

Aíry Faerie
Lammas 2007
Camp Out



Publisher's Notes

"WOOF!" Welcome to the dog days of summer. The temperature is going up as summer burns into autumn.

One little fun side note. I was on a Bear chat group once, where in a guy's profile he said, "...please do not say 'woof', bears do not say woof." I really wanted to send him a note saying: "Bears live in the woods, don't use computers, and would not be on a gay chat group, so lighten up." I didn't send him the note because I could tell he was taking everything just a little too serious. Not to mention he would probably bitch slap me into next week! OPPS! I'm sorry; bears are too butch to bitch slap aren't they? I hope none of you are offended because you believe that faeries do not say 'WOOF!'"

ANYWAY, on with the pub note. Welcome to the Lammas issue of the Denver Faeries' Airy Faerie. I am currently sitting at my computer with the AC going feeling like Mother Nature turned her oven on broil, stuck Denver inside and slammed the door shut. We do get basted once in a while with a nice thunder storm. After the rain, it just feels hot and muggy. In all this heat it is hard to wrap my brain around the first harvest. It was also pointed out at the Denver Tribe's recently Lammas ritual, that living in a time where fresh fruits are shipped year round, we loose touch with this harvest. No longer do we need to harvest and store up food for the long winter. Harvesting the first fruits of our gardens, and orchards has really lost the meaning it once had for most of us urban faeries. So we must force ourselves to remember that the great wheel is turning. While we bask in the hot sun, we need to take time to honor the fruits of the first harvest.

Not only is Mother Nature turning up the heat, but the Airy Faerie seems to have gotten a little hotter. Five of our Tarot cards for this issue add to the heat. We have our four F's of playful fire, and our main card is the God of Flowers/Lammas card. When you see this card I think you will agree he is one hot God. Not only has he gathered the fruits of the harvest around him, he is indulging and

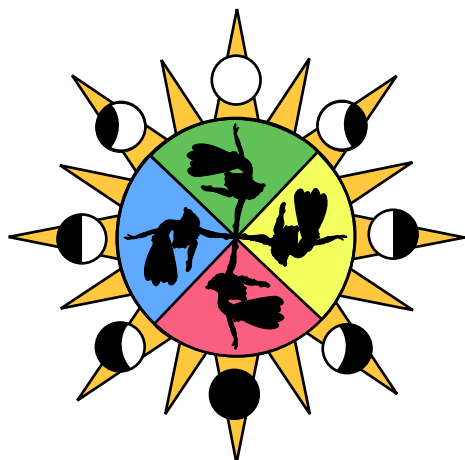
thoroughly enjoying the fruits of the first harvest. After our Lammas ritual, the card is really calling to me to not simply acknowledge this first harvest, but to enjoy it. So many times we come to the end of a project and say, 'Ok, that's done, what's next?' We never really take the time to fully enjoy the harvest of our work. We might take a break for a bit, but we do not really indulge in our harvest. Of course that indulgence is going to look different for every harvest, but take the time to taste the sweet rewards of your work. So, while you are you basking in the heat of the final days of summer, and starting to harvest some of the projects in your life, be sure to enjoy that harvest. Indulge yourself a little and give thanks for the blessings of the fruits in your life. Sorry Lesley Fey, when I say the fruits in our lives I am not talking about you, although I understand many faeries have enjoyed you. Kiss kiss.

If you are being a good faerie and are not skipping ahead to look at the pictures or to see what else is in the issue. Then let me spoil one surprise for you. There are images of naked men in this issue. There are also a few images of gay men enjoying each other. So if you are using a public/work computer; do not wish to view such images; or you are too young to legally view them, please do us both a favor and do not go any further. We would hate to have anyone get upset, or in trouble, over some gay erotica.

Ok, after looking at the Lammas card again, and typing in the afternoon heat, I think I need to take a cool shower. I hope the rest of you are able to find a way to stay comfortable, as you honor the first harvest, and enjoy the Lammas issues of the Denver Faeries' Airy Faerie.

Sweaty Naked Hugs,
DragonSwan
"WOOF!"

Airy Faerie



Lammas 2007

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

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Answering The Call to Global Warming

By AstralWizard

A light clicked on earlier this night.
It's been sparking within the last two days.
Where and when did we lose our democracy?
When did the earth start to fail?

Great mother, great bringer of life.
Guide us, tell us what we need to do.
Talk and I will listen.
Time and time again many a gift you have given.

Now I want to give it back.
I thank you and have tried not to take all your blessings for granted.
Help us get back on track.
I'm willing to speak out. I am willing to help.

I am awake!!!
Comprehending the message to fight for a just cause for once!
Give me the tools I seek so that I can protect.
Protect my mountain that shows itself on a clear sunny day.

The city that in itself has a unique natural life.
The call has come.
It is one I gladly take.
This is not a promise I'm willing to break.

Oh great universe I call on you now.
Not out of greed.
Not out of emotional chaos.
But, out of enlightenment.

Ambitious now to fight for a global being.
The music again spoke to me.
Now out of a different kind of context.
One that's worth believing.

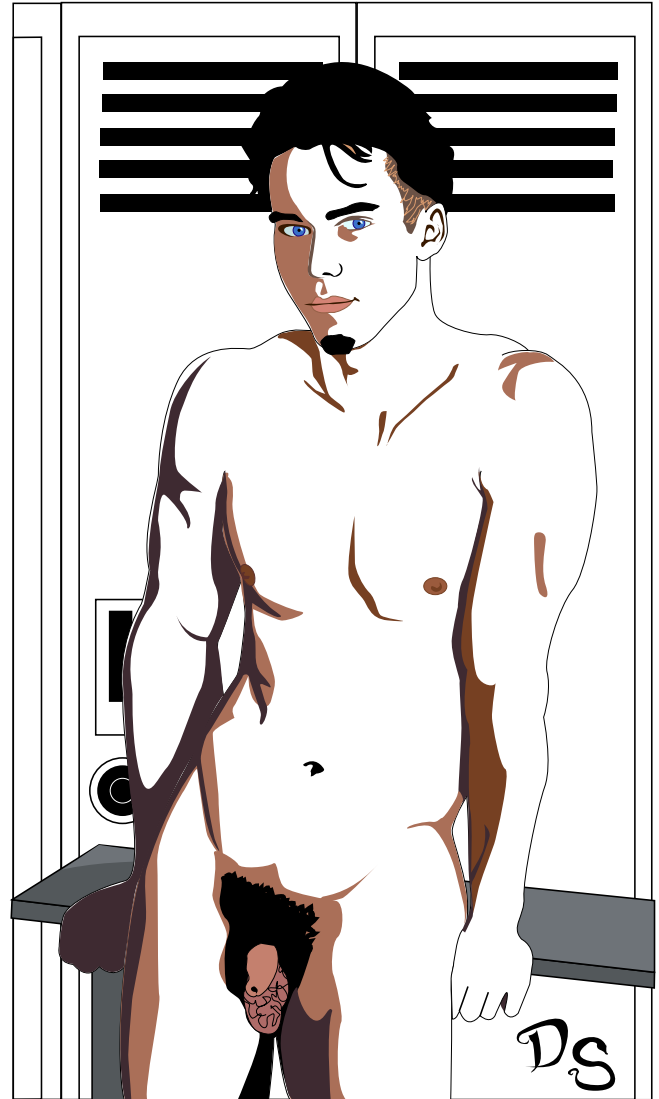
I will not stand and watch my world die.
I will not stand as men of power decide this planets fate,
Am I awake? Oh Hell Yeah!!
This is where I come in the calling of a light from purity and out
away from the winds of hate.

Stand up everyone!
Stand up now!
Put down your guns. Forget your bombs.
Warfare solves nothing except ends lives without rhyme or reason.

Put aside your disagreements.

Change now has to be imminent.
Make it something positive!
Make it happen!
Make it now!!

7-9-2007 @ 2:18 am PDT
Poem 28



Triple Aspect of the God

By Earl

*Sung to the melody "We all come from the Goddess"
(Originally published in the newsletter for the Circle of Lavender
Fire, February 1994)*

We all spring from the Sun King,
Apollo, Loki, Priapus
Children, nymphs and faeries
Join us as we sing and dance.

We all come from the Horned One,
Lovers of the Summer Lord.
Hunters of game in the forests,
Eros, Herne, Cernunnos.

We all grow from the Green Man,
Shamans of the seas and earth.
Odin, Hermes, Osiris,
Turn the Wheel of our rebirth.

Quest for the Crystal Phoenix

Chapter 22: Blue Moons and Blue Balls

by Orpheus

Prince Apollo had never been so eager to be on the road before. He loved making the journey between his father's and grandfather's kingdoms. He loved the sights and sounds that he would encounter on the way; the people that he would meet. He knew he was anxious about his first visit to his great aunt's kingdom but he looked forward to the new sights, sounds and people he would meet on the way. The twins, Shanna and Channa, two of the escorts that Queen Susan sent, told him of the blue nosed villagers in the mountain town of Indigo Ridge, the first town that they would stay once they crossed the border into Rysbal. Shanna told him that everything was so cold during the winter that people's noses turned blue. Over many generations, the color became permanent. When he asked why he never heard of this before, she told him that the people of the region don't visit other areas much because they would die in the heat. The houses are so frozen over that most travelers think the town is an ice cliff and keep right on passing through without even recognizing it as a town. Only the elite guards of Rysbal know its secrets. Toby said he had heard rumors of a town filled with little blue men and always thought it was pure fantasy.

As he thought about the days leading up to his departure there were three things about this trip that had not been part of previous journeys that he loved. First, after a week of the adults haggling over his security after his attack that not only did they allow him to leave, they actually decided to stick to the original plan of just Cetee and eight guards traveling with him instead of the outrageous plan of a full battalion of the guard. The adults finally listened to him when he said that a smaller group would attract far less attention to itself and thus be safer than the larger troop. He pointed out that it would be a small enough group to turn invisible as he had done the summer before. He had some satisfaction in feeling that his arguments carried weight and that his grandfather actually respected his opinion in the matter. An hour ago they had crossed the border into Rysbal and by nightfall he was going to meet some of the exotic blue people that were part of this kingdom.

Second, he was going to be free of the attentions of Lily, Cory and Viola for five months. The night after the attack they had been in near hysterics over the injury to their "poor sweet prince." As the departure got closer, each of them corned him to present him with a token of their affection. Both Lily and Cory presented him with highly embroidered, totally impractical kerchiefs that he could keep inside his shirt and feel their touch next to his heart. He said that the silk fabric would be a pale comparison to their own gentle hands. He had learned enough to not say that he thought that the heavy use of metallic thread made the kerchiefs scratchier than the woolen underwear he was going to have to wear in the mountains.

When Viola approached him, he asked her to join him for a stroll in the garden. "I would say I would miss you," he started hesitantly, "but I miss the fun you already. It just hasn't been the same since you started competing with Lily to be the heir to the crown of 'Princess Faerie Fairest of Them All.' I'm almost sorry I said you were pretty when I saw you in that show last summer."

"You don't think I'm pretty?"

"It's not that at all. But since Lily has been here you each have been trying to be more like the other in appearance and attitude. I think you have been copying her worst features and she copies the worst features of the pieces you have been copying from her. I haven't seen the carefree faerie that came into court wearing the most outrageous outfits in a long time. I miss my friend and want him back."

Viola patted the bench where she sat down and the prince joined her. "Are you talking about me or are you talking about Johnny?"

"Both, I guess. You two used to make me laugh a lot. Now, I spend my time trying to avoid you because the other two will think I'm favoring you, so I avoid them too so I don't make you think I like them better. Then I never get to talk to any of you. Or if I do, I have to be careful to spend the same amount of time and be extra careful about what I say so that I don't give anyone ammunition to use against the others. And then Lily won't let you out of her sight when you are near me and Johnny stays away from his sister and now he's gone and..." he paused a moment. "They can't really stop him from being my faerie godparent can they? I mean Holly is the queen and she issued the assignment in the first place."

"She is not above the law. If the Efgee Ethics Council so rules, she would have to obey. I'm sure they would have demanded something when I botched my job but Queen Amaranth had already punished me sufficiently in their eyes. When it comes to Faerie-Virgin interaction they are extremely strict. Even if you maintain the letter of the Virginity Laws, the perception may be enough to make them want a new faerie assigned to you in order to remove temptation and maintain the integrity of the law."

The longer they talked, the harder it was for Apollo to believe that everything was going to turn out right. It sounded like several of the Council members had grudges against Johnny and had been blocking every attempt over the years to approve his Faerie Godparent license. It was only because Hilda was overseeing the situation did they grudgingly approve the appointment. Now that Hilda had reported the attack and her perception of the situation, it seemed like the perfect opportunity to prove that they were right.

"What can I do to help?" asked the prince.

"Unfortunately nothing," Viola replied. "Any attempt by you to support him will only prove to some that you are inappropriately attached and thus make the case for them."

With a heavy heart, the prince headed inside to prepare for the



next day's departure. He was surprised when Lance woke him up at the bells for the Second Watch. He was told that Cetee needed to see him immediately and was directed to find him at the stables. A weary prince found Cetee standing there holding Bebeep. In the dim light it took Apollo a moment to realize that Cetee was naked.

"Strip," he commanded.

"But won't that mean..."

"Exactly. And exactly why I asked you here," said his teacher.

"You are the only one who knows that little secret. Plans have changed and I am to take Toad Charming to meet my father and I am faster on my own four feet than I am riding a horse."

Apollo started to strip as commanded and as soon as he was naked, Cetee's transformation from human to centaur began. "Ah, that is so much better," he said once he was changed, "Now get dressed and get the rest of your sleep."

Apollo asked that now that he was naked, why get dressed just to get naked again? He turned invisible for a moment, showing his teacher how he planned to go back to his room. "Imp," said Cetee, "somehow I knew you were going to do that." He said that in light of the attack, the kings felt that it was time for the two brothers to be reunited and that perhaps the combined memories would give them some clues to defeating Belladonna. "And for added measure, Rondar and your father will join us. With them in control of the rings, we should be able to sift out the truth from the fiction that they have been telling themselves all these years."

Cetee leaned down and gave the prince a quick hug. In a blur, he turned around and galloped off into the night. Apollo stood there amazed. He had seen several races where he thought the horses were as fast as the wind. Watching Cetee at full gallop made those horses seem like they were turtles in comparison. He headed back to his bed. As he fell asleep he had visions of what the meeting of the two brothers, both transformed by Belladonna's magic, was going to be like.

The third reason Apollo was eager to make the journey manifested itself at breakfast before they left. King William announced that he had come to an agreement with Hilda Harbell as to the wording of his second wish. After hearing of Adam's struggles with communicating with his capital the previous summer and with the prince's upcoming travels through sparsely populated areas he felt that it would be vital for the prince or his companions to be able to communicate with the capitols. The king handed Viola a set of four hand mirrors.

"I wish that these mirrors be enchanted so that the viewer may view family and friends as if they were looking through a window and that if the other is holding their own mirror they may chat freely as if the window had been opened."

Apollo looked at Viola and realized that she was dressed in one of her kilts. He gave her a thumb's up as she began her spell. Viola fanned the four mirrors in her hand and did a mock primping in the four reflections before pulling out her wand.

"Mirror, mirrors, in my hand

Show me someone at my command

If they should hold a companion mirror,



Then our shared words, we each can hear.

As today so shall it be for tomorrow,

And if they break, let there be seven years sorrow."

A light sparkled from Viola's wand as she waved it over the mirrors. The light bounced from one mirror to the next. The speed picked up and soon it looked like the light went through one mirror before lacing through the next. Faster and faster it went until a flash was seen. Viola let out a shriek as the mirrors turned to molten glass. She dropped the handles before the glass could ooze to her hand.

Everyone stood there stock; Viola most of all. "I did exactly what you told me," she cried, looking at Hilda for answers. "Honest. No embellishments."

"I know child. I'm as much at a loss as you are. I've never seen that happen." Hilda grabbed her own wand and started to send a flare.

"No need to waste magic on calling me," said Holly, Queen of the faeries, stepping out from between two pillars. "I felt that all the way back home. What happened?"

They filled Holly in on the details of the morning. Her brow furrowed as she concentrated on the exact wording of both the wish

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and the spell. She reached in the pocket of apron and pulled out a small book; that quickly turned into a very large book that required her to put it down on a table. She started ruffling through the pages and stopped after only looking at a dozen or so pages.

"Hilda, I'm ashamed of you. You know that you can't grant a wish that is still active in the book." Holly looked at William, "Your Majesty, in the world of wishes, people can not duplicate a wish that has already been granted until the first wish has expired. Queen Angelica made that same exact wish after all three of her sons married and moved to castles of their own. Those mirrors have never been destroyed and thus the wish has never expired. If your wish had been worded to say tunnel or doorway instead of window, Viola's spell would have worked."

"That can not be, Your Majesty," stammered Hilda. "I checked my copy of the book myself and I made Viola check her own copy. There is not one mention of a mirror/window wish." Hilda called to her book, which came floating into the throne room. Viola reached into her bag and pulled out her own copy. They looked at all three books.

Apollo looked over their shoulders and noticed that the oldest wish listed in Hilda's book was several lines down from the mirror wish in Holly's book.

"You are right," exclaimed Holly. When they looked at Viola's copy, her first recorded wish was much further in the other two books. "It appears that our wish books only start recording at our birth. They do not include wishes from before our time. That certainly puts a new wrinkle into this. I wonder who EEK will blame for this gap."

"At a guess," offered Hilda, "I would say Johnny Jump-up. Count D'Grouch is going to say that he created this as a distraction from his trial."

"Then let us do damage control before Oscar has a chance to take control and make it happen," said Holly. Turning to Apollo, "Keep the faith. I believe in my grandson even if others only see the imp."

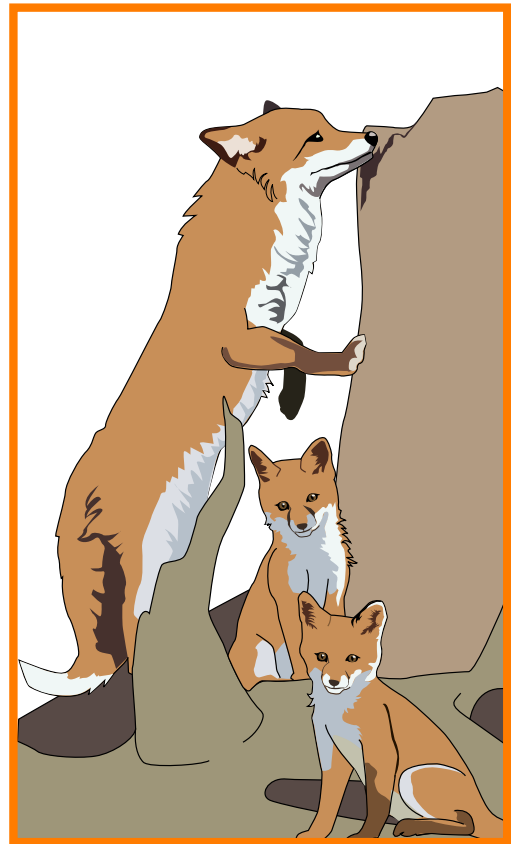
She held out her hand to Hilda and started to head toward the pillars.

"Excuse me, Aunt Holly, but how is it your book goes back to a wish made by Queen Angelica. I thought Amaranth said you weren't born until after Sundering and I thought the history books said she died before then."

"I hadn't thought about that," she said as she pulled out the book from her apron. She opened it and this time it did not contain the mirror wish. "That explains it! The first copy I looked at is the Queen's copy that gets passed from queen to queen. It goes back to when they started recording wishes. My personal book is like the others. I never noticed that they were different."

"Then could there be a way to link a new faerie book to the Queen's copy and at least fill the new book with the active wishes? At least that way they would know which wishes to avoid so this wouldn't happen again."

"A very interesting idea, young man. Very interesting indeed. If this is how my grandson's teachings have helped you think about magick, then you may have just found a way to help him with his trial."



"But what about my wish?" asked William.

"Your wish was granted five hundred years ago. It looks like you need to find out where it has been hiding all this time." With that, the two elder faeries disappeared into the darkness.

Apollo decided that since they had found ancient relics in Kenneth's and Oliver's castles that maybe the missing mirrors were in the third castle, home to Queen Angelica and later Myron Irving and now home to Queen Susan. The thought of hunting for hidden treasures was the thing of fantasy for most. But the excitement of discovering that there really was something to find quickly overpowered any anxiety he felt about going to a foreign country.

A shout from the guards brought the prince's attention back to the present. He looked up and didn't see anyone. He turned when he heard the shout again. Six of the guards were waiting at a turnoff from the road and Stane and Shanna were racing toward him. "Hey, we stopped but you kept going," said an agitated Stane. Shanna had few kind words about her future king who could get so lost in his thoughts that he doesn't notice when his guards disappeared.

"Oh, I noticed," he replied to her barb. "It was suddenly quiet which is probably why I was finally able to concentrate enough to actually do some thinking."

"And what great thoughts came to you, oh Wise One? I await any grain of wisdom you may have to impart," Shanna said as she gave a half hearted bow towards him.

Apollo pulled himself into the Royal Oratory pose that he had seen his grandfather use when making speeches. "My thoughts have led me to the conclusion that Royal Guards are lacking in the skills of paying attention to when their Royal Charges are not paying attention. Attention needs to be paid to future lessons in that area."

"Well," said Shanna to Stane, "spoken like a true king."

"You didn't understand a word either, huh?" Stane replied.

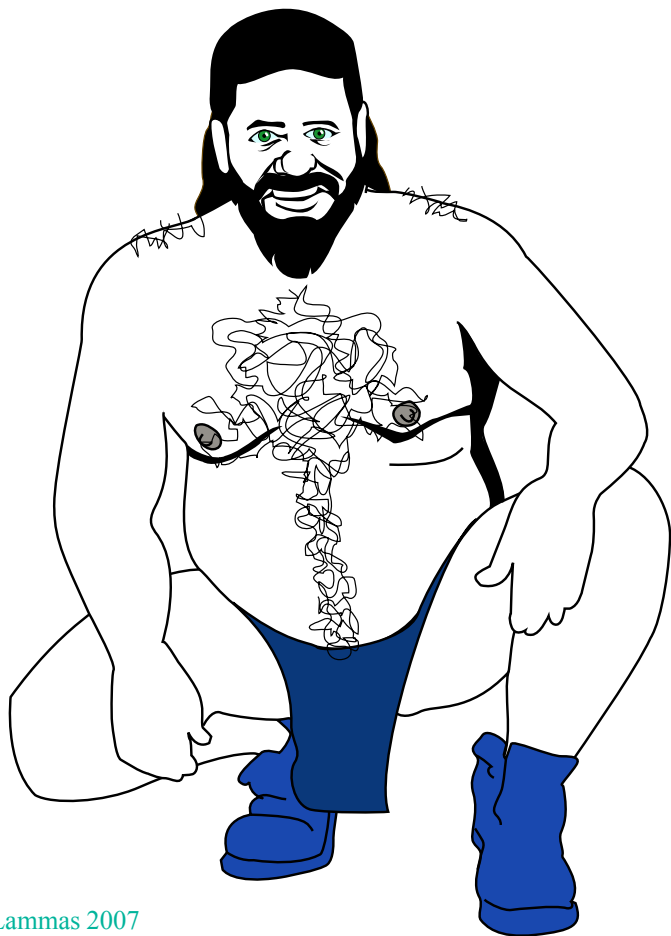
They led him back to the turnout and just off the road was an old farm house. Its paint was peeling and the rail on the front porch needed mending. Danna, Shanna's lover, or was it Janna, her twin, rang the big bell by the porch stairs. In a moment, a bear-like man came around the corner. Apollo found himself staring because this man was covered in a thick pelt of black hair and was only wearing a small piece of deep blue fabric folded over a cord tied about his waist. He walked up to Danna and gave her a big hug. Apollo saw that nothing was covering his backside.

"Geoff, didn't I tell you to expect company? I thought I told you there would be a child present and that you should cover up," Danna said.

"I'm wearing my loin cloth, aren't I? Besides, I get sweaty chopping wood and in this temperature my clothes would freeze before I would and I would catch a cold." As he spoke, Apollo noticed that he indeed looked as sweaty as the guards during a work out. Geoff reached down and grabbed his loin cloth from the cord and used it to wipe his brow. He was left standing totally naked revealing his blue cock and balls. When he finished, he tossed the cloth over his shoulder.

"What you staring at, boy?" he grumbled. "Never seen a man's cock before?"

"No, sir, Just never seen it openly displayed in front of ladies before," he replied. He wanted to say he had never seen a blue cock before but he didn't want to appear to be rude since he didn't know if blue cocks were as common in this land as the blue noses he heard about.



"I ain't seen no ladies in these parts for years. These gals here have seen more cocks while serving in the guard than I have..."

Channa put her arm around Danna's waist, "Yup, seen more and hated them all."

"And as cocks go," Danna added, "I'm not sure if I've seen yours yet. Where are you hiding it these days?"

"Vicious girls, but I love you anyway."

After a laugh and a quick round of introductions, Geoff led them inside for a quick lunch. Even though Susan's guards had told him they were returning, it was two weeks later than anticipated. They were lucky that he was still there since he planned to leave after lunch to go to the Blue Moon and Balls Festival at Indigo Ridge.

"That starts tonight?" gasped Janna. "I thought we had planned to be out of the area by then."

"We had," replied Channa. "But we didn't plan on the delay."

"Sounds fun," said Apollo. "What is it?"

Before one of the girls could say something, Geoff said, "They don't know. It's a men only event. The ladies of town will be going to the Alice Blue Moon Festival. They don't know what happens at our event and we don't know about theirs."

"So if we go outside, will you tell me?"

"If you really want. But I remember my first festival and think I had more fun because I didn't know what to expect." He excused himself and came back dressed.

"You didn't think I would go riding dressed in my birthday suit did you? That might be fun for a short ride but not the four hours to Indigo Ridge." He tossed something to the prince. "You kept staring at my loin cloth so I thought you should try one for yourself. It is great to run around naked knowing you have one of these handy to quickly become 'polite' as my mother used to say."

The road was only wide enough for two people to ride side by side. Apollo paired off with Geoff. They talked about being naked. Apollo loved being naked at the Valley of the Kings but was intrigued by someone who lived naked most of the time. "What do the others think of you being naked?"

"What others? I've lived out there alone for longer than you have been alive," Geoff said. "I grew up out on that farm. When I was eighteen I left to move to the city to be with other people. Ultimately, I missed my wide open spaces. My folks took to a cold and I came home to help. They moved on to a new life and I stayed. One day my britches got torn on a fence and my cock was hanging out of the rip. I looked around and no one was looking and took them off. As I felt the sun on my body, I laughed at myself."

"Laughed? Why?" asked the prince.

"I was looking around to see if someone was watching when I knew full well that the nearest person was hours away," he said. "The sun felt so great that I vowed that I wasn't going to wear more clothes than I absolutely had to."

"Aren't you afraid of how people will react when they stop at your property?"

"Oh, I've posted signs on the road warning them if they don't like seeing a nude man, then they shouldn't stop. I figure that they are coming to my house and have to accept me as I am. Truth be

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Quest/Crystal Phoenix continued

told, there is so little traffic on the road since hardly anyone travels between the kingdoms that it isn't a problem. And there are so few places where they can stop. The few people who do stop have long ago accepted the fact that I like to be nude."

"Well, I'm going to be traveling the road with some frequency. If I plan ahead, do you think I could spend some naked time in your company?"

"You would do that?" Nodding to the others, "What would your guardians say about that?"

"Toby and Lance have all been to my father's Birthday Suit Party enough times that it shouldn't matter. I'm not sure of the others but they love sauna time so I still don't think it would matter."

Apollo could see the town of Indigo Ridge on the horizon, so he finally asked the question that had been nagging at him all afternoon, "I don't mean to be rude, but why is your penis blue? Are there others with blue cocks?"

"Was wondering when you were going to break down and ask," he replied. "I can't speak for others but for me, it's blue because I'm a lazy cuss. In the middle of the night I have to get up to pee. In the middle of winter, when there is a couple of feet of snow on the ground, the last thing I want to do is put on clothes and walk all the way to the outhouse. So I just pee off the side of the porch. Well,

this winter was so cold that my cock turned blue. But its getting warmer now with the approach of spring and it's finally thawing out."

"Just like the people with blue noses that Shanna told me about?"

"She told you that?"

"I didn't think it was a secret," said Shanna. "He is the prince and ought to know about the tales of his people."

"That's one of the tales all right," chuckled Geoff. "I'm surprised you knew it."

"Someone told us when we passed through town on our way to Requad. Up until then, I thought blue men were just the vivid imagination of book writers. Then we met Billy Blue and found out the truth."

Further conversation would have to wait as they dismounted at the city gate. A large sign on the gate stated "Nudity only permitted after sundown, except during festivals."

"That's the other reason I put on clothes," said Geoff.

The gate guard told them that the city gates would be locked for the duration of the festivals and no one would be allowed to enter or exit during that time. Shanna groaned when she heard that. "Three more days of delay. Queen Susan is going to have kinipions."

"She can kinip all she wants," said the guard. "The pass is closed due to an avalanche. The road crews expect to have it reopened by



the end of the festival. Either way, you aren't going anywhere, so you might as well enjoy the festivals."

The guard gave Shanna directions to the central guard post where they could send a messenger bird to the queen to alert her of the delay. After sending the note, Shanna and her guards were to lodge at the Pink Sisters Inn on the far side of town. Geoff led the male contingent of their group down the main street towards Blue Brothers Bed and Breakfast. Walking down the street, Apollo got his first sight of real blue people. There were some people with ragged shorts with the blue legs exposed. Blue arms extended out of tunics. He even saw some of the fabled blue noses. His eyes widened with every sighting.

Billy Blue greeted them at the front door of his establishment. He was a slim man with blue hair. Everything that was not covered with clothes revealed blue skin, and since he was only wearing a vest and loin cloth, that meant a lot of skin. He extended a blue hand to the prince for a handshake. "Go ahead, it's dry and won't get on you. Not that will matter this evening."

"What do you mean? It's going to get so cold tonight that I'm going to turn blue?"

"Is that what they have been telling you?" he asked.

"Guilty as charged," said Geoff. "It sounds so much more interesting than 'oh we get sloppy when working with the indigo dye.'"

"You mean when someone dies you get blue when you prepare them for their journey to Hades?"

Billy laughed. "I haven't heard that one before. No, I mean dye as in coloring fabric. That is what we do for a living in this town."

Any further explanation had to wait until Billy got everyone settled in rooms. Not knowing the exact date of their return, Shanna had paid a large retainer to the Blue brothers to hold several rooms for a period of a month. Shanna had rented more rooms than they needed, so Toby released the surplus so that Billy could offer them to festival travelers. He was about to reduce the room count one more when Apollo convinced him via a "You can't enter my room without my permission spell" that he had learned since their last trip that Toby didn't have to sleep on the floor to protect him. Upon learning the spell, the prince realized that parts of it were in the vows that he would one day take as King. After casting the spell, Lance walked in and out of the room and all were convinced it didn't work. Buster Blue came up to tell them supper was ready and the door wouldn't budge until the prince acknowledged him. They decided that Lance was his guard and a known person and thus had tacit permission to be there. Buster on the other hand had not been introduced to him and thus the spell kicked into play. Convinced of the prince's safety, everyone retired to their room for a quick wash in their basins.

Apollo arrived at supper in his new loin cloth. He felt very naughty wearing so little, but since his host and others were wearing them he felt he should try it out. As he stepped into the common room, his clear white skin shone in the relative darkness and stood out among the bluish undertones of most of the other guests. With everyone staring at him, he felt more aware of his skin tone than the fact that his penis was nearly exposed to anyone who wanted to look at it.

After dinner, Billy took them on a quick tour of the town's main dyeing facility. They were busy finishing up so that everyone would be free for the festival. He showed them where the woad was pulverized and then dried for storage. The foreman of the team thanked Geoff for his shipment.

"Picked in the dark of the new moon just like you asked," Geoff said.

"And did you wear the proper protections?" asked the foreman.

"I wore gloves just like you requested. No human hands touched the leaves during the process."

"Then the touch of the god will be first. Perfect!"

They proceeded to a large bathroom. Billy had supplied them with plenty of liquid during dinner and Apollo was glad of the opportunity to relieve himself. Before he could, he learned that the urine was saved for the dyeing process. Billy said that they long ago learned other ways to get the proper reaction to make the dye for the mass quantities needed in the fabric business, but for the large festivals they returned to the old process to make the special blues that couldn't be made other ways. The dyemasters over the years discovered that the urine from men and women produced different blues, as did youth versus older person, or the urine from drinking different fluids. He said each blue is named for the type of urine being used.

"So Baby Blue is from urine of babies?" asked the prince.

"Sort of," replied Billy. "We use the bath water. We figure there is enough urine in there. Marine Blue is from..."

"From sailors?" offered the prince.

"Close. They yield Ultramarine Blue. Basic Marine Blue is saltwater fisherfolk. Fresh water fisherfolk are needed for Lake Blue."

An opening came up at the trough and Lance started to head forward. Billy stopped him.

"Not so fast my friend," he said handing the four guards a special cup to pee into. Each cup was labeled with the solar emblem used on the Adbalm uniforms "Fill these first and then you can relieve yourself in the trough. Each time you come in here, be sure to get a cup from the attendant."

"What's so special about our pee?" asked Stane.

"Adbalm Guard Blue, of course. We haven't had a fresh supply of that for some time. It gets expensive to get someone to collect the proper stuff and ship it to us."

"If we had known I could have sent you kegs of piss," said Patrick, "I know some folks who would be glad to pee for you. Getting money for it would be icing on the cake."

When it came time for Apollo to go to the trough, he was handed a cup with gold markings. Before he could ask, Billy offered, "Royal Blue of course. We don't get too many true Royals. We have plenty of queens to pee for us, but you have the heritage to make this a special batch of its own. I wouldn't doubt that the town elders will reserve this for making fabric for your coronation outfits."

Apollo found the freedom of the loincloth made the act of holding the cloth out of the way and holding the cup difficult so he followed the example of several others and pulled the cloth from

-continued on page 10

Quest/Crystal Phoenix continued

the cord and tossed it over his shoulder. He filled his cup and was surprised that he still had enough inside to add his own contribution to the jug being filled at the end of the trough. When he finished, he started to tuck the cloth back under the cord when a fully naked Geoff stopped him.

"It's after sundown. You don't have to if you don't want to," Geoff said. He was rewarded with a "Yippee" as the prince tossed the fabric back over his shoulder. Looking at the others Geoff said, "What about you mates? Going to join us or wait until the festival?" Lance and Patrick took him up on the invitation and untied their sarongs. Stane and Toby were still in their riding clothes and decided to wait until they were more suitably attired.

Next, Billy led them to the big vats where the actually dyeing took place. Apollo quickly learned why people had blue all over themselves. The churning action of moving the bulky fabric around often splashed dye on the workers. "That's why we wear minimal clothes around here. It just gets ruined by working here, so why bother?"

Apollo agreed that it made sense. "So what are the special blues that you will make during the festival?" he asked.

"When it's a men's only event, it is a given that we will make a

vat of Navy Blue."

"Why would that be a men only thing? I thought female guards were allowed to sail on the royal ships."

"True, so this will be really be Old Navy Blue," said Billy. "Once you see the special ingredient we add to the vat you will understand. This is a Blue Moon Festival, so Dion has promised to join us and help create Heavenly Blue."

"What makes this a blue moon?" asked Stane. "I can see it starting to rise and it looks the same as always."

"Some folks like to say it is the second full moon after a Sabbath that falls on the third Sunday of the week."

Apollo struggled a moment trying to make that day fit when he realized that a week never had more than one Sunday in it. "So it would never happen?"

"That's what they want you to believe," said Billy, "But around here, we celebrate the Blue Moon when a full moon falls on Dion's birthing day."

"It's his birthing day?"

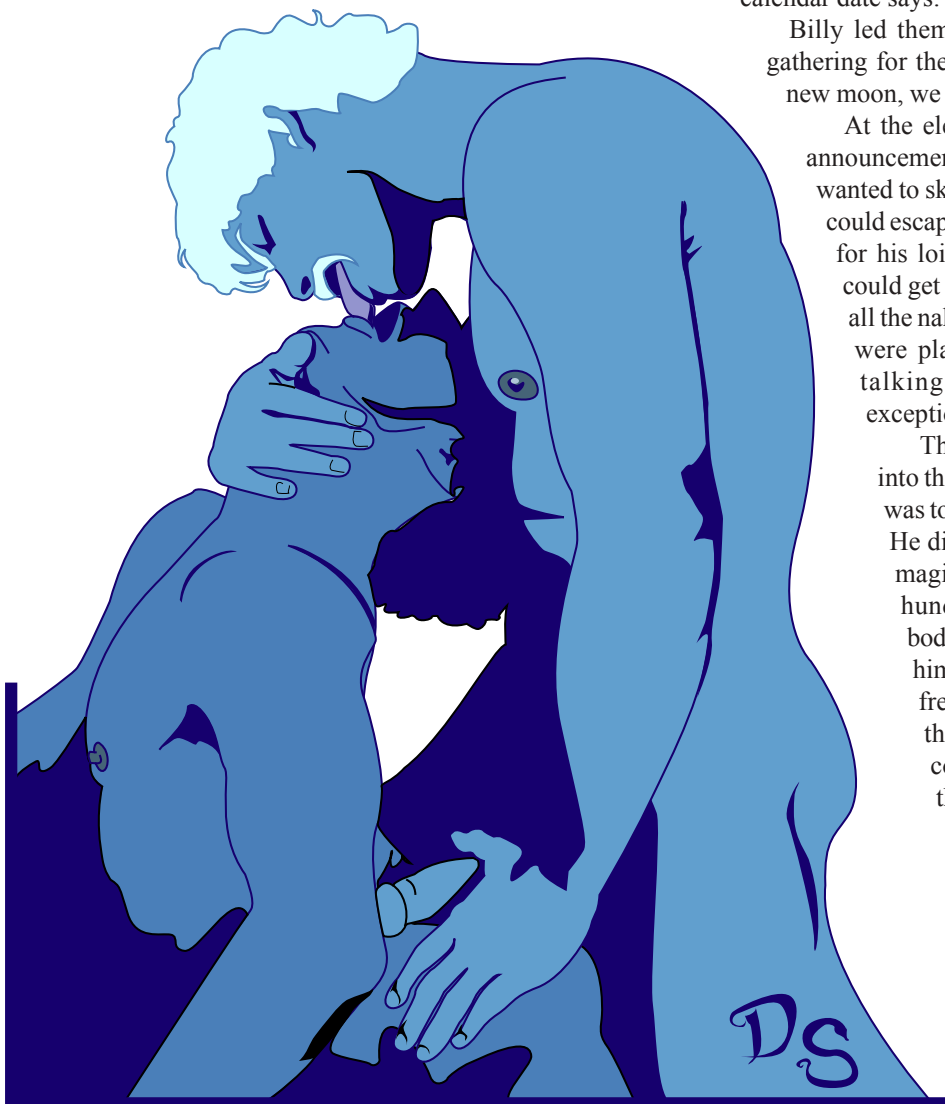
"We don't know for sure and he doesn't remember, so we agreed that he was born on the second full moon after the Winter Solstice, so we pick that day for a Blue Moon Festival regardless of what the calendar date says."

Billy led them back to his place so they could rest before gathering for the midnight ritual. "If we hold a festival on the new moon, we would be making Midnight Blue," he said.

At the eleventh hour, the town bells began to peal the announcement of the start of the festival. Even if anyone wanted to skip the festival to sleep, Apollo didn't think they could escape the cacophonous carillons. He started to reach for his loin cloth and realized that he didn't need it. "I could get to like this," he thought to himself. He watched all the naked guests gathered in the common room. Some were playing billiards; some darts. Others were just talking. Everything seemed so natural with the exception of the lack of clothes.

The moon was high overhead when Billy led them into the town square. The moon looked extra large. He was told that was an effect of the ice crystals in the air. He didn't really care about the explanation. It was a magical moon and he was standing in a space with hundreds of naked men and boys. The mass of bodies in the space caused people to press up against him. As more people came in and the contact more frequent, he felt a charge rippling in the air. With the excitement growing around him, he felt his cock grow hard. He saw people playing with themselves and joined in.

Geoff shouted at him to follow him toward the large central vat. As they got closer, he saw that the men were reaching into the dye and then jerking themselves with the wet hand. He watched several shoot their load into the vat. He wanted to shoot right and there but Geoff stopped him. "Don't waste it down here. Wait your turn up there. We need every drop to



make a good Old Navy Blue.” Then it hit him what the special ingredient was – semen!

Geoff held him back until the very last. Like earlier, Apollo’s white skin shone with a luminescence against all of the blue skins around him. As he let out his load, the water in the vat began to bubble. In the middle, Dion stood up from where he had been laying. His normal white hair and skin were a deep blue. As he rose up out of the water, a cheer was emitted from the crowd as they realized that the moon was an equally deep shade of blue.

He held out his hand to Apollo. “Come join me, little one.” He stepped into the water and walked to the god’s side.

“Let it be known to all that Apollo Phoenix is protected by Lord Apollo himself. On this night of the Blue Moon, the gods have agreed that the future king of the reunited kingdoms is special and have agreed to allow me to add my own protections to one already protected. This child is child to both Sun and Moon. One shall watch over him at all times.”

A new gasp rose from the crowd. Toby later told him that as Dion spoke the blue dye rose in Apollo’s body like oil in a wick. As soon as the color filled his body, blue flames erupted in the water surrounding both god and prince. Dion led the prince through the flames and both were instantly drained of the blue color, with the exception of the blue tint on their cocks and balls.

The town priests and officials led the processional to a nearly empty vat. There was a small platform with a couple of steps in the middle. As Dion and Apollo stepped up on the platform, the god whispered, “I will need your help. Just watch what I do with the first couple of fellows that come to me and pretend you have known how to do this all your life. When you have figured it out, nod and I will have you start helping. Last time, this went on until the second day. I would like to finish this tonight so I can spend time with you.”

To the crowd, he shouted, “Look at you! Look at all the wasted dye you have covering your bodies. Step forward and be cleansed!”

The lead priest stepped up and Dion touched his head and suddenly the dye flowed out of his body. The only blue left was the cock and balls. As the man turned to step down he noticed a small phoenix shaped mark bordered by two crescent moons on his buttocks. As Dion worked with the next man, Apollo turned an eye towards the god’s energy. His grounding energy came from the moon, not the earth as he had been taught. He “saw” Dion take some of that energy and push it down through the man, forcing the dye to flow out. By the third man he could see how Dion channeled that energy away from the genitals so that they would stay blue. It took him a couple more men to figure out how Dion was leaving the same mark on everyone. It was like he was copying something. Then he noticed that Dion was looking at him as he worked with the person in front of him. Apollo glanced at where Lord Apollo left his mark. It was now surrounded by twin crescents in deep blue. This was the mark that Dion was leaving on the people. He overlaid his own energy as Dion started working with the next man. At the energy touch, Dion let the prince take control and followed his progress. As the man left the platform, Apollo nodded.

“Good people of the festival,” shouted the god before the next man came forward, “this could take days at this pace. Shall we put

my faith in my godson to the test and see what your future king can do?”

A great shout rose from the gathered men. At first people were hesitant to go to the prince. They would stand in line waiting for the god to be free. As a town leader, Billy managed to be in the first group to line up. As he got to the top, he made it known, very loudly, that he wanted Apollo, not Dion. “Heck, I have been blessed by Dion every year since I was old enough to attend. How often do I get the chance to be done by Prince Charming?”

“About once in a true blue moon,” someone shouted.

“Exactly,” he replied

After that, most people went to whichever person was open. He was pleased to see that all of guards and Geoff were among those that waited for his touch. As a special treat to his guards, he left the SunGuard mark that matched Rondar’s Godmark on their arms.

Out of the corner of his eye, he saw the moon, barely over the rooftops. The blue was nearly drained. There was only a small sliver of blue showing. He turned his attention back to his surroundings and noticed that the vat was nearly full and the line of people waiting to be cleansed was finished. The rooster crowed the arrival of the sun just as the last people stepped off the platform, leaving the god and prince alone on the platform. Dion started peeing into the deep blue waters of the vat. The site of the god peeing triggered his own need to relieve himself. As the first rays of the sun illuminated the golden stream flowing from the two cocks, the piss lit up like a lightning flash. As it touched the water, the liquid burst into flames.

When the flames died down, the lead priest pulled out some white fabric and dipped it in the water. He pulled it out and laid it on a heated rock. The sizzling of the quickly released steam could be heard across the square. Once it was dried, the priest lifted it off the rock and held it up for inspection. He got an astonished look on his face, “I’ve never seen anything like it.”

The dyemaster and elders gathered around him, passing the fabric between them. They huddled for a moment, nodded in agreement before the priest spoke again.

“Gentlemen, we attempted to make Heavenly Blue and failed.” A gasp arose from the crowd. The dyemasters of Indigo Ridge always knew the proper formula. “No fear for this truly is a blue moon moment. After in centuries of attempts, one color has eluded us until now.”

He held up the cloth for all to see. “Behold! We have recreated the legendary Charming Blue!”

A cheer filled the square and the bells burst into life announcing the news. The prince was quickly hoisted over people’s heads and passed around like a sack. It was several hours before he could escape to the quiet solitude of the bed and breakfast. He reinforced his protection spell and turned towards his bed and promptly ran into Dion, who had been standing right behind him.

“A word to the wise, young one. Always check your room for visitors before raising your protections. They do you little good when your enemy is already in the room.”

Dion stretched out on the bed and held Apollo in his arms. The

—continued on page 12

prince was comforted in the familiar position, even if it wasn't Johnny who was holding him. The god explained that the other god's were outraged that Belladonna dared to attack him. Since Lord Apollo and Dion were lovers, they agreed that extending the Godmark was just an extension of the love the two god's shared and thus didn't really violate the single patron god rules. Thus they found a way that both gods could watch over him freely.

"I'm so proud of you tonight," Dion said. "You picked up faster than I expected." Dion kissed the prince on his forehead and soon Apollo was fast asleep in the god's arms.

By the time he woke up in the afternoon, the festival had changed. With the rediscovery of Charming Blue, the two festivals we combined into one giant celebration. In fairness, Dion and the prince had to drain the dye from the ladies. The color on most of the women had been a light lavender blue. He wondered what secret ingredient they added to turn the indigo that shade. After everyone had been cleansed, Dion and Apollo laid down in the vat. When they stood, they had absorbed all of the blue tones from the liquid yielding an equally legendary Charming Pink dye.

Apollo was glad when the celebrations ended. The novelty of being naked in public had quickly disappeared under the press of too many people in such tight quarters. His relief was shared by his guards when the announcement was made that the road crews had returned and the pass had been reopened. The morning they departed he gave Geoff a hug and promised to stop by his house each time he traveled the main road between the kingdoms. In return, Geoff promised to start fixing up his home to make it look like he wanted people to stop for a visit.

He gave Billy a hug. "I wonder what my friends will think when they learn about how their favorite blues get made."

"It's more fun not telling," said Billy. "There's something perversely fun in knowing that someone is standing there in piss and them not having a clue."

"Another good reason to be naked," said Geoff. "You never know what is in the clothes."

Shanna and the others joined them and soon they were headed out the west gate.

Two days into the mountainous journey, the snow began to fall. It soon began to pile up around them and it was nearly impossible to see the others in the group. Danna got out some rope and tied a loop

around everyone to keep them together. She remembered a small abandoned cabin being nearby but when they got there, it had collapsed under the weight of the snow.

They stood there pondering where they would find shelter from the storm. A bright light descended from a hidden point in the sky and circled the group.

"It's a phoenix," cried Apollo as his eyes focused on the moving light.

The phoenix did one more circle around the group and then flew into the forest. The snow melted under its flight, leaving a dry path for the group to use.

"And it wants us to follow it," said several of the guards.

They followed the path to a cave in the canyon wall that lined this side of the valley. Once they got in from the storm, Stane lit one of his torches. The light illuminated the thousands of crystals in the cavern walls and ceilings. A sudden gust of wind blew out the torch. As their eyes adjusted to the sudden darkness, a face illuminated by red and purple flames appeared before them.

"You don't need to waste your time with that. You won't be needing a torch where you are going."



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The Woad Ode

By Anonymous (1921)

What's the use of wearing braces?
Vests and pants and boots with laces?
Spats and hats you buy in places
Down the Brompton Road?

What's the use of shirts of cotton?
Studs that always get forgotten?
These affairs are simply rotten,
Better far is woad.

Woad's the stuff to show men.
Woad to scare your foemen.
Boil it to a brilliant hue
And rub it on your back and your abdomen.

Ancient Briton ne'er did hit on
Anything as good as woad to fit on
Neck or knees or where you sit on.
Tailors you be blowned!!

Romans came across the channel
All dressed up in tin and flannel
Half a pint of woad per man'll
Dress us more than these.

Saxons you can waste your stitches
Building beds for bugs in britches
We have woad to clothe us which is
Not a nest for fleas

Romans keep your armours.
Saxons your pyjamas.
Hairy coats were made for goats,
Gorillas, yaks, retriever dogs and llamas.

Tramp up Snowdon with your woad on,
Never mind if you get rained or blowned on
Never want a button sewed on.

Blue Boys

By Orpheus

The Woad Ode (above) is based on the belief that the Picts used woad to dye their bodies blue before going to battle. Most scholars seem to agree that as body paint (either as tattoo ink or applied paint) woad is probably not the source of the dye used. Whatever the source, I can certainly deal with the fantasy of soldiers going to battle wearing only blue paint. I'll be glad to help them wash their uniforms when they get home.

Woad (*Isatis tinctoria*) produces a less intense blue than the true indigo plant (*Indigofera tinctoria*). The chemical nature of both require an added substance to make the dye soluble in water. How the ancient dyemasters discovered that urine did the trick is anyone's guess. Oh, to be a dyemaster in ancient time and imagine the fun of all those hunks standing in line to give you samples of urine to see if they meet quality standards.



Ode to Jack

By PandaBear

The world springs upward
tickling and blessing the land we
call biopark, the zoo; the entire
world,
it's there, right under
and surrounds
us.

I am no longer tired.

The baby, his eyes dancing
through the hours,
life surrounding and blessing
him, throws
his binky in the
African waters,
has his diaper changed
in Australia,
laughs at giraffes,
is startled with open
eyes and a start
of the head
at the cackle of monkeys.

Trees are gently but
firmly
mapped
together,
and the crust of the Earth
is separated
by nothing.

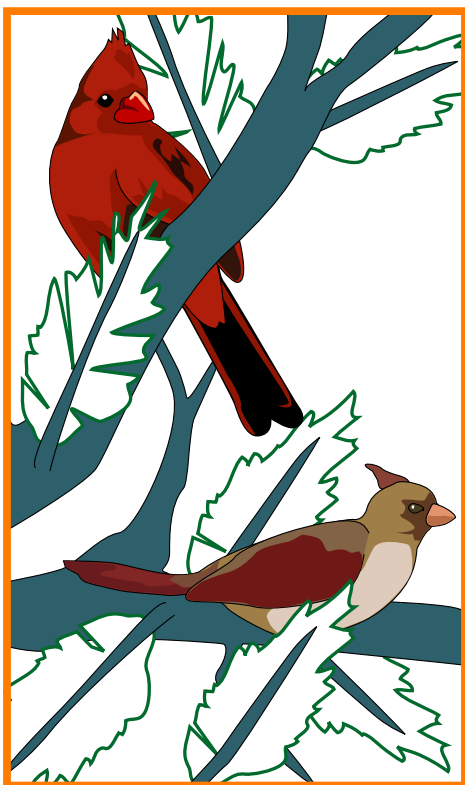


The 4-F Tarot: Tarot Meter

by Phoenix

Someone asked how far we had progressed in the creation of the deck. I thought it would be fun to include some form of pictorial representation of what has been done. Don't get too caught up in trying to make one row equal a "Feather" or a "Water". The color banding is true to energy level, but after that, the placement of the individual cards is more artistic than representational. If we went the more literal route, the orange bands would be two solid rows or columns and pinks, blues and purples would be floating in the air. In two issues, the orange bands will be complete. Six issues from now, the yellow and green bands (two columns each) will be complete. If all goes according to plan (and no more skipped issues) we should complete the first pass of art for the cards by Yule 2009. To push ourselves, the next several issues will have six cards instead of the five we have been presenting.

Let's look at this issue's cards (stop staring at the stud on the opposite page, we will get to him soon enough. I will admit that DragonSwan has outdone himself with this one - WOOF!). This time we have the Fire + Play representatives of Feathers, Flowers, Fins and Furs (just a reminder to new readers what the 4Fs are). The working representatives were the snow creatures that lived in a world with minimal fire. This issue's set are those that are fire. The cardinal with its bright red color warms the winter snowscapes. Peppers in their infinite variety that bring fire to cooking. A fire of the ocean is the jellyfish. Not all are electric but their sting is painful and they are as fascinating to watch as flames in a fireplace. A red fox is our firey fur. Like all others that have been presented, each of these comes with a wealth of meanings that I don't want to catalog in these pages. Your personal association with the image is



what is important when you use the deck in a reading. That association can be as simple as Fox = Sly to philosophical such as "you never know how hot a pepper is until you bite into it" or something more interpretive as I wrote about the jellyfish.

On page 5, you will find one of the "major" cards for the deck. I haven't spent much time talking about these yet. These live outside of the "grid" and "wheel" that I've talked about in past issues. There are a variety of these cards. The mediation card is one of the "situational" cards. It depicts a moment in time and it is the character's action in that moment that is the focus of the energy. In an earlier issue (Litha, 2006), we had the naked guy stepping out of his front door to get the newspaper. He was "caught in the act" and is basically our version of the traditional "Fool." In linking moments of time together and giving them possibilities, one of his choices after being caught is to retreat into himself. Meditation can be a beautiful thing. Sometimes we need that quiet time to focus on something. Maybe we need the quiet time to unfocus on something and let the clutter disappear. For others, this kind of inward journey could be a metaphor for them shutting out everything, turning their back on the world and their inner journey is all that exists.

Putting this in a reading opens a wealth of possibilities. Is this you or is this person in a position that is supposed to help you? Will you be about to count on their support when they are needed? Or is the mediation all that matters to them? Are you retreating from something in the spread? Are you needing to get some quiet time so you can gather the strength you need to wrestle with the crocodiles and sharks in the deck?

OK, now you can stare again - the card on the opposite page might look familiar. He was featured last year (Mabon 2006) as the last of the card designs that DragonSwan worked on as part of the original concept of doing a standard tarot deck. He was to be the King of Cups. As the energy settled in the new deck he left for a while. Now he has returned as the God of Flowers who rules over Lammas. He is at the height of his power. He has worked hard to bring in the first harvest and is ready to party. He is hot (in about every way you can imagine) and needs some cooling down. Early on I said that nudity and erections would have meaning and this god is ready for action. Who is in control? Will you let his lust rule the day or will you be able to harness that energy for something. Think of him in comparison to the calm quiet solitude of the Imbolc card; spending Beltane in the park; or the playfulness of dancing semi-nude in the Litha card. The Yule kings were ready to warm you up at their fire if that was what you wanted. This god is certainly up to his task of inspiring the hot passion of Lammas and probably isn't going to give you the chance to back away once he knows you are there. Trade any of them for the same spot in a spread and you come up with very different readings.

Are you ready to get down and party with him? When you are seeking something and encounter him on your journey, will he distract you from your journey or will he put down the cup and say "Let's go"?



The Cubby Diaries: The Remodel - Part 4

By Cubby

Jim and Aeríc picked us up at the airport when we got home. Instead of taking us directly to the house, we went to Jack and Gil's to freshen up. I have to admit it was nice to have a few quiet minutes to gather my nerves before seeing what had been done to my house while we were gone. Gregg joined us for lunch so that he could be in the car with us when we pulled up to the house. He was in charge of getting the "Cubby Eye View" of the big reveal.

I was impressed with how much he had grown in the months we had known him. Gone was the shy kid hiding in his clothes. As soon as he got inside Jack's house off came the clothes. I commented on the change and asked if he was going to miss being free about nudity when he goes home. He said that if he went home to his old friends that might be true, but his nudity led him to new friends so there would be nothing to miss. His phone rang cutting off any further questions. He announced that they had finished filming the "Oh my god we are out of time and the relief that the flights were delayed so we have a couple more hours to finish" segment so we were free to head home. Jim said that they really were finished the day before but they were doing the final clean up to get everything ready for the camera.

With a big lump growing in my stomach, we got dressed and loaded everyone into the Tahoe. I was surprised when Jim drove past the normal turn we take to get to the house. Instead, he took the longer route that winds through the neighborhood. I asked if he was deliberately prolonging the agony and he said that he just wanted to take the scenic route. As we passed Aeríc's parent's home I noticed a "sold" sign on their house and was about to comment on it when I saw why Jim took the scenic route. The front yard had been relandscaped. Gone were the cinder block retaining walls and rotting railroad ties. In their place were beautiful stone walls. The gardens were packed with flowers and the overall effect made the yard look like one of the city parks. Jim asked if I truly thought they were going to limit things to the inside. We got out of the car and Aeríc said that he got to help *Mr. Green Thumbs* himself, Douglas Furr. *Mr. Green Thumbs* is Aeríc's favorite show so I knew he had to be in seventh heaven. Jim told us that Doug was so impressed with Aeríc's care of yards that he offered him a position on the show. I said I was proud of him and asked when he was going to start. He said he turned them down because he didn't want to be on the road all the time. I told him that he was crazy. The station agreed. They had loved how Aeríc and a couple of the faeries played it up for the camera so they are now working out details for a local production called *Faeries in the Garden*, their version of the *Queer Eye* stuff. The show will have the faeries take over a run down garden and it will follow the process as they nurse it back to life. I gave Aeríc a big hug.

After inspecting the new gardens I was herded towards the front door where we were greeted by Cindy. Before we entered the house, Jim stopped me with a hand to the shoulder. "Oh, by the way," he said, "we lost the plans you approved and had to improvise." That was all the warning I got. The front door swung open and the first thing I noticed was the sound of the grandfather clock chiming. I hadn't heard that in years. Uncle Phil had tried to get it back in working order but never could. But there it was standing sentry in the front hall. I had to walk up to it and feel the

wood as if to make it more real in my mind. As I approached I heard the sound of water. They couldn't distract me with the lure of the new half bath or Jim's mini-office that framed the foyer. I had to find the source of the sound. As I got past the corner of the bathroom, I saw it. Carved out of a corner of the foyer, living room, dining room and kitchen was a new space, open to all four rooms. In the middle was a fountain. The lower part was a series of green marble steps which had the water cascading down all four sides. The top was shrouded in a ball of mist. In that mist, an outstretched arm held a gleaming sword. "Behold, 'The Gift from the Lake'" announced Cindy. Jim asked if I liked it. Wiping tears from my eyes, I said that he shouldn't have done it. He said he didn't and pointed at Peter who said, "Happy anniversary." I melted in his arms. I love that man. I love all of them, but Peter most of all. I sat down on the bench looking at this marvelous fountain. I could see where I was going to spend most of my time in the future.

Frank joined us, coming in from the living room. It was a struggle, but I got up to start the tour. I turned back to look at the fountain. Peter whispered in my ear "Yes it's real. No it's not going away and neither am I." How do you maintain composure on camera after that? I nearly lost it and turned toward the living room and caught the full effect of the new color scheme. The hunter green and camel combination gave the room a richness I never thought possible. The substitute BareButt Mountain picture was the focal point of the room. I plopped down on the new couch to absorb it all. Cindy and Frank rattled away, calling out some of the details in the



room. I don't think I really heard a word they said. I was lost in a fog at that moment. I couldn't believe that Grams's house could look like this. Peter knows me too well. I hadn't said anything but he came up behind me and said, "It's not Grams and Phil's house anymore. This is our house now. Welcome home." That was the final straw and I went into another full meltdown, and a family hug ensued. After a moment, Gregg said, "I hope you don't have too many of those today, I'm low on film." I promised that I would try to save it for one final time. We started to head out of the room and Frank signaled for the cameras to stop rolling. He went back into the room and headed to the picture. He pressed something on the back of the frame and the fake picture rolled up inside, revealing the Kevin and Buck version of the same shot. He said that he had discovered this when doing a show that needed something to mask off the flat screen TV when it wasn't in use and thought it would be the perfect solution to our dual picture situation. Seeing the picture of those two hot studs openly displayed in the beautiful room and the sound of the clock chiming a quarter hour and the fountain adding to the sounds, I said the only think that came to mind, "Now I know we're not in Grandma's anymore." Everyone laughed and I realized that I was finally ready to move on, both on the tour and with my life.

Josh greeted us in the dining room and showed off his handiwork on the new built-in sideboard. If I hadn't known better it would be easy to believe that it had always been there and that it was a real antique. Displayed front and center were Grams' and Phil's "birthday plates." The family had their everyday plates and the Sunday Finest Plates. But for their birthday, Grams had a special plate with each person's name that was only used on their special day. Above these were my Wizard of Oz collectible plates; below were four new special plates: "Cubby" - "Peter" - "Jim" - "Aeric."

Jack and Gil stood waiting to show off "Jack's kitchen" with its state of the art appliances. The color scheme was maintained with the use of green granite counters. The center island range was angled so that while standing there cooking I got full view of the fountain. I wondered how many meals I was going to burn while being mesmerized in its sound. As we left, I noticed that the breakfast counter had been set up for two. I looked closer and saw "Jack" and "Gil" staring up from the center of the plates.

Next we wandered up to the family room where we were greeted by the twins, Hugh and Drugh. Since the team decided to add the half bath to main floor instead of up there, they brought the pool table from the rec room up. They said that they had Josh make some covers which turn the pool table into something that can be used as a buffet table during a party or for my Christmas village during the holiday season. There were new window benches, which turned out to have drawers which contained my DVD collection. The second Barebutt mountain picture was on the end wall. I was assured that it had the same trick frame as the other.

Ann, along with Kevin and Buck, were waiting for us downstairs in the Senior Retreat. The boys were the work horses for that room. The room had been transformed from a hodgepodge of furniture that had been collected over the years into a tropical oasis. The camel tones from upstairs settled into the bamboo furniture and the greens settled into palm leaves. Ann had sheer fabric panels dividing various spaces in the room. She called attention to how they catch the slightest breeze and how the shadows of the print added texture to the walls. She said it with



each panel, so she really must love it. Kevin showed off the remodeled kitchenette. Appliances have changed so much over the years that they were able to get some good compact models that actually freed up some space so that they could add a bit more storage. The roll-top desk worked beautifully as a work station, but I couldn't help but notice that "Kevin" and "Buck" were adorning the plates on the café table.

With a growing entourage we headed back up to the main floor. I paused at the fountain. Yes, it was still there. Next, it was up to the living areas. Guarding the top of the stairs was Hamlet. They had elevated his status by giving him a real built in bed instead of just a pillow tossed in the corner. He looked up from his nap (fine guard dog, huh?), gave a quick woof and then proceeded to jump up to give Peter a kiss, which nearly caused him to tumble down the stairs. With that greeting out of the way, he curled back up on his bed, resuming his nap...excuse me, his guard duty.

The first room we came to had been the original nursery. It was the smallest room in the house and we had turned it into the mediation room. With the room shuffle, it became one of the rooms we weren't 100% sure how to use. I opened the door and was met with lots of light. They added a skylight and turned the room into a solarium. Green plants filled the room. A slim wall fountain was on one wall, its soothing tones filled the room. A large wicker chair sat in one corner, a stack of books was on the adjacent table waiting to be picked up.

Aeric showed off his room, which was next door. He had opted for a more technical, modern space. His room was black and chrome and all the gadgets you can imagine. It looked like a showroom for a electronic store. That floor's bathroom was just three-quarters which freed up a bit more space for the new laundry room. They kept the laundromat feel by having a pair of stacking washers and dryers so that two loads of wash

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The Cubby Diaries - continued

could be done at one time. They added a built in folding/ironing center on one wall.

Lady Macbeth greeted us in the master bedroom. Well, greeted as well as any cat who has been woken from her afternoon nap. "Oh, its you. Now go away." The room was so different from what it had been. Gone was the dainty white French provincial wanna-be pieces. In their place was good solid oak. It took me a moment to focus, but the carvings in the headboard came to life as I realized that it was a green man. I don't remember that feature in the showroom model we looked at. Frank said that they kept Josh busy. As the leaders headed toward the master bath, I stopped Josh to say that the carving was gorgeous and said that I would always remember him when I went to bed. He gave me a wink and said that it was amazing what the tools in my house inspired him to do. He said that it wasn't remembering he wanted when I was in my bed and reminded me that he still had one tool he needed to work with before he went home.

Jim's room on the upper floor surprised me in its simplicity. He had chosen an oriental based design. The silk tapestries that were hanging on the wall had been in his family for many years. They had been stored in a cedar chest ever since he could remember. He knew that someday they would hang on his walls and this seemed to be the perfect time to make it happen. Ann had been invaluable in giving tips on preserving the material and proper ways of storing the rest of Jim's heirloom fabrics. Gil showed off the mediation room. They deliberately kept the room sparse so that Gil would have room to set up his massage table. I shoed everyone out so I could get the full effect of the room. Truth is, I had been stuck on Josh's comment and wondered how long he would be around after taping today's show. I had a hard on and could only adjust so much when people were standing there.

Spencer, one of the winners of the garage sale challenge, showed off the new office. Jim and Aeris had each decided to put a workstation in their room. That really freed up a lot of space in the office for storage. He added a good scanner to the computer so that we could convert paper to electrons. Instead of bulky paper files, we had it all on computer disk. Ann ruled supreme in the craft room. They updated my sewing machine from a department store special

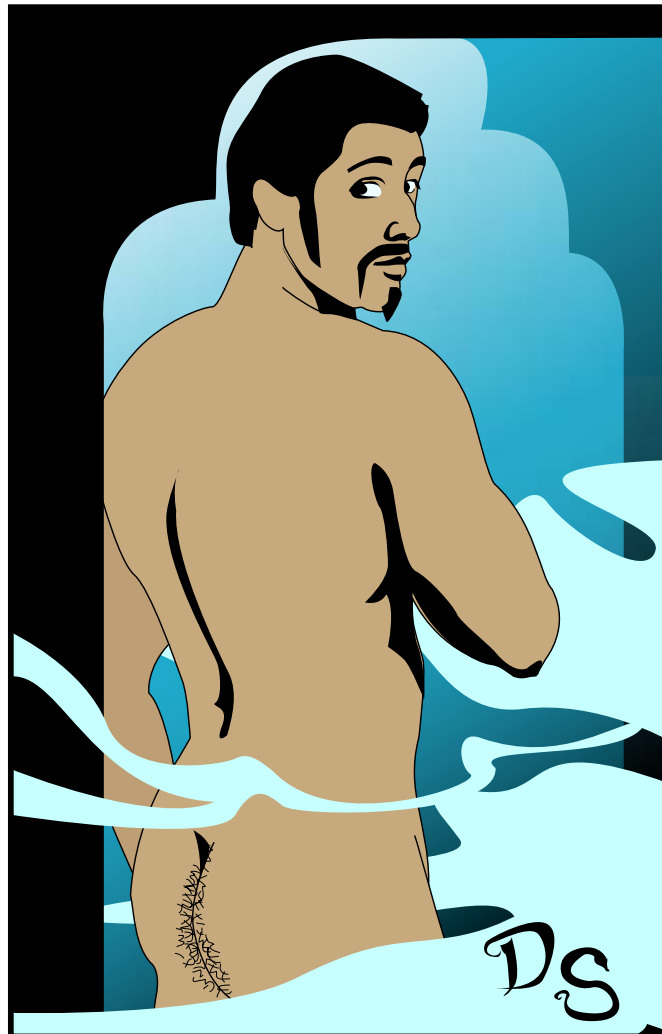
to one that has all of the bells and whistles. Once she saw the quilts I started but never finished because I hate the actual quilting process, she made room for a long arm quilting table. The thing is huge and fills one side of the room. I had seen them on television but I never visualized how it would fit in my room (and the answer is barely and did require taking over some of the space of the adjacent bathroom. Fortunately, we didn't need a bathroom that was

designed for three teenage girls trying to get ready for school so there was room to spare.

With the upstairs living quarters toured, we returned downstairs. Yes, the fountain was still there. We went down to the lower part of the original split-level design. With the pool table moved up to the family room, a ton of space was freed up so a new game room emerged. A soda fountain style bar was tucked under the stairs. The dart board and pinball machine came out of storage and were along the walls. A couple of small tables were added. One had a chess game in progress and the other was ready for Clue. I was eager to see what the twins did with the bathroom and new gym. Living up to expectation, the bath truly had a locker room feel. A rack of lockers filled one corner and the shower was exactly like one at a gym. It had four shower heads in a common area, no dividing walls. A second door was added to one end, which was conveniently located next to the door that led to the back yard. Anyone out back could have access to the bathroom without needing to track mud

down the hall. Across the hall, the new gym equipment looked daunting. I really wondered how much it would get used. That is until Kevin told me that he had given up his membership at "Perfect Bodies Requires More Money Than You Can Afford" as he liked to call the commercial gyms. He had been using the equipment every day for the past week and several of his friends from the gym were starting to join him. He said we might want to consider asking for money to help cover the costs of all the hot sweaty guys that would need to take long showers. Off camera, he added that he planned to be my personal trainer and if I promised to keep up with the formal exercises he knew ways to stretch the body that couldn't be done with clothes on. Just when I thought I had control of the hard on.

Next was a visit with Noel, the other garage sale winner, with her able bodied assistant, Twinkle, in the new Christmas Room.



Stepping into the room, the first thing we saw was the old china cabinet filled with the Christmas village. It was nice to see them displayed as the fine china pieces they are. The back wall of the room was filled with a huge industrial shelf unit. Each shelf held six storage tubs side by side; two deep on the shelf; two tall on each shelf. There were four filled shelves. Each tub was carefully labeled. Most of all of those tubs were for the lights and garlands and larger decorations. The trees were tucked away in a cabinet in the corner. The boxes with the ornaments were on another set of shelves. They had been taken out of the boxes that we normally cram way too many into (knowing that they are so packed that they can't move and thus not break) and laid neatly in clear containers. They made it easy to pull one off the shelf to look at the contents during the year. They even included a box labeled "new this year" so we can put the new ornaments in one place until they go through the proper "I'm a virgin on the tree" ritual.

Having finished all of the main rooms, I was ready to head back upstairs. They reminded me that they had done work in the lower basement as well. Josh organized the workroom. The smell of sawdust lingered in the air. It wasn't a dusty smell, just a smell of good old-fashion craftsmanship. Josh whispered to me that loved being down there late at night, wearing only enough protective gear to be safe. I had an image of this stud wearing only an apron. I wanted to jump him right there. The thought of the smell of fresh cut wood and man sweat mixing took me to another planet. "Later," he whispered. Aunt Becky was waiting in the utility room. She rattled off all the specs of the new electrical, heating and plumbing systems. She assured me that the water heater was designed to provide hot water for a five story hotel. There were several odd looking units in the room. She said those were the storage batteries for the new solar panels.

Something was different about the last room. This had been the old laundry room. The doorway was moved to a landing that was part of the stairs leading to the garage and senior retreat. A small bench was located next to the door. Everyone stepped aside and sent me toward the door alone. I climbed the steps and opened the door and was rewarded with a blast of hot air. My eyes adjusted to the darkness inside and saw the most incredible site – a sauna. Wooden benches lined the side walls. A second bench was elevated and u-shaped. Nestled under the bottom part of the "u" was a small wading pool. Ok, I'm in trouble. How am I going to sit and stare at my fountain on the main floor, lust at the picture of Kevin and Buck in the livingroom, make love to Peter on the carved bed, get a massage in the meditation room, sit in the office and look at the video pictures coming in from the showers downstairs (don't think I didn't notice the ceiling cameras in there), do sewing, work out in the gym, and veg out in the sauna all at the same time. Not to mention spend time enjoying the new deck that they were showing me as I was trying to figure it all out.

When we got back inside, everyone was there and the real party started. I lost track of time talking to the faeries and BABs and other friends and learning about how each of them helped. Slowly, one by one, the designers left. I wandered with them to their special room and stood there appreciating their work before I let them leave. Unfortunately, one of the first to leave was Josh. We

barely had time for a grope in the bedroom before I heard someone looking for me. "Maybe next time," he said before he headed downstairs. Eventually it was just down to my "family". I gathered the four new special plates and headed to the dining room. Down came the collectables and up went "Jack," "Gil," "Kevin," and "Buck". Those are far more precious to me than Dorothy and friends. We had a group hug and I asked why our clothes were still on and wondered if the sauna was ready for a family gathering.

In a blur of motion, clothes were strewn on the backs of chairs and we headed downstairs. Like before, everyone stopped and let me approach the sauna alone. I told them to come in and they stood their ground and said I needed to go in for one last surprise. I opened the door and stepped in. A naked Josh and Gregg were standing there with two more plates. Gregg told me he decided that if he was going to be on the road all the time, he might as well base himself where his friends lived and where he felt most alive. Josh said that the network was so impressed with his restoration of the antiques that they offered him a show of his own. He talked them into filming in his home town so he could be close to his family. They agreed so he bought Norman and Kathy's house and was going to be my neighbor. Kevin, Buck and Gregg were going to move in with him. The producers loved the concept of him working in a home workshop and wondered if he could use the house for filming. I asked if he only wanted the space for professional reasons. He handed his plate to Gregg and based on the temperature rise in the room as he kissed me, I think we went off the grid heating the room. Gregg started to head out with the plates and I stopped him. I took the plates and set them down and gave him an equal welcome. When we stopped for air, I grabbed the plates and stepped out into the main room where everyone was still waiting.

Peter kissed me and asked what I was going to do with the new additions to the plate collection. I said that since he knew about this and hadn't told me, he should figure it out. He took the plates and we headed back upstairs. He added them to the open space on the shelf with "Sarah" (Grams's real name) and "Phil." I looked at it and said that it didn't look right. Peter rearranged the plates by trading our pair with the latest pair. Still not right I said. I waved him aside. I took Grams's and Phil's plates off the shelf and placed them in the cabinet where we stored the Oz plates earlier. I centered "Peter" and "Cubby" on the center shelf. I announced that was better. This was my family now. The others would still be with me, but I didn't need them staring at me everyday.

I heard the sound of a cork popping and Jim started pouring champagne. We stepped out to the fountain to make a toast to the new home. Josh grabbed my dick and pulled me to him. "After the toast, I have something else I want popped. The question is where?" I stalled out thinking of all the rooms that needed properly blessing and couldn't pick one for the inaugural fuck. Peter poured some champagne on my cock and everyone said, "Here would be good."

Making Soup

By Anja

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As usual, yesterday I spent the day cooking, baking and cleaning. Also, as usual, I got farther on the cooking. (No one could possibly tell how much I detest cleaning, right?) The house smells wonderful, though, mostly from bread and soup.

I was reading an article yesterday and it was mentioned that soup is one of the oldest cooked foods. We don't pay soup much respect, drying it out and putting it into little cups or packets and then reconstituting it with hot water for a meal that we don't even taste, or stuffing it into cans where it sits on the shelf for years and when you finally open it and put it on the table you get the response, "Aw! Soup again?"

Soup is an all-day food. By that I mean that it takes you all day to cook it if you're doing it right and it's awfully easy to make from scratch. Besides, it makes the house smell soooooooooooooo good! You don't need recipes to make good soup. In fact, when I use a recipe it usually turns out rather bland until I fiddle with it.

Take a pot full of water and get it hot. Put in some kind of protein, (meat, fish or beans) and let cook slowly, an hour or so. When the meat is done, pull it out and let it cool, while you dump in a lot of peeled and chopped vegetables that are "hard", like carrots, celery, turnips and so on. Let them simmer for another hour or 6, then add the "soft" peeled and chopped vegetables, like spinach leaves or cabbage, onions, potatoes, tomatoes and the cooled meat (that you've chopped up by now) and let cook for another hour or two. If the broth is too thick add some water. If the broth is too thin, add some rice, or during that last hour of cooking, some noodles. You probably don't need much seasoning, if any, only a little salt if you want it, maybe some pepper, dill or rosemary, if you're using chicken, caraway seed if you've got beef. If you add too much salt, throw in several chopped up potatoes. (I usually don't add any salt, just put a shaker on the table).

Soup doesn't need all that much care or measuring of ingredients. Many folks have had what I call "scraped icebox" soup at my place. I go through the fridge as the water is heating right at the start and look for leftovers that ought to get used up...and I have put some **really** strange things in. You can add almost anything if you chop it fine enough: leftover sandwiches, salad greens that are getting tired and rusty, sauces that there's not enough for a serving, "doggie bag" contents, the last hotdog that someone forgot, a twice-baked potato that's been re-heated one too many times, the last egg from the carton, serving of mac and cheese that you just can't face for one more day, shrimp that needs to be used up, the last bits from a can of tuna, black olives (you can get away with green sometimes, but I don't like 'em in this). I've even added the "swishings" (fill the jar 1/2-way with water and shake) from baby food. Yes, you can add milk and cheese products, although you may find that if the quantity is large you'll have to watch for it sticking to the bottom of the pot and scorching. Once all this has simmered a while I go on as above. It just adds depth to

the flavor. I try to not let the "icebox scrapings" be more than 1/2 ingredients in the soup.

Talking about strange ingredients... the oddest I've ever had went into a pot of soup that I was making over an open fire at an historical re-creation event (SCA, for those of you who know of it) We were camped under an oak tree and I was stirring the soup so the lid was off. Just as turning my head to look at something that a camp mate was doing, I realized that several leaves from the oak tree had dropped into the pot! I had stirred enough that they were already down in the broth and while I fished out a couple, we found out later that I had missed at least one. The soup won the culinary prize for the event, although I don't necessarily recommend oak leaves as seasoning!

I usually have a box in my kitchen freezer that I call "soup starter". When I bake meats in the oven, or fry it up on the stove, after I take the meat out of the pan I run water in and let it stand for a couple of minutes, then scrape the pan with a soft spatula to get the bits and drippings to come loose. I pour that off into the box. It

takes the drippings with it and any flavorings from the meat, (like mushrooms, onions or spices) that would normally get thrown out. If you collect enough of this stuff you don't even have to use any meat in your broth, there's plenty of flavor without. It also gives you a chance to de-grease the stuff, because the fat will rise to the top. If you have multiple layers, though, it helps to warm it up enough to melt the fat and add some water (maybe the night before you make your soup?), then put it in the fridge to let the good stuff drop to the bottom and the fat (which with the American way of eating we **don't** need!) harden on top. Our ancestors did that without the refrigerator, because once the broth gets cold, the hardened fat will keep out air and the broth will stay good a while. Birds love the fat in the winter, btw. You can just put it out in a bowl, or mix it with birdseed and you'll make a lot of the feathered ones **really** happy with you! And then nothing goes down the drain or into the trash. You can also take leftovers from your serving dishes and toss them into this box.

Once your soup is done, put however much you can eat in 2 or 3 days in the fridge. Store the rest in freezer bags or in small servings in Gladware® or some such in the freezer. Freezing soup in one-day-amounts means that you can pull a container from the freezer after dinner one night, stick it into the fridge to thaw, and then just zap it in the microwave the next night for dinner.

Soup doesn't take much tending, which is why it's been around for such a long while. If you have sufficient water in the pot, you only have to stir it every 1/2 hour or so and on a low enough heat (the setting that you can get cooking in a fireplace, but **not** on an electric stove!) it can sit and stay warm and good with **no** tending for a whole work day, which is probably why our ancestors developed such a flexible type of cookery.

Yes, for those of you who are vegan or tend that way, I'm a carnivore. I like the taste of meat, so I do put it in my soups. You can make soups without, really good ones, but since I'm not so good at those I didn't put those directions in here.

