

Aíry Faerie
Lítha 2007
Surf's Up



Publisher's Notes

Welcome beautiful faeries, to the Denver Faeries' Litha issue of the Airy Faerie. During the Denver Faeries' Litha ritual I won the honors of wearing the crown as Holly King. I was going to promise not to let it go to my head. But then were else does one wear a crown? Sitting at my computer with my crown upon my head, I began to think of the duties of the Holly King. I thought about how quickly the wheel of time spins. I mean, summer has just started and already it's time to start thinking about the harvest. There are all the harvest festivals that will need to be organized. Not to mention the Winter Solstice Fay-Extravaganza! So many parties, so little time!

Well, before I get too far ahead of myself, let me sit back and enjoy a bowl of ice cream and a glass of Kool-aid. Back when I was on the national faerie list exchanging e-mails with faeries around the world, most of us would end our e-mails with where we were at the time we wrote the e-mail and little bit of what was around us. For instance I would say, "...Naked Hugs from DragonSwan, while sitting in my art room with the ac going, enjoying vanilla-raspberry-chocolate chunk ice cream and cherry Kool-aid, in Denver where it is 87 degrees at 9:00pm!" Those types of sign offs led to my playing with my digital camera and taking a picture of me naked at my computer drinking red Kool-aid. Since I have been trying to get more faeries to pose for me, I thought I would once again, bite the bullet myself and turn me into a toon. That is why there is the picture of yours truly as a fairy holding up my glass of red Kool-aid.

Also in this issue is another Denver Faerie who let me turn his picture into a piece of faerie art. I want to say a big THANK YOU to Adam, for letting me have fun with his image. Since we are on the subject of images, it is probable too late to warn you that this fae-zine has images of naked males, and some guys kissing. There are also stories with some gay sexual themes as well. So please be careful where you open this file, or read this mag. If for some reason you should not or don't want to view such things, then please, do us both a favor and close this right now. Thanks!

We are also grateful to have Anja return to the AF. After last issue we invited her to send some more. Remember, be careful what you wish for! Actually, her prose came at a perfect time and she has many wonderful things to share with us. If you too have something that you want to share within these pages, we are always open for reader submissions. Heck, that is how we got started in the first place.

AstralWizard is back among us. And the usual cast of characters help fill the rest of the pages! So enjoy the Summer and the Litha issue of the Airy Faerie, before the leaves begin to fall.

Ok sweeties, I gotta run and start working on my Lammas outfit.

Many Faeries Blessings and Naked Hugs!
DragonSwan



Airy Faerie



Litha 2007

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

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Eyes of Pan

By AstralWizard

The world that dried up and went away.
It came back in full bloom.
I saw it, I watched it happen.
It made my blood go warm.

The mountains again became snow capped.
It seemed to have happened over night.
The trees started breathing.
It was such an intoxicating feeling.

Life was back in business.
It defied both heaven and hell.
But, the gods rejoiced.
Pan the one of the wild lands.

He played his pipes in joy and a new found pride.
For everything once thought just retired, had just merely died.
Shadow came back, but more vibrant and with color.
I praise the Universe.

Pan came to me playing his sweet harmony.
I danced with him, majick was now renewed.
I glorified its sacred flame.
It welcomed me in like it did once before.

I walked the fields, came upon to a lonely mountain range.

I heard a voice from nowhere.
It said to me, "this is your place."
"What am I to with it?" I questioned.
"Make this your own creation. Give yourself a new face."

I climbed one of the mountains.
Clouds lied on the ground before me.
So this is what it's like to be free.
This is what it's like to feel safe.

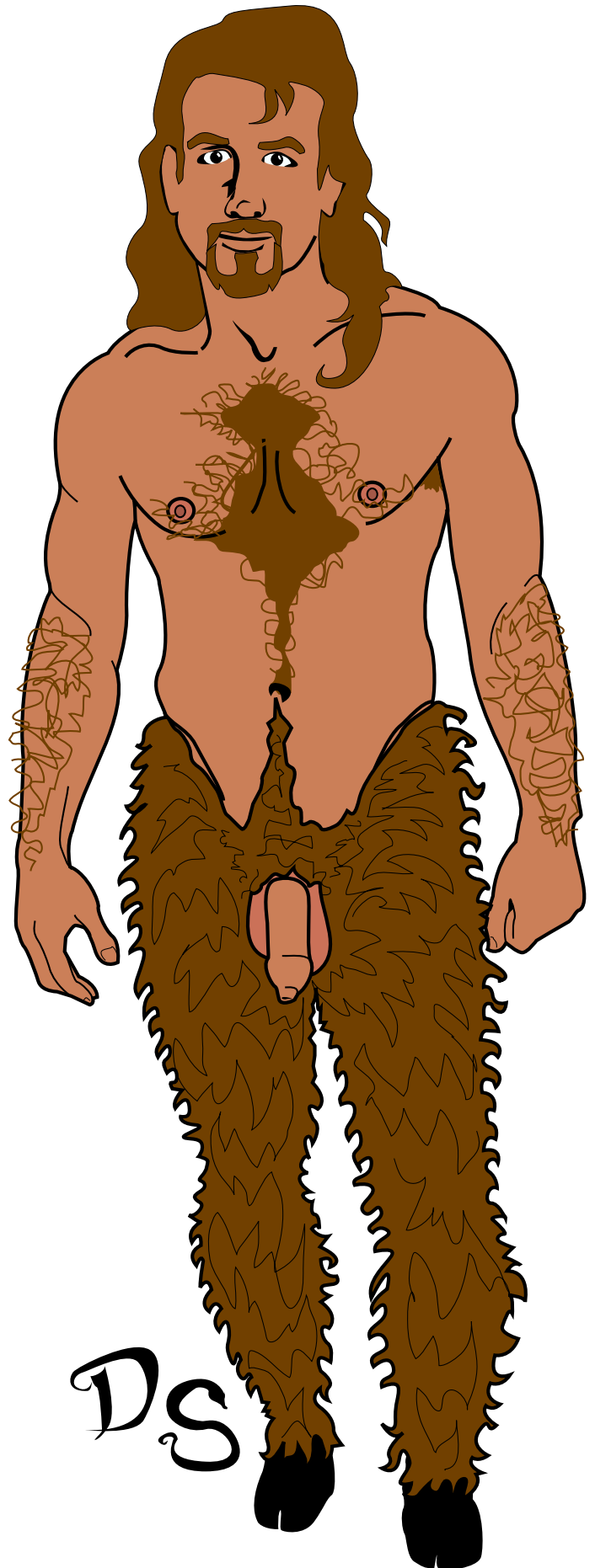
Clouds came, thunder roared, lightning flashed.
I danced naked and without shame in the rain.
Though I danced barefoot on hard earth.
There was no pain.

A figure then approached me.
All I could do is look down.
All I saw was earth and clove feet.
"Look up my sweet child," He said to me.

Into the eyes of Pan I stared.
Drowning, losing control, no longer feeling scared.
He embraced me, all I felt was warmth.

Only then did I surrender, surrender to total and complete bliss.

12-16-2006
8:57 am PST
Poem 38



Twin Flames Leaping Up

by Anja

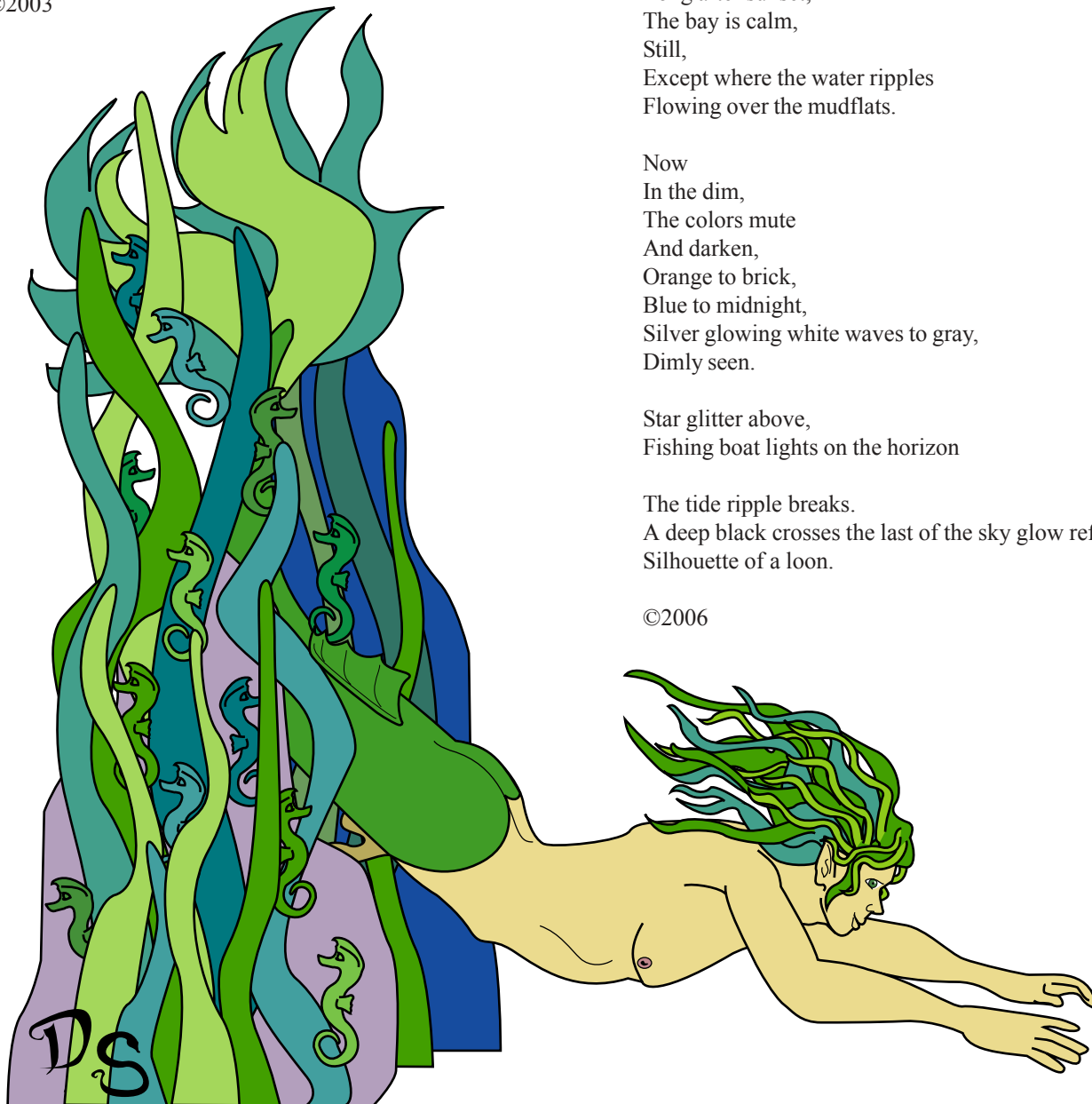
Twin flames leaping up
from a dish of salt
Incense rising up to Spirit
Surrounded by a still pool of water.

I see you
And I see you
Sometimes the same

Colors swirl back and forth
Changing faces
Exchanging self.

Two sparkles from the surface of Ocean
Bright and gone and bright and gone and
Bright forever.

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Silhouette of a Loon

By Anja

The day was bright sunshine and stiff wind,
But now,
Long after sunset,
The bay is calm,
Still,
Except where the water ripples
Flowing over the mudflats.

Now
In the dim,
The colors mute
And darken,
Orange to brick,
Blue to midnight,
Silver glowing white waves to gray,
Dimly seen.

Star glitter above,
Fishing boat lights on the horizon

The tide ripple breaks.
A deep black crosses the last of the sky glow reflecting,
Silhouette of a loon.

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I Know You

By Anja

I know you.
I have never seen you until this moment in my life, but I know
you.
You must feel it.
You open your arms to hug me before we speak a word.

Where could I have seen you?
We have never been near each other in this life.

I know you.
I know what fits with who you are.
There are no questions as I make a gift for you.
Green and white and pearl and rosemary and sandalwood and
hibiscus
Shells and stones from the beach and some small egg cases for
beginnings
Just a certainty
Just beginnings again.
How do I know?
I don't know how I know.
I just know,
With a certainty that could frighten me into speechlessness,
If I didn't know with such depth

Even your friends saw it
That first evening.
They laughed to see the connection.
Recognizing something beyond the Seen.

But always my thinking part says, "What?"
It says, "How?"
It says, "No!"
Talking Self does not understand.

I know you.
Even if I had never seen you again
Your existence in this time would be a gift to me from the
Universe.

My joy
Knowing that you live
Spills over from my eyes in tears
That I add to my gift
Knowing that this, too
You will understand.

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Fairy Tale

By Anja

Nah, when I open my mouth
Frogs and toads hop out

The gems and pearls and flowers?
That's some other girl, not me.

Me, it's all slugs and frogs and toads.
Always in the wrong place
Always at the wrong time.
Belching up a frog in the Queen's lap.
Barfing up slugs all over the marble steps.
Yeah, that's me.

But something happened.

You saw me
Held out your arms
We knew each other.

And since then,
No more frogs and toads.
Pearls of wisdom
Literary gems
Flowers of the Spirit.

I am who I am supposed to be, now.

It's weird, though.
I belch up a frog, or I think that's what it is.
But when it comes out
It's a pearl
But only when I'm with you.

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Quest for the Crystal Phoenix

Chapter 21: Confessions

by Orpheus

Prince Apollo sat alone in the Garden of the Queens. It was a rare time for him since Viola, Lily and Cori were constantly trying to corner him to get him to declare that they truly were the fairest of them all. After his birthday party he thought the rivalry had died down but then he learned how subtle a female can be when she wants something. He had gotten tired of their games and declared that each day no one was to bother him when he went to the garden during the hour after breakfast.

This day he looked forward to his alone time. The following day he was to depart for his first journey to his aunt's kingdom, Rysbal. She had sent an escort for him since none of his guards had made the journey. They finally arrived the previous evening. After a day's rest, they were to head out so this would be his last day in Riangleret for several months.

"Hey, a centauri for your thoughts," came Bebeep's voice from the fountain.

"I'm not sure they are worth that much," replied Apollo. "I'm just torn about being excited and nervous about going to Rysbal. I'm excited because it's something new and Father has never gone which means I'll be doing something he hasn't done before me."

"I can understand that part," replied the toad. "But trust me, the excitement will wear off soon enough. Sharpeton is not the best place to visit during the winter. I hated the cold those few times Father made us attend a function in that frozen city this time of year. I never knew what Myron saw in that place but I was so glad that he got that as his capitol in the sundering and not me."

"Were you happy with how the kingdom was divided? I mean, comparatively you got the smallest territory."

Bebeep said that at first he was upset but as the middle brother he had gotten used to being shortchanged by the family. He had tried to claim the East Blade as part of his lands but since that was mostly settled by the faeries and giants he quickly gave up his plans. "But this isn't supposed to be about me. Why are you nervous about going?"

"It's just that things will be so different and I'm afraid of doing something that will upset them."

"From what I've observed and heard, there is small chance of that happening. Besides, if you do, always remember one small thing."

"What's that?"

"In the minds of the people, there will always be those who look to find fault in the ruler and those that will want to copy every little thing they do. And there is no way you can control or predict which is which. So keep focused on the fact that you are the prince

and therefore the leader. They may not like something but they aren't there to give you their blessing. It's the other way around."

"Doesn't that seem a bit heartless?" asked the prince.

"Seems and feels like it at times," said Bebeep, "but no more heartless than that day when you finally pick your bride and have to reject the other girls. Someone is not going to like your decision and you will have to find your own way to deal with that."

"True."

"But enough musing about the burden of the crown, I came to warn you that She is near. You need to be on guard."

"You can tell that?"

"I can feel her presence. Even after all these years we are still connected in some way." The toad shivered. "Oh, my god! She's coming. I'll go get help. Be very careful."

Apollo looked around and didn't see anyone. Soon he was joined by Johnny. The faerie was limping. He was dressed in his black leather jerkin and trousers.

"I haven't seen you wear that since you became my faerie godparent," said Apollo.

He tried to give the faerie hug but Johnny stepped back and struck a pose like a model. "It is a pretty hot outfit, isn't it? But that stupid 'we have to make a proper presentation' balderdash that my sister Viola is always talking about kills good fashion," said Johnny. "But I had a going away present for you and thought this was the perfect outfit to wear for the occasion."

The faerie waved his hands and a small package materialized. It was wrapped in black paper with a red and purple bow. He handed it to the prince.

As Apollo started to unwrap the unexpected gift, he asked, "Why were you limping? Is there something I can do to help ease the pain?"

"I'm fine," came the quick response. "It doesn't hurt that much. I just made the mistake of telling my sister that Lily looked exceptionally beautiful last night and didn't dodge fast enough when she kicked me."

"Having been on the receiving end of some of those I can empathize." Apollo finished opening his package and held up a studded collar that matched the one that Johnny was wearing. "Cool! Thank you."

"I wanted to give this to you for your birthday but Pedro was behind in his work and just got it to me. I wanted to be sure you got it before you left. Try it on to be sure I got the right measurement."

Apollo eagerly snapped the collar around his neck. "Perfect, with a little room to grow into, as grandmother would say."

"So, do you like it?"

"I love it. I can't wait to go inside to see how it looks."

"Time enough for that later. Let's enjoy this quite time while we can."

"Sounds good," replied the prince. "Awk." He started gasping



for air. "This is tighter than I thought." He reached up and started trying to take off the collar. "Help me. I can't get it unsnapped."

Johnny started laughing. "Now why would I want to go do something like that? It is doing exactly as planned. That collar is becoming a wristband and is going to snap your neck in two. I am going to enjoy watching the downfall of the Charming family tree."

Apollo dropped to his knees as he continued to try to unsnap the collar. "Johnny! Help me!"

The sound of tinkling bells could be heard and a second Johnny Jump-up materialized. This Johnny started to try pulling on the collar and the first jumped on him. The two Johnnys tumbled to the ground and fists and feet were flying. As they fought, Hilda Harbell came in and with a flash of light from her wand, she snapped the leather of the collar. Apollo collapsed in the sudden release and gasped in air. Toby, Lance, Stane and Patrick jumped in and separated the dueling Johnnys. Both were dressed in identical leather outfits.

"How are we going to tell them apart?" asked a breathless King William as he helped Apollo to a nearby bench.

"I think I know," gasped Apollo. "Call Viola, here. Surely his sister can tell them apart."

The Johnny being held by Toby and Stane spoke up, "Hilda, you better check him. The lack of air must have done something to his head."

"Agreed," said the elder faerie.

"No, I'm perfectly fine," he protested. He turned and pointed at the other Johnny. "That's the false faerie that attacked me."

As soon as he pointed, the faerie burst into flames forcing Lance and Patrick to let go. "I'll be back to finish the job," came a cackling voice from the fireball as it darted out of the garden.

Toby and Stane released their Johnny. "How did you know to ask that?" asked a puzzled Johnny.

Apollo said that the false Johnny had said that his sister Viola had kicked him when he said that Lily looked beautiful.

"I would never say that Lily was beautiful you should know that," protested the faerie.

"I know," apologized the prince, "but I was so excited about getting an unexpected gift that the comment didn't really register. As I was choking I kept replaying that conversation in my mind trying to figure out you laughed as I choked. It finally dawned on me that you, well really the other Johnny, had said that Viola was your sister."

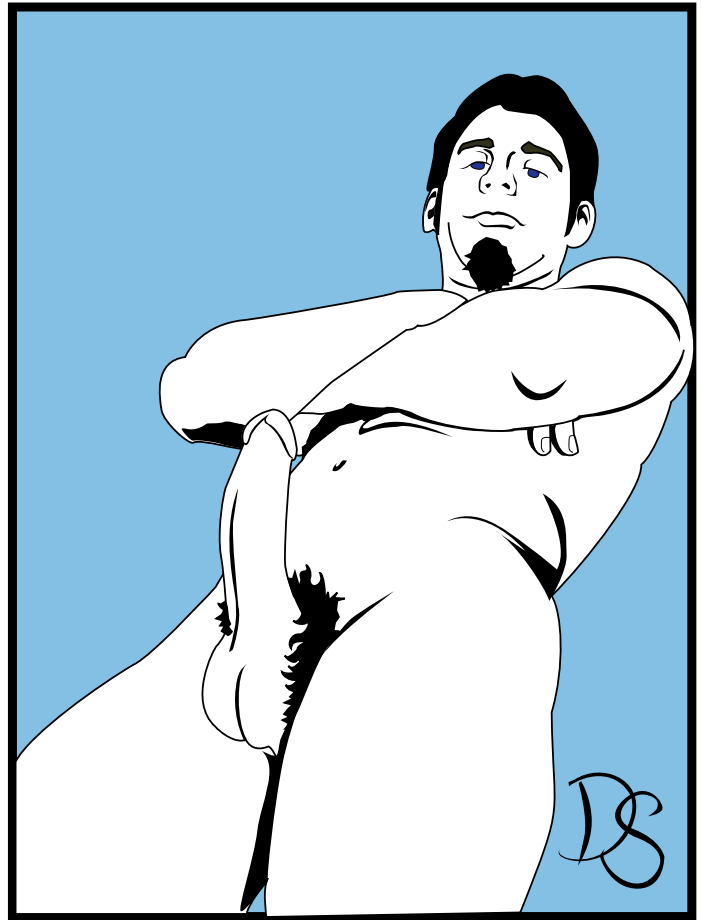
King William sent Stane and Lance to alert the palace guards to search for an intruder.

"They won't find her," came Bebeep's voice on the edge of the fountain. "Look's like your help got here in time. I guess I'll go now."

"Not so fast, toad," shouted Patrick. In a lightning fast move, he grabbed the toad's legs, preventing him from jumping into the bushes.

"You have been keeping secrets from us," said Toby. "You know about our enemy and it's well past time to tell us."

"She'll kill me."



Toby pulled out his knife. "If you don't tell, she won't have the chance."

"You're bluffing. You are the good guys, remember? Besides, you can't do anything to harm me that she hasn't already done. Now, put me down."

"Well, maybe I won't kill you," said Toby, "but I can certainly enjoy some toad legs for lunch."

"I'm poisonous, but good try."

"Bebeep," said Apollo softly, "please tell us what you know. Can you really live with the fact that your silence nearly cost me my life?"

"No. That's why I came to talk to you today," said Bebeep. "It's not easy being like this and being powerless to really do anything helpful. I think back on when I was human and I realize that when it came to my wife I never really had any power. She controlled me from the beginning and I let her. Who would have believed that King Kenneth the Kind was really a hen-pecked shadow of Black Bart, the scourge of the kingdom? When I felt her in the castle this morning, I knew it was not for a social call. I knew I had to take action before she killed again. I hadn't anticipated that she was going to be so bold as to try to attack you directly. Now put me down and I will tell you everything."

Apollo nodded and Toby released Bebeep.

"Let's start with why are you a toad?" asked the prince.

"That's really the end of my tale. Let's go back before then."

Bebeep told them that when he was human and known as Black Bart, he was a real terror. His older brother, Myron, being the first born was constantly showered with the best things. All the pretty

—continued on page 8

girls threw themselves at Myron. Anyone who paid attention to himself was only doing so to try to gain access to the older brother. Bart started to demand what he felt was owed to him. Eventually, an old beggar woman offered him a gift and he spurned her. The gift was a simple rose which was hardly a worthy exchange for the charity she was seeking. That had been Amaranth in disguise and she used her powers to teach him humility by changing him into a monster. Belladonna had been spurned by his brother and sought Black Bart out as a possible ally in her revenge. She tamed the monster and they fell in love. When they married, everyone acclaimed her as the most beautiful of them all. Soon afterwards, Myron fell in love with a simple serving girl, Ashleigh Ellen. Belladonna was livid when she saw this child on the arm of her ex-lover-now-brother-in-law, for Ashleigh was the bastard child by her father and one of her mother's maids. This child had slept her way into the future king's heart and suddenly people were saying that Ashleigh was the more beautiful. Belladonna was furious. Then, when Oliver brought home his exotic beauty, no one ever talked about Belladonna. Thus began the battle of the beauties. Bebeep told them that one day Belladonna tried to end the debate by placing all three of them in front of her mother's magic mirror. The mirror was bespelled to say the truth. When asked who was the fairest of the three of them, the mirror cracked under the strain.

Bebeep said that by the time of sundering, people were starting to talk about the beauty of Ashleigh's daughter, Daisy Amaryllis. With the sundering, Belladonna's anger grew because she was only the fairest of a small, insignificant country when once she captivated the hearts of people across the whole of the country of Wobnair. She plotted to take out this upstart child and her siblings. She knew that without an heir, the people of Rysbal would need to turn to her husband to become their ruler. When Belladonna had her first child, Laurel Lilac, she feared that Ashleigh would seek revenge for the plot against her daughter by attacking the newborn child. Belladonna hid their daughter in a tower and few even knew she existed. The people needed a princess, so Belladonna allowed Ken to keep their second daughter close at hand. Ruby Rose had a large purplish birthmark on her face so they knew she was "safe" from the beauty feud.

Years later, the worst thing imaginable happened, Laurel Lilac fell in love with Myron's youngest son, Rupert Ulster. One day, Belladonna visited her daughter's tower and caught them love making. When asked how the young prince got into her tower chambers, Laurel laughed in her mother's face and said that his love gave him wings and if they didn't believe that, then perhaps he climbed her long hair. Belladonna called her guards and put the naked young man on his horse and sent him back to his father in disgrace. Laurel refused to wear anything until her love was returned. Neither the prince, nor Belladonna's guards were seen again. The former didn't bother Bart much but the captain of the guard was his queen's lover and she was furious when it was suggested that maybe he found someone new to warm his bed. A search by both kingdoms revealed a traveling gang of mercenaries that boasted of murdering a naked man and his guards. Unfortunately for them, the gang liked to display the heads of their victims. Reaction by Myron's guards was swift and the gang was



killed before they could lead anyone to the bodies and allow Myron to give his son a proper burial. Soon thereafter, Laurel was found dead, the victim of poison. Belladonna went crazy and vowed to kill the entire Charming line. Bart had to agree with his wife and aided her plans. He worked with his younger brother for the nearly fatal accident of Ashleigh Ellen. Only quick intervention by Amaranth prevented that death. Belladonna poisoned Annette's mind against her own husband and he helped her with her suicide leap into the ocean.

After the brutal attack on Oliver's children, he was left with no choice but to denounce his wife and strip her of all legal power. At his announcement, she threw something at him and claimed that he was a toad without her and one day he would realize the truth of her words. The next time he went fishing he saw a toad sitting on a lily pad and thought he was nothing like that. In a flash, he found himself sitting on the lily pad watching a guard in Adbalm court colors stabbing him. Belladonna was laughing as she watched it happen. She gave the guard a kiss and then stabbed him. She picked up the toad and puckered up her lips in a mock kiss. She said that only the kiss of the fairest of them all would break the spell. She told him that she would rot in Hades before she would ever touch her lips to his traitorous mouth again. She flung him into the lake. Only then did she start to yell for help. She had long ago discovered the fact that they couldn't be killed, reveling in the fact that eternal beauty could truly be hers. She apparently found an effective way to get her husband out of the picture. She spread tales about how only a princess could reverse the spell on an enchanted toad. She also spread tales about how toads caused warts and had a poison that would burn holes into skin. Ken knew it was no use to hope. She had vowed to kill the entire Charming line and she had included

him in that vow. She couldn't truly kill him but this was effective enough. He had seen enough of his wife's dark magic to know that with the death of the toad that had been changed to look like him that there was no true way to reverse the spell other than with her being the one to kiss him. In her mind, and thus the spell energy, only she could ever be the fairest of them all. With the king apparently dead at his bother's orders, the queen banished, and the elder princess dead, the crown passed to Ruby Rose, their youngest daughter.

"So where does Belladonna get her power?" asked Apollo.

"And more importantly," asked William, "how do we counter it to protect my grandson?"

"After Belladonna's open attacks on the Charming children, Queen Amaranth dedicated her life to trying to understand that," offered Hilda. "Belladonna learned from the darkest mistress of magic, Heca. My queen hinted at that she had found the one student of the dark ways that might offer help in overcoming Belladonna. During the time since her death I've been trying to discover if she left any hint of who this is. The only thing I found was a note that said:

*"Deep in the earth, beyond the light of day,
Surrounded by the stench of death and decay.
She sits and she waits for the night to bring dawn.
This maiden can help for her true love is gone.
In the fire of a phoenix her hopes are renewed
When a prince will join her in a hug that is nude."*

"That sounds like my grandmother," said Johnny. "She never could come right out and say something important. No, she had to stick it in a verse and make you work to get your answer."

"That certainly sounds like someone I'm going to have to find since it talks about the phoenix," said Apollo. "But why would the verse specify about being nude?"

"In the old magic," said Hilda, "it is said that nudity was a sign of fearlessness, of nothing to hide. And for one who has been waiting for long, the touch of flesh may be required to break a spell that kept her from taking action against Belladonna on her own."

"I bet it just her way to gain power over the prince," said Johnny. "Let's face it, she's probably been alone for too long and surrounded by death and decay. She probably wants to check out the merchandize first to see if it measures up to her lost love."

"Johnny!" chided King William.

"Well, it's a possibility."

King William escorted his grandson out of the garden. He had been watching Apollo rub his neck so he insisted on the healers taking a look at it. The healers only found signs of bruising and overstrained muscles. Apollo was sent to his room to rest. He turned his inner healing eye towards restoring the muscles and veins to their proper condition. By lunch his neck felt better than when he had woken that morning.

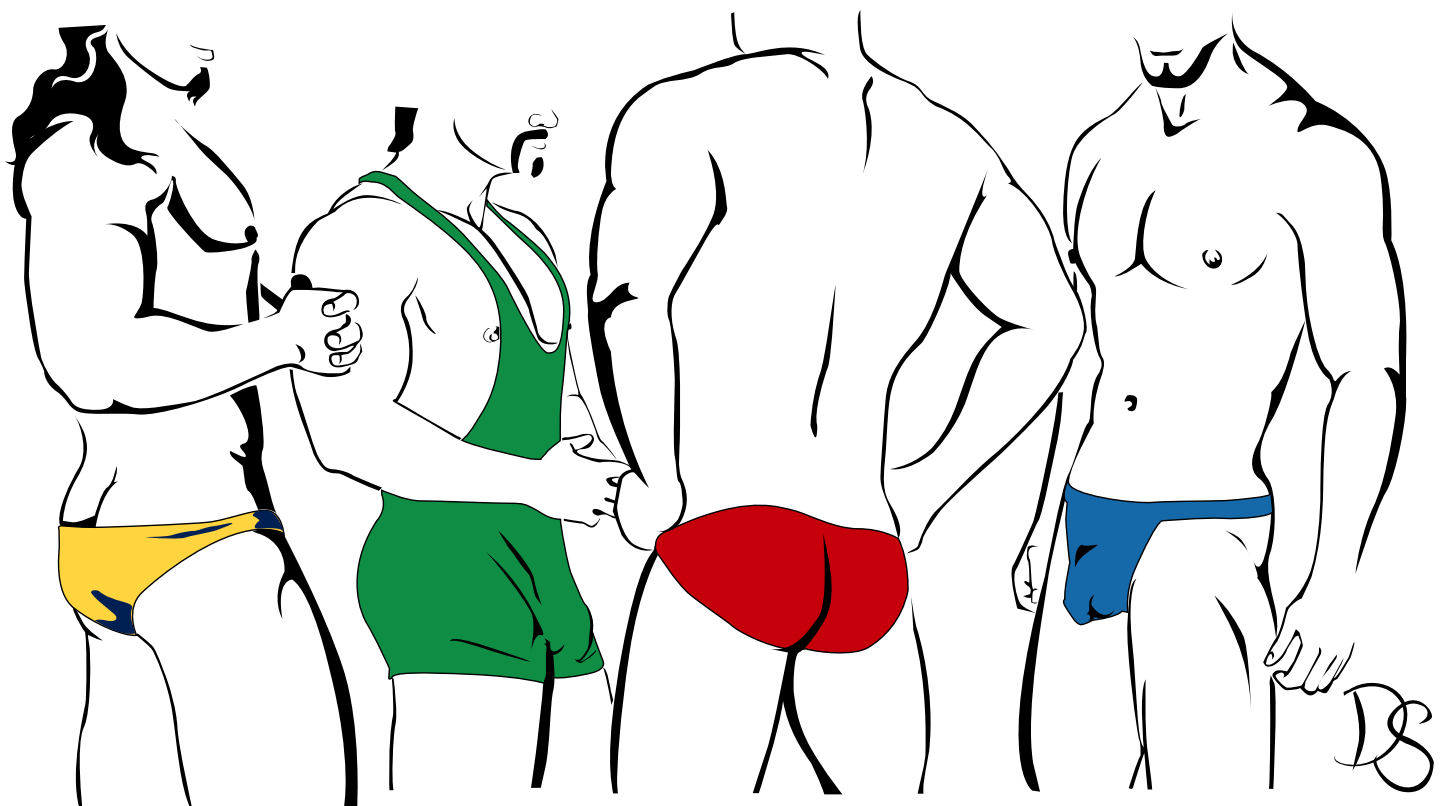
"Good, little one," came Dion's voice as he materialized in Apollo's quarters. He was naked as usual, his silver hair cascading down his back. "I'm proud of what you just did. I came to show you that little trick and here you went and figured it out for yourself."

"Thanks but we both know I should have done better."

"How so?"

"Well, for starters I should have realized it wasn't the real Johnny, starting from the fact that he didn't give me a hug."

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"And why didn't you?"

"I was feeling sorry for myself. And Bebeep said he was sending for help and then came Johnny, so I guess I stopped thinking."

"Well, don't be too hard on yourself," said Lord Apollo materializing beside his lover. "That witch has had centuries to practice her craft and knows exactly when and how to strike."

"But..."

"No 'buts,'" said Lord Apollo. "For all the wisdom you have displayed, you are still a child and have many things to learn before you are ready to outthink someone of her skill." The god held out his hand to stop the response. "You will eventually. In the meantime, rest assured that I am going to be on alert for signs of her treachery. She may be under Heca's protections for most things, but she has crossed the line by attacking my..." Dion stopped him with a look. "...well, you." He gave the prince a hug. "You are very special to us and we will do our best to protect you."

Dion joined the hug. "But as you saw today, we can't be there all the time. She is crafty and knows better than to touch you lest we instantly know about her presence."

"So that's why Johnny wouldn't hug me!"

"What's that about me not hugging you," said the faerie entering the room. "And save some of that for me." He joined the hug.

"I'm so sorry," said the faerie. "I let you down today."

"No, you tried to break the collar."

"But I should have tried magic like Hilda did," said the faerie with downcast eyes. "A fact that she has been giving me a tongue-lashing about for the past hour."

"And why didn't you?" asked Lord Apollo.

"I don't know. I know I should have, but magic seemed the furthest in my mind at that time. I just wanted to snap the collar and was about to grow as large as it took when I struck me and I couldn't break free."

"Is it because you were thinking with your heart and not your head?" asked Dion. "That's why I told you to meet us here. You haven't told him, have you?"

"He told me that Queen Holly is calling him home for a couple of months," said the prince. "He said it was for some special training and the proper certification for his Faerie Godparent papers."

"You have to tell him the rest Johnny," added the Sun God. "Emotions are great except when they get in the way of duty. You need to...you both need to be honest with each other if you are going to learn from this."

"And the fact that She used you for her illusion should be telling you something. She knows the vulnerability that will make people careless," added Dion.

"You're right. Of course you're right. You're gods and can't be wrong," said the faerie.

The gods tweaked his nose. "Oh, we've been wrong before. Someone usually ends up paying the price for it and we don't want to see that happen here."

"I know," said Johnny. He gave the gods a hug. "Can we have some privacy, please?"

"I know when we're not wanted," said Lord Apollo wiping away

a fake tear. The two gods shimmered away in the sunlight streaming in through the window.

Johnny stood there for a moment with his back to the prince. He sniffled a moment and brought his hand up to his face.

"What's wrong?" asked Apollo. "Can I help?"

He turned around slowly. "I wish you could, but you are the problem."

"Me? What did I do?"

"Everything," responded the faerie. "Nothing. Honestly, it wasn't something you did. It's something you are." Johnny sat down on the bed and patted the spot beside him for the prince to join him. "You are such a sweet wonderful child and I went and did the one thing a faerie is never supposed to do. I fell in love with you."

"And I love you," echoed the prince, "Always and forever."

"Always and forever," said Johnny with new tears forming in his eyes. "That's the problem. For a human always and forever may be a day, a month and if I'm lucky until you die. But for me, I will still be here long after you are gone. When I saw you being attacked that was all I could think of. I was out of mind with fear that you would be dead and I couldn't stop it and I would be left alone."

"But I'm okay and nothing really happened. I learned that I have much to learn to be able to fight someone like that," said the prince. "You tried to help and fought off the fake you long enough for the others to grab her. Hilda was there to snap the collar so it all worked out."

"I don't think you really understand what I said. I love you, Apollo. Not just any love. I wish I was a girl and could try on the slipper. I would grow to just the right size to make it happen. I wish the world would let me stay a boy and try on the slipper. Just let me put on the slipper and I would prove to everyone how much I love you."

"I wish I was old like you," said the prince quickly adding, "that is not an official wish, by the way."

"I know. You think I'm old?"

"Not like that. It's just I would have experience in what to tell you. I don't know what love is. I see Father and Rondar together and I can only dream that something like that waits for me. Sometimes when we are playing I feel like I want it to last forever. I want you beside me, showing me all those lessons you can't teach me. And then I remember that whole duty thing and having to have an heir. Then I wonder if it would be fair to you, to love you but be married to another. What if it were Lily that fit the shoe? How would it be to have her beside me on the throne while watching you before us?"

"You had to go and bring her name into this? Today's been hard enough without that thought to cause me nightmares."

"Exactly my point." Apollo kissed the faerie on the cheek. "I don't know what to expect in the future. I do know whatever it brings I want you in my life. If that is love, then I'll be a happy man. I do love you, Johnny. I just don't know if it's the true love kind of thing that Father has."

"Can I hope a little?"

"There's always hope."

"So where does that leave me now? I nearly got you killed because of my emotions."

"I don't know," said the prince, "but I do have one question. I'm horny and I won't see you again for several months, so why do we still have our clothes on?"

"I didn't think you would be in the mood."

"Not in the mood? I was ready to do something when I saw you come into the garden. Well, guess that wasn't really you, but you know what I mean. And then when the real you came to my rescue all I could think of was..."

Apollo stopped talking and kissed Johnny on the lips. It wasn't long before clothes were off and Apollo was stretched out on his bed with Johnny by his side. Johnny had hoped to make the moment last as long as he could but Apollo's youthful enthusiasm didn't allow for that kind of control. All too soon they were covered in cum. Johnny rested his head on Apollo's shoulder.

"I wish it could be like this forever," said the faerie.

"I do too," replied the prince accompanied by a kiss to the faerie's forehead. "This is my favorite time and no matter what the future holds, no matter the who the future brings, I will always have a place for you right here."

"Always?"

"Don't sound so doubtful. A king always keeps their word. It's in the vows."

"But you aren't king yet," reminded the faerie. "I want to believe you and I believe you believe you right now. Let's just say,

I don't have a great track record in that department."

"I'm different," protested the prince.

"I know," said the faerie softly. "I have never felt like this before and I could wish it could go on forever." Johnny got out of bed and dressed. "I'm going to Fransancisco tonight, so I won't be here when you leave in the morning, so this is good-bye."

"You make it sound so permanent."

"It might be," confessed Johnny. "Hilda was anything but pleased with my performance today. She has called a meeting of EEK, the Efgee Ethics Kouncil, to debate whether or not I've crossed the line in my duties and should be stripped of my responsibilities."

"They can't do that!"

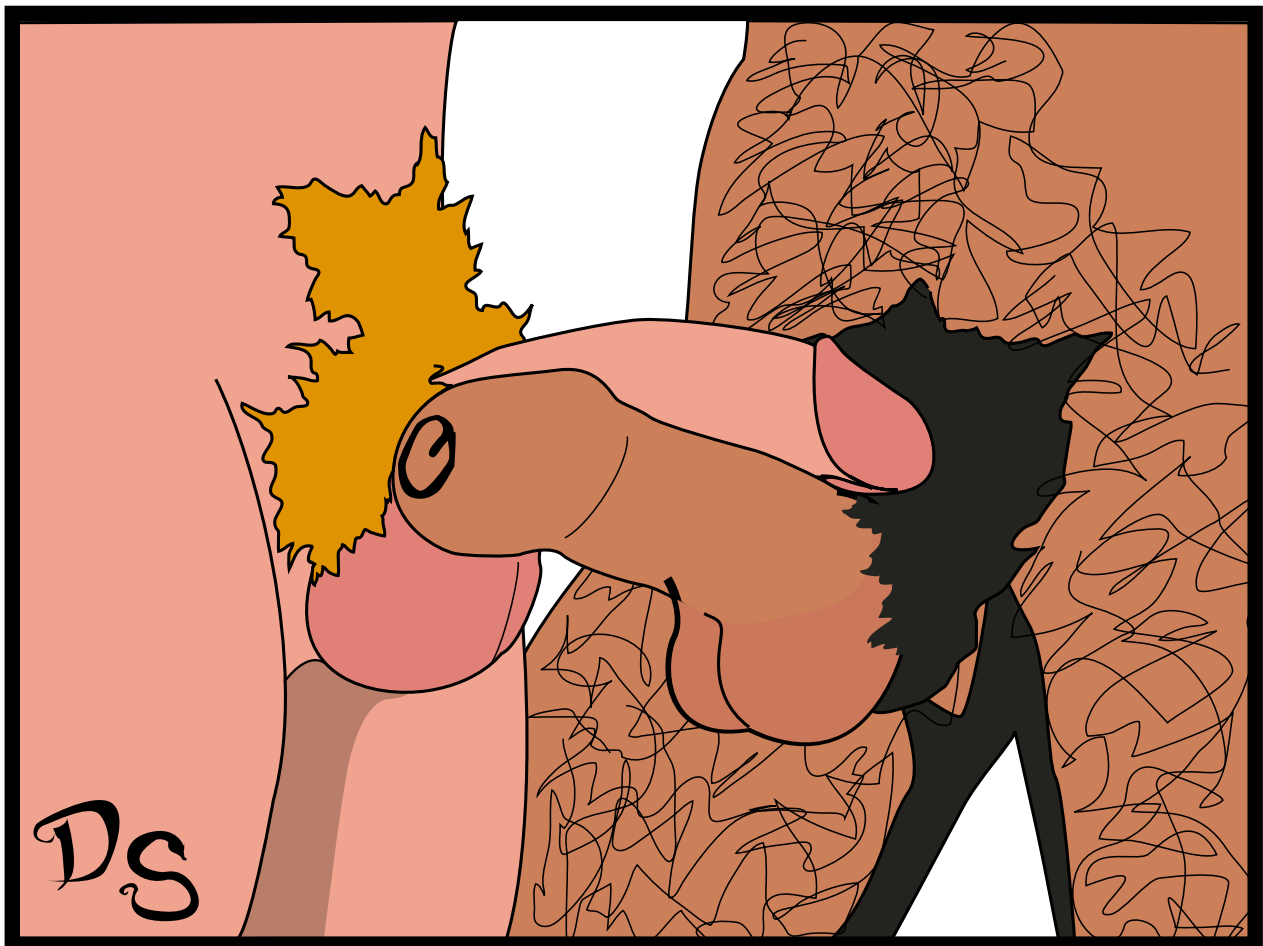
"The fact that I was in this room jerking off with you is all the evidence that some of them need. Queen Holly has granted me some leeway, but EEK is strict and may have a different opinion. If they rule against me, I will be pulled from the assignment and they will cast a spell to prohibit us for ever being together."

Johnny shrunk down to faerie size and flew up to kiss Apollo on the cheek. "Wish me luck,"

"If a wish would help, it's yours."

"Thanks, but I will need to do this on my own."

Apollo watched him fly off and broke down in tears at the thought of never seeing him again.



The 4-F Tarot: Work and Play

by Phoenix

This issue's feature card is probably one of the cards that has undergone the most changes since it was first conceived. This is the Kween of Flowers. Before I get too far let me tell you a little bit about the Kings and Kweens. Last issue I mentioned how each of the Gods and Goddesses have their own space on the power grid. That level of card needs to pull in something related to all four of its kingdoms (ie Air needs to have feather, flower, fin and fur energies while Feather needs Air, Fire, Water and Earth).

A King or Kween hasn't progressed that far in their learning. They have mastered their primary element pair (such as Earth + Fur) and are learning about their secondary talent (for the aforementioned Earth that could be Feather. If we are talking about the Fur half of the combo then that could be Air). The primary rules for the balancing of the sixteen Kings and Kweens was simple (at least in theory) which is that King/Kween pair for any of the categories could not have the same secondary energy between them. Thus, if the Kween of Flowers is Fire + Earth (as is the case) then the King of Flowers could not be the same (he got Fire + Water). Secondly, all four secondary energies had to be accounted for in each of the four groups. I couldn't cheat and have two Element Kings with secondary Fin energy while giving the extra Fur to a Kween to balance things out. Nope, each of the four groups had to be balanced. (If you want a fun challenge, try your hand at balancing the energies between these four groups. It has helped me understand how to watch for similar balance when planning ritual.)

The Kween of Flowers, being of fire and earth, became our flower child. She has passion (fire) but is earthy. She was at first going to be a traditional "love child," but she grew into a tree hugger. Her passion was going to be displayed in her efforts to save the forest. As I allowed for the possibility that a card would not always

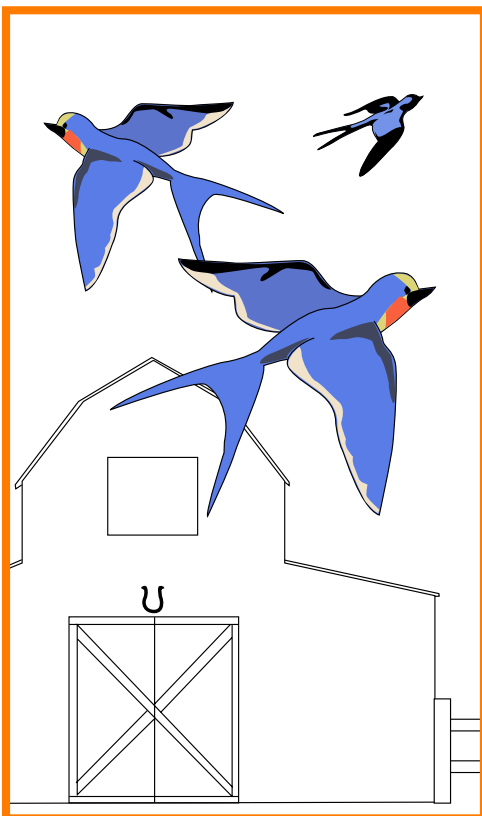
be a solo performance and that the character could have supporting cast, this card grew a bit more cynical. I had a vision of this being a faerie group sitting in a room working on consensus for how to save the tree while in the window, the axe man was sharpening his blades. The "message" of the card was going to be focused on something like "the time for planning is over, now is the time for action." (That energy has been diverted to Beaver and his hunky workers at Three Pigs Construction Company as they try to complete the brick house before the wolf shows up.)

After the card settled on the Litha space on the wheel, it circled back to the "love child" era and was going to be some kind of poster of gay pride and all the community diversity that comes out for the Mid-Summer festival. After last issue, DragonSwan and I began to talk through the realities of this card and as you can see, the Kween has gone back to a more simple, free-spirit kind of energy. She is dancing in the moonlight of the Solstice evening. She knows the art of the tease by wearing just enough to be covered, making you strain to see what lies beneath the fabric. This magical night the moon is your ally by helping reveal what lies underneath. Do you think the Kween knows or do you think that was what she had planned all along?

She is caught up in her dance. She will dance the night away as long as she can. She doesn't care if you join her or just want to watch her. Either way, she is going to have fun. The flowers in her garden are symbols of faith, hope, purity, pride and innocence. In a reading, are you her? Are you watching her? Are you so mesmerized that you don't want to break her reverie or are you so moved that you want to join her? Which of the floral energies is the key to the dance at the time of the reading? Or is it something as simple as "get off your butt and dance in the moonlight?"

The key to reading cards from this or any deck is to get inside the card. Don't stand on the outside and look at the pretty picture and analyze it. Put yourself in the card for a while and look around, talk to the characters. Compare this card to the other Sabbat cards that we have created. You have seen Imbolc, the Goddess of Water, with the sole figure walking into a very cold lake. She knows that it will take some courage to follow those that have come to her. You will be rewarded if you do. Beltane, the Goddess of Air in the park, presents its open invitation for you to do whatever you want. In Yule, the Kings of Fire are waiting for you to join them at the fire. They have done the hard work and want you to come to the party. Now, the Kween of Flowers caught up in her dance. Join her when you are ready. The dance will continue regardless of your participation. But wouldn't it be more fun if you stripped down, grabbed a sarong and joined in the dance? Or skip the sarong – while a half dressed dancer is highly erotic to watch, the dick bobbing up and down is fun to watch too. You'll have to wait for our kangaroo boys out on the volleyball court for that.

Last issue we completed the sixteen "work" cards. This issue you get to see the first of the "play" – those creatures who have their element in abundance: the swallow, wheat with a grasshopper, frogs, and squirrels (this almost was bats, but having transformed and gained wings they have moved up to the realms of magical creatures and flew up into the higher energy cards.)





Communication Scars Remembered

By Anja

Reprinted from the Daily Stuff 03/01/2007

I'm feeling very sad this morning. A blowup on one of the mailing lists that I get daily caused a really dear person to leave that list, and not the person who was making hurtful statements. We've been talking a bit in Katrina's class about non-violent communication and right now I'm seeing that it's awfully necessary. The comment that caused the person to leave was one of those that should have been stopped at the "sandbox" level, but that so many people make to others all through their lives, either not knowing any better or through never quite understanding that a psychic or psychological harm, while not prosecutable, is even more damaging than breaking someone's teeth with a left hook.

A psychic amputation, is what this caused.

Please pardon me for being down this morning.

I worry when people start hurting each other, whether as drastically as this, or just in the off comment that I heard in the grocery store yesterday, one teen to another, said in a mocking tone, "Damn, you're an ugly slut!" They were poking each other and grinning, so it may just have been play, but those things work down to the bottom of your soul if you let them.

There are things that we hear often from people who don't mean them but who say them anyway or say them from frustration and lack of understanding. It can take years to wipe those scars off your soul, and that's if you're lucky.

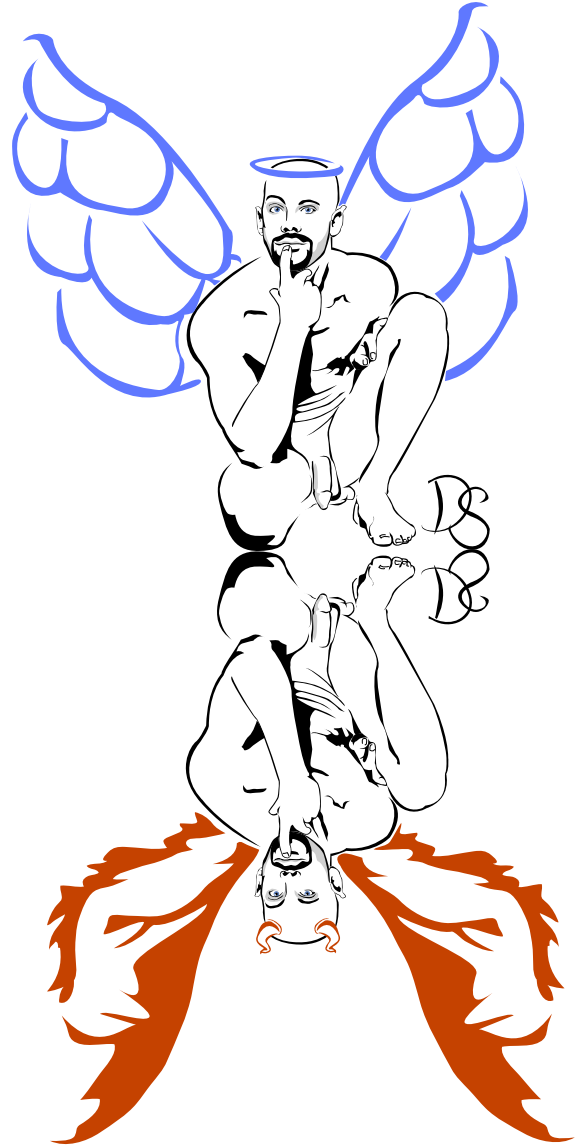
I heard, "You're so smart, but you are *sooooo* lazy" when I was a child, at least once a week, in reference to academics, probably from age 5 or so up until I left home at 22. My grandfolks and my Dad told my mother that I wasn't in the least lazy, but that something else was going on. They tried to tell the teachers that said, "You just need to work harder." No one figured out until I was 20 and in college that, no, it was not laziness that caused my grades to be lower than expected, but dyslexia, specifically "dyscalcula", which causes me to not be able to perceive numbers accurately. Sometimes they're upside down, sometimes backwards, sometimes scrambled. It doesn't mess me up in reading letters because the form and contour of words gives my brain enough of a clue to snap them into a readable shape, but numbers just don't quite get there. It means that most arithmetic I do in my head and that I'm a whiz on an abacus, but don't hand me a calculator or put it on paper in front of me, and I'll call your phone number 5 times to get it right once!

That's all to explain what I mean about scars on your soul. It wasn't until a little over 5 years ago that I finally started to explain right out front what the heck it was that caused me to put off writing a bill and going to the PUD to pay it instead, or to hold off calling people, or to prefer e-mail to the phone, and this to people that I knew loved me and wouldn't care a bit! I was so shamed by it that I couldn't even explain.

At 49 I've gotten to the point that I no longer believe that I'm stupid and lazy for being this way, but a well-meaning comment screwed itself into my psyche so hard that rooting it out is next to impossible. I'm still working on it. The form this scar took with me was that procrastination when faced with what looked like stupidity looked like the better option. Do you know how hard a habit that is to break? I run my face into it every day.

...and that is an obvious thing with an obvious cause. Who knows what calling someone an "ugly slut" will do? Maybe it will cause the person to stop caring enough about themselves to think that acting like a slut will at least get them some attention. Maybe it will cause the person to neglect grooming and taking care of their clothing in a situation where it will cost them a job or 6, or even to take up drinking or drugging to forget the pain that that supposedly funny comment caused.

Non-violent communication is something that more of us need.



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Perception

By AstralWizard

If something is written on paper.
Do you read it? Do you feel something?
Does the conception cross your mind?
The buried message is that hard to find.
If a picture is painted and put on display.
Can you comprehend its meaning?
Does it speak to you as though it were a voice from beyond?
Does it portray a holy archetype to which you felt you needed to pray?
Now take your eyes off of the words.
Take your eyes away from the picture.
Look all around. Look into life's constant flow.
Does that voice from beyond still have sound?
It should be louder.
It should be clearer.
To its message you'll become the bearer.
Carrying it to those who need it the most.
Help others find peace that's been long needed restored.
Ease the pain that affects too many.
Disarm that suffering inflicting sword.
Kill the flame that only knows disaster.
Look inside of yourself. You hold the key.
Quit looking for a message that's in the face.
Quit searching with your eyes.
Find with your heart. In your own personal silence you'll find a place.
Thoughts will guide you.
Intuition will be the infinite burning light.
Come into yourself.
Only by practice will you kill that long lasting fight.
Then you'll achieve being the being you strive to be.

5-2-2006
4:24 P.M. M.D.T.
Poem 12



True Family Rides the Wind

If I err...tell me.
If I do good...tell me.
What I said made you feel bad.
Why? The words were jest.
Pain begetting pain
Sorrow building
Hurt anger there and there.
Family has love and shoulder to spare.
Trouble shared is trouble halved.
With seven and more to share.
to care.

Anger dissipates
Tears wiped away
Pain soothed until no more.
That is true family
Family of Choice

Universal Truth

Symmachus (384 CE)

We gaze up at the same stars,
the sky covers us all,
the same universe encompasses us.

What does it matter what
practical system we adopt in our
search for the truth?

Not by one avenue only
can we arrive at so
tremendous a secret.

(ed: Isn't it amazing how some things never change. I guess that's part of the universal part of seeking Truth.)

Russian Hymn to the Earth

Traditional

If the people live their lives
as if it were a song
for singing out of light
provides the music
for the stars to be dancing circles in the night

Then the peoples lives might be a joyous
song of praise for light and mystery
a wondrous passage on this fragile earth
in the timeless dance of death and birth

So I offer this my song of joyfulness and praise
for the lessons come along
my teachers share and learn with me
as we invent a new mythology

The Cubby Diaries: The Remodel - Part 3

By Cubby

The weeks after the massive garage sale and emotional meltdown were interesting. We moved into the basement of Aeris's parent's house. Norman and Kathy are great. They are getting ready to sell their house and move into one of those pricey lofts downtown. They have been busy clearing out their own junk and have a nearly empty basement for us to take over. During the majority of the destruction of my home, they are going to be gone on a trip to Europe, so we will have the house to ourselves.

The day after the sale, we presented the final challenge of having an actual budget and presenting an overall concept of what the entire house would look like. Their key requirements were that the pictures of Barebutt Mountain had to be used in the living room and family room and all antiques that we kept were to be used somewhere. Now I should tell you that neither of the pictures of the mountain hanging in the house were the ones with Kevin and Buck or Peter and myself. Jim had commissioned copies that were near duplicates without the humans. It is not that we are embarrassed about having naked men as art, but Jim discovered early on with our naked refrigerator magnets that when his society ladies came over for a meeting they spent more time fantasizing what their husbands would say about them having something like that than they did their business. The substitute pictures could be brought out to save on the distraction. And it has worked out since I know that they would never show them on television. We spent the day with the two team captains going through all of the rooms of the house. They were on a radio link with the lead designers and relayed questions from the teams.

The teams had two weeks to prepare their final designs. During that time, MyHouse TV invited the design schools in the area to

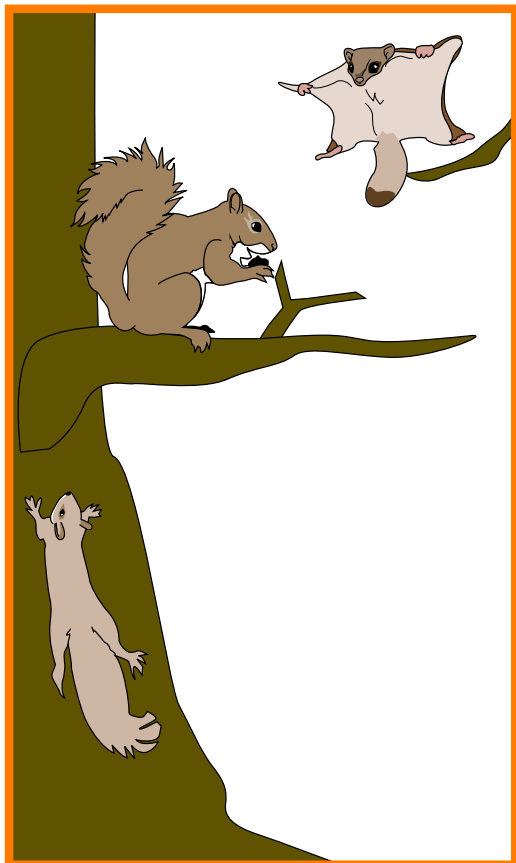
have students come to the house to have some hands on classes with some of the designers that had been eliminated. Each night I wandered down to see what creative things had been done. One night it looked like a hotdog stand had exploded. The walls were vibrant reds and yellows with splotches of green. While I was there a crew came in to prime the walls back to a basic white for the next day's class. There were interesting attempts at trying to recreate the fancier faux finishes that the designers like to use in place of the \$200 per square foot wallpaper. Each day, they picked a student to represent their school. They were featured on the show when I announced my final selection.

The two final designs were as different as night and day. If I hadn't known better, I would have sworn that they had been talking to completely different households. The Purple Team went first and presented a Southwest inspired theme design. They opened up the living room and dining room by creating archways instead of eliminating the walls altogether. The colors were cream, rust, sage green and slate blue. They continued this color scheme into every room of the house. They mixed in the antiques with the new furniture but it was interesting to note that almost every piece was exactly where Grams had put it. I guess they couldn't argue with the pro. When I asked if it seemed a bit strange to have such a strong design in the entire house when the house itself was typical suburban track home, they revealed their special surprise. They had saved money in the budget by glazing the existing tiles and fixtures and used that money to stucco the house and add a mission tile roof.

The Blue Team had a strong color palette based on deep hunter green and camel. They stepped through each room showing how they would use the color and how it flowed into the next space so that by the time we got up to the master bedroom that colors were the same camel but the accents were warm rusts and golds. They pointed out where they had relocated some of the antiques. The roll-top desk was moved down to the senior retreat to give guests a working space. They thought they could work a cord into the back grooves to get phone and electric connections for laptops. They consulted with the other design winners and Noel said she was looking for a cabinet to display the snow villages year round. They would pass the large china cabinet to her, which freed up space to create a giant built-in sideboard in the dining room. They announced that they had a little bit of money left over in the budget so they brought out their final surprise. They said that it wasn't fair that the humans got all the good stuff. They noticed that Hamlet had been squeezing into a doghouse that had been designed for a smaller dog. They wanted to give him a house that used all the features of the current one, just bigger. Based on that alone, I wanted to say "You're hired" right on the spot, but I knew I had to give both plans careful consideration.

We spent a lot of time over the next few evenings discussing the plans. We tossed out our opinions of the different parts of each plan. The longer we talked, the clearer that one team was the obvious choice. The day of the taping, we went down to the studio. I sat under the lights and was nervous that I was going to get all mixed up and announce the wrong team. The Blue Team was the clear winner for us. When Cindy asked why, I said it was simple. In their effort to go for the big WOW factor of the exterior remodel,

Airy Faerie



the Purple Team neglected to do some basics. We pointed to their presentation and asked what their plan for Jim's and Aeric's rooms was. We pointed at their kitchen and bathroom plans and asked how they planned to reglaze the tiles when everything was going to be gutted to get new plumbing. We pointed at the Blue Team presentation and showed how they took advantage of the gutted house and added a half bath in the family room. We pointed out how they relocated the laundry from the lower basement to near the bedrooms. I looked at their leader and said we will have to discuss that since I noticed that there was no space for the ironing board and wondered where I was going to iron my underwear. Before the captain could respond, Cindy brought out the rest of the Blue Team on stage. They were the MyHouse Dream Team. The lead designer was Frank (the lovable teddy bear) from *Old Spaces, New Ideas*. Aiding him were the sewing queen, Ann Needles (call me "Pins") from *Sew What?*, Hugh (with his blue hair pulled back in a pony tail) from *Color Values*, Drugh (Hugh's identical twin except for hair color) from *Decadent Kitchens and Baths*, and Josh (the sleeveless wonder carpenter) from *Champagne Dreams, Tap Water Budget*.

The following morning we met with the Dream Team for a walk through the house to start refining the plans. Frank started off saying that there were some things that they had wanted to do but didn't know how much they could stretch the budget. Jim made everyone sit down before he announced what the true budget of the project was going to be. I could see their eyes glaze over as they considered what they could do with the full sum of the budget. Then he added that any money left in the budget would be matched and the funds donated to their charity. Since the idea was to raise money for charity, they realized they had to restrict some of those dreams.

We started in the living room and I asked if they would get some paint samples so I could see their color scheme on the walls. The green

seemed like it would be too dark but Hugh swore it would give the room a nice rich feel. Frank floored everyone with his first question when he asked if he could see the real pictures that were to be the inspiration of the design. I started to ask what he meant but he stopped me. He said that the photographer was his nephew and he knew that Joey would never sell a picture of just a mountain. Jack was to come over later in the day to discuss what was needed in "his kitchen" so we called him to bring the pictures with him. When they saw them, the flamboyant twins and Ann agreed that everyone should have shaved before taking a picture like that. Frank looked at them and said that it was a good thing it hadn't been up to them because the prints of the two were currently Joey's top selling pictures. He also called attention to the fact that two of the models were their clients, to which the trio tried to apologize for their comments and I asked if it was too late to change my mind. Josh didn't say anything. He just adjusted his shirt to hide the tuft of hair that was showing.

As we walked through the house, each of the team picked a room that was going to be their special pet project. Ann picked the craft room since she was going to use that space for her workroom during the project. Hugh and Drugh said they always wanted to combine talents so they picked the extra bedroom and bathroom in the basement. Their plan was to turn the space into a home gym where the bathroom would become a locker room with a four person shower so that we could have the full gym experience without leaving home. Frank heard that and claimed the rec room as his special room. The team had planned to turn that into a bar type setting but hearing the gym idea, we decided that a juice bar/soda fountain might continue

—continued on page 18



Cubby: I found this drawing in the box Grams had set aside of things she had saved for Uncle Phil. She had a note on the back that said this was from his second grade art class. I'm having it framed to go into my sewing room.

The Cubby Diaries - continued

the healthy concept. Josh salivated when he saw Gramp's workshop in the basement. He confessed that when he learned that the blueprints had been drafted by Joe Johnson he had wondered if it was the same man who hired him for his first job. Then he learned that Johnson and Miller were to be the general contractors for the project he called and talked to his old boss's daughter to find out details about the house and anything she knew about the current owner. I said that my aunt was great. Josh got that "aha" look as he finally made the family connection and said he had been wondering why I looked so familiar.

We stood in the laundry room and tried to decide what to do with that space once the washer and dryer moved upstairs. The space was huge since it was almost like a mini-laundromat with its multiple machines to get several loads done in a short time. Grams even had space for a chair where she could sit and read or darn socks while waiting. Jim claimed that space as his special surprise.

I never realized that shopping could be so exhausting. Becky advised us to be sure to have all construction materials ordered AND delivered before she brought in her crew to start the demolition. She had been involved in too many projects that were delayed while they waited for the key elements to be delivered only to find out that they had never been ordered in the first place. I lost track of the number of showrooms we looked at to pick out the fixtures and tiles and cabinets and flooring and furniture and paint and wallpaper and fabric and on and on. I never realized how many choices there were for small details such as switch plates and outlet covers. I had always moved into apartments and had inherited furniture so I had never appreciated what it takes to build up a home from scratch. We did have one battle in the store. Ann went crazy in the store picking out fabric for the master bedroom. When I saw the stack of fabric and asked why she needed so many different ones she said it was for the pillows for the bed. I asked how many she planned to have and she said a dozen. I said I only wanted two. The team all said that a beautiful bedroom had to have layers of pillows. I looked at them and said that when I see that many pillows on a bed my only thought is where was I going to toss them to get into bed. They finally talked me into allowing them four accent pillows. I said make them large because at least one of them was going to become Lady Macbeth's bed once it was tossed on the floor.

While we waited for the deliveries to begin, Josh got started on his carpentry. The first thing the team wanted to do was refinish some of the antiques. Frank had noticed that a couple of pieces had been done by someone but not all of them. I said that Uncle Phil had started but stopped when Grams got sick. I wanted to do something to help on the project so I asked if I

could help. We set up shop in the garage and Josh told me that the first thing we had to do was strip. Now, you don't have to tell me to do that twice. I closed the garage door and started to take off my shirt. Josh got a shocked look on his face and said he meant the furniture. That's when I realized that the normally sleeveless wonder was wearing real shirts all the time. I asked him about that and he said that my grandfather had a strict policy about workers showing skin on a job and after the comments the other day, he felt it best to revert to his old training. I told him to be himself and that if the others have some issues with his hairy arms all he had to do is remember that the people paying the bills didn't. After that, he started to relax and was more like the goof ball prankster we see on television.

With everything planned and deliveries started, Becky sent in the first crew to begin the demolition process. In two days they had all of the old drywall pulled off and I could see why she said it would make her job of redoing the plumbing and electrical work so much easier. I came home from grocery shopping one afternoon and found her workers putting in new windows. I called her and said I didn't think those were in the budget and she told me to talk to Jim. When I did, he gave me that "caught in the cookie jar" look and asked if I could think of a better time to do it? Or would I rather



deal with the dust when they came back to replace them in a year or two? I couldn't really argue since he was right.

As I walked around the house that afternoon it felt really strange. It was the house that I had lived in for nearly fifteen years, but being stripped down to its essence and being given new everything, it was like I was watching it being built from scratch. Some of you might think it would have been easier to level the house and do just that, but Becky assured me that the structure itself was in perfect condition. It really was just the guts that needed to be brought up to modern standards.

Greg and Cindy flew into town the next day to film a progress report. While we walked around, Peter had the idea to host an open house. Let's face it, a house can't be too much more open than this, with the exception of a house with no exterior walls. We had the public party in the early afternoon and then planned our private "Down to the Bare Studs" party that evening with the BABs. During the afternoon event, Josh surprised me by asking if we were doing anything that evening. He was getting tired of his hotel room at night and wanted to go see a movie but wanted some company to enjoy it with. I told him that we had plans and watched him deflate. It must have taken a lot from him to ask. I told him that he would be welcome to join us if he didn't mind being around a bunch of gay naked bears. He said he would pass so I said that we would plan on something for the following evening.

The next afternoon I wandered over to the house to see if he still wanted to do something that evening. I found him lost in thought on the back porch. I stood there for a few minutes looking at him. Physically, he is one of those models of male perfection. Strong arms from years of work in the construction business that could probably break me in two if he wanted. But that wasn't what I was seeing that day. He was struggling with something. Some vulnerability that he didn't want the world to see. He was holding something to his chest and I could hear him softly sob. I tried to back away quietly but as I turned I caught my foot on some lumber. He jumped at the sound and dropped what was in his hands. I reached for it automatically and our hands met on a little teddy bear. It was wearing a little yellow shirt with a faded letter "P" on its chest. I laughed, well not HaHa laugh, but a quiet chuckle really. Josh asked if I was laughing at him and I said no. I laughed because I had that same exact bear in my collection. Uncle Phil had given it to me when I broke up with my first lover and said that when I held the bear, he would be there to comfort me.

Josh said that Phil had given him this bear also. He had been dating the sister of one of the workers. Phil had been helping on the site one day and told him that Jeanie wasn't right for him. Josh said that he told Phil to butt out and he knew what was right for himself. The next day, he found the bear in his locker with a note. "I will never tell you 'I told you so.' But someday, when you need a shoulder and I'm not around, tell the bear and it will be the same." I said that sounded like my uncle. Then I asked if he would tell me what he was telling the bear. Josh looked at me and said that I was just like my uncle. He said that Phil must have been proud of me. He looked away for a moment. When he looked back, he said he had been so tempted to come to the party the previous evening. When I asked him what stopped him, he pointed at his crotch, where

I noticed his hard-on. He dropped his bear and pulled me into a surprise passionate kiss. Just as suddenly, he let go and apologized. He said that he had wanted to do that since we first met, and then seeing my naked picture had only made it more frustrating that he was on television and couldn't risk something like that with a client. Then, when he realized that I was related to Phil it had brought out all the old memories of his days of coming out. Everyone at the site always talked about trying to score with the boss's daughter. Josh thought Becky was a nice enough girl but his heart always beat faster when her little brother came around. He started dating Jeanie to prove he was a man. Phil must have known. When he started to accept his gay nature, he realized that he loved Phil but in that work environment he never could admit it. Their paths parted and he never told Phil the truth. I gave him a little kiss and said "He knows."

I asked Josh if he was still interested in going to the movies that evening. He pulled off his shirt, exposing his fur covered pecs and started to pull off my shirt. "Mister, I think I told you to strip. And right now I'm not interested in going to a movie. I want to make one."

"Should I go get my camera," came Gregg's voice from the doorway. "Or can I be in it?"

"As the director of the production, I have to say 'CUT!'," said Peter entering behind him. He gave me a quick kiss and pulled Josh into it. He said he really hated to break up such a hot action scene but as Josh knew, Peter and I had to head to the airport.

Josh protested that wasn't until that afternoon. Then he looked at his watch and realized that he and I had been talking for hours. I, on the other had to ask why? That's when Peter informed me that it wasn't Norman and Kathy that were going to be gone during the next phase of the project. It was us. Jim was taking command of the rest of the remodeling and sending us to a month of luxury on the Hawaiian Islands.

I picked up the teddy bear and handed it to Josh. I told him that we would have to pick up when we got back and suggested that he help inaugurate the new bedroom. We had a group hug and kiss. Peter and I slipped out leaving Gregg and Josh liplocked. I'm not sure if they really noticed that we left.

Peter pulled me into the house and stripped. I said I thought he had said we needed to get going. He pulled down my pants, releasing my still hard cock, and asked if I thought I could wait five hours before doing something about it. He wet his hand and slicked up my dick and let me fuck him one last time in the shell of my house. I pulled out and we shot our wads on the floor. Peter started looking for a towel to wipe it up and I said to leave it. "Let it soak in. It will be a good foundation to start our home."

I am writing this on the plane. I keep wondering what it is going to be like to walk into my house when we get back home. When I walk up it is going to look the same, but inside is going to be completely new. Peter keeps telling me that it will be wonderful and to trust our happy little clan (that seems to grow every time I turn around). They know me and love me. The latter is a blessing beyond words. The former scares me a little because sometimes they know me better than I do. Who could ask for better friends and lovers than that?

When this recipe came my way, the use of cinnamon caught my attention and the whole combination sounded delicious. I had never used cardamom (see there are some things I haven't done) and hit sticker shock when I saw the price. The aroma of this cooking and the resulting taste was well worth the money. However, being a frugal queen, I had to go find another recipe to make use of this new found taste treat and justify the expense.

Moroccan Chicken Kabobs

submitted by Potsan Pans

Dry Rub

1 tsp cinnamon
1/2 tsp salt
1/2 tsp cumin
1/2 tsp tumeric
1/4 tsp cayenne (optional)
1/4 tsp pepper
1/4 tsp cardamom
1/8 tsp ground cloves
1/8 tsp nutmeg
2 tsp brown sugar

Kabobs

2 pounds boneless, skinless chicken breasts
2 small red onions
2 bell peppers
1/4 cup olive oil
Salt and pepper
12 (10-inch) skewers

Step 1:

If using bamboo skewers, soak in water for 30 minutes before you use them. Let them soak while you prepare the rest.

Step 2:

In a small bowl, combine the dry rub ingredients and mix well.

Step 3:

Cut the meat into 1 1/2 inch cubes and place in a gallon size zip lock bag. Add dry rub mix. Seal the bag and shake vigorously until chicken is well coated. Put chicken in a bowl.

Step 4:

Peel the onions and cut into 1-inch wide sections. Clean the peppers and cut into 1-inch squares. Add vegetables to the bag that had the dry rub. Add olive oil and shake vigorously to coat vegetables.

Step 5:

Assemble the kabob by alternately skewering pieces of chicken, onion and pepper.

Step 6:

Get your grill going and get cooking! Grill kabobs, turning occasionally, until chicken is no longer pink inside. This should be about 8-10 minutes on a gas grill.



Cardamom Honey Chicken

submitted by Potsan Pans

Marinade:

4 Tbsp honey
2 Tbsp sherry
1 tsp cardamom, ground
1 tsp peppercorns, ground

Chicken:

6 chicken breasts, or one whole chicken cut into parts
2 Tbsp olive oil
1 lemon, thinly sliced
salt and pepper

Step 1: Warm the honey, stir in other marinade ingredients.

Step 2: Place chicken and marinade in large bowl, coating chicken well. Cover with plastic and let sit at room temperature for 30 minutes.

Step 3: Preheat oven to 350°

Step 4: Heat olive oil in a large frying pan at medium heat. Sear the chicken (skin side down) until golden brown.

Step 5: Place lemon slices in bottom of roasting pan. Lay the chicken on top and brush with leftover marinade. Bake until chicken is done (15-30 minutes depending on thickness of chicken) Let chicken rest for 10 minutes before serving.

Step 6: Pour drippings from pan into a gravy boat for gravy.