



## INDEPENDENT STUDY: Module1, Class 9

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The recording for Class 9 is around 33 minutes, and can be found in your attachments.

CLASS 9: Shell #:55,23,103,34,20

In Class 8, we learned about epiphragms, the temporary operculums land snails form from mucus. This ability to seal their shell at will when the environment becomes hostile allows the snails to hibernate until the climate is suitable once again. We discovered that some land snails are able to enter a state of aestivation for many years if need be. Remember the snails in the British Museum that were comatose for 4 years?

We saw how the Green Tree Snail hibernated during the intolerable times of the year in New Guinea, and then re-entered the world when their comfort zone changed. Remember the Green Tree Snail is about a change of comfort zone. The issue around which we feel discomfort can be anything. That is where other shells in a reading will give guidance.

In my case, the issue was my shy nature juxtaposed to becoming an ambassador for my seashell partners. First, as you learned last week, I was “outed” in the hospital cafeteria where I worked.

After a few years, I had changed jobs and became a nutritional counselor. Then, the owner sold her business. When I lost that job, as a last resort, I placed an ad in a metaphysical magazine. That led to being asked to write a column on seashell divination...something I had no idea how to do. Just as I became comfortable with writing about shells, I was asked to be a guest on a radio show. It seems that I barely got comfortable, and then I was pushed out of my comfort zone to tackle handling increased public attention.

I have always wondered why the shells would pick someone who is so shy to be their ambassador. In your first class, I mentioned that all I ask of you this year is to be true to yourselves in this class. In that spirit, I will admit one more thing to you. I have always been afraid of abuse of power. I thought if I kept my ego in check, and did not get a swelled head, there would be no opportunity for me to abuse any position of power. Going on the first radio interview, I was nervous but also excited to share the information. I studied hard to be prepared.

However, because all of my information came from studying books, I was insecure. I never heard these words pronounced out loud. I envisioned someone calling in to say I was pronouncing something wrong, or something I read had been disproven. None of that occurred, but you saw how my first radio interview still managed to reveal my lack of experience. I was so naïve that I tried to SHOW A PICTURE of the poisonous Cone Shell to

the RADIO audience. In hindsight, I think that happened because a part of me was afraid of a swelled head, and knocked me down to size very quickly.

That pales in comparison to the first time I appeared on TV. This was only a local cable show, but it was a live call-in show. I thought it would be better than radio because I finally could hold up pictures. The host came to my home to do a pre-interview, and he left with a very good understanding of my process. The actual day of taping was a sweltering hot summer day. I was not concerned because I had been informed that the studio was air conditioned. I arrived with two suitcases of shells to show the television audience, and the first thing I noticed was the long flight of stairs...no elevator. When I reached the studio on the top floor, I was sweating profusely. I expected to be refreshed when I entered the studio, but that was when I was informed that the air conditioning was out. It was a hot day, we were on the top floor where heat rises, and the show films under hot lights. As I tried my best not to wilt under these conditions, I silently thought "There goes any chance of my presenting a professional image. I'll be lucky if my makeup doesn't run down my cheeks." I busied myself taking out my seashell partners from the suitcases and arranging them on the table provided. When I took out the Green Tree Snail, I thought "This environment would be enough to make any Green Tree Snail seek hibernation." That should have been a sign. Before we began, someone I never met before entered the studio, and was greeted warmly by the host and crew. She was introduced to me as a former co-host who had left the program for another job. Then I was miked, and the show began. At the first commercial break, the host leaned over to tell me that he was sick and he was going home. I couldn't believe my ears. Can you imagine Oprah, or Ellen leaving in the middle of a show?

I did not think a host could leave in the middle of a live show. He assured me that we were very fortunate his old co-host happened to drop in for a visit that night....she would take over and everything would be fine. As the commercial ended, he left, and the co-host whispered to me "I don't know who you are; I have no idea what to ask you." I realized that the host had come to my home for a pre-interview, but she was not privy to what transpired during that conversation. The commercial break had ended, and I quickly whispered back that she could ask me what certain shells meant. When I heard the tape of the show later, you can clearly hear her say "I don't know who you are; I have no idea what to ask you."

That was the least of my problems. A caller phoned in and asked if anyone had ever called me an idiot. I thought he was being protective, so I replied, "Not to my face." Then, he felt it was his job to inform me, "Lady, you are such an idiot." As these words left his lips, all I could think was that my 10-year-old niece was home watching her aunt and now she would think I was an idiot.

But it got worse. We went to commercial and the co-host told me that she was completely offended by that caller. As a result, she decided not to answer the phone anymore. We came back from commercial break, and the co-host took the phone off the hook. Meanwhile, the original host had arrived home, tuned in, and realized his former co-host did not know what to ask me. He tried to call into the show, but she was no longer answering the phone. Eventually, he called into the production office, and they piped his voice into the studio. So, I was answering questions from a disembodied person. It was the slowest hour of my life. I left the studio convinced that I was not cut out for this. That was my introduction to the glamorous world of TV.

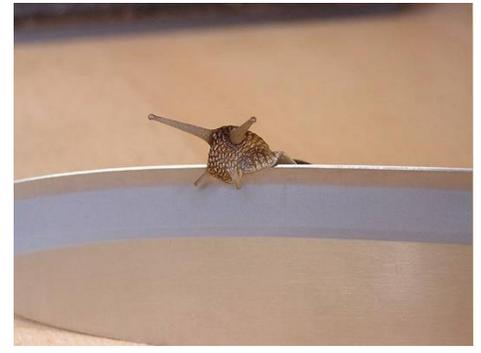
When enough time passed so this experience could fade from my memory, I was asked to be a guest on another TV show. The invitation came from the host of a local cable show quite a distance from where I live. Her show was produced on Cape Cod, and that is seashell territory. I was going to decline, but I really got along with her and she assured me that her show was not a call-in show. That helped me feel comfortable (Green Tree Snail) so I agreed to let go of my concerns around media interviews. The day of the show, the host was terrific, and

she stayed in the studio for the entire show. However, halfway through the show, as I held up a shell for the viewers, I looked up, and the cameraman had vanished. Apparently, he set the camera where it would capture our conversation, and then he left the room. He neglected to realize that I would be holding up seashells. He needed to be there to zoom in, or the viewing audience would not be able to see them. Once again, I thought, I am not the person who should be the seashell ambassador if the host of one show and then the cameraman of the second show don't even stay during my interview. As I mentioned, I can see in hindsight that this fit in with my plan not to get an inflated ego for being on TV.

There is more, but first we need to return to our discussion of the magic of mucus. We are well aware of the way land snails use mucus to produce epiphragms. Other mollusks use mucus for other purposes. If you have ever seen a slimy trail left by a snail, that trail is created with mucus. This assists the snail to glide along the ground on its foot. Remember we learned that snails do not actually crawl on their stomachs even though snails are called gastropod which means stomach foot. As their tender bodies glide along the rough terrain, land snails use mucus to lubricate their path. The mucus is so effective at protecting mollusks that they have been observed crawling over upended razor blades unharmed!

[http://www.molluscs.at/gastropoda/terrestrial/helix/knife\\_lucorum.html](http://www.molluscs.at/gastropoda/terrestrial/helix/knife_lucorum.html) [Land snail crawling on knife blade.](#)

Wonderful series of photos by Robert Nordsieck as seen below:



Up and over, no problem!

## Placostylus Land Snail



*"Getting what you wish for, nothing standing in the way."*

When I wrote *Ocean Oracle*, I only knew of this ability in vague reference to land snails, but could never find which land snails in particular. To represent this quality in *Ocean Oracle*, I used Shell #55 which is a **Placostylus Land Snail**. In *Ocean Oracle*, it captures this aspect in the divination meaning of *"Getting what you wish for, nothing standing in the way."*

After *Ocean Oracle* was published, this shell continued its teachings. I want to share the newest information from the shells with you. When we encounter "razor blades" placed in our path, many of us halt in our tracks or take a detour around them. Because of mucus, the snail continues on its path uninterrupted. It doesn't perceive the razor as an obstacle, much less a source of danger. And, for the snail, it proves to be neither. It PERCEIVES no danger, and it

RECEIVES no harm. This offers a lesson in the power of belief. There are those among us living in human bodies who are capable of lying down on a bed of nails and arising unharmed due to their spiritual "mucus." I know that if I were to lie down on a bed of nails, I would be bleeding profusely. We have the same physical bodies, what is different? The difference is our beliefs. We create our experiences based upon our beliefs. If I could ever get to the place where a razor blade represents no threat to me, I am certain that I would actually experience no threat. Then, I could lie on a bed of nails and suffer no damage. Meanwhile, what I can do is reinterpret some of the situations I identify as razor blades in my path, and that will produce a different outcome. When shell #55 shows up in a reading, you can use the other shells in the reading to assist your client in locating and redefining the razor blades in his or her life.

## Janthina



*"Living in a fantasy world, a state of denial."*

Let's leave the land snails and look at other specialists employing mucus in magical ways. The purple hued **Janthina shell** (shell #23 in *Ocean Oracle*) is as light as air. In seashell divination, attraction to this shell indicates *"living in a fantasy world, a state of denial."* To understand why, we must explore the life of the janthina, also known as the Purple Sailor in children's books. This mollusk lives far from shore on the ocean's surface.

This may not seem like much

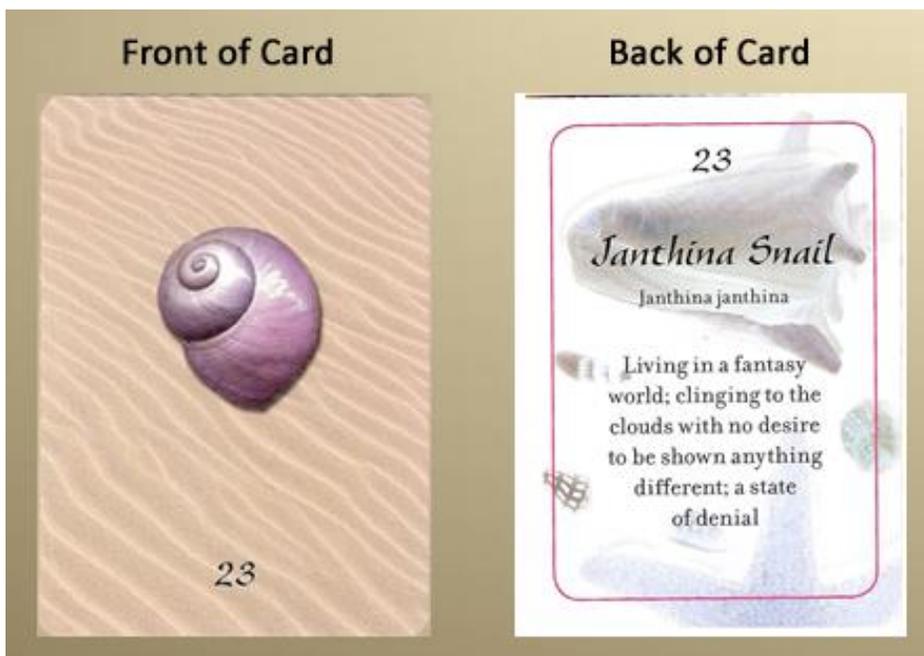
of an accomplishment until you stop to consider that this animal can't swim. How is it able to live on the surface of the ocean? It uses mucus to cement air bubbles together and constructs a raft. The janthina spends its entire life floating on its raft, hence the moniker "Purple Sailor." In the picture on the right, you see the janthina on its raft. It is attached underneath. If it becomes dislodged from the raft, it drowns. Its survival depends upon clinging to the bubbles, just as we may live in our own "bubble" fantasy world. In addition, the janthina snail is blind. It can be challenging for people attracted to this shell to see the fantasy they're living in.

Photo by Denis Riek [dwrwiek@optusnet.com.au](mailto:dwrwiek@optusnet.com.au)



My favorite illustration of this shell's energy speaking to someone involves my third experience with the world of television. A local TV talk show host heard about me and came to my home to conduct a pre-interview. By this time, with my previous television experiences, I had only one request. Would the host and the cameraman remain throughout the show? She wondered what kind of shows I had been on, and assured me that would not be a problem. I still had a concern. Her show was not a metaphysical show. It was a popular cable show where the host interviewed guests from all walks of life...singers, sports figures, etc. I was not certain that her audience would be interested in seashell reading, so I suggested she come visit me to see what it was about. She told me that she would visit, but she wanted to book me anyway.

During her visit, with almost 500 shells displayed in my cabinets, the host was drawn only to the Janthina. She was not expecting a reading, but her curiosity prompted her to ask about this shell. The first thing I told her was that the animal that made it can't swim, to which she replied, "I can't swim." I immediately followed up with telling her it is also blind. To this she replied: "I am blind in one eye." I felt as if I were speaking to a human janthina! The odds of her selecting the one shell whose mollusk shared, and thereby revealed, two hidden traits she possessed captivated her attention. As she later told her audience, this "made a believer" out of her. She was open to listening to the message connected to the shell. I discussed the possibility that she might be living in a fantasy, which led to her selecting more shells to elaborate on the details. To her credit, when I appeared on her show, she recounted this entire story to her audience even admitting to the fact that the Janthina brought awareness that she had been living in denial. She was so blind to her fantasy, no person could succeed in bringing this to her attention. It took an unexpected encounter with a shell to break through the bubble she had created.



Once I discovered how rooted my clients can be in their denial, using the *Ocean Oracle* card deck provided an unexpected bonus. If the Janthina appears in a reading, I use a different strategy. Since the meaning of each shell appears on the back of the cards, rather than telling them about the Janthina's message of denial, I turn over the card and have them read the information themselves. Since they were attracted to this shell, reading its meaning delivers more of an impact than anything I could say. More than once, after reading about the Janthina, my clients have admitted that their

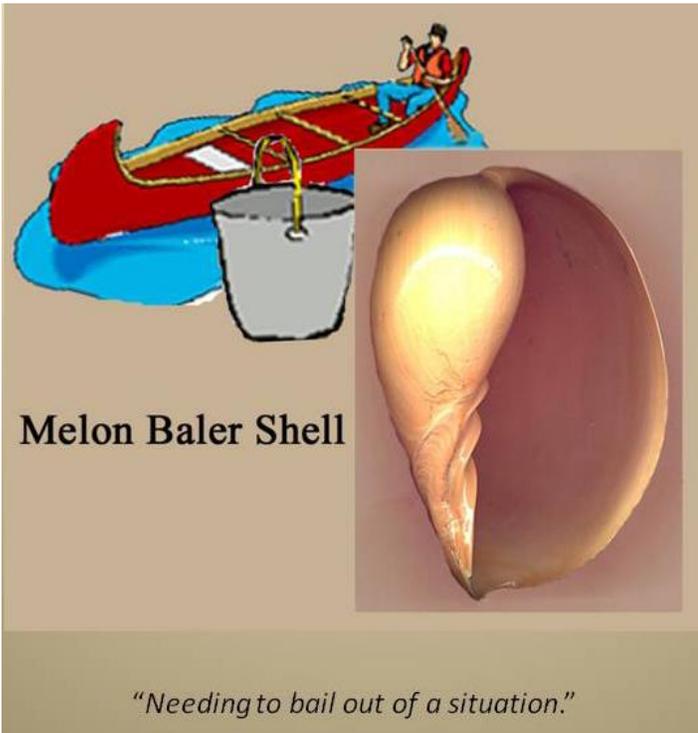
friends have tried to tell them something but they refused to see. It is stunning to witness how this little shell reaches through walls that no humans could penetrate.

By the way, on my homepage, if you scroll down, you will find segments of video clips from an interview with this same TV host many years later...after I wrote *Ocean Oracle*. It is called the Barbara and You show.

<https://www.oceanoracle.com/> For the information on Janthina, click on "[Shell Reading with TV Host.](#)"

Here is some [information about Barbara](https://www.fatv.org/barbara-and-you): <https://www.fatv.org/barbara-and-you>  
She still remembered her encounter with the Janthina ☺.

You saw how great the host of this TV show was. Now let me tell you about the cameraman. During the show, the host sort of put him on the spot and asked him if any of the shells I brought to the show got his attention. He picked two. One was the Green Tree Snail, and one was the Melon Baler shell.



The Melon Baler is #103 in *Ocean Oracle*. It is a shell found where the native people transport themselves in canoes. If the canoe is taking on too much water, they use these shells like buckets to bail out the water preventing the canoe from sinking. In divination, it means *"Needing to bail out of a situation."*

When the host asked the cameraman for his shell selection, I had mixed feelings. My personal policy is to keep readings private. I don't like giving readings on the air because they should be treated as confidential. However, I did not expect the host to involve the cameraman...I was just happy he was still in the room! I revealed that the Baler was about bailing out of a situation. Following this, the host said that described the cameraman perfectly because he was always baling people out of trouble. But, as you now know, his second shell was the Green Tree Snail.

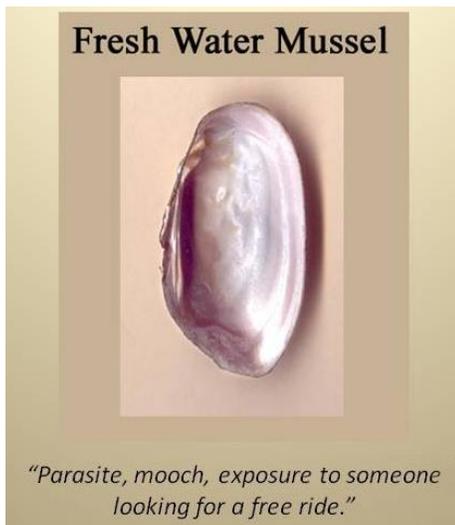
Let me ask you, looking at the shells below, what do you think the Green Tree Snail would add to his message? Pause here before proceeding to the next page.



He was having a change of comfort zone around bailing people out.

To maintain his privacy, I did not say anything. I responded by pointing out that the cameraman was very limited with only 30 shells I brought with me. After the show, I told him that if he ever wanted a full reading, he was welcome to come to my home where he would have access to the full inventory of shells. He sounded interested, but months went by, and I thought he forgot about that. It was almost a year later when he contacted me.

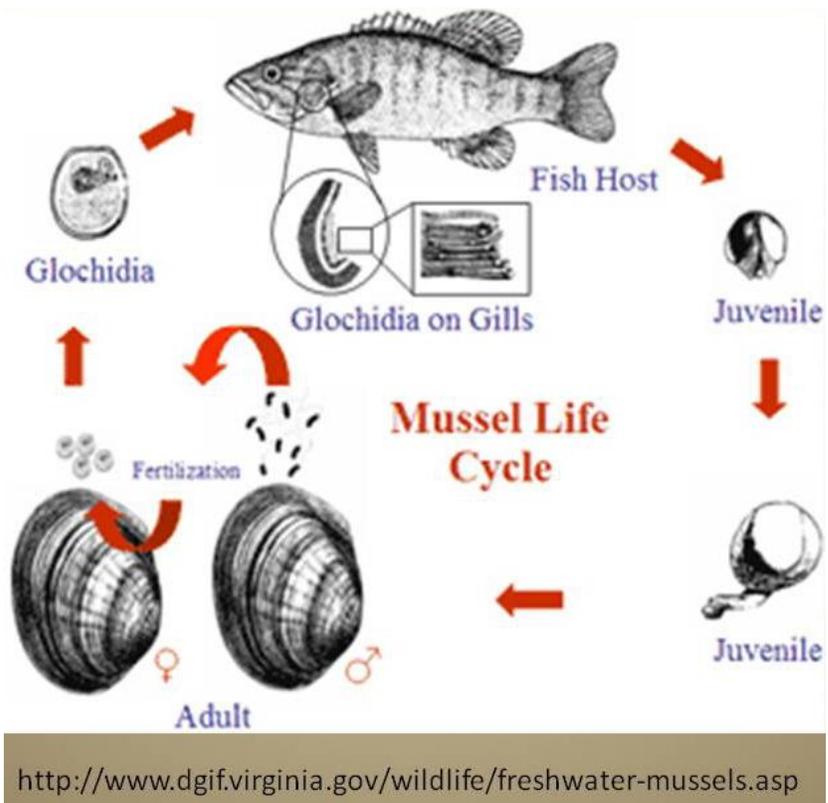
He came to my home but after all this time, and with 500 shells to choose from, I doubted he would remember the shells he picked in the studio. To my great surprise, he immediately spotted the Green Tree Snail, and then the Melon Baler. With the rest of his shells, it became clear that he had a family member who was a mooch...someone who is a parasite living off others.



In *Ocean Oracle*, this is the **Fresh Water Mussel shell # 34**. It means “Parasite, mooch, exposure to someone looking for a free ride.” Here is another meaning based upon the reproduction of the mollusk.

Fresh water mussels are born without a shell. The larvae have a hook-like structure on their body called a glochidium. This allows them to hook onto the gills, scales, or fin of a host fish. The fish grows a layer of skin over the hitchhiker creating a cyst.

The mussel larvae absorb nutrients from the fish’s blood while transforming into a more advanced phase of their life cycle. Once this is achieved, the juvenile mussel parasites burst through the skin layer and drop off the fish to form a shell. As they mature into adults, the cycle repeats.



<https://www.fws.gov/northeast/nyfo/es/mussels.htm> scroll down to see nature video “[The Intricate and Astonishing World of Mussel Reproduction](#)” of female mussel luring a fish.

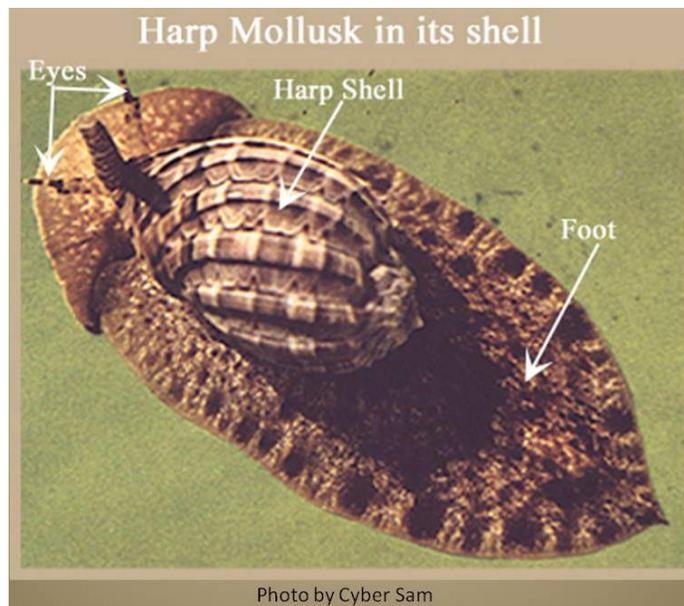
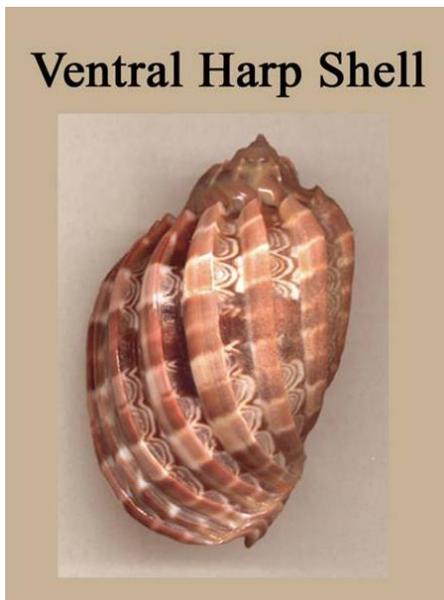
The parasite in the cameraman’s life was his brother. He thought he had to allow his adult brother to live with him, and eat his food, while his brother offered nothing in return financially nor did he lift a finger to help out around the house. It was very difficult for the cameraman to admit, but he did not want to do that anymore. I

could see why he did not come for a reading for a year. He thought this made him a terrible brother. A year earlier, the shells in the TV studio showed he was changing his comfort zone around bailing people out. This was subconscious and had not reached his conscious awareness; it had not reached a place where he could act on those feelings. When he came for the reading, and saw the confirmation of the parasite shell, he was ready to speak up and make changes in his relationship with his brother.

Now let's discuss another mollusk with a unique use for mucus. In Class 8, you met the Imperial Harp, #88 in your *Ocean Oracle* book. In their efforts to protect their national shell, authorities in Mauritius had to increase the consequences for tourists attempting to collect this Harp. It is now against the law. Due to its Interaction with Man, its meaning is "A behavior that will be changed voluntarily or by force."

I want you to see the harp from the perspective of another category. To look at mucus with the harp, we need to examine the Anatomy and Behavior of harps. The harp snail has developed its own wonderful employment of mucus.

In the pictures below, on the left side is the **Ventral Harp Shell**. It is **#20 in Ocean Oracle**. This falls in the Behavior and Anatomy category #1-65. If you look at the picture on the right, you will see the harp mollusk. Notice the size of its foot...it is huge!



The harp has the ability to detach a portion of its foot. This is a small sacrifice as the foot will regenerate. It uses this ability when pursued by a predator, such as a crab. When the crab sees the harp's foot protruding from the shell, it must be thinking "Look at all that food, dinner for weeks!" Since the crab is seeking to dine on the harp, when the harp sheds a portion of its foot to preoccupy the crab, the harp could use that distraction to get away. But it doesn't do that. Instead, while the crab is enjoying its morsel, the harp secretes mucus, mixing it with sand, and coats the crab. The unsuspecting crab becomes immobilized... and then the harp eats the crab! Willing to make a small sacrifice of a piece of its foot, the harp receives a big reward. It completely turns the tables, enabling the intended victim to be the victor. In shell divination, attraction to the **Ventral Harp Shell** (**#20** in *Ocean Oracle*) is about "The intended victim will be the victor; a complete reversal; present sacrifice for future reward." You can completely turn the tables from the status of victim to victor.

<http://www.melekohola.com/hawaiian-seashells/> scroll about 2/3 of the way down on this site to see the photo of a [live harp and the story of its feeding habits](#).

*“The Harp shells are amazing creatures. These bad boys are the terror of the sand flats. They live on crabs and shrimp which they envelope with their strong foot and smother with mucous, clogging the gills, and suck dry of life. When prey turns pursuer, the harp is capable of slicing off part of its foot which then placates the hungry pursuing crab while the harp typically escapes into the sand or, ironically enough, counter attacks. While the crab happily munches on the seemingly free meal, the harp will sometimes return to smother the happily feasting crab in mucous and sand, turning its former pursuer into its next meal.”*

And now, after meeting the Green Tree Snail, and the Placostylus, the Janthina, and Harp, you can begin to see why I said mucus is magical for mollusks. You watched mucus serve as a protection against the elements, a lubricant to crawl over razor blades, a glue to construct a raft, and a means to turn the tables on a predator.

What do you think? Have you changed your image of mucus? What about the glamour of TV?

Beauty is in the eye of the beholder. Someone once told me that I should wear a T-shirt that says, “Mucus is magical if you are a mollusk.” Actually, that is not a bad idea.

#### HOMEWORK EXERCISE #1 (Using Class 1-9)

Hello students,

At this point in the course, we have covered over 30 shells from Ocean Oracle. I think this is a great time to take stock of how you are doing so far in class. It is my hope that as you read the names of the shells in this assignment, they will seem like old friends. Just think, when you began this course, most of you never heard of a mollusk, or radula, or operculum. Look how much you have learned already!

My plan is to try a word association where I will give you the name of a shell, and see what comes to your minds. There are no wrong answers. Just share whatever thoughts surface based upon the material we have covered. I will simply mention the name of a shell, and the category for its meaning. Then, I would like you to tell me something in connection with that shell...either the meaning for the shell, or something about its behavior or anatomy or interaction with man depending upon the category. Please understand that you do not have to memorize the meanings of the shells. They are already on the backs of the cards. What I would like to do in this assignment is to see if you can tell me anything about the explanation for the meaning based upon our lessons and the photos you have been viewing. Try to answer without referring to your books or transcripts. I will supply a hint if you need it.

1. If I say Slipper Shell which has its meaning derived from the Anatomy and Behavior category, can you tell me what it means in divination, or something unique about its anatomy and behavior? You may answer now, or read on for a hint.

Hint: It involves something unique regarding reproduction.

2. If I say Imperial Harp shell, can you tell me its meaning derived from the Interaction with Man category. You may answer now, or read on for a hint.

Hint: The Interaction with Man involves the island of Mauritius.

3. What comes to mind if I say Cat's Eye based upon the Anatomy and Behavior category?

Hint: This part of the mollusk's anatomy serves a special purpose.

4. What about the Chiton? What comes to mind when I mention this shell?

Hint: Their shell has 8 plates. What purpose might that serve?

5. What can you tell me about the Tusk shell based upon its Anatomy and Behavior?

Hint: It involves their heart.

6. What about the Geography Cone shell based upon the Interaction with Man?

Hint: What unique feature of the cone mollusk was man able to adapt for our benefit?

7. Let's try one more. What can you tell me about the Reticulated Cowrie Helmet? Do you remember its scientific name?

Hint: The meaning based upon its Name and Appearance was later confirmed by its Behavior.

OK. That's it. Homework exercises assist me in monitoring your progress, but they are optional. If you have intentions to continue through all 4 modules and graduate from Level I of Ocean Speake, then completing all homework exercises is part of the requirements for graduation. Please email me at [michelle@oceanoracle.com](mailto:michelle@oceanoracle.com) with your response. In the subject window, please write your full name and Homework #1. Also, let me know if you have any questions or problems with this.

Many Seashell Blessings!

Shelley