emma thought for a moment. “**Sabio**, **Gaston** was able to be in the purest **sense**.”

The old man clasped his hands and slowly raised them into the air. “**Yes**,” he said, “**that** is the noble aim of being. To be in an extreme state, one must be uninhibited and completely selfless and centered with purpose, without undue distraction or influence from anyone.

Emma replied, “**Gaston** was willing to lose Sally in March; he was willing to leave everything behind to be with her in August; he lost her forever as he exposed **Dennis**.” Emma came to a poignant consideration. “**Gaston** had clarity of mind and, I am certain, his heart carried the burden after he was **broken**.”

“**Yes, Mariposa**,” the old man added, “**But** do not forget, all is circumstantial to the warrior who crosses into **destiny**.”

Emma looked perplexed.

He continued. “Brokenness to someone with a manifested purpose like **Gaston** is just another circumstance. My **child**,” he emphasized, “**to be means to *be***”

## The Promise



By the time they returned to their mats, Emma was mentally and emotionally drained. Their conversation had taken a toll. The sun had quietly settled below the horizon. The old man knew it was time.

“**Mariposa**, you are tired. Let us rest for the **night**.”

Emma fought his suggestion. “**Sabio**, man does not have to exist in the micro. He may be in the macro. One may cross with purpose into possibility and **destiny**.”

The man held his breath. He realized **Emma**’s passion for wisdom. “**Watch** this, **Mariposa**.” He drew a vortex in the dirt. He then placed the end of a small stick in parvus and the other in medietas. He aligned a longer stick from parvus into magnus.

He explained that to cross to the center and up the vortex was a **warrior**’s choice—a willful act. The old man then whispered his next thought. “**This** choice and act of a warrior is love. No other definition is worthy. Love is an **act**!”

Emma was speechless. At that moment, she had complete clarity of their entire conversation.

The old man drew another vortex in the dirt. He raised his finger. “**When** a warrior is centered with purpose, as he nears destiny, when the sacrifice is the hardest and he is able to be regardless of the circumstances, the path he walks is straight and **narrow**.”

Emma noticed that the man placed the long stick down the center of the vortex and perpendicular to the smaller stick which spanned across magnus.

The old man continued. “**If** one is whole and centered under extreme sacrifice within the vortex of life, he will be with truth and achieve **purpose**.” The man paused deliberately. “**Mariposa**, he bears his cross into **destiny**.”

Emma could not ignore the cross that was almost perfectly aligned within the vortex. She was overwhelmed with thoughts

emotions. “**This** is Ana’s cross. This is my **father’s** cross. This is the cross of those who paid a dear price for purpose and destiny. My heart **hurts!**” Emma exclaimed. She tried to laugh. “It is a good hurt. My mind is renewed. I am grateful for the wisdom. I know the **truth.**” She paused and then added, “**Sabio**, I hope to persevere with the will to cross into **destiny.**”



The man knew this moment would come. He bowed his head in satisfaction. He knew Emma had arrived at wisdom beyond understanding.

Their conversation was coming to an end. “**Mariposa,**” he advised, “**heroes** are born every day; yet, few are manifested. Few demonstrate the humility to surrender completely. Few are able or willing to be larger than **life.**”

“**We** need only look for those who bear a cross into **destiny.**” Emma listened intently. “**We** need only look to yesterday for righteous examples of a manifested purpose and destiny. Those few are worthy of our **acclaim.**”

“**My** child, we long for warriors, if only because we are inadequate and too fearful to be so intrepid. This is why we vie for the champion. We root for the underdog, the one with the hope and will to persevere.

“**Consider** my words,” the man said lovingly. “**The** past is replete with those who inspired humanity, those who dared to be for the benefit of all, those who trekked a solitary path, alone, lonely, and often desperate. Their ultimate inspiration was **truth.**” Emma was spellbound.

“**Man** looks into yesterday for hope and inspiration. We look into yesterday, whether a decade or centuries ago, for those with humility, those humbled into submission, and those who honored truth with **purpose.**”



## The Providential



The old man closed his eyes and placed his hands together in front of his face. A moment later he bowed and rested his hands upon his knees. Emma watched patiently.

He then drew a final vortex. After he secured two straight sticks,

he whispered. “Do you want to see a true act of love?” Emma’s eyes were wide. She was so moved, she could not reply.

He solemnly placed the small stick above and beyond magnus and a long stick through the heart of the vortex. He looked into her eyes and said, “Yesterday Everyone Saw Humility Upon A . . .”

“Cross,” Emma uttered with deference. She could not hold back the missing word. Humbled, she bowed her head in awe.

Emma rose and walked to the old man. She sat in his lap and wrapped her arms around him. She wept gently for all he had given her. She was grateful for what she understood. Emma loved her teacher.

With her face buried in his robe, she spoke. “Where is she today, Sabio?”

“I don’t know, Mariposa. I hope she crosses into destiny.”

Emma asked, “Have you crossed, Sabio?”

As the man hugged Emma, he sighed with gratitude. “I loved her enough to be with her; I loved her enough to release her; I love her enough to wait. The circumstances do not matter. I chose to be. Love is an act, my dear child.”

Emma smiled. She treasured the warmth of Sabio’s heart. She then searched for a question with the hope to lengthen their grand conversation which she did not want to end.

Too tired to think, she closed her eyes in her teacher’s gentle embrace and whispered,

THE CROSSING

“Yesterday Everyone Saw Humility Upon A cross.”



THE CROSSING

“Yesterday Everyone Saw Humility Upon A cross.”



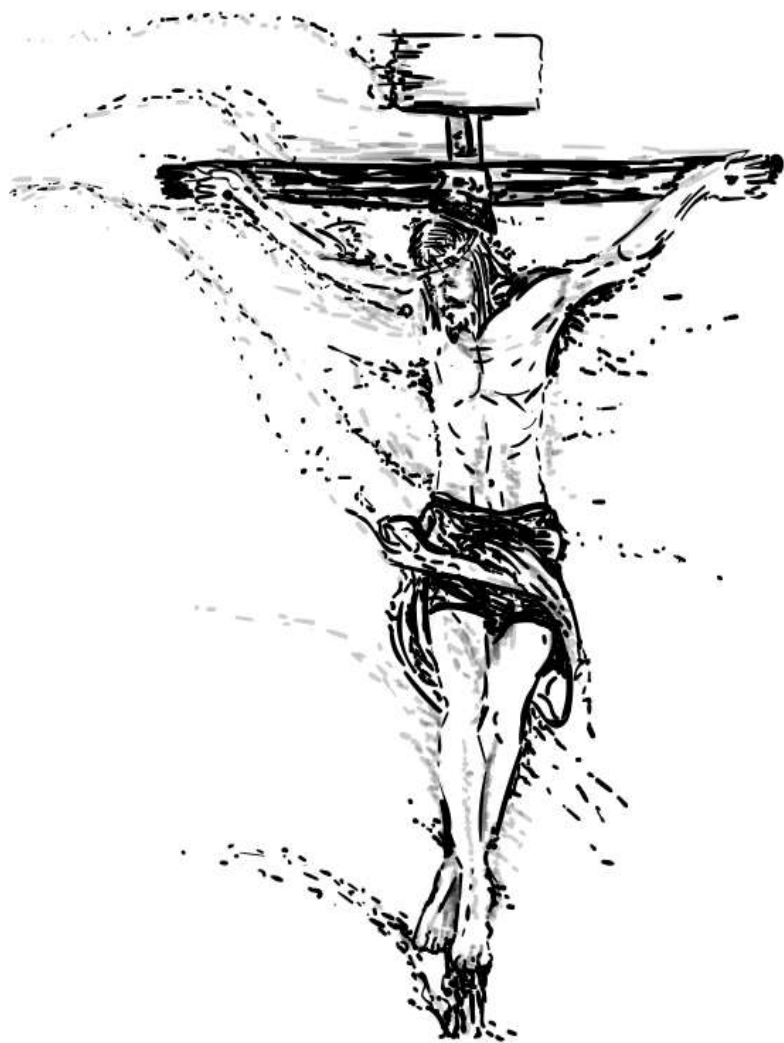
THE CROSSING

“Yesterday Everyone Saw Humility Upon A cross.”



THE CROSSING

“Yesterday...”



## THE CROSSING

When Emma stirred, she was overwhelmed by commotion. She opened her eyes to boys and girls laughing, dancing, and smiling. They pointed in her direction and chanted, “Mariposa! Mariposa! Mariposa!” Emma was at the base of Cerro Tres Kandú. All about, countless butterflies flitted; many rested upon her.

“Oh Sabio,” she exclaimed cheerfully, “You crossed!”

The End



*When the cowards realized the warrior's efforts were noble, they scoffed and said, "What a fool!"*



## Notes

\*Pareto Principle, the law of the vital few.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pareto\\_principle](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pareto_principle)

## About the Author

James Bowers Johnson is the father of Cory, Heather, Timothy, and Emma. Born and raised in Virginia, he was graduated from the Virginia Military Institute in 1987. As a Distinguished Military Graduate, he received an Army Commission, served in the field of Military Intelligence and was Company Commander for HHC, 748<sup>th</sup> MI Battalion, 704<sup>th</sup> MI Brigade, INSCOM.



He was unjustly incarcerated for four years for allegedly failing to sign a piece of paper for the federal government. You may read about his incredible story in [The End of Justice](#), a critical analysis as to why America is the most incarcerated country in the world.

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## THE CROSSING