



## Times Square Competition New York City, 1984

*Scheherazade's Specifications for Construction on Time Squared: On Sewers, Sibyls, and Stylobates:*

A sewer purification system is proposed to transform Times Square incrementally into a new landscape for the Ritual of the most Routine: *the Passage of Time*.

The depths of the City are mined to construct a New Mountain from which Time will rise every New Year as purified waters are released to cleanse the City.

*Take a toss at stolen chances.  
Place your bets and dream of dances.*

*To enter the crossroads, one may first walk into a garden along 42<sup>nd</sup> street. It has been said that in the garden, there is a man who opens gates, and indeed I recall a distant relative on my mother's side telling me of such a man.*

*I expect that this relative was accurate, when in confidence; she told me that in the garden there are never more than two gates. Indeed, she led me to believe that if you told the old gentleman which of the two gates was to take your fancy, that he would obligingly open it for you. But, I understand it is first customary to praise him on his flowers, even in winter, for he takes great pride in them.*

*It is my impression from this relative's account that in the garden nothing was to be taken for granted. If you have misbehaved, you will never get to meet the gatekeeper and you will certainly never encounter any of the Gates. There is a good chance you might remain in a lamentable place.*

*All of this my relative told me with great satisfaction in her voice. She concluded that Time Squared should logically become a quiet place, a place to engage the circle of time.*

*If you like I can take you through this garden. I cannot promise a meeting with its genteel keeper; sometimes he is not home. In his absence, you will find other tales to be told. That is the nice thing about Time Squared.*

*One of the gates is closed and is very large. The other is always left slightly ajar and appears at first glance to be substantially smaller; you might peek in, if you can.*

*The Keeper opens the gates by operating a spring-release mechanism, of his own invention, too complicated to describe here. Suffice it to say that it is no small undertaking to operate those great doors. One must be very patient as their hinges and bolts grind slowly into gear.*

*No matter which of the gates you have chosen, tread softly as you walk through. If you are very attentive you may hear coming from beneath your feet the trickling of water and the ringing of bells. If you are clever, you might guess that there could well be subterranean chambers. Perhaps, some could be large enough to swallow trains.*

*Go through the gate. When you have crossed its threshold, say thank you to its keeper. As you are now in his realm, tipping is no longer necessary.*

*All in all, the promises we make have much to do with the chances we take, and the difference between the places each of the gates may lead you can be no less than the difference between a mountain and a valley. This I tell you in strictest confidence and would advise you to choose carefully to which place you would rather go. But I digress...*

*In the mountain, you will follow many chambers, each leading to the next. Please use the railing, as the floors are sometimes slippery and there is never much light. Walking up through the chambers will, perhaps, take you a minute, perhaps, 365 days, so make sure you have plenty of time on your hands. Perhaps, you should come during the weekend.*

*This is what the inside of the mountain looks like. Follow this map and you will not get lost. There may be sudden corners. These only occur along Broadway. Don't be put off; some people like them. Anyway, you should know by now that the illusion of the mountain is nothing more than a modest wall.*

*Periodically, you will be flushed from the chambers by smelly stuffs, and will be required to start your journey again from 42<sup>nd</sup> Street. Next time, you will inquire as to when these floodings take place before you start. Ask anyone; everyone in New York senses when these wet surges might arise.*

*Perseverance and moderate tolerance will lead you to discover the constructed beginnings of the last chamber. Here you will be relieved to find the gatekeeper still at work polishing the stone of a newly finished house. Stay and visit for a while; you might meet one of the new tenants.*

*And still you haven't reached the ends. You may well pray; you may well cry, stone domes will tremble and the earth will fall.*

*How can such furies lead to so much calm...*

*Move along now; don't delay. In Paradise the stars are twinkling...*

*Almost a year has come and gone since last New Year's Day, and the clock will soon rise up in it's moon.*

*Pause now, rest for a while from your journey; you have undoubtedly come from afar. Friends are here to greet you as you watch the expectant walls swell up and grow impatient. You know their secrets.*

*Time after Time, official Time cannot be trusted; it has been known to be inaccurate. So follow the rising steps along Seventh Avenue. Make sure you have change before you go up; looking at Midnight between the Stars and the Moon will cost you a dime.*

*And rejoice, for it is the New Year! Write on walls, if you like. Their surfaces are now clean and await your mark. Carve a secret of your own invention, your own incantation. I'll not tell what they mean. There will always be enough room, even if, at times, you will have to use shorthand.*

*The gates are open now and a silent flush rises through the ageless walls with the tide of the moon.*

*New virgin water sparkles and joyfully glistens in its marble channels. Look, the Clock has risen in the Universe.*

*In Paradise, a blanket of warm water soothes your tired winter feet. Take a seat and chat with a new friend. It's been a long night.*

*Not far remains to go in this garden. It is best you come and see for yourself the pool rising to your ankles, and people joyfully wading.*

*It is best we part now as the gentle vapors overflow onto the morning streets. Don't be alarmed; Manhattan will welcome the infinite purity of Time's waters.*

*Yes, you can go home, if you like. There has been plenty of water for all on this special night. Sibyls will give you a flask on your way out. Treasure it for it must last you one year.*

*Dawn has quietly come.*

*The streets have been cleansed by purifying Time flows.*

*Your pace is lighter; your heart beats faster.*

*The final gate opens. In front of you you'll see Words Made Flesh.*

*Indeed, Time squared is a Circle.*