

Kiry Faerie

Lughnasadh 2008

Boos by the Sea



Publisher's Notes

Hi ho Faeries! Welcome to the Denver Faeries' 2008 Lughnasadh issue of the Airy Faerie. The wheel is turning us to the first of the harvest. I never understand how it is that the days are getting shorter and the sun is suppose to be loosing power, and yet it is keeps getting hotter. Being in Denver, Colorado you have to add that it is a DRY HEAT! I guess that is what we get living on the desert plain. This is totally different than living on plain desserts. That sounds yummy, but very fattening. ANYWAY! I have always been amazed that even though Denver is far from any ocean, the art and home décor stores here are full of sea themed knick-knacks. I guess even those of us living at the foot of the mountains still hear the call of the sea. We here at the Airy Faerie hear the inspirational call of the spirits of water. Of course being in another year of drought we are reminded to use only what you need.

Our cover ghouls start us off with their trip to the beach. Sorry, since it is the cover, it is not a nude beach. The nudity is inside the pages of the AF! Since this is a nice lead into the "ADULT CONTENT WARNING" I will take it. OK faeries, say it with me. The Airy Faerie contains images of naked men, and men enjoying themselves and each other. If you should not be viewing this type of material, for whatever reason, please wait until you are able to do so. If you do not wish to view such images, please just close this now and walk away slowly. I know not everyone is into looking at naked men.

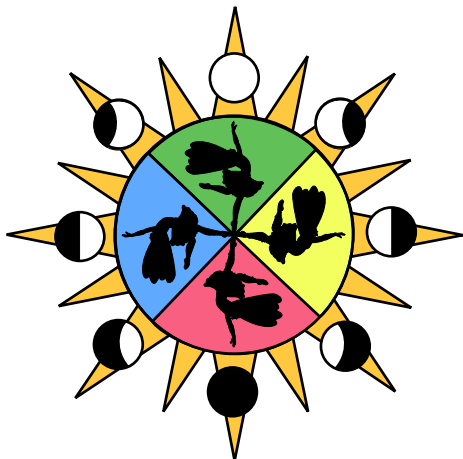
The water continues to rush into issue as two of the four new 4-F Tarot cards features the crashing waves of the ocean. There are a lot of other things for those who may get a little sea sick. Besides exploring the ocean we explore a couple new tarot spreads. We have a young prince who continues his adventures in the past. Cubby tells his tales of going to his high school's reunion. I won't say which year it is; one should never give away a lady's age. Phoenix shares what he learned about the sacred day. Seeds of thought give us even more to think about.

After receiving a file of my art, Phoenix asked me what the story was behind "Miss Wormwood", the picture of the one who is not amused. You will see her later on page 15. I guess the story behind her is that she is a mix of two childhood memories. One is the teacher who talked as if she had a mouse in her pocket. She always seemed to be in a bad mood. The few times she was in a good mood it made me even more scared of her. With eyes in the back of her head she only seemed to see anything I did when I was doing something I shouldn't. She is also a bit of a lesson my father taught me when I was young. He was an artist, who, in sharing his own frustration, taught me people do not like to see themselves as they really are. When you draw or paint someone's portrait you have to make them look gorgeous, no grey hair, and never a wart or pimple should be seen. Without really thinking about it, Miss Wormwood is that overly critical, impossible to please authority figure that terrify us, but is still the subject of our secret jokes.

Now it is time to turn you loose to swim in the tide of the 2008 Lughnasadh issue of the Airy Faerie. Enjoy the final days of summer and be sure to take the Airy Faerie with you when you go to the Beach or where ever you enjoy the sunny hot days!

Naked Hugs & Faerie Blessing,
DragonSwan

Airy Faerie



Lughnasadh 2008

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

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

or send an email to:
DenverRadicalFaeries@yahoo.com

or visit us at
www.geocities.com/denverfae

Stuck With a Rainbow

By Okapi

What were they thinking, I wondered
As we were sitting there
Bumper to bumper
Going nowhere fast.

Each of the thousands of drivers
And hundreds of passengers
Each lost in their little world
Of having to be someplace else
Five minutes ago
Or remembering all the things left undone
At the place they left behind
Or worrying about all the things to
At the places they have yet to go.

Or was it the conversation on the phone
That mattered most to the drivers
Around me?

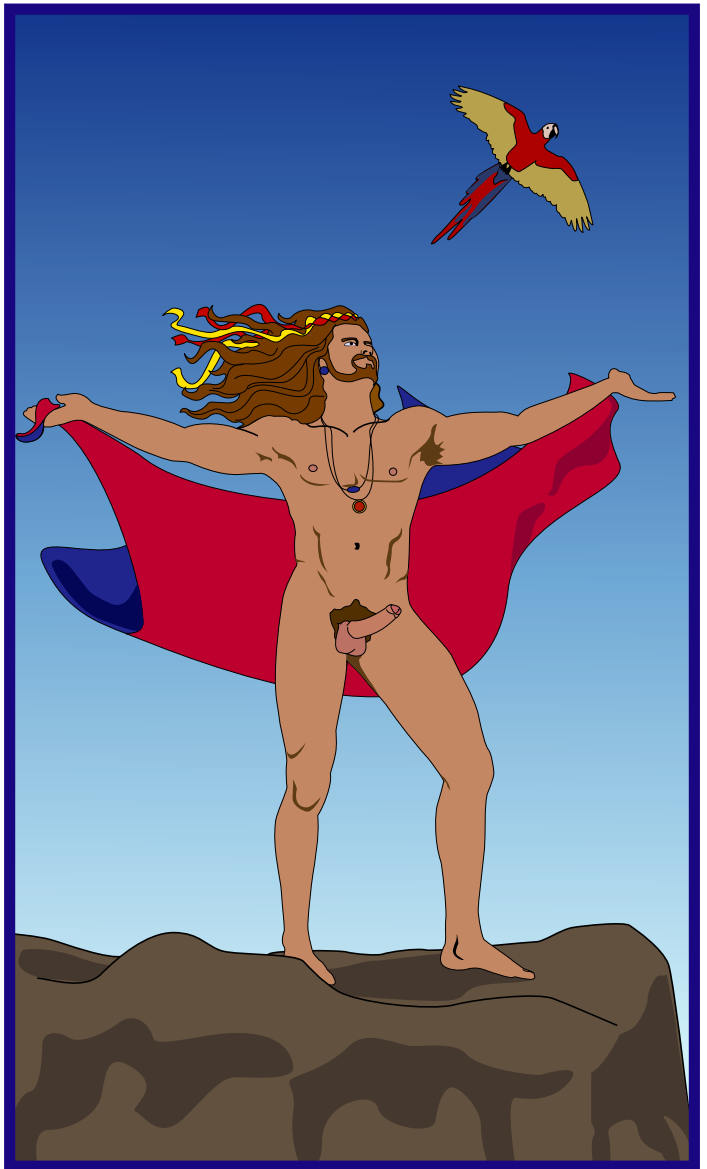
Or was it thoughts about that
Nasty so-and-so who didn't know
How to use their turn signals?
Or was it thoughts of how to get
There one car sooner
Regardless of the danger to others?

How many of those thousands of drivers
And hundreds of passengers noticed
The pale rainbow that brightened the way?
The one that hung low in the sky
The entire time I was in that bumper to bumper
Slow crawl.

While the others were busy with
The things undone and things to do
I watched the display that was put there
For anyone who cared to notice to enjoy.

I cared.

And it stayed with me all the way home.



Out of the Rolling Ocean, the Crowd by Walt Whitman

1

OUT of the rolling ocean, the crowd, came a drop gently to me,
Whispering, I love you, before long I die,
I have travel'd a long way, merely to look on you, to touch you,
For I could not die till I once look'd on you,
For I fear'd I might afterward lose you.

2

(Now we have met, we have look'd, we are safe;
Return in peace to the ocean, my love;
I too am part of that ocean, my love—we are not so much separated;
Behold the great rondure—the cohesion of all, how perfect!
But as for me, for you, the irresistible sea is to separate us,
As for an hour, carrying us diverse—yet cannot carry us diverse
for ever;
Be not impatient—a little space—Know you, I salute the air, the
ocean and the land,
Every day, at sundown, for your dear sake, my love.)

Lammas vs Lughnasadh – A Tale of Two Sabbats

By Phoenix

In Lammas/Lughnasadh we have an interesting Sabbat – one with two names that seem to be equally accepted. Both names are associated with the first festivals of the harvest season. This is the time of offering the first fruits of our labors to the gods in thanks for the bountiful harvest that is starting to be gathered. Lammas translates to “Loaf Mass” and Lughnasadh is associated with Lugh’s funeral games. With Lugh being a Celtic sun god, at least I know we have a specific god associated with this Sabbat. Since one of the common themes for this Sabbat is about the death and sacrifice of the Corn God and we have a god and their funeral games, I guess I will start with looking at Lugh.

As just mentioned, Lugh is a sun god, but don’t get too hung up on that concept. Belenos, our Beltane god, and Brid, our Imbolc goddess, are also connected with solar energies. In digging into the Celtic deities the first thing that we have to do is break our habit of thinking of gods and goddesses as specialists. These are gods in the purest sense. If they need to use something to achieve their goal, they will use it. They are not limited by the fact that they are “the God of the Sun” and thus can only use solar energy. And this is most true in the tales of Lugh. A common tale of Lugh is how he was turned away from a castle on the eve of a battle. When the gatekeeper refused his entrance, Lugh asked if they needed a carpenter. They had one. He asked if they needed a blacksmith. They had one of those too. He went down the list of his skills and they had someone doing each of them. He then asked if they had any single person who could do all of those jobs and they didn’t. He was allowed to enter and led them to victory.

Lugh represents an interesting bridge between the generations of Celtic traditions. His mother, Ethniu, was the daughter of Balor, King of the Fomorians. The Fomorians are one of the oldest Celtic races and generally represent the giants, trolls, half-human/half-animals creatures, and other monsters of ancient lore or, as in the case of Ethniu, they can be extremely beautiful. Balor learned of a prophesy which said that he would be killed by his grandson. He locked Ethniu in a tower so that she couldn’t get pregnant. In a magical way, she does get pregnant by Cian, one of the Tuatha de Danaan, who are the newest race of Celtic gods who are represented by the more familiar deities such as Brid and Dagda. Balor orders the child killed and in the grand epic tradition, he manages to escape death and is raised by Tailtiu, an earth goddess of the Fir Bolg, another of the ancient Celtic races. If you are not familiar with Celtic mythology, think of this in terms of the more familiar Greco-Roman stories – his mother was Medusa, his father was an Olympian god and his foster-mother was a Titan. The child Lugh has connections with all of the major players in Celtic mythology. Well, true to the prophesy, Lugh killed Balor in battle. Eventually the Tuatha de Danaan defeated the Fir Bolg to become the ruling deities of the Celtic world. As a result of the defeat, Lugh’s foster mother was forced to clear the forests to make irrigable lands. She was exhausted from her efforts and died. It is her sacrifice that Lugh honors in the funeral games. They were not established to honor his death or that of the Corn God. It is the goddess’s death in giving birth to the harvest and the sacrifices that she made in doing so that were honored.

Since she is important to the Sabbat, I’ll take a moment to

mention a few things about Tailtiu. Her festivities often center around marriage. It is common that couples get handfasted at Lughnasadh as sort of a trial marriage of the traditional year and a day variety. If the marriage worked, the couple would take more formal steps to make it a lasting marriage. If it didn’t work, then both people could walk away from the relationship. Now, most of these Tailtanean marriages were made after the Beltane baby was conceived. This assured that the child was born into a married family even if the mother didn’t know who the Beltane father was. One of the interesting traditions of these marriages was that it was often a blind marriage. The women would put their hands through a hole in a wall and the men would select their bride purely on the hand offered. This sounds much like the glory hole in a bathhouse – only this time, it isn’t just a quick blow job, you are committed for a full year. This will certainly flavor my interpretations of the Glory Hole card in the new tarot deck!

Now as I dug into Lugh’s story, I discovered that the leaders of both the Fir Bolg and Tuatha de Danaan were more often referred to as Kings than as deities. It is often suggested that this is due to the fact that the people who finally wrote down the ancient Celtic tales were Christian monks. Certainly, they couldn’t acknowledge that there are gods and goddesses other than their own One True God, so they recorded the characters as mortal heroes, kings and queens. The truth may lie in some combination of this and other ideas such as the God/Kings of the Pharaoh’s of Egypt. Or, since they were all gods and we mere mortals hadn’t come upon the scene, within the context of the world back then, to each other they were just kings and queens. If you don’t have mortals to worship you, it is possible that they didn’t know they were gods at the time the stories were happening. I have a feeling that this Lugh as King rather than God holds a clue as to finding the secret identities of the Oak and Holly Kings. I have found one tale of an Oak King (Cerne or “the Horned One”) who is turned into a Holly King, but I haven’t found a reference of Holly going the other direction. Of added interest – Oak is the major symbol of the oldest of the Celtic religions – the Druids. And of course, the lovely holiday tune “The Holly and the Ivy” is strongly focused on the Christ-child. As I move into digging into Yule, I have a feeling that I’m going to find that the battles of Holly and Oak have several layers one of which might relate to the culture clash as represented in the stories of how Christians ended pagan practices much like the tale of St. Patrick driving the snakes out of Ireland. I’m sure that there will be more to follow on that line of thought when we get to Yule.

But this does provide a beautiful segue to the Lammas verses Lughnasadh portion of this article. As stated earlier, Lammas is the “Loaf Mass”. This is the Christian church’s ritual that was brought in to end the pagan traditions. Think about it for a moment – how many masses do we have in the pagan community? The acceptance by the pagan community for this as the Sabbat’s name is an attempt to “reclaim” something that really wasn’t the community’s in the first place. The older tradition is Lughnasadh.

To reinforce that thought, Lughnasadh as well as Imbolc, Beltane and Samhain are cross-quarter Sabbats. This means that they are supposed to occur halfway between the equinoxes and solstices. The modern calendar places these on February 1, May 1, August 1

and November 1, with celebrations starting on the traditional evening before. The eight Sabbats as currently celebrated are not equally spaced out through the year.

A year has 365 days, so for easy math let's call it 364 since that divides into quarters nicely. This gives us 91 days per quarter (and an extra day for the year to make it 365 – which is probably that Litha day I talked about last issue). Now, with 91 days, let's hold one day for the cross-quarter Sabbat itself, which then means we should have 45 days between Litha and Lughnasadh and another 45 days between Lughnasadh and Mabon. Let's count. Litha is normally on June 21. With June having 30 days, that leaves us 9 days in June after Litha. July has 31 days. $9 + 31 = 40$ days between Litha and Lughnasadh. The same relationship can be found in Mabon to Samhain, Yule to Imbolc and Ostara to Beltane. That means that from cross-quarter to solstice/equinox is 50 days. So we have 40 days going into Lughnasadh and 50 days going into Mabon. This is definitely not an equal spacing between Sabbats.

Does 40 sound like a familiar biblical number? Such as 40 days in the wilderness? 40 days of flooding? 40 years of exile?

Adding 5 days to the date of the Sabbat, places each of the four cross-quarter Sabbats at the sun being 15° in the Zodiac sign for that part of the year – Aquarius, Taurus, Leo and Scorpio – the four fixed signs of the Zodiac. Those are the four anchor points of the Zodiac and it makes sense that the power moment for a celebration would be when the sun is at the height of its influence within that sign. Aquarius the Water Bearer, an air sign for Imbolc when the earth is starting to stir from its winter slumber and waters begins to flow again. Taurus the Bull, an earth sign, as crops are really starting to grow and calves are being born. Leo the Lion, a fire sign, with the sun at its roaring best just at the peak of needing the warmth to ripen the crops. Scorpio the Scorpion, a water sign, as the first flakes of snow bring an end to the harvest and we feel the sting of winter's chill. And if you remember my previously stated hesitation about associating the Zodiac with Celtic culture from a few issues ago, let's just say I've learned a lot of things about the Celts as I dug into Lugh's story. There is a lot more possibility of cross-culture influence in early Celtic culture than I had realized. This will be the subject of next issue's "Make You Think." (As a teaser – the Celts didn't originate in the British Isles.)

If you remember, last issue I had said that Litha is a "Lesser Sabbat" and had struggled with figuring that out since the solstice seems like a major something. Well, putting that Sabbat in context to the Zodiac clears that up in my mind. The four cross-quarter Sabbats sit firmly in a Zodiac sign with solid influence over the energies associated with that sign. The Lesser Sabbats are sitting in the voids between the signs. Litha, for instance, is on that day when Gemini transitions into Cancer. It marks a moment in time but is lacking the full impact of a Sabbat that sits squarely in one of the Zodiac signs where the solar influence is all about that sign. (Methinks that next year we are going to have to do a series on the Zodiac so we can see how those energies tie to the wheel of the year.)

Please take a moment to think about the implications of the shifted dates. By accepting Lammas as the Sabbat and celebrating it on the date as dictated by the Christian church, we, as pagans, are

giving that church power even as we celebrate the Sabbat in our manner and customs. We have accepted their desire for fixed dates and tossed away our dates which were tied to the rhythm of the sun and earth. We have accepted the shift away from the day when the sun is at its maximum influence and thus denying ourselves the full effect of its power in our celebration. While Lammas is far easier to spell and pronounce, I think I'm going to shift my thinking to calling it Lughnasadh from now on. For the record, that is pronounced Lugh (as in rhymes with Hugh) – na – (rhymes with ma) – sa (still rhymes with ma or sounds like saw) and forget that the dh is there – it is just there to confuse us.

Here are some of the websites that I visited on this portion of our trip through the Wheel.

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

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

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

<http://www.answers.com/topic/lammas>

<http://www.mythinglinks.org/Lammas.html>

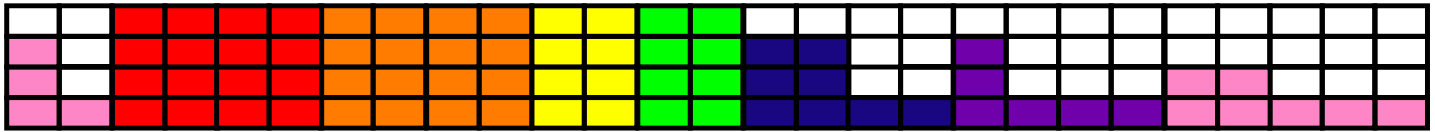
<http://www.chalicecentre.net/lughnasadh.htm>

<http://www.geocities.com/Athens/Forum/7280/lammas.html>

<http://www.webofoz.org/heritage/Lammas.shtml>

<http://www.wicca.com/celtic/akasha/lammas.htm>





The 4-F Tarot: The Growing Deck

by Phoenix

Before I go into talking about this issue's cards, I thought I would take a moment to recap things to both remind loyal readers of our plans for this deck as well as letting new readers in on the process as well.

Before I joined the Denver tribe, DragonSwan had a dream of creating a new tarot deck featuring his gay male oriented graphics. To that goal, he had drawn a couple of cards. Each time I saw those drawings I would ask when he planned on working on new cards. After four years of being together, no new cards had been added to the deck. I'm not 100% sure what got this jump started, but I remember some friendly bantering about new suits for the deck featuring something like the leather and bear communities. Instead of Kings and Queens, we might have the Daddies and Drag Queens of the suits. The ace of the suit would be a solo person, probably jerking off. The two of the suit would be a couple, etc. The logistics of figuring out how to get 10 bodies entwined and have it still look good at card size proved the downfall of that idea.

When DragonSwan agreed to get handfasted, we decided that a new deck would be our gift to our community and the serious discussion began. We knew we didn't want something that was a simple retelling of traditional images that have been reshaped into everything from stop signs to comic characters to science fiction characters. We wanted something fresh that spoke of our relationship to the Queer God, our community and our connection with nature.

One of the first things to go out the door was the concept of cups, wands, coins and swords. We wanted something organic and flowing between the cards. These became Feathers (birds), Flowers, Fins (fish and other marine animals) and Fur (mammals) - these are the four F's of the deck. These creatures live in various places and move through the four elements. We as faeries often assume names based on the plants and animals of the 4Fs. In planning the "Major Arcana" and "court" cards, we are picturing people who would take a particular animal or energy as their faerie name.

To follow some of the trail of development, you will need to go back to the Beltane 2006 issue. But the thing I most wanted to remind you is that we are not doing this for money. It is our desire to make these cards available to you in such a way that you can print them for both your friends and yourself. We may offer print copies to those with limited access to electronic files at a nominal charge to help cover postage and printing costs. But this process isn't about making money. It is about giving something back to our community and creating something new.

And I'm excited about what we are creating. It is amazing how excited I can get about this process. When DragonSwan is working on a card, I can tell when he has managed to capture my thoughts in his images by the "peter meter." For example, take a look at our young Kween of Feathers (also known as the Macaw on page 3). We knew her basic image but hadn't decided on the erect status. DragonSwan created the image with both a flacid dick and a hard on. Flacid was "nice" and had that energy of "I'm nude but naked is

just a state and has nothing to do with sexuality." He traded the flacid image for the erect one and my own dick reacted equally. That was the energy I wanted in the card. He was excited about throwing off the sarong and showing his manhood to the world. From what we can tell on that rock or cliff top, there is no one else there. The excitement isn't as much about being sexually charged, he is just energized by the situation and is proud of it. To me, he is freedom. He is hard and he doesn't really seem to care who notices. What is important to him is that he doesn't have to hide how he feels. It is out in the open for anyone to notice.

The Goddess of Fire (also known as The Fury or Hell Hath No Fury... on page 12) isn't hard. The lightning bolts that she is tossing around have nothing to do with getting her sexually aroused. This is a natural state for this Goddess. She is calm, cool and collected as she prepares to unleash her rage on the poor soul who earned her wrath. When she appears in a spread, you will want to look for ways to quiet her storm. Her partner, the God of Fire, is the fireman. Is he in a position in your spread to help control the Goddess's temper? Is the calm solitude of the Sanctuary nearby that can serve as a retreat until the storm blows over? Or is this something that you have bottled up for too long and it is going to be released in an explosive manner? And for the record - her tattoo is a symbol for Ukko, the Finnish God who was featured in the Litha article last issue.

Unlike the quiet chill of the solo person walking into the wintery lake that is the home of the Goddess of Water, I had promised that the God of Water (The Ocean, page 14) would be full of playful energy. For a reading, you have lots to work with - surfers riding the crest of their waves and one wiping out. You have figures waiting for you to join them. You have figures just having fun. You have the sentry that is the lighthouse lighting the way in the background and the danger of the rocks it is warning you about. You have my old guide in the form of Jonathan Livingstone Seagull ready to soar to the heights. And you have that one figure who is not interacting with the others. He is looking for something/someone. Is he watching a ship carrying a friend leave? Or waiting for one to return? So many possibilities - even in the tides themselves as they come to shore to wash away your footprints in the sand.

Our final card this issue is the Magic of Water as represented by the Mer-folk (opposite page). OK, so he isn't one yet, but this time, it is Prince Eric wishing to swim in the sea, not Ariel's wish to be human that is the focus of the card. To me, this card is about holding on to your dreams and wishes. Someday, they may be granted. For our hero on the rock, his wish is about to be granted. Will it be just as wonderful as he imagined? or will it be the grand tragedy of the original tale of the Little Mermaid? (and in case you haven't read the original Hans Christian Anderson tale, it is a sad ending - the prince marries another and the mermaid gives up her immortal soul and becomes seafoam). As the witch says in the beloved musical *Into the Woods*, "Careful the wish you make, wishes come true not free."



Quest for the Crystal Phoenix

Chapter 29: Transitions in Flames

by Orpheus

The group stood there mesmerized by the swirling flames around the sword. In the chill of the cavern Apollo shuttered. GoldenRod snapped his fingers and several fluffy robes appeared. He handled them to everyone except Laika, who had shifted to his natural fur coat. “Just a little different down here than the warm fires that we left topside.”

“Thank you,” said the prince absently. “But I’m not that cold,” he said as he slipped on the offered robe. The warmed fabric felt good on his naked skin. “Well, maybe I’m colder than I thought. This feels nice. Thank you,” he said with a little more feeling than he had the first time. Even in the warm robe he continued to shutter.

“Maybe it is an after effect of releasing all the fire that you drew into yourself,” offered Rowan.

“Maybe, but I don’t think so,” said Apollo pointing at the sword. “It’s that. It scares me in a way that it hard to describe. I wonder if I’m up to the challenge. I don’t think that staring into the water to see what folks back home are doing is going to be enough to help.”

“I’m still trying to understand all of this,” said Princess Daisy, “but am I to understand that there is more we can do with our gifts that we don’t know about?”

“Yes,” said Amaranth. “Your grandfather understood, as did the generations before him. Your father and his brothers only learned enough to impress or spy upon a fair maiden. Whenever your grandfather tried to get his sons to pay attention to his teachings, they always put him off saying that they had plenty of time to learn before he died. The years passed and none took the time to learn. And there was only two of your generation who were curious enough to learn.”

“Yes, cousin Lilac tried to teach me things but they always seemed like parlor tricks. I never really believed that they were something I could do. Anything beyond that seemed as fanciful as father’s tales of that sword. Everyone knows that only faeries such as yourself can do real magic.”

“Magic is something you have to believe in before you can do,” said Rowan. “You can believe without doing, but you can’t do without believing.”

“I wish Lilac were still alive,” said Daisy. “She hid a lot from her mother. I think she knew more than she even told us. She would know what Apollo would need to learn to overcome the challenge.”

“If Princess Lilac was one, who was the other?” asked Apollo. “My brother, Rupert, Heca bless his soul wherever it may lie” said Daisy. “He would come home from visiting with Lilac in her tower filled with excitement about the magic that they had created together. He knew Father would disapprove of his visits with the ‘enemy’ so he only told me his secret fantasies. At least that’s what they seemed like to me. He never could recreate his magic when I was around, so I never really believed his tales either. I just nodded and waited for the day that he would come to his senses.”

“Could not? Or would not?” asked Amaranth. “The magics your brother practiced were of a dark nature that were not appropriate to show a delicate princess.”

“I may be in a ‘delicate’ condition,” protested Daisy, “but I am also a Priestess of Heca. She herself has told me of some of practices that would seem dark and evil to outsiders.”

“But you had not been chosen by her yet,” said the faerie queen. “Nor could he reveal that he had learned them at all. Belladonna would know where he had learned them and would thus know of his tryst with her daughter.”

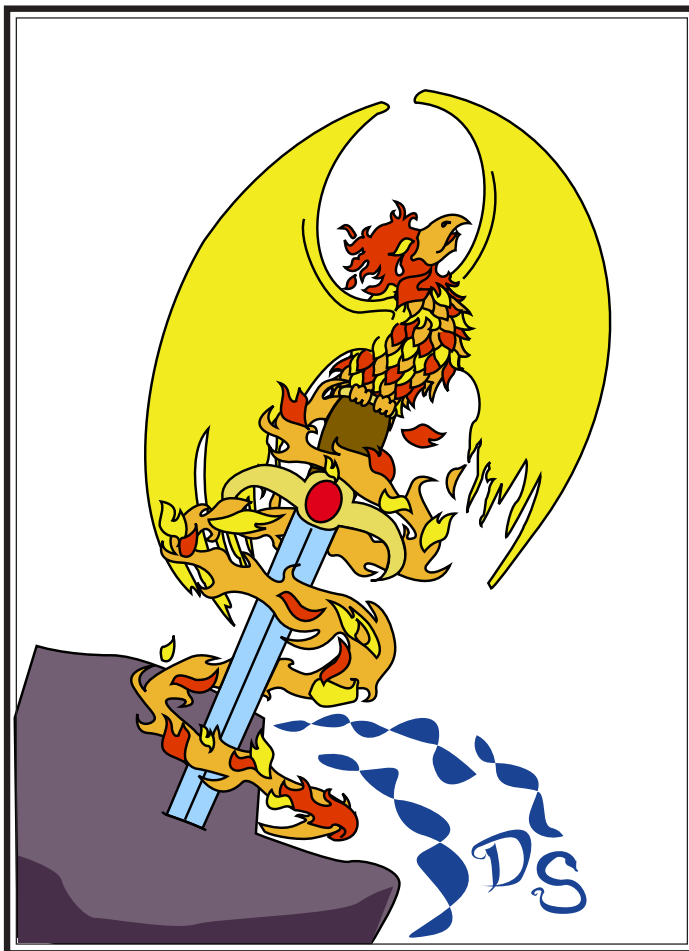
“Oh!” said the princess.

“What about your Mistress, Heca?” asked Rowan. “Isn’t she a mistress of the magical arts?”

“Most of her magic is tied to using the natural feminine energies that men can’t control. Hers is not the magic of creating the thunder storms of myth or granting wishes. I don’t think flirting with the water is going to help much. Anything stronger than that is only taught to her highest Priestess. The only way to get her to teach you is to defeat the current student.”

“Let me guess,” asked Apollo, “your aunt, Belladonna?”

“Only recently. She only earned Heca’s highest favor after she arranged for the death of Queen Lucrezia. The queen had been teaching her daughter the necessary skills to defeat other priestesses and work her way to the inner circle. In turn, Belladonna taught her daughter with the hopes of having an ally in her ambitions. Little did grandmother know of her daughter’s designs to have absolute power. If Belladonna hadn’t been able to lure Belka into her plot, I would have died and she would have used her magic to control Father into believing that the Queen was responsible and it would have been her head instead of Belka’s that he cut that day.”



“What about...” started Apollo. “Hey, wait a minute. You said that Princess Lilac had the talent for magic? Daisy nodded. “When the three of you came to my time, she presented me with a crystal that had all of her knowledge of her mother’s poisons. I’ve just now begun to figure out how to tune into the memories that are stored there. Perhaps she left other crystals with knowledge of her other gifts.”

“She had planned create a series of teaching crystals,” said Daisy. “That was the first and only one she created. Soon after its creation was when she disappeared into the timeline crystal. When she returned, she was excited about meeting you. At first, Angelina and I didn’t really believe her. I don’t think either of us really thought that magic could stretch through time. Since only she made the journey, I thought she had just cast an illusion to make it look like she could journey in time.”

“What made you change your mind,” asked Apollo.

“It was her death,” said the princess. “The fact that Belladonna felt so threatened by her own daughter convinced us that Lilac’s magic might have been real. While inspiring Angelina and I to vow to learn more about true magic, her death prevented her from creating more crystals.”

“That’s not entirely true,” said Amaranth softly. A tear had formed as she thought of the day she was called and found Lilac’s battered body. “By some miracle, she was holding on to the last thread of life when Renaldo called me to her aid. With her last breath she issued her third childhood wish which was to have all of her memories transferred to a crystal.”

Apollo gasped as he realized what Amaranth was saying, “Do you mean that her crystal tomb is preserving more than just the memory of her beauty?” Amaranth nodded.

“Why didn’t you tell us before?” demanded Daisy. “Maybe I could have learned something that could have alerted me to the attacks on us?”

“Would you have believed me?” responded the faerie queen. “To you, magic was a still a trick to entertain your friends. To Lilac, it was life and death.”

“But why say something now, sister?” asked Rowan.

“As you said not so long ago, I have been remiss in paying attention to Apollo’s potential. He is experimenting with dangerous magic just as a child plays with a pretty snake only to learn later that the snake bites. The faeries don’t understand the elemental magics the same way as humans and Lilac is...was the only child of this generation with the willingness to learn from anyone who would teach her; faeries, traveling gypsies who heard the lure of her call from her tower window, and even her mother. Lilac’s crystal is the only way I know how to get him the basic training he needs. No offense, brother. You have done well with your limited knowledge and I should have listened to you.”

Before anything else could be said Daisy screamed out in pain, “The baby!” It’s coming!”

Amaranth rushed to her side. “I was afraid of this. The energy of the portals has been too much of a strain on her and we dare not portal her back to her mid-wives.”

“I’ll open a portal and bring them here,” offered Apollo.

“No,” said Amaranth. “You are still pale from your previous portals, besides I need you here. You have a touch of healing energy and the princess will need that while we wait. Husband, you go and bring help.” With a flare, a portal opened and GoldenRod flew through. A moment later he flew back followed by two mid-wives, one human and the other a wolf. The two got busy with their craft.

“Please, Amaranth, my father and Fenrir should be here,” said the princess. “This is the heir that they are fighting to claim. They should be here to witness the birth.”

“Very well,” said Amaranth. In a voice that echoed throughout the cavern “Myron Irving Charming, King of Rysbal and Fenrir, Leader of the Great Wolf Council. By the blood that links you to the child who is about to be born, I summon thee.” With twin flashes from her wand, a bewildered Myron and Fenrir stepped forth from clouds of smoke.

“What is the meaning of this?” demanded Fenrir looking around at his changed surroundings. “The council does not take interruptions lightly.”

“Even when that interruption is the birth of your heir?” said Daisy weakly.

He spun around and saw her lying on the ground, “What are you doing in a cave? You promised to stay at the cottage where I could keep watch.”

“Things happened last night which is why I asked to have you brought here,” she held up a hand to stop his response. “I’ll explain later. This is certainly not my choice of birthing places and times but then the choice was never mine to make.” She screamed out again and the mid-wives helped her relax. Apollo tapped into his grounding energy and started to help divert the pain away from the princess.

When the ground shuttered at the diverted energy, Daisy touched his hand. “I appreciate the gesture but obviously this is my pain to endure.”

Apollo watched both Fenrir and Myron alternated staring at the princess and the sword in the lake. Without saying anything, both men knew that the sword was Eartaifiwa. Myron nodded toward the sword and mouthed a silent “thank you” to Apollo. Fenrir seemed to only have lust in his eyes when he looked at the sword. When Mushka, the wolven mid-wife, proclaimed that they could see the baby’s head, Fenrir used the distraction of attention on the princess to make a leap for the sword.

“At last, the sword that should be mine by birthright, since I am descendant from the eldest of your king’s children, is now mine to command.” With two massive leaps, Fenrir was at the side of the lake. He paused momentarily to gather his strength to make a leap to the middle of the lake.

Myron raced after him and caught him just as he leapt. The combined weight brought both men into the water. They attempted to stand to fight but the slick rocks under the surface prevented them from getting a firm stance. The black clearness of the water began to shimmer with swirls of blues and greens as the men disturbed the lake bed. As they fought, the swirling flames around

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the sword expanded into the surrounding lake. At the flame's touch, any place where the water was less than crystal clear erupted into an inferno. The intensity of the flames was equal to the disturbance in the water. The screams of the burning men caught in the inferno were matched by the screams from Daisy as she gave the final push to help her child enter the world.

Apollo tried to reach out to control the flames but the swirling wind had already returned to the rock, taking all flames from the lake with it. If it was not for the charred bodies on the edge of the lake, it would be hard to believe that anything had happened. The prince rushed to the two bodies. The smell of burnt fur and flesh was almost more than he could bear. He heard the sound of something ripping and Rowan handed him a cloth to cover his nose and mouth. One body was lifeless while the second was trying to pull itself out of the lake. Rowan and Apollo reached out to help him.

"Stop!" shouted Amaranth. "If you touch him while he's still in the water, the fires will return for you."

They watched as the survivor slowly pulled himself out of the water. As soon as he could, Apollo touched the body to start channeling healing energy. Myron's weak voice came from the burn disfigured face, "Attend to Fenrir first. I can wait."

"That will not be necessary, Your Foolishness," said Amaranth. "He did not survive the challenge and you are lucky."

"You and I know that luck had nothing to do with it, I counted on my curse to help me survive," he responded. "How is my grandson? He wasn't harmed by that inferno, was he?"

"Figured it out, did you? Well, your granddaughter is just fine," said Amaranth. She stepped aside so that the king could see his daughter and her newborn daughter. Nestled in her arms was a child with a head full of blond hair.

"Her name is Iris Angelica," said Daisy. "I've named her after my grandmothers."

"What?" gasped Apollo.

"Don't you like it?" asked a hurt Daisy.

"No, it's beautiful," said Apollo quickly. "It just surprised me. That was my mother's name."

"That's odd," said Amaranth. "I knew both of your grandmothers and Ashleigh Ellen's mother's name was Millie, not Iris."

"I know," said the princess, "but when mother was working in the kitchens at Lucrezia's manor, the older maids would tell her about stories of when her father came to the kitchens to court his Lady Iris. They said that he called her that so if Lucrezia found out about the affair, she wouldn't know which maid to whip. While grandfather may have started the relationship with Millie the maid, he created Lady Iris and their love was legendary at home. So that is the name I want to have remembered."

"However you came to it, it is a lovely name. But enough talk of the dead for one day," said Amaranth. "We need to get your father and yourself to someplace where you can get some proper care before either of you join those ranks."

She tapped her wand on the cave wall in a complex pattern. Before she finished, the sound of several footsteps coming from the opening at the far end of the cavern.

"Hey-o," shouted the leader. "We felt the rumble and came to



investigate who would be foolish enough to enter the Chamber of the Sword. Is everyone OK? No one tried to get the sword did they?"

Amaranth absently gestured towards Fenrir's charred body and quickly told the miners of their needs. As she spoke, they heard a sound echoing down the hallway. "Renaldo got the message you sent as we arrived. He is on his way with some stretchers and some of the healing crystals you requested."

"Let me see my granddaughter," said Myron. Daisy nodded and Amaranth picked up the child to carry her over to where he could see her better. "So beautiful. Just like her mother and her mother before her. Fenrir was so sure that it was a boy. He said his family only had boys and to have a girl would be utterly humiliating."

"I tried to tell him that I carried a girl," said Daisy. "He could never accept that a priestess of Heca is only allowed to have daughters. A boy would have been killed as would the mother carrying him."

"That seems cruel," said Apollo.

"Seems cruel but it is Heca's way," she replied, "The growing male energy makes the mother unable to work Heca's magic and thus she is no longer worthy of our Lady's protections. As a result, she is vulnerable to any lower level priestess's attempts to gain favor."

"Well, I am grateful that she is both beautiful and alive," said Myron. "At least I got to see her before I go."

"You're not going to die, Father," protested the princess. "Our healers have cured people with burns as severe as yours."

"You don't understand daughter," said the king. "I'm not going back. The crown is yours now. My brothers and I made a mess of our kingdoms. They are gone and so too should I go. Now it is up to

you to make things right. I only stayed around to protect you and your growing child." He gestured at everyone in the room, "But you now have other protectors to watch over you. I need to watch over Laurel Lilac's child. Without mother or father, they have only Belladonna and I for family and I refuse to let that witch even know the child exists."

"But what shall I tell the people?"

"Tell them that Fenrir and I fought a good fight, each receiving mortal wounds from the other."

"But they will want to see the body to pay their respects," she protested.

Handing Iris back to her mother, Amaranth said, "Tell them that I spirited him away to the mist shrouded lands of Novalava, where the perpetual fires touch the sea to hide the resting king in its healing mists until he is needed again. Turning back to face Myron, "Are you ready?" When he nodded, she waved her wand and a portal appeared. Unlike previous portals which were like open doorways revealing the place it connected to, this one was filled with mist and the land beyond could not be seen.

"Sister, you knew about this?" asked Rowan.

"She has. It has been my desire for some time," said Myron. "We have been waiting for my daughter to wed so I could abdicate and then Fenrir forced us to changed plans. Who can think of a more heroic way for me to leave than saving my daughter from the wolves? Should I send a letter like my brother?" Myron amazed them all by standing. "It's time. Farewell daughter. Hail to Queen Daisy Amaryllis."

"When will I see you again?" asked the princess.

An eerie voice filled the cavern.

***"While the great dragons on this land still roam,
The king can never return to the land he called home.
Hidden away from the Dark Queen's sight,
Until a phoenix of crystal is born Solstice Night."***

Everyone looked around to see where the voice came from. It was Apollo who saw the phoenix perched on the hilt of Eartaiwiwa. As it launched itself into the air, the swirling flames echoed its wings and for a brief moment it looked like there were two birds. The phoenix spiraled around the king and then flew into the portal. Myron followed in the wake of the phoenix flames and the portal closed behind him.

Chaos ensued as everyone started to speak about what they had just witnessed. Rowan silenced everyone. "Look at the baby!"

Laika had been sniffing at the infant. She was as human as her mother but he could smell

her wolf blood. He accidentally touched her with his nose and suddenly, a golden-coated wolf cub was wrapped in the blanket. He changed to human form and she changed with him. Everyone was staring in amazement at this curious interaction as the two changed back and forth. After a few minutes, Laika realized that everyone was looking at them. He changed to human and stepped away from Daisy and Iris. As soon as he was where Iris couldn't see him, he returned to wolf form.

"We will need to get word of Fenrir's death to the council," said Laika. "With his disappearance, they are going to be ready to renew the war. As it is, I doubt they will believe anything we have to tell them."

"Then it's a good thing I'm here to bear witness." A pair of glowing eyes emerged from the shadows. As the shape illuminated in the light of the flames around Eartaiwifa, a giant wolf was revealed. If Apollo had thought Fenrir was enormous, this wolf dwarfed him.

"Wolfsun!" shouted Laika. "I am humbled by your presence."

"And I am impressed with you duty to both Council and your pack leader," said the God of the Wolves as he lowered his face so both Laika and Mushka could rub his muzzle with their own. "You were outcast and returned. Throughout the wars, you were more concerned with the larger pack's safety than that piece of rubbish was," he said nodding toward where the miners were using a wooden crook to fish Fenrir's body out of the water. "With my blessing, are you ready to take up the Regency of Council Leader until that child is grown to where she can take her own seat on the council?"

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"If I may address you, Your Wolfship?" asked Rowan. "Let me be the child's regent."

"What?" gasped both Daisy and Amaranth.

"Without her father, the child will need Laika to help her learn to live in both worlds," said Rowan. "She has already connected with him. I, on the other hand, don't fit in palace life. I miss the freedom of the forest and long to return to its embrace."

"How do I know that you are capable of defending yourself?" said Wolfsun. "You look like one of those pampered pansies that flit around the forest."

"That is fabulous faeries," shouted Rowan. He launched himself at Wolfsun with a ferocity that Apollo hadn't seen in his friend previously. Rowan landed on the wolf's back and the two began to wrestle. Several times it almost looked like Rowan had the wolf pinned, but Wolfsun would alter his size to slip out of Rowan's grip. After several minutes, Wolfsun had Rowan down on the ground. The great wolf's teeth were flashing in the light as he poised himself to rip out the former faerie's throat. Rowan stopped fighting.

"You think that surrendering is going to spare you?" snarled the

wolf. "You started this and I'm going to end it. Weak pampered pansies have no place in a wolf pack!"

Suddenly, Rowan sprung up and threw Wolfsun into the lake surrounding Eartaifiwa. Just as before, the flames spiraled out and ignited the pool of water. Unlike before, there was no scream. This time, a flaming wolf emerged from the flames and stood back on the ground. He shook off the flames, revealing that all of his fur had been singed.

"This is going to itch when it grows back," said the wolf. "Very well done. Where did you learn that?"

"From my pack leader," said Rowan, pointing at Apollo. "I believe it is the same move he used to win Laika's loyalty."

"It might be interesting indeed to have someone with your training on the council. Lupus would be proud of you. Your regency is approved unless your pack leader wishes it for himself."

"Thank you, Your Worship," said Apollo, "but my attentions would be divided between my duties to the human and wolf tribes. If this is truly what Rowan desires, then I am sure that he will be dedicated to his duties to the council."

"It is," said Rowan.

"Then pick up that piece of rubbish and get on my back," said the wolf. "We have a council meeting to attend and I don't think all will be pleased with the changes that will happen."

Daisy stood, placing Iris next to Laika. The child instantly changed to cub form and nestled in the curl of his tail. "I think you are right about Iris having chosen for me. Is there anything you need from me?"

"No, just your blessing and a promise to support the end of the war," said Rowan.

"Gladly on both," she replied.

"Hey-o, stretchers for two at your service," came a cheerful voice from the entrance to the cavern. A dozen dwarves came marching into the cavern. The leader's face looked familiar to Apollo.

"Renaldo?" asked Apollo.

"Yes?" he responded. "Do I know you sir?"

Apollo hesitated a moment as he thought about how to explain that he met this person's future self.

"Not yet," offered Daisy. "My...nephew has a gift of knowing the future."

"Princess Daisy!" exclaimed the dwarf. "They didn't tell me that you were here to brighten our dark world."

"Flatterer," she said blushing at the compliment. "But how can you say that when you have my cousin to grace your caverns for all time? Have you grown tired of her looks and are finally ready to acknowledge that I am the fairest of them all?"

Renaldo stammered looking for a response.

"That is unfair of you to ask," said Apollo. "The lilac and the daisy are beautiful in their own way. The beauty of the bouquet that is the combination of both is lessened when only one is present."

Daisy laughed. "You sound just like my father. That alone should convince anyone that you are a true member of the House of Charming."

The next several minutes were spent on trying to convince

Daisy to allow the dwarves to carry her on the stretcher. Her own body won the argument for the others as the after effects of giving birth finally overcame the adrenalin that filled her when her father rushed after Fenrir.

Apollo started to follow when he realized that Amaranth hadn't moved. She was staring into the darkness at the back of the cavern. GoldenRod gave her a quick kiss on the cheek and shrunk to flying size and followed the others. Apollo noticed the streak of tears on her cheek. That's when he noticed that Wolfsun and Rowan were no longer in the cavern.

"He didn't say good-bye," said Apollo. He had come to care for the former faerie in much the same way as he did Johnny and Viola and the hurt of being abandoned was easy to hear in his voice.

"That is ever his way," offered Amaranth. "He says that good-bye always sounds so final and that by not saying it, you can maintain the connection even when you are apart."

"That sort of sounds like what he's been teaching me about using the earth energy to stay connected or how my father uses the air energy to help him watch things when he has other things to do."

"I can see the similarity," said the faerie queen nodding with approval. "But I know my brother all too well. The truth is that he refuses to say good-bye when he knows someone will try to convince him to change his mind. The longer he delays leaving, the higher the chances are someone will find a way to prevent his departure."

"I wanted to ask him who Lupus is," said the prince. "Do you know?"

Amaranth explained that there was time when Rowan had gotten lost in the forest. Their mother was so involved with trying to train Aster to be the heir and Aster's pregnancy that it was several years before she realized that her youngest child was missing. When she confronted the faeries as to why they hadn't informed her, they unanimously stated that they thought she had changed him into another child just as she had claimed when they realized that Prince Ambrose was missing. None had wanted to admit their ignorance so hadn't said anything to the queen. With faeries actively searching for the lost prince, he was quickly discovered in the care of a wolf named Lupus. Rowan refused to return to the palace. Amber Rose went to bring him home and was losing every argument that she could think of when she got news of the birth of Princess Daisy. She grabbed Rowan by the neck and drug him through her portal.

"It was love at first sight for my brother," said Amaranth. "He saw the baby princess and did everything he could to try to impress her. He refused to return to Fransancisco and settled in woods near Sharpeton. When Daisy was old enough to venture outside of the castle grounds, he took her into the forest to meet his animal friends. That's the first time she met Belka. It was only when it became clear that Daisy had chosen Belka as a mate that my brother came home with his tail between his legs."

"So that's why he knew so much about the details of wolf culture," exclaimed Apollo.

"Exactly," said Amaranth. "And why it was easy for Wolfsun to accept his offer once he proved that he could hold his own in a wolf fight. Now, we had better get moving."

Amaranth took his hand and led him through a portal. Apollo

was surprised to find himself back in Fransancisco. "What? I thought we were going to join the others."

"By now, GoldenRod has already told them of my plans. I need to start becoming a queen and that will start with salvaging my coronation. Without my brother, I am going to need your help to undo what he did to my trees." She pointed out of her window and Apollo could see a phoenix design that nearly matched his godmark silhouetted against the rainbow strips of the rest of the forest canopy. The rising sun painted the sky above a rosy pink. "With the city in flames, they are already saying that the phoenix is a sign of the dark days ahead. We need to bring back the cheer that is found in the rainbow."

"I don't know what he did, but he said something about talking to the trees had worn him out. Maybe my earth magic can help."

Apollo stretched his earth senses to the forest itself. He could feel the forest quiver at his touch. It was like the hounds of the guards back home wiggling in excitement when he stopped to play with them. He added thoughts to his energy of how he was impressed with the design and the colors of their display and looked forward to seeing what they might come up with next. He watched the full canopy turn bright pink as if it were blushing with his praise.

"Well, that certainly is bright," said Amaranth.

"If you think that's bright, you should have seen what your daughter did to my grandmother. Those colors could make your eyes bleed."

"I don't think I want to know. The less spoken about the future is probably for the best."

They stood at the window and watched the forest change colors several time. Both agreed it looked like the forest was struggling with which color to put on for the morning display. When the colors settled, the majority of the canopy was a deep purple. Centered where the phoenix had been displayed was the Royal Faerie Crown. Rather than being a solid color as had been the phoenix, the crown was created in rainbow stripes.

"I think the forest says that its time for your coronation," said Apollo.



Playing With the 4-F Tarot: Listen to Your Body

by Phoenix

When making a decision about something have you ever gotten that sick feeling in your gut that tells you not to do it? And when you do it anyway you find out that feeling was valid? Or when you get really excited about something you can almost taste it? We spend so much time making rational decisions that it is easy to forget the simple basics of listening to our bodies. The spreads I'm going to present this issue are ways to help your body communicate its feelings about the situation.

Let's start off by looking at our five senses. To make this easy, we are going to adapt the spread we used last issue. Starting with card number two of that layout, focus on one of your senses as you select your first card. Work through each of the five senses and fill in the star that is the outer five cards of that spread. The sixth card you pick will go in the center where original card number one was. This represents your "sixth sense" about the situation and your overall feelings. It doesn't matter which sense you think of first as you work through the spread just as long as you know which is which. For my spread, I thought of Sight, Hearing, Smell, Taste and Touch.



In each case, as you look at the card with the sense in mind, try picturing the image on the card as something that might interact with that sense and then decide how that makes you feel. For example – the sense of hearing – if the card were music what would it sound like? A grand Wagnerian opera? A Broadway show tune? A modern composition with lots of honking horns? Or the sense of taste – is your card light and fluffy with a creamy filling like a Twinkie or a good solid four course meal?

For this sample spread I focused on the idea of a person who had just heard from an old lover that they hadn't seen in a long time and they weren't sure about how they felt about seeing them again.

Sight = Lovers of Flowers (Imbolc 2008, page 14), Hearing = God of Water (this page), Smell = Peppers (Lammas 2007, page 17), Taste = King of Feathers (this issue, page 3), Touch = King of Fire (Yule 2006, page 7) and Sixth Sense = Lovers of Air (Imbolc 2008, page 16).

As a sight you are detaching yourself from the situation since you are looking at it through the window rather than being a card where you are in the action. You want to get that sneak peek at them before they see you. As a sound it is full of energy and the pounding waves are probably the sound your heart is making as you think about your ex. The smell is hot and spicy as you remember the hot sweaty nights you had enjoyed. The taste is that explosive release that comes from that first bite that is so good that you throw cares away and dive into the food. The touch is that welcoming warmth of the fireplace. Your sixth sense is struggling with the possibilities (which is probably why we are doing the reading – and honestly, I just pick the cards at random. I don't carefully hand select them for the positions). If you remember from last issue, I worked the outer five cards as a wheel, so let's see if that helps up with our feelings. We have the peppers which represent all of those choices, the heat of the situation will depend on which one you pick. You have been waiting for this moment a long time. You may think you are just a casual observer but when you see your friend you will throw cares away and rush to greet him. You will find that there is a lot to do with your old friend, but it is going to be as comfortable old friends without any of the sexual attraction that had been part of your earlier relationship.

A second way to listen to your body is to select your cards based on the seven chakras. This is a simple spread, card one is your root chakra and it goes at the bottom of a seven card pole. Each added card goes higher on the pole. Each of us probably has different awareness levels of the chakras but for simplicity of writing this article, they are going to be represented as Instinct, Creativity, Center, Emotions, Growth, Awareness, and Consciousness.

The focus question is about a new job offer. It comes with a hefty pay increase which also means that it comes with longer hours and more responsibility. The cards: Instinct = Peppers (Lammas 2007, page 17), Creativity = Chicken and Eggs (Beltane 2007, page 4), Center = Seahorse (Mabon 2007, page 7), Emotions = Meditation (Lammas 2007, page 5), Growth = Goddess of Air (Beltane 2007, page 17), Awareness = Kween of Flowers (Litha 2007, page 13), Consciousness = Lovers of Fur (Litha 2008, page 5).

WE ARE NOT AMUSED!

At the root, you are concerned with making the right choice. It certainly offers you the opportunity to break out of your shell creatively. This is that pregnant moment of the seahorse that is waiting for you to make that decision but your emotions are telling you to think about this. They have concerns about that storm outside. As growth potential, the job would be a walk in the park and it certainly would be cause for dancing if you take the job. But those wrestlers indicate that you still haven't come to terms with the decision, so perhaps some supporting cards are in order.

Add a tree of chakra cards to the left of the current stack. These will represent energies that your chakras are drawing into you. Then add a tree of chakra cards to the right which will represent what your chakras are projecting.

External energy coming in – Trickster (Ostara 2008, page 7), Lotus (Mabon 2007, page 4), Lizard (Imbolc/Ostara 2007, page 13), Kween of Fins (Samhain 2007, page 5), Mirror (Litha 2008, page 7), The Call (Ostara 2006, page 3), and Baby of Water (Beltane 2008, page 20). Something doesn't quite seem right. It is like the new boss is hiding something. The beauty is there but you will be left out to dry. You will be drained with the occasional pat on the back. When you look for support, the boss is just going to toss it back with "and what do you think?" The warning alert is given and time to get the snorkel and fins because you are going down with the ship.

Energy going out – Caught in the Act (Litha 2006, page 14), Frogs (Litha 2007, page 5), King of Fire (Yule 2006, page 7), Lover of Flowers (Ostara 2008, page 3), Lovers of Water (Beltane 2008, page 17), God of Water (opposit page), and Baby of Flowers (Ostara 2008, page 10). You seem like you are surprised that someone would offer this to you but it almost feels like a game of leap frog, going from one job to the next. Both your center and emotions are waiting for someone else to do something. Now they have. The job offer given is much like that hose with our friendly otter and soon the party can begin. Hey, it sounds like you are pretty excited and ready for the job! But that last card is weed killer. Remember our root instinctive feelings – peppers, the trickster and surprise! I don't think that this is a good sign.

As an added way to look at this reading, since each chakra now has three cards, think back to our first spread and look at the past/present/future of each chakra as it brings in the energy, you assimilate it and then send it back out.

Root – fiery choices with hidden surprises that catch you off guard

Creativity – hatching new ideas that blossom but you have to jump around

Center – pregnant feeling which leads to baking in the sun and roasting by the fire

Emotion – Meditation, grief and waiting

Growth – Reflection becomes go fly a kite and everyone is going to gang up on you

Awareness – receiving the call and dancing for joy but the little lake in the park is now a big ocean (think big fish in a small pond syndrome)

Consciousness – needing safety devices and wrestling and weed killer



Collectively, this job is not the best fit for you. It may offer you the chance to break out of your shell and end your waiting game, but you are not going to have a lot of support from your boss. In the end, you are going to spend more time fighting for survival than you will be expressing your creative side. But don't rule the job out completely. It also represents the next lily pad that you might need to leap to the perfect job. If you can grab the snorkel and keep breathing after you go under, this job may just be the pregnant moment. It could be the next job that allows you to give birth to your full potential. Will it be worth it? Listen to your body for the answer to that.

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Make You Think: Homosexuality and the Bible

by Phoenix

So, I've made it back for round three and haven't been zapped. I was thinking today that for all the appearances of bible bashing that I've done, it has been interesting to pick up the book and read the parts that get glossed over in Sunday school. I mentioned a couple of my findings to my church going mother and she said "I never knew that!" I have to admit, I struggled with picking apart such a sacred book but then I remembered something. My journey started after Brid's inspiration at Imbolc and one of her area's of expertise is books. Somewhere along the line, she had some influence in its making and left things for people to find. This issues quotes seem to be coming from either the New International Version (NIV) or New Living Translation (NLT) so I will use those abbreviations to indicate which translation I'm looking at. As an interesting note, the preface to my multi-version copy of the bible says that in the preface to the 1611 version of the King James Version, Augustine said "Variety of translations is profitable for finding out the sense of the Scriptures." If it was good for Augustine, it is good for me too.

As a reminder, I've been working through understanding the ancient law that says homosexuality is bad. There are many people who treat that law as absolute while at the same time ignoring or dismissing most of the other laws in that same section of the bible. My journey this time starts many years after the homosexual law was written in Matthew 13:34-35 (NIV) – *Jesus spoke all these things to the crowd in parables; he did not say anything to them without using a parable. So was fulfilled what was spoken through the prophet: "I will open my mouth in parables, I will utter things hidden since the creation of the world."* The cross reference in the footnote about that prophesy takes us back to Psalms 78:2. OK,

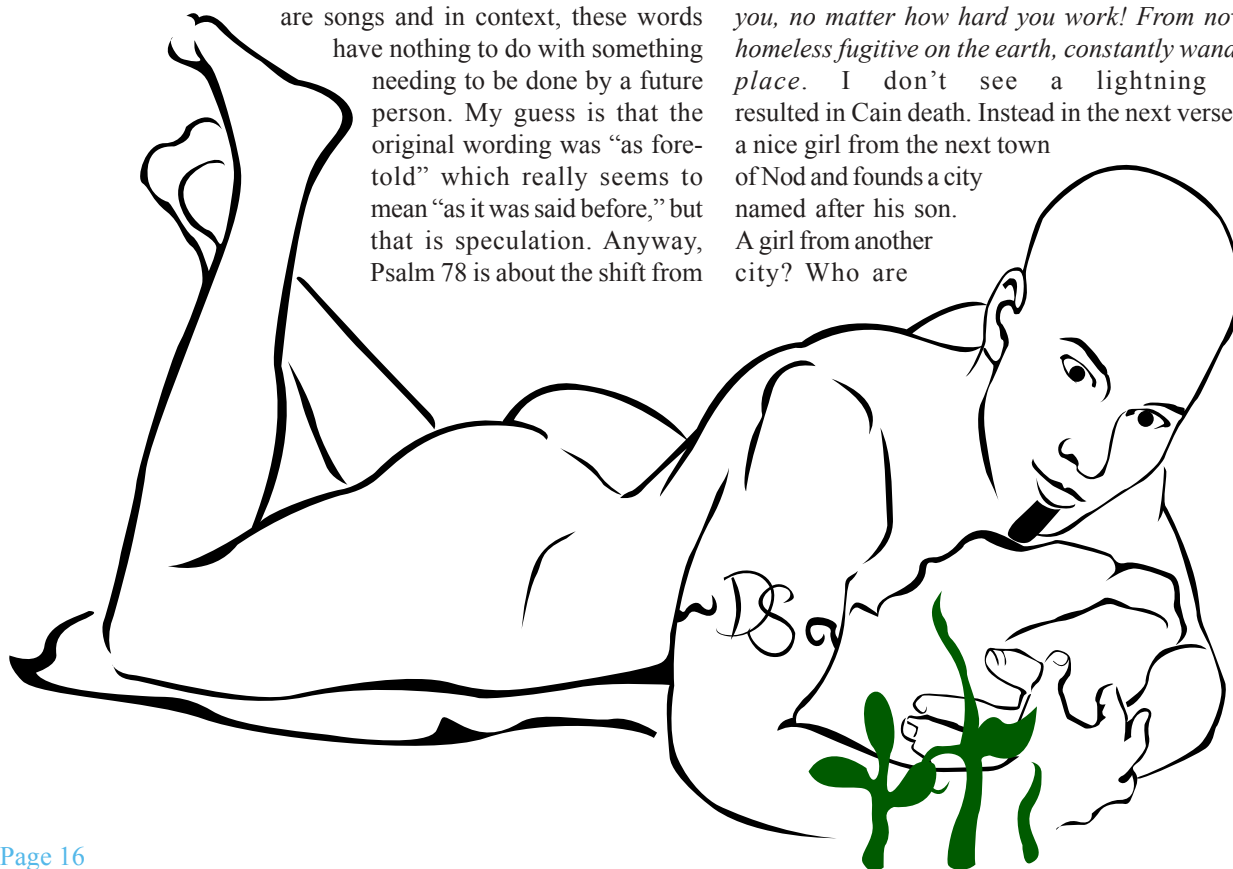
first off, the Psalms are not prophesies – they are songs and in context, these words have nothing to do with something needing to be done by a future person. My guess is that the original wording was "as foretold" which really seems to mean "as it was said before," but that is speculation. Anyway, Psalm 78 is about the shift from

the descendants of Levi being God's chosen priests to the descendants of Judah. Didn't I say last issue that there had to be that kind of shift? I certainly didn't expect to find it so fast. (Thanks Brid!)

Now, here is why I felt it important to include this little side journey – why speak in parables? Wouldn't it be easier to spell it out in detail just as the laws of Moses go into detail about each possible sin (and by detail I mean all the way down to including the sin of having a wet dream – Deuteronomy 23:10-11 – guess you must have been lusting in your dreams)? A parable is designed to give you clues and then make you think things through. In the process it will become more real to you and easier to remember in the long run. Since that is what I'm doing, thinking, I feel a bit lighter about my research.

Time to go back to planting seeds of doubt that will hopefully sprout and the roots will shatter the foundation surrounding "homosexuality is bad."

Seed 1: "Thou Shalt Not Kill" – Exodus 20 is the source of all the Thou Shalt Nots, and if you missed it there, go to Deuteronomy 5, which repeats everything except for that part about the uncut stone altar that I talked about in part 1 of this journey. I am not going to argue that killing is OK – I wholeheartedly agree with that statement, especially if the object of killing is me. There are laws in the book about the penalty for killing someone. Death. (Leviticus 24: 17). Remember any of the stories about Cain and Abel? I seem to recall that Cain killed his brother. I did say kill, right? Yup right there in Genesis 4: 8. And his punishment? Genesis 4: 11-12 (NLT)– *You are hereby banished from the ground you have defiled with your brother's blood. No longer will it yield abundant crops for you, no matter how hard you work! From now on you will be a homeless fugitive on the earth, constantly wandering from place to place.* I don't see a lightning bolt zap that resulted in Cain death. Instead in the next verses he leaves, marries a nice girl from the next town of Nod and founds a city named after his son. A girl from another city? Who are



her parents? At this point in time Adam and Eve have only had Cain and Abel. And constantly wandering and homelessness seems to only last as long as it takes for him to get married and settle down.

Seed 2: Thou Shalt Not Commit Adultery - The death penalty applies to most sinful sexual acts (Leviticus 20) including sex with your father's wife. Death in most cases applies to both parties. I guess it is a good thing that law wasn't around when Levi's brother, Reuben, slept with one of dad's wives (Genesis 35: 22).

Seed 3: And don't forget the Levites who don't have an inheritance of their own – You will find that enough times that I don't need to give you special reference. And don't forget why the Levites don't have an inheritance – Levi killed people. Thou shalt not kill and Levi is still alive, dishonored by his father yes, but alive.

Seed 4: Throughout the books, it is stressed that only the Levites can enter the splendorous Tabernacle with all of the gold that they used in its creation. No one can help them strike the tents when it is time to move. No one is allowed to enter. Only they are allowed to see its holiness. Are you wondering what I'm wondering? Was there anything inside that tent? Or had that gold been diverted to other pleasures?

Seed 5: Honor Thy Mother and Father – another of the big ten – rebel, you get taken to the council and get stoned to death (Deuteronomy 21: 18-21)

Seed 6: Thou Shalt Not Make Idols – yet Moses's brother did just that. This is another of the big ten and so far the penalty for violating those is death. Yet Aaron lives. However, his sons are killed for the sin of burning the wrong incense in the new Tabernacle (Leviticus 10: 1-2).

Seed 7: Thou Shalt Not Steal – another big ten – so in no way could the Levites steal the temple gold, right? Let's look inside...oops, can't look, it would hurt our little eyes so they will look for us. Yup, it's in there, so they say. Anyway, the penalty for stealing is returning the stolen goods with interest (Genesis 22, which of course is only two chapters away from the main Thou Shalt Not Steal rule). There certainly seems to be an unevenhandedness about the rules around Thou Shalt Not.

Seed 8: Keep the Sabbath Holy – another of the big ten. God rested on day seven, so every one rests on day seven. Not exactly true. Deuteronomy 5:14 (NLT) – *but on the seventh day is a day of rest dedicated to the Lord your God. On that day no one in your household may do any kind of work. This includes you, your sons and daughters, your male and female servants, your oxen and donkeys and other livestock, and any foreigners living among you. All your male and female servants must rest as you do.* Now, all of the laws in these books are extremely male oriented. While nothing is specifically said, this "you" has to follow that same thought and as such is directed toward the men in town. With that in mind, notice anyone missing? How about "and your wife"? Hey, someone has to cook the meals.

Seed 9: Hey, remember I am the God who led you out of Egypt – as if they will let us forget since we are reminded of the fact every few lines. Do you want a news flash that they don't say in Sunday school. Exodus 7:3-4 (NIV – God to Moses) *But I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and though I multiply my miraculous signs and wonders in Egypt, he will not listen to you.* He says this multiple

times throughout the plague stories that follow. God could have easily softened Pharaoh's heart but God wanted to have a show.

Seed 10: ...As demonstrated as they are getting ready to leave Egypt and God causes the Egyptians to act favorably toward the Hebrews and gift them with all the gold and silver in town (Exodus 12: 36). Now some versions say the Hebrews seized upon that generosity and plundered the town. The King James Version offers that the Egyptians lent them the gold (as if the Hebrews had any intention of returning it). In any event, at least they didn't steal the stuff on their way out of town.

Seed 11: Slavery is bad. We know that. There are lots and lots of rules about how to treat slaves. There are even rules about conduct if you want to marry one. Wives give their slaves freely to their husbands when they are barren. The latter being a result of having sex with too close a relative – go back to Leviticus 20. It's a good thing that God changed his mind and let the brother-sister team of Abraham and Sara have a child, since from him we eventually get Joseph and his coat.

Seed 12: While we are on Joseph – one of his dreams was that the sun and moon and eleven stars would bow before him. His father asks why would he, Joseph's mother and his brothers bow before him. (Genesis 37: 9-10). Very interesting. He has just happens to have eleven brothers, one for each star. Daddy is certainly the sun in this dream (or parable if you will). I said he had eleven brothers right? Back in Genesis 35: 16-20, Joseph's mother dies giving birth to brother number eleven, Benjamin. (and if you pay attention to numbers...look at when Reuben was sleeping with one of Jacob's wives – verse 22 of this same chapter, so one of the wives dies, dad is grieving since it is his favorite wife and his son goes and sleeps with one of the other wives. What a devoted child that Reuben is.). Rachel is dead by the time Joseph has this dream and certainly Jacob knew that. Why this misdirection? Remember I told you that Joseph had a sister? Dinah – sound like the name of a familiar Moon Goddess? I told you Brid left fun things for us to find.

Seed 13: Remember the story of creation and how everything was good? Guess he changed his mind years later at the time of the flood. The NLT says that God is sorry that he ever made us. (Genesis 6:5-7). Did God just admit that he is less than perfect?

Seed 14: Let's go all the way back to that lovely garden with that tree with the forbidden fruit. Eat and ye shall die, right? (Genesis 2:15-17). Yet, when Adam and Eve eat the fruit, they don't die. God lied? Or is the lie within the story as it has been told?

Seed 15: Did you know that next to that famous Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil is the Tree of Life? (Genesis 2:9) and that when he banishes Adam and Eve, we are told (Genesis 2: 22, NLT) – *Then the Lord God said, "The people have become as we are, knowing everything, both good and evil. What if they eat the fruit of the tree of life? Then they will live forever."* He then stations an angel with a fiery sword to prevent Adam and Eve's return. I don't recall him being worried about that when Adam and Eve were ignorant of Good and Evil and didn't forbid them from eating from the tree of life. So apparently he wanted us to live forever just as long as we stayed naked and dumb as the rocks that gave us birth.

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Make You Think continued

Seed 16: God made us in his image (save that him/her thing for another Make You Think), so anything in us came from him originally. All of our sexual desires would be in that package. Since God made me and I am a homosexual, I come from that same root stock. Even if you factor in the flood, Noah and family still trace their roots back to Adam, and thus that “own image” carries on through the ages. Somewhere in there, God has some latent homosexual tendencies. God made me and God is perfect, so is someone saying that God goofed and made something less than perfect? Oh, it was the sin that came from the serpent that made us change. Who made the serpent? Only one God, so it has to be the same guy. Go back to seed 8 above. God could have made the serpent behave differently, but he didn’t.

The more I dig into these chapters, the more I am convinced that these were written by men with many motives other than the desire to help people live in the grace of their god. Some core essence is there for certain, but these laws are all about power and control of people’s lives. They are about a core group of flim-flam men who came up with a great racket to get free food and shelter and used God’s name to justify their actions. I can pretty much say that I can dismiss most of the laws as written. They are full of contradictions. They are full of selfish motives by those who wrote them down; the same motives that have carried on into the practices of church leaders into modern times. The God of these stories is constantly changing his mind about things. Our society has long come to accept most of those laws as out dated (it’s a sin for a woman to wear the clothing of men - Deuteronomy 22: 5 - yet I bet I can walk into a church on any given Sunday and find women in both skirts and pants). Now, there could be Papal decrees that override some of these old laws, but for some reason they have never put them together in Bible II.

Now, I will leave you with this last thought. In Beast’s and my articles about Brid, we were both focused on the holy water and perpetual flames that are part of our Imbolc celebrations. For the record, one of Brid’s symbols is the snake (as it is for most of the Egyptian Goddesses and I’m sure for many others in other cultures) which of course is related to the “driving out of the snakes” by St. Patrick as the church pushed out the Celtic traditions. When I said Brid left clues for me to find, I hadn’t expected it to be so blatant. I knew the Egyptian Goddess part but I hadn’t even begun to think that far into the parable presented. Now, that tree was about the knowledge of good and evil. Everything after that is about how evil we are. All the sins we commit and the prices we have to pay for them. We must not have learned too well from that bite of fruit for God is constantly having to remind/punish us for our evil acts. As portrayed, God was desirous to have ignorant naked people running around as long as we were blind to the truth and would only come to him for wisdom. He lost that control and focused on getting it back and those Levites used it to their advantage. The Goddess, in her infinite forms, manifested as the snake to help us gain that knowledge and join them as gods. The God figure is so focused on evil and punishing us for deeds we do, yet with all the warnings, flooding the world, destroying cities, we still continue. Maybe the reason is that some of the things we are doing are good. The Goddess gives us one rule “Harm None.” Doesn’t that seem far

simpler than a list of ten commandments and four chapters of laws that clarify what they mean? And the penalties for committing them? And by the way, don’t forget to pay the priest on your way out.

I always find the ways of Gods and Goddesses fascinating. I started this particular journey to understand a particular law that is quoted to say that I am a bad person. I found that the God of the stories is a very selfish, controlling, dominating stereotypical male father figure. Where is the counterpart of the loving mother? She’s there if you look. She’s just busy trying to do damage control from her unruly husband. God made male and female in his image. It seems kind of strange that a man would have the image of both genders. He had to have some other piece of inspiration. He gave life to people and everyone knows that guys aren’t the ones to give birth. He formed Adam from the dirt. Hey! Dirt is earth and we need a mother in here somewhere. Can we say Mother Earth, Gaia, perhaps? Hmmm....I have a Mother, and a Crone (Sorry, Brid, I’m not saying you are old, just that you represent ancient wisdom). I guess I will need to come back later to see if I can find where the Maiden is hiding. I think it is the lovely sister Dinah, but I will have to think about that another day. Right now, my brain hurts (in a good way, Brid, please don’t think I’m complaining. I’m not. I’m actually enjoying this investigation.)

As always, please let us know your thoughts about the topic. Send your notes to the email address listed on page 2.



The Cubby Diaries: The Reunion

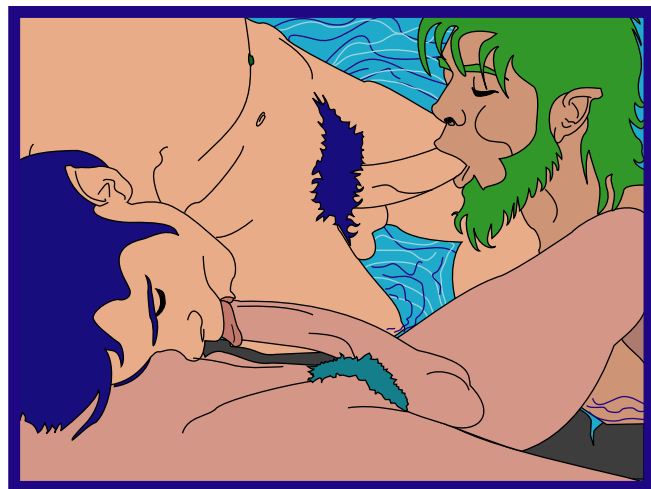
by Cubby

It was that dreaded time again - my high school reunion was quickly approaching. I had managed to avoid both the 10 and 20 year celebrations, but I wasn't going to be so lucky for this year's 30 year event. After last year's remodeling project, the committee knew where to find me. I was going to be their celebrity draw to get more people to attend. "As seen on television" was their planned motto for the invitations. Even now, I am shaking my head at the thought. I can still recall the last day of school and not looking back as I left campus. It wasn't that I hated school. It was the fact that I was the class faggot back in the years when it really wasn't cool to be gay. I was fortunate to have Uncle Phil as a role model and found the way to keep cool amid the jeers and taunts. I was one of the lucky ones since I had good grades which meant the "B" crowd still came to me for help with their homework. I always came through for them, but for some strange reason, I always heard about their great weekend parties on Monday morning. "Oh, I'm sorry, I thought you knew," they would say and then ask for the answer to the final math question. And not wanting cause problems, I would give it to them. When the jerks in the "A" crowd were at their worst, I endured and waited for that day when our class would scatter and that would be the last I had to see them. It almost worked.

I really tried to get out of it but Sheldon, the committee chair, would butter me up with the "we missed you last time. everyone was wondering what happened to you." Which of course translated in my mind to "we thought you were dead and some had hoped it was true." But after the remodel, the pressure was on. We had gone to Peter's class reunion and it wasn't so bad. Maybe people can change in 30 years so I finally caved in and sent in my reservation.

As the weekend neared, I tried to convince myself that I was having a heart attack and I would have to be hospitalized and miss the party. Oh darn. Peter didn't buy it. That night we held a clan heart circle on the back porch and I told them about my fears. I was voted "the one most likely to be a mamma's boy and still be living in their parents basement." I pointed at the house and said that they weren't too far off. Some of my classmates were executives in big companies. What had I done with my life since then? I didn't go to college to get a fancy degree. I became a florist, just the stereotypical job that my classmates would have expected of me. And now I wasn't even working at the shop. What was I really doing? Living off of Gram's and Phil's past generosity and Jim's continual support. It took the clan a while to get me to look beyond employment and focus on all of the volunteer things I do such as my days at the animal clinic and office work for the A.P.E.N.I.S. Foundation. Jim was the one who finally gave me the confidence boost I needed when he said to tell them that I was retired already and then to focus on the trips and volunteer work. He said that'll make them jealous and wonder how I could afford to retire when they are trying to pay for college tuitions and second mortgages.

The weekend finally arrived and Peter and I headed to the Forest Green Country Club where Stanley Wonderford, III, Esq. was hosting the opening social. It was an open bar paid for entirely by Studly Stanley. He was our class president and always had impeccable, wavy hair, and never was a hair out of place. He was the poster child for the hair cream products - literally. We couldn't drive around town without seeing his face plastered on a billboard pitching the newest hair products. He greeted us at the door and he looked exactly like he did back then. As we headed to the table to get our name tags, I had to stifle



a laugh when Peter asked who Stanley was. It wasn't amusing that he asked. It was amusing because he asked who Wigboy was. I realized the truth in his words and thus began my survival tactic of the weekend. I started giving my classmates faerie names.

It wasn't long into the evening that Peter discovered that one of my classmates, Vincent, was a veterinarian and soon those two were lost in shop talk. I wandered through the party pretty much the same way I had school - an occasional conversation but mostly observation. That changed when Sheryl arrived at the party. She was my date for prom. She was the tomboy who did better in the shop classes than most of the jocks so we were the matched misfits. It was natural for us to gravitate together. When she saw me, she let out one heck of a girlie scream and nearly bowled me over with her enthusiastic hug. I only mention the scream because it shocked the heck out of me. I didn't know she could scream in that register since her voice was lower than mine. Anyway, she pulled me aside and caught me up on all of the class gossip that I missed at the previous reunions. Star Jock had married Perky PepSquad right after high school and Jocko Jr was born before daddy reported to his college training camp that August. But at the 10 year gathering Star Jock was found in the bushes with Twirling Tina and Perky finally had enough. It was fun in a sad kind of way to listen to Sheryl list all of the faults of my classmates. As she worked through all of the attendees, she got stuck when she saw Peter. When I started to say that I knew him, she stopped me. She said that she knew she knew he was and she wanted to dig up the memory herself. It wouldn't matter what he had done to change his appearance, she was confident she would remember his name soon enough. Then she launched into the next round of pointing out the various flaws in people's attempts at recapturing their youth.

I struggled with figuring out how she knew so much detail about people's lives. She reminded me that not only had she been the yearbook editor, she was responsible for maintaining the class memory book. In one way or another, she had been in contact with everyone in our class since we graduated. Well, everyone except me I thought. She floored me with her next comment when she looked me in the eye and said that included me. When I protested that she hadn't talked to me, she said that she honored my feelings about school and had waited for me to

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The Cubby Diaries continued

show up. That hadn't meant she didn't know where to find me. Her auto shop serviced Aunt Becky's construction trucks.

Across the room I could see that Peter was giving me that "please rescue me" look. I saw that Spacy had joined his group. She could always monopolize a conversation especially if it had to do with sex and her quest for the right man. I started to excuse myself but Sheryl decided to join me so she could see Peter closer. I offered my arm and we walked over like a couple of young kids on their way to prom. As we approached, I could hear Spacy trying to do her clueless vixen best to lure Peter away from the party and into her car. Peter was trying his best to discourage her politely without embarrassing her with the fact that he was gay. Sheryl barged into the conversation by saying that Peter was already taken. Spacy got riled up and accused Sheryl of attempting to steal another of her boyfriends. I was dreading the pending catfight since the two had often clashed over the same boy in school. Sheryl laughed at her and offered her free arm to Peter. "Come on honey, I think its time we get to bed." Once he accepted her arm, she proceeded to give both Peter and myself a peck on the cheek. The three of us walked away arm in arm in arm. We waited until we were outside before we burst out laughing at our classmates thoughts of Sheryl and I rekindling our fictitious childhood romance and were having a torrid three way affair. Sheryl admitted that it took her a while to stop thinking she knew Peter from school and realized that she had seen him on the remodel program with me. We walked her to her car with the promise to be tablemates at the banquet.

I asked if Peter wanted to go back in. "And ruin that grand exit?" he said. On the way home I admitted that I was almost glad to have gone. It was great to connect with Sheryl. In burying the bad memories of high school, I had also buried memories of the few people I had actually cared about in school, Sheryl and the other misfits. I said that I was glad that Perfect Preston wasn't there. Of all my classmates, he was the one I was most glad couldn't attend. Trying to say it as delicately as he could, Peter had the misfortune of telling me that the word in the group he was talking to was that Preston was working that night but he was planning to be at the banquet.

I could feel my heart pounding at the thought and knew it was time for my heart attack. The very thought of him sent me back to feeling like I was sixteen again - just not in a good way. Preston's mother was our principal and his father was the football coach. Perfect Preston could do no wrong. It was always someone else's fault, never Perfect Preston's. Of course, that darling child was responsible for me lying to my mother sixteen times about how my locker door had a mind of its own and would suddenly shut closed on my hands, and fifty lies about how I was so clumsy and sidwaks would just grab my feet and send me flying, resulting in bloody noses, scraped knees, and torn clothes. The list goes on. Perfect Preston was my personal personification of all of the horror movie characters rolled into one. The fact that his parents were Jason and Rosemary Satani, his birthday was on Halloween and his locker, next to mine, was #666 had no bearing in my feelings about him what-so-ever.

I didn't sleep well that night. But I did wake up with a resolution to be adult and do my best to avoid contact with Preston.

I would be gracious and let him be the jerk I knew him to be.

When we got to the banquet, Preston was already there. I could feel him staring at me when we walked in the door. I could feel his eyes follow me everywhere I went that night. As the crowd thinned toward the end of evening, I could sense him circling in for the kill. I had my back turned when he approached the group I was talking to. "Hey, it is you Georgie." Those were his words, but my inner sixteen year old heard "Hey Faggot!" I took a deep breath and decided the best course of action was to pretend I didn't hear him. Sheryl made it easy for me as she kept sharing the gossip on classmates who hadn't shown up.

"I don't blame you for not wanting to talk to me," he said behind me, "but I need to say something to you. Please turn around." What??? The Beast said "Please?" I didn't know that word was in his vocabulary. But there was a pleading in his voice that compelled me to turn around. This was one of those Hollywood movie moments when suddenly everything stopped and all of the focus was on the underdog hero (me) finally facing the villian (him).

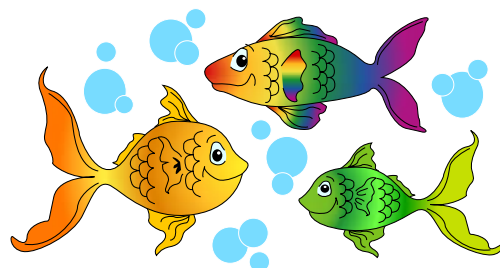
"I want to apologize for being such a bully to you in high school," he said. He explained that his son had been one of the many victims of the school bullies that had been killed in one of the school shootings a few years back. In his profession as a counselor for abused children, he found it difficult to help his own child. Jimmy would tell his father that he was afraid to go to school. He wished he could have gone back to the days when his dad was in school and never had to deal with bullies. That was back in the days when people were polite he told his dad. The more his son asked about the good old days, the more he realized that the reason he hadn't had to deal with bullies was because he had been the bully. I stood in awed disbelief as he bared his soul to everyone. "And I'm thankful that it was a more polite society back then," he concluded. "Otherwise, I would have found myself staring at the barrel of a gun held by half of the class and you would have been in the front. Can you ever forgive me for creating such terror in your life?"

What do you say at a time like that? This person had made my life a living hell for four years. He was the devil incarnate. Yet, here he was, tears in his eyes asking for forgiveness. A deep calm flowed into me and I felt the touch of the Lady. "Have you forgiven yourself?" I heard myself ask. Forgiveness, he felt, had to come from a higher power but he said that he had learned a lot about himself since then and that he hoped he would never go back to that person.

"Then that is my answer to."

I held out my arms and offered a hug. He accepted it to the cheers of our friends.

They say that you can't go back. Sometimes it isn't a question of can or can't. Sometimes it is just something you have to do.



Airy Faerie