

Aíry Faerie
Ostara 2008

Bats In Their
Bonnets



Publisher's Notes

Welcome back to another edition of the Denver Faeries' Airy Faerie. Let's see...the days are getting warmer, there is more sunlight, we have changed our clocks ahead one hour, the weather report is a mix of 60 degree days and days with snow, and Phoenix is busy cooking eggs so that we can color them tomorrow. So this must be our Ostara issue. Happy spring everyone! I hope you enjoy the vernal equinox, the time when light and darkness are balanced. I have heard rumors that you can stand an egg up right at the equinox but have never tried it. If anyone has been successful at this please let me know. I am sure there must be a YouTube video of someone doing this out there, heck they have everything else.

Anyway, back to the issue. Our faerie monsters continue their celebrations of the holidays on our cover. Our young prince Apollo continues on his adventures, trapped in the past. Of course we continue to have our images and writings of male nudity and gay sexual acts. This means we also continue our nudity and sex warning. Please be careful where you view this fae zine, and who you share it with. Not everyone enjoys, or is old enough to view naked men or sexually active gay men. Continuing on...(Sorry I'll stop continuing to continue.)

Phoenix starts off his offerings with a new series called "Make You Think." I know thinking is a dangerous past time, and can cause headaches, but he does have some interesting thoughts to share. He also offers some thoughts on the Goddess we honor at Ostara. He has been doing a lot of thinking lately. If you have some thoughts to share with us, please feel free to send them our way. We always love to hear from our readers.

On the back cover, along with some cooking tips from Ms. Panz, I pay a small tribute to the overworked star of Easter: the Easter Bunny. Unlike his Christmas counter part, Mr. Claus, the Easter Bunny does not have a workshop full of elves doing his work. He does not even get to sit his lazy ass in a sleigh pulled by magical

reindeer. Poor Mr. Bun has to hop all over the world delivering his baskets of goodies to good boys and girls. Ok for some special kids, a visit from the Easter Beagle does lighten the load for poor Mr. Bun. Thanks Snoopy, at least someone helps out. I show our tired holiday hero filling his last basket for the season. Here is to you Mr. Easter Bunny! I'll leave some extra carrots out for you.

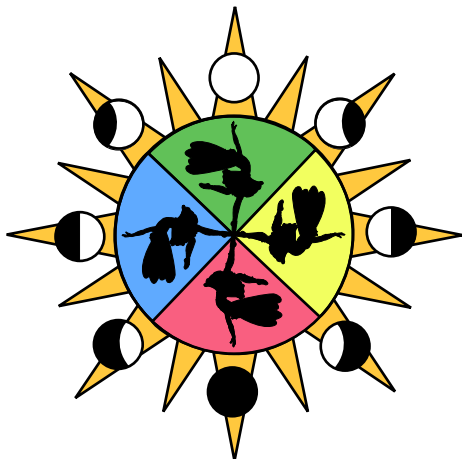
With that I will close this pub note and let you go enjoy our Ostara issue and the start of spring. Maybe you can try balancing an egg after you read the issue!

Be well my Faerie Brothers and Sisters!

Much Love, Faerie Blessings and Naked Hugs,
DragonSwan



Airy Faerie



Ostara 2008

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

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These Things Shall Never Die by Charles Dickens

The pure, the bright, the beautiful
That stirred our hearts in youth,
The impulses to wordless prayer,
The streams of love and truth,

The longing after something lost,
The spirit's yearning cry,
The striving after better hopes —
These things can never die.

The timid hand stretched forth to aid
A brother in his need;
A kindly word in grief's dark hour
That proves a friend indeed;

The plea for mercy softly breathed,
When justice threatens high,
The sorrow of a contrite heart —
These things shall never die.

Let nothing pass, for every hand
Must find some work to do,
Lost not a chance to waken love,
Be firm and just and true.

So shall a light that cannot fade
Beam on thee from on high,
And angel voices say to thee —
"These things shall never die."



Lines Written in Early Spring by William Wordsworth

I heard a thousand blended notes,
While in a grove I sate reclined,
In that sweet mood when pleasant thoughts
Bring sad thoughts to the mind.

To her fair works did Nature link
The human soul that through me ran;
And much it grieved my heart to think
What man has made of man.

Through primrose tufts, in that green bower,
The periwinkle trailed its wreaths;
And 'tis my faith that every flower
Enjoys the air it breathes.

The birds around me hopped and played,
Their thoughts I cannot measure:—
But the least motion which they made
It seemed a thrill of pleasure.

The budding twigs spread out their fan,
To catch the breezy air;
And I must think, do all I can,
That there was pleasure there.

If this belief from heaven be sent,
If such be Nature's holy plan,
Have I not reason to lament
What man has made of man?

Make You Think: The Number 19

by Phoenix

After last issue's article about Brid, I was asked what was the significance of the number nineteen as associated with that Goddess. I honestly didn't know but it made me think. If I have to think, then so do you. It hurts to think, so pain shared is pain divided.

Actually, as a society I don't think we think enough. Are you old enough to remember "Question Authority" as the slogan during the youth movement and years of 'the generation gap'? Questioning authority, in and of itself, is not necessarily a bad thing when presented in a proper manner at the proper time. When done right it can be a good learning tool. You may find out that the authority had good reason for what they did. You may find out that they are all smoke and mirrors and don't have a clue. Or they may have had a good reason once upon a time and have done it that way for so long that they have forgotten the reason and needed your question to force them to remember. And maybe you find that the reason is no longer valid and it is time for change. But it all starts from asking the question.

The world of the internet's urban legends counts on you to not think, to not question the authority. They want you to take their information at face value and pass the message on without thinking. The more people that do that, the more it grows into a life of its own and sounds more real with each generation of notes. Then one day, you get a response from a friend telling you to go check out www.snopes.com to read the truth. If you are lucky, they send that to just you. Otherwise, they will send it to all of your friends so that they will know that you are an idiot who acts without thinking.

And of course, when facing those of the religious right, their followers are generally taught that they can't think for themselves. They must find their answer in the holy book and the priests will be sure to tell them how to think about what they read. When entering a discussion with one of those people, chances of getting them to give you a real response to the question "what you do think" are slim and none. You will be most likely met with "Well, the holy book says..." They can quote chapter and verse but could not tell you what it means. By taking the time to understand the holy book and ask the questions outside of the debate, you will find yourself in a better position to open the door of their mind and plant the seeds of doubt. Then, they will begin to question authority themselves.

As I work on this series, I am going to examine some of the questions that I've had in my spiritual quest. As I take you on my journey to finding an answer that makes sense for me, I hope that you can begin on your own journey. If you are so moved, send us your thoughts on the question and I will put the responses together for the following issue. If you have a question of your own that you want to open up to others, send that as well.

Now, I will be honest with you. I know I don't have "THE Answer" and I am not on a quest to find out what "THE Expert" has to say on the topic. I am trying to find the answer that makes sense to me. If I pick up a book at it says that a certain herb is masculine or feminine, I want to know why. It sounds so black and white and we know that there is a spectrum of sexual identities so why limit our herbs to those dualistic labels? Part of the magic of spell craft and ritual lies in one's understanding and belief in the magic being performed. "Because I told you so" is not a good way to get me to

believe. If I act just because I was told to do something in a certain way, it means that I can play copy cat. But if I figure out why, embrace it and claim it for my own, then I can go beyond what I was taught and create something new.

I have had a flood of ideas that I want to bring into this series (Thank you Brid for your gift of inspiration!). Things I have been thinking about for this series include why is a snake on the symbol of healing when we have such a strong snake = evil image in our society? What changed? Or why is it a Triple Goddess? She is often represented by three phases of the moon – new, half and full. But we know that the waxing and waning moon energies are different so shouldn't there be at least four aspects of the Goddess instead of three? I'm not going to give away all my questions yet, so time to dive into the question of the issue – Why would the number nineteen be important to Brid?

My first thought wasn't pretty. We have twenty fingers and toes. How many was She going to ask us to give up to gain her favor? She isn't greedy, so She would let us keep one. My guess is a toe so that when we whine that Her gift wasn't exactly what we wanted, She could arrange to have someone step on it to remind us what we gave up to receive her gift. Now that isn't the nicest of images, so I think I will move on to the next idea.

Nineteen is a prime number. It is the largest prime number that we have in those same twenty fingers and toes. That has some possibility, so I'll file that thought away for later consideration if nothing better comes along.



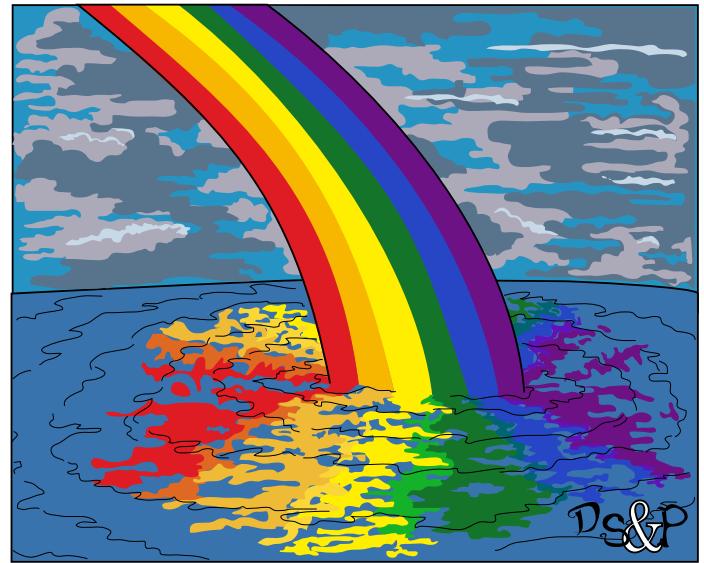
Numerology? Nineteen reduces down to 1 ($1+9 = 10$, $1+0 = 1$). Something doesn't seem right. She is a triple Goddess, so I would think She would want that number to reduce to a nice magical 3 such as 12 and 21 would do. That doesn't seem to be leading me anywhere, so next thought.

How about looking at the nineteenth card of the Tarot? Oh, that's the Sun. If She were the Goddess of the Sun, I might pursue this a bit more. But since the Tarot, in its standard form, isn't really a Celtic tradition, I think I will move on. I don't know my runes well enough, but I associate those more with the Nordic tradition, so I think I won't go down that path either.

Some suggest $19 = 12 + 7$, with twelve signs in the zodiac and the seven planets of the ancient world (Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, the Sun and the Moon). At its simplest, that would represent everything in the skies. Something doesn't feel right about that to me. First it is a very contrived possibility. It seems to be a forced fit such that it seems to me that the $12 + 7$ idea came after the 19 was established and someone struggled with the question too and that's where they stopped looking. My second hesitation is two-fold. As a Goddess, I would expect that She would have known that the Sun and Moon weren't planets. And in my mind the concept of the twelve sign zodiac is really not part of the Celtic culture. I'm sure that an expert would point to some text book that has the Celtic zodiac, but they would be hard pressed to convince me that it was the older tradition and was not the familiar zodiac retrofitted with Celtic names.

Now, in my quest for information on Brid and the number nineteen, I came upon this website: <http://whisperingwood.homestead.com/Brighid.html>. On this site (and others), they suggest that the number nineteen is in honor of the Celtic Great Year. This is a nineteen year cycle that marks its beginning and ending when the new moon and Winter Solstice coincide. I think I can believe in other people's belief in that number, but not in my ever questioning brain. It seems too simple and too easy. First, that is a pretty major solar and lunar event and Brid is neither a major solar nor lunar deity. Certainly, as a Goddess of the Fires of Hearth and Forge She has some relationship with the fire of the sun, but that really isn't her domain so why pick a magical number that is so strongly tied with either the solar or lunar rhythms? Second, because that number is so linked to the passing of time, I would expect a deity of time to use it, and again that is not something normally associated with Brid. Third, that moment of synchronization of solar and lunar cycles is linked to Yule. Brid stands firmly as the Goddess we honor at Imbolc. I think this is another occasion of someone searching for meaning in the number nineteen, found this and stopped looking. I can live with someone putting their belief in that answer, but I think the answer is deeper than that.

As I indicated, I found other websites that linked Brid's nineteen priestesses that kept the perpetual flame with the concept of the Celtic Great Year. I singled out this particular website because it said something else. Each of those priestesses tended the flame one day and then, on the twentieth day Brid tended to the flame herself. Now if we go back to the Celtic Great Year, it doesn't make much sense to have a day of rest between the rotation of



duties between the priestesses. But, if we have nineteen priestesses and one Goddess, we are back to twenty somethings and that leads me back to my original starting point of fingers and toes...just in a nicer way. In this thought, Brid is working along side her priestesses. She is not putting herself above working. She is part of the team. She needs them and they need Her. It isn't the nineteen that is so special. It is the one that gets added to those nineteen that make up the sum of our fingers and toes that is important. In the case of the petitioner, that one isn't Brid, it is the petitioner themselves. By the time one completes the nineteen incantations, they have assumed the role of those nineteen priestesses. That then allows Brid to come in as the twentieth and make things happen. And my gut is telling me that Brid actually lends her energy and inspiration to the petitioner so that they are actually the twentieth rather than Her coming in from the outside to "save the day." That doesn't seem to be Her style. She is a goddess of inspiration, and if the comment about Her taking a turn at tending the flame is accurate, She is also a very hands-on kind of goddess and would expect Her followers to roll up their sleeves and get to work too.

I think I can believe in this idea. Anything else seems contrived and artificial. They feel like something has been imposed on the number. While they fit (sort of – kind of – but not really) it is about the same fit as some of my pants – just a little too snug to feel comfortable. The idea of the hands and feet and Brid being one of the set instead of something that comes in from the outside feels good to me. It feels natural. This makes me feel empowered that by invoking Her presence that I can actually make things happen; that I can make a difference. To me, that is one of the most important aspects of spirituality. This makes me feel good about myself and what I might be able to accomplish in Her name. I think that is what I will keep in my heart and hold in my thoughts when I'm invoking Brid in my life and in circle.

If you have thoughts to share on how I came to this conclusion or your own thoughts on the number nineteen, please send them our way. The address (both email and snail mail) are on the inside cover. See you next time when I come back with something else to make us think.



The 4-F Tarot: Fire and Flowers

by Phoenix

Take a look at the tarot meter - there are 58 colored boxes out of the 108. We are over halfway through the process!

This issue's babies and lovers are those of fire and flowers. I don't think I need to spend too much time talking about the fire pair - matches and the lovers' passion that lights up the sky like the Fourth of July. Those two pretty much speak for themselves in a universal kind of way. That's fine with me since that gives me more room to talk about the other cards for this issue.

The Baby of Flowers is a bottle of weed killer and a can of insect killer. Do you remember that I said that the babies of the 4-F side of things are things that our creatures needed to learn to avoid in order to survive? Well, this stuff can kill, so our babies better learn that when they see this stuff, they need to get out of the way. But if they can't, then they need to learn how to grow strong enough to overcome the effects. If this comes up in a reading as something you might need to help you in a situation, don't forget to be careful about what you wish for. The poison may work but it can have some downstream effects. Maybe the problem you are trying to get rid of will adapt and become a bigger problem. Maybe, like insecticide, once you release the poison, it gets into the food chain and causes damage in ways you never predicted. It might be the fast, easy way to get rid of a problem but you might end up with a ripple effect that is far worse than the original problem.

I think the Lover of Flowers standing at his window is a fun card in many ways. I want the characters on the cards to live in real kinds of ways so that we can relate to them. In this case, I think we have all been there at some point, standing there waiting for someone. How many times has he picked up the note to check the time? How often has he looked at the clock? How often has he looked at the clock only to discover that the only thing that has moved is the second hand? Is this their first date? Is this that "special night" when he expects his lover to pop the question? How

many times has he stood at the window waiting for others only to have the heartbreak of getting the call saying that their date can't make it? What was the time again? Oh, it's still only 6:45. Was that a sound he heard? Is that him? Will he rush to the door and open it before his date gets to the front porch? Will he wait until the doorbell rings? Will he walk slowly and make him ring twice? Oh, that wasn't him. What time is it? Oh, it's still only 6:45. Will he pick up the rose to smell it and have a flood of memories of all the other roses he's gotten? Does this one smell sweeter for the fact that it came from him? Is this the first one he's gotten?

I can remember the first roses that Rich sent me - my favorites: Chantilly Lace (a lavender and white rose in case you are wondering). I was at work and in came a half dozen roses. The women were jealous that a guy got roses and they didn't. The dried roses are long gone but I know exactly where that vase is even after nearly 20 years. I know what is in our lover's mind. I've been there and I bet you have been too. And on the off chance you haven't, I bet you know people who have.

Next in our floral family is the Goddess of Flowers. You have already met the God in the form of the stud with the cup of wine. The Kween was our card for Litha with dancing in the moonlight and the King is Mr. Mabon resting in the wheelbarrel. With the Goddess, you have now seen all four of "court" cards of Flowers.

The Goddess is all about spring and its freshness. In the world of the triple Goddess, she is the Mother component. The Kween of Flowers would be the Maiden and you will meet the Crone in the form of the Goddess of Feathers. The Goddess is also about having some pride in getting something started. It is about taking up some responsibility in caring for the baby, whether that is physical or metaphoric. It is about nurturing.

And for the last card for this issue, we have the fellow on the right. I'm not going to say too much about him right now, not even his name. You will find out later in this issue when I use him in a reading, but for now, I will let you stare at him and see if you can discover his secret on your own. Some of his lessons will be painful. Some will make you laugh. But some of his best lessons are the "Aha moments" that earn you the wink. How you react to his lessons will depend on your mood at the time as much as his.

This is a "Magic" card. You will be able to recognize a Magic card by the presence of a rainbow. In his case, that rainbow is a clue to his nature. The Magics are cards that move through the other cards. They combine things in different ways and don't limit themselves to the rules that the others are designed around. They are the spirit that links us together. We have the four elements of Air, Fire, Water and Earth. The Magics are our Center or Spirit.

In this case, the card is the Magic of Play. He is out to have fun and it is up to you to play around with him or to expose his secret to anyone who listens. In this case, I want to play along and let you discover his secrets on your own. As to exposing his secret, I think he is doing a fine job of exposing it himself. Or should I say exposing himself? And that's all the hint I'm going to give you.



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Quest for the Crystal Phoenix

Chapter 26: The Aftermath

by Orpheus

Silence filled the room for a moment as everyone absorbed the latest news. The princess had been attacked on her wedding day by Amaranth, who really turned out to a priestess of Heca disguised as a beggar woman, who slipped away from the guards and apparently attacked the real Amaranth and her mother. The same Amaranth, who is now standing in the doorway saying that her mother is dead. Meanwhile, in the turmoil that followed the attack on the princess, Fenrir, the great wolf chief, kidnapped the princess.

The silence was shattered by King Myron. Pointing at Amaranth, he shouted, "Grab that woman who attacked my daughter!"

The guards tried to grab at the faerie. "Don't even think of touching me with those filthy human hands!" she said as she shrunk to flying size and quickly flew to her brother's shoulder. "Tell them I'm the real thing," she demanded.

"Oh, now you need my support? Where were you when mother banished me to the human realms?" Rowan chided.

Amaranth started to cry. "Mother is dead and I thought I could count on you for some support."

"Oh, stop that and start acting like the queen instead of like my sister," he said. "This one's the genuine thing. You can stand down."

The guards lowered their weapons which were directed toward his shoulder.

"What are you doing standing there?" shouted Myron. "Shouldn't you be off chasing after those wolves? Who knows what he's done to her?"

"So far nothing, Your Majesty," said Apollo. "I'm following her energy and so far she is only frightened. He hasn't hurt her in any way."

"And he won't," came the voice from the doorway.

One of the maids screamed, "Wolf!" All eyes turned toward the door and indeed a wolf was standing there. One of the guards was about to swing his sword when Myron stopped him. "That's Laika," he shouted, "Let's see what he has to say before we kill him."

"While you have a sword to my throat, I'll probably say the same thing that my brother said to you when he died."

"He said nothing."

"Exactly."

The two stared at each other. Myron broke the stare by ordering the guards to follow the wolves and for the maids to take Amaranth to where she could begin the sad process of planning for her mother's funeral. That left Myron alone with Rowan, Apollo and Laika.

"What are you implying, Laika?" demanded Myron.

"Nothing, Your Majesty. Everyone in this room was in the

meld that saw you rush into the cottage. The one thing that only the two of us knows is whether or not a wearwolf changes form after they die. One of the reasons the council put a geas on me to remain in wolf form is that if I'm killed, it will prove one way or the other which is the truth and which is the lie." He stared at the king, challenging him to refute his claim. When the king averted his eyes, Laika continued. "But that isn't why I came in here. I know things about Fenrir that you will want to know before you try to rescue the princess."

"And why should we believe anything you have to say about your father" asked Myron. "You would probably say anything you could to protect him."

"For starters, he's not my father."

"We assumed he was talking about Belka when he talked about his son. And you two were brothers, right?" asked Apollo.

"Belka was his son and brothers, yes," replied Laika, "But we had the same mother but not the same father."

Laika explained that his father, Verlorok, was Fenrir's brother. Both were sons of the child of the union of the first human and wolf. Fenrir mated with Strelka, child of the council leader in hopes to strengthen his position to take over the council when Chernushka died. Belka was the result of that union. Verlorok, with his own eye toward the council leadership, humiliated Fenrir by raping his mate. The long power struggle between the brothers left Verlorok dead. The child of the rape, Laika, was cast out of the pack. Belka loved his little brother and managed to sneak him food so he could survive. Once Belka was old enough to claim leadership of a small pack of his own, he broke tradition and pulled in an outcast as a member of his pack. Since he was grooming his son to succeed him in the council, Fenrir could not openly question the decision without making it look like he couldn't trust Belka's choice. So while he didn't like to have the reminder of Verlorok's betrayal around, he had to accept it."

"So if he killed his own brother," asked Myron, "why would you say that he won't harm Daisy?"

"Simple. If Fenrir wanted to kill her, he would have done so right in front of you," replied the wolf. "Where's the pleasure of killing for revenge if the object of revenge isn't present to watch?"

"As unpleasant as that sounds," offered Rowan, "that does match what I know of wolves."

"So what is his plan?" asked Myron.

"Much like Daisy was used to lure Belka into Belladonna's plot, he is using her to lure you to his. He isn't interested in killing her. He wants to kill you. And if he can do it in front of the council, all the more witnesses to his great skill as leader. None would ever question his right to rule the pack. And in the pack's eyes, since he killed the human pack leader, he would become the pack leader of



both wolf and human.”

King Myron paled at that information.

“What else should we know about Fenrir?” asked Apollo. “You said there were things to know about him and I don’t think you meant about your heritage.”

“True. Fenrir has built up protections against most weapons. He found favor with Wolfsun, the God of All Wolves. He was granted protections against most all human weapons. It is said that the only weapon that Wolfsun could not grant protection from is Eartaifiwa since it was a gift to the humans from their gods. To defeat him, you will need the great sword of your ancestors.”

Myron collapsed in a chair, burying his face in his hands. “Then we are doomed. I have tried to find it these past several years but always turn up empty handed. I’ve begun to think I was imagining things and almost believe my daughter when she says that I’m crazy.”

“You are not crazy,” said Rowan. After a moment of hesitation, he continued. “I’m betraying a faerie secret, subject to being cast out of the tribe, so what do I have to lose by telling you? It does exist. The Gods entrusted it to the faeries for safe keeping until the kingdom is reunited.”

Looking up, Myron’s eyes brightened, “Then you know where it is?”

“Only mother did. It was one of the Grand Secrets that she kept to herself. I don’t know if she left anything about it to her heir.”

“Then I will need to talk to her as soon as possible to learn what she might know.”

“Now is probably not the best time to talk to my sister. Between the accusation that she would possibly harm one of her godchildren, narrowly escaping the same death as Mother and the attack by your guards, I doubt she will be in the most favorable of moods to be generous with a Grand Secret.”

“Ouch!” cried Apollo.

Turning his attention from the king, Rowan asked, “What happened?”

“I’ve been following the wolves and Fenrir tripped and dropped the princess. She must have cut her leg when she fell and I felt it. He’s picked her up again now.”

Rowan brightened with a thought, “Tripped, you say? That gives me an idea. Do you think you could use your gift of using invisibility magic to hide the larger rocks and fallen branches in front of him? It would slow him down, giving the guards a chance to get closer to him.”

“I normally would need to be close to the object, but Queen Holly said that I should be able to use my connection with the air to be able to touch anything that needed to be changed without actually needing to be in physical contact. I’ve done that while practicing with Johnny, but not at this great a distance. I think I need to see what I’m going to change.”

“Then use your earth magic to look in front of where he is running and we know that your magic is far reaching. Your gift of air magic, while untrained, should be able to give you a double connection to the object you want to make invisible.”

Myron got some color back in his face. “You really can do magic? You can help my daughter?”

“I certainly will try. Please be quiet so I can concentrate.”

Everyone stared at the prince while he worked. “Ah, there is something to try. There is a large, low branch hanging across the path. It would be no problem for a running wolf, but for Fenrir carrying the princess, it would be right in his face. I’ll try that.”

He closed his eyes and focused on that branch. Both his earth and air senses were giving him the total feel of that branch. His mind was so in tune with the branch, he reached out as if he could touch it and suddenly found himself staring at it. Not only the branch, but everything around it, just as if he was standing next to it. He heard a sound behind him and turned to see the pack coming toward him. He quickly hid behind the tree, barely remembering to turn the branch invisible as the pack got near.

The wolves raced past him, but just as they had hoped, Fenrir ran hard into the branch, dropping the princess. Apollo quickly projected invisibility on Daisy, but just as Laika hadn’t been fooled, so too Fenrir grabbed her.

“I don’t know how you did that little trick, missy, but turn visible again or I’ll bite off your dainty little leg and we’ll see how fast you can run, invisible or otherwise.”

“I’m as surprised as you are,” came Daisy’s frightened voice. “I didn’t do this, honest.”

Fenrir sniffed the air. “I can’t smell you, but I know you are near. Show yourself, wizard, or your princess will be returned to you in two pieces.”

Apollo turned Daisy visible and stepped out from behind the tree.

“That’s better,” huffed Fenrir. “Ah, the little pup that Laika fancies as a pack leader. Strange, why can’t I smell you? You stunk like a human when you were at the castle. And how did you get in front of us? You humans can’t even begin to run as swiftly as a wolf.”

“Magic, of course,” said Apollo with more confidence than he felt. While the wolf couldn’t smell him, Fenrir was not returning the favor. The scent of man sweat, the after effects of Fenrir’s run, was filling Apollo’s nostrils and he found it strangely intoxicating.

“Doesn’t matter. Go back to your puny king and tell him that if he wants her back, he is going to have to come for her himself. If one human guard gets close or even dares to kill a wolf, carrying my heir or not, she will die.”

Without waiting for a response, Fenrir picked up the princess and started running again. Apollo was staring at his departure when he heard Rowan’s faint mental voice calling his name. He concentrated on hearing what Rowan had to say and suddenly found himself back at the castle. Only, when he left, he was standing by the fireplace and now he was laying on a couch that was on the opposite side of the room.

“Don’t do that again,” said a very worried Rowan. “You collapsed. You said something about magic so I thought I would meld into your mind to see what you were thinking.”

—continued on page 10

Quest/Crystal Phoenix continued

It took everyone a few minutes to understand what had happened. Apollo had been so focused on what he was doing that he actually left his body and projected himself to the scene.

"Nice trick that is," said Rowan. "We are going to have to report this to the Queen. She is going to want to know about a new manifestation of magic in a human. Besides, it will distract Amaranth from her problems."

"Amaranth is the new queen?" asked a bewildered Myron. "I thought your sister, Aster was the heir."

"She should have been since she is the eldest," said the faerie, "but she never could master the magics needed to be a queen. No, Amaranth is the one with that gift in the family."

"I'm puzzled by something Fenrir said," interrupted Apollo, bringing the conversation back to rescuing Daisy. "What did he mean that he would harm her whether or not she was carrying his heir?"

"I thought you knew," said Laika. "That's the other reason I know that Fenrir had no desire to kill her now. She is carrying Belka's baby."

"My daughter is pregnant?" gasped Myron. "What else can go wrong today?"

"Well, for starters, your guards could catch up to them and Fenrir would carry out his threat," offered Rowan. "I suggest you go quickly and get the word to your guards that are following to have them keep a safe distance between them so that Fenrir doesn't feel threatened until you can recover the sword. Meanwhile, I'll take Apollo to visit with my sister and see what we can find out about the sword's location."

Rowan and Apollo walked in silence. Rowan was lost in trying to figure out how to broach the topic of the sword. Apollo was nervous about meeting his great-grandmother again. She hadn't seemed to like him when they met out in the forest the day he fell back in time. And now, he needed a favor from her.

When they entered the room, it was dark. Amaranth and all the maids were dressed in the black of mourning. The only color in the room were the clothes worn by Rowan and Apollo. "Your

attire offends me," came Amaranth's voice from the shadows. A sparkle of light flickered through the air and their clothes changed to black.

"I am sorry. It was not our intent to offend," said Rowan as he bowed to the new queen. "These are the clothes we were planning to wear at my wedding. We came here directly after our visit with King Myron without giving thought to the color of our clothing."

Apollo looked at his changed clothes and something boiled inside. "Change them back, right now!" he demanded. "You do not have My permission to work magic on My Royal Person without My Authority."

Standing up from her chair, Amaranth's eyes were visibly flashing in the darkened room. "And just who are you to demand anything from the Queen of the Faeries?"

"I am the great grandson of the late Queen of the Faeries from my time, and I have been told that I have a large percentage of faerie blood. I know for a fact coming from the current Queen of the Faeries that no faerie can work magic on another without permission. You did not have My permission. Now, change my clothes back to their natural, beautiful color. My clothes are not in mourning. Return them and I shall depart to change to clothes that have been prepared for the occasion."

"You are right in the statement that faeries cannot work magic on faeries. Even so, my magic changed your clothes, not you, so I don't need your permission."

"Is that so?" growled Apollo. "Then I can play that game too! That shade of black is not flattering to you and thus offensive to My eyes. Begone!" With the barest of thoughts, he turned Amaranth's dress invisible, leaving standing in her shift."

"You Beast!"

"No. I believe that title is held by my many-times over grandfather, King Kenneth, whom I believe you helped marry the woman who attacked you today. I believe that it was you who helped foster and fan the flames of the fairest maid passions that have resulted in the mess that exists in this time." He returned her dress to visibility. "Now, I respect your desire for honoring your mother by donning different attire. Please allow me the courtesy of showing you that respect instead of imposing your will upon me."

"No. I am the Queen and you are subject to My will."

"Then, I have no choice." He turned both his and Rowan's clothes invisible.

Rowan was surprised by Apollo's bold stance, "Sister, I don't think this bodes well for your first acts as queen. If this is how you are going to rule the faeries, then I'm glad I am no longer one of your subjects."

A sparkle flew through the air. "Now, put your clothes back on."

Apollo turned the clothes visible and they were back to normal coloration.

"Why should I believe in your claim of relation to the Queen of the Faeries?" asked Amaranth.

"For starters, sister, we both agree that he does have faerie blood. The fact that as a human he has mastered the faerie gift of invisibility should be a good clue as to the quality of the faerie blood



that he claims to have.”

“Any faerie can do that,” she responded in a dismissive tone.

“Then what about astral projection?”

“That only manifests in the strongest of the royal line. I had to master that before Mother would teach me the Great Magics. Much to Mother’s disappointment, Aster never could project.”

“That wouldn’t have anything to do with the fact that...”

“Silence,” commanded Amaranth. “You did not come here to drudge up painful family history.”

Rowan told her about the events that transpired after she had left their company. She agreed that it did sound like Apollo had tapped into the projection magics and thus did have some connection to the royal faeries. As they talked of the events of the day, Rowan asked about the attack on their mother and herself. She filled in basics with the details of the horrors of the screaming and her vulnerability at being alone with the old beggar woman.

“I’m puzzled,” said Apollo. “Where were your bodyguards during the attacks? I thought the Hilda Guard were supposed to protect you.”

“I don’t have a bodyguard,” Amaranth said in disbelief.

“Apparently, not yet,” offered Rowan. “Just as he knows your past connection with Kenneth and Belladonna, he knows things of your future that you don’t.”

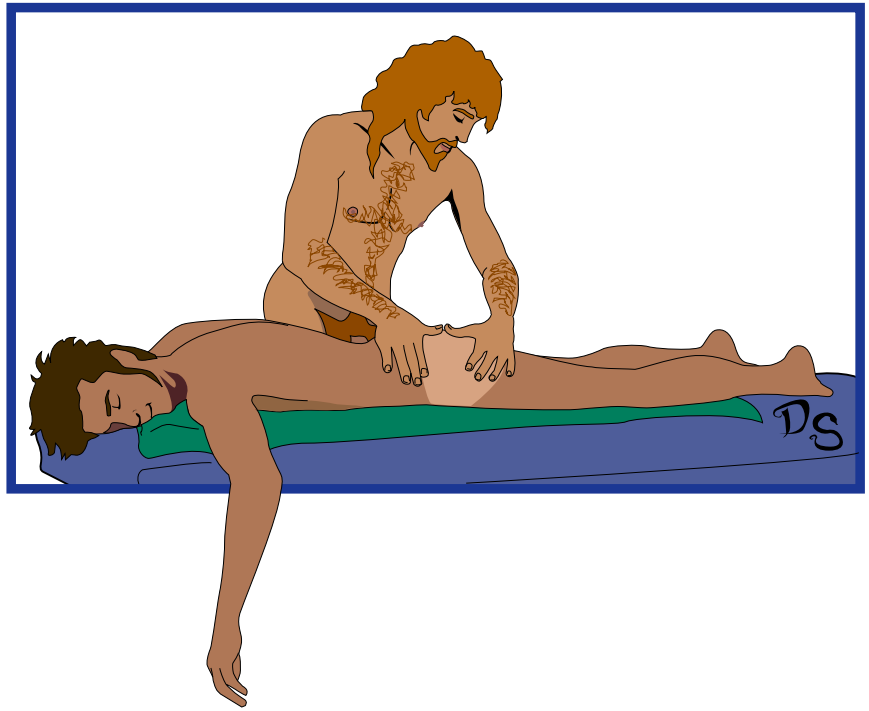
Realizing that he just said something that he probably shouldn’t, Apollo wanted to leave before Amaranth pressed him for details. “Please excuse me Your Majesty. If we are to continue our conversation, I desire to change my clothing to those respectful of the loss of your mother.”

Amaranth nodded, so he stood up to leave. As he reached the door, she called out, “Before you depart, one question needs be answered. What is the name of Faerie Queen of whom you claim relationship?”

The moment came that he had dreaded, but Apollo knew he couldn’t lie. So as he opened the door, he said, “Queen Amaranth Morningstar,” and then hurriedly closed the door behind him.

When Apollo got to his room, a guard was posted at his door. When questioned, he was told that the king felt that it would be in Laika’s best interest to have a guard keep track of him. The people would feel safer knowing that he was being watched and that Laika would be safe from people wishing to attack him knowing that a guard was protecting him. Apollo couldn’t find fault in the logic and entered his room.

Laika was on the bed. Apollo was surprised to see him changing between wolf and man forms. Each time he was in man form, he cried out in pain but tried to hold the shape as long as possible before giving into the pain and changing back. Not wanting to disturb his concentration, Apollo watched a couple of changes in silence. He stripped out of his clothes and when Laika changed into human, he slipped on to the bed. He snuggled in behind his friend, wrapped his arms around him and began to



channel some of the pain.

“What are you doing?” Apollo asked.

With the strain of holding in the pain showing in his voice, Laika said, “I’m trying to break the geas. If I am to wander safe in the castle, then I need to be in human form so people don’t attack me. And I’m going to have to learn to eat human food. I don’t think I’m going to be able to hunt freely with that guard following my every move.”

“I have an idea. Relax from your struggle for a moment.”

Laika changed back to wolf form. Apollo got out of bed and was about to summon Lord Apollo but then remembered that the god of this era doesn’t have the familiar knowledge of him, so he decided that he had better do things right. He got dressed in some of his sun colored clothing and led Laika down to the pond. Sitting in a patch of bright sunlight, he called out, “Lord Apollo, I have need of some advice from you. Please join us when you have the moment.”

He fed some crumbs to the swan while they waited. He felt the god’s arrival before he saw him. He turned around and saw the god scratching Laika’s head. Apollo knelt before the god. “Great God, I humble myself before you...”

Sounding more like the god he knew, “Save that for an audience. While I don’t know you, I can’t deny that you have my mark. So since it is just us, we can cut the formality.”

“Thank you. I wasn’t sure so thought it best to play it safe,” said the prince. “I was hoping you could tell me something about a geas. One has been placed on Laika by one who has proven that he is no friend to the realm and I want to know how to break it.”

“A geas is a very minor spell that depends on one’s belief in the power of the one who placed it. The stronger one’s belief in their power, the stronger the compulsion that goes with it,” explained the god. Turning to Laika, “Who placed the geas on you?”

“The head of the wolf council, Fenrir.”

“Is he your pack leader? Does he control your actions?”

—continued on page 12

Quest/Crystal Phoenix continued

"He is the leader of all wolves. His word dominates all pack leaders."

"Who is your pack leader?"

"I look to Prince Apollo as my leader."

Turning to the prince, the god asked, "Do you accept Fenrir as your pack leader? Does he have the right to control one of your followers?"

"I have been taught that I am my own leader. All others are my teachers. In no disrespect, that includes my relationship to you. I am to be king of a combined nation and have to be strong in leadership. Sometimes that means turning to my teachers for advice. But the seeking of advice does not instantly imply that I shall follow it. The choice is mine to make."

"So young and so wise already. Then, the lesson needed has been given. It is up to you to apply what you have been taught." With a rub to Laika's head and a tousling of Apollo's hair, the god vanished into a sunbeam.

"What did he mean that the lesson has been given?" asked Laika. "He didn't tell you how to break the geas."

"No, he didn't," said the prince, thinking as he spoke. "But he did give me a clue how they are placed. And in the understanding of how something is made lies the understanding of how to break it. I will need to think about it for a little while, but not this minute. I want to go for a swim."

He quickly stripped and jumped in the pond. Laika, still in wolf form, jumped in after him. Apollo reminded him that the geas didn't work outside and that he could change to human form if he wanted. He did, so he changed. The two splashed around for a while. Apollo realized that it was the first time that he had laughed since the beginning of the Wolf War.

"That sounds nice, my I join you?" Apollo looked up and

saw Rowan standing there. No longer in his wedding attire, but dressed in a simple casual outfit. Apollo noticed that it wasn't black as he would have expected.

"You look surprised to see me dressed this way," said the faerie. "Yes, my mother is dead, but she said I was no longer her son when I lost my powers, so I have no compulsion to be limited to black garments for the next year. I will do so when attending her funeral or when I am with my sister. Since neither applies at this minute, I shall dress as I desire. Now, may I join your frolics?"

Feeling better than he did earlier, "Under your terms or ours?" Apollo got out and started toward Rowan to give him a big wet hug.

"Back off. The clothes won't have time to dry before we have to head back to dinner." He quickly stripped and jumped into the pond. The trio played in the water until they heard the first bells for servers to go to the kitchens to prepare for dinner.

"Thank you," said Rowan, in a breathless voice. "I needed that to take my mind off of things for a little while. That chat with my sister after you left took more out of me than I thought."

"Is she made at me?" asked the prince, fearful of the answer.

"I don't think so. She was at first but I pointed out that she was the one to start the rudeness and that she got as good as she gave. I can say that I have often wondered whom she would push too far in her royal airs and you were the last one I suspected. I always thought it would be Raven Stormcrow."

"I can see the possibility based on what my aunt has told me of her father. She says she gets her temper from him, but after this afternoon, I thought she sounded like her mother when she had her tantrums."

"Are you implying that Amaranth and Raven...?" gasped



Rowan. "I wish I could tell someone but they would never believe me. Those two hate each other."

"Oops."

"Don't worry, the secret is safe with me," said Rowan. "I think you have been wise to keep silent on too many details of life in your times."

"I had one other question that I wanted to ask Amaranth, but perhaps you can tell me." Rowan nodded for him to continue. "Who is Aster? When I met my great-grandmother she said she was the first born daughter of your mother."

"That's part of that family history that my sister didn't want discussed. Mother's first born was a boy, Ambrose. He tried to do everything he could to please mother but failed. With the birth of Amaranth, we learned that the greater magics only pass mother to daughter. Mother sat Ambrose down and got his permission to work magic on him and suddenly I had another sister. Mother spun a tale on how her daughter Aster had been changed into a male so that she could learn life through their eyes in order to be a better queen to all faeries, female and male alike. My new sister, Aster, was not able to work the feminine magics and wanted to change back, only..."

"Only she got pregnant and couldn't," concluded the prince.

"I thought you didn't know her story," said Rowan.

"Let's just say, history repeats itself with that particular spell." Apollo went on to tell them the tale of Viola's experience with Gaylon.

At the conclusion of the tale they had arrived at the castle. Apollo headed to his room to get into proper dinner clothes. While he changed clothes, Laika tried changing to human form and was yet again met with pain so he switched back.

Apollo sat on the floor next to the bed so that he could look Laika in the eyes. "Laika, I, Apollo, your pack leader, order you to change to human form. There is to be no struggle in your body. You can not serve in my pack if you can not change freely. Any order by any other person or wolf is made without my permission and has no effect on you."

Laika changed to human form and cringed in anticipation of the pain, but it didn't come. Laika jumped off the bed and gave Apollo a hug. "You broke the geas!"

"No. You did," said the prince. "Fenrir told you that you would be in pain when you were in human form inside a building and you believed him. You believed in his power and made the geas real. I just gave you something new to believe in and you made that equally real. That is what Lord Apollo was telling us."

"It was that simple?" said Laika in disbelief. "I wonder how many other things he's told the pack that are only real because he's told them to us?"

Any further discussion was cut off as Apollo heard the call to dinner ringing. He hurriedly got Laika dressed in one of his outfits and rushed them to dinner. Throughout the meal he could feel Amaranth's stare. As special guest, she had taken his place at the High Table. But even from his seat across the hall, he could feel her watching his every move. The conversation around him was all speculation about what had happened to the princess and why the wedding hadn't occurred as planned. His dinner companions hadn't heard about the wolves so they agreed that she canceled the



wedding since the death of a guest, not to mention a queen, was a very bad omen for the pending marriage. The tragedy of the situation must have been weighing heavily on her as evidenced by her vacant seat next to the king. Not wanting to create a panic, Apollo simply nodded in agreement and allowed the gossip to continue.

On their way back to Apollo's room, he and Laika had a lively discussion about the merits of cooked food. Apollo told the wolf that food had to be cooked to kill germs that could cause death. Laika looked at him as if he was crazy and reminded him that every other creature eats their food uncooked and that they don't die horrible deaths. Apollo couldn't come up with a good argument in response.

When they got into his room, Apollo asked Laika if he wanted to wrestle. Without a vocal response, the wolf grabbed the prince and attempted to throw him to the floor. After a few minutes of feints and attacks, Apollo heard the rip of fabric in clothes not designed for wrestling and called a quick time out to strip. The wolf's passion had him energized and as he got out of his pants he realized that he had a hard on. And he also realized that he hadn't jerked off in weeks and his cock was aching for release. Laika didn't give him much time to think about it, for as soon as clothes were off he attacked again. His hard on rubbing against Laika's body made him more excited that he had felt before. He reached down and grabbed Laika's cock and began stroking it.

A knock on the door interrupted them.

"Ignore it," whispered the wolf. "I've been waiting for this for months."

The knocking grew louder and suddenly the door burst open in an explosion of splinters. A flash of light caught the edge of a sword aimed straight at Laika's head. "Die, traitor!"

Apollo barely had time to shove Laika to the side. He reached out with his mind and grabbed his dagger and threw it at the intruder. Just before the blade entered flesh, the prince realized that the would be assassin was King Myron so he halted its flight. Not

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being in a favorable mood at having been interrupted, Apollo let the dagger hover in front of the king for a moment before allowing it to drop to the floor with a clang of steel on the stone floor. Laika had changed to wolf form. His white teeth glistened in the candlelight as he snarled at the attackers.

"How dare you barge into my room and attack my friend!" shouted Apollo.

"I heard fighting and the door was bolted. I feared for your life. You should be grateful. If it had been a real assassin, I would have just saved your life," came the king's equally shouted response.

"If the situation were real, the oaths we both took would have unbolted the door and you wouldn't have had to have the guards shatter my door."

"What do you mean?"

"When truth is needed, let no windows be barred nor doors locked," quoted the prince. "According to my teacher, those words are from long before the sundering of Wobnair. Each of the three kingdoms have the same oaths of office."

"They aren't just words? There was chaos when father died and suddenly I was King of Rysbal. I was simply the king and as far as anyone was concerned, I had always been the king. A coronation would have been confusing to everyone."

Apollo shoved the guards out of his room and grabbed a robe. He turned back to face the king. "Are you saying you never took the oaths of the kingdom?" Myron shook his head. "And your brothers, too? Myron continued to shake his head. "So all three of you were rulers who never bound yourselves to your people?" Apollo sat down hard in his chair. "I can't believe I'm hearing this. No wonder people wanted to forget the details of this era."

Myron knelt before Apollo so he could look him in the face. "Father never told me of the importance of the oaths. He just said that I would understand when I became king. Apparently he must have felt that the oath would impart some great wisdom that he hadn't been able to teach me. And my brothers never even had to undergo the Princing Oaths. Which, if I'm understanding your thought correctly, is why they were less restrained in their pursuit of pleasures than myself. Please forgive me. I truly feared that you were in danger."

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Not feeling overly sorry for his ancestor, Apollo "So you burst in to save the day, just as you did to rescue a defenseless old woman from the big, bad wolf? With nearly the same results, I might add. Perhaps to gain a little glory in the grand rescue since the other tale has Rowan being the hero of the princess's rescue?"

Myron stood up, nostrils flaring. "I have had enough of your condescending tone, young man. Just who to you think you are to criticize your king?"

"You are not my king. My king is a loving father who is probably worried sick that I have been gone for so long without a trace. My king is a loving grandfather who is married to the daughter of woman who just became Queen of the Faeries. The queens of my time are all daughters of Amaranth Morningstar. I nearly died when I was attacked by the woman who attacked your daughter. My mother is dead at the hand of the woman who attacked your daughter, and I might add at least twice now she's been attacked by your sister-in-law. And twice now, I have been called into service to rescue her from death. I can work the Earth Magic that was your birthright as king. I am stuck here in your time, cut off from my family and friends. My people are without an heir right now because I was pulled here to save your daughter when you couldn't. And you wonder by what right I can criticize you? When you start acting like a king, I will stop criticizing the man."

"You are not my father!" shouted Myron.

The silence that followed was charged with the million words that were unspoken. Finally, Myron broke the silence. "I'm sorry, again. You sounded just like my father and like him, you are right. I have played at being king and my desires came before my responsibilities. But I know I can't fix things right now without your help, which is why I came here tonight." Myron took a moment to take a deep breath and regathered his thoughts. "We have two tasks that need to be done simultaneously to be successful. First, we need to rescue my daughter from the wolves. And second, according to your friend, we need to find the great sword in order to defeat Fenrir. Since the sword has been elusive to find, I can only assume that it is not mine to find. If, you indeed are to be the future king of the lost land of my birth, perhaps you have the gift necessary to find it. I need Laika at my side to serve as a messenger between the wolf council and myself while I play the diplomat to win the release of the princess without further bloodshed. In the meantime, I want Rowan and yourself to hunt for Eartaifiwa and bring it to me."

"I don't want to go on a quest," protested Apollo. "I want to go home."

"Please," begged Myron. "If you do this for me, I will do everything in my power to help send you home. I will beg for Amaranth's help. I will petition every god and goddess known until I find one who can help. If not, for me, then please help save your many-times over grandmother so she can give birth to the next generation of the family."

Apollo locked eyes with the king. "Then you better start preparing your prayers. I will find that sword."

The Cubby Diaries: The Workshop Rituals

by Phoenix

It started one night when I had Gregg and Josh over for supper. My inner family were scattered that evening. Peter had some classes on changes to laws related to the vet practice, Jim was out of town at a stock holder meeting and Aeris was having dinner with his folks. It wasn't often I had time alone with this pair of my extended family and I was going to take advantage of the situation.

When the guys came over, Josh was in a foul mood. At dinner, he told me that it had been one of those days that nothing worked right. The project he was designing for his next show was turning into a disaster. After measuring things, everything he cut on his new saw was wrong. When he finally got the size right, his new hammer tried to pound his thumb instead of the nail next to it. Every screw he touched with his new screwdriver ended up stripping. On and on the list of problems continued. Gregg filled in the details of the blue streaks of curses that Josh had uttered with each problem.

I sat there recalling a time when I was helping Gramps build Jesus's doghouse and having similar problems. Gramps' words sprung to my lips without thinking, "It isn't the tools that deserve the curse. They weren't in charge of their use." I really don't know what possessed me, but Josh got real quiet at that. Then his eyes flared as if I had just said the most offensive thing possible. To his credit, he didn't explode. Rather, he got quiet again and excused himself for a moment. He headed toward the bathroom but I didn't hear the door close. Instead, I heard sounds on the back steps down to the basement. Gregg and I sat in silence for a few minutes. Gregg started to excuse himself to go check on Josh and I intercepted him and said that I was the one to set him off, so it was my responsibility to apologize for the rude remark.

I found Josh in the workshop. He was standing there holding one of Gramps's hammers. He was caressing it. I was about to ask if I should leave the two of them alone when he looked up and saw me. "You sounded just like him. Your grandfather never tolerated his workers swearing on the job. He would say that no matter how expensive the tool, a bad carpenter is still a bad carpenter."

He held the hammer up to his cheek. That's when I noticed the tear about to fall on the handle. "And what would he say about getting your tools wet?" I asked as I wiped away the tear.

Josh said that he would be damned to the ninth hell for doing something like that to one of Gramps's tools. And his cursing of his own tools probably meant he would need to go buy a new set. He knew that those tools would never forgive him for blaming them for his shortcomings.

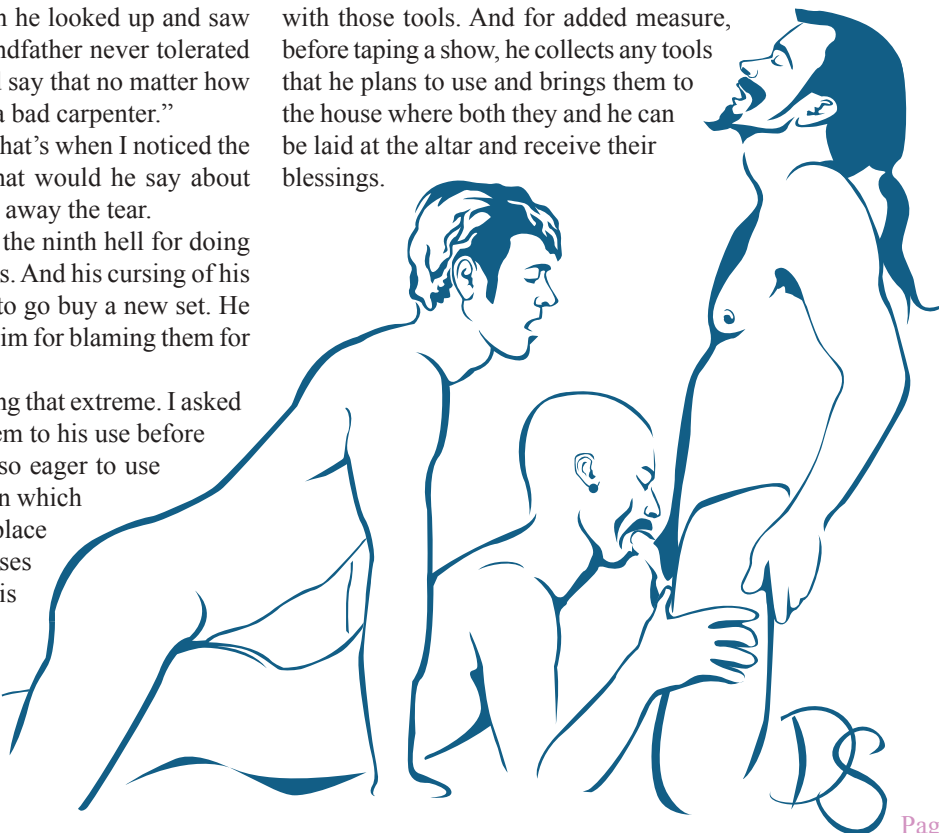
I said that he didn't need to do something that extreme. I asked if he had cleansed his tools and blessed them to his use before starting to use them. He said that he was so eager to use them that he just started in on the project. In which case, I said that he probably only needed to place his tools on his altar, cleanse away the curses and dedicate them to the god(ess) of his choice.

With a much lighter heart, he said that he would do so right after supper. We headed upstairs and true to his word, as soon as we finished, he excused himself and went home. Gregg stayed to give me

a hand with the dishes. Of course, the first step in cleaning the dishes was for Gregg to show his appreciation to the cook. We were deep in a kiss and jumped at the sound of the front door closing. As we came out of the kitchen, we caught a glimpse of Josh heading back downstairs. We followed him and found him carrying a box full of his tools. He had the look of the divinely inspired as he laid his tools on the workbench. The workroom was to become the shrine to the carpentry god as embodied by my grandfather. He knelt before me and claimed that I was the priest closest to the great spirit and could channel his ancient wisdom and needed my forgiveness for the curses he had uttered at his tools. He needed my blessings to cleanse them again.

It took me a few minutes to realize that he was serious. He had taken my words to heart but had no real way of knowing how to go about following my suggestion. After helping him craft a couple of basic blessings, we struggled with the best way to cleanse the tools. Somewhere along the line, it was said that the tools were forged in fire and thus needed to be cleansed in fire. Lacking a smith's forge we created our own fire. We cleared off the tools from the workbench and placed them on the shelves below. I laid on top of the bench and Josh lubed up my "screwdriver" and climbed on top of me. As I entered him, Gregg handed him one of the tools. As we fucked, he recited one of the blessings. Gregg took the tool and replaced it with the next. Not being one to complain about long fuck sessions, I had never realized how many screwdrivers and wrenches came in a set. In honor of the spirit of what we were doing, I managed to hold out until the last tool was blessed and then released my blessings into Josh's ass.

Something must have worked that night because Josh has told me that he has never had another problem with those tools. And for added measure, before taping a show, he collects any tools that he plans to use and brings them to the house where both they and he can be laid at the altar and receive their blessings.



Playing With the 4-F Tarot: Four Card Spread

by Phoenix

Last issue we played with the finished cards using a basic three card spread, most commonly read as Past, Present and Future. Let's bump it up a notch and add a fourth card. We know about what happened in the past. We know about what is going on in the present. We are seeking answers about the future. The card we will add is inserted between the present and future. It is a card to represent either an obstacle we have to overcome to get to that future or it might be something we need to gather to us to help us achieve it. So card 1 = past, card 2 = present, card 3 = challenge, card 4 = future.

Spread 1

Past	The Lovers of Feathers (Imbolc 2008, page 14)
Present	The Trickster (This issue, page 7)
Challenge	Caught in the Act (Litha 2006, page 14)
Future	Kween of Flowers (Litha 2007, page 13)

At first glance we have the lovers snuggled together. Enter the trickster and someone is playing around. They get caught and now there is one.

We have the trickster here, so nothing is ever that easy. He is here to have some fun and it means that we need to look a little closer before assuming anything. So what is really going on here?

The lovers are representing something very comfortable. Maybe your question is about should you move or change jobs. Whatever the object of the question, it is something comfortable, just like a pair of old lovers. Enter the trickster giving you a hot foot to wake you up and make you look around. You discover something you hadn't noticed before. As a result, instead of passively standing and watching the sunset, you will be free to dance and celebrate. Whatever was the part that made you feel comfortable is actually holding you back

Spread 2

Past	The Lovers of Flowers (This issue, page 3)
Present	The Glory Hole (Samhain 2007, page 15)
Challenge	Peppers (Lammas 2007, page 17)
Future	King of Water (Imbolc 2008, page 5)

We start with waiting for something; thinking about something. The glory hole presents us with something new to explore. In fact, it is a whole bushel of peppers. Which is the one that meets your needs right now? The king is saying that whichever one you pick isn't what you think you want. And that will pretty much trap you in a loop.

What is interesting between Spread 1 and 2 is that the first is taking us into the future. There is momentum in the discover that will set us free. The second is really a warning of the need to break that chain. Time to make a decision. Time to go back and spend some energy in deciding what you really want. Because if you don't, then no matter how many times you reach into the peck of purple peppers (OK, there are other colors too, but I couldn't resist the alliteration - the trickster made me do it) what you find is never what you want simply because you don't know what you want.

Spread 3

Past	Prairie Dog (Samhain 2007, page 20)
Present	King of Water (Imbolc 2007, page 5)
Challenge	The Shrine (Imbolc 2008, page 7)
Future	Kween of Air (Mabon 2007, page 19)

Our past was cautious. We were careful and probably planned things out in loving detail. Our present is reckless. We are in one adventure after another. Find a quiet spot and we will be able to get some balance back in our lives.

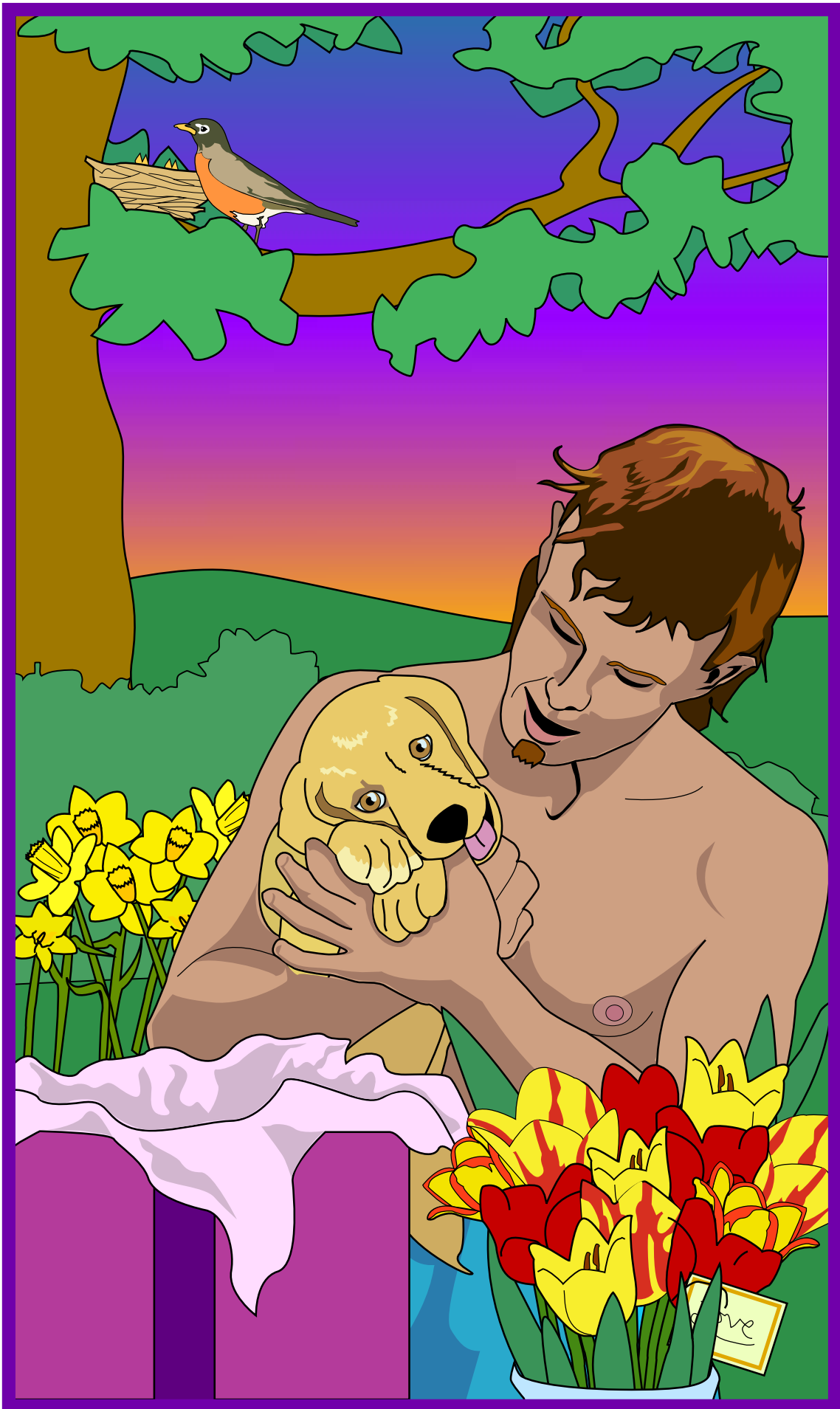
In this spread, the king isn't really about thinking of the one thing (skiing) while doing another (surfing). He is really about that constant chain of events. This is our busy everyday's lives where we spend so much time and energy into planning how we are going to get everything done. Our little prairie dog has been planning, but we have to be in four places at once to get everything done. We are on that surfboard and about to get wiped out. Time to take pause. Once we collect ourselves, we will be able to get things done. But we aren't safe yet. The wind is about to blow off the Kween's bonnet and set things into a spin again. Get things done and then go back to that quiet place and find a better way to bring balance back into our life.

Spread 4

Past	Ostrich (Samhain 2007, page 14)
Present	Clover and Bees (Beltane 2007, page 17)
Challenge	Kween of Flowers (Litha 2007, page 13)
Future	Camel (Imbolc/Ostara 2007, page 11)

I think I have to start with the stereotype image of the ostrich with its head in the sand. Where is it buried? In work, work, work. In comes what you need - a vacation! Yippee! Freedom! And when you come back, everything is dried up and you are out in the desert. That lush clover field you worked so hard to maintain is gone.

I think this comes into the warning kind of spread. It is a picture of the future if you don't change things; if you give into the temptation. The vacation isn't something you need to get to the future, it is a challenge. Whatever the work that is being accomplished, it isn't complete. What do you need to get things completed so you can take that vacation? This is where you get to pick another card or do a second spread to get some clarification.



Ostara: The Lady of Mystery

By Phoenix

An unusual title for a feature on a Goddess of Fertility, don't you agree? When I started this series last issue, that is what I thought of this goddess – a lady of mystery. I knew little about her and looked forward to broadening my understanding of her mysteries and history.

This is what I knew at the start of my journey. She is known as Eostre or Ostara. She is, as I said, a Goddess of Fertility and comes to us from the Anglo-Saxon and Germanic traditions. Eggs and rabbits, as major symbols of fertility are sacred to her. Her name is the same as the Sabbat and is strongly similar to the Christian celebration Easter.

What did I learn on my journey? Reread the paragraph above.

Oh, I've fleshed out a couple of things but honestly it boils down to there isn't much out there. In any of the older writings, there appears to be only one real mention of Ostara. That is written by The Venerable Bede (672-735). He said that the old name of the fourth month of the year was Eostur-monath, which was named after the goddess Eostre. Jacob Grimm (of the Brother's Grimm fame) mentions Ostara in his *Deutsche Mythologie*. But that really is a reference back to the other writing and no new substance as to any myths or legends surrounding this goddess.

So, without any solid stories to pass on, I guess this gets to become my second "Make You Think" article. What happened to the goddess who we honor each year at this time?

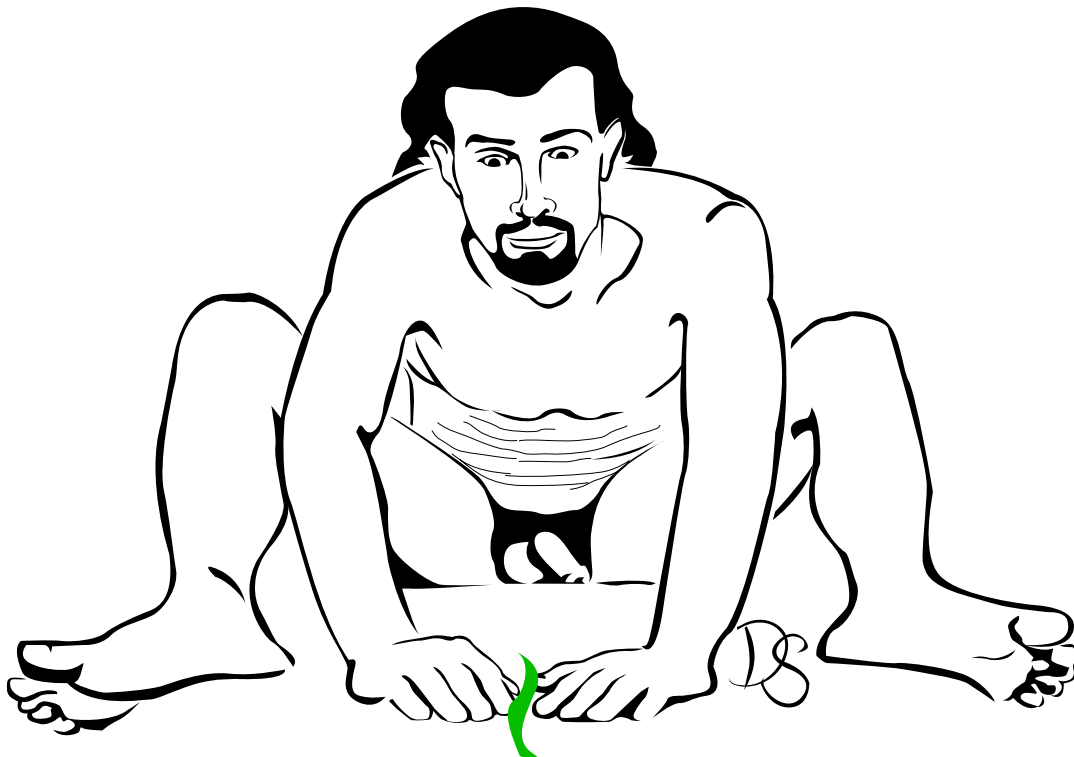
My guess is that in the grand pantheons, she is a relatively minor deity. She serves as a watcher for the one moment in time – the transition from Winter to Spring; to breathe life into the dormant seeds and cause them to sprout. But once sprouted, the tribute was then given to the deities of Earth, Sun and Rain who would nurture the crops and bring them to harvest. Her moment was past and her job was done. Why maintain a shrine year round for such a singular moment?

And then, when the chroniclers started gathering stories of deities to be preserved in written form, whose tales are told first? The big and powerful, of course. The heroes and epic battles of the clashes between gods. Those are the ones that come to mind first. By the time they thought of the quiet workings of Ostara, the chronicler had long left town. And the scene would have been repeated in each town and village. By the time Bede came around, all that was left was her name as associated with a month.

Here's where things became fun on my journey of discovery.

It is fairly well recognized that the name Easter does derive from Eostre. That does become odd when you add in the church's edict of "Thou shalt have no other god but me" statement. Somewhere, the belief in Ostara held strong enough that the church said "that's no goddess celebration, that's really the resurrection of Jesus" and it stuck. But the ever assimilating nature of the church isn't why this became a fun journey.

Have you ever really wondered, as did I, why Easter is celebrated on the first Sunday after the first full moon after the Vernal Equinox? Talk about something sounding Pagan, especially when they celebrate his birthday on the same day every year. This is a result of the clash when trying to reconcile the various lunar and solar calendars that were in use throughout the Mediterranean. The stories in the bible say that Jesus was resurrected on the first day of the week – thus it must be on Sunday. The crucifixion occurred in relationship to Passover, which is the fourteenth day of the fourth moon (Nisan or the paschal moon). Well, in basic understanding, the fourteenth day of a lunar cycle is the full moon. And then somewhere along the line, someone decreed that the paschal moon had to be after the equinox. By the time the church pulled all of the various factions together, the fluctuating date we know for Easter became the standard.



Cybele and Attis

By Phoenix

Now, have you ever wondered about Good Friday, Easter and the three days in the tomb bit? I told you this would be a “make you think.” The church celebrates the death on Friday, he is dead for three days and comes back on Sunday. Dead on Friday, day zero. Saturday is day one. Sunday is only day two. So in reality, if the three day part is the important part, the crucifixion really was on Wednesday or Thursday (depending on whether you count time on day zero). The Sunday part is easy to understand since the stories say that they discovered the resurrection on the first day of the week. So why Friday and not the logical Thursday? Time to go back to pagan lore – Good Friday and Black Friday were common spring celebrations in the region (the first for Istar, a common alternate idea for the Easter name, and the second for Attis or Osiris, both having a springtime three day death/resurrection cycle). So, in the grand quest for converts, the early church leaders moved their celebration to be on top of the others so that people would have to choose which one they went to. Once the church got established, they never moved it back.

This has been an interesting journey. I started out hoping to learn more about the deity we celebrate during this Sabbat and ended up with answers to some questions that have always intrigued me. I know that Ostara is out there somewhere, but she moves in a mysterious way. I decided that it is much like the seedlings of spring. We know that they are growing but they never seem to appear during the day. We go to bed after watching for them and magically they are there in the morning.

Brid blessed me with some inspiration when I started the series on the gods and goddesses of the Sabbats. She further inspired me to explore my thoughts with the new “Make you think” series. Now the wheel turns to Ostara who blessed the seed of inspiration and gave it life in this issue. I look forward to seeing what happens when that seed comes under the Beltane energies next issue.

Oh, and before I forget, there is one other mystery unraveled. In my search, I found reference to a story (unfortunately no details) of when Ostara turned a bird into a rabbit. That is how we have an Easter Bunny who can lay Easter Eggs. Based on the colorful eggs, that must have been a pretty colorful bird. As I said, no details found for the story but it certainly explains something else that always puzzled me when I was growing up.

References

General Ostara Information:

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eostre>

<http://englishheathenism.homestead.com/eostre.html>

The Ostara – Easter Connection

<http://www.bright.net/~1wayonly/easter.html>

<http://www.religioustolerance.org/easter1.htm>

<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/05224d.htm> (Easter)

<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/05228a.htm> (the Easter Controversy)

Please note – NewAdvent is a Catholic site, but I’m impressed with their acknowledgement of some of their pagan roots. I have to say “some” since their St. Bridget article does not mention Brid – but shockerooni – St. Bridgit founded a school for art and metal craft. Sound familiar?

In his 2006 “What is Ostara” article, Beast mentioned that part of the death/rebirth cycle that is celebrated at this time of year is tied back to the myth of Cybele and Attis. Since part of that myth has Attis being castrated, after saying “ouch” yet again after rereading that passage, I had to check out this myth since I wasn’t really familiar with it.

To keep with my “make us think” mode, the first thing of note in this myth is a culture clash. Cybele is a the Great Mother Goddess (great mother being the mother of all other gods) from the Phrygian pantheon. Phrygia being in modern Turkey, not Greece, which is where the next character in our tale comes from - Zeus, head God of the Greek pantheon.

Cybele rejected Zeus’s affections. He couldn’t accept that someone would do so, found her sleeping one night and masterbated on her. His seed impregnated her and she gave birth to Agdistis. This child of that strange magical birth was said to have had both male and female organs and very aggressive. The Olympian Gods feared Agdistis and managed to cut off his male organs (“ouch yet again and we haven’t gotten to Attis yet) and cast them aside. Agdistis’s genitals grew into an almond tree. Nana, daughter of a river god, ate one of the almonds from this tree and became pregnant with Attis. Not wanting to be an unwed mother, Nana left the infant on a hillside to die...and like every other hero left in that same condition, he was found and raised to manhood. Cybele saw this handsome youth and fell in love with him. Unfortunately, Attis’s foster family had arranged for him to marry the king’s daughter (the king being King Midas). Cybele in her show of divine displeasure halts the wedding and both bridegroom and father of the bride castrated themselves (setting a very bad precedent since all of her priests were then expected to do the same thing - ouch, ouch and double ouch). After suffering his wounds, Attis died on “Black Friday” (sound like a familiar something?) and after three days of grieving, Cybele caused him to be reborn (still familiar?) as a pine tree.

Oh, I forgot to mention that Attis was born on December 25 (still sound familiar?). All I can say of that parallel to the newer son of god who shares many of those traits is that at least the new story gets rid of the castration part.

Now, for the soap opera twist to the legend, as if it isn’t twisted already. Many equate Cybele with her counterpart Rhea in the Greek Pantheon. So, if we are to believe that these are the same goddess, just different names, that makes Cybele Zeus’s mother. And we started off this myth with him masturbating over his mother. And here we thought that Oedipus was the only one with a complex!

Now, like many myths, there are many variations to the story, but this represents the most common themes from the various stories I found. Lesson one from this legend is an appreciation of almonds since they started off as a god’s testicles. Two, be careful when eating those same almonds because people can get pregnant from eating them. And three...I think I’ll stick to honoring Brid as my patron. Her price of patronage of doing things nineteen times doesn’t seem as severe as what Cybele asks of her followers. OUCH!

Cooking 101: Boiled Eggs

By Potsan Panz

I always thought that boiling eggs was the simplest thing to do. Get some eggs into the water, get it boiling, go paint your fingernails, come back and they are done. I was visiting a friend last year at Ostara and I commented on how perfect her eggs were. We cracked open a couple of her perfectly dyed eggs and they were so easy to peel and the yokes were perfectly yellow. My eggs always lost chunks of the whites when I peeled them and the yokes always have a dark green halo to them. The latter I was informed is a sign that the eggs are overcooked and the former is a sign that the eggs were too fresh. Too fresh? I didn't think that was possible when cooking food.

Apparently the history of boiling eggs is rooted in what to do with eggs that have been sitting around for a while and you want to do something before they spoil. It isn't about wanting egg salad for lunch today, so run to the store to buy a dozen eggs and rush home to start cooking. For best ease of peeling, the eggs used in this process should be at least one week old, but I know of someone who says they find that it has to be two weeks old (which of course is about when I start wondering what to do with the last couple of eggs in my refrigerator before I go buy the next dozen.)

The trick to knowing how long to cook an egg and avoid the dark green halo effect is simple. Put the eggs in cold water and bring it to a boil. Let them boil for two minutes – only two minutes, so not enough time for nail polishing. Turn off the heat and let the eggs sit in the hot water for approximately 15 minutes (so that's when you get to do the nail polishing). When your nails are dry, return to the eggs. Remove them from the hot water and place them in ice cold water to shut down the cooking process. And poof, you have perfectly cooked eggs. Cooking goddess Julia Child adds a final step – while the eggs are in the ice water, bring the water back up to a boil. Dip the chilled eggs in the boiling water for 10 seconds and then remove from the water. The process heats the shell causing it to expand and pull away from the goodness inside making it even easier to peel.

And if you are like me and your yokes are generally way off center and generally in the pointy end of the egg, here is something to try. The yoke is pretty much like the bubble in the level used when doing your butch tasks of remodeling your house. Most of us put our eggs in the tray in our refrigerators or keep them in the carton; all neat and upright. The yolk then settles to the top of the egg. When getting ready to boil eggs that are planned for visual presentment such as deviled eggs, let the eggs rest on their side for a couple of hours (or overnight so that they are ready for boiling the next day). The yolk will work on settling in the center of the length of the egg rather than the top. Now, when you cut the egg in half, the yolk will be more centered instead of lopsided towards the end.

The Last Basket by DragonSwan

Our tired holiday hero is filling his last basket for the season. He is surrounded by eggs, Peeps (and just for Phoenix, I only show the true yellow chick Peeps, since he has let me know all other Peeps are an abomination to true Peeps) and three chocolate bunnies; one dark chocolate, one milk chocolate, and one white chocolate, to please all our chocolate lovers out there. With his basket filled, his job is done and so is ours. See you next issue.

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Cooking 201: Deviled Eggs

By Potsan Panz

Deviled eggs, you say? Not in my kitchen! All my creations are heavenly, not offerings for some satanic ritual. Actually the term has little to do with the red demon with horns other than both are fiery. The spices used in “deviling” foods such as eggs, ham and crab are what gives thing that devilish characteristic.

The actual term is “stuffed eggs,” of which one way to serve them is “deviled.” Stuffed eggs are a very old tradition that goes back to ancient Rome. Some recipes from as far back as the 13th and 15th centuries have been found. And I will swear that some of the eggs I had at a recent party were some of the originals...not just the recipes, but actual left over eggs from that first party.

In searching through my recipe cards for the perfect ones to send out to my Airy Fairie friends, I decided to not send them because upon reading them, they are really all variations on a theme - boil the egg, peel, cut, scoop out the yolks, mash yokes and add some mayo or salad dressing, add some chopped meat as desired, add your favorite herbs as desired, add cheese or cream cheese, add guacamole or salsa as desired. There really isn't a wrong way to fix stuffed eggs as long as it is a flavor combination you like.

Here are two of the more interesting ideas I found:

1) After scooping out the yolks, use mashed potatoes as the base for the stuffing and continue with your favorite additions.

2) Ova Farcta (from the 1475 cookbook *De honesta voluptate*): starting with 8 eggs (boiled and all that), scoop out the yolks and mix with 2 tsp each of fresh minced marjoram, mint, parsley, and chives, 1/2 tsp salt, 1/4 tsp ground pepper, 1 1/3 tsp minced raisins, 1 tsp vinegar and 2 Tbsp of fresh cheese. Mix and stuff the egg white shell - but here is where this recipe gets interesting - put the two halves back together to make a whole egg. Take your left over stuffing part, add a raw egg white and some more vinegar to make a sauce (set aside for the end). Take your reassembled eggs and either fry them gently in some oil and then top with the sauce or bake them in a greased baking dish, topped with sauce and some extra cheese until golden brown (about 15 minutes) (and if the raw egg white in the sauce makes you squimish - go back to using the the common mayo/salad dressing - what do you think is a main ingredient?)



Airy Faerie