

# ROBERT RILEY

## ROBERT RILEY #7

### The Messenger Arc: Symbols out of Giddiness

*As I write this I have already left on a journey across to the other side of the world. There comes a time when you take all that you've learned, all that you have become and put it all into practical use. I don't know if this is the right thing to do, but I know something is out there that needs to be resolved. I know... "It's a little vague", but I'm not ready to tell you what I am hoping to achieve out here, not until my work is done at least. I can elaborate how I got here.*

*Not only had been given this awakening that has allowed me to see and interact with shadows on the other side, but a path littered with familiar faces, symbols and messages... it seemed I had no choice but to follow a trail that would take me on an adventure beyond that of the norm.*

*It all began here...*

#

I have mentioned before that I was six years old when I collapsed in a heap on my school room floor. I had been standing there with the rest of the children far too long already, my falling was inevitable. We'd been listening to teachers provide morale guidance and reciting the Morning Prayer like we always had. We were standing because that was how they did things in that small "two room" village school, built of "old world" stone, with "old style ways" of working.

The moment I fell to the ground, the piano player ceased, and the children stopped singing. The teacher immediately came over to me, and soon I felt the sensation of being carried through into the curtained off partition of that same room. This was the small village version of the library room, "slash" teacher kitchen, staff room and recovery room. They laid me down onto a bean bag. My legs rested on the cold, heavily polished wooden floorboards. I thought I was awake. I thought I was aware on purpose, maybe just foxing\*, allowing things to happen around me.

I was a thin, wiry tall child with short light brown spiked up hair that stuck up on its own without the use of any hair product available at the time. I remember waking and seeing my bare white ankles. I always wore dark grey trousers that were too short for my long spindly legs. I had dressed myself that day because my "Battle Cat" socks were clearly inside-out, representing Cringer in a very dark orange mottled mess from all--that factory made dye. My fingers were said to be piano fingers, not only because they were long and thin, but because I actually played the piano, whenever I had the chance. It was, after all, the only time during the early morning assembly gathering that I was able to sit. Even after this fall, I would not be treated any differently. I believed I would be passing out through my entire elementary years.

There I was, lying on the bean bag, listening to the fragments of chatter coming from the teachers and children who through the curtain had returned to class after the assembly had come to an end. I remember waking up to the eyes of a little girl. Her name was Talia, and she had the widest eyes I had ever seen. They were bright blue, and her hair was mousy brown. She

# ROBERT RILEY

was very typical Pollyanna-type, very reassuring, supportive and proactively involved in both teacher and pupil activity. She was the only child who had been allowed past the curtain and was a clear favourite for all the teachers and staff there at the school.

'Do you feel giddy?' I heard Talia speak, even though I swore at the time that her lips didn't appear to move. I focused on the word "giddy" for a moment as I didn't have a clue what the word meant. I was only six years old and was without a full working vocabulary of words at my disposal. It didn't matter that I couldn't respond, as the question was coming from the know-it-all pretty girl of the school; I had to go along with her assessment.

'Yes, I suppose so.' I said wearily.

The little girl looked puzzled at me. Her rose red lips parted. 'Suppose so what?'

I turned my head, wondering if I had indeed heard something being said from one of the teachers present. I began sharing the puzzled feeling, wondering if I was still too sleepy to understand why this conversation was so difficult.

'You asked if I was giddy--' I said. I stopped talking as the teacher asked the little girl to "hurry along". As Talia headed to the curtain, she looked back and told me softly,

'I didn't say anything...!'

With that, she was gone, and that was the last time I recalled ever speaking to her. I didn't know it at the time, but she was right. She didn't say anything, and from that moment on, I heard other voices, fading away as quickly as they arrived. I had no understanding, no concept of what it was I was experiencing.

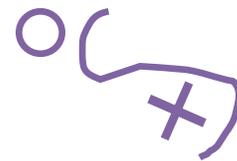
The teacher finally noticed I was sitting up, clear and lucid staring across at the curtain partition from which my classmates were noisily chatting on the other side. She helped me to my feet and led me back through into the classroom. The moment the curtain parted I knew something was different. All my classmates were sitting quietly, pencils down on paper in an air of concentration, yet still, I could hear that chatter of kids. I was ushered to what I the teacher believed was a vacant chair. I backed away when I realise I did not recognise the child who sat there. He wore a cap, a black blazer that was buttoned to the neck. His pale grey face turned and starred with excitement at my presence. I felt the push of the teacher's hand against my back wanting me to go sit in the chair where the boy was sitting.

The boy turned and jumped off his seat and ran past me and through a door that was closed firm. This was a living miracle in my mind and I starred at the door for the longest of times, waiting for the boy to return. The teacher managed to get me seated on the chair despite my resistance to move or to look at anything but the door. She touched my forehead and told me that I would be taken home in a short while, when my mother had a chance to come and get me.

# ROBERT RILEY

As the teacher moved away, I realised something profound. There were more pale grey children with old fashioned clothing and hats wandering about the classroom. Some were curious about what my friends were doing as they sat quietly, others just stood looking blank faced, staring at things beyond my understanding before stepping through the walls and vanishing, just like the first boy I had seen sitting where I now waited. For some reason I knew I couldn't say anything. For some reason, I knew I was the only one who could see.

My mother arrived and took me by the hand. I focused only on the spirit children. I couldn't understand who they were, but as I was led out of the junior class, down the hall, I spotted even more children walking together in lines, fixating at a spot on the walls. Some turned when they noticed I was looking at them. To that, I simply shifted my attention to the other side of the corridor. I was led out onto the school playing ground and through to the gate. I looked back, and in the senior classroom, I saw Talia, the little girl looking down at me from the window. She smiled and then delicately with her finger, she made a shape on the condensation of the window. She marked out an s shape wave, and placed an X in one of the inner swirls, and a circle on the outside tip of the other end of the s shape.



I saw it, submitted it to memory and with a smile, she wiped the window clean and moved away out of view. For some reason the symbol didn't frighten me. It was something of a code, or a deep symbolic message that over the years I had scribbled down onto paper when entranced in deep thought. Years later, I managed to interpret the symbol as such that the "O" represented an origin, and the "X" was either a destination, or in the path that swirls around both symbols, a place I should be avoiding. I didn't know what I knew now, to which I cannot elaborate too much too early. That will all be explained in good time.

That was the last time I saw Talia. So the story went, she was picked up by her estranged mother later that day and taken away from the school and apparently out of the country due to unforeseen "family" circumstances that I never understood. I knew nothing more than that back then. How frikken timely everything seemed to be that day: from my collapsing, my first visions of spirits from the other side, and Talia, the little girl whose eyes I see constantly looking back at me while I sleep; and then she draw on that misted window symbol I would be made to never forget.

© 2011 "Robert Riley: Shadow Investigator" Stephen Radford, All rights reserved.

\*foxing is a state where somebody pretends to be asleep. The act is passive with an unwillingness to move.