

Chapter 12

Harry (8)

The Seven Trials (4)

Leaving the unconscious Ron behind, Harry and Hermione enter a room where they are trapped by fire and can neither go forwards nor backwards until they solve a logic puzzle. Obviously, it is Hermione who solves the puzzle, as she personifies the renewed mind of the seeker with a New Soul.

My interpretation of this symbolism is that an alchemist must act with intelligence if progress is to be made. Although the heart, the centre of the New Soul, always takes the initiative on the Path, the head must ensure the candidate takes logical and intelligent actions. Together they succeed.

I just want to digress slightly and ask a question. This is a short extract from the book:

Hermione's lip trembled, and she suddenly dashed at Harry and threw her arms around him.

"Hermione!"

"Harry -- you're a great wizard, you know."

"I'm not as good as you," said Harry, very embarrassed, as she let go of him.

"Me!" said Hermione. "Books! And cleverness! There are more important things -- friendship and bravery and -- oh Harry -- be careful!"

As you can see above, Hermione says, *Friendship and bravery and* -- And what? Ever since the first time I read this I've thought that she was going to say, "love", but was too embarrassed to say it. I thought it was obvious, in fact, that everyone else would think the same. After some years now I've found that no one else has this thought at all. My question is, what do you think is the missing word?

Back to Harry. There is only one draft of the magic potion to be able to get into the next room, so Harry goes in alone. The new soul has to face this trial alone. Whenever the soul is facing a be all and end all situation, it has to act on its own inner strength.

When Harry enters the next room he meets a man with two faces - one in front and one behind. I believe this is to indicate that the microcosmic self is

both good and evil. This is why Quirrell, speaking as Voldemort, says, *There is no good and evil, there is only power, and those too weak to seek it...*

As I said in Chapter 4, the microcosmic self is impersonal and knows no good or evil, just power.

Harry is able to take the stone out of the Mirror of Erised because he doesn't want to use the stone. I believe this symbolises the liberation of the soul from attachment to the physical plane. The stone can make gold and the elixir of life. In other words, the owner of the stone can live an unending life in perfect health, with all the luxury he wants. Harry does not think of himself, or of the unending wealth and power and prestige he could have. He thinks only of defeating Voldemort.