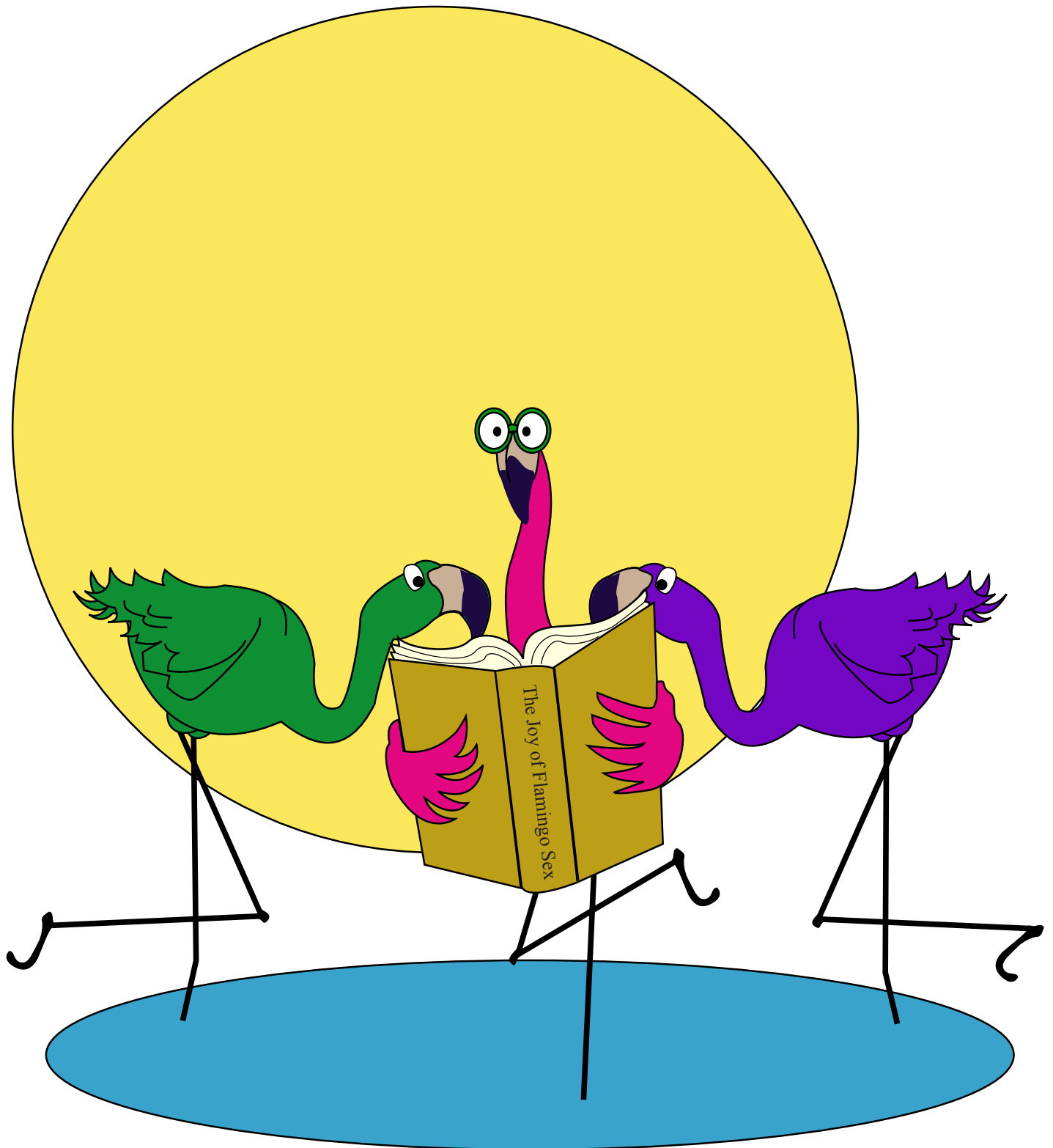


**Airy Faerie  
Mabon, 2006**

**What cha Reading?**



## Publisher's Notes

***"What refuge is there for the victim who is oppressed with the feeling that there are a thousand new books he ought to read, while life is only long enough for him to attempt a hundred?" - Oliver Wendell Holmes, Sr.***

Welcome to the 2006 Mabon issue of the Airy Faerie. With the arrival of fall, the air gets chillier, the leaves begin to change, and school starts up again. That thought always filled me with more fear than any ghost story I ever read. Instead of looking at the fear of heading back to school, we at the Airy Faerie thought it would be fun to look at joys of reading.

I think most of us started our reading adventures with Dick and Jane, Mother Goose, the twisted Brothers Grim and the tongue twisting Dr. Seuss. As our skills grew, we were taken to different worlds by Charles Dickens, Hans Christen Andersen, and even Edgar Allen Poe. The more we read, the further our dreams went. We could travel back in time with mythological tales, or blast off into the future to discover new worlds. We made friends with Tom Sawyer, the Hardy Boys, King Arthur, and a little girl from Kansas, named Dorothy, as we shared their adventures. Of course, our minds were also expanded with history books and biographies of people who inspired us. Reading helped to shape us and sparked our desire to follow our life's path.

***"Night after night, he sat and bleared his eyes with books." - Henry Wadsworth Longfellow***

For your reading pleasure, this season's Airy Faerie offers an assortment of poems, Faerie and pagan lessons, the continuing tales of young Prince Apollo and a look at the Tarot deck that Phoenix and I are creating. Phoenix also undertook the challenge of retyping and updating the Faerie Reading List. This is a list that the Denver Faeries came up with years ago of books that have helped them on their journey. For the sake of brevity, we did not include all of the publication information. If you are looking for one of these titles and need more details to aid you in your search, just let us know and we will get that to you.

One contributor that I want to mention is Tom. He has opened his private journals for us to use in the Airy Faerie. His journals are filled with poems and beautiful drawings that we are honored to be able to share with you with the aid of some typing and a scanner. It is so nice to share pages the AF with another artist.

***"I only buy it to read the articles. The nudes are just for my artistic reference." -Soapy McDonald, (my dad, when asked about his collection of Playboys)***

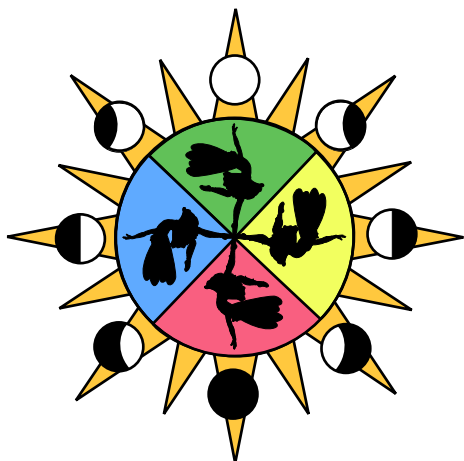
Well, as they say, 'Like father like son', well kind of. Where my dad had stacks of girly mags, I have stacks of male mags, which is a great lead in to the nudity warning. Now I know you all get the Airy Faerie for all the wonderful poems and stories, but in case you haven't noticed, there are images of naked men in the Airy Faerie. Even a few images of men having gay sex! If you should not, or do not want to view such images, please close this fae zine. That way, no one gets upset or in trouble. Otherwise continue on, and be sure to stop reading long enough to enjoy art.

***"OK class, if I hear anybody talking during reading time, that person will have to stay in during recess and read out loud to me."- Mrs. Miller, my forth grade teacher***

With that said, now it is time to enjoy the harvest of writings that the Denver Faeries have offered for this 2006 Mabon issue of the Airy Faerie. Be sure to check out the Faerie Reading list to see if you can add a few more 'must read' books to your reading list. If you think we need to add a book or two to the list feel free to contact us with the book's information so that we can include it in future generations of the list.

Naked Hugs,  
DragonSwan

## Airy Faerie



**Mabon, 2006**

The Airy Faerie is a publication of the Denver Radical Faerie Tribe.

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# Tom's Page

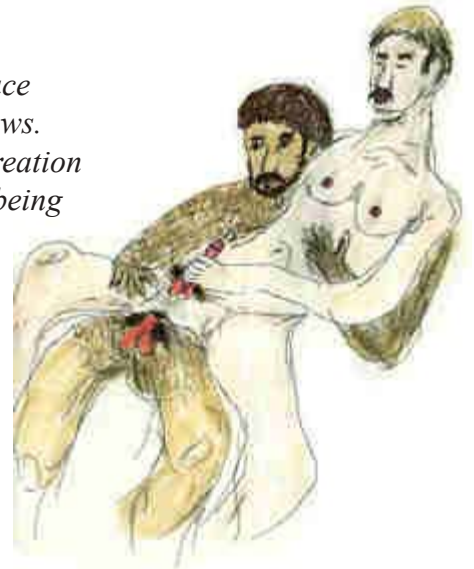
## Art and writings from Tom's Journal, Spring 1994

*Even though I don't know  
What they are or their use  
I feel a kinship  
a reaching out of the past  
to claim, "these are mine."*

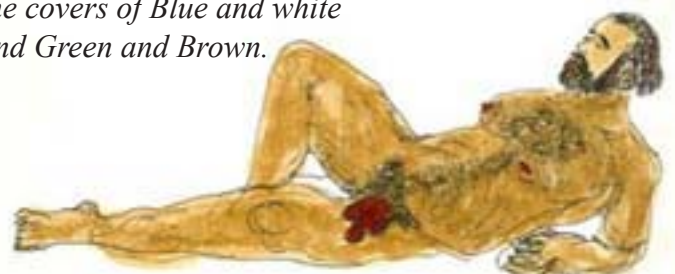


*I was reading a book on  
Japanese gardening the other day  
and came across words like  
WABI, SABI, and SHIBUI.  
terms defining a delicate subdued melancholic  
beauty.  
A place where people have their own  
outdoor garden.  
For me it's a place of mystery - mysterious - not too dark  
- just edgy*

*His hairy belly jiggling  
as his puissant rod slams  
into my dark place of mystery  
—hurrying in and out with  
surprising momentum  
and urgency.  
I clutch fist fulls of  
hairy tits, kneading  
them between finger  
tips, gasping cries  
pelvises rearing  
sparking flowers  
melting and burning  
my entrails around  
his flesh  
the face of it thumping  
into my flesh  
like a drum all  
the way to my heart  
beat — an eruption  
into the gloom of  
this cavernous space  
where no light shows.  
It is the secret recreation  
of an ancient rite being  
delivered by God.*



*Myth of Adam  
that god created  
a young man  
Lies, he was already  
"Mature"  
Let me out  
of this stupid doctrine  
the book is between  
the covers of Blue and white  
and Green and Brown.*



# What is Mabon?

by Beast

Mabon is one of the “lessor sabbats” and marks the day of the Autumnal Equinox—usually around September 21. (This year it on September 23, 2006, 12:03 A.M. EDT.) On this day, the sun appears to cross the celestial equator, from north to south; this marks the beginning of autumn in the Northern Hemisphere.

There is some controversy whether this is a “genuine” pagan festival or not. The name “Mabon” (Welsh for “son”) was apparently coined by Aiden Kelly in the 1970’s for this day. Our ancestors did mark the feast day of St. Michael on September 25, and it seems likely that they did mark the Autumnal Equinox in some way and that the Christian holiday (as was so often the case) took the place of an earlier, Pagan, holiday.

Being an equinox, this is a day of balance, but also when we start our roller coaster ride into the Dark. This is the second harvest festival. Lammas, the first harvest, marked the gathering of the “first fruits” of our labors. Samhain is the last harvest—usually of livestock—and is thus more strongly identified with death. There is death associated with Mabon also—the self-sacrifice of the spirit of the corn and of vegetation: John Barleycorn. His symbolic sacrifice may take the form of a figure made of grain or a “wicker man.”

Now is when we relish the full fruits of our harvest. We put up tomatoes and peaches and dry herbs to season winter stews of hearty root vegetables. This is the times when the dying plants drop their heavy load of seeds to the care of the Earth. This is the time of the rut for animals like the elk and the deer, and so this is also the time of hunting.

It is now that the God and Goddess begin their journey to the underworld:

*“Farewell, O sun, ever-returning light,  
The hidden god who ever yet remains  
He now departs to the land of youth  
Through the gates of death  
To dwell enthroned, the judge of gods and men,  
The horned leader of the hosts of air.  
Yet, as He stands unseen without the circle  
So dwelleth He within the secret seed  
The seed of new-reaped grain, the seed of flesh;  
Hidden in the earth, the marvelous seed of the stars.  
In Him is life, and life is the light of man,  
That which was never born, and never dies.  
Therefore the wise ones weep not, but rejoice.”  
– Doreen Valiente*

So what does this time mean for you? The sun is cooling down, and the shadows grow longer, but the sun still shines for us in our lovely Colorado Indian Summer(s)!!!

Autumn blessings to you all!

## More from Tom

Nov. 1995

*I’m sorry to say  
utopia has been  
postponed.*



## Subscription Information

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# White Sheets and Tainted Blood

By AstralBrat

I woke up from a bad dream last night.  
It was vivid, it was abstract, it was so real.  
In it I could hear and I could feel.  
I went into a room, candles burned, colors turned.

A face stared back at me. It was cold.  
Yet it was so familiar. It felt to be ages.  
But my dream's mind told me it was not.  
I looked down and a bed did appear.

It held that of white sheets and tainted blood.

I asked why there was blood.  
The face told me it was the innocence I bled.  
Not innocence of others.  
But, it was that out of my own.

Then all vanished and I was left alone.  
Materialized in front of my eyes  
was a cold, shivering, and naked child.  
No older than that of the age of ten.  
"Is this my voice?" my voice murmured.

"No," the other voice that held the face  
before all disappeared responded.  
Silence then surrounded, and watched the child cry.  
"It's the you of pain not yet accounted for." it again spoke up.  
The more I stared at this broken one. I wanted it to be a lie!

No god real or fake would allow this.

My heart broke and I couldn't shake it.  
This child, this dreamed up being broken,  
forgotten and so abandoned.  
I tried to tell me of long ago I was there.  
Tried to say that I did still care.

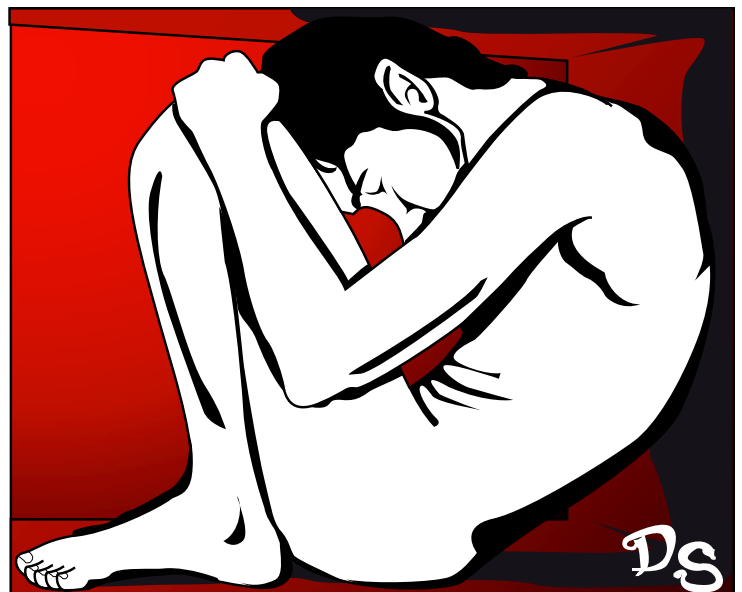
It couldn't hear me.  
This broken being knew nothing of my existence.  
After all in the way of dreams. I was only allowed to hear  
and feel.  
"Get me out of this!" my dream voice begged.

Still I remained.  
Feeling shattered, feeling guilty. Then I remembered.  
I remembered the sheets. The white empty sheets  
with tainted blood stains.  
I could do nothing. Do nothing but watch and hurt.

Then the picture changed.  
Someone very close to me, intertwined with the deepest part of  
my heart did appear.  
Sitting in my ten year old version's lap in tears, heavy and in  
traumatic pain.  
"No! Not her! I don't want to remember!" my dream voice  
begged.

Then all went to black and there was nothing more.

7-29-2006  
3:38 am PDT  
Poem 28





# Quest for the Crystal Phoenix

## Chapter 16: Pearls of Truth and Wisdom

### by Orpheus

The silence was thick as Sir Dinsmore led the king's company across the outer courtyard of the castle. After the captain of the guard shocked them with the announcement of the charges levied against the king he reminded all of the code of silence surrounding criminal cases. According to law, all impacted parties were to remain silent on the subject until accused and accuser could be brought together. When Apollo asked about the need for the silence, Sir Dinsmore told him that the law was created to prevent one side or the other from influencing the memories of others involved. Each person needed to be able to tell their story from their perspective without the pressure of thinking they saw something they didn't just because someone else was talking about it. In this case, since everyone in the city had some opinion about the crimes an edict was issued that no one was to talk beyond necessary words of common manners until the king's return. At that time, King Adam was to be led to view Daisy May's casket and face his accusers. From there, the formal trial process could begin.

Their footsteps sounded hollow in the empty grounds. Without the bustle of the normal traffic of the King's Market that was normally set up in the courtyard, the distance seemed endless to the prince. He whispered his thoughts to Lord Cthdêhâssêsbüt, his teacher, who responded that while it seemed larger, it was mostly an effect of the emptiness and the slow, solemn pace set by the guards. "It is paced to give your father time to calm down after the fast ride and gather his thoughts as to what lies ahead."

Even at the slow pace they eventually reached the inner gate to the castle keep. At their approach, the gates swung open as silently as the castle grounds; not even a screech of a poorly oiled hinge disturbed their thoughts. As they passed through the portals, they saw a shaft of light streaming down from the upper windows of the Grand Rotunda. Each beam of that light bounced off the glass casket in the middle of the hall, casting sparkles of light on the shadowed faces that lined the outer edges of the hall.

"Behold, Adam Solari," shouted Sir Dinsmore, "the result of your crimes against the people of this nation. Here lies Daisy May; she who was named fairest in this land by all who knew her. See the results of the viper you set forth among your people."

As Apollo approached the dais holding the casket, he saw a maiden of exceptional beauty inside. She had long golden tresses wreathed in a chain of white daisies. Her cheeks held a rosy glow. Her hands were folded, holding a bouquet of daisies close to her heart. She looked like a maiden asleep. Apollo imagined that at any moment she would take a deep breath, flutter her eyes and stretch her arms as if she had just been taking a nap.

"So much like my wife," cried the king. "So perfect in beauty, yet so still and lifeless."

"That is one reason why you are being linked with this death," said Sir Dinsmore. "Another is that just like your wife, a basket of apples was found with her body. Like the queen, an apple had been the last thing she was eating. Just that day, a peddler woman with a royal license with your signature was in the market. She was the only one selling apples that day. When we looked back on the licenses on record the day that Queen Iris died, again that peddler woman's name was on the books with a license, again, signed by yourself."

"What day was this so called royal license issued?" asked Cetee.

Sir Dinsmore looked at the documents in his bag and found the license. "It is dated three days past, just the day before the evil deed was done."

"Doesn't it seem strange, Captain, that if indeed King Adam signed that license three days ago, that it would be most unusual for the bearer to arrive one day afterwards when the signer was a minimal four day cart ride away?"

"That may well be Lord Cthdêhâssêsbüt, but your question is out of turn as are my comments. These will have to wait until the appointed adjudicator arrives and can help us sift through the evidence. Meanwhile, let us honor the late Daisy May by maintaining the silence at her vigil. At sunset, her body is to be taken to her family's manor for burial."

Adam knelt beside the casket. His head was hung in sorrow. Apollo knelt beside his father and the others of this company stood in silence behind them. After a short while, the prince broke the silence with a shout.

"Quick open the casket! She's not dead."

"That's impossible," said Sir Dinsmore. "The doctors have certified that she is dead. I was there when they pronounced that she had no breath...no heartbeat. She would have already been buried if not for the fact that the King has been implicated in her death. The royal honor of a state viewing was the least we felt that we owed her."

"Then why is there condensation on the inside of the glass? Didn't the history books say something about why the official viewings were done with glass caskets?" he asked.

"You are correct, My Prince," said Cetee. "It is more than a mere matter of royal honor. Many deaths have been caused by families hastening the burial only to learn that the treasured son or daughter had taken a strong sleeping potion. It was King Anton who extended the royal practice to all suspicious deaths. It seems like this would certainly qualify even if King Adam had not been implicated." He paused a moment. "You said that there were apples near her body?"

"That is correct."



"That sounds too close to the old legend of Daisy Amaryllis, daughter of King Myron of Rysbal."

A trio people stepped forward. "That's what we thought when we found my daughter, sir." A middle-aged woman bowed low. Her face was that of an ice maiden with no sign of the loss she must have been feeling. Gesturing to the youth beside her she said, "We called Peter to her side. He kissed her but nothing happened. Alas, that old legend is just a child's faerie tale."

"As Lady Melody says, I tried." To Apollo, his grief looked less sincere than the other's.

"And you are whom?" asked Cetee.

"I am Peter Shepard. I was Daisy's fiancé. These are her parents, Lord Brisley and Lady Melody."

"Did you love her with your whole heart?"

"Well...to be honest, I never met her before that day. My parents arranged our marriage when we babies. I went to their house that morning to make the formal arrangements and she burst into tears. Hours later, one of Lady Melody's maids came to me with the news. They had hoped that things would be like that fairy tale and Daisy would wake up. She was beautiful and I know that I would have loved her in time."

"And if her fiancé could not waken her with a kiss, who else?" sobbed Lady Melody.

To the prince's ears, the mother's cries were not genuine. He turned his magical senses toward Daisy and her fiancé and saw nothing special connecting them. Something caught his eye when he looked around the room.

"Father, when we were riding you said you had the sense of something happening. You said it seemed to center on someone crying." Adam nodded, so Apollo continued. "Now that we know something did happen, what are you sensing?"

"I can still hear the crying," he replied, "yet no one here is crying to match what I hear."

"Those are the tears of a mother's heart breaking," offered Lady Melody.

"No, these are the tears of a true love being denied the right to waken the sleeping maiden." He saw flinch at the words 'true love' so raising an eyebrow he added, "A love that maybe you didn't sanction or approve perhaps?" Adam turned around in the hall, listening carefully. Slowly, he started toward where the family had emerged from the crowd. In an alcove, there was a kitchen maid busily using her apron as a handkerchief as she saw who was walking toward her. "Who are you child? If it isn't Peter, do you know where we would find Daisy's true love?"

"I am Belinda, Sire. And I know not. That very day, after the family shared lunch with that young man, Daisy said that if that's what her family though her heart desired then she was better off dead. I tried to tell her that we could still be together after she got married, but she said that as a married woman she would have no time for a foolish thing like love."

"Do you love her, Belinda?"

"How dare you imply that my daughter and this creature..." Lady Melody's nostrils flared with her rage. "It is bad enough that

my daughter is dead, and now you are implying that she loved a kitchen maid?"

"Well, Belinda? Do you?" She nodded her head. "And does she love you?"

"Until that morning, I thought so."

"Then go to her," ordered the king.

"And show her all the love in your heart," offered Johnny. "Make her feel how empty your life will be without her. If ever you wished your life was a faerie tale, now is the time to believe that dreams can come true."

Belinda rushed to the casket and Rondar helped her shove aside the lid. She bent over Daisy's lifeless body and gave a quick peck on her cheek. Belinda stood up and with fresh tears in her eyes, started to turn away but changed her mind. She reached in and lifted Daisy's head off the satin pillow and gave her a kiss full of the passion she felt. She was starting to lay Daisy back down when Daisy reached up and pulled herself up to return the kiss. A bit of sparkling lights flared around them and soon Belinda's kitchen rags where transformed into a silk gown that matched Daisy's.

Adam, Rondar and Apollo looked over at Johnny. He shrugged his shoulders and whispered, "What can I say? It is the standard spell and we faeries do have an image to maintain."

"It appears that my services won't be needed." A towering figure was coalescing in the shaft of light. Lord Apollo stepped forth into the hall and everyone bowed. Light radiated from him, illuminating even the darkest corners of the hall. From the entrance a herald announced his arrival, "All hail the arrival of Lord Apollo, Guardian of the sun and all that it shines upon and Source of knowledge from which our laws are based."

As the prince looked up to the god for whom he had been named, the light dimmed back to normal. "I came here expecting to moderate a debate on the guilt of King Adam as it related to the death of a maiden, yet it appears that we no longer have a victim of a crime."

"Begging your pardon, Your Radiance," said Sir Dinsmore, "but while the crime of murder may now be a moot point, the king still has been named an accomplice in what is now a case of attempted murder. There are still the charges of his involved in the death of Queen Iris and the looming destruction of this nation."

"Very well, since everyone is already gathered, let us begin." With waves of his hand, the casket moved out of the center of the hall. Chairs magically filled the room and people moved from the edges of the hall to take their place. Lord Apollo announced that no one would be allowed to leave the hall without his permission until they reached decisions on whether or not there was enough evidence to hold the king for a formal trial. The god explained that each piece of evidence, each account of events would be presented. People would be given five minutes to question or support each presentation. If all the questions and concerns about the evidence were addressed, the evidence was labeled 'solid'. If there were outstanding questions it would be labeled 'suspect.' If there was no support for the evidence it was labeled 'removed.' At the end of the presentations, both accuser and accused could ask to reexamine one

*-continued on page 8*

## Quest/Crystal Phoenix continued

of the suspect pieces of evidence. After that, all decisions could only be made based on the solid evidence.

"With the logistics of the proceeding out of the way," said the god, "let us begin with that license you were discussing prematurely."

Sir Dinsmore pulled out the license and presented it to the god pointing out the fact that the license was on official Adbalm Royal Paper, had the Official Royal Seal and bore the signature of King Adam. Cetee asked to examine it. "Very interesting, since this color of royal paper hasn't been used in two hundred and fifty one years, not since the death of Queen Annabelle, who was the only person who loved to use mauve, melon and vermilion as official colors. The seal used is original to the kingdom and does not have all the embellishments added by later rulers and the signature has more flourishes than I have ever seen King Adam use when signing something."

"That may be but everything is a perfect match to the license issued thirteen years ago," responded the guard."

"Which only shows that the same person created the document," responded Cetee. "Have you compared this to anything else signed by your king?"

When he admitted that he hadn't, Lord Apollo ordered a pair of guards to bring samples of other royal licenses signed by Adam. They returned with the documents and handed them to Sir Dinsmore, who promptly announced that nothing on them matched the evidence. He withdrew the evidence from consideration. "Sir Dinsmore, I would suggest that you instruct your guards to examine the authenticity of royal licenses in the future," said the god. "At minimum they should learn that not everything that has the word 'official' printed on it is automatically official. Now, is there any other evidence specifically linking King Adam to the attempted murder of Daisy May?"

"No," he replied.

"Then, if all are in agreement, let this charge be dismissed. Is there anyone wishing to pursue this charge further?"

No one spoke up.

"Let us move on to the charge of King Adam's involvement in the death of his wife, Queen Iris." The god turned to Sir Dinsmore, "Why, after thirteen years, are you now charging King Adam with the death of Queen Iris?"

"The primary cause was the similarity in the deaths themselves. My feeling is ever stronger now that we have learned that Daisy was not truly dead. If she was poisoned in the same manner, should she not have been found breathing just as was Daisy. Even if the king was not responsible of directly killing the queen, he turned a blind eye to the fact that she was truly still alive in coffin."

"May I speak?" Daisy May stood up and came to the center of the circle. "I may have an idea about that." She said that after that meeting with her family and the arranged fiancé, she was distraught over the situation and left the house to clear her head. She went to the market to look at cheerful faces. One peddler, an old woman with an apple cart, called her over. The woman said that Daisy must be the one that the people had been calling the fairest in the land. Daisy said she never liked it when people said that, but she blushed when she heard a person from outside the city calling her that. The old woman said that a pretty girl like herself deserved only the

finest things and she had a saved her best apple with hopes of meeting her. The woman pulled a piece of cloth from an apple that had been set to one side. It was the darkest red apple that Daisy had ever seen. It was so deep in color, that Daisy almost thought it had a purple cast to its hue. The woman said that she could see some sorrow in that pretty face and that this was the magic fruit of the papel sedoipen tree. A single bite of its flesh would be enough to reveal a person's true love. If that was not enough to satisfy a person, the consumption of the entire fruit was enough to ensure an end to all that caused sorrow and pain. "I took the offered fruit and went home. I planned to take a small bite to see if the magic was true. If that part was true I had planned to eat the rest at a later time. If the queen resisted the lure of sleep that the first bite induced, the later bites with their promise to end all pain might have sent her in a sleep so deep that no one could detect those faint breaths until it was too late."

"It is known that the Queen had been in poor health the month's prior to her death," said Sir Dinsmore. "An offer of that nature would certainly be tempting even if she didn't realize the danger it implied. But I don't understand how an apple could kill a person."

Cetee spoke, "It could if it is an apple grown from the seeds of the apple in the story of Princess Daisy Amaryllis. The original documents of the discovery of her body say that when her friends found her, they were so upset that one of them threw the apple out of the window. It must have grown into a tree and now bears fruit of its own."

Someone in the crowd shouted, "Then if it is fruit of that same tree, why did Queen Iris die? Surely the kiss of her loving husband would have awoken her!" The crowd murmured its agreement.

"I have often wondered that myself," said Adam. "We thought of the old tale and I kissed her but nothing happened. I can only suspect that it was because..."

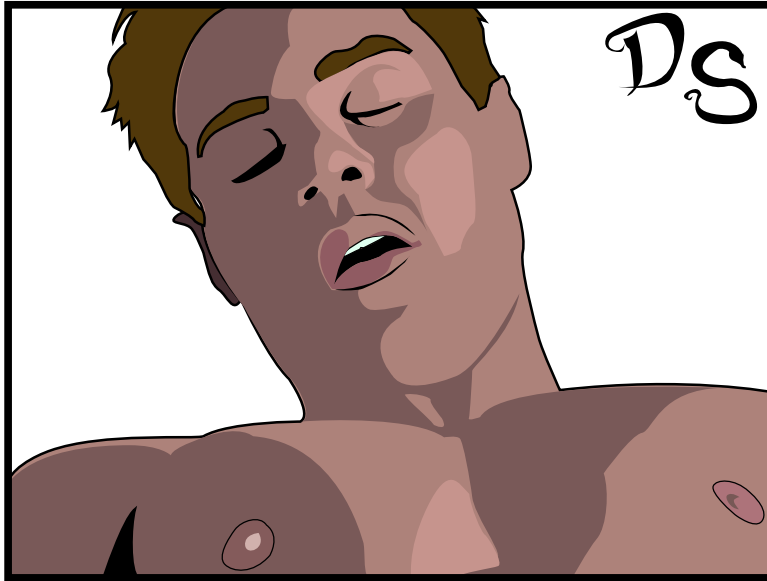
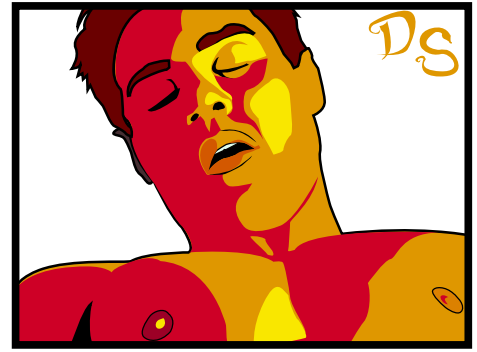
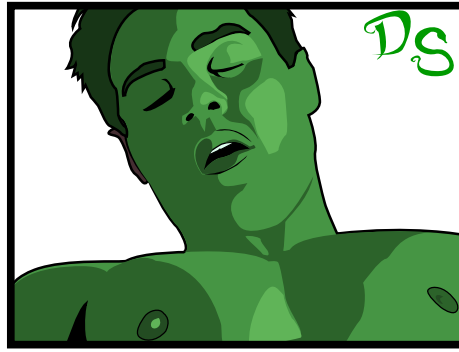
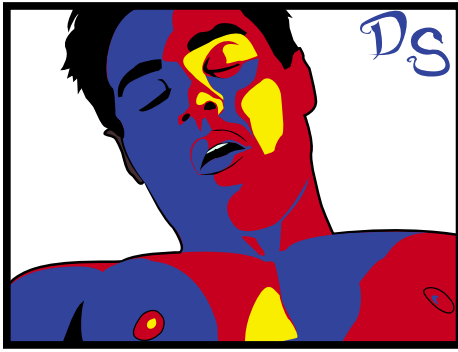
"Don't say anything more," a trio of voices shouted from the entrance. Everyone turned and saw Queens Holly, Susan and Rose in the doorway.

"It is true that the kiss of one's true love can end the curse of the papel sedoipen fruit," said Holly. She held up an apple for all to see. "Until today, I never knew if it was the first kiss of one's true love, the kiss of one's first true love, just a kiss by one's true love, one's first kiss ever, or any other such thing. I have yet to find a willing subject to try the experiment with me. After today's demonstration, I'm beginning to suspect that it's the true love part that makes a difference."

"And if Adam is blame for my daughter's death because he couldn't wake her with a kiss," said Rose, "then I am probably as guilty as he. There were many suitors for her hand, many of whom she approached us as being serious possibilities for marriage. But her father and I forced her into marriage with King Adam. It could well be that one of those had been fated to be her true love and I denied her that chance." Rose paused a moment before continuing, "I love my son-in-law and I know my daughter loved him in her own way. Sad as it is for a mother to say, while Iris may have been Adam's true love, the whims of fate may have held other plans for her in that respect."

"I agree," said Susan. "During her Walk, she was a frequent





guest at my castle and she often spoke of romantic dreams. She had the picture in her mind of her true love, and as handsome and charming as King Adam is, he is not that dream. Her fantasy was of the knight in shining armor who comes to rescue her from certain death as she is being sacrificed to a dragon. When she learned of the marriage announcement, King Adam represented everything she already had in life and she wasn't ready to give up her freedom from responsibility."

Lord Apollo stood up. "Is there anyone here who doubts King Adam's love for his wife? If so, let your doubts be heard." People looked around the hall to see who might speak out. After a moment of silence, he continued. "Is there anyone here who believes that King Adam had a hand in the death of Queen Iris? If so, let your thoughts be known." Again, silence reigned. "Then, if all are in agreement, the charge of being an accomplice in her death shall be dismissed." A loud 'aye' echoed in the Great Rotunda. "That leaves us with the charge of King Adam being a co-conspirator in the destruction of the Kingdom of Adbalm. On what basis is this charge levied?"

Sir Dinsmore pulled out his charge book. "The suspicious nature of the Queen's death, the lack of additional heirs should something happen to Prince Apollo, the fact that the heir is being raised in a foreign court, and that upon his death this kingdom will forever be merged with another and cease to exist as an independent kingdom."

Lord Apollo thought about this a moment. "We have already addressed the Queen's death. There does seem to be someone else involved in that but it was not your king. By the way, Sir Dinsmore,

after this trial, I do suggest you try to find that old woman. Besides charges of selling poisonous fruit she is also suspect in forging royal documents."

"Noted, Your Worship."

"Now, since two of the other conditions you mentioned are based on the Queen's untimely death, we shall address your list in reverse order. What is it about the merging of your nations that prompts this charge against King Adam? It was his father, King Andrew, that drafted the contract that bound your country to Rianglelet. You, yourself, were among those that signed it."

"It was done at a time of conflict and we needed to remove our enemies by whatever means was available. While joining the kingdoms together was not a perfect solution, it did save lives. Now, we have had time to think about what will be lost when the conservative Riangleletians try to dominate our culture. Many think that King Andrew was too hasty in offering that as the only solution to our war."

"Sir Dinsmore," said Rose quietly, "I am afraid I am partially to blame for those fears. When I was Regent of your country while your king was on holiday, I missed the quiet routine of my home. Your culture is different than my own and I was wrong in trying to change your routines to suit my needs. I have much to learn from your people. Your king himself has taught me much about ruling a country from the heart instead of the head. I have spent the past several weeks with my sisters learning about how others live their lives without the strict control of the central authorities. I have learned that there are better ways to garner respect than using a verbal whip.

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## Quest/Crystal Phoenix continued

If anyone has something to fear about the joining of our kingdoms, it is the people of Rianglelet. They are going to have to learn that they can make decisions for themselves and not rely on the Crown to do all their thinking for them.”

Apollo looked at his grandmother and was amazed at how serene she was while speaking. Her dress was a pure white, not one sign of the shifting, glaring colors that had been evident when Holly cast her spell on her. He looked at the faerie queen and she was beaming with pride at her sister. She saw the prince looking at her and gave him a thumbs up sign. He took that as a sign that his grandmother was free of the curse that prompted Holly to cast the spell. Something happened on the queens’ vacation and he was eager for this trial to be over so he could find out what happened to bring about this change.

Cetee stepped forward. “Sir Dinsmore, the process that is in motion now is restoring a splintered kingdom to its former, unified state. Should we not be rejoicing in something that has been nearly five hundred years in coming?”

“But by who’s authority does King Adam, and his father before him, have to make this kind of decision for the people? We were not given that choice. King Andrew presented the marriage of the kingdoms as the only solution to saving lives.”

“By who’s authority?” boomed Lord Apollo. “It was the gods who splintered your kingdom in the first place. The people couldn’t continue in their hatred for the others so we did what any parent would do—we sent the errant children to their own rooms. Ever have we wanted you to come back together, but it had to be on your terms not ours. Don’t you think it’s time to see what your ‘siblings’ have learned in all that time?”

“That may well be true, but still it would be nice to have been included in the decisions that brought to this point,” came a voice from the hall. “It would have been nice to have time to prepare.”

Cetee responded, “Your people have had five hundred years to prepare. You, yourself, have many years to prepare while the current kings and queens grow to a respectable age before young Prince Apollo formally claims the united throne. How much more time do you need?”

“How can we prepare if we have no idea what our future ruler is like? He is never here for any length of time. Even if Her Majesty, Queen Rose, says that she was wrong to try to make changes, how can we be certain that Prince Apollo won’t force those changes through when he becomes king?”

“I can see where that would be a concern,” said the god, “but is that evidence that King Adam is conspiring to destroy the kingdom?”

“My people have shared a similar concern with me,” said Queen Susan.

“Your Worship, I know that it is out of order in these proceedings but I want to offer a suggestion that may help with those concerns.” Susan explained that she had planned to propose that Prince Apollo spend four months each year at each of the capitols. They could ensure continuity of his instruction by having his key teachers travel with him. After his stay, he would have a period of two or three weeks to travel between those stays so that he could visit parts of each of the kingdoms. This also ensures that over the course of time, he will not always be in the same city each year for the same season.

“That sounds reasonable to me,” said Adam. “I allowed Queen Rose to raise my son because I knew I would not have time to be both king and father. It was matter of wanting my child to have someone available to him in those early years when he needed a mother’s care at the ready. A family member in that role seemed more suitable than a person who was hired for the task. Now that he has grown beyond that immediate need, I had hoped to bring him home more often. This certainly seems like a reasonable compromise. What do you think of this idea son?”

“I think it is great. I know little of the people of Rysbal other than what I’ve read in books. Based on those, life up north is one endless winter, but according to Queen Susan that is not the case. I don’t think a ruler should learn everything about his people from books.”

“Pardon my boldness, Sire,” said Sir Dinsmore, “but shouldn’t you have taken a new bride to be mother to the prince once the official mourning period was over? That would have meant that the prince could have been raised by her and he could have had brothers and sisters to share duties when you were gone?”

“I have said it before and I will say it again,” said Adam, “that I once married for duty. The love was there but that was not what brought us together. Iris was everything I could wish for. She had all



the training to perform the duties that would be expected of her. There has never been another woman that I have felt that I could love more than I did my wife. If there was no one that could bring that kind of love back into my life, then I needed someone who was ready for the burdens of the Crown. Of the women with the skills and training necessary to manage this castle, with the background and bearing that would make her acceptable to the kingdom, all of them I care too much about to force them to live with that burden every day. I respect each of their talents and they have been invaluable for filling in the queenly duties when called upon, but without that added touch of love, it would not be fair to ask them."

"You are the romantic, aren't you?" chided Susan.

"Of anything that has been said of me today, that is the sole thing I'm truly guilty of."

"Does anyone here have reason to continue on the charge of King Adam's willful participation in the destruction of the Kingdom of Adbalm?" A silence filled the room. Just as Lord Apollo took a breath to speak, the silence was shattered.

"While I may not be guilty as charged," said Adam softly, "I do have to wonder if I've been the best king. I took vows to protect my people and yet they can think that I am plotting their destruction. All the memories of these years since Queen Iris died have been flooding my brain this afternoon. I keep wondering if I did something unknowingly that caused her pain. Did I do everything I could have done to make her happy? Did I do everything that could have saved her? The only answer I can think of is 'no.' I keep going back to what I almost said when someone asked why my love wasn't enough to awaken her. I have been lying to myself too many years. I have been lying to my people for that same time."

Adam walked over to Queen Rose and knelt before her. "I beg your forgiveness, mother of my beautiful bride, but my heart belonged to someone else before your daughter arrived in my life. Your daughter was everything a young man could wish for but my heart had already been won by the time the marriage contract was made and thus I could not save your daughter. With that marriage, I had to hurt the one I loved and deny them the happiness they deserved. In hurting them, I broke my vow of harming none."

Adam's confessional tears echoed in hall. Rose pulled out a handkerchief and handed it to him. Rondar came up and placed his hand on the king's shoulder. "If anyone should apologize it should be me. You are living in the assumption that you caused me harm. You couldn't have done that. If you had, the god's that oversee our vows would have struck you down long ago. No, my friend, only I could harm myself. I knew that our love would never be able to last. I knew that when we first met that I would not be able to have you for the 'happily ever after' of the faerie tales. You were honest with me about that yet I chose to turn a blind eye to reality."

Adam stood up to look Rondar in the eyes. "But if I had been honest with myself, I would have found a way to be with you. I would have stepped aside and the kingdom would have found another heir somewhere in the family tree."

Sir Dinsmore spoke, "Your Majesty, that thought had crossed our minds when the charges against you were being drawn up. After much research, besides your son, there is only one other living person with sufficient royal blood that would satisfy the populace.

That would be the grandson of your grandfather's sister."

The prince thought through the family tree quickly. "In other words, Rondar?"

"That would be correct, my Prince."

"Which means Adam," said the god, "that you are right back where you started, a man trapped by duty, ever denied being where his heart wants to be. If you want to remain king, how are you going to pull these pieces of yourself together?"

"That isn't completely true, big guy," said Susan in her typical no nonsense style.

"And pray tell where did I go wrong, wise crone?"

"He isn't exactly back where things started. Something is different now."

"True enough. He was just a prince then. Now he is both king and father. He does have more responsibility now," responded the god after giving it a thought.

"Not exactly what I was thinking of."

Everyone stared at her in wonderment waiting for that flash of inspiration that didn't seem to come. Susan realized that she was the only one who recognized this, so she continued. "Adam, how many people knew about your relationship prior to your marriage?"

"I know that Lord Apollo knew. Only two of our close companions knew. We were very good at keeping our secret."

"And why didn't you continue with the secret after your marriage? Lord knows, the monarchy is infamous for maintaining liaisons outside of the formal marriage chamber."

"It would not have been fair to my wife or to Rondar. I would have had to constantly split my attention between love and duty; live a double live. Each of them would only have half a lover. Eventually, I would have had to face the same decision lest I be torn apart."

"And how many people know now?" asked Susan.

"Not many. My son figured it out, but I have never told anyone else."

"Well, bucko," said Susan. "I have something to tell you in case you've forgotten. Even though you haven't officially told anyone, there are about three hundred people in this room that basically heard the two of you confess your love. Apollo, I think that counts as being different, don't you agree?"

"I was wiser in calling you a wise crone than I thought, Susan. So now what are you going to do Adam?"

"I don't know. I've lived with feeling that I must always sacrifice my needs to those of the people. That duty is more important than my needs. When I realized that I could never have my love openly beside me, I never dared think that life could be different."

A shout came from the back of the back of hall. A man dressed in the blue and green robes that marked him as a priest of Poseidon came forward. "This is preposterous. Men don't love men. That's against everything the gods have taught us. If anything will lead this country into disaster it will in allowing this kind of decadence to flourish in the light of day."

"And what have the gods taught you, good priest?" asked Lord Apollo.

"It is written that Lord Poseidon created women to be the

*-continued on page 12*

## Quest/Crystal Phoenix continued

companions for men. It is the union between male and female that honors the gifts he has given us.”

A blue green light streamed through the window and coalesced into Lord Poseidon. “I’m hearing my name mentioned. What is it that I’m supposed to have said?” Apollo repeated the words of the priest to the God of the Seas. “That’s a bunch of bunk if I’ve ever heard it. Indeed, women and men are companions for each other, but at no time have I ever said that they are the exclusive companion to each other. Gads, that would get boring after a while. I rule the sea, the ever constantly changing waters of the ocean. Why would I sanction something that is immutable?”

A rosy light shimmered and the goddess Aphrodite stepped into the room. “It is the love shared by the people that is important, not the containers of that love,” she said. Looking at Adam she asked, “Do you love Rondar?”

“With all my heart.”

“And you Rondar? Do you love Adam?”

“I do.”

“That is ridiculous,” said the priest. “I don’t know why you gods are testing us in this manner, but it is not possible for two men to love each other.”

“I know a way to prove whether or not they are in love,” said Poseidon.

“So do I,” said Rondar. Rondar dashed over to Queen Holly and took the apple she held in her lap. Before anyone could react he took a bite of it. The poison worked quickly and Adam barely got to his side in time to catch him before he fell to the ground.

“NO!” cried the king. “I have already lost one person to that villainess’s poison. I can’t lose you too.” Adam gave Rondar’s lips a kiss that lacked any of the hesitancy displayed by Belinda’s first kiss. Rondar’s hand let loose of the apple, letting it fall to the ground and grabbed his lover’s neck and returned the kiss with equal passion.

A ball of light flared around the two lovers and when it died down, the two of them were stark naked. The prince looked at Johnny, who in turn nodded toward his grandmother. “She ranks me and casts the spells when both of us are present.” Later, when he had the chance to ask her why they were naked instead of in finest court attire, she said, “Their love determined the form. Their love had been secret and they had bared their souls. Their bodies needed no other adornment and thus reflected the naturalness of the situation.”

Almost simultaneously Poseidon and Adam spoke.

“That’s not exactly what I had in mind, son,” said the god.

“Don’t ever do something that stupid again,” said the king. “What if it was the ‘first’ kiss part that mattered?”

“It was a risk I had to take. I’m willing to die for you. I’m also willing to die so that you can find a woman to make you and your kingdom happy. I also trusted that your love for me was strong enough to not let me die. I knew that somewhere in the realms of spells, that whatever kiss you gave me would have to be ‘true love’s first kiss.’”

“And why would you feel that?” asked Holly as she picked up the fallen apple.

“Until that moment, we merely loved each other. True love had never been given a chance to grow. In that moment, I knew that

once we opened up to that love our lives would never be the same.”

“What say you to this, priest?” asked Aphrodite. “Is that enough to prove their love to you?”

The priest merely nodded and retreated back to his chair.

“So back to my question,” said Susan. “What are you going to do now, King Adam Solari of Adbalm?”

“People of Adbalm, this involves you as much as myself. Can you accept me as your king even knowing that I am in love with a man?”

Silence filled the air and then Sir Dinsmore spoke. “Sire, you are our king. You took your vows to protect us. Those vows are not there to force you to give up all personal happiness, only the selfish happiness that would prevent you from doing your duty. Can you fulfill your obligations and love Rondar at the same time without breaking those vows?”

“Yes.”

“Then that is my answer to you as well.” A chorus of “and mine!” and “me too!” filled the air.

When the sound died down, Poseidon cleared his throat. “As I was about to say earlier, there is a way to prove your love.” He reached over and pressed something into Adam’s hand. The king looked down at what had been handed him and dropped to one knee.

“Rondar Sunsguard, will you join with me as my life partner?”

“If you will have me at your side, then I shall be there.”

The prince saw a familiar flash of light in his father’s hand. He was struggling to figure it out when Poseidon spoke. “I think we can skip most of the formalities at this point. I think our lovers have made their intentions known. Adam, the rings I just handed you are the very same rings I gave to my daughter when she married your forefather, Oliver Benedictus. Their inlays are carved from the Pearls of Truth and Wisdom that rest in my own throne room. No lie can pass without the Pearl of Truth noticing. No ill-advised words can be uttered in the presence of the Pearl of Wisdom without it reacting. In the days ahead, you will need more than just your love for Rondar to protect your people. If you can tell me which one is which one, they are yours. Three questions may be asked to make that determination.”

“Rondar, do you love me?”

“Yes, with all my heart.”

Both rings flashed white. “That is one,” said the god.

“Father, Lord Ctholbêahâssêsbüt instructed me to say something to you if ever you saw these rings.”

“What was it, son?”

“He said he could never figure them out. A seer once told him that a wise man knows when to not tell the truth. It didn’t help him any, but he thought you might succeed where he couldn’t.”

Both rings flashed white again. “That makes two questions.”

“Hmm. It is easy to get both to turn white, which I’ll assume is a good sign reflecting wise truth. Another color would then be reflecting a lie has been told, in which case, it would be a guess that turning them both that color would be equally easy.”

“Then the trick must be to get one to turn white and the other that second color,” said the prince.

“And knowing which part was spoken in truth or wisdom and which wasn’t.”



"And the greater trick will be figuring out the right question to ask next," added Rondar.

They all sat thinking for a moment. "Men," said Susan in an exasperated huff, "always making things more difficult than they need to be. Adam, do I look old?"

"Of course not."

One ring flashed white, the other went jet black.

"I think you just found your answer."

"I think you are correct." Pointing at the ring with the black stone, "Lord Poseidon, this is the Pearl of..."

"You don't need to continue," said the god. "The rings are yours. You will be able to fine tune your knowledge of how to tap the magic of the rings based on what you have now discovered. As you place the rings on each other's hands, state your personal vows. A far healthier way to demonstrate your love, don't you agree Rondar?"

"No."

Both rings turned black.

"I just wanted to see if I could make them do that. Yes, I do. And may I never again feel like I have to use an apple to reveal my true love." The rings returned to being white.

"Adam Solari, is this truly the person you wish to join with?" asked Lord Apollo.

"I do."

"Rondar Sunsguard, do you likewise wish this?"

"I do."

Aphrodite held out her hand and the rings floated to it. She kissed each ring. "I offer my blessings to these rings. As the ring surrounds the finger, so too does the love of the other surround the bearer. The love that knows no bounds shall be shared by all those that come into their presence. The love that has no limits shall be felt by all who pass between them, no matter the distance that may separate them." She kissed the rings again and sent the rings to the sun god.

"I call one other to join me in my blessing. Dion, Master of the Moon, please join me so that we can bless these rings to guide their love both day and night." A shaft of silver light streamed into the room. A tall thin man appeared next to Apollo. His silver robes matched the golden ones worn by the sun god. The two embraced and kissed. Dion stood next to Apollo, each wrapping an arm behind the other's waist as they blessed the rings. As one, they offered their blessings.

"The sun shines on all by day, so too does the love held in these rings shine for all to see."

"As the moon reflects that light to guide travelers at night, so too do these rings reflect that love to guide others out of darkness."

They brought the rings together and placed them between their lips as they kissed each other. "I love you," they said to each other as they separated the rings. Each god held one of the rings and stretched out their arms away from each other. Flashes of light bounced between the two rings. They brought their ring to their lips for a final kiss, offered them to the other for the same and then sent them to Poseidon for his blessing.

*—continued on page 14*



## Quest/Crystal Phoenix continued

"I already gave my blessing by bringing forth the rings to this celebration," said the sea god, whose deep voice resonated in the hall like a crash of a wave. "But this union is more than just a simple joining of two souls into a unified whole. Unlike my daughter and her love, one of these has a child and thus a family needs to be formed. Prince Apollo, please attend me."

The prince stepped forward, wondering why the god needed him.

"My child, more than any in this room, you are effected most by your father's decision. Can you offer your own blessing to these rings?"

Apollo took the rings from the god's hand. "A circle is a symbol of unity and wholeness. A ring is a reminder of that circle, but it isn't solid. It is hollow and needs a finger to give it life. Without that finger it is merely a beautiful piece of craftsmanship. Worn by that finger, it comes to life. So too have been the lives of the two men who stand before us. Each is whole unto himself, but there has been a hollowness in their hearts that cannot be filled on their own. Each needs the other to become more than just a great king or weapons master. To these rings I offer a blessing of the gift of smiles. May you always remember the smile of the other when you see your own ring. May the smile you have when you look at your ring be reflected in the faces of all who see your own smile so that all can share in the love you have for each other. May you honor the craftsman that created the ring but more importantly may you never lose sight of the love that fills it and gives it life." He kissed the rings and handed them back to Poseidon.

"Adam and Rondar, step forward and join us." When they did so, he handed each of the lovers a ring and told them to pledge their love to each other.

"I have missed having you here at my side," said Adam. "After

I married Iris, I always hoped that I could tell her the truth about us so that we could figure out a way to be together. When you left for Riangle, you took a part of me with you. These past few weeks with you back in my life have been heaven and I dreaded having to relive the lies we lived all those years ago. I am so glad that I we don't have to. I love you." With a flash of white, Adam placed the ring on his lover's finger. Rondar reached up and brushed a tear from Adam's eye.

"I have always loved you from the moment I first met you and didn't even realize that you were the prince. My love was given to you freely even when I knew that you were bound by obligations that would prevent you from returning that love. I left the kingdom knowing that was the only way I could let you be whole. But somewhere, I left a piece of me behind and always wondered about what life would be like if things were different. Now the day has come when we can be together. I'm standing here naked and exposing my heart to you. I gave a part of my heart to you long ago and today I am free to give you the whole thing. Is it what you still want?"

"I am as naked and vulnerable as you are right now and my what if has always been 'what if I ask him to come back into my life and he said no. I couldn't risk finding out that my fears were founded. If you are willing to accept my heart in exchange, then yes, I will accept your gift."

Rondar slipped the ring on Adam's finger.

"People of Adbalm and guests from other lands," announced Poseidon, "I am proud to present to you, King Adam Solari and..." The god paused a moment. "Dear me, that's a briny situation. What do we call the king's spouse when it is a male?"

"Let me, introduce them since I've been waiting for this moment since I first saw them together," offered Lord Apollo. "I've had some time to think about this. Assembled family and friends, I am proud to present King Adam Solari and King's Mate Rondar Sunsguard, newly joined partners in love."

The room exploded in a cheer.

"This is the time you get to kiss each other to show your guests your love for each other."

Adam swept Rondar in his embrace and gave him a kiss that surpassed the passion he felt when the thought Rondar was going to die.

"People of Adbalm," continued the god, "What say you to this new couple?"

As one, the people shouted, "It's about time!" Somewhere in the crowd someone added "And get a room!" and the cheers began all over again. The royal couple was lost in their kiss and never heard a sound.



# Rock, Paper, Scissors

## by Okapi

I was walking through the park the other day and met my friend, the Teacher, who was similarly enjoying the sunny day in the park. He was accompanied by one of his students. They invited me to join them in their wanderings. I accepted as it is always a joy to journey with friends.

It was shortly thereafter that we came upon a group of children sitting in a circle. We watched as they shook their fists up and down twice, and then on the third shake, they would form various shapes with the hands. Some kept the fist, others held their hand out flat and some would make a “V” with two of their fingers. At the end, they would slap each others’ hands in an organized manner and start over.

The Teacher and his student wondered at this game as they had never seen it before. I explained how the “V” was a pair of scissors that would “cut” the paper of the flat hand. The paper would cover the rock of the fist, who in turn would “pound” the scissors. The Teacher was amazed at the simplicity of this rendition of the Circle of Life; how each will be eventually be destroyed by those that were once thought the lesser of choices.

The Student proclaimed that the Teacher was the Rock. Everything the Student had learned was built upon the foundation that the Teacher provided. The Student said that he was the Scissors. While the Rock was greater than the Scissors, the Scissors would destroy the enemies of the Rock; those that would try to destroy the Rock or otherwise cover it so that the Rock’s message could not be heard.

The Student turned to me and asked which I was and I replied that I was Paper. The Teacher looked shocked and asked why I would choose to be his enemy. I said that I was more the ally to the Rock than the Scissors could ever be. When it came to support, when the Rock lends its strength to the Scissors, it will crush the Scissors before the Scissors can destroy the Paper. When Paper joins with the Rock, it gives weight to the Rock, and thus the Scissors are destroyed even quicker.

I said that it is more than just a matter of destroying things. Scissors can never truly destroy Paper. They may cut the Paper in half, but the result is that you end up with two pieces of Paper. Both are whole unto themselves. Yes, I said, they may be smaller than at first, but they are still Paper. Those pieces of Paper can stack on top of each other and become stronger than one piece of Paper alone. Each time Scissors cuts Paper, Paper becomes stronger.

I said that when Paper covers the Rock, the Rock will leave its impression on the Paper. The Paper is a far better messenger of the Rock than the Scissors. The Rock can write its message on the Paper and send it into the world. It can then gather the Paper to its side to face the challenges presented by its real enemies.

The Student made a slash and thrust in the air with an imaginary sword. He said that mere Paper could not do as much as Scissors in ridding the world of the Rock’s enemies. Those that gather against the Rock must be cut down. It was that statement that made me realize that this was probably not one of the Teacher’s brightest students. I reminded him that in cutting down an enemy, you only make them angrier and more determined in their efforts. The Paper has a greater power over an enemy than Scissors will ever have. I turned to the Teacher and asked, “What is the best way to get rid of



an enemy?”

He thought about it for a moment. He said, “You turn him into a friend.” I said that the Teacher should write his words of love and hope on the Paper. The enemies will read those words and realize the universal truth in them and will stop being an enemy. Paper has the freedom to move when the Rock becomes burdened by all that is built upon it. The Teacher said that he would grind a piece of the Rock and mix it with his tears to make the ink used to write the words.

The Student looked dejected. “What can Scissors do?” he asked. I said that Paper gains strength when it is multiplied. But each of the individual Papers lacks strength without the others. If someone only gets one piece of Paper, they will not know all that the Rock had to say. The Scissors can cut the cord that binds them all into a single unit so that nothing is lost.

The Teacher reached into his pocket and pulled out a note pad and started writing. He pulled off a page and wrote on another. He tore off that page and wrote something on a third page. He closed the pad and put it back in his pocket. He handed each of us one of the pages that he had torn from the pad.

Here is what he wrote that day: *“The way to conquer an enemy to is be their friend. You don’t do that by making them choose between Rock, Scissors, or Paper. No, you show them the beauty of a world that is Rock, Scissors AND Paper.”*

# The 4-F Tarot

## by Phoenix

Isn't he handsome? The King of Cups on the facing page was one of the next cards that DragonSwan had been working on in his early foray in creating a deck. The King is sitting in a vat filled with the wine of life as he pours that which he has gathered in his own cup upon his body.

Honestly, the graphic had not been originally planned as part of the deck, but when placed with the others that we have already shared, he quickly grew into that role. As that happened, DragonSwan had planned to add the kind of layers of symbols that one would expect on a tarot card.

The key part of that last sentence is "had planned."

As he and I talked about the possibility of actually giving his deck life, we started tossing around some interesting ideas. Instead of King, Queen, Knight, Page (or Prince and Princess as they are in the Cosmic Tribe) we thought about the Bear, Leatherman, Drag Queen and Cowboy of each of the traditional suits of Coins, Cups, Swords and Wands. We talked about using those same four court cards but making the suits the elements. So we would end up with something like the Bear of Coins or Cowboy of Fire depending on the final decision.

We talked about making the suits themselves the subcultures of the community yielding things like the King of Bears, the Queen of Drag Queens (which of course is a bit redundant in title so we were looking at being things like the AlphaMale or AlphaFemale kind of images.) The "one of" cards might be some kind of solo sex graphic, the "two of" might be a couple, etc. Of course, by the time we got to the nines and tens the graphics started to get full.

Well, once we committed ourselves to the project, the time came for us to put some serious effort in giving shape to this deck and the thing I focused on first was the suits. Something like the traditional suits of Coins, Cups, Swords and Wands seemed to force us to adhere to many of the traditional images expected on a deck. If we are simply going to regurgitate those traditional icons with some kind of faerie twist, what did we really have to offer that was fresh and new? I have seen many samples of decks based on various concepts or books. They all have great art but I never felt they had anything fresh to offer. Each of them seem limited by the artificiality of forcing their characters and images into a mold created by someone else. I knew that I didn't want the new deck to fall into that same trap. I wanted this deck to have a life all its own.

As we explored that thought, we thought about looking for those suits in nature. Swords are traditionally associated with Air when we are casting a circle. Air then easily links us to using birds as the base for a suit. Cups then represents Water which then translates to fish as a suit. Coins equate to Earth is where most mammals live. Wands are tied to Fire. This then means we need something to burn, so we are left with plant life. Thus the first real working idea was a suit of Birds, Plants, Fish, and Mammals.

With that out of the way, our deck needed some kind of

working name. While "the Airy Faerie Tarot" has a nice sound to it, the name doesn't really reflect what someone will discover inside the deck. I recalled the origins of why "faerie" had been chosen to be part of our community of Radical Faeries. It was a term that had been used about us in a derogatory manner and we wanted to reclaim as our own. So what other terms could we use for the deck. As I thought about our suits and played with their names, I realized I was starting to call them the suits of Feathers, Flowers, Fins and Fur. The 4-F's!. What better way take something that has a derogatory meaning and turn it into something positive?

What will you find in the suits of the 4-F's? In my mind, the figures on the cards are living creatures, each with their own gifts. I didn't want to get into a game of having to rank them one through ten, only to turn around and have people question why I ranked "their" animal totem the way I did. Nope. Ain't going to go there.

Instead of ten numbered and four court cards for each suit, we are going to have eight basic energy, a baby, and five manifestation cards. The basic eight will be two each of the four elements of that suit (Feathers of Air, Furs of Water, etc). These cards will be images of the actual animals/plants selected. The "baby" card won't be as simple as an egg in a nest. This will be a representation of something a baby will need to learn to avoid in order to survive (for instance a fisherman's hook.) The five manifestations will be people that represent that energy in their lives (think of a carpenter as they channel beaver energy). This group will include Lovers, Kween, King, Goddess and God, each with an expanding domain. A King for instance wouldn't simply have command of their native domain, they also need to have command of a second

element (for instance the King of Feathers would have to be a master of both Air and something else). A God needs to be strong across the board (think about that beaver - if he doesn't understand all four elements, his construction work is going to have problems). There will be a lot more on these cards in future issues.

But just as there are eight basic cards of each of the suits, if you reorganize your thoughts a bit you will realize that those suits could have easily been the four elements having two each of the 4-Fs. Balancing out the five manifestation cards of the 4-Fs will be the elemental manifestations. Instead of being a person who has mastery of various elements, these Gods and Goddesses, Kings and Kweens will draw on multiple animal energies to achieve that mastery.

When you add this all up, there will be eighty of these "minor arcana" cards. Add in our "wild card" and you have eighty-one, which is 3x3x3x3 (or 9x9) which seems like a nice magical number. In a previous issue I mentioned that there will be twenty-seven "major arcana" cards. That brings our 4-F Tarot Deck to a grand total of one hundred and eight cards. I am certainly going to keep DragonSwan busy over the next couple of years.







# A Faerie Reading List

## Suggested and Compiled by Members of the Denver Radical Faeries

*Note: This list was originally compiled in a fit of chocolate cake inspiration at the Mercury Café on Wednesday, April 5, 2000, by members of the tribe. For this issue we are reprinting the list and adding some new books. It represents a list of books that have brought us hope, inspiration, and entertainment along the way. In no way is it to be considered all-inclusive.*

Abbott, Franklin	Changing Always Mortal Love
Adler, Margot	Drawing Down the Moon
Antler	[wonderful poet, but no specific titles provided]
Anthony, Piers	On a Pale Horse Being an Hourglass With a Tangled Skein Wielding a Red Sword Being a Green Mother For Love of Evil And Eternity
Bach, Richard	Jonathan Livingston Seagull: a story
Baum, L. Frank	The Wizard of Oz The Land of Oz (and the other 12 original Oz books)
Bradley, Marion Zimmer	The Mists of Avalon
Broughton, James Richard	The Androgyne Journal Coming Unbuttoned: a Memoir A to Z: 26 Sermonettes Making Light of it

Broughton, James Richard  
(continued)

Brown, Rita Mae  
Boyd, Malcolm

Conner, Randy P

Conner, Randy P  
Sparks, David Hatfield  
Sparks, Mariya

Constantine, Storm  
Coyle, T. Thorn  
Delany, Samuel R

Drew, AJ  
Edmonson, Roger

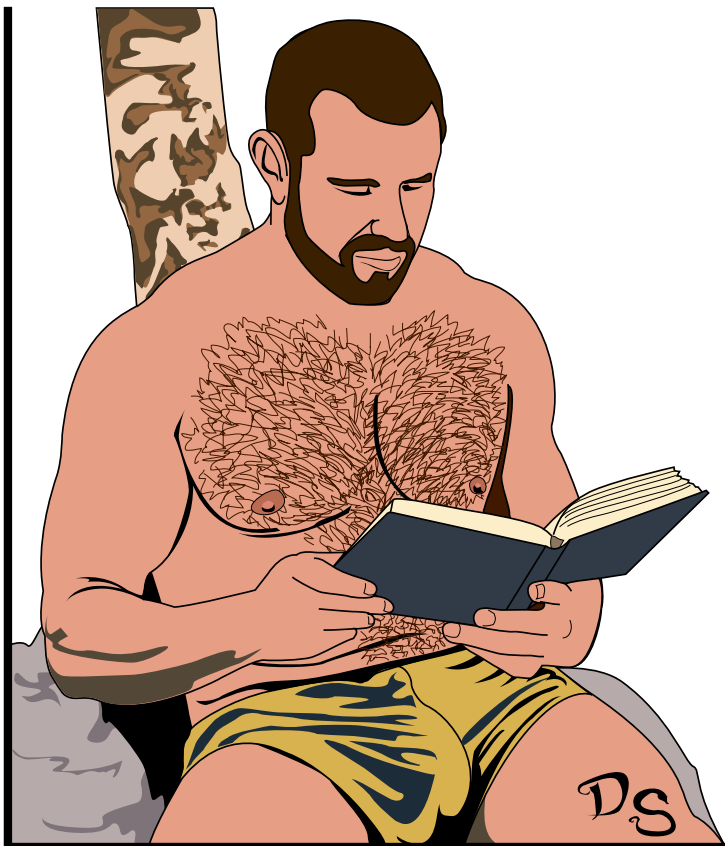
Evan, Arthur

Ford, Michael Thomas

Gibran, Kahlil

Gide, Andre  
Grahm, Judy

Seeing the Light  
Ecstasies: Poems 1975-1983  
A Long Undressing: Collected Poems 1949-1969  
Odes for Odd Occasions: Poems 1954-1976  
Packing up for Paradise: Selected Poems 1946-1996  
Special Deliveries: New and Selected Poems  
The Water Circle: a Poem of Celebration  
Rubyfruit Jungle  
Look Back in Joy: Celebration of Gay Lovers  
Gay Priest: an Inner Journey  
Take off the Masks  
Blossom of Bone: Reclaiming the Connections Between Homoeroticism and the Sacred  
  
Cassell's Encyclopedia of Queer Myth, Symbol and Spirit: Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Lore  
  
Wraeththu  
Evolutionary Witchcraft  
Bread & Wine  
The Bridge of Lost Desire  
Dhalgren  
The Einstein Intersection  
Flight from Neveryon  
The Mad Men: A novel  
Neveryona or the Tale of Signs and Cities  
Return to Neveryon  
Times Square Red, Times Square Blue (Sexual Cultures)  
Wicca Spellcraft for Men  
Clone: The Life and Legacy of Al Parker Gay Superstar  
Witchcraft and the Gay Counter Cultures: a radical view of western civilization and some of the people it has tried to destroy  
The Path of the Green Man: Gay Men, Wicca, and Living a Magical Life  
The Prophet  
The Voice of the Master  
The Counterfeiters  
Another Mother Tongue: Gay Words, Gay Worlds



Hay, Harry (Roscoe, Will, editor)	Radically Gay: Gay liberation in the words of its founder	Renault, Mary	The Charioteer Fire From Heaven The King Must Die The Last of the Wine The Persian Boy The Praise Singer
Heilein, Robert A	I Will Fear No Evil The Moon is a Harsh Mistress A Stranger in a Strange Land		Interview with the Vampire The Vampire Lestat The Queen of the Damned The Tale of the Body Thief Eternally Bad: Goddesses with Attitude
Holleran, Andrew Hooven III, F. Valenine Katz, Jonathan Ned	Dancer from the Dance Tom of Finland: His Life and Times Love Stories: Sex Between Men Before Homosexuality	Rice, Anne	Another Roadside Attraction The Zuni Man-Woman Changing Ones: third and fourth genders in Native North America
Lynn, Elizabeth A Lackey, Mercedes	The Dancers of Arun Magic's Pawn Magic's Promise Magic's Price (anything by this author is good, but these three get you started in her world)	Robbins, Trina  Robbins, Tom Roscoe, Will	Queer Spirits: a gay men's myth book Gay American Indians (Organizations). Living the spirit: a gay American Indian anthology A Radical Fairy's Seedbed The Man Who Fell in Love With the Moon
Le Guin, Ursula K Maguire, Gregory	The Left Hand of Darkness Confessions of an Ugly Stepsister Mirror, Mirror: A Novel Son of a Witch Wicked: The life and times of the Wicked Witch of the West	Roscoe, Will (ed.)	The Fifth Sacred Thing Spiral Dance The Crystal Cave The Hollow Hills The Last Enchantment Midnight at the Palace: My Life as a Fabulous Cockette
McDonald, Boyd (ed.)	Cream: True Homosexual Experiences CUM Flesh Flesh: True Homosexual Experiences S.T.H Juice: True Homosexual Experiences from STH Writers Meat: how men look, act, walk, talk, dress, undress, taste and smell Raunch: True Homosexual Experiences	Rose, Bradley (ed.) Spanbauer, Tom  Starhawk  Stewart, Mary	Gay Body: a journey through shadow to self Gay Soul: finding the heart of gay spirit and nature with sixteen writers, healers, teachers and visionaries Gay Spirit: myth and meaning The Trouble with Harry Hay: founder of the modern gay movement
Mitchell, Larry	Sex The Faggots & Their Friends Between Revolutions The Terminal Bar	Tent, Pam (aka Sweet Pam)  Thompson, Mark	Men Loving Men: a gay sex guide and consciousness book Visionary Love: a spirit book of gay mythology and trans-mutational faerie
Moore, Alan Villarrubia, José Paolini, Christopher	The Mirror of Love Eragon Eldest Gay Witchcraft Faeries: Visions, Voices and Pretty Dresses	Timmons, Stuart	The Front Runner The Once and Future King The Complete Poems Orlando: a biography
Penczak, Christopher Pickett, Keri	Two Flutes Playing: a spiritual journeybook for gay men City of Night The Coming of the Night Numbers Rushes This Day's Death The Vampires	Walker, Mitch  Warren, Patricia Nell White, T.H. Whitman, Walt Woolf, Virginia	

## New Book Listings

*We asked people to say a few things about the books they were adding to the original published list. Here are some of the things they shared.*

Recommended by Beast

**Bread & Wine: An Erotic Tale of New York**  
**Times Square Red, Times Square Blue (Sexual Cultures)**  
**The Mad Man: A Novel (Hardcover)**

*By Samuel R. Delany*

—the wunderkind SF writer. The first is an autobiographical story from Delany's life told in graphic novel form (drawn by Mia Wolff). The second is an exploration of the transformation of Times Square and the loss of the egalitarian sexual diversity that once was there. The third is a mind-blowing novel with strongly homoerotic themes.

Recommended by Beast

**Love Stories: Sex between Men before Homosexuality**

*by Jonathan Ned Katz*

A historical look into male-male intimacy in the 19th century—a world before “gay” and “straight” meant what they mean now.

Recommended by Beast

(with a second recommendation by Robin)

**Wraeththu (Wraeththu)**

*by Storm Constantine*

The Wraeththu are the next step in evolution. Demi-god-like hermaphrodites with the outward appearance of young men. They talk and act and think like many faeries I have met at sanctuaries and events through the years! Wonderful SF/Fantasy!



Recommended by P'chE

**Eragon**

**Eldest**

*By Christopher Paolini*

A third book in this series is in progress. Eragon is supposed to be in theaters December 15th! These are listed as juvenile fiction, science fiction, fantasy and magic but they're every bit as exciting as the Harry Potter series and certainly a lot in them for faeries!

**Eragon**

When Eragon finds a polished blue stone in the forest, he thinks it is the lucky discovery of a poor farm boy; perhaps it will buy his family meat for the winter. But when the stone brings a dragon hatchling, Eragon realizes he has stumbled upon a legacy nearly as old as the Empire itself. Overnight his simple life is shattered, and he is thrust into a perilous new world of destiny, magic, and power. With only an ancient sword and the advice of an old storyteller for guidance, Eragon and the fledgling dragon must navigate the dangerous terrain and dark enemies of an Empire ruled by a king whose evil knows no bounds. Can Eragon take up the mantle of the legendary Dragon Riders? The fate of the Empire may rest in his hands...

Recommended by Phoenix

**The Wizard of Oz**

*by L. Frank Baum*

**Wicked: The Life and Times of the Wicked Witch of the West**  
**Son of a Witch**

*by Gregory Maguire*

OK, so the first one seems a bit “childish” but with the fascination of the community with the movie version, it really is fun to read the original version at least once in your lifetime. L. Frank Baum wrote a total of fourteen books based on the OZ world. Did you know that Dorothy, along with Uncle Henry and Aunt Em actually moved to OZ? That's right, in the books the place is real and not just a dream caused by a bump on the noggin.

Pairing up with this are the newer books written by Gregory Maguire. Baum created a fantasy world. Bad things happen but good will prevail. Maguire takes the world created for children and fleshes out the tale with a story about how a green-skinned girl with magical powers earned the name of “Wicked Witch of the West.” It is a grand reminder that history is written by the winner, and they have need to have a villain to justify their actions. And that villain can't be themselves. If you are familiar with the Baum books, you can recognize the seeds he is planting in both books that will eventually blossom into a third book.