

The Ceremony

Shamanic Story



Storyteller-Artist-Shaman
MARIA MAR

“The Ceremony” by Maria Mar

THE CEREMONY

Shamanic Story

By Storyteller-Artist-Shaman

MARIA MAR

<https://dreamalchemist.com>

Published by ShamansDance Publishing & Productions, New York 2020

THE CEREMONY

Shamanic Story

Cora was excited, scared and happy all at once. This was her first time doing a ceremony all by herself.

“Do you have all you need?” her shaman teacher asked at the bottom of the hill.

“Blanket, tobacco pouch, water, sage bundle and matches for smudging, a compass, my journal and pen, my eyeglasses and the script for the prayer,” Cora reviewed.

“Umm,” her teacher hummed.

“What? Am I forgetting something?” Cora asked nervously.

“It’s time you go,” her shaman teacher replied. “May Spirit protect you and guide your steps.”

So it was that Cora found herself going up the hill.

She had barely taken five steps when she bumped into a beautiful heart-shape stone with whirling colors of red and orange... and promptly fell flat on her ass.

“The Ceremony” by Maria Mar

“Ffff...” she started to curse, but closed her mouth and pressed her lips, reminding herself of what her teacher had taught her; that she was in ceremony and everything she said or did was part of the ceremony.

On Cora went, climbing the hill while she kept her eyes on the ground, carefully placing her feet so she would not stumble again as she tried to remember all the parts of the ceremony.

“Setting *Sacred Space* is the first thing I have to do,” she reviewed. “The first thing in that task is *Summoning Power*. I do this by bringing in my *Spirit Guides* and all my *Circle of Light*.”

“What was the *Circle of Light* again?” Cora wanted to check. “Something about... oh, yes, it’s my *Spirit Team*, those entities assigned to help me evolve and carry out my purpose.”

“I liked the image that the *Circle of Light* is a wheel that activates my spiritual power grid and it helps when I move my hands in a circle to activate it.”

“I better review it, because this is the first thing I must do when I get up.” Cora mumbled. “First, my *SpiritMother* and *SpiritFather*, or *Guardian Angels*. Then what? Oh, yes, my *Ancestors*. Wait! This task has two parts. The first part is easy, as it’s calling those family *Ancestors* who have passed away. But what’s the second part? My teacher gave me an image to remember. What...? Aah! The rainbow. Yes, that’s it: *All our Ancestors*, from all races, across time and space... for we are one family.”

Cora breathed deeply, feeling good about herself that she had remembered these parts of the *Circle of Light*.

“The Ceremony” by Maria Mar

“I am starting to feel the presence of my *SpiritMother*,” she reflected as she walked mechanically up the hill. “She sometimes feels as who I would love to become in a faraway future, like three lives from now: strong, compassionate and with overflowing joy and humor. But sometimes she whispers things into my ears that are not so funny; especially when she shows me how ridiculous my ego can be. Hmph!”

As Cora muttered and harrumphed as she mentally reviewed the imaginary circle that her teacher had helped her assemble as a blueprint to understand and summon her *Circle of Light*. She was so engrossed in her thoughts that she barely registered the green joy of the fresh grass and the gentle breeze cooling her climbing efforts.

“After I summon my *Guardian Angels* and *Ancestors*, I’m to call my *Caminos*, the different paths in my *Circle of Light*, where different Spirit Teachers and Guides, Power Animals, Power Plants and Wise Ones connect with me and my unique gifts, talents, lessons and goals,” Cora reviewed.

“Well, I’ll summon the ones I am familiar with right now because it will take years to recognize some of them; especially the Warriors. I don’t feel so comfortable with this aggressive energy. I’m not even sure that I can accept that aggression and warriors can be part of Spirit. Isn’t Spirit peace and love?”

These ruminations had caved a deep crevice in her forehead, right between her eyes. Meanwhile, birds sang, swinging merrily on the tree branches and a generous sun illuminated the clear late Spring sky.

“I think I got the *Summoning of Power* ready to go,” Cora checked on her never-ending mental to-do list. “After that, I’m to call the directions,

“The Ceremony” by Maria Mar

and that makes me nervous because I’m not sure if I know the *Medicine Wheel* well enough. And I can’t mess this up. Ceremony is a serious endeavor. Things have their proper order and place. Everything has meaning”

“What if I screw it up...” A whiny, grumpy and irritating voice within Cora intervened.

“Sorry! Sorry Spirit! I did not mean to use a crude word!” Cora immediately apologized.

“But that’s true. That’s a fear I have,” Cora acknowledged, feeling her heart fall into her tummy. “What if I mess up and then the reverse of what I want happens? Oh, God, I better remember what direction I’m supposed to call first!”

Suddenly, Cora saw a blur of furry movements. There was a squirrel jumping and squeaking, swinging her tail outrageously. Cora’s mouth dropped open as Squirrel did three consecutive summersaults and then jumped about six feet as she landed. She scrambled to coordinate her limbs quickly again and did a backflip that landed her in the opposite direction.

“What an amazing acrobat!” was Cora’s first thought. But just as she began to grin and was about to let out a guffaw, she remembered that she was in ceremony and that this was serious business.

Cora snapped her mouth close, shook her head disapprovingly and kept climbing the hill.

Cora was worried about “the flow.”

“The Ceremony” by Maria Mar

“My teacher insisted that I could not get distracted because distractions poke holes in the energy weave holding the ceremony together. She said that it’s as if I drilled holes in a container. The water inside would leak out. So will the energy in the ceremonial circle leak out if I get distracted. So focus, Cora!” she admonished herself.

She carelessly took a step forward as she kept her eyes on the hill top. She was so close!

Suddenly a rattlesnake stood not four feet from her. She rose tall and angry, rattling menacingly.

Cora froze. Her body grew cold. Her instinct told her to back away slowly.

“No, I cannot show fear,” Cora admonished herself. “This is a ceremony. I must have faith.”

Before she could take a step forward, however, another rattlesnake called from the South and the rattlesnake in front of Cora glided away towards the sound.

“Feeuu! That was close!” Cora mumbled as she wiped the cold sweat from her forehead.

Her next step up the hill failed as her knees had turned to jelly.

Cora sat on a boulder to catch her strength, not to mention her breath.

Two huge eyes spied on her, hidden among the bushes.

“Racoon,” Cora whispered. “They are cute, but they remind me of a thief, with that black mask around their eyes.”

“The Ceremony” by Maria Mar

An annoyed chittering hit her ears as the grass blades where the raccoon had hidden snapped into place and scurrying sounds indicated an ill-humored retreat.

““Oh my, you are touchy!” Cora muttered. “Don’t take it personally!”

Feeling rested, Cora continued her climb, using her fingers to tick off the rest of the tasks in the ceremony.

“Offer my tobacco. Sing or call the *Spirits of the Place*. Close the portal to nasty or undeveloped Spirits or energies but send a prayer for them. What else?”

And so it went, Cora mentally busy with the orders of things until she finally reached the top of the hill.

Cora took out the blanket and place it inside an old ceremonial circle drawn with small stones. She found several loose stones to anchor the blanket at the center of the circle.

She then took out the sage and smudged all around the hill top, taken care to smudge herself and the blanket.

Next Cora took out her water bottle, pen and journal and her glasses, laying them to the right of the blanket. She then made sure that the paper with the prayer script was securely held inside a tiny pouch in her bosom.

Ready to start, Cora took out her compass and found North. She then oriented herself on the location of the cardinal directions in reference to the ceremonial circle of stones.

Feeling more confident now, Cora began to *Summon Power*.

“The Ceremony” by Maria Mar

Cora used her voice and arms to invoke her *Circle of Light*. Then she walked the ceremonial circle, sending a sound and sage smoke to each direction. Opening her tobacco bag that she had hanging from her belt, Cora offered tobacco shavings in each direction.

Finally, she returned to the center, in front of her blanket and took out the prayer script given by her teacher, to call Spirit and activate the ceremonial purpose.

A scurrying sound behind her made her jump.

Raccoon had her eyeglasses in his tiny hands.

When Cora turned and growled, she could swear that Raccoon had a triumphant smile; but when she took a bunch of stones and started throwing them at the bandit, he dropped the glasses and scrambled away, hissing and snarling.

Shaking her head, Cora went on to voice the prayer as loudly as she could, though the wind quickly stole her words.

“*Spirits of the Place*, I call upon your help,” Cora finished as he offered tobacco at her feet and then rose her hands with a smidgeon of tobacco shaves that were quickly snatched by the wind.

With a big sigh of relief, Cora sat on the blanket... and a crack violently reminded her that her glasses had been moved by the miscreant.

“Ahhggrr!” Cora screamed, “I’m going to kill you, you big buffoon! I’m making Raccoon soup out of ya!”

“The Ceremony” by Maria Mar

A high-pitch chitter, so close to laughter that it made her skin crawled, echoed her threat. Cora made to get up in pursue, but she could hear the grass rustling as the Raccoon scrambled away.

Picking up her shattered eyeglasses, Cora felt like a rotund failure. It seemed that instead of hearing her plea and coming to her aid, the *Spirits of the Place* were mocking her. Furthermore, they were stealing her words and even her glasses. What was she to think? Was she not good enough for this lowly hill? That left tall holy mountains out of the question!

Deflated and exhausted, Cora drank some water and then sat on her blanket and waited for Spirit to show up.

Several tiny birds perched on the circle of stones, gathering the tobacco shavings and leaving in a brouhaha of chirps and songs and fluttering feathers.

A squirrel stood between two stones in the ceremonial circle, wagging her tail. Was it the same clown she had encountered on her way up? Cora erased her budding smile and drew her lips tight, remembering that she was in ceremony. This was serious business.

“Shoo!” she yelped at the squirrel, throwing a couple of pebbles at her. The squirrel scurried away.

Suddenly two hawks whirled across the sky, one white and one red. Their talons locked, they fought fiercely, none able to fly away. Was that a sign?

“No, that can’t be right,” Cora said. “Spirit is peace; it would not show itself in a fight.”

“The Ceremony” by Maria Mar

The rapidly spinning ball of feathers dashed away and stillness fell upon the hilltop.

Not a leaf moved in the trees. The branches were still in the lack of even the gentlest of breezes. The song of birds had stopped. No animal steps could be heard. Cora felt goosebumps on her skin, though there was no breeze to cause a chill. The entire hill top seemed to have been blanketed in silence, frozen in time and space.

So Cora waited for the arrival of Spirit. She waited for the magic to descend upon the ceremonial circle.

Waited as her lids began to drop.

Waited as she started to yawn.

Waited as her mind went blank.

She woke up startled.

“What time is it?” she asked herself as she scrambled for her cell-phone; just then remembering that she left her bag with the teacher. “Did I miss Spirit?”

The sun was sinking rapidly into the earth, so Cora hurriedly packed and walked down the hill, dusk on her heels.

Hallway down the hill, she realized that she had not closed the ceremonial circle, released the spirits or given thanks. Her teacher said that was bad manners.

“The Ceremony” by Maria Mar

“But I don’t think anyone showed up, so no one will be offended,” Cora comforted herself.

“How was it?” her shaman teacher asked, searching her eyes.

“Disappointing,” Cora said. “Spirit didn’t show up.”

“Are you sure?” the teacher asked.

“Well... either that or I was asleep when Spirit came,” Cora confessed. She felt embarrassed, but mainly she felt a failure.

“Tomorrow is another day,” was all her shaman teacher said.

The next day, Cora found herself with her shaman-teacher at the bottom of the same hill.

“Couldn’t we try for another hill?” Cora asked hopefully. “This one doesn’t seem to work for me.”

Her shaman-teacher smiled widely, but then she asked:

“Do you have all you need?”

“Blanket, tobacco offering, water, sage bundle and matches for smudging, the compass, my journal and pen and the script for the prayer,” Cora reviewed.

“And your eyeglasses?” her teacher asked.

“I sat one time too many on them,” Cora muttered, not willing to divulge how Raccoon had bested her.

“The Ceremony” by Maria Mar

“Anything else?” her teacher asked.

“No, that’s all,” Cora said. “I’m ready to go!”

“Umm,” her teacher hummed.

“What? Am I forgetting something?” Cora asked nervously.

“It’s time you go,” her shaman teacher replied. “May Spirit protect you and guide your steps.”

So it was that Cora found herself stepping into the hill.

“Wait!” her teacher said. “My niece just showed up and I have something important to do, could you take her with you?”

Just then seemingly out of nowhere a pubescent, rod-thin girl showed up. She seemed flighty, as she looked everywhere but where her feet were landing showed up. When she stepped close to her aunt, she simply wave her hand.

Cora was surprised. “I thought that I had to do this ceremony alone,” she told her teacher. “That’s what you said.”

“Oh, well, shit happens,” her teacher said with a breezy laugh and pushed the young girl towards Cora. “She knows this hill and she will be no trouble at all. Just do your thing,”

And with those vague instructions, the teacher went off, leaving Cora with a pubescent girl on one hand and an already failing spiritual mission on the other.

“The Ceremony” by Maria Mar

Cora could not believe that her teacher had said “shit” and had dumped her niece on her right at the start of her ceremony.

“Hi, I’m Trixie,” the girl said. “You’re doing a ceremony? Far out! and she raised her open palm, calling a high-five.

“You need to be more circumspect,” Cora scolded. “A ceremony is a serious thing.”

“If you say so,” Trixie mumbled and walked ahead. She picked up a stick and went about swinging it as she climbed.

They had not gone up half a mile when Trixie stumbled on a stone.

“Well, at least I’m not the only clumsy one,” Cora thought.

As she lay there on her ass, Trixie held the stone up. Cora could have sworn it was the same heart-shaped red stone that had stood on her way the day before. But that couldn’t be, could it? That stone had been almost at the bottom of the hill, and this was half a mile up.

“I can see stones rolling down, but they can’t climb up!” Cora told herself, shaking her head.

Just then she heard Trixie. The girl was actually talking to the stone!

“Is the girl touched in the head?” Cora thought.

“What do you want, little red heart? Trixie asked. “Oh, I see, you want a ride up!”

Trixie put the stone in her pocket.

“You are not supposed to intervene in the landscape,” Cora scolded.

“The Ceremony” by Maria Mar

But Trixie was already too far to hear the admonishment, so Cora hurried up after her.

Just as she was catching up she heard noises and laughter.

“What is this rascal up to now?” Cora mumbled.

Her mouth dropped open when she entered the small clearance where she had seen Squirrel the day before.

Squirrel was back to her antics. But that was not all. Trixie was doing summersaults with the freaking squirrel! The clown squirrel squeaked in delight and Trixie fell once again on her ass, laughing her head off.

“Young lady, this is my ceremony. Your aunt entrusted you to me, but I have a serious ceremony to perform and you must behave,” Cora said in her most authoritative voice.

“If you say so,” Trixie responded, dusting off her derriere as she ran up the hill.

They were almost at the top, Cora huffing and puffing after Trixie, when the rattlesnake showed up again, rising menacingly not three feet from Cora.

Cora didn’t dare to move.

Trixie was about six feet behind the snake. Cora saw the girl quietly searching inside her bag and taking out a small rattle drum.

“Rrrratratrrrrra!” Trixie rattled on her tiny rattle drum as she stomped her feet on the ground.

“The Ceremony” by Maria Mar

Was this young girl mad? Cora thought. Did her aunt know how weird she was? Why would her teacher have pushed the girl at Cora when she was in a holy quest?

“Rrrrraatatrrrrra!” Trixie rattled as she hollered and stomp, moving fast along the grass, adding the rustle of the grass to her racket.

The snake turned towards the noise and began to glide away from the racket. Cora used the distractions to move to a safe distance.

She was about to sigh in relief when Trixie stopped the racket. She stopped moving and seemed to be mesmerized by something.

Cora look at the point where Trixie’s eyes were fixed. The rattlesnake had turned back and was moving toward the girl at unexpected speed.

When she was about three feet from Trixie the rattlesnake reared up.

Cora held her breath.

Then something impossible happened.

The snake started to undulate rhythmically. The movements were so graceful that they were mesmerizing. It reminded Cora of a snake dancing to a snake charmer, but here Rattlesnake was the charmer and was charming Trixie, who began to play at the rhythm of the snake’s movements.

Then Trixie stopped and bowed to Rattlesnake.

“Thank you for your wisdom,” the girl said.

Cora could swear that the snake bowed back. But that was impossible.

“The Ceremony” by Maria Mar

Slowly, the snake dropped to the ground and disappeared among the bushes, a sense of “mission accomplished” in her smooth movements as she headed West.

Cora released the breath she did not know she was holding.

They finished their journey without a word.

Cora was deep in thought; but the more she thought, the less she understood.

Something strange, perhaps sacred had happened between Trixie and the rattlesnake. Why had nothing happened to Cora in her journey alone yesterday? She felt rejected by Spirit.

They reached the top and Cora when through the rites to smudge the place and the blanket and then smudged Trixie and herself.

She summoned power, called the directions and placed her tobacco offerings along the ceremonial circle.

She then stood at the center of the stone circle, wondering how she was going to read the prayer without her eyeglasses.

As Cora fumbled inside her bra to get the prayer script out, Trixie was placing the heart-shaped red stone she had carried up into a gap between two stones at the South of the ceremonial circle.

“Oh, so this is what was calling you, tiny red heart,” Trixie was saying. “You were chosen for this great honor, to be part of the ceremonial circle. I celebrate you.”

“The Ceremony” by Maria Mar

Prayer script on hand, Cora was stroke by the sudden realization that Trixie was not as clueless or flighty as Cora had judged her. The girl was simply organically connected to the natural world.

At that moment, a wind blew the paper out of her hands. Cora ran after the paper, but the wind stole it out of reach.

“What was that?” Trixie asked.

“The prayer script,” Cora said. “What am I going to do now?”

“That’s easy,” Trixie said. “You make up a prayer.”

“But I don’t know how to do that,” Cora complained. “This is my first ceremony.”

“Why?”

“What do you mean?” Cora asked.

“Why are you doing this ceremony?” Trixie asked.

“Why, that’s easy...” Cora said. Then snapped her mouth shut. Why was she doing this ceremony?

“I... I don’t know...” she confessed.

“Then there is no prayer,” Trixie said.

“What do you mean?” Cora rattled.

“Your intention is the heart of the prayer,” Trixie explained. “Without it, the prayer has no power. No wonder Wind snatched it away!”

It was at that moment that everything fell into place for Cora.

“The Ceremony” by Maria Mar

She had separated the mundane from the sacred, the material from the spiritual, the land and the creatures from Spirit. But it was all interconnected.

She had not been listening. She was deaf and blind because she had not brought her intention.

No wonder her teacher had acted as if she was forgetting something. Because she had. She had forgotten her intention.

“Sit with me,” Cora invited.

They sat on the blanket. Trixie began to hum a strange chant.

Cora placed her hands on her heart and breathed deeply into it.

“What is my intention? I know I had one when my teacher told me it was time for a ceremony. What was it?”

“What happened yesterday?” Trixie asked. “Maybe that can help you.”

“Well, first I stumbled into a stone. One very similar to the one you stumbled upon, but mine was further down the hill, Cora said.

“Did you pick it up?”

“No, when I fell I felt like a fool,” Cora confessed.

“Sometimes being the fool is the smartest thing we can do,” Trixie answered.

“I’m beginning to see that,” Cora smiled.

“What happened next?”

“Clown squirrel,” Cora muttered.

“The Ceremony” by Maria Mar

“Jajaja!” Trixie laughed. “Was she as outrageous as she was today?”

Cora nodded.

“And what did you do?”

“I wanted to laugh... but instead I pressed my lips and pressed on, trying to be serious,” Cora confessed.

“Because a ceremony is a serious thing, and one must be circumspect right?” Trixie said, imitating Cora’s earlier tone.

“Something like that,” Cora said, embarrassed at her own rigidity. She was starting to understand that sacred and serious were dimensions with many layers, not edicts to stifle the natural flow of life.

“Squirrel was moving the energy,” Trixie said. “She was ushering joy and playfulness.”

“Oh God!” Cora barked. “That’s it! “I’ve been searching for my spiritual power inside a bag of seriousness and retreat. I’ve believed that I need to sit in serious meditation and shut off the world for Spirit to touch me.”

“As if birds would not perch in the tree that swings in the breeze...” Trixie whispered.

Cora looked at the young girl. She was about 11 years old. She played and guffawed, danced and stumbled throughout the ceremonial walk; and yet, she had not missed a sign. She had found Spirit in every stone and creature they’ve met.

“The Ceremony” by Maria Mar

Cora’s body began to swing back and forth, as if it needed to rock in order to digest the innocence she was witnessing, the simplicity that Cora had mistaken for ignorance.

“What about rattlesnake, did she show up?” Trixie wanted to know.

“She did, and I froze.”

“Good idea,” Trixie said. “Staying still is the best first response to a rattlesnake. They scare easily. Did you back away?”

“No, that’s the thing,” Cora mumbled. “I thought that being afraid was not spiritual, so I began to move forward.”

“Are you mad?” Trixie squeaked.

“Wait a second, you took out the rattle and started stomping and singing, and you were moving a lot!” Cora accused.

“I was far away enough when I played the rattle, so that you had time to back away,” Trixie explained. “After that I was listening to Spirit, and it told me that Rattlesnake had medicine for us, so I listened.”

“Was that when the snake began to dance?” Cora asked.

“Yes, and then I knew we had entered the *Sacred World* and I played for her,” Trixie said.

“Entered the *Sacred World*?” Cora asked. “What do you mean?”

“The *Natural World* and the *Sacred Worlds* are just a blink away from each other,” Trixie said. “It’s more like one is inside the other, like Babushka dolls. One moment you are watching a dangerous snake and the next you are dancing with the wisdom of transformation.”

“The Ceremony” by Maria Mar

“You are so young and yet so wise,” Cora whispered.

“I was breastfed in ceremonies,” Trixie laughed. “Mom would carry me strapped to her back as she did ceremony. I sat and played as Spirit came and went. It’s like breathing to me.”

“And that is why you were sent with me,” Cora realized. “Not as a burden or distraction but as a scout, an eye-opener so to speak.”

“I guess,” Trixie said shrugging her shoulders. “What else happened?”

“I got up the hill, set up the space and then Squirrel showed up. She was standing right where you placed the stone.”

“Oh, yes, that gap there was allowing energy to escape in ceremony, so it needed to be healed. Squirrel likes you. She was helping you by sealing the gap,” Trixie explained.

“And I was clueless,” Cora muttered. “I was shooin it away!

Trixie laughed hard, she laughed so hard that she fell back and began to stamp on the blanket with her shoeless feet.

Her mirth was contagious and Cora finally let go and began to laugh.

“Was the offering received?” Trixie asked.

“Aaaah, so that was what the birds were doing!” Cora said, drying her tears of mirth.

“Yes, they are excellent receptionists,” Trixie confirmed. “So that was good. What happened next?”

“To think that I was pissed off because I thought they were stealing the offering,” Cora confessed. “I thought that’s why the ceremony failed.”

“The Ceremony” by Maria Mar

“Failed!” Trixie questioned, almost to herself, but quickly recovered. “What else happened?”

“Well, even before that, something happened....” Cora mumbled, embarrassed to share her most humiliating moment.

“You sound reluctant to share it,” Trixie said seriously. “That convinces me that it must be told,” she finished with a guffaw.

Cora narrowed her eyes at Trixie, but then smiled. “Might as well. It seems that everything that happened was sacred and I kept ignoring it and missing it’s meaning.”

“Shoot,” Trixie bade, closing her eyes. Her ears were twitching, as if she had grown antennas or switched her sight to her ears. The thought made Cora smile.

“Raccoon was pissed off with me because he felt insulted that I called his species thieves, so he tried to steal my eyeglasses,” Cora rapidly confessed.

“Tried?” Trixie asked, already a wide smile in her face.

“Well, I shoo him away,” Cora explained, “But minutes later I sat – more like I threw myself—onto the blanket; forgetting he had dropped the freaking glasses on the center spot.”

“And...?” Trixie taunted.

Cora was sure that Trixie knew what followed and just wanted to hear it from her lips.

“I sat on the eyeglasses and broke them beyond repair,” Cora blurted.

“The Ceremony” by Maria Mar

Trixie laughed uproariously. She laughed so hard that her body rolled back and she was slapping her thighs as big waves of raucous laughter escape her shaking body.

“Go ahead,” Cora said, a wry smile on her lips. “I deserve your laughter. You have shown me how there is so much magic available, but whereas you received it, I pushed everything away, wrapped in my obsession with order, diligence and seriousness.”

“That’s it!” Trixie said, springing forward like a Jack-in-a-box.

“That’s what?” Cora snapped.

“What are eyeglasses for?” Trixie asked.

“To correct one’s vision, to help one see better,” Cora answered.

“And what correction in your vision did you need that your current eyeglasses were not helping with?” Trixie asked, genuinely curious.

Cora sat up, her whole body coming alert.

“I... I was following the letter, but not the spirit of ceremony,” Cora confessed.

“What do you mean?” Trixie asked.

“Today I watched you interact with everything and every creature in the path, recognizing and receiving their *Medicine*,” Cora shared. “I have been taught about the *Medicine* in animals and that everything speaks to us, that Spirit is present in everything, that the universe co-creates with us....”

“But?” Trixie whispered.

“The Ceremony” by Maria Mar

“But I was not living that teaching,” Cora acknowledged. “I judged and labeled everything as a distraction and failed to see the gifts they brought. I thought that the heart-shaped red stone was a foolish mistake because I felt like a fool for falling. I saw her as an obstacle and did not see that she was an ally, that she wanted to help in the ceremony by sealing the energy in the ceremonial circle. I judged Squirrel as annoyance when it was reminding me of the power of joy and play. I did not even wonder why Rattlesnake had showed up, and I called Raccoon a thief. I even called Wind a thief. I felt that everything was interfering, stealing power. The whole world was trying to help me and all I saw was adversity!”

Trixie was nodding empathically, but did not comment.

They sat in silence as Cora digested the attitude that had stolen her ceremony yesterday.

“I needed a change in perception!” Cora suddenly yelped. “That’s why the eyeglasses broke!”

“Wonderful!” Trixie cheered as she applauded enthusiastically. “I love when dots are connected. There’s strong magic in the weave of life!”

They drank water and Trixie got out some cornbread. half of which they ate and half of which they shared with the creatures all around them.

“Anything else happened that you may need to er... view with different lenses?” Trixie asked, and then laughed again.

“No, that was it, except I fell asleep, so I might have missed the rest,” Cora confessed.

“Then we should...”

“The Ceremony” by Maria Mar

“No, wait, something else did happen,” Cora remembered. “And now, I wonder if...”

“Just describe it,” Trixie said. “We’ll figure it out.

“Two hawks, one white and one red whirled through space, talons locked,” Cora described. “Because neither let go of the other, neither could fly away, so their locked bodies formed a feather ball speeding across the sky so quickly that I barely realized what I was seeing.”

Trixie looked at her, eyes wide opened, mouth agape.

“What? Is that a bad omen?” Cora asked. “Tell me!”

“Spirit and matter locking talons,” was all Trixie said. “Spirit sent strong Medicine.”

Trixie fell into a sort of trance, her eyes closed. Cora could feel the image of the feathered ball speeding behind the girl’s eyelids, as if she was retrieving what had happened to look deeply at it.

“You see only what is behind your eyes,” Trixie said, her voice soft and intimate, as if she was seeing with Cora’s eyes. You saw the two hawks fighting because that is the story you hold on to. But I see something entirely different.”

“What do you see?” Cora wanted to know.

“Perhaps they were not fighting. White Hawk, embodying Spirit locked its talons into Red Hawk, representing material reality and Red Hawk also locked its talons on Spirit.”

“They were not fighting?” Cora questioned, a furrow between her eyebrows.

“The Ceremony” by Maria Mar

“It depends on your interpretation, doesn’t it? Are Spirit and matter fighting in your eyes?” Trixie asked with a wry smile in her lips. “Or could it be that White Hawk acknowledged that only through the embodiment possible in our physical form could he fly as high as Spirit takes him; while Red Hawk acknowledged that holding on to Spirit empowered him to see the *Sacred World* in the *Natural World*, so that he could unfold his best potential. In that case they were locking talons to accelerate their evolution.”

A veil was pulled from Cora’s eyes.

She saw her struggle with reality; how she judged and badgered her own humanity, her imperfection and her natural emotions, judging them not worthy of Spirit, not sacred, not good enough. Thinking that she had to press her lips, swallow her laughter and measure each step in order to be holy.

She saw her dismissal of joy, laughter, play and human folly as inconsequential foolishness in opposition to her spirituality.

She saw how she had learned a definition of power and authority that was stiff, rigid, almost bureaucratic. She recognized how this notion had been a veil that made her blind to all the ways Spirit spoke through its creatures, through mistakes, through her very humanity.

“I remember,” Cora said softly, her hand on her heart. “My intention was to make my heart holy, to open my heart to Spirit.”

“Your heart is already holy,” Trixie said, touching Cora’s heart. “Your name is like *Corazon* in Spanish or *Coeur* in French. It means heart, and you bring your heart into everything, especially into your laughter.”

“The Ceremony” by Maria Mar

“Meanwhile, I’ve been trying to close it to all that made it joyful, thinking that I had to be serious and do things right in order for Spirit to visit me.”

“Why would Spirit come down to a boring party?” Trixie barked.
“Would you?”

“You are right!” Cora said, getting up. “Get your rattle drum!”

Trixie drummed and danced as Cora sang her intentions to all directions.

*Come Spirits of the East,
set my heart on fire.*

*Come Spirits of the North,
breathe joy into my sacred heart.*

*Come Spirits of the West,
I am standing with the trees.*

*Come Spirits of the South,
The River of Life flows through me.*

*Come from below
beating with the heart of Earth.*

*Come from above
like music through a flute.*

*Come from my heart,
welcoming Spirit now!*

“The Ceremony” by Maria Mar

And Spirit perched on Cora’s heart, filling it to overflowing.

“How was it?” The shaman-teacher asked as they descended the hill.

“Pretty ordinary,” laughed Trixie.

“And extraordinary,” smiled Cora.

“Oh, so you met the *Sacred World*,” the teacher said, and embraced Cora. “How is your heart doing now?”

“My heart is smiling,” Cora said.

“That is your place of power,” the teacher responded. “Everything is sacred when your heart smiles.”

“But what if my heart is crying,” Cora said. “What then?”

“Everything is sacred when your heart is crying,” her teacher said.

“But...”

“Everything is sacred when you listen to your heart, is what auntie is trying to say,” Trixie said, burying her elbow on the teacher’s side.

“Exactly,” her teacher said and exploded into naughty giggles.

Hearing the girlish giggles bursting out of the powerful teacher, all three women laughed ‘till their sides hurt.

THE END

“The Ceremony” by Maria Mar

This story is courtesy of Artist-storyteller-shaman Maria Mar and it is shared for your eyes only. © Maria Mar.

Can I support you?

If your heart tells you that I can help you, please listen. I’m not going to push for anything, but will listen to Spirit with you and see if together we can find a path. What to do:

1. **Email me at** shamansdancepublishing@gmail.com.
2. Entitle the email: **“Support Inquiry”** Tell me what’s going on, how you believe I can help you and what you’d like to happen.
3. **Click send. Really!** We so often hesitate and miss opportunities. Trust your index finger! Everything is in perfect divine order.
4. I’ll reply as soon as I can and we’ll take it from there.
5. **Email me again.** If I don’t answer in a week, your email may have gone to spam or to the promotion tab. Email me again. I give you permission. It will not annoy me. Go ahead.

Loved this story?

If you love magical stories that are blueprints for real life, join my **Story Magic Tribe** at: <https://dreamalchemist.com/join>

Get a free experience of the power of story as a journey for your real life. This free trial includes a **Treasure Chest of Magical Stories**. Go to: <https://storyloversclub.newzenler.com/courses/free-trial>

“The Ceremony” by Maria Mar

Stories for the Time of Covid

Maria, “The Ceremony” was delightful and got some points across that I find eye-opening. BUT these are terrible times. Do you have anything to help me through this time?

Actually, I do.

“The Covid Chrysalis: The Secret Essentials to Face the Covid Emergency and transform it into Emergence” gathers the transmissions I have been receiving in the form of poems, stories, articles and interviews.

They are delivered straight into your inbox and you are invited to respond with your own stories, experiences and insights. I will read your words.

See the topics that are included and register here:

<https://dreamalchemist.com/the-covid-chrysalis-the-secret-essentials-to-turn-this-emergency-into-an-emergence/>

Did you Identify with the protagonist?

If you are a creative spiritual woman who longs to share your gifts and talents with the world in order to make a profound difference, but find yourself playing small, pulling back or hiding in plain sight, join my **Butterfly Waves private FB group** to find inspiration, support, tools

“The Ceremony” by Maria Mar

and events to shine without shame and wear your bold, bright beautiful true colors as you illuminate the world with your radiance.

When you join, you also get a free copy of my latest book “Shine without Shame: Invitation to the Peacock Sisterhood.”

<https://dreamalchemist.com/butterfly-waves/>

Do you like ceremonies? Do you seek connection?

As a ceremonialist I have created ceremonies for individuals, couples, families, groups, communities and natural sites. I have done ceremonies in South Africa, Spain, Mexico, Puerto Rico and the United States. I design ceremonies customized for your purpose and your situation. I also offer Poetry Ceremonies, Story Ceremonies and Shamanic Theatre that is a ceremonial collective experience. During the COVID lockdown, I have created the **Inlakesh Ceremonial Circle** to transform emergency into emergence, isolation into connection and adversity into a bridge to a better self, a better world and a humanity living in harmony with Earth.

The Inlakesh Ceremonial Circle meets via Zoom every last Sunday of the month at 2PM EST.

Join now.at: <https://dreamalchemist.com/inlakesh>

About the Author

About the Author

Maria Mar

“I champion women to drop the old stories of limitations and create the new story of their brilliance illuminating the world. I do this through storytelling, art and creativity as a vibrant, immediate journey of transformation and liberation.” Maria Mar

Maria Mar is the Dream Alchemist, a storyteller, poet, artist, shaman and spiritual teacher whose life mission is to inspire women and all creative, spiritual beings to live a rich, fulfilling and magical life where they are free to express their unique gifts to make a profound difference in the world.



Maria has helped hundreds of women in three continents to break free from limitations so that they can unfold their potential, share their gifts and talents and embody their life purpose

Caminos: The Paths She Walks, the Path She Opens

Maria is a shaman trained by the *Sacred Feminine School of Wisdom* and the creatress of several transformation and self-actualization paths for spiritual, creative women, including:

- **The Butterfly Woman Journey™** ~ Go from hungry, hiding **Caterpillar Self** to bright, bold delighted **Butterfly Woman** and

“The Ceremony” by Maria Mar

make a profound difference in your life, in others and in the world through your *Feminine Gifts*.

- **Story Alchemy™** ~ The reality you are living is made of stories. Change the story and you change your reality.
- **Artchemy™** ~ art as alchemy to playfully dive into the layers of your problems and paint new solutions into the canvas of your life.
- **ChiDancing: Weaving the Energy Field™** ~ Integrate the power of sound, movement and energy work to reweave the energy patterns in your energy body, releasing old habits, freeing yourself from learned limitations, implanting new responses that facilitate your choices and becoming the weaver of the life you want to live.
- **Inner Dynamics™** ~ Meet, heal and govern the vast village inside you. *Recast your Shadows into the Light*, mother your *Developmental Selves* trapped in past traumas and limitations, heal your *Wounded Selves*, awaken your *Creative and Power Selves*, free your infinite inner treasures and assume the *Creative Agency* of your life; becoming a self-actualized woman who embodies her divinity here on earth.
- And other specialized living and creative strategies, such as *Theatre of Transformation* and *Creative Freedom Alchemy*.

Maria is the author of half a dozen personal growth books for women, such as [**Rewrite your Fairy Tales for Success: Unleash your Greatness**](#), and ***Give Yourself Permission to Deserve Success***, and for Creatives, such as [**From Hiding in Plain Sight to Living my Brilliance**](#).

Her shamanic fiction includes the novella [**A Place for Roses**](#).

Her latest novel is [**Angelina and the Law of Attraction: A Woman's Ride from her Pressing Problems to her Brightest**](#)

“The Ceremony” by Maria Mar

Potential. The novel is also available in paperback at Amazon’s, Barnes and Nobles and in the author’s store. Go to:

<https://gumroad.com/l/angelina-paperback>.

Maria Mar constantly writes magical inspirational stories that serve as maps to your real life journey. These are *Story Journeys* that guide you through life’s challenges. Check it out in her [Story Lovers Club](#). Get a [free Story Journey](#) here to try this magical experience.

As a performer and story-teller, Maria Mar has been featured in PBS-TV Channel 13 and other media. As a poet she has been featured in the anthology “**Breaking Ground**,” published by Editorial Campana and edited by Dr. Myrna Nieves and as a playwright she was featured in “**Puro Teatro: Latinas in Theatre**” published by Arizona University Press and edited by Alberto Sandoval and Nancy-Saporta Sternbach. As a shaman and spiritual teacher, she has been featured in Bronx-Net TV, national and local radio and print media.

As a ceremonialist she has created ceremonies for individuals, couples, families, groups, communities and natural sites. She has performed ceremonies in South Africa, Spain, Mexico, Puerto Rico and the United States. Maria Mar designs ceremonies customized for your purpose and your situation. She also offers Poetry Ceremonies, Story Ceremonies and Shamanic Theatre that is a ceremonial collective experience. Now she is offering online ceremonies via Zoom.

Maria is the creator of **The Poetry Botánica™** events that present poetry, art, storytelling and performance as a ceremony for community healing and personal transformation. For presentation at your site, email Maria at shamansdancepublishing@gmail.com

“The Ceremony” by Maria Mar

Find Maria Mar at:

The Dream Alchemist

<http://dreamalchemist.com>

Now there's a store for your Dreams!

<http://dreamalchemist.com/store>

Check out my bookstore at:

<http://dreamalchemist.com/storetag/books/>

Love stories as a path to transformation? Join my **Story Lovers Club** at:

<https://storyloversclub.newzenler.com/>

Book a 30-minute Courtesy Conversation to see how I can help you at:

<https://calendly.com/mariamar/preptalk>

MY BLOG

Enjoy great articles, videos, poetry and inspiration.

<http://www.mariamar.com>

SOCIAL MEDIA

Facebook profile:

<http://www.facebook.com/DreamAlchemist>

Twitter:

<http://twitter.com/DreamAlchemist>

LinkedIn

<http://www.linkedin.com/in/catchthedreamexpress>

Communities

Mark your life with the magic of story!

Join the **Story Magic Tribe** of women living an inspired life through the magic of story. Join at: <http://dreamalchemist.com/join>

Unfold your wings and fly in your bright true colors

If you are a spiritual, creative woman who wants to shine without shame in her bold, bright true colors to share her gifts with the world, join the Butterfly Waves community (Closed FB group) at:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/butterflywaves/>

Copyright Notice

This book and all content, tables and illustrations is the intellectual property of Maria Mar©2014 and are protected under international copyright law.

No reproduction by any means now existing or created in the future is allowed. No copy/paste, appropriation or distribution.

For quotes contact the author at
shamansdancepublishing@gmail.com

If you want to share this with your friends, buy a copy for them or send them to the page where you got it.