“Merlin: The Succession” Companion Guide

Merlin: The Succession is the sequel to *Merlin: The Return*. I wrote a companion guide for the latter, outlining my reasons for writing that book and describing the places and points of interest that feature in it. So, since Glastonbury provides the physical setting for the sequel too, I am not going to repeat any of that background information here. If you want to know about Glastonbury and its historical and mythical associations, then please refer to *Merlin: The Return Companion Guide* as a start point – visit https://www.santarigreen.com/merlin-the-return.html to download.

Why “Merlin: The Succession” came to be written

When I completed my first Merlin book, I didn’t have plans for writing anything further – the story seemed complete, and I was satisfied with its outcome. However, later in that year (2018) I decided to follow up on a request that a reader had made.

“And yet, it seems that this is just the beginning. A new scene is set, a New Avalon is unfolding. I'd love to hear more about how the gifted ones (the children) continue the journey.”

Accordingly, I set to work with no clear plan of how a new story would unfold but knowing that it was important to start the new book with a chapter devoted to each of Merlin’s protégés, outlining their struggles in the wake of Merlin’s abrupt departure from their life.

Sometime later, another friend mentioned that many children feel a sense of emptiness inside them and a disconnect from others. I took this on board and, as I explained in the book’s introduction, this tempered the writing to go more in the direction that I felt it should go. Merlin is the central character that supports, guides and empowers the children, and yet they are determining the reality of their lives almost without his wisdom. His wisdom does inspire theirs, yet they independently develop a sense of self in which their magical nature predominates. Hence, they determine the direction that the book takes: they are Merlin’s successors: they provide the underlying inspiration for this book.

Ages of the children

Getting the children’s ages right is important as it lends credibility as to who they are, how they behave, and what they say … although there is merit in letting a reader judge the ages for themselves and not let age be a deciding factor in the various relationships.

The children operate within certain bounds but in the magical realm they have free reign to express themselves entirely in unconventional ways. Thus, a young reader can relate to them fairly easy, finding something comparable in their own life situation whilst learning that they too can be wildly imaginative and live in a dream-like magical reality, creating their own stories of what is possible.

In the first book the children are quite young but presented as mature for their ages. Now three whole years have passed since the events of that book. Accordingly, I envisage their ages as follows…

Mel is 13+ years old. Cheeky but extremely aware of her emotions. She has a powerful imagination and tends to keep to herself because she knows how others might respond to her obsessive behaviour. Merlin would appear to be the only one who really understands her, although the other two children might also say the same thing about him! Sometimes, Mel seems to use a more mature language than you might expect for one of her age, but we can assume that this is when the seer speaks through her!

Jonathan is in the age range 16 – 17. He has no doubt about how to use his abilities (teleportation and seeing into other dimensions): he has learned self-discipline and control. His problem, as the opening chapter shows, is that he also is a loner who feels the loss of his friendship with Merlin. Initially, he believes that forgetting Merlin’s wisdom is the source of his emotional upset.

Alyssia is 19 years old, has left school and started college – likely to be the prestigious Strode College in the neighbouring town of Street. Her problem is that she is dealing with the stress of college life combined with an almost complete separation from the magical reality she enjoyed before college.

Themes

There are several powerful themes that crop up in the writing almost unnoticed, but once they are identified it becomes easy to see -

a) how they progress the characters and allow the reader to identify and engage with those characters on a deep level rather than just have a superficial acquaintance with them
b) why Merlin is introducing concepts and ideas that, when they are accepted and developed by the children, will lead to a satisfactory and successful ending for everyone.

Validating the children

From what we are told about the children, they don’t have a support system, either from friends or parents, to match Merlin’s wisdom and understanding. In their previous encounters with Merlin the children were valued as his equal which emboldened them to establish their own authority and self-awareness, though it’s clear from the book’s opening chapters that they needed to develop that further for themselves in his absence.

There are many instances where the children relate to Merlin as friend, mentor, guide, source of wisdom. They value him highly in their lives. He is a validator for them – but what does he validate? Here are some suggestions, though there may be others …

a) He confirms that they have the ability to create (and embody) magical reality,
b) He affirms their intuition and prompts them to always use it,
c) He encourages them to fully express the skills and qualities they already possess,
d) He encourages them to question and validate everything for themselves,
e) He places them on a par with adults, and by doing so confirms their self-worth.

Witness Merlin’s response to Alyssia on pages 55-56 when she bewails the fact that she doesn’t know what to do about the “dragon people”. He listens to her and forestalls any further protests that she might make by giving her a fresh perspective on her situation – a new role to play.

“They want to know what it is to be you. They want to understand how humans think. It’s exciting for them. […] This is a profoundly moving time and you, Alyssia, have a part to play as an ambassador to those who have come here to join with humanity … to create a world full of magnificence, beauty and splendour. You will be much needed.”

Relationships

There are many relationships that form during the course of the book. These relationships have differing functions; they develop in different ways; they also have specific influences upon the characters involved. In general, though, a relationship is a gateway to a fulfilling and satisfying life.

There are relationships that strengthen a character and help that character gain insight, such as the one that develops between Mel and her past-life counterpart, the seer. We are told that it is a two-way exchange, for on page 83 we learn *“You can now benefit from her gifts and abilities, as she will from yours”*. By being aware that she has a connection to a powerful, self-realised part of herself as a seer, and that the seer can act through her as her, Mel understands that she can be powerful in the physical world and not confined to being magical only in her daydreams.

There are multiple relationships that involve Alyssia. Perhaps the one that stands out most for her is her storyline with the “dragon people”. It’s not one that she readily embraces at first, being apprehensive of the responsibility as an ambassador to an off-world race, and yet it ultimately has her declare to Merlin that – “*I want to do something memorable, something amazing, something that I was brought here to do. And I want to be fully awake and conscious of what I’m doing*.”

Merlin’s relationship with her is more intimate than with the other children, perhaps because she is the eldest but, more importantly, she is poised to make a breakthrough in seeing herself on a par with the deities that she has worshipped in past lives. Her complete faith in him and his subtle guidance is sufficient to reposition her to accept the requirements of her new life. Merlin tells her -

“You should treat every word that you speak or telepath as an expression of your power and authority, whilst your actions should remind you of the miraculous creation that you are. Once you see yourself as a joyful expression of life then that knowledge will never leave you.”

“I recommend that you pay attention to how you affect others. You don’t need to be outspoken for your presence in this world is already vast. You will influence people simply by knowing that you are shaping the future of this world and the generations to come. This is no small thing this magical life of yours.”

It’s interesting to note her brief interaction with The Lady of Avalon, a being that Alyssia has come into contact with in previous lifetimes. We get two important pieces of information from The Lady.

1. On page 144 she indirectly informs Alyssia that her role as priestess is over. Merlin cannot tell her that himself because he doesn’t have the authority to do so, but The Lady does.

   “Alyssia sensed that there was a subtle message here addressed to her personally, underlining and acknowledging that she was an awesome power herself and that the days of being an introspective priestess in service to a deity were now over.”

2. On page 154 she calmly informs Alyssia that she is now a guardian of the planet through her desire to be of service to life in a greater capacity than she has ever imagined.

There is a lot of interesting dynamic going on with Alyssia: her relationship with herself changes vastly in the later chapters. Her roles move from being priestess to ambassador to guardian. There is an invitation to stop seeing herself as a priestess and claim the authority of a goddess (page 102). And also, there is her relationship with the non-corporeal Jonathan, who reminds her that this is but one of many lifetimes that she has featured in – that she is eternal and not of human origin.

You may wonder at how the children recall or somehow receive timely guidance from Merlin even when he is not in close proximity to them. We may safely assume that they share a collective consciousness that makes this type of communication possible. The entwinement of these relationships tend to make the characters more accessible to each other and help to support the progression of the story.

Creation of magical reality

There are several cautions in the text of the need to guard against taking things at face value. Merlin’s remarks about a carefully constructed reality on page 106 leaves one wondering what he might be referring to, though as the story progresses it seems clear that for the children to live in a magical world, they need to understand that their unquestioned acceptance of reality no longer serves them. Who creates their reality, Merlin asks? How is reality created?

Merlin’s frequent assertion is that they are already magically gifted. Later they understand the false assumption that fantasy and reality are separate states. In Merlin’s world there is only magical reality, and he explains on one occasion how that is so (page 131).

“You need to be the universe in action, greater than the sum of its parts. You need to drop any feeling of being separate from any part of life. If you learn only one thing from this experience then it is to be one with life, neither seeking to control it nor wanting to oppose it. Always paying attention to the natural rhythm and flow of life – of what wants to be.”

The elements

Chapter 26 concerns Merlin’s schooling of his protégés about the need to be at one with life. This has its source in a period when I encountered Shamanism, especially with the book ‘Urban Shaman’ written by Serge Kahili King which espouses “the way of the adventurer [...] in contrast to the way of the warrior”. The treatment of power is different in both cases – the power to control, to have power over something or someone versus the ability to “produce change through love and cooperation”.

I have experienced harmony with the weather myself on multiple occasions – such as to ask the rain to hold off for a while, by showing respect whilst understanding that there is a need for the rain to be present. On another occasion, a friend in the US phoned me in alarm about a storm that was rapidly

approaching her home. I told her to be calm and to embrace the force of the elements and become with it, in the same way as described in the chapter, “neither seeking to control it nor wanting to oppose it”. I further said, in as many words, that she should think of herself as in the eye of the storm, the comparative calm, where “you become one with the elements; one with this world”.

One’s real power is interiority – the ability to be at peace and in flow with Life.

The concept of Godness

Merlin approaches the concept of Godness with the girls before mentioning that Jonathan has a part to play in making it a world reality. There is a tie-in here with the arrival of the “dragon people” - for they have their own contribution in making Earth a planet where Godness is embraced by all. But it will not be an overnight conversion! I introduce the concept of Godness because I didn’t want this to be a stereotype contact with an alien race: there needed to be a far-reaching purpose that fitted with the characters’ development and built upon Merlin’s success in the first book in which he unifies the rift between Heaven and Earth in human consciousness.

The introduction of Godness, then, signifies another rift that needs to be addressed. Merlin notes that *“the essence of greatness and Godness has been distorted and discarded, becoming mere ideals to strive for”*, but this time he is not personally responsible for repairing this rift. That is the responsibility of his charges, for he tells the girls - *“You will play a big role in encouraging others to fully accept their divinity and realise that they are the greatness they have been waiting for.”*

Page 97 defines Godness as “a pristine self-aware miracle of life that has no inner conflict”. No inner conflict seems a tall order, yet that is the future Merlin envisages for humanity.

The concept of unification

The book is sprinkled with examples of unification. Perhaps those that most stand out are -

1. Mel and her seer aspect
2. The coming together of Camelot and Avalon its earthly counterpart
3. The blending of human and collective unity consciousness as exemplified by the dragon people

What is more obliquely hinted at on page 161 is the upholding of the vow that King Arthur made to The Lady of Avalon in *Merlin: The Return* – that of returning to her when his quest of unification could be completed. These few words hint that he has seen her and fulfilled his vow …

‘It is done,’ said Arthur. ‘The Lady awaits you, Alyssia, once more,’ he added knowingly.

Places of interest

All the action centres around Glastonbury Tor in Somerset. Here are some noteworthy references to the physical places of interest mentioned.

Page 69 introduces the concept of “walking between worlds” - a meditative state, similar to daydreaming. This is accomplished in the book by traversing the Tor labyrinth- a recognised feature of the area. Looking down on the Tor from the elevation of a drone, one can see several terraces that encircle it at regular intervals.
Various representations of the labyrinth may be found at this website… https://www.geomancy.org/index.php/labyrinths/glastonbury-tor-labyrinth. Instead of being fully intent of the process of walking, Alyssia focuses her attention on meeting with the “dragon people”. After a while, she is unconscious of her walking progress and an inner journey takes place that is distinctly separate from her physical awareness. Now she is able to telepathically communicate.

Page 69 also references Brigid and the White Temple pool. Brigid is a pagan goddess reverenced by the pagan community in Glastonbury. You can read about her connection to the area at https://www.unitythroughdiversity.org/imbolc-in-glastonbury.html. Alyssia reverences Brigid.

The significance of bathing in the White Temple pool, off Chilkwell street, is that nude bathing is allowed there by permission of the doorkeeper. The building is held as sacred with several altars to pagan gods/goddesses dotting the premises. Bathing here has a ritualistic significance and is an alternative option to the labyrinth for Alyssia to get in touch with the other worldliness.

Page 105 mentions Gog and Magog – the last surviving trees of the oak-lined avenue that once led to the Tor, though one of the trees is now dead. “Their story depends on who is telling it.” (page 107). Merlin is prompting the girls to use their discernment to distinguish fact from fiction, and to question what they are told or given rather than blithely accept someone else’s account – even from Merlin himself!

Visit https://www.unitythroughdiversity.org/gog--magog.html for information about these famous trees.

Page 105 also cites the book “*Glastonbury: Maker of Myths*” by Frances Howard-Gordon. Although I haven’t read the book itself, I’m always fascinated to hear stories about people and places connected with one’s area and, of course, use my discernment about what a story gives me. People love stories, which is why they come from around the world to visit those sites that are held sacred in Glastonbury; the opportunity to walk the land and feel immersed by its energy. Visit https://www.glastonburytor.org.uk/makermyths.html if you are interested in tales that tantalise!

The quality or virtue of a place

In chapter twenty-seven, there is the phrase "a place may hold its virtue for many years". It has its origin from a remark made by Gandalf in *The Lord of the Rings* when he talks about the land known as Hollin, also called Eregion by the elves. He says, "Much evil must befall a country before it wholly forgets the Elves [...] Only the land remembers them now."

When I first visited Glastonbury back in 1993, I had various impressions about it. It seemed an ordinary town with some unusual shops that sold crystals, New Age books, and other such paraphernalia. There was an air of excitement about the place. Then I worked at a healing centre on the slopes of the Tor for over a year. I had the responsibility for running the place, so my incursions into the Glastonbury social scene were curtailed, especially as I didn't have much money. But the place where I worked held an air of other-worldliness, quite separate from the rest of the world it seemed. Some years later I perceived that this magical aura had extended to include the town and surrounding area. Maybe the magic of the place had worked upon me, but also I believe that Glastonbury heritage culture had bloomed in the meantime.

The area is known locally as Avalon, through its association with Arthurian legend. Avalon, known in Welsh as "the island of apples", coincidentally has an apple orchard at the rear of Glastonbury Tor. Glastonbury/Avalon is associated with King Arthur and Joseph of Arimathea and has many sacred sites that have the capability to thrill, inspire and marvel if the onlooker is open to the magic of these places - notably, Glastonbury Abbey, the Chalice Well, the White Springs, Glastonbury Tor and Bride's Mound. The pilgrim, truth seeker, pagan, or just curious onlooker may derive meaning from these places and the tapestry of stories they contain, but surely, what we believe to be true about any of this is kept alive by what we desire to be true - perhaps as magic, myth and legend - and this, I feel, is what resides in a place, what we give it as a gift.

Points of interest

This section offers insights into some topics that I think would be of interest to the readership. These topics are included in the book because I’m drawing upon personal experiences to present information that might otherwise be difficult to express. For instance, I have experiences of using telepathy to detect layers of meanings within a communication, much akin to Mel’s energy awareness as described on pages 25-26. Telepathy comes easy to me so naturally it is fair game to use that communication with non-corporeal beings.

There is nothing in the book that is “made-up” as such. All I am doing is crafting a story from things that I already know to be true and extending commonly accepted canon lore surrounding Merlin. You might say that Merlin is my muse or that I’m channelling him. However, since there is no absolute truth, all that I need to say is that I am sensing the words that best fit my intentions of accurately describing the reality of Merlin and his protégés – and the future that they face together.

Telepathy

Through chapter 28 Merlin and Alyssia are telepathically communicating with The Lady of Avalon with open eyes. Many years ago, when people wanted to channel, do psychic readings, or otherwise communicate with non-corporeal beings, then it was common practice to close your eyes so as not to be distracted by whatever was going on around you. The practice of telepathy has become easier, allowing for it to be seamless with whatever you are doing, akin to normal voiced communication.

But what is telepathy? One explanation is that it’s the reception and interpretation of impressions that our consciousness intercepts and puts into a meaningful context for us. It doesn’t require ears to register sound waves that are then turned into electric signals for our brain to translate into something intelligible. Nevertheless, something magical happens and information is received.

The use of the word prescience on page 56 refers to having a knowledge of how things can be – precognition or clairvoyance. Telepathic on page 57, however, relates to being able to understand an unvoiced communication. They have different meanings. Note that Alyssia is already said to be intuitive, so her telepathy has developed naturally and from wearing Merlin’s bracelet.

Jewellery

I had a clear sense about what Alyssia’s bracelet should look like as I wrote chapter two. I envisaged a dragon’s head, and then I found a bracelet that matched that vision with the ‘Women’s Double Coil Dragon from the John Hardy Naga Collection’. The website advertising this piece is found at http://www.bendavidjewelers.com/blog/925-sterling-silver.

The bracelet shows a white sapphire with African Ruby eyes. The significance of the white sapphire is explained by Merlin as “having the propensity to promote insights”. An equally good word to use here is intuition.
This information was gleaned from https://www.gemstone7.com/145-white-sapphire.html.

Hall of Records

When I met my wife, Soleira, in 1996 we decided to host workshops together. We called our first workshop “The All-Knowing workshop”. In it I led group meditations to assist people to access selective past life information from what was called The Akashic Records at that time. As it was explained to me, it was sometimes important for people to gain clarity about past actions and acquire the wisdom needed that could prove useful in their present life.

In the book, then, it is easy for Jonathan in his non-corporeal state to find details about his past associations with Alyssia, which leads him to understand that they had shared a level of oneness that encompassed the living of multiple simultaneous lives. A concept that transcends human ideas about reality creation and let's one wonder about a god-like ability that each of us may lay claim to.

“Did he activate something when he was in The Hall of Records? Perhaps it was that declaration he had made aeons ago about bringing things together; about collecting fragments of dreams and visions to create a mosaic from them? Yes, that seemed right. And, because Alyssia and himself were essentially one entity in his mind, it made sense that she too would be prompted to bring things together in her own way and erase any boundaries that kept them apart.”

Total recall

The concept of recalling conversations with total clarity, that Mel experiences with her memories of being with Merlin, took on an added interest by hearing how that works in other people’s lives.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hpTCZ-hO6iI&t=612s

There is a twist, though. In the book we learn that it is quite likely that her past-life counterpart as a seer, a person of great insight, is responsible for bringing these memories to the surface of Mel’s awareness. This may seem to be a writing ploy but, like every other feature in the book, it has grounds for being included as a real life possibility rather than relegated to a fanciful imagining that has no substance to it. It is possible to be super-acutely aware of incidents from many different perspectives, as if, we could look through Mel’s eyes and have her experience -

“Not only could she see what they had been wearing, but she could recall how she had been feeling and what she had been thinking and also, heavens above, it gave her access to what Merlin had been thinking too! She could walk around the hologram to view a scene from different angles and find something new every time, getting insights that she would never have guessed at or imagined.”

The only barrier to having that type of experience as one’s reality would be the thinking that it isn’t possible for you; or that you have no wish to recall the minutiae of your life; or that your life is uneventful; or that there are things that you would not want to recall; or that the scope of recall would make you feel old; or that the experience might change you in some way that you would not like!

The Lady of Avalon

There is some literature that mentions her and her connection with the fabled Isle of Avalon that is modern-day Glastonbury. Glastonbury resident and self-proclaimed Priestess of Avalon, Kathy Jones, has written a book about her called “Priestess of Avalon, Priestess of the Goddess”, of which she says, “There are no facts to be found about Her, no history, no certainty, only a paragraph or two of dubious legend and a priestess title in a modern day novel.”
https://kathyjones.co.uk/priestess-of-avalon-priestess-of-the-goddess-2/

Nevertheless, as with Merlin, a story born from humble beginnings can resonate with people who desire a path into a mysterious and unknown landscape. A story filled with fantastical, magical possibilities that also has a physical touchpoint: actual places where one can wander and allow the wonder of life to enter in and claim you.

The Lady of Avalon is surely a mythical presence and perhaps it is wise not to put labels on her or assign her roles to fit one’s agenda. For me, she is non-corporeal and an enigma, just like Merlin. Ageless. As a character, I have carefully presented her as an unseen guardian of the planet, partly to

advance the storyline with regard to the “dragon people” but also to be a source of inspiration to Alyssia.

As a reader, you should decide for yourself where The Lady sits with you in your reality of life. Perhaps you may find that you can telepath with her, as with the oracles of old, or perhaps you will relate to her as the Goddess that Kathy Jones proposes. I think the question, though, that needs addressing is *what relationship are you truly desiring*? This recalls Merlin’s words to Jonathan -

“It’s not me that you’ve been seeking, but yourself. And it’s not magic that you’re seeking to master, but a relationship with life. Life is a mystery, an ever-changing dance of intricate possibilities that so engage you that you will never tire of wondering what it can be. It is a gift. Treasure it.”

The Storm

Mention of the storm on page 126 alludes to storm Eunice in February 2022 which devastated some parts of the UK but left Wells, where I was living at the time near Glastonbury, relatively unscathed. The piece about the storm wanted its place in the book.

Kafka and the doll

I found a story circulating on the Internet that tells of an incident in which the writer, Franz Kafka, befriended a young girl who had lost her doll and was inconsolable. After searching in the surrounding area for said doll and not finding it, Kafka is reported to have told the girl to come to the same spot on the following day. Thus unfolds a series of letters that he writes for her, purporting to be from the doll, assuring the girl that the doll is travelling the world and that the girl is not to be concerned by her precious toy’s absence.

“By that point, of course, the girl no longer misses the doll. Kafka has given her something else instead, and by the time three weeks are up, the letters have cured her of her unhappiness. She has the story, and when a person is lucky enough to live inside a story, to live inside an imaginary world, the pains of this world disappear. For as long as the story goes on, reality no longer exists.”
[Source: https://www.snopes.com/fact-check/franz-kafka-doll-girl-story/]

I thought that story was beautifully told and had a happy ending, even though attempts to substantiate it have not been successful..

But what would be even better to say about it is that *the beauty and innocence of an uplifting story has more power than the depressing circumstances of an assumed reality, and may, in turn, transform into the accepted reality one wishes to live*. The imaginary reality, the fable, the fantasy and myth are the desired reality for many people – but how to make that so?

This is what Merlin achieves with the children – he shows them branches of their life that, once taken and embraced, lead to a magical reality that has a solid foundation in their trust of themselves. I discovered the Kafka story after writing my book.

For Mel:

‘Let me suggest,’ he said, and she nodded, ‘that you revisit those moments when you’re doing great magic. Be an observer; see yourself in action; feel yourself growing from the magic that you’re doing and then come back knowing that you are your magic.’ (page 86)

For Alyssia:

Alyssia was mesmerised, partly by what he said but also by the manner of his speaking. There it was again, the enigmatic elusive knowing that personified Merlin. A knowing that seemed to encompass everything. Everything he said made sense; it was like watching him put a jigsaw together; selecting a piece and unerringly finding the place where it fitted perfectly. (page 136)

And just like that she suddenly realised what she had been searching for during the past three years. It had never been about Merlin. It was her brilliance that she had wanted to find and own and show the world. And what that looked like, she sighed with deep satisfaction, was entirely up to her … and nobody else. (page 137)

For Jonathan:

He could see, now, that Merlin had set something in motion and stirred in him a desire that couldn’t be quenched by his old human life. An opportunity to step outside perceived boundaries of time, space, and form. A chance to create afresh without any pre-knowing or prejudging of what might come next. A chance to imagine a different Earth, a new people for that Earth, a new Universe with no past. He relished the gift he’d been given. (pages 110-111)

The essence of a piece of writing

For me, the writing of this book was about encouraging the development and independence of children through Merlin's benevolence and wisdom. Yet, with chapter twenty-nine, I realised that I had been building towards a piece of energy work that was more far-reaching - it was about envisaging the unification of the etheric with the physical, of dismantling the concept that they were two distinct and separate components of reality.

We have Arthur, a disembodied spirit who has created an etheric dream-like scape that encapsulates those values most dear to him. Then there is Alyssia, who, in her bodied state, activates the essential meeting of the etheric with the physical.

> *“She was glowing, waving her hands in the air from which slender streams of colourful rainbow ribbons of light were issuing. […] Years ago, in the etheric, Arthur’s Camelot and Earth’s Avalon were distinctly separate spaces, but in Alyssia’s reality they were unified.”*

When I later read what I wrote tears came to my eyes, for I saw that there was a truth here, and writing often reveals the hidden nature of what is possible. This has a counterpart in my other Merlin book, *Merlin: The Return,* in which -

> *“Merlin envisioned Heaven and Earth as one, thus sealing an age-old rift in human consciousness.”*

This is why I write, for writing is a powerful communication of what sometimes lies deep within us beyond our awareness of what is there.

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