

Aíry Faerie
Mabon 2007
Working Out



Publisher's Notes

Greetings Faeries! Welcome the to the Mabon issue of the Denver Faeries' Airy Faerie. Autumn is here. YEAH!

My thoughts of the second harvest, take me back to one of the great feelings I had when I first joined the Denver Faeries so many years ago. We would gather at a member's home and enjoy a meal of bread, soup and some kind of a salad I had picked up at the store. Ah, the joys of a potluck for those of us who are kitchen-challenged. While we ate and shared our tales, I was transported back to the days of old. I could picture us gathered in a wooden home, candles and the fire in the hearth our only light, in the late evening. We gathered around a solid wooden table, enjoying the homemade soup, bread, and the companionship, as we honored the Gods and Goddesses who watched over us. Then a bite of pre-packaged macaroni salad would bring me back to the present. Damn, I knew I should have brought the cupcakes. ANYWAY, the whole point of that little story (and yes there is a point, even if I have to make it up as I type) is that during this time of year, it is a time for us to gather around the table with those we love, and share our tales, and our harvest. It is also a time for us to turn our thoughts inward even deeper and gather up the harvest of our soul. Sit at the table with ourselves and take stock of our lives. What has the past year brought to us? What lessons have we learned? What were our joys and sorrows? Take stock of your life, your friends and family. Do you have what you need to make it through the coming winter? Will you be able to call on friends and family to help you gather the things you need? Remember, we not only gather to celebrate what we have, but to also make sure those we love have what they need. Please remember to include yourself as one of the people that you love.

We are entering the dark of the year. It is very important to make sure your cupboard and soul are ready for the journey. Gathering around the table gives us the opportunity to make sure you and other are ready for the journey into darkness. During the celebration make sure you remember to ask for what you will need, and offer what you have to those in need. A nice little give and take.

Happy Autumn dear Faerie! Enjoy the harvest. Oops, I didn't really talk about the Airy Faerie, Mabon issue, my bad. Hopefully I have left some room for Phoenix to add his two cents.

Naked Hugs and Faerie Blessings,
DragonSwan

Publisher's Note Too

We received a letter from a reader saying that they loved the flamingo cover series. They looked forward to seeing what they were going to do next. Sad to say, once they finish their workout, they will be heading on to their next modeling assignment. The next cover model has yet to be determined, so if you have suggestions on something you would like to see, please send us a note.

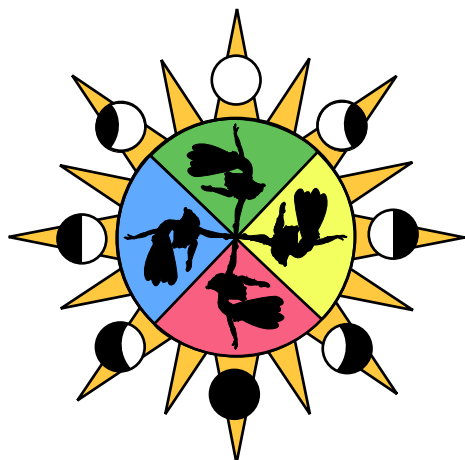
Continuing DragonSwan's harvest theme, the process of creating the deck and the issues of Airy Faerie are their own harvests. Ideas get planted, then nurtured and then the fruits of our labour are finally gathered and presented in these pages.

For this issue, we have gathered PandaBear and Anja for poetry, dug into the well and found a copy of the Wiccan Rede and even dug into the gutter and found out where the Professor has been hiding. Orpheus put together a little aid in the form of the House of Charming Family Tree to help us keep track of family relationships in the Quest. And of course, it wouldn't be the Airy Faerie if we didn't gather some of DragonSwan's great male graphics.

That sounds like the lead-in to a traditional warning - this issue does contain graphics of male nudity and men engaging in sexercise, so please use proper discretion when viewing the Airy Faerie in a public location such as work or at the library.

Naked hugs from me, too
Phoenix

Airy Faerie



Mabon 2007

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

For more information you can contact us at:
Denver Radical Faeries
PO Box 631
Denver, CO 80201-0631

or send an email to:
DenverRadicalFaeries@yahoo.com

or visit us at
www.geocities.com/denverfae

The Wiccan Rede

Being known as the counsel of the Wise Ones:
Bide the Wiccan Laws ye must
In Perfect Love and Perfect Trust.
Live an' let live
Fairly take an' fairly give.
Cast the Circle thrice about
To keep all evil spirits out.
To bind the spell every time
Let the spell be spake in rhyme.
Soft of eye an' light of touch
Speak little, listen much.
Deosil go by the waxing Moon
Sing and dance the Wiccan rune.
Widdershins go when the Moon doth wane,
An' the Werewolf howls by the dread Wolfsbane.
When the Lady's Moon is new
Kiss thy hand to Her times two.
When the Moon rides at Her peak
Then your heart's desire seek.
Heed the Northwind's mighty gale
Lock the door and drop the sail.
When the wind blows from the East,
Expect the new and set the feast.
When the wind comes from the South,
Love will kiss thee on the mouth.
When the West wind blows o'er thee,
Departed spirits restless be.
Nine Woods in the Cauldron go
Burn them quick an' burn them slow.
Elder be ye Lady's tree
Burn it not or cursed ye'll be.
When the Wheel begins to turn
Let the Beltane fires burn.
When the Wheel has turned a Yule
Light the Log an' let Pan rule.
Heed ye flower bush an' tree
By the Lady Blessèd Be.
Where the rippling waters go
Cast a stone an' truth ye'll know.
When ye have need
Hearken not to others greed.
With the fool no season spend
Or be counted as his friend.
Merry meet an' merry part
Bright the cheeks an' warm the heart.
Mind the Threefold Law ye should
Three times bad an' three times good.
When misfortune is enow
Wear the Blue Star on thy brow.
True in love ever be
Unless thy lover's false to thee.
Eight words ye Wiccan Rede fulfill
An' it harm none, Do what ye will.

Rede Thoughts

by Phoenix

The last line of the Wiccan Rede is the part most often quoted—"An' it harm none, Do what ye will." I thought it might be of value to people to see the full verse that goes with it. This verse, or one of its many variations, became one of the cornerstones of the modern neo-pagan community as it touches on several of the key philosophies such as Perfect Love/Perfect Trust, the Threefold Law and Harm None.

Like any magical text, the origins of this verse are shrouded in mystery. Some claim it comes from Aleister Crowley (1904). Others give credit to Gerald Gardner (1953) or Doreen Valiente (1964). In 1974 both *Earth Religion News* and *Green Egg* published their versions. *Green Egg's* Lady Gwen Thompson claims to have gotten this from her grandmother, Adriana Porter. Others will trace the origins back to 16th centuries writings.



Cause and Effect

Watch your harm

as
life will rise up
and expel
the taint of wickedness
like toxins
in the

Gut.

You don't
want to be
in the gut,

The belly
of the Mother,

The womb
at the core
of the rumbling
alert
rawness.

The cry
of creation
is sometimes
vengeance.

Roots pulsing with
pain
and anger
quake loose
a fury,

And you
are outcast,
alone,
hazy in the brain,
wondering what happened
to your

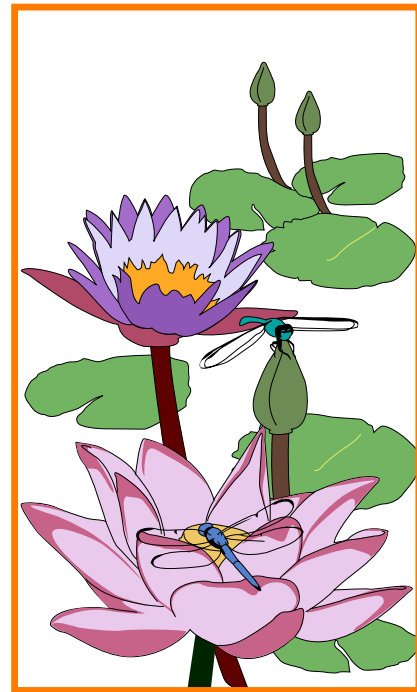
own
comfortable
roots.

To Take a Risk

by Author Unknown

submitted by P'chE

To laugh is to risk appearing the fool,
To weep is to risk appearing the sentimental,
To reach out for another is to risk involvement,
To expose feelings is to risk exposure of your true self,
To place ideas, feelings, before the crowd, is to risk their loss,
To love is to risk not being loved in return,
To live is to risk dying,
To hope is to risk despair,
To try is to risk failure,
But a risk must be taken,
As the greatest hazard in life is to risk nothing.
The person who risks nothing, does nothing, and is nothing.
He may avoid suffering and sorrow,
But he simply cannot learn, feel, change, grow, love, live.
Chained by his certitudes, he is a slave.
He has fortified freedom.
Only a person who takes risks.....is Free.



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The F.U.N.G.I. Exchange

by Professor Percival "Perry" Grinn

I'm sorry that I haven't written in a while. It's not that I didn't want to rather it's because I couldn't. Trust me, I would rather have been here with you than where I've been. Last year, I drew the short straw at Faerie University's Annual All Faculty Meeting. This meant that I got the dubious honor of participating in the Faerie University 'N Gnome Institute Exchange Program (or more commonly referred to as the F.U.N.G.I. Exchange.) Don't get me wrong. There isn't a gnome that I've met that I didn't like. It is just that the two schools are as different as night and day. As a result of the experience, I certainly learned to appreciate my faerie students all the more.

The reason I didn't write while I was gone is because, as I discovered, to gnomes communication is a one-way street. Gnomes are allowed to receive as many emails and letters per day as you could possibly want. But it is strictly forbidden to reply. And to remove all temptation from susceptible young minds, the institute has such strong system security controls on all internet access that it actually disables the reply button. One can create new messages. One can forward messages but additional comments are limited to "words" that can't be found in a dictionary such as "LOL" and "ROTFLMYO." But heaven help you if you want to reply to a party invitation or voice your support for a friend having difficult times. It just can't be done.

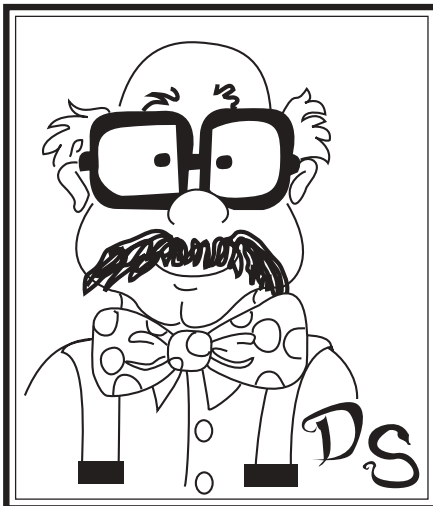
This translates to the classroom activities as well. A teacher may ask for the students to do homework but they can't expect them to turn anything in. The same is true for tests. If they turn in something with just their name it is an automatic 100 points because it shows that they know who they are. Any correct answer is extra credit. Just showing up every day in class shows student dedication and adds 20 points to each assignment and test turned in. All extra credit points above the set threshold of 200 points for a passing grade are eligible to be traded on GnomeBay. It is not uncommon for a student who never showed up in any class to graduate with honors.

I complained to the dean of the institute when I noticed that every paper that was turned in was a carbon copy of each other. Based on the first paragraph of one that was slightly different, these were printed from a web site that hosts term papers on all subjects at the institute. That singular difference was a line that read "Please remove this paragraph prior to submitting. Failure to do so will result in no credit for the paper." The dean's response to my complaint was that students shouldn't need to waste their valuable college years on original writing when the important thing is to demonstrate that they know where to find the answers when then need them. He was upset that the student couldn't follow the simple instructions and agreed that I could take away his points as long as I distributed them evenly amongst the other students. Apparently, once given the points must be accounted for and one mustn't waste points.

I will say that I was pleasantly surprised by the eating habits of gnomes. I had been lead to believe that they overly baked everything so that it was rock hard. Apparently they only do that

when visitors are present so they would get that impression and stay away. Once I was the only non-gnome on campus and I was going to be there for a while they dropped the image and out came the gourmet meals. I stuffed myself and it shows. In fact, upon my arrival back at Faerie University several of my former students handed me copies of a new weight loss program they have developed called Sexercise. I am not one to bust their bubbles but I recall similar programs from my own university days. Since school rules do allow student-faculty relations as part properly documented research activities, I have been an active research subject. See my report elsewhere in this issue for more details.

The discovery of the great food at Gnome Institute came with another discovery. It is illegal to flit on institution property. For those that can flit, they are discouraged from attempting illegal behavior by feeding them gourmet meals. Those that do flit against the rules are literally grounded via the use of a ball and chains. It wasn't until I got home that I learned the roots of the anti-flitting policy. The simple explanation is that since gnomes can't flit, no one can flit. This was painfully demonstrated by my exchange counterpart. Apparently he found a pair of faeries sexually appealing but they did not share in his ardor. They led him on a merry chase until they arrived at Lover's Leap, where the faeries like to go to launch for their aerial encounters. The gnome didn't realize what they were up to and followed at



full speed, which on the downhill launch slope can be considerable, and went plummeting to the ground below. I have been told that he was uninjured in the fall. He knew enough to fall head first since gnomes have naturally thick skulls. The administration building, however, did not fare so well. Watch for announcements about the upcoming bake sale to help raise funds for the repairs.

All was not total despair while I was there. I did develop a strong bond with several students. These were the ones that responded without thinking when I asked what they thought about subjects not covered in the text books. We met in various basements so that no one could see them having fun and carrying on conversations. Under the cover of darkness and utmost secrecy, I even demonstrated flitting. I have heard from them since my departure and they have continued meeting. I have a feeling I am going to see some of them in the near future. Several of the First-Called, as they like to call themselves, have expressed a deep itch in the middle of their backs. The doctors are puzzled but I know what it is: these youngsters are about to sprout wings and fly on their own. Apparently the act of flitting simulates youthful minds that they might one day do something other than plod along through life. At one point I had despaired that I hadn't done any good during my visit to Gnome Institute. But if they only thing I did was to help this group find their wings, then I guess I did Faerie University proud by accomplishing that much during my stay.

Quest for the Crystal Phoenix

Chapter 23: Crystal Memories

by Orpheus

At the sound of the unexpected voice the guards drew their swords. Patrick pushed the prince behind him. As Apollo stepped backwards, his boot caught on the uneven surface of the ground and fell. Patrick and Channa quickly stood over him.

"Who are you? Why do you threaten us?" demanded Toby.

"Who am I?" came the equally demanding voice from the eerily lit face. "You are the ones who have entered my domain. You are the ones standing with drawn swords. In my day the guards would bring me flowers."

With a wave of her hand the swords turned into bouquets of multicolored roses. "Now that is more to my liking," she said.

The guards dropped the flowers to the ground with a clang. They reached for their other weapons.

"That won't do." With another wave of her hand she turned the daggers into snakes, which were promptly dropped with another clang.

As the guards prepared to charge the unknown assailant, Apollo started the process to gather the energy needed to turn the company invisible. As the grounding energy started to flow through him, he felt something shock him. He focused on it for a moment and felt the edges of the crystal that was under where his hand rested on the ground. It felt cool to his touch. As the grounding energy grew, so too did the cool calmness of the crystal. He felt a peace growing that was at odds with the building conflict before him. When the calm reached his eyes he looked at the scene before him anew. There was no one standing in the circle that had been formed by the guards. Swords and daggers lay on the ground.

"Stop!" he shouted. "There is no one there."

"Very good, young man," came a voice from behind him. "But am I real?"

"Or I?"

Soon voices came from all around them. Apollo held the crystal and looked around. For all of the voices he heard echoing around the chamber, he saw none of the people that his guards were reacting to. He wanted the guards see what he saw. He felt something in the crystal calling to him so he directed some of his energy into it. With the touch of the energy, the crystal burst into life and cast its light into the deepest crevices of the cave. Nowhere was there a sign that anyone but them were in the cave. The prince pointed at the ground and the guards saw their swords and picked them up.

"Bravo," said a slim woman with long lavender tresses, approaching them from the archway where the face first appeared. "Please forgive me my strange welcome, but there are many secrets here in this cave that need to be protected for the future king. By tapping into the energy of the crystal you have proven that you have

the potential to aid me in protecting those secrets and defeating his worst enemy."

"And just whom might that be?" asked Janna.

"My mother, Queen Belladonna."

At the sound of her name, the prince reached up and touched his neck as if feeling the collar choking him once again. The guards placed their hands on their swords and looked around.

"Ah, I see you have met my mother and it seems that you have felt her touch. I think we have much to discuss. Please follow me to the inner chambers where you can warm yourselves by a fire." She stepped to the side and pulled open a curtain revealing a well lit passageway.

"Dear lady," said Toby, "how are we to know that you are not luring us into your own trap? We only have your word that the queen is your enemy and we are protecting something more precious than secrets. We are guarding the future of our kingdom."

"Spoken like a true guard. I offer you choices. You can stay here in the windy antechamber without food. You can venture back into the blizzard and hope to find shelter. Or you can follow me to a hot fire, hot food and hot springs to ease your aches."

"Mistress of the cave, please answer this question," said the prince. "With the aid of the crystal I can see that you are no illusion, yet with the light of yonder passageway shining upon you, it appears as if I can see right through you. Are you the ghost of Princess Laurel Lilac?"

"I am indeed the former princess, but to the dwarves of these caves I have called Lilac Longlocks. I am not a ghost as you would know it. I am speaking to you from the past through the aid of time crystals."

With quick introductions made Lady Lilac led the company to the living part of the caves. She refused to say much more until they had a chance to warm by the fire. Resident dwarves came and led the horses to their stables. Large bathrobes awaited them to wear while their clothes dried. Platters of food were brought. Danna insisted in sampling food from each plate before allowing others to eat.

"No trust, I see," said Lilac standing in the archway. "And what if the food was poisoned? Does your life have so little meaning that you would so casually exchange it for the others?"

"I am but one guard among many. I trust that my prince will be able to save me before I died," replied Danna.

"Like the prince in a faerie tale riding in on a pure white stallion?" asked Lilac. "It never happens that way. My prince never returned to rescue me from my tower. No prince came to save my cousins, Angelina and Daisy, from my mother's torture."

"Not something so heroic," said Danna. "Should there have been poison, my prince would have been there to catch me as I fell."



“Ah, so one of these fine gentlemen is the prince of your heart. But is your love strong enough to call each other from the brink of death? For nothing short of that could counteract my mother’s poisons.”

Apollo spoke, “But what of the love of the heir to the kingdom for one of his subjects? Or one trained in healing by Lords Apollo and Dion? Were they not there to help Princess Angelina?”

“Only after the harm was done!” Lilac became agitated as she remembered the deeds done to her cousin. The crystals embedded in the walls began to resonate with her elevated tones. “The prince of the faerie tale would have been there to stop mother in the first place. My mother should never have been able to...” She paused a moment to regain her composure. “How is it that you knew of the gods involvement? That is something only a very few knew about and certainly not what got presented in the public records written by Angelo.”

“It was told by one who loved them dearly and passed from father to son and then to me,” said Apollo. “I am sorry that the reality of your experience with princes does not live up to the legends that have been handed down in the stories I have heard. But two of those ancient princes have stepped forward to aid me.” With that, Apollo pulled out his necklace.

“Oceana’s Horn!” gasped Lilac. She turned to Toby, “I don’t think you told me everything when you said you were escorting this child to visit his aunt.”

“You are correct,” said the prince.

Lilac listened intently as he reintroduced himself to this ancient princess with his full lineage. As she realized that Apollo was the heir to all three branches of the House of Charming her eyes got wide. “You aren’t the one with the potential to help us. You are the one we are here to help.” She started to faint but caught herself. “I’m starting to fade. I’ve been away from my body for too long. Follow me.”

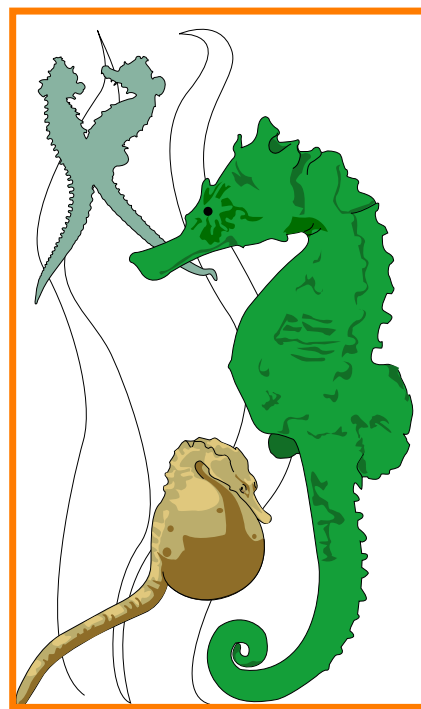
Lilac led them down a long winding passageway. Without Lilac’s aid, Apollo wasn’t certain if they would be able to retrace their steps. She finally stopped at a doorway guarded by a pair of dwarves.

“It is time,” she said. “The past shall be revealed in the present to safeguard the future.”

The dwarves nodded and stepped aside. Upon entering, Lilac directed Apollo to a clear crystal that was on an altar of sorts in the middle of the chamber. It was shaped like a small pyramid, broad at the base that narrowed to a sharp point at the top.

“Here is the Crystal of Ancestral Timelines. My cousins and I put energy into its creation. See how there are three lines inside at the base? They spiral upward until they become a single line. We use this crystal to broadcast our thoughts hoping to find someone in the future to help restore peace to a united kingdom. A child of the House of Charming should be able to call to us through the crystal. Are you one of those we are looking for?” With that Lilac stepped up to the crystal and disappeared.

Apollo barely heard her words. He was fascinated with the flickering light from the single torch that was rippling up and down the spirals like miniature lightning bolts. He picked up the crystal and



looked around the room as he had done earlier. In the dim light, he could almost imagine faces staring at him from several of the larger crystals that stood along the walls. With each ripple of light, he though he heard someone calling his name from inside the crystal. He gathered his mental strength and listened. He gathered energy and sent it into the crystal to see if he could make the sounds louder. He gathered more energy and sent it along the spirals. He finally felt like he connected to the voices trapped inside and pictured himself as a fisherman reeling in a massive catch. He drew in energy from the crystal as he would when he gathered grounding energy.

With each burst of energy the crystal began to glow. Sparks flew from the base points of each of the three lines and lit up three large crystals that lined the walls of the chamber. Apollo was too caught up in the crystal in his hand but the others noticed faces inside the trio. They said it was as if they were looking at someone looking through a frost covered window. The longer the sparks bounced between the crystals, the more it appeared that the frost was melting. Apollo could hear the voices in the crystal as if they were standing beside him. He focused all of his attention on wanting to see the people calling to him. He drew one more surge of energy and sent it into the crystal, which flared up in phoenix shaped flames. This in turn was matched by dragon shaped flames on the large trio of crystals.

A loud crack was heard in the chamber and the flames suddenly disappeared. The front facet of each crystal lay in shards on the floor. Three women stepped out through the opening, one of which was Lady Lilac.

The prince whimpered in pain from the hot crystal that was in hand. He was about to drop it when Lilac shouted, “Don’t drop it. We can only be here as long as you hold it.”

The eldest of the trio, a scar faced woman with blue-green hair, rushed to his side and placed her hands around his. Her touch was like cool water and the heat from the crystal dissipated back to the

—continued on page 8

Quest/Crystal Phoenix continued

earth. The third woman moved the elder's hand and kissed the prince's hand where the crystal touched it. "Let mother make it better." Apollo looked at her and realized that she looked like pictures of his grandmother when she was younger. It matched the image of what he envisioned for his mother if she were still alive.

"Mother? You are here?" he asked.

"Sorry. A phrase from long habit. I am Daisy Amaryllis." She gestured to Lilac, "I believe you have met Laurel Lilac." And gesturing to the third, "And this is Angelina Tritina."

"Time for pleasantries later, cousins," said Lilac in a business-like manner. "We have much to tell and little time in which to tell it." Lilac stepped up to Apollo and put her hands around his. "You have done more than we dared dream. We had only hoped that one of our descendents would have enough of the gift to open the Windows of Time to allow us to talk to each other. You have immense potential if you have the energy to be able to bring us all the way to your time. But that energy comes at a cost. The crystal you hold in your hand will begin to turn to dust. With it, so too will we turn to dust in this time."

"How long do we have?"

"I do not know. Keep it firmly in your grasp to help hold it together as long as you can."

To Apollo, the crystal no longer felt smooth. It began to feel like a cube of sugar, ready to break apart at the slightest bump.

"Let us attend to business first," said Lilac. "Then, we can spend the time we can filling the prince on the details of his heritage."

Lilac led the way to a chamber that had been hidden by the crystal she had emerged from. She walked around the room lighting candles that rested on various tables and cabinets. On each surface was a tray that held a polished crystal. Some were in the shape of balls. Others were pyramids or cubes. Others were more like a

miniature wand, something Viola might use when she was faerie sized. "Good. It hasn't been disturbed in all the years." She picked up a lavender colored crystal that was long and tapered like an obelisk. She caressed it for a moment before handing it to Apollo. The smooth sides were not as smooth as he first thought. On each of the five sides were strange symbols that appeared to be etched into the crystal.

"My mother is the mistress of poisons. This is a record keeper of all that I learned of her craft while locked in my tower. When my sister refused to learn of the dark arts, mother would come to my tower to train me as her successor as High Priestess of Heca. With the aid of the faeries, Hemlock and Poppy, that kept me company when she wasn't around, the daughter surpassed the mother. With the death of my beloved, Rupert, I knew mother would never tolerate finding out that I was carrying his child. I staged my own death. Hemlock unsealed my crypt and revived me. Rupert told me of the kindness of the dwarves so I retreated to this cave. While here, the dwarves began to teach me of the power of the crystals. I crafted this record keeper to store my knowledge. In its depths you will discover lessons on the crafting of the poisons and how to counteract their effects."

"The lessons in counteracting I can understand," said Stane. "Why should the prince want to learn the crafting of poisons?"

"My mother may have learned new skills over the centuries," she replied. "If you understand how poison is made, it becomes easier to figure out how to undo its effects even if you don't know the specifics of its making. Even true love needs help in overcoming the effects of my mother's poisons."

"And one can't count on one's true love being there to save the day," said Daisy.

"True," said Apollo. "It is believed that my mother died of one of Belladonna's poisoned fruits. My father tried to save her but we have learned that he may not have been her first love."

"And with these lessons, someone might have had a chance to find an alternate cure," said Lilac. Turning to the prince, "Just set aside all other thoughts and let your mind merge with the crystal. It will lead you through the memories that are stored inside."

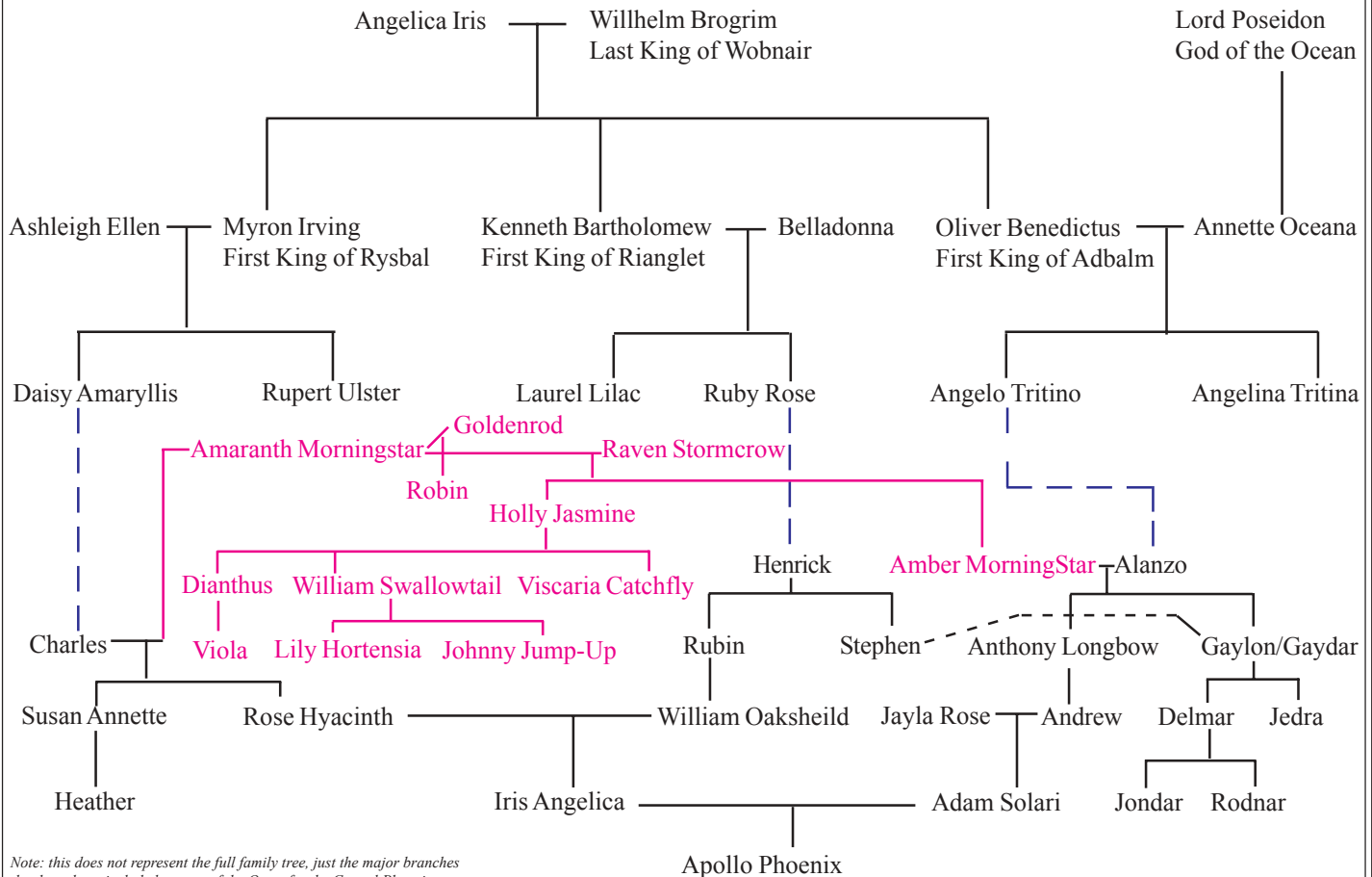
Angelina wandered over to one of the tables and picked up a similarly shaped obelisk, only this one was light blue with streaks of white running along its length. "After I was lured into Belladonna's illusion of a child's fantasy come true of a house made of sugary treats, I vowed to learn the way of illusion so that I would never be caught in that trap again. When Lilac called to me via her crystals, I came to her side to aid in the birthing of her child. In return for my aid, she taught me what she knew of the crafting of illusions. What she couldn't teach, I learned from others until I could craft the illusion of the look, smell and even the feel of anything."

"If you are so skilled at illusion, why not use it to mask your scars?" asked Channa.

With a bare flicker of thought, Angelina did just that. "Like this?" she asked. "Does the fact that you can't see the scars make them any less real now that you have seen them? It might be easier on your eyes, but the pain of feeling the knife cut away my skin will never leave me. Is your ideal of beauty so shallow that you can not see past the physical to see the beauty within?"



The Royal Charming and Faerie Family Tree



Note: this does not represent the full family tree, just the major branches that have been included as part of the Quest for the Crystal Phoenix.

“I mean no disrespect,” said Channa, “but the history books tell of you being of a beauty that rivaled your mother’s and your cousins.”

“For a while, I did play the game of living up to what people thought was beautiful. It gets tiring maintaining an illusion all day, everyday. When Angelo had his son, I quietly stepped away from his side and returned to this cave to help prepare for my battle with my aunt. She had taken my father from my mother, tried to kill my brother and myself and I wasn’t about to let her harm my nephew.”

“But she didn’t take your father,” said Apollo. “He loves her still even though she died so many years ago. Any rumor of his involvement with Belladonna was passed by her to further her own ends. He paid the price of rejecting her attentions. He is paying the price still.”

As he spoke, he felt the call of a deep purple crystal. It was a flat oval disk. He set down Lilac's gift and picked this one up. Lost in its call, he held it to Angelina's face and sent his healing energy to her and drew the pain into the crystal instead of himself. When he stopped, the scars had faded to the faintest trace.

“Thank you, that was kindly done,” said Angelina. “Cousins, his gift is strong if he can do that without lessons. How long was it before we discovered that trick?”

“Yes, he is proving himself many times over as the future king,” said Lilac. “The gift of earth magic belongs only to the rulers of Wobnair. The ancient kings and queens had the gift of all

four elements. At the sundering, the brothers had lost touch with listening to the land and thus lost their ability to use earth magic. As you tune into the energies of the crystals, you will learn how to tune into the larger earth magics. You will be able to use your connection with the earth to sense problems in remote parts of your kingdom. You might even be able to affect change from that distance.”

“Like how my father can hear things in the wind?” asked Apollo.

“That would be one of the aspects of air magic. He should be able to speak to the wind to have it carry his words where they are needed,” said Daisy. “That was how I kept in contact with my cousins.”

“In order to defeat my mother, you will eventually need to awaken all of your gifts and those of the others in your family. Mother learned how to hide from combinations of the elements but never the combined force of all four at once. Find the place that can’t be seen in air, fire, water or earth and you will find her hiding place. Once discovered, she will never be able to hide from you again.”

“Time for my gift,” said Daisy. “But not for you alone.” She held a tray with nine matching black crystals that had flashes of blue and gold. Each crystal was fitted with a small golden ring. “These are for each of you. Wear them and in the web of energy between the set, no illusion can exist.”

"An earring?" wondered Lance. "You want me to wear an earring like some fancy lady in court?"

—continued on page 10

Quest/Crystal Phoenix continued

"Don't men wear earrings?" asked Daisy. "In our day, everyone wore earrings. In fact, I can remember times when father couldn't decide which pair he wanted to wear so he wore multiple earrings at a time. It caused quite a fashion trend for a while until people's ears started to stretch from all of the weight."

"I don't think it would be so bad," said Stane. "Don't the marine guard wear some kind of gold hoop in their ears?"

"I like this," said Danna. "It would be like the badge of honor for the prince's elite guard."

Toby held one to his ear. "Might take me a bit of time to get use to, but if it will help protect the prince, I'm willing."

The three cousins made quick work of piercing ears and fused the rings closed so that they could not accidentally be lost. Apollo used the healing disk to take away the sting of the piercing. As they worked, Daisy explained that the closer the crystals were to each other, the stronger their power. She said that even if the crystals were on the far points of the kingdom, any illusion that crossed the line between crystals would still flicker momentarily.

The prince could feel the deterioration in the crystal in his other hand. It felt like he was holding a fistful of sand. He must have gotten a look on his face for Lilac nodded. "It is nearly time. The crystal is breaking down faster than I hoped. We have much to tell you but I am afraid we won't have the time."

"Can you put your words in one of these crystals?" asked Apollo, gesturing at the massed collection.

"We will find a way," said Angelina. "You spoke earlier of my father. It sounded as if you had conversation with him. Did he find a way to reach through the years to you?"

"He is still alive and served as a teacher to your children and children's children for many years. Now, his son has taken over the position." Apollo quickly explained the curse of the two brothers.

"Two men and the woman who ruined their lives still living," said Lilac. "May our fathers do better in protecting you than they did their own children."

"What happened to your child?" asked Apollo. "You mentioned giving birth but I don't recall a story of a fourth branch of the family."

"My child was taken from me by the dragon that used to roam this part of the kingdom. I watched in horror as the great beast flew off with my child's basket dangling from its giant mouth. I tried everything I could to get the beast to turn back. I tried scrying to find where the beast went so that I could at least recover bones to give my child a proper burial. But the beast disappeared from my sight. Soon after, that beast was the first of the great dragons to be killed. From its blood sprang the phoenix. I can only hope that the phoenix is the rebirth of my child."

"Don't be fooled by that old tale," said Angelina. "That is she told me when I returned for a visit and the child was missing. The truth is that the child's grandfather, Myron, discovered the birth and came to see his grandchild. With him came Amaranth to give the traditional faerie blessings. She had a vision of Belladonna torturing the child to get Lilac to join her cause in defeating the family."

"The truth is that with the aid of mother's sleeping potions, we sent my child into a deep slumber and hid them away where mother

would never learn of its existence," confessed Lilac. "With both husband and child gone, I dedicated my life to learning all I could that would help lead to mother's downfall."

"How is it that you stayed so young, while your cousins appear so much older?" asked Apollo, "I always thought you were about the same age. Is this a potion you created?"

Before she could respond, Angelina tripped on one of the uneven surfaces. Apollo instinctively reached out to stop her fall, momentarily forgetting the crystal in his hand. It was now pure dust and he had no chance recapturing it once he realized his mistake. As the dust left his touch, the former princesses dissipated like the morning mist. Before they totally disappeared they managed to give Apollo a kiss.

"Look under the crystals," were Angelina's last faint words.

They all stood in silence, each lost in their thoughts about having just met three of the princesses of legend. Channa reached up and caressed her crystal. "I don't think I will ever be the same. I always dreamed of being heroic and rescuing the queen from danger. I never dreamed of the depth of passion that would enable someone to span the centuries in quest."

"I know what you mean," said Patrick.

"How could I have been so stupid to let go of the crystal?" cried Apollo. "There was so much I wanted to ask them."

"You did the right thing in trying to help," said Toby trying to comfort him.

"I know," said the prince, "but it doesn't make it better."

The silence returned as they looked at the various crystals around the chamber. "What did Angelina say? Look under the crystals?" asked Danna. She quickly ran around the chamber picking up each crystal and looking under it. The others joined her. It was Janna who found a letter under the tray that had been under the crystal



Airy Faerie

presented by Angelina. The paper was brittle and threatened to shatter into dust as had the crystal. Apollo remembered watching Cetee handle some of the older books at the palace and proceeded to carefully unfold the parchment.

Dearest Apollo,

To me, it is only moments since I returned from our visit, but it will be centuries before you see this note. Please don't blame yourself for dropping the crystal. I couldn't let the others know the answer. Yes, we cousins were of the same relative age when we were born, just not when we died. When you looked back in time, you saw us as we last appeared to the crystal. I outlived my cousins so thus you saw me as the eldest. When I saw the others when we stepped out of the crystal, I cast an illusion so they thought we still looked as we did when we sought for you. You are already learning and saw through my spell.

Please take all of the crystals that are stored in this chamber. They contain much that will aid you in the years to come.

Present this letter to the master of the caverns and he will know what to do.

Angelina

"Shall we prepare your dinner?" asked one of the dwarves who had been standing guard.

The unexpected voice startled them.

"Who is the master of the cavern?" asked Apollo, showing the guard the note.

The guard stepped over to the wall and tapped a complicated pattern. They could hear it echo through the caverns. Soon, an elderly bespeckled dwarf appeared. He took one look at the company. All color drained from his face. "Shards! It can't be!" He blew the dust off of his glasses before extending his hand to Apollo for a handshake. "Sorry about that. I thought you were someone I knew. Foolish thing since that person has been gone a long time. You must be Prince Apollo. I am Rinaldo. I am told that you are looking for me."

Apollo showed him the note that they found. Rinaldo read it over and asked "Who is the fairest of them all?"

"How do you determine the fairest?" responded the prince. "I have thought some extremely fair but have come to realize that I have yet to meet everyone in order to make a proper choice. For as soon as I declare one the fairest, another will appear to rival them for the title. Each is fair in their own way."

"So you will not declare one the fairest?" asked Rinaldo.

"I can not. How am I to judge whether the lilac or the daisy is the fairer of the pair?"

"Exactly what I always said. Someone once told me that a long time ago and it has stuck with me all these years," said the dwarf.

"The same someone I reminded you of?"

"The vary same," he replied. "I wish your forebearers had shown half of his or your wisdom. It would have spared much grief." He paused and wiped a tear that a memory had brought to his eye. "Follow me."

They followed Rinaldo in silence. They returned to the main chamber and then he led them down a different path. This passage had dried petals on the ground that crunched under their steps. As they neared a brightly lit chamber, the petals turned to full dried

blossoms and then to bouquets. The crushing of the petals released the scents of flowers. Even though they knew a blizzard raged outside, it smelled of a summer day in the passage.

Rinaldo led them into the chamber. In the middle, was what appeared to be a crystal coffin, but it was not a manufactured object. It was a single large crystal. Inside, they could see Laurel Lilac. "She died soon after her child was taken away," said Rinaldo in a hushed tone. "She regretted giving into the demands of both king and faerie and left the safety of the cave. She talked about seeing the future and that the battle would last for generations. She wanted to create a new future. When Belladonna learned that her daughter was still alive, she sought her out. Lilac refused to join her mother's vengeance on the House of Charming. Belladonna signaled to her guards and stood watch as they held her down and killed her. I came upon the scene and watched in horror as the queen stood and watched the death of her own daughter. As soon as they left, I gathered the broken body and brought her back to the cave. Amaranth came at my call. She healed the wounds to restore the beauty but could not restore the life that left the body. She called to the crystals to preserve her memory forever."

The dwarf was openly weeping at the memory. "If only I had convinced her to stay where it was safe. If only I could have gotten to her before that witch of a mother found her."

"Ever it is the way of a child to leave the safety of the home," said Toby. "Each child will think that they have what they need. You can not hold them forever."

"You loved her, didn't you?" asked the prince.

"Yes. I was barely old enough to work in the mines when she came here. I loved her with all my heart and hoped she could learn to love a dwarf once she stopped mourning Prince Rupert. But her lust for vengeance left little room for thoughts of love."

Apollo placed his hand on the crystal. The grief of unfinished business resonated in the touch. "I may not have been there to rescue you, fair princess, but I shall see to it that your mother's reign of terror ends." He picked up one of the dried roses that lay on the floor at his feet. He brought it to his lips for a light kiss and placed it on top of the crystal. As he set it down, the fullness of the bloom returned. "If only I could make both it and you alive again."

Rinaldo led them back to the main chamber where dinner was served. Hardly anyone ate that night. They spent the following day packing the crystals that the princesses had left behind. Rinaldo told them of the crafting of each one with tales of the dwarves who mined and polished each on. In the morning, he guided them to the western entrance of the caverns. The storm had passed on that side of the mountains so they would be able to continue their journey.

At the sight of blue sky at the end of the tunnel, Apollo realized how claustrophobic he felt being under ground the past couple of days. He rushed ahead of the rest to be the first to get some fresh air. He barely heard Rinaldo's shout and started to turn to get him to repeat his words. That's when he discovered the ice under his feet, fell and slid the final feet into the sunshine. The prince turned to face forward and realized that there was nothing to grab hold of to stop him.

To the horror of the guards, they watched him disappear over the side of the cliff that Rinaldo tried to warn him about.

By Professor Percival "Perry" Grinn

It is not just the students at Faerie University that are fascinated with the subject. Researchers across the world are studying the benefits of sex. The findings seem to reflect a universal theme: sex is good for you. Duh! And they had to pay how much to discover this? Even without the caloric quantification, everyone knows that you feel better after sex. Everyone around you sees the positive effects because you smile more, which is good for your facial muscles and helps reduce wrinkles. It gets your blood pumping for a good cardiovascular workout. And it can help keep you limber. For those caloric bean counters out there, researchers are estimating that sex can burn 300 calories per hour which is

The following are some of the preliminary results of the collective research on this matter. I should note that the caloric benefit of the various results that I have studied seem to reflect some major research biases that we at FU are trying to avoid. Some researchers seem to discount activities that they wish their partners would not do to them (i.e. premature ejaculation) while exaggerating the benefits of those activities that they like or are afraid will happen to them (i.e. sex from behind or being caught in the act)



Masturbation

For pleasure only	6 calories
For relief from tension	12 calories
To avoid overeating	16 calories
Using your hand(s)	11 calories
Using tweezers	2 calories
Using an inflatable doll	24 calories
Using fruit or vegetable	19 calories

Premature Ejaculation

During insertion	2 calories
During intercourse (Approximately. 2 sec's or 3 thrusts after insertion)	5 calories
During foreplay	3 calories
Immature ejaculation (Similar to premature ejaculation except person acts childish and throws a tantrum.)	4 calories

Consequences of Premature Ejaculation

Cursing	10 calories
Apologizing	3 calories
Snivelling	5 calories
Pleading for mercy	8 calories
Begging for another chance	15 calories

Positions

Top on top, couple facing each other	20 calories
Top on bottom, couple facing each other	25 calories
From the rear	40 calories
Standing: Both partners of equal height	18 calories
Standing: Bottom 1 foot taller than Top	90 calories
Standing: Top holding Bottom off ground	300 calories

Three Way

In middle (Receiving and Giving)	150 calories
Receiving both cocks	50 calories

Sex Related Noises

Short gasps (per gasp)	3 calories
Squeals	4 calories
Ecstatic moaning	11 calories
Low growling	8 calories
Screaming	18 calories
Any short speech giving partner directions	25 calories

Orgasmic Intensity Scale

Expression didn't change	1/2 calorie
Face turned purple	15 calories
Orchestra swelled	6 calories
Magical explosions	10 calories
Blazing Sheets	25 calories
Earth moved	30 calories
Vesuvius erupted	47 calories
You began moaning in Latin	60 calories

Pulling Out

After orgasm	1/4 calorie
A few moments before orgasm	500 calories

Rolling Over and Going to Sleep

After intercourse	18 calories
During intercourse	32 calories
During foreplay	12 calories
Avoiding the wet spot	80 calories

Post Orgasm

Lying in bed hugging	18 Calories
Getting up immediately	36 Calories
Explaining why you got out of bed immediately	816 calories

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Calmly	32 Calories
In a hurry	98 Calories
With parent knocking at the door	1218 Calories
With jealous spouse knocking at the door	5521 Calories

The official university findings will not be available for some time. The research team is having too much fun gathering data to be bothered with the mundane details of documenting their results. Here is a sampling of web sites visited while putting together this article:

http://www.ediets.com/news/article.cfm/cmi_2427758/code_30174

<http://www.medicinenet.com/script/main/art.asp?articlekey=46271>

<http://www.pillfreevitamins.com/articles/articles/5911/1/Lose-Weight-By-Having-Sex/Page1.html>

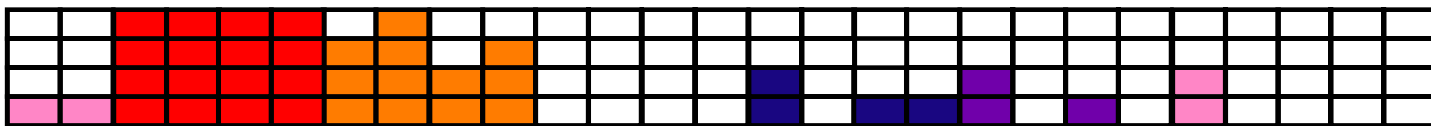
<http://www.marriedromance.com/articles/healthsex.htm>

<http://ridotsurvey.com/webthing/bbstuff/Caloriessex.php>

<http://www.c4vct.com/kym/humor/csex.htm>

<http://www.angelfire.com/freak/lufrednow69/calories.htm>

Have fun doing your own research and send in your findings. Photographic evidence of your research techniques is always appreciated.



The 4-F Tarot: Balancing Act

by Phoenix

I have all sorts of things to share with you this issue. First, you might have quickly noticed that the opposite page is one of two full page card graphics. We started the “Sabbat” cards with the Kings of Fire at Yule and Samhain will complete the turning of the wheel in that cycle of the energies in the cards. Well, back in the combined Imbolc/Ostara issue, we only presented the Imbolc card. All things work out for a reason. In this case, the Mabon card (opposite) and the Ostara card (page 19) are linked in my mind. When exploring the ideas around balance and the equinox, the two men who stood on these cards became brothers, quite possibly even twins (even though in my pantheon they end up growing up in different families since Mr. Ostara is the Kween of Air and Mr. Mabon is the King of Flowers), and quite possibly even lovers (heck, in any good soap opera when siblings are separated there is a good chance they will end up as potential mates thus adding to the drama of the grand horror of their mother’s big reveal.)

I will start with Mr. Ostara. There he is out playing balance beam. In one hand he has the basket with the eggs he has gathered as part of his chores. In the other he holds a book. A gust of wind is about to blow off his lovely bonnet. He is about to be forced to make a decision as to what to do. How is he going to maintain the balance between work (the eggs) and pleasure (the book) while trying to grab the bonnet. He is focused on all of the above while one of the chicks is leaving the area. And his brother/lover is out in the field watching. He is probably shaking his head because he has seen it before and from where he is working, there is nothing he can do to help. It is for Mr. Ostara to figure out.

Now we come to the end of the summer with Mr. Mabon’s time in the spotlight. He has worked hard all summer and is finally able to shed his overalls and take a well deserved nap. While Mr. Ostara is about the balance of work and play, Mr. Mabon seems more like the balance of work and rest. Unlike the other card, this time the brother/lover has ideas of what is supposed to happen next. He is

finished his chores and is ready to play. He knows Mr. Mabon is tired but he has his ideas as to what the conclusion of the wrestling match that is sure to ensue when he dumps the water on Mr. Mabon’s head.

Now, here’s a little exercise for you to try that I find helpful when reading cards. Take this pair of cards and imagine what happened between those two moments in time. Going from Ostara to Mabon - was it a bumper crop year or did a tornado come and rip out most of the crop? Going from Mabon to Ostara - did they have enough to comfortably survive the winter or did they have to ration themselves? Add one of the other cards we have shown you. How about the cactus? Doesn’t sound like good news in this context. Or the playful swallows? Sounds more like a celebration is in store. Or how about those hunky Kings of Fire? Sounds like those brothers just got some help on the farm. Or the Goddess of Air out in the park? Maybe its time to take a break from the hard work and focus on play to bring back some balance.

Think about other harvests, not just the literal one the scene evokes. Think about the other things you might harvest in your life such as friends or a better job. How about the gathering of thoughts and new ideas as you think about learning something new? There are many ways to play with the images.

As to the other cards in this issue, these are the playful water creatures. This group has made some interesting changes since my first thoughts. Naturally, my first thought for a playful water fur was the otter. But they proved to be too playful and energetic and jumped up to become the Lovers of Water. With that opening of the space had to think of other water furs and the other natural choice was Beaver and he is our God of Earth, the construction worker. Then I had the idea of golden retrievers splashing in the water. As I have mentioned before, he is a supporting character on several other cards so he really should get a card of his own.

The playful water feather was going to be a duck splashing in a pond. Unfortunately, when the retriever started splashing in the water the duck said “I’m out of here”. So - Swan...nope, that will be our “ugly duckling” looking in the mirror...Goose...nope that is our sailboat captain sailing off into the sunset as the geese fly south for winter. Then I remembered something. The Goddess of Air was going to be a ballerina and I had thought of the Flamingo as being her feather energy. The image of the ballerina on one leg and the Flamingo doing the same thing seemed like a natural fit. But the Ballerina left the dance studio and went out to the Park leaving the Flamingo without a home. She found her way here. Next issue will have the Ostrich. These make an interesting pair since both are large but one can fly.

That leaves us with the fourth of the group. This was going to be cattails, such a wonderful phallic symbol rising out of the marsh. The graphic image seemed too close in my mind to the wheat. The lotus blossom was going to be the symbol for the Kween of Water, but she has changed, so this lovely flower came to rest here.

Next issue - we complete the band of orange with the playful earth creatures. We are making progress!





The Cubby Diaries: Spotlight On Buck

By Cubby

When we first met Buck last year at Woodies in the Woods he was an underemployed actor. For those of you who haven't been around a lot of actors that roughly translates to the fact that he spent a lot of time waiting tables and other odd jobs that are easy to leave when you get a job in a show...and easy to find again when the show closes before you get your first paycheck. Well, I am proud to announce that not only is he in a show now, he landed the lead.

Going into opening night, he was very tight lipped about the details of the show. We knew the name was *Instant Winner*. We knew it was a world premier, never before seen outside the mind of the playwright, Nick L. Andymes. He researched all the stories about the foibles of the lottery winners and wove them into the story of Richard "Rags" Johnson, a down and out gay waiter (played by Buck, did I say we were proud of him? If not, we are) who was suddenly thrust into wealth by winning the lottery. After that Buck wouldn't say a word. He said he wanted us to see the show the first time without hearing about scenes that were deleted or rewritten so the company would get a good first reaction on the show as presented.

Kevin was over one evening while Buck was at rehearsal. We were talking about our families and he said that Buck's mother had never seen him on stage. Buck and his parents kicked him out of the house when he came out. It was only after his father's death that his mother reached out and tried to reconnect. After some struggle, Buck started to return her calls which finally resulted in their trip the previous year to his grandmother's birthday party. Kevin said it was the first time the two of them had been in a room together in fifteen years. Collectively we thought it would be a nice treat for her and a huge surprise to Buck to invite her to see opening night.

We had it all planned. We picked Charlotte up at the airport the

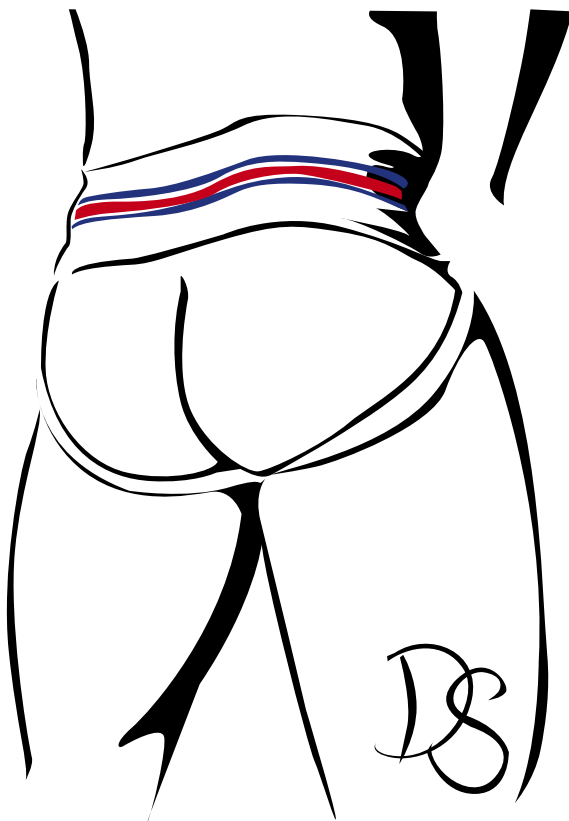
afternoon of the show and got her settled into the hotel that was a block from the theater where they planned to host the opening reception. We had a charming dinner where she expressed regret for the years she wasted giving into her husband's bigotry. When her sister's son died of AIDS she knew that it could be her son one day but couldn't break free of her husband's abuse to reach out to Buck to say she loved him. She hated the thought that she would never see Buck while her husband lived. She was thankful that he had found a loving partner in Kevin and such supportive friends. She traded those embarrassing childhood stories for stories of what he was like as an adult. We watched the clock carefully and at precisely 7:45 we headed down the block to take our seats just as they dimmed the lights.

The curtain rose, revealing Rags standing on stage in front of the door of an office holding a box and a piece of pink paper; he had just been laid off. He headed home only to find his lover (Kenneth, smooth chisel bodied blond) in bed with another man (Other Man, rock solid furry brunette). The two men do nothing to hide their nudity and even their hard ons. Surprise! I looked at Charlotte who was staring at the stage with big eyes. It was about then that Buck must have noticed her because I caught a bit of a gasp out of the corner of my eye. With the two naked beefcakes on stage, I don't think anyone noticed. Or if they did, I think they thought he was gasping at the size of the clam digger on Other Man strutting on stage; even the people in the balcony didn't need binoculars to see that.

Needless to say, Buck maintained his composure while Rags packed a suitcase while the now ex-lover and his playmate sang what they planned to do to each other once the riff raff got out of the house. The next scene had Rags bouncing from office to office trying to get a new job. He finally gave up looking for a perfect job and applied for the waiter job at the diner he passed every time he went to a new interview.

Next was a scene with Rags settled into his new job and it was Christmas Eve (as if there any other night for a sappy scene for a down on their luck character?). The person at his last table of the evening left Rags a lottery ticket as the tip. At first Rags was furious because he needed cash but just as he concludes his song the television announcer read off the winning lottery numbers. Rags realized that he held the winning ticket in his hand.

Rags lived the rich life. His costumes changed to fancy suits and started drinking expensive liquor. We saw Other Man and friends climbing out of Rags' pool and most were naked. Some tried to seduce Rags but Rags isn't interested. He calls and a slim, red-headed young man in fine tailor clothes appeared. Rags rejected the others saying that Young Man has something they don't and then exits with Young Man on his arm. The guys, with their range of physiques and endowments, wonder what Young Man could have that they didn't. They concluded it was "Virginity." As they sang, we watched Rags and Young Man stripping and making love on the mansion balcony. After seeing the other naked fellows, I was surprised to see how careful Buck and the other actor were about fig leafing themselves from the audience. At the end of the song one of the rejected asked what will happen now that the virginity was gone. Other Man responded, "Jump in the pool with the rest of us. He



then sang how he was sorry when he saw the hurt on Rags' face when he left Kenneth's. As the lights dimmed and the follow-spot closed on his face, he said, "He thinks I want him for his money, but I left Kenneth to follow the love I saw in his heart."

As the act concluded, friends and relatives were surrounding him looking for handouts. The bank called saying his checks were bouncing. And as the curtain fell his Kenneth presented him divorce papers claiming half of his winnings since they were still registered as domestic partners at the time he won and he was handed a tabloid which showed his ex-boss (That B-Word) claiming Rags was the father of her unborn child.

During intermission we praised Buck. I knew he had a good singing voice from those times he joined us at circle. But we had never heard him cut loose at full voice. Because we had a guest, we refrained from being too obvious about our impression of Kenneth and Other Man. That is until Charlotte brought it up by saying she wished her husband would have seen them. He always said that Gays were nelly, sissy, mama boys. She would love to see him try to use those words to describe them. She added that she had seen a lot of flesh on her soap opera but it looked so much better in the flesh. Everyone laughed at the double meaning of her words. I had been worried about her seeing Buck naked and she said that Kevin asked her about that when he called her. (That bum! He knew and didn't even give us a hint.) She said she had long ago gotten used to him being naked since it was hard to keep his clothes on when he was a child. She said that she remembered one time when she came up from doing the laundry and he was running through the house naked. When she asked where his clothes were, he said "Gone." She said that she never did find the puce and vermillion striped jumpsuit that he had been wearing that morning.

The curtain rose on Rags busy selling everything. He had spent all of his cash and his next winnings check wasn't due for six months. He resolved the divorce papers with Kenneth by moving back with him. The two still loved each other and the real reason Kenneth had the fling was to try to make Rags jealous. Rags had been working 12-14 hours days and coming home and going directly to the computer for the rest of the night. Kenneth figured the love was gone and that Rags had been hooking up with people on the internet. Rags said when he came home, Kenneth was always so angry about how his boss was so cruel to make his work so late all the time that he just wanted to avoid that confrontation. As the two reconcile, the lights faded out as they headed to the bedroom leaving a trail of clothing behind them.

In order to get money to pay for a lawyer, Kenneth remembered an ad in *Studs Magazine* where they were looking for gay millionaires for a photo spread. After some coaxing, Kenneth convinced Rags that he has what it took to pose. During the photo shot scene it looked like Rags was going to cop out and only do carefully fig leafed photos. The photographer thought it would be hot to have some pictures of Rags with his lover. Kenneth agreed and with the naked men together it became increasing difficult for Rags to hide his cock, especially when Kenneth started licking his ear and Rags started getting hard. I could see that Buck was nervous about playing the scene with his mother in attendance. I caught him looking at her several times trying to see her reaction. Charlotte must have seen it too because I caught her doing an exaggerated "hands over the eyes but fingers wide open so she could watch" game. When it came time for Buck to stand completely naked with a



hard on, she gave him a double thumbs up and was hooting and hollering with the rest of us.

With a lover at his side and money back in his pockets, Rags turned his attention to the legal showdown with the tabloids and The B-Word. The trial was a humorous farce. The B-Word described in loving detail her disgust at how Rags raped her on the day he was laid off. Rags' lawyer declined to cross-examine her. When it came time for the defense, his lawyer had Rags take the stand.

"The witness for the prosecution says that she is five months pregnant. When were you laid off?"

"One year ago next week."

"The witness described you as being a hairless ape with 'a dick the size of a toothpick. Is that an accurate description of yourself?"

"No"

The lawyer entered a copy of *Studs Magazine* into evidence. It was fun to watch the reactions of the judge and jury as the issue made its rounds. Under cross-examination the plaintiff's attorney tried to question the accuracy of the photos "How do we know these are really you?" Rags stripped revealing his hairy chest and the full lies of The B-Word. The judge slammed his gavel shouting "Case dismissed." He handed Rags a note and pantomimed "Call me" as the scene broke out in a celebration that eventually resulted in everyone getting naked singing "Justice is best served with a healthy portion of naked truth."

After the ensemble left, Rags and Kenneth grabbed their clothes, tossed them over their shoulders and headed off stage together as the stage went dark. When the lights came back up, the two were dressed and seated at the diner where it all began. Other Man, the first time we saw him in clothes, and Young

—continued on page 18

The Cubby Diaries - continued

Man were working the tables. As they were ready to leave, Rags handed each of them a lottery ticket, which they returned to him. Young Man said that Rags was his first and only love. He first wanted the money but when he was cast out, he realized he loved the man, despite the money's effects. Other Man said that seeing Kenneth and Rags together and back in love he could only wish that he could find something like that for himself. Rags looked at Kenneth and asked if he was willing to open the relationship to include both men. Kenneth pulled everyone into an embrace in response. Other Man pulled away and walked over to the door and locked it. As he pulled down the shades on the windows the curtain descended.

For the curtain calls, the ensemble came on stage wearing matching robes. Other Man, Young Man, Kenneth and Rags all appeared naked. After their bows, off came the robes as the cast reprised the Naked Truth number.

After the ovations stopped and the curtain fell for the final time we headed to the stage door. There was already a crowd gathered seeking autographs and probably phone numbers. Buck finally made it through the crowd and came over to us. He said he had been so shocked when he saw his mother there. He had never dreamt that the first time she saw him on stage he would be in his birthday suit. Charlotte reminded him that the first time she saw him he was in his birthday suit. She looked at us and said that Buck must have inherited his...um, talent from her side of the family because his father would never have been able to play such a large part in a production like that.

We headed over to the reception. After making the "meet my mother" rounds, Charlotte headed off to bed, telling us to have fun to "do whatever it is you boys do when mama isn't watching." Buck introduced me to the playwright, Nick. He blessed the day that Buck joined the cast. Not only was he talented but he had proven to be very helpful in creating the show. I asked Buck if that was why the characters seemed so familiar. He said that if the shoe fits...and then went on to ask why I would think that a story about a lottery winner, two lovers who both love the same man and a youth who lost his virginity and his heart to the one lover and now lives with the other three would have anything to do with the Cubby household. He added that I was the richest man he knew, so why not use that to base a character on. I reminded him that Jim was the one with the money. Jim overheard that and said that Buck was right. He said that he may have the wealth but I was the one with the gift to bring everyone together as a family. I stood there in shock that they would think I was special in that department since I'm the lucky one to have them in my life.

I got to meet Kenneth and Other Man (really David and Michael) who turned out to be real life lovers. Both men had their shirts off, allowing people to get a closer look at their "costumes." As I watched them work the party, if one or the other saw me looking their direction they "casually" rubbed their hand on their crotch. As the party wound down, they came over and asked about our new gym. David said that they were having issues with their current gym. For some reason they started requiring everyone to wear shirts while working out. Michael added that the flimsy gym shorts he wore were too binding and he wanted to find a place where he could be

totally nude. Buck joined us saying that he hoped I didn't mind that he invited David and Michael to follow us home for family opening night celebration. After all the simulated sex scenes on stage the lovers were looking for a little real action. David blushed at Buck's frankness. Michael grabbed my crotch and rubbed my growing hard on. "Buck and Kevin both said Peter and you were the best coaches in town for helping tops learn to be bottoms. Want some new students?"

"When do you want to start?"

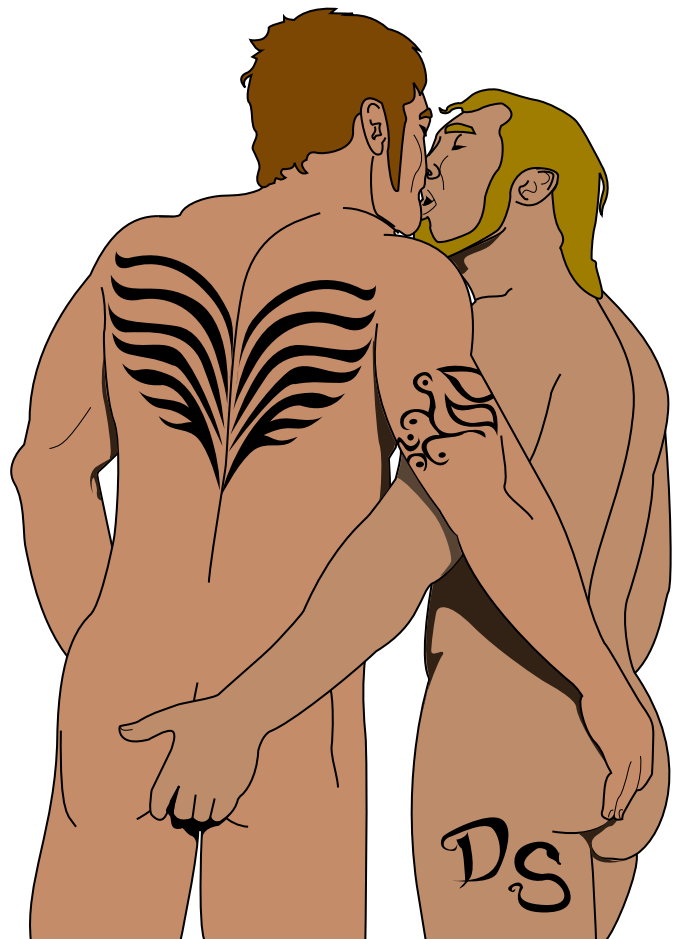
Buck chimed in, "Oh, about four hours ago. That's all he's talked about since he jerked off after his first scene. But before you start I want my next lesson."

I told him he was going to have to wait. He pouted until I reminded him that the star was always the last one during curtain calls. I promised to be right behind him when he bent over for his final bow that evening. I looked around and saw everyone engaged in multiple stages of friskiness. Young Man was the subject of Kevin's attention. Jim was lip locked with Nick and Aeris was with Rejected Lover 3. I whistled to get their attention and announced that it was time to take the show on the road. "Head 'em up! Move 'em out! And lots of raw hides!"

"Yee Haw!"

"That's it," shouted Nick. "My next show. A nude, gay cowboy musical." Buck started singing "I'm just a bunkhouse daddy."

I think I just created a monster.





Ancient Ones

by AstralWizard

Ancient ones of all four quarters.
Do you hear me?
Deities of the earth what do you see?
The elements are now chaotic, and in complete disarray.

I call upon you for guidance.
Candles circle around me.
Shadows dance about the walls.
Energies find rhythm and again sheds the needed key.

The atmosphere I draw upon.
The circle I draw for protection.
The energies I conjure are for your inspection.
Ancient ones, who've been around before the dawn of time.

What direction is there left to continue?
Back into my vortex I go.
Ancient ones, make the positive light grow
Help me to give back to the supreme being.

Not concerned now about the obvious count down.
Not concerned about failures of the world.
Not at this moment in time.
For spirituality is not bound by these things.

There are no connected strings.
For any type of flow cannot be controlled.
Work in the energies well in the manner of law of three fold.
From within is where purity can come.

North of earth
East of air
West of water
South of Fire.

Ancient ones of the quarters.
Harness these energies, harness these well.
Make them stronger so that they may never fail.

Poem 32
8-8-2006
10:07 am PDT



Cooked Squash

by Anja

I suppose if people are things to you
It is possible to take someone else's word
Against that which you know
And scrape someone out of your life, like cooked squashed being
removed from its shell.

But I am not like that

You are my right arm
Having you away from me
Has left me maimed
Unable to even go through the motions of life

Something is very wrong

To me you are in color
To them you are black and white

You have done wrong, but then, so have they
Why do they not see that?
You have caused harm, but not to the extent that they have.
Why do they not see that?
You hurt me, you hurt yourself but we bleed red, not little grey
bits of confetti
Why do they not see that?

I saw some of what they say, but not the whole
I know you
I know who you are
We lived, intertwined, for 13 years,
How can I say that you are nothing but squash,
yummy on a plate, dripping with butter and brown sugar,
How can I say even that?

But they say that you are nothing but a black and white photo of
that dish, crumpled and torn, no nutritional value at all
Fit for nothing but garbage
To be discarded
And forgotten
And burned.