

Airy Faerie Samhain 2007



Publisher's Notes

Welcome Faeries to the haunted Samhain issue of the Denver Faeries' Airy Faerie.

"Die, Die, we all pass away. But don't wear a frown, 'cuz it's really ok. You may try and hide, and you try and pray, but we all end up the remains of the day." This little haunting chorus comes from Tim Burton's "The Corpse Bride". It is fun movie where the land of the dead is more fun and lively than the land of the living. Which if you think about it makes sense. How many earthly pleasures do we deny ourselves because they are bad for our health? Not to mention that nagging fear of death that makes us play safe. Well one thing I can guarantee is that this issue of the Airy Faerie will not take any years off your life, so it is safe to indulge in this little pleasure. And what a haunting pleasure this issue has been to put together, as we collected other faeries' thoughts around this season.



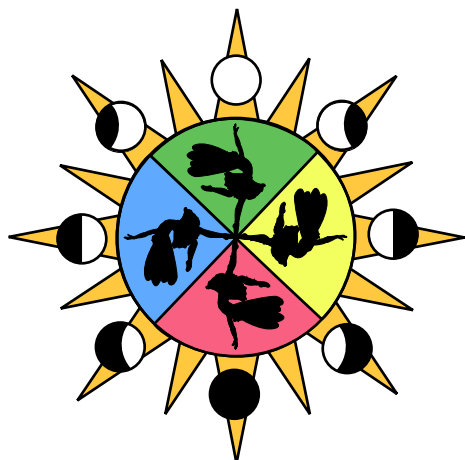
Please heed this warning... This being the Airy Faerie there is some male nudity, and even some gay sexual activity with our pages. If this is offensive to you, I would really like to know why you are reading this, but would also ask you to put it down now. No need to let some words and a few images get you all upset. If you are too young to view such things, again I ask you to please put it down and wait until you are older. No need to get into trouble over some words and a few images. To our faithful, and unfaithful, readers, please be careful who you share this with, and how and where you view it. Once again we are just trying to avoid any trouble from some words and a few images.

As I type this little note I am truly amazed and humbled at how far reaching this little fae zine has become. The Air Faerie connects the Denver tribe to a whole world of faeries. It still blows my mind how many faeries read our little baby. I trust that you are enjoying it as no one has even unsubscribed due to content. Please feel free to write or email us to let us know what you think. We also welcome submissions outside of Denver, making our faerie family that much closer. I thank you all for letting me be a part of your life, through this fae zine, and for being a part of my life.

As we travel deeper into the darkness of the year, I hope that you are all enjoying the final harvest. Take time to honor those who have past away, as well as those who are still with you. You never know when they too shall cross the veil over to the other side. While you are honoring others, don't forget to honor your own life, and make time to enjoy some of life's pleasures. I trust that the Samhain issue of the Denver Faeries' Airy Faerie will be one of those earthly pleasures that you are enjoying.

Happy Halloween!
Naked Hugs & Faerie Blessings,
DragonSwan

Airy Faerie



Samhain 2007

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

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Skeleton God

by AstralWizard

Let me tell you about an interesting individual.
He has no flesh or blood.
Made only by that of bone.
He eludes the day, but comes to rule the day.

Every fragments of his bones are laced with eternal wisdom.
It comes from centuries of existence.
To keep from causing sheer fright he sometimes cloaks himself.
The night time's full moon's glow he will soak.

When he is seen he endures a jaded world's misconception.

Looked upon with such confusion.
Looked upon with such scorn.
Though he looks a though he was cast from the darkest of evil.
It was from the fibers of spirit he was born.

He doesn't really walk.
Nor does he have a voice to talk.
He just floats and guides as he moves on.
His vocabulary he produces solely though his thoughts.

He can appear from fire.
Or from pure darkness.
Or from the water,
He can appear form where ever he sees fit.

His path before him always lit.
For even though he can see through the holes where there's
suppose to be eyes.
He still needs a form of guidance.
When he's not on this physical plane. He sits in his own world.

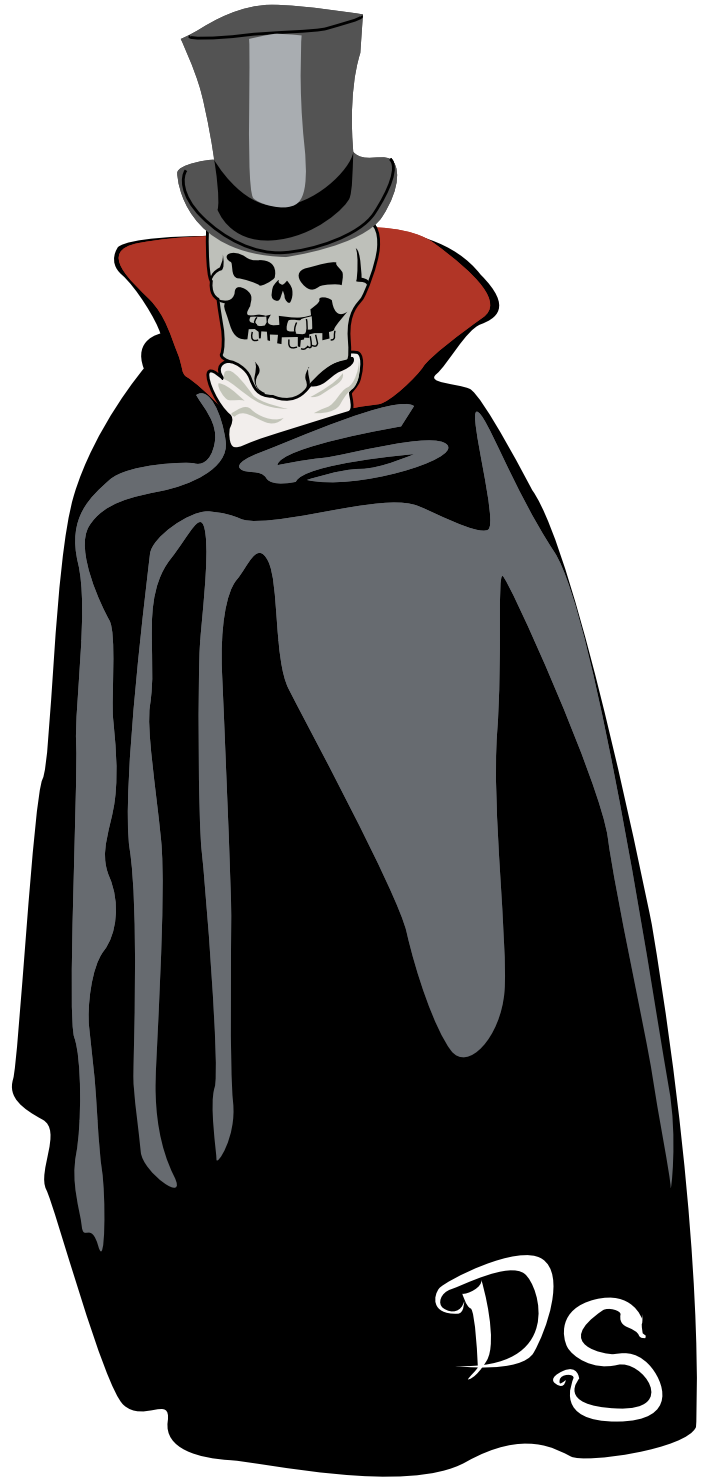
Upon his throne he sits.

Do other souls from this world go with him?
Only if their soul's light is going dim.
Otherwise he comes and goes as he pleases.
He needs not survive in this world.

This not his place of origin.
He doesn't consume this world's sin.
Tonight he goes back to his realm alone.
For it his and only his zone.

When he is ready, and when he is called upon.
Out of his chosen darkness he will again appear.
To dance with other gods and goddesses that rule this world.
And if he feels like it may spread his own unique brand of fear.

8-20-2007
5:47 am PDT
Poem 37



Litany of Remembrance

Author Unknown

We remember all those who died alone this year
of cold and hunger,
of torture and false imprisonment,
of poisons in air, water and earth,
of war and genocide,
Crying out for help and comfort that didn't come.

We remember those who died of AIDS,
of cancer,
of wasting and crippling diseases,
of disfiguring injuries,
While those around them turned away in discomfort or fear.

We remember all those killed for their beliefs,
women still being killed as witches,
for being sexual, or for loving other women,
men killed for loving men,
thinkers, killed for unpopular visions,
While others stand self-righteous over their suffering.

We remember the children with lives cut short,
through the violence on our streets and in their own homes,
from AIDS received within the womb,
by drunks, and carelessness, and neglect,
Whose innocent eyes sought to understand their pain.

We remember those whose lives touched and changed the world:
those who gave their lives to stop genocide,
those who spent their dying seeking cures
they would never receive,
those who gave their lives to bring food and
medicine to those who suffered,
All whose love and time were freely given to those near or far
who had need

And we remember our own dead,
Those of our family and friends who have died.
We honor them all
Their lives, their joys, their sorrows, their gifts
and we release them to make their own journey.
We take up the ashes of memory and dress in mourning
to cross the bitter Ocean of Tears
As they join the ancestors there
in the endless dance of death and life

We remember and speak their names so that we may
live to serve life,
to grow,
to heal ourselves and the earth
So that all may thrive.

Into the Dark

by Beast

We move into the dark, now. A darkness full of mystery, beauty
and magic; full of all the old terrors and ancient dreams of
humankind.

On wings of velvet beauty, Night enfolds us; on crystal cold
winds we rise up into the stars, or delve the deep and hidden paths
of Earth – who births monsters and mysteries and fragile wonders
to confound us, or make us clear and transparent to our inner gaze.

From Darkness came All, even the Light, and we return to it
now to be reformed, refigured, or else to see ourselves in mirrors of
shadow brightness where Fantasy becomes the Truth.

As we lie in our Winter beds, we wrap ourselves in our travel
cloaks, and begin the Night's Journey...

Too Many Names

by Phoenix

Too many names, too many tears
As the list grows longer year after year
Your mother, my father, your sister, their brother
Our friends and fuck buddies and even our lovers

The ancestors who stood up and paved the way
The firemen who died while saving the day
The soldier who died in a land, distant and far
The co-worker who died at the hands of a drunk in a car

The victims of tornados, the winds out of control
The victims of fires when the flames took their grim toll
The victims of rain that caused the river to flood
The victims of quakes that turned homes into rubble and mud

The hand of Death touches our circle, far and wide
We gather together to honor those who have died
We call out their names so that they can hear
We haven't forgotten and still hold them dear

We remember the first whose death we still grieve
We never understood why they had to leave
We remember the friend of whose death we just heard
We remember the enemy whose death gave them the last word

We remember our friends who died in their prime
The victims of AIDS or even a hate crime
We remember you all even those we never knew
And if I'm next, I hope I will be remembered by you.

But the tears I shed today is not for one that I named
Its for the names I've forgotten and I feel ashamed
My memory is a victim of too many names and too many tears
So, please know that I still love you, whoever you were.



Quest for the Crystal Phoenix

Chapter 24: Children of the Wolf

by Orpheus

At first Apollo felt really stupid for slipping as he ran down the passage. He thought he heard Rinaldo call out something so he turned back and felt his feet slip out from under him. That's when he realized that the shout must have been a warning. He fell with a thump and started sliding down the rest of the passage. He knew that it was going to hurt but he didn't have much time to think about it. As he turned to face forward to find something to stop his slide, that's when he realized that there was nothing except blue sky in front him. He tried to twist to slide towards the wall but his momentum was too great and in that second between heartbeats, he found that the ground was no longer beneath him.

Fortunately for the prince the drop to solid ground was not too far.

Unfortunately for the prince, the ground below was an extremely steep slope. And to his greater misfortune, the sun had been shining the day before and melted the surface of the snow covered mountainside and the night chill had frozen the slope into a sheet of solid ice. Nowhere could Apollo find a way to stop himself. He slid down the mountain on his butt, picking up speed with every second. He knew that crashing into the boulders was not a good idea. He quickly figured out that if he twisted certain ways he could guide himself away from the largest of the obstacles.

He saw an upward mound in front of him and relaxed. He hoped the uphill slope would slow him down. As he crested the mound he discovered the folly of the thought and found himself airborne once again. This time, the drop was greater than before.

As Apollo curled up into a ball so he could roll when he landed, he felt something. Oceana's Horn! He didn't know what good it would do him in this situation but he blew it. "Just let there be someone who can hear this that can help stop me," he thought.

Just as quickly as he had been zooming down the mountain, he came to an abrupt halt when he landed. It felt like he had hit something solid. He put out a hand to try to sit up and that solid something felt like it had fur.

"GRRR," came the snarl. "Don't even think about moving until the Queen gets here."

He heard the echo of howls on the mountainside. "She will be here in a moment," said the deep grovelly voice.

Apollo hadn't realized that his aunt's palace was that close to the mountains and the thought of not moving while he waited appealed to the prince. It gave him a chance to catch his breath and let his eyes catch up with him. The slide down the mountain had been a blur and his head throbbed. As things began to come into focus the first thing he noticed was that the solid something was a

human sized wolf, whose baleful stare and bared teeth left no room for imagination as to what he intended to do if the prince moved. The second thing he noticed was that the ground was not snow/ice covered beneath his hand. The slope was covered in grass. He twisted to look up at the mountain and it barely had a touch of snow at the top of its peak. His twisting earned him another snarl, so he lay still.

"Did you find something, Laika?" came a light feminine voice that sounded like she had just been running. "Did you find my cousin?"

"No. But I did find this young pup trying to escape. He is not one of us so I figured he must be part of the gang that kidnapped Princess Daisy."

Apollo realized that these people were not there to help him.

They thought he was an enemy. Too weak from his wild trip down the mountain, he did the only thing he could think of, which was to turn invisible.

Before he could move, Laika put a massive paw on his chest, pinning him to the ground.

"Just because I can't see you, doesn't mean I can't smell you," he snarled. "Do something like that again and I'll rip off a leg." Apollo felt teeth on his right leg. The wolf suddenly jumped back, howling in pain. "What did you do to me? My mouth burns."

A blast of hot air filled Apollo's lungs. "Who dares touch one of my chosen in anger?"

A chill of the night air brushed across his neck. "Who dares touch one of my chosen with less than love in their heart?"

Apollo gathered the strength to sit up. Lords Apollo and Dion were standing over him. Their eyes were flashing with a fury that matched the tone in their voices.

"I did not know, my Lords," quivered Laika. "I heard the sound of Queen Angelina's horn and came racing across the mountain. With the disappearance of Princess Daisy, I feared the worst. I saw this child fall from the top of yon point. He was not one of the Queen's or Princess's guards, so I assumed he must be the enemy."

"Please forgive him, Your Divine Lordships," said the woman. "I had barely arrived on the scene and not yet realized that he was chosen."

"Show yourself, child," said Lord Apollo. "I can feel the presence of my mark but I do not recognize your energy."

"Yes," said Lord Dion. "We shall not let the others harm you. I too do not recognize you and am curious as to why two gods would be summoned to your danger."

Apollo turned visible as instructed. He tried to stand up but got suddenly dizzy. Dion caught him before he fell. "Must be a bit of concussion from his fall." Apollo felt Dion's familiar healing touch and used his own energy to try to work ahead of the god. He didn't want Dion to think that he had forgotten all of his lessons.

"Where did you learn that?" asked a very puzzled Moon God.



"I barely touched him and he was already doing for himself what I was going to do. Just who are you?"

"Don't you remember me? I am Apollo Phoenix, son of King Adam of Adbalm."

"King Adam? Of Adbalm?" asked the woman. "The King of Adbalm is my brother, Angelo. Our father, the first King of Adbalm was Oliver. There has never been a King of Adbalm named Adam."

"Your brother is Angelo? I must be dreaming. Am I to believe that you are Angelina?"

"That is King Angelo and Queen Angelina to you," said Lord Apollo. "Godmark or not, only royalty my address others so familiarly?"

"Does being the heir to the crowns of the combined kingdoms of Rysbal, Riangler and Adbalm qualify as royalty?" Turning slowly toward the two gods, "I don't know why you don't recognize me but to answer your question, I learned the healing trick from you, Dion, and you added your GodMark to the one granted by Apollo after Belladonna attacked me. You said it was to offer as much protection as possible both day and night."

Angelina shuttered at the name of her aunt. "They may not recognize you because I don't think you belong here and I think it is my fault." She explained that she and Daisy had just finished the memorial to their cousin, Laurel Lilac, and were just about to part company when Daisy disappeared from camp. Fearing the worst, she called to her brother and cousin to come to her aid. Angelo had the gift of water magic, Ruby, the gift of fire magic and she herself the gift of air magic. Her Faerie Godmother said she could only lend the aid of faerie magic if all four elemental magics were present. Angelina said that she remembered a time when she was with Laurel in the cave when they tried to contact the future. Laurel disappeared into the crystal for several hours. When she returned, she was full of hope as she met someone with the earth magic. Angelina used one of Laurel's crystals to see if she could contact that person for help. The next thing she knew, she heard the sound of Oceana's Horn even though it was in a bag around her neck.

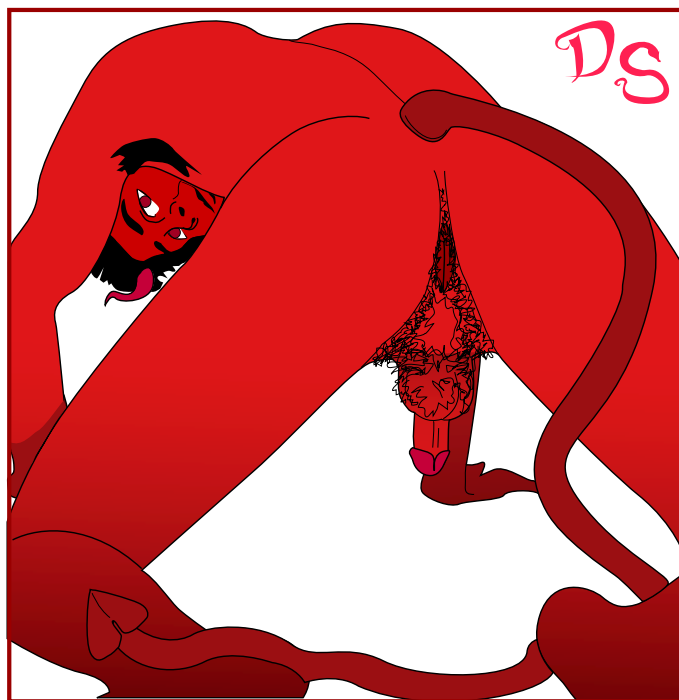
While she spoke, Apollo shed the heavy winter coat he had been wearing. "I have been told I have earth magic, but until a few days ago I had never heard of it. If I can help, I will try but I haven't a clue what I can do."

"Amaranth, I need you," said Angelina, blowing into the wind as if to push her words along faster.

A small bubble descended from the sky. As it neared, it grew larger. When it got close to the ground, it popped and a dainty faerie appeared. She barely came up to the prince's chest. She was dressed in a shimmering blue and white gown. Her long blonde tresses reminded him of paintings of his mother.

Apollo let out a snicker at the sight of the faerie emerging from the bubble. "Why are you snickering at me, young man?" asked the faerie.

"My apologies. I am not snickering at you. I just had memories of one of my faerie teachers attempting to do the same thing and each time she ended up rolling around on the ground until someone burst the bubble for her. She is going to be so excited to learn that



the trick is to start small and grow faster than the bubble so that her diadem pierces the bubble as she grows. She's been starting out at full size."

The faerie pouted. "Someone else is using my trick? I just started using it and already someone is trying to copy me? Who is this upstart?"

"Princess Viola Saxitilis, granddaughter of the Queen of the Faeries."

"There is no Princess Viola Saxitilis. The only granddaughter to the Queen, is my daughter Robin Merryweather."

"I believe that is the name of her great aunt, the Queen's sister," said Apollo.

"Dear Amaranth," said Angelina softly, "don't think too much about this other faerie right now. She hasn't been born yet. Let me introduce you to Apollo Phoenix. He has come from the future in answer to my call for help from someone with earth magic. Right now we need to find Daisy."

"A working session? Let me change into something more comfortable." Amaranth snapped her fingers and her fancy gown changed to a simple white dress with her namesake flowers embroidered around the collar. She shrunk down to flight size and circled around Apollo. "Yes, indeed. He does have earth magic, as well as the other magics." Her wings suddenly stopped fluttering and she started to drop from the sky. Apollo reached out and caught her. "Oh my stars! He even possesses faerie magic! How is that possible?"

Apollo was beginning to realize that he was going to have to be careful in what he said about himself. "My faerie godfather said that it is because I have many faerie ancestors, the most recent being my great grandmother."

"A faerie marry a human? That's as preposterous as a male faerie being a godfather. It will never happen."

"Never say never, Amaranth," offered Lord Apollo. "Check out his GodMark energy."

"Who would have thought that the other gods would allow two

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Quest/Crystal Phoenix continued

gods to protect the same child?" added Dion. "The evidence is before us that things can change."

Amaranth flew up to Angelina's shoulder. Apollo felt like she was watching him, even when she was strategizing with the others. Like most adults they ignored him in the discussion so Apollo slipped away from the group to think about what happened. Laika followed him.

"Feeling like an outcast too?" he asked. Apollo nervously backed away from the wolf. "Don't worry. I won't bite. I learned my lesson. The big blonde guy told me what to look for next time so I don't make the same mistake twice. I am sorry for how I overreacted. Not only is Princess Daisy missing, so too is my brother, Belka. They are planning to get married and I'm sure he's going to do something stupid in trying to rescue her."

"Don't take this wrong, but how can a human princess and a wolf marry?"

"Follow me."

He led Apollo to the edge of the nearby grove of trees. As they entered the grove he shook his body and in an instant, there stood a naked youth, slightly older than Apollo. His skin was light brown and was covered with thick hair. His eyes still held an ice blue tone.



"You are a werewolf?" gasped Apollo.

"No, we aren't part of that cursed pack. They can only change during the moon cycles. My pack are the wearwolves. It is said that we can choose to wear our wolf skin or our human skin."

The coolness of the grove called to the prince. Since his companion seemed to be comfortable being naked in his presence, he stripped off the remaining winter clothing and basked in the touch of the cool breeze.

"You must be part wearwolf too," said Laika. "You can choose to wear or not wear those outer garments. I'm surprised my brother could love a woman who insists that he covers up his natural beauty as soon as he changes."

"It's strange that my teacher never mentioned the wearwolves. He's told me about all sorts of other magical creatures, but not you."

Laika said that they aren't true magical creatures. His great grandfather, Wilhelm, was a human who wished that he could be a wolf. His faerie godmother granted him the wish for one night. The true wolves sensed his other worldness and Laika's great grandfather had to fight the pack leader in order to survive. He defeated the leader and won the heart of Laika's great grandmother in the process. Wilhelm returned to his human form in the morning and returned to his human bride. Laika's great grandmother soon discovered her pregnancy. That child was able to change at will between human and wolf forms. Laika said that the family believes that with each generation they have lost some of that ability and will eventually return to their wolf roots.

"So if Belka and Daisy have a child..." started the prince.

"That child should be able to change at will as does Belka."

Laika sighed. "But since your people don't know about my family, I guess it won't be enough. We will all become true wolves again."

"Why not true humans? Couldn't their children eventually lose their ability to become wolves?"

"I hadn't thought of that."

Laika changed back to wolf form and started sniffing Apollo. The wolf fur tickled as it brushed against his naked skin. When Laika started sniffing Apollo's crotch, the touch caused Apollo to become aroused.

Laika changed back. "I can't be sure. The faerie blood is strong in you and it masks out a lot of your other scents. But I can tell one thing..." Laika leapt toward Apollo. "Time for talking is over. It's time for some action."

The two wrestled. When one broke free, they would start to race away and the other would chase after them and tackle them to the ground where the wrestling would resume. Laika, with his larger body and stamina, began to wear Apollo down and nearly had him pinned to the ground when one of Rondar's lessons echoed in his mind. *"When being pinned by a larger opponent, try to relax into their grip. They will think they have won and will begin to celebrate prematurely. Use that moment to your advantage."*

Laika felt Apollo starting to relax. "Ready to yield? I promise I won't to be too rough in claiming my prize." Laika licked his lips. "I can hardly wait to see what it is like to copulate with a human."

Apollo felt Laika's cock pressing into his own cock. The wolf started to spread the prince's legs apart. Apollo gathered his strength and in a sudden burst of energy and flipped the wolf over on his back. Laika rolled again to try to get his hands and feet under him and the prince found his cock pressed up against the wolf's upraised butt.

"I yield," said the wolf. "Aren't you going to claim your prize?"

Apollo was about to say that he didn't know what Laika was talking about when they heard the others call their names. "I guess your prize will have to wait."

Laika changed back to wolf form while Apollo dressed. Laika rubbed his head against the prince's leg and Apollo reached down in an automatic gesture and rubbed the wolf's head as he would the hounds back at the castle.

"Keep that up and I will follow you to the end of time."

When they joined the others they discovered that King Angelo and Princess Ruby Rose had joined them. Lords Apollo and Dion had already departed to see what they could find out about the missing princess from the other gods. After a brief introduction, Angelina started the task of finding Princess Daisy.

"It is up to you, Apollo," said Angelina. "I have tried the air magics I know and the air can't see her anymore."

"The fire that is the sun can't see her either," offered Ruby Rose. "Nor is she near a hearth or campfire."

"And she has not touched water since she was taken," added Angelo.

"And the animals aren't talking," said Amaranth. "They chattered for a bit about watching the men take her but then they just stopped seeing her. It was almost like the whole company disappeared into thin air."

"Like this?" asked the prince as he turned everyone but the faerie invisible.

"You can do that?" asked an astonished Amaranth. "But it's not like that. The animals can sense that kind of magic and would have said something. No, they said it was suddenly a dark as the darkest night. When the light returned, the company was gone."

Apollo turned everyone visible again. "What can I do to help search?"

"Father once said that earth magic connects everything. Close your eyes and feel the energy of this rock." Angelina handed Apollo a small stone that had been on the ground at his feet. "Can you feel how it is still connected to all of the earth even though it is broken?"

Apollo nodded.

"Through that connection, can you feel my connection to the earth?" asked Angelo.

Apollo thought for a moment and then nodded again.

"And now?" Angelo jumped up and grabbed a branch above his head and hung there.

Apollo got a puzzled look on his face. "You are not directly on the ground. I can feel you, but there is a tree between us." Angelo dropped to the ground. "Ah, there you are again."

"Through that same connection," said Ruby, "you should be able to find Daisy."

"How will I know it's her?" asked Apollo. "I am already getting confused with the energies around me here."



"Try this," said Angelina, handing him a piece of red fabric. "This was part of the cloak that she was wearing when she was taken. Find the rest of it and you should find her."

Apollo sat down on the ground. He searched in ever widening circles. The further he searched the fainter the images he was seeing. He could hear the others being concerned at how long he was taking so he tuned them out and kept searching. It was Laika who brought him back by licking his face.

"You were turning as grey as a stone and everyone is concerned," he offered as an apology.

"I think I felt something. It was like she was in a deep hole as there was earth all around her. I was trying to find my way to the surface to see if I could tell you something about where that hole is."

"Did you see something that would help?" asked Ruby.

"It is hard to say since everything was comprised of masses of colored energy. The person wearing the cloak was a shining white light, much like your own, but fading. Everything around her felt cold and dead. At the surface, I felt a space that was blackened circle like an old fire pit. It seemed like there was a cottage. There were seven distinct larger living energies. One was old. It shone with a sick green glow. Another was deep reddish purple. It felt like those two were trying to keep me from finding them. Those two stayed within the cottage. Four bluish ones were searching for something outside. The last one, avoided crossing the paths of the four and had a reddish brown edge that reminded me of..." Apollo pause a moment. "That red purple energy reminds me of the person who attacked my great grandmother. My teachers think that might have been Belladonna."

"That certainly describes my mother's energy," confirmed Ruby.

"And the brown energy..." Apollo saw Laika looking at him. "It was very similar to Laika's"

"My brother! I told you he was going to do something stupid."

"That's it!" exclaimed Apollo. "If you can't see Daisy with your magics, can you see him?"

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"An interesting idea," said Angelina. "Dear wind, please carry my words to the one known as Belka, the Wolf Prince. Belka, we know you are near the princess. Tell the wind what you see and we shall join you."

While they waited, Apollo reconnected to the earth energy. Knowing what he was looking for, the magic quickly took him back to the princess. He was searching for clues of things. He shifted his attention from object to object to get different perspectives. It was frustrating because nothing came into focus since it was all energies and not real sight. He just knew that with more experience he should be able to get sight. Then he had a thought and asked the others what they saw when they used their magics to search. Angelina said the air would bring her the shape of the objects. Ruby said the fire gave her colors. Angelo said the waters conveyed the textures.

"So it is like we each only see an aspect of the scene. Is there any way we can combine what we see so that comes into focus?"

"If you are the true descendant of all three royal families you might be able to," said Amaranth in a tone that made Apollo think that she really didn't believe him. "But I don't think there is time to try to teach you."

"My teacher, Johnny Jump-up, has sometimes used a mind trick to help guide me in my lessons. Could there be a way to link our minds to combine the magics?"

"Mind magic?" gasped Amaranth. "Those little mental tricks the male faeries do actually is useful?" She pulled out her wand. "Rowan, I need you here. Now!" She raised the wand over her head and brought it down quickly. A spark flew from the end which exploded on the ground in front of her. In the midst of the dust cloud that followed, there appeared a figure bent over coughing from the dust. As the dust settled, the figure was revealed as a nude man, just slightly taller than Apollo. He was dripping wet.

"Sister, you could have at least let me finish my shower and put some clothes on."

"I didn't have time for that. We need your help. This young man claims to be the future heir to all three kingdoms and we need to train him quickly in the elemental magics. In that future, he has a male faerie as a teacher who has used mind magic in their lessons. Is this something you can do? Have you been hiding something on me?"

"As you can clearly see, I have nothing to hide," said Rowan, indicating his nudity.

"Put some clothes on," said Amaranth with a snort of disgust.

"You said you didn't have time for that, so neither do I. You brought me here naked, naked you get me." He gave her the raspberry.

Apollo used their bickering as an opportunity to check out Rowan. In appearance, he seemed to be about the same age as Rondar and his father. He was of a stockier build than his sister and when he talked with his hands, Apollo could almost imagine branches swaying in the wind. Rowan's hair was a flaming red that reminded the prince of fall leaves. His body was hairless except for the flaming patch of hair that framed his thick cock. His wings seemed to flicker like flames when they fluttered.

"Brother, there are ladies and children present. I shall insist that you cover yourself," insisted Amaranth.

"Sorry Angelo," said Rowan, "I didn't see you there." He snapped his fingers and a fuzzy pink robe dropped into his hands. As he put it on, Apollo noticed that he didn't belt the robe so it still revealed his cock when he moved. "And just where are the children you mentioned?"

Angelina silenced her brother with a stare before he responded to the barb.

"Brothers," sighed Amaranth. "Can't live with them and can't kill them without Mother finding out about it. Why she lets you get away with that outrageous behavior I will never know. If I were queen..."

"Daisy would be dead before you finish your speech," said Rowan. "You said this was an emergency so let's get to business."

Before they could continue, Angelina stopped them. "Listen! The wind brings news from Belka."

Very faintly Apollo could hear, "I can't talk. They will find... Argh." His voice suddenly stopped.

"I think he has been found," offered Angelina. "We need to hurry for both of their sakes."

Amaranth explained that they needed him to help transfer knowledge of the various elemental magics from the others to Apollo. Rowan thought about it for a moment and said that would take too long. He suggested that they link minds to Apollo and work through him. He said that the advantage would be that everyone would be able to see the same thing as he would. He sat down on the ground and indicated that he wanted Apollo to sit in front of him. He arranged the others in a circle.

"I will link to Apollo so that he can get used to my presence and touch. Then I will link Angelo as his male energy will be most familiar to him. Next, Angelina who will be the first feminine touch in his mind but in every other way the same as her twin. Next, Ruby Rose who will complete the four elements. Apollo is our earth and I am already the foundation of our link. Sister, you will be the crown of our combined energy."

As he spoke he had Angelo sit to his right and Angelina to his left. Ruby was to sit facing them. He had his sister sit behind Ruby just as he was behind Apollo.

"Where do I fit in?" asked Laika.

"Do you love your brother?" Laika nodded. "Then your love will lead us to his side. You will represent the center of our energies." He indicated that Laika should sit in front of Apollo.

Rowan stood up. "This robe has got to go. I am already warm and it is going to get hot by the time we combine all of our energies. Now is the time to get comfortable." He took off his robe and spread his robe on the ground like a blanket.

Angelina and Ruby removed their outer garments and sat down wearing just their shifts. Angelo took off his vest and boots. He removed his pants and his blousy shirt was almost like the girl's shifts and covered his groin. Apollo was glad of the opportunity to strip off the heavy winter clothes. He followed the lead of his ancestors and left his underpants on.

Laika changed to man form so that it would be easier for him to sit with the others. As they resumed their places, Apollo found himself in a naked sandwich with Rowan settling in behind him and Laika in front. With the feel of the two naked bodies around him,

the touch of the fabric felt binding so Apollo stood up and removed the last of his clothing and sat back down.

Rowan had everyone scoot in closer to each other so that they could be in physical contact as he built the mental connection. He talked in Apollo's mind and had him focus his earth energy on a point at the top of the mound that Apollo had fallen from earlier in the day. As each mind was added to the link, the other used his latent magics to start bringing the picture into focus. With each added energy, the scene became clearer. With Amaranth's energy, they found it possible to hear the sounds around them. Rowan had Apollo shift the focus around so that they had some practice of working together. If he shifted too quickly, he had to wait for the others to catch up so that the scene came in focus again. After a couple of minutes they learned the rhythm of shifting as a group.

"Now it's time to add Laika," said Rowan.

The touch of Laika's mind felt different to Apollo than the others. At first he thought it was the wolf energy that made it different. But as Rowan directed Laika to start concentrating on his brother Apollo felt a shift in Laika's thoughts. The others had been completely focused on the ultimate task of finding Daisy. On the other hand, Laika's thoughts were focused on Apollo. He wanted to do something to make up for attacking him and to be worthy of being at his side in the battle ahead. When Apollo claimed his prize, he didn't want to be left alone...again.

Rowan directed Apollo to find the princess again. Apollo worried that he had sifted too fast. When he saw her, it was as before, just shapes of energy. But when he heard one of the others

gasp, he realized that he could see something, but it was so dark that it was shadows within shadows.

"Who's there?" said Daisy in a hoarse voice. "I can feel you there. Are you another foul demon sent by that villainess?"

Apollo tried to project his thoughts into her mind and the others leant their support. "We are here to find a way to rescue you. Tell us what you know."

The princess couldn't help much. She had been bound in a bag when they traveled. When they released her, they threw her into a pit which was filled with the bones of its former residents. The prince promised that they would rescue her.

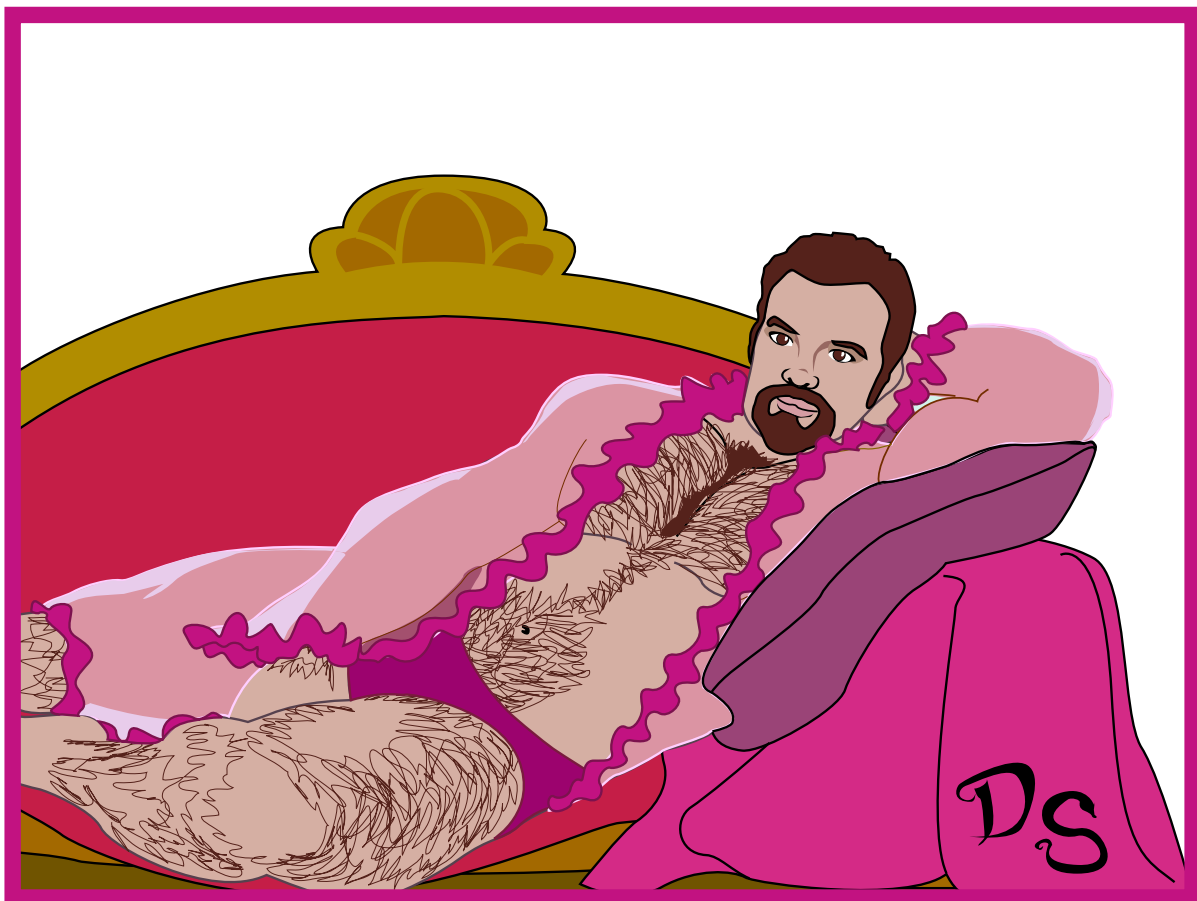
They shifted their attention to Laika's connection with his brother. They found him staked in front of the cottage. He felt the contact with the group and let out a howl.

"Do that again cur and I'll cut off your head," came the voice from inside. A moment later the door flew open. "Maybe I'll do that anyway. I'll toss it into the pit with your beloved princess so you two can gaze lovingly at each other for all eternity. I wonder if your head will be wolf or human when it lands." The woman let out a cackled that chilled Apollo's bones.

She was tall and slender. Her robes were red and purple and swirled around her as she walked. Her dark beauty mesmerized the prince as it seemed to surpass his memory of Crystal, Lily and Viola combined. That is until Ruby's gasp that she should have known her mother was involved made him look at her with a different attitude.

"Don't be so cruel, daughter," came a weak older voice from

—continued on page 12



inside the cottage. "He is probably just lonely and wants to be inside with people. Humor an old woman and let him come in to comfort me in my sick bed."

"As you wish Mother," said Belladonna. She unchained Belka and drug the snarling wolf by the muzzle and flung him inside the cottage and shut the door behind him. As she sat on the small bench by the garden she waved her hand and her image changed to that of a young peasant woman dressed in a torn riding cloak.

"Oh, you poor dear," said the unseen mother. "Let me take that muzzle off you." In a moment, they could hear the sounds of snarls and screams from the cottage. Apollo wanted to shift the focus to see what was happening but the others prevented him.

As the screams died down, Belladonna started shouting, "HELP! A wolf has attacked my grandmother! Help!"

A man dressed in hunting gear came charging from the forest. He grabbed an ax from the woodpile and burst into cottage.

Laika's scream broke the connection.

"What happened?" asked the prince.

"Belka's dead. That man killed my brother!" He broke down into sobs and everyone held him.

"I know where they are," said Ruby softly. "That is my grandmother's cottage where she retired after grandfather died. It is only a few hours ride from here."

"It will be faster my way," said Amaranth. "Get dressed so we can stop Myron from doing something else like being tricked into killing his own daughter. Gads, he always had a blind spot when it comes to helping damsels in distress."

"Why would Myron kill Belka? Didn't he recognize his future son-in-law?" asked Rowan.

"Perhaps that witch cast her illusion on him," offered Angelo. "He wouldn't have known the difference."

Softly into Apollo's shoulder, Laika spoke, "She didn't need to. They never told him. Daisy knew her father hated wolves and vowed to kill every last one of our kind. They hoped to change his mind once they got married."

Apollo sent his healing touch into Laika. He filled it with all of the love and concern he could. "We need you to be strong," he said. "I need you with me."

"You do?"

"I couldn't think of a better companion to have at my side."

Laika changed to wolf form. "Let's go and avenge my brother!"

Amaranth opened a portal to the cottage. Angelina blew her Oceana's Horn and called the guards from their search to join them as they stepped through the portal. She sent them to find Belladonna while they searched for the pit where the princess was. It was Laika's keen sense of smell that led them to it.

Apollo lit a small fire ball so they could see inside. She was about ten feet below ground and could barely respond to them. Angelo ran to find a rope that they could lower to her. Rowan shrunk and flew to her. He said she was strong enough to climb to his shoulder. He was going to grow tall enough so that she would be able to reach for someone to help her climb out the rest of the way.

Rowan grew to as tall as he had ever done, but it wasn't quite enough. Daisy was just a few inches shy of being able to grab Angelina's hand. He was sweating from the effort. The strain from

being that size was beginning to show and he started to shrink.

"I must be getting out of shape," he said apologizing to Daisy. "I have never strained so much before at sixty-nine inches." To those at the top of the hole, he shouted, "I'm going to try again to see if I can get one or two more inches. That should be enough for you to get her free and then I will fly up to join you."

"Don't do it," shouted Apollo. "You won't be able to fly again if you do."

"I've grown before and it has never been a problem."

As he spoke, he grew again. This time Daisy was able to reach the outstretched hands. Just as they got a firm grip on her they heard a loud scream from Rowan.

"My wings are on fire."

Angelo came running with a rope which they quickly lowered down to Rowan. Too weak from the pain, Apollo scampered down to help him. He applied some healing magic to the now former faerie to help ease the burn marks where his wings had been. After a few minutes Rowan had the strength to climb out of the pit.

"Belka, you saved me," said Daisy rushing to his side, ignoring everyone else. Just as Apollo climbed out of the pit, he saw her cloak fall to the ground. She had been nude underneath and the two were in a naked embrace.

Rowan blushed at the sudden press of flesh against his skin. He bent down to pick up the discarded cloak. "Alas, I am not the prince of your heart."

It was her turn to change to a deep shade of red as she realized her error. "It just that I thought I heard him. And when you started changing size to help me, well, I thought that was a new aspect of his gift."

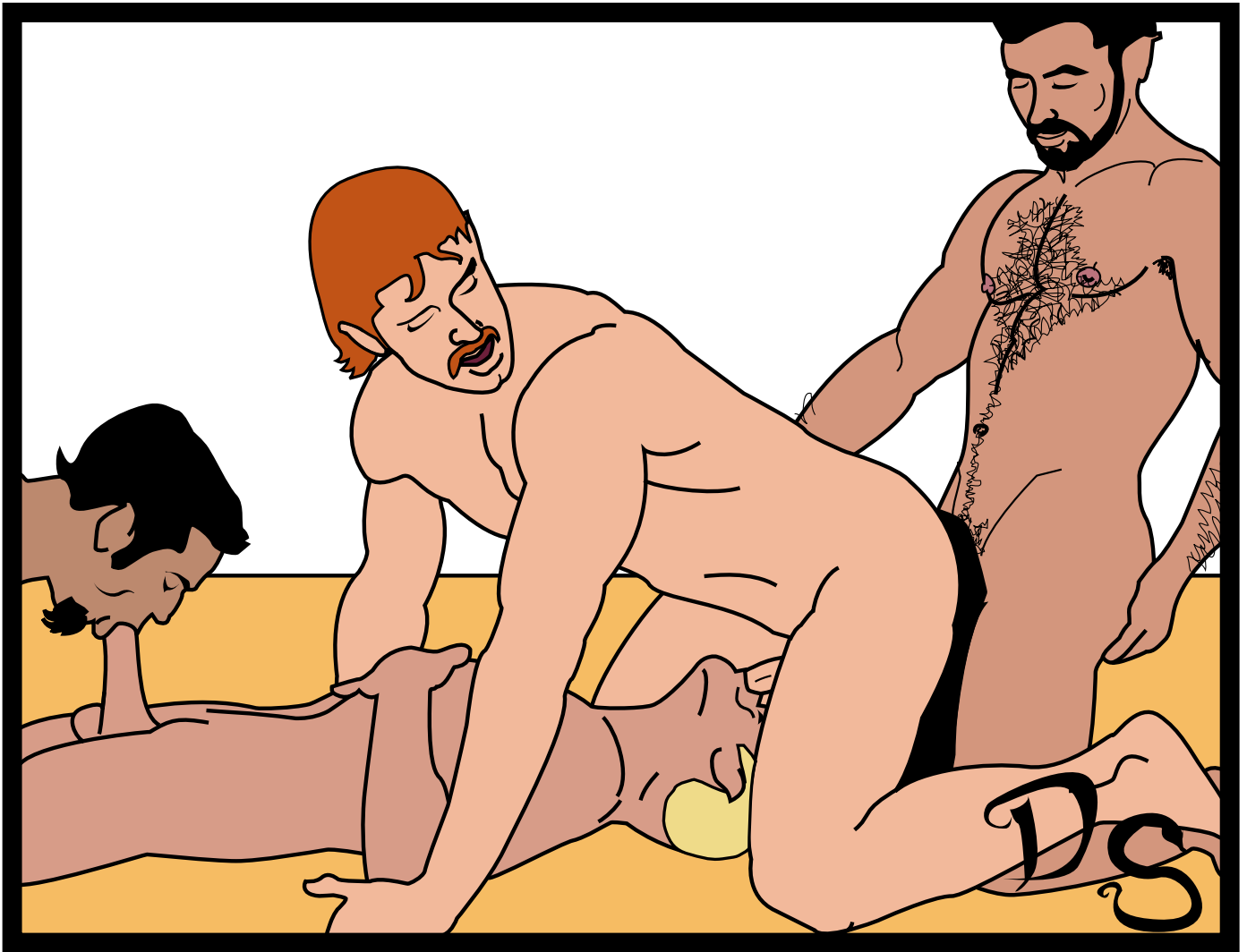
Amaranth and Angelina quickly filled her in details of her rescue. Daisy rushed to the cottage in hopes that the others were wrong. Her father was sitting there holding the lifeless body of a young man.

"I didn't know," he sobbed.

Laika rushed to his brother's side and howled. The royal cousins all gathered around Daisy as she wept with her father. Amaranth left with Rowan to see if a faerie healer could help him. Apollo suddenly felt alone and wandered to the garden. He couldn't bring himself to sit on the bench so recently occupied by Belladonna so he sat down on the small wall of the garden. He absently ran his fingers through the dirt. The familiar feel of the dirt made him think of the Garden of the Queens at home. He was lost in his thoughts of home and jumped when he felt a light touch on his shoulder. He turned to find Laika standing behind him. Laika said the others were sitting down for food and were waiting for him to join them.

The grumble in his stomach made him realize he hadn't eaten all day so he quickly washed up before heading back to the cottage. Large blankets were set up outside so that they could eat picnic style. The mood of the group was less than festive as they talked of hunting down the woman responsible for the kidnap and torture of a princess.

A beggar woman came to sell the former queen some fruit. When she learned of her death, she insisted on everyone taking a piece as her gift to a grieving family.



Daisy brightened at the sight of the fruit. “It was in an apple orchard that I met Belka.” She glared at her father. “I shall honor my love for him as I eat of this fruit.” Just as she took a bite, Daisy collapsed. Angelo barely had time to catch her before her head hit the ground.

The beggar woman let out a cackle and suddenly transformed into the slender woman Apollo had seen in his trance with the others. In a flash of smoke, she disappeared.

They tried to revive the princess to no avail. “Where’s Rowan?” asked Apollo. “We need him!”

“But he has no magic,” said Angelina.

“He doesn’t need magic. He is magic. Hilda Harbell told me that she found this when working with Amaranth to learn about Belladonna.

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

“We had thought the prince was me. Daisy could still be the maiden that can help me. I, Apollo Phoenix, shone fire on her but it was Rowan she hugged, not me. Is he not a Prince of the Faeries?”

Angelina called to her Faerie Godmother as she had before. When she arrived with Rowan, Amaranth wept when she saw Daisy’s still body. “For all my powers in granting wishes, the one that I can’t grant is my own. How I wish I had been here. I would have seen that witch for who she was.”

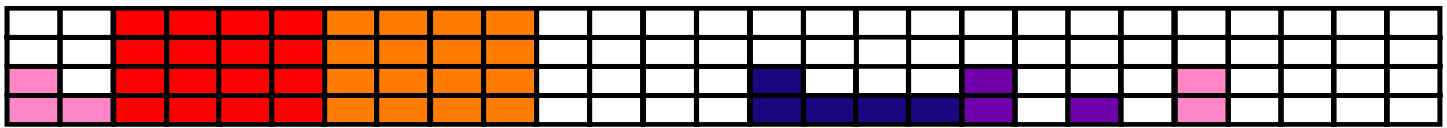
Apollo approached Rowan. “What do you say of the lady fair?”

“I shall never fly again,” he said softly, “but I would do it again. It felt so right to do something for someone. I think I could have loved her.”

Rowan knelt beside Daisy. “I too wish I had been here,” said Rowan. “I gave up everything to save you from the pit and I would have given my life to spare one as fair as you from the cruel hand of Death. In the brief times I met you in the past, I had wished I could have said something. Then, when you met Belka, I knew I could never hope to have you by my side.” He kissed her lightly on the lips. “I shall wait for you to be reborn so that I may have a second chance.”

Daisy’s body jerked on the cart and her eyes opened. She reached up and grabbed his hand. “Dear prince, I am in your debt. Twice now you have saved me.” She sat up and embraced him.

“Excuse me, but now that the princess is safe, I don’t want to seem anxious to leave, but I am sure my guards are frantic,” said Apollo. “Anyone have a clue how to send me back home?”



The 4-F Tarot: Milestone

by Phoenix

We have come to the next milestone in our journey in creating a new deck – the completion of the cards of the 4Fs (feather, flower, fin and fur) at play with their element. To complete this portion of the deck we present the ostrich, the dandelion and caterpillar, turtle and prairie dog. As I have said in the past with the other 4F of Work and Play cards, these are meant to be read with whatever depth of understanding you have of these creatures. When reading a spread, they would be akin to signs and omens when walking through the woods.

Sometimes, you encounter one creature multiple times and decide that it must be trying to tell you something. You observe the animal. You go home and dig out your books on animal totems and dream interpretations. You do research on their habits. You go on a spirit quest in the hopes that they will talk to you.

Sometimes, the stereotypical image of the ostrich burying its head in the sand is all you need to see. But those birds are also very strong and fast. That could be what you need for your reading.

The dandelion and caterpillar have to be one of my favorites of the Work and Play cards. Take a moment to think about how much energy is spent trying to rid the world of dandelions, and yet they come back every year. But, if we let them grow, we can return to our childhood and giggle in delight as we blow the seeds into the wind. Even as adults, we can delight in the making and drinking of dandelion wine. The caterpillar, another that undergoes a transformation. A worm like creature, often killed for having too voracious an appetite as it strips leaves off a favorite plant. Yet, if you let it grow, you delight in the fluttering of the butterfly. Both are a reminder to look beyond what you see as something to be removed. Look at the potential inside.

I will admit that the Sea Turtle is a bit of a stretch for the Fin of Earth, but it certainly is more visual than its land counterpart. But

then I remember that it is carrying its earth on its back. It has to go to land to lay its eggs. So I guess I can live with that stretch.

And the prairie dog – isn't he cute sitting there, ever on guard, ever paranoid? To me, he is the sign of being watchful.

I am not going to say much about the Kween of Fins on page 5, our Samhain card. I will let you relate to that moment in your own way.

The last card presented this issue is the Glory Hole. Bet you chuckled when you read the graffiti. And likewise I am sure you are wondering how this card fits into the deck.

If we were to have the deck commercially printed, this would be the first card I want you to see when you open the box. To me, this card is a moment of discovery. Something is being offered. Are you willing to reach out and grab the opportunity that is presented? Are you hopeful that the encounter will lead to something else or are you satisfied with just being able to have that anonymous moment?

Are you the person with the dick in the hole? Just putting yourself out there in the hopes that someone will come along and accept what you have to offer? But what if you have a Cinderella moment and the mouth on your dick fits perfectly. You receive the best blow job that could ever be wished for. Do you break the code of anonymity and look around the participation?

Maybe for a reading, it is the graffiti that plays an important part. "My mother made me a homosexual..." This is always a fun graffiti quote, but underlying it is a common issue – looking to blame someone else. Think of all of the energy spent in looking back in time trying to find someone to blame for the problems of today. And when you find that moment, sometimes you just have to sit back and laugh at the discovery.

How about "For a good time call..."? Have you ever picked up the phone and called? Was it a good time? Is the writing a desperate attempt at finding someone? Is it a lure into a dangerous situation? Or is it an attempt to embarrass the person whose number was listed?

Have you ever gotten to the point where you posted something on an internet hook-up site with the picture of your cock with the hopes of someone seeing the picture and contacting you? Have you responded to someone's message? Did you get what you wanted? Was that the only encounter or have you gotten together again? However you felt in all of that, in part, that is what this card represents.

And sometimes, we just need to have someone give us directions. The desired outcome of a card reading might be staring us in the face but we need "Your mouth goes here" to call attention to what is needed.

As with any deck of cards, what you can find in a card of this nature is only limited by your imagination and how deep you want to delve into going beyond the surface image and finding ways to relate the card to aspects in your life.

Next issue, we begin exploring how these cards interact by creating actual tarot spreads using the cards that we have presented.



Suck my



for a good
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24/7

Be alert
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My Mother
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The Cubby Diaries: A Special Hug

By Cubby

"I just caught your show on television" is familiar message on our answering machine. People I hadn't talked to since high school, or earlier, suddenly found their connection to someone on television and they had to pick up the phone and be part of that celebrity status. Don't get me wrong, I do like talking to them again, but the cynic inside has to ask if they haven't wanted to find me in thirty years, why now?

One message stood out from the rest. "I just caught your show on television and I miss Phil too. I wish I could have been there to join in the group hug. I miss you too." I didn't immediately recognize the voice but Caller ID said the call came from The Weird Sisters Brew House. This is a local coffee house run by Lilith, a pagan friend that I met through Uncle Phil. That's when it connected. The voice belonged to Orion, a friend of Lilith's that I had met several years ago at a public ritual she hosted.

It doesn't take much to recall the first time I met him. We were on opposite sides of the circle and I couldn't keep my eyes off of him. He had long wavy blond hair that cascaded down to his shoulders. Even across the room I could tell he had crystal blue eyes. He had that slim, trim all-American boy build and an angelic smile that lit up the room. It amazed me that I was so captivated by him since he wasn't "my type," which at that point in my life generally referred to them being a jerk more than it did about their physicality or sexual appetites. As Orion moved through the post ritual social I could hear his laughter throughout the hall. Phil introduced us and I must have stammered like a boy asking someone out on their first date. He seemed to glow and was like a Greek god gracing us with his presence. As we said good night he gave me a hug. The electricity flowed and I felt my cock grow hard. On our way home I asked Phil for all the dirt on the blond god and he told me, "Hands off. He's married and has two charming children."

Over the next few years I would run into him. When Lilith opened the coffee house, I was there. I shouldn't have been. I had one cracking headache but I had promised. Orion sat me down in a chair and proceeded to rub my head. It didn't take long for me to melt under his touch. Phil didn't say a word to me on the way home. I could tell he felt I had crossed some artificial line of socialbility.

For Imbolc after Gram's and Phil died, I didn't want to circle with the faeries. I needed a break from seeing my pain reflected in their own. I knew I didn't want to be alone so I accepted Lilith's invitation to join her at a friend's ritual. Unfortunately she got the flu that day and had to stay home but she encouraged me to go without her. When I walked into the room, there was Orion in all of his blond splendor. At the end of evening when it came time for the good-night hug I planned to keep it "friendly." He had other ideas. He held me far longer than a social hug. He said, "You need this." And I did. He held me and I felt his energy touch me and I cried. I missed my uncle and grandmother and had held back those tears. But in his embrace I knew it was safe to let go.

I felt such a strong connection to him that evening. It scared me in some ways. He was straight and I knew I would only be setting myself up for hurt if I began to think there was something to that connection. I went to the coffee house the next weekend to check on

Lilith. She asked about the ritual and I told her it was beautiful. I confessed that I was confused about Orion. She said that he had just said the same thing about myself when he was at the coffee house that morning. After that, I barely saw him and if I did, it was only at the larger public rituals. One of the last times I saw him was shortly after Peter and I started dating. We ran into him at the Weird Sisters and convinced him to join us for lunch. He disappeared after that. We occasionally asked Lilith about him and she hadn't seen him. With Orion's message fresh on the answering machine I asked her again. She said that he had been in a couple of times in the past few months. I made her promise to call me when he was there and I would come over.

The phone rang bringing me back to the present. It was Lilith. She asked if I was doing alright. Her voice was tight with concern and I had to wonder what she was talking about. She had sent me an email and was concerned that she had not heard from me. She started to say something but a customer came in. I promised to call as soon as I checked my mail. Normally I'm faithful about checking my email but for some reason I hadn't gone up to the office that day. When I signed in, there was Lilith's note. It was a good thing I was sitting down. I could see why she was worried about my not calling. Orion was dead, apparently by his own hand. The recent thoughts about him and the memories of his hugs so fresh in my mind caused me to bury my head in my hands and cry. Jim must have heard something because he came out of his room. I couldn't say anything and pointed to the open email. He read it and ran downstairs to get Peter. The two of them drove me over to the Weird Sisters and another wave of tears erupted when Lilith and I hugged. How could he do that? Why? He was such a wonderful loving man. What would make him do something like that? It had to be an accident, right? Lilith couldn't answer. She just listened. When I finally stopped ranting, the dark haired lady sitting at one of the tables said, "You loved him, didn't you?" It was Nichelle, Orion's wife.

"Only in the purest way," I said.

I gave her a long hug before we sat down. She handed me a container with some of his ashes. She said that his one request was for me to have them because as he said, "Cubby always gives the best hugs and after I'm dead I figure I'm going to need the best hug possible." I said that it was Orion who gave the best hugs. She said that after hugging us both she had to agree with Orion. She said that when she first met him, he hated hugging. Any hug he gave was because he had to. She remembered noticing the change in his hugs after he met me. After then, he started hugging from his heart not his mind. She said that is something that can't be taught in words. That is something that has to be shown and felt.

We never did learn answers to the whys surrounding his death. I never really knew much about him, you know the work and favorite sport team, kind of stuff. I just knew that he gave great hugs. I guess if you are going to be remembered for one thing, that is a great one. I can only hope that I will be remembered for something equally good.

The Happy Place

by Okapi

Why did you leave me?
They say you went to a happier place.
Wasn't I enough to make you happy?
I was happy.
I thought you were happy.
I thought we were happy.
Why did you need to go to a happier place?

Without you here, there is no joy.
No sunshine.
No color.
Why did you take the color away?
Each day is like night in a bad black and white movie.
I miss the splendor of a Technicolor world.
I miss being happy.
I miss you.

I guess I need to pack up and find my happy place.
I know where it is.
It is with you.
Can you give me directions to the happier place?
I don't think I can get there by myself.

What do You Say?

By Phoenix

What do you say to a friend who has been hurt?
Is a simple "I hope you feel better" enough?
Will a "I'll say a prayer for your recovery"
Cover what needs to be said?

What do you say to a friend who has been hurt?
Hurt so badly that they are rushed to a hospital?
"I hope you feel better" doesn't begin to convey
The feelings of relief that they are alive.
"I'll say a prayer that you'll be home soon."

What do you say to a friend who has been hurt?
Hurt so badly that they are rushed to a hospital?
And the act that took led them there was deliberate?
By their own hand?
That hurt is so deep that it goes to the soul.
What can you say so the message is heard
That you care and want them around?

What do you say to their lover who found them?
Is "Thank god you were there" enough?
Will "My thoughts and prayers are with you"
Cover everything that needs to be said?

What do you say to their lover who found them?
What do you say the second time it happened?
The third?
One time is all it takes for them to not be there
In the right time, the right place.
What do you say then?
"My prayers and thoughts are with you,"
Can't begin to cover the feelings of pain
That anyone feels.

Suicide, a permanent solution
To a temporary situation.
They sought an answer to their question,
However imperfect that answer was.
But in their wake, they leave so many more questions.

Please send your prayers to me
Help me find the words to say
When I go to visit my friend and their lover
After the one was hurt,
And are in the hospital
And it was deliberate
And the one found the other
And it is the second time around.



Crossing the Bridge

by Anja

Reprinted with permission from the Daily Stuff, June 2006

Earlier this year, I did a Crossing the Bridge ritual. I stood in front of a roomful of people that I didn't know, that I had only met briefly and said that the woman whose ashes were in the small box in front of me, covered and surrounded by flowers, had crossed to the Summerlands. "The Horn has sounded for her. The Wheel has turned", I said, and it was true. Yet, I did not know them, or know her. How could I speak words of comfort?

Two months earlier I had sat in a hospital room, holding the hand of a woman that I had only been able to speak to for a few minutes, quietly chanting as she collected herself to make that final journey to the other side, knowing that this is what she wanted, not to be alone while she made the final jump, but knowing that none of her family or friends were in reach, that they would come too late to say anything more than goodbye.

Death is hard to deal with in our culture. We fear it and try to sanitize it. I don't know whether our forebears who had to deal with it up close did it better, but I think it may have been more real to them.

I have sat in too many hospital rooms, with relatives, friends, total strangers, even one of my own children, holding a hand, being the link with the rest of humankind.

Perhaps I am the quiet voice, perhaps I am just a receptive ear, but I sit, and listen, or talk, or chant, or just sit silent as requested, listening to the beeping of the machines and the quiet bustle from the area outside the curtains or the door and the breathing of the person in the hospital bed.



I have listened and watched as the shadows creep up to the person that I am with. Sometimes they recede, but sometimes they do not and the Wheel turns into the Dark.

This is a hard time. Sometimes family and friends are there, and for the one who Crossing, this is a good thing, but sometimes those who remain behind don't know what to do, or to say. They fumble for words, and go silent, or weep or even scream at the realization that heart monitor has begun the long beeeeeeeeeeeep that signals that the Spirit has left the beloved husk. All I can do then is to say, "I know," and hold or pat or weep with them.

Sometimes the need for hospital routine or medical intervention to try to hold onto the person throws everyone from the room. This is even harder, although there are places for people to wait and sit and hold together.

Once, that was my lot, to sit with my father when hope was fading that he might be able to hold on. The injuries he had suffered were mortal. That was becoming obvious as the early morning wore on. He was fighting to keep going. My mother was trying to keep my brother from going into hysterics. He couldn't handle the thought that our strong, hearty and healthy Dad could be too damaged in body to go on. He couldn't even come look at him, knowing that Dad was not likely to be able to hold on my longer.

I sat by my Daddy, thinking of all the wonderful things we had done together and told him bits and pieces when I could speak, although most of the time my grief was choking me into silence. I was holding part of his hand, only two fingers, all that I could touch without causing him pain.

I told him, "Daddy, if you're holding on because of us... We'll be alright. Mom's with Dwight and I'm here with you and we'll all hold together. If you are ready to go, well, we'll miss you, but it's ok. We'll take care of Mom. I could feel him squeeze my fingers, and then he relaxed and I could feel him start to slide away from me, faster and faster, not with any sense of dread, but the way he had always been when we rode on our sleds, grinning with anticipation, and then just as the long beep started and the attendants came rushing in to do what they could, I heard him laugh.

I heard again his big, beautiful belly laugh. Not with human ears, no, because his breath was gone from his body at that point, but I heard it. I walked down the hall to where Mom and my brother were and quietly said, "I think he's gone," and that's what the doctor came and told us in a few minutes.

That is why I can say, "I know."

It's not easy to have to let go of someone, but that memory of my Dad's laugh has kept me going for years, and kept me going when I've had to tell others that the one they loved most in the world has gone for good.

I stood in the room where we were having the funeral service for this woman that I had met with only briefly, but at a time of Passage. I was doing the ritual at the request of her children who were still arguing five minutes before we started about whether this type of ritual was appropriate.

The one daughter said, "This would be what Mom wanted." The one son said, "She was a priestess, too." The other daughter said, "But she ought to have a funeral at MY church!" She finally

gave in and the ritual started. I don't why people fight about things like this. I can only guess that control of small things becomes more important when you cannot control Death.

These things are never easy. I like to have people who know the person who has Crossed read favorite poems, or passages from books, sing a song, or something. I usually end up doing the eulogy which is often just bare, bald facts. Born here, this year, went to school, married, had such and such a career, won thus and so awards, had so and so many kids, died....

This time, I told them how the few words that we had exchanged had gone. I knew she was Wicca, as I am, and when I came into her room with the nurse she opened her eyes and smiled and whispered, "She says you are a Priestess? Can you sing me across? I don't want to be alone." So I did.

How much do you have to know about someone to do them that service?

Thankfully, not much, but I found myself thinking about her and wondering as I sat there during several long hours, where I grew very tired. I got up every so often and got some water and came back. I knew that I was doing what she needed...wanted, but I got tired and I got hoarse and I got sleepy, but I kept going....and then it was over.

At that point in the service I invite those who are there to come and add rosemary to the bouquet that is with the ashes. Many people do this silently, some weep, some say goodbye, some say something else, but one that spoke really caught my attention. He walked up to the altar, put his rosemary sprig into the bouquet and very firmly said, "I hate you. Thank you," and then walked away. No one there knew who he was or what that was about and he disappeared right after the service, so they'll never know.

An unfinished story...

And yet, it brought me to a new thought. None of us really know everything about those around us, even those we love. When someone Crosses the Bridge there's always some unfinished business. What comfort can we give when all those possibilities are ended?

What we can offer is what we all share. Grief, shared pain, that it's ok to weep, that we're not alone. Sometimes all I can say is, "I know," and that is enough.

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To One Shortly to Die by Walt Whitman

From *Whispers of Heavenly Death* found in *Leave of Grass*

From all the rest, I single out you, having a message for you,
You are to die – let others tell you what they please, I cannot
prevaricate,

I am exact and merciless, but I love you – there is no escape for
you.

Softly I lay my right hand upon you, you just feel it,
I do not argue, I bend my head close and half envelop it.
I sit quietly by, I remain faithful,

I am more than nurse, more than parent or neighbor,
I absolve you from all except yourself spiritual bodily, that is
eternal, you yourself will surely escape,
The corpse you will leave will be but excrementitious.

The sun bursts through in unlooked-for directions,
Strong thoughts fill you and confidence, you smile,
You forget you are sick, as I forget you are sick,
You do not see the medicines, you do not mind the weeping
friends, I am with you,
I exclude others from you, there is nothing to be commiserated,
I do not commiserate, I congratulate you.

Know Your Tarot? The 4Fs of Work and Play

By Professor Percival "Perry" Grinn

You know the drill - words can be found vertically, horizontally or diagonally, forward or backwards.

G	S	T	B	O	U	E	D	T	P	Y	S	C	T	P	N	G	V	O	S
R	V	E	H	L	E	J	U	R	L	F	X	V	P	F	H	S	U	F	U
A	E	G	D	E	S	R	O	H	A	E	S	K	V	C	U	W	L	H	C
S	P	T	A	R	C	P	D	E	J	Z	E	H	W	H	E	A	T	Y	O
S	X	H	R	R	A	Z	P	W	E	Y	I	L	L	H	M	L	U	E	R
H	R	A	E	I	M	G	A	R	L	T	C	L	N	I	D	L	R	N	C
O	W	M	B	U	E	L	O	O	L	V	K	V	N	Y	S	O	E	A	A
P	P	E	M	Q	L	V	T	H	Y	J	R	G	D	F	C	W	T	C	R
P	O	O	A	S	P	U	E	N	F	I	O	S	K	R	F	F	A	A	D
E	J	U	R	E	S	M	U	R	I	L	O	E	C	H	I	C	K	T	I
R	I	R	E	I	X	X	O	A	S	U	Y	R	Y	S	T	Q	A	E	N
O	K	H	N	G	S	S	W	E	H	N	Q	U	H	U	I	D	D	R	A
A	S	N	O	O	T	V	B	B	S	K	O	N	S	E	Z	R	A	P	L
D	G	P	K	R	I	P	P	R	A	I	R	I	E	D	O	G	I	I	Z
R	C	O	I	F	O	P	O	A	H	F	Z	F	L	P	T	C	Z	L	F
U	V	C	L	O	V	E	R	L	C	Y	R	A	T	E	Q	A	C	L	T
N	H	Y	H	X	K	A	M	O	P	X	L	S	R	P	D	X	V	A	E
N	N	N	J	X	B	T	D	P	C	T	J	A	U	P	E	N	Q	R	R
E	Q	E	E	W	Y	D	U	X	L	S	P	M	T	E	F	I	A	G	S
R	Y	P	N	K	J	G	M	I	N	Y	I	C	A	R	X	D	F	D	H

Working Element Cards

- VULTURE
- PENQUIN
- ROAD RUNNER
- CHICK
- FLY *stuck in* AMBER
- CROCUS
- CACTUS *and* SCORPION
- BEE *and* CLOVER
- CATFISH
- KOI
- LIZARD
- GUPPY
- HYENA
- POLAR BEAR
- CAMEL
- SHEEP

Playing Element Cards

- SWALLOW
- CARDINAL
- FLAMINGO
- OSTRICH
- WHEAT *and* GRASSHOPPER
- PEPPER
- LOTUS *and* DRAGONFLY
- DANDELION *and* CATERPILLAR
- FROG
- JELLYFISH
- SEAHORSE
- TURTLE
- SQUIRREL
- FOX
- RETRIEVER
- PRAIRIE DOG

Only the words in ALL CAPS are actually in the puzzle. The “fly” in DRAGONFLY does not count as a find for FLY. It is in the puzzle on its own.

