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Body, Mind & Spirit

Clear Heart: Rainforest Transmissions from the Greater Universe
Joanna Morsicato
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Rain forests once covered twelve percent of the earth's surface; now they cover only two percent. Every day, an area the size of New York City is destroyed. Experts predict that this ancient ecosystem will have disappeared by 2025, taking countless plant and animal species with it. Is it possible that the spirits of the forest are struggling to reverse this trend by reaching out, lifting the veil between everyday reality and the greater universe to educate humankind away from fear and greed before it is too late?

Morsicato—anthropologist, environmental consultant, and ordained minister of the Universal Life Church—heard their voices during a trip to the Ecuadorian rain forest in 1997. She relays their message in a fictionalized narrative combining the exotic sights and sounds of the Amazon Basin with glimpses of what is hidden under the skin that most people consider "reality."

The protagonist, eighteen-year-old Joe Fielding, accompanies his father Frank on a trip to Ecuador. Hoping to boost his career in pharmaceutical research, Frank is on a quest for medicinal plants, especially one elusive specimen that is reputed to cure cancerous tumors.

Even before his departure, Joe finds himself straddling two worlds. Extraordinarily vivid dreams of a bizarre drumming jungle creature whet his appetite to learn more. At the research station, he contends with relentless humidity, co-ed showers, and plate-sized tarantulas dropping in for lunch. In his dreams, he enters an enormous "grandfather tree," and struggles to comprehend what the spirits are teaching him. "Your mind allows in only what you've been conditioned to see. There's so much more."

The search for the cancer-curing plant leads to a Quechua Indian village where the people are using an electric generator and debating whether to install showers and indoor toilets for eco-tourists. Joe finds a shamanic portal that has been closed for decades, and obtains a specimen of the plant his father is seeking. Before he can bring it back, however, he must face

the test of being lost and alone in the jungle, and learn the meaning of having a “clear heart.” “When you have a clear heart, the universe will take care of the rest.”

Joe goes home a changed person. The same may happen to readers.

Christine G. Richardson