

Ariel's Grove



J. Z. Colby

The NEBADOR series:

Book One: The Test

Book Two: Journey

Book Three: Selection

Book Four: Flight Training

Book Five: Back to the Stars

Book Six: Star Station

Book Seven: The Local Universe

Book Eight: Witness

Book Nine: A Cry for Help

Book Ten: Stories from Sonmatia

The LYCEUM series:

Book One: Lyceum Quest

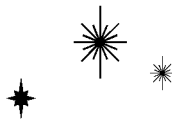
Book Two: Lyceum Challenge

Book Three: Lyceum Diplomacy

Also by J. Z. Colby:

Ariel's Grove

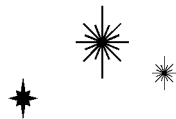
**Standing on Your Own Two Feet:
Young Adults Surviving 2012 and Beyond**



Ariel's Grove

a young-adult journey of
physical, emotional, and spiritual discovery

by
J. Z. Colby





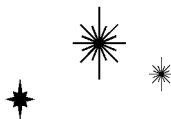
Copyright © 1986 by J. Z. Colby

ⓘ Ⓞ Ⓢ All rights reserved, but freely distributable as this PDF file with attribution, without charge, in its entirety

ARIEL1EA23: Adobe Portable Document Format (PDF),
8.25" x 11" (printable on letter or A4 paper),
311 total pages, medium print (12-point Georgia type)

This special PDF edition has no ISBN.

This story only existed as a single typed manuscript from 1986 until 2023, when it was lovingly prepared and polished.



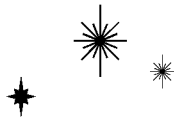


This story is based on real people and events that the author became familiar with while living in the interesting little city of Olympia, Washington during the 1970s and 1980s. All the names and identifying details have been changed, of course.

“Ariel” and her friends followed a religious path that is today very rare. This gives the reader the possibility of feeling discomfort, perhaps even hatred. It is also an opportunity for the reader to see past the details and glimpse the essential goodness and beauty in any person’s spiritual experience.

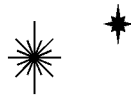
“Ariel” only got lost on one dead-end path during her youth. The author wishes his own youth had been so uneventful, and that he had had friends like she had.





“It is not the mental immaturity of the child that I commend to you but rather the *spiritual simplicity* of such an easy-believing and fully-trusting little one.”

— Jesus, Urantia Book 155:6:12



Chapter 1

I was wandering through the wooded park on my way home from town like I often did. Since my 10th birthday last week, I had been in a very thoughtful mood. I sat on the cliff that overlooked the water and remembered my Teacher. I hadn't thought about him for a long time. He had gone away — been sent away — two years before. None of the adults could handle the fact that we really *learned* things from him, important things. He wasn't like the teachers at school who just taught us the simple stuff — or more often just pretended to. He was our Teacher. All the kids loved him, a kind of love that we never felt for the plain old school teachers. I loved him especially, but my mom and dad thought it was some romantic thing — they couldn't understand that I could love someone as a Teacher.

The tide was low and I could see the sand bar part way across the inlet. We had come here many times with our Teacher. I looked down at the beach where he taught us to run and climb, to be free and to be strong. I remembered the rope swing he put up that swung out over the water at high tide, and how each of us had learned to fly. I think I was the first one on it, after him, but even little five-year-old Penelope had gone, in his arms the first time.

I never saw Penny anymore. She lived way out in the country. In fact, I never saw any of the others anymore. I was the only one who lived on this end of town, and all the rest went to different schools.

A gull screamed at me. Feeling finished with my thoughts, I hopped up,

trotted over to the playground area, and swung across the high rings a couple of times.

“How do you *do* that?”

I look down. It was some boy, 11 or 12, who had wandered over from a family having a picnic. I swung to the last ring and dismounted.

“I had a good Teacher,” I said, rubbing my hands together. Then a thought came to me. “You want to learn?”

“Yeah, but . . . yeah!”

“Okay,” I said, “you don’t have to be a muscleman or a supergirl. See?” I pointed to my skinny arms. Actually, my arms had grown very strong over the last two years, but they still looked skinny.

“Well, how do you do it then?”

“You control the energy you have already. Have you ever gone bowling?”

“Yeah,” he said with a puzzled look on his face.

“Okay, you know you don’t just stand there and *oompf!* push the ball down the alley, right? You swing the ball back, right? And then you just *control* the energy of that ball as gravity pulls it back down. See what I mean?”

“I think so. You kind of use the motion that’s already happening, like?”

“Yeah. Think of pushing someone on a swing. You push them when they are the farthest back, when they’re just starting to go forward. You work with the energy. If you try to push them at some other time, you either get your head knocked in or fall flat on your face, right?”

“Okay, I copy,” he said, grinning.

All of a sudden, everything I had been saying came into clear focus in my mind. I could almost hear my Teacher saying it, but I don’t think he ever had, in just those words. “If you work with the universe, you get power. If you work against it, you get hurt!”

The boy laughed.

“What’s your name?” I asked.

“Michael. Yours?”

“Ariel. Now watch!” I grabbed the first ring, lower than the rest. “Swing . . . grab the next ring . . . swing back and *pull* back and release . . . swing and grab the next ring . . . pull back and release . . . see? . . . change direction . . . rings are swinging now . . . grab, pull back, release . . . if a ring isn’t there,

change direction again . . . until you find one . . . pull back . . . last ring . . . swing . . . and at the end of your swing, bend your knees and drop.”

“You make it look so easy,” he said. “I’ve goofed around on them, but could never get my hand to the next ring.”

“That’s because you weren’t in motion. It doesn’t work standing still, only flying. And you *always* have a hand free so you *never* put two hands on a ring at once. Never! Are you ready to fly?”

“I guess so . . .”

“Feel the first ring, Michael. It’s cold steel and will hurt your hands at first, but they’ll get stronger.”

“It is cold!”

“Just swing on it a couple of times, back and forth, with one hand.”

“Ouch!”

“You can do it. After you are flying, you won’t notice the pain. A little pain is okay, you know. My Teacher taught me that.”

“What kind of teacher would teach you something like that?”

I didn’t answer him. A very special kind of Teacher. “Are you ready? I’ll help you swing, you just worry about your hands,” I said, getting a fallen branch to stop the rings. Even my Teacher couldn’t reach some of them. Am I a Teacher now?

“Okay,” he said.

“Swing! Swing again! Grab! Pull back and release! Grab! Can you feel the rhythm? Release, swing, grab! You’re doing it, Michael!”

“I am!”

“Last ring, swing out, bend your knees, and drop! Great!” I said and clapped. I was as happy for myself, that I could teach him, as I was for him.

“I did it! Ow! My hands are on fire!”

“They’ll be okay,” I said.

“You’re a good teacher, Ariel.”

I held in a smile. “Want to do it without me pushing?”

“M . . . maybe.”

“Just remember, on the pull-back, milk it for all it’s worth — it’s a long way to the next ring!”

“Hey, Michael!” a lady’s voice called.

“That’s my big sister. Gotta go. See ya!”

“Bye.” I watched him run across the grass. He was cute. I hoped he would practice.

Once he was out of sight, I walked on home.

* * *

Chapter 2

As we learn about ancient lands and peoples, we will often hear them described as “primitive.” Remember that the only way we know that is because their machines were much simpler than the machines we use today. In all other parts of their civilization, like art, government, social customs, and religion, we will often find that what they had was not all that much different from what we have today.

Somehow, that first history lesson touched me. I could almost feel like those ancient Hebrews, Greeks, Romans, and Celts were still alive, and that they were calling out to me.

Religion, myth, and magic were mixed right in with the lives of the people. We can't separate the history of the people from their gods, goddesses, and heroes . . .

From then on, whenever I wasn't concentrating on something else, I found myself pondering the ancients. In my mind, I could just change clothes and stroll into the agora in Athens, buy a roll and piece of fruit to munch on, and sit on a stone wall to watch some actors practice a play. A line of soldiers would run by in the street below, off to some battle in Peloponnese.

“Nióti!” a merchant called to me. “Make some use of yourself! Take this sack of loaves and dried fish to the Lykion, and I'll give you a copper.”

“Ne, kirie!” I said with a grin, pocketed the copper (which would buy me dinner), shouldered the sack, and trotted down the narrow street.

“And don’t eat any of it or I’ll have you whipped!” he yelled after me.

I smiled to myself, turned a corner and sat down to figure out the merchant’s knot that tied the sack closed. As soon as I had it memorized, I pocketed a loaf and a couple of fish, retied it with the same knot, and headed off.

Past the temple of Apollos Lykios I skipped, where several people were gathered. My favorite gods were Artemis and Athena, the Huntress and Wisdom, so I didn’t even stop. Soon I came to the Lykion where Aristotle taught.

I went through the stone portico and looked around. A boy just a little older than me took the sack and smiled at me.

Then I recognized him. It was Michael, the boy at the rings three weeks ago. I shook myself back to the present, put away the book I had been daydreaming on, and started poking around in the library shelves again. Athens was nice, but a little too hot for me.

I finally checked out *The Ancient Celts* and headed home.



For centuries it was believed the Celts built the mysterious structures at Stonehenge. It was finally determined that, even though the Druids may have used it, Stonehenge was built long before the Celts entered Britain in about 500 B.C.

I gazed at the pictures of the stone columns. In my mind I could see hooded figures filing in with a pre-dawn glow in the foggy sky. They carried torches and chanted in an ancient tongue. As the sun rose, all of them bowed down, except the Arch-Druid, who raised his arms and cried aloud in an eerie wail that made my heart pound. I focused on the page again.

The Druids, consisting of priests, prophets, and bards, were also the judges of the Celtic people. They gathered most often in oak groves, and held several trees in great reverence, as well as the mistletoe. Knowledge of plants and herbs, and their uses in magic and medicine, seems to have been

great.

I could see a full moon gleaming in the sky above a forest of large trees. Below the trees, figures in deep blue robes danced and sang in a circle, and in the middle, a single figure knelt at an altar preparing something. The chanting and dancing continued, and owls hooted in the trees. Finally, the figure at the altar stood and let its cloak fall to the ground. It looked like a girl, about my age, and she was completely naked, even barefoot. She held a garland, a circlet made of herbs and flowers. She raised it up and called out, "Ariel!"

I slammed the book and looked around my bedroom. It was late, so I curled up in bed and tried not to think about Druids anymore.



Chapter 3

I didn't have anyone to share all my reading and daydreaming with. I knew from experience that my parents didn't like anything unusual. There was a girl in my ballet class that I thought might be that kind of a friend, but when I tried once, she just said, "That's too weird!" and went back to stretching.

I had friends, but I was getting lonely anyway. I wanted someone I could tell things to, and trust. I could trust Tara, my horse, and often I told her about what I was reading and thinking as we threaded through the back roads and wooded trails. I thought of Michael one day, and wondered if I could share things with him, but I never saw him again. I even went by the wooded park two or three times a week to see if I could find him, but I never did.

It was a warm October, and one Saturday I decided to take some of my birthday money and treat myself to something. I didn't know what yet.

I bought myself a hot dog, then poked around in shops. I had quit getting dolls years ago, and even the glass and plastic horses didn't thrill me like they once did.

I looked at clothes, but decided my closet was in good enough shape. I went into the bookstore and looked at horse books a little. I had some of them, and the rest weren't interesting.

I was wandering around the store when I almost bumped into a shelf with a sign that said *Silk Covered Blank Books*. But there was only one book left, and it was on sale, \$8 instead of \$12. I felt the silk and thumbed through the

thick, textured blank pages.

“Do you like that one?” the lady asked.

“I think so . . .”

“It’s strange, but that was the only one with that design on the cover, and no one wanted it.”

I looked at the dark blue silk with funny lines on it. “It almost looks like words or something.”

“I don’t know,” she said.

“I like it!” I said. I had this tingly feeling inside me that I had found something special. Maybe this little book was the friend I had been looking for. I was excited.

I bought it and dashed to the boardwalk near the docks where I liked to sit. I wanted to write my name in my new book, to make it really mine. But when I pulled a pen out of my purse, I couldn’t do it. Something stopped me. I looked at the beautiful book, open to the first page, and I looked at my 19¢ medium-point plastic pen. It was wrong, it was the wrong pen. I couldn’t. I started getting this strange feeling, like my book was alive or something, trying to tell me that I couldn’t use my pen.

Whereas today we only attribute spiritual qualities to people, the ancients lived in a world of magic where everything, plant, animal, or object, possessed a spirit and spiritual qualities.

I had just read that the day before. I could never tell this to anyone but Tara. What should I do? I closed the book and gazed at the strange letters, or whatever they were, on the deep blue silk cover. I cleaned out a side pocket in my shoulder purse and put it lovingly in there — a place of its own.

I wandered down the street. I wasn’t sure what I was going to do. I wasn’t scared, just a little in awe. I wanted to write in the book . . . but it looked like maybe I wasn’t ready yet.

I decided I was done in town, so I headed home at a brisk pace, but just as I was passing the art supply store, something caught my eye. I looked in the window — there it was, a calligraphy set, with three little bottles of ink, several pen nibs, and a stylus handle, all in a wooden box. I went inside and looked at

it closer. Black India ink, and green and red inks too. The stylus was wood and cork. An instruction book. It was beautiful, but it was \$15.

My heart was pounding. I pulled out my new book and said, "Well, little book, what do you think? Would these be okay?" I was hoping no one could hear me.

I had a vision of writing in my book with the calligraphy pens . . . beautiful letters in black ink . . . slowing forming each letter, thinking about each word. I knew in my heart that it would be right for my book.

Even though it put a large dent in my birthday money, I bought the set, and also a pad of paper that had the same texture as the pages of the book. I would need to practice!



Chapter 4

I quit reading Celtic books and started calligraphy. The instruction book told me how to clean the pens and stuff, and I began practicing the letters that looked old-fashioned but weren't too complicated. It wasn't easy, but I could do it.

I looked at books in the library on calligraphy, and discovered that there were lots of different letterings I could use. One book had color pictures of beautiful old books and scrolls. The borders and some of the letters were illuminated with wonderful knotwork, mythical creatures, and strange symbols, all in bright colors.

My pen box and pad went with me to school each day, and I would practice even while eating lunch with my friends.

"Hey, Ariel. Can you come to my Halloween party?" Nancy asked.

I looked up from my lettering. "That would be neat. What are you gonna do?"

"Play games and stuff. It's a potluck, and everybody is supposed to bring something to eat. Can you come?"

"I think so. I kind of want to do something, you know, Halloweenish, like go trick-or-treating of something."

"Nobody does that anymore! Except a few little kids that get driven around by their moms. And no one's allowed to do it after dark anymore, so it's no fun."

"I know! What time is your party?"

Thank You for previewing this eBook

You can read the full version of this eBook in different formats:

- HTML (Free /Available to everyone)
- PDF / TXT (Available to V.I.P. members. Free Standard members can access up to 5 PDF/TXT eBooks per month each month)
- Epub & Mobipocket (Exclusive to V.I.P. members)

To download this full book, simply select the format you desire below

