

Kiry Faerie

Special Edition 2009
Snow Me Your Cards



Publisher's Notes

Hey Faeries,

Welcome to the Airy Faerie Special Edition 2009. Take a seat and clear your mind and I will tell you your future. Through the mist of time I see, images of what is to be. I see in your near future dear readers a butt load of graphics for you to view. Trust me on this, I have seen some butts that could take a semi-truck and still have room for the truck to do a U-turn! But we won't go into that right now; instead let us focus on the images that await you. Phoenix has been working over time putting together all 83 of the 4-F Tarot cards that we have created up to this issue. Add to that some of my artwork and this issue is sure to be a feast for the eyes. Those sharp eyes out there may notice that some of the images seem a little fuzzy. Don't go running to the eye doctor. Phoenix had to create several gif files in order to keep the file size of the issue from getting out of control (as in without the change this 40 page issue would be nearly 8 Mb in size). You will still be able to see a lot of the detail in the graphics; they are just a little softer. We still had to break the special edition up into three parts to help keep a workable file size. This means I also see in your future, two more Airy Faerie Special Editions coming your way. Unless of course you are getting this via snail-mail, in which case only one very large envelope was sent to you.

We also would like to thank you for your patience as we put this bad boy together. Of course working on the Airy Faerie was not all that we did. It seems like the Gods and Goddesses wanted to test our dedication to the 4-F Tarot and to the Airy faerie with making our lives very busy over the last several months. We were busy playing Faerie God-Fathers, to a local pagan group who is putting on a three day Beltane festival called Beltania, May 8th to the 10th. It has been and continues to be a lot of fun helping put this festival together, and planning the three main rituals. As of this writing there are nearly 450 people registered and the weekend is supposed to be sunny and warm which means we anticipate a lot of people showing

up at the gater. We also became involved in creating the Men's Mysteries Ritual, which will honor the Pentacle of Man: King, Master, Magician, Lover and Warrior. Phoenix will be the king and I will be the lover. In addition to this, Phoenix had the old radiant heating in his house decide to start leaking. First it was a series of patch a leak find another leak, patch that leak, find another leak... Then they finally decided to replace the whole system, and the 40 plus year old carpeting. To make a long story short, his house is chaos. But from the chaos come order and beauty.

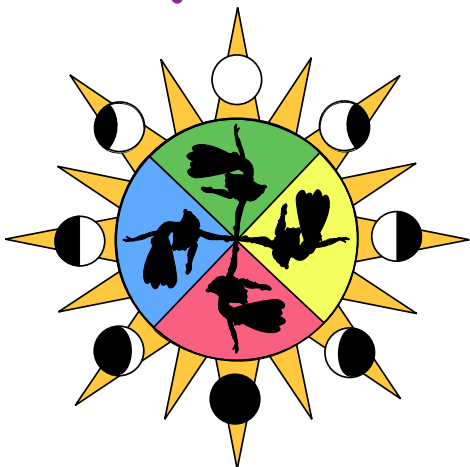
While this issue is dedicated to the 4-F Tarot, there are still the shared talents of our friends. Raven Bear Paws joins us once again, with some of his poems as well as a story called *The Great Rite*. ShadowWalker joins us for the first time as does Soothsayre. Soothsayre honors us by sharing a "Tales from our Tribe" that is not an easy to share. We are honored that he is stepping forward to share his tale with us, and with you dear readers. It is our hope in sharing this tale that great healing can happen for every member of our tribe who shares a similar tale. And you get, not one but three chapters of the new story game with a chapter by Raven Bear Paws, Phoenix and they even got me to join in the game.

In addition to all of that, we do have male nudity and some gay sexual graphics. Yup, old time readers know what is coming next...WARNING ADULT CONTENT! Please do not go any further if you do not want to view such images, or if you are on a public or work computer. If you are under age for such viewing, please put this down and wait until you're old enough. Why? Because I said so!

With that warning, I believe we are ready to continue with the issue. We hope that you enjoy this issue.

Many Faerie blessing and Naked Hugs,
DragonSwan

Airy Faerie



Special Edition 2009

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

Beneath the Beltane Sky

by Soothsayre

This wheel spinning softly as hand and hand we round
The smell of patchouli and sandalwood radiating
as up from the ground
I feel the drums and the tambourines coursing through each vein
And the chanting to the Elements draws us closer,
tighter than a golden chain
Each of us has placed a log here on the burning fire
as we toss in spells of hope
As well as releasing past desire

Or honored ones now enter in to the circle and begin to cast
Calling down the Moon and our Horned Father's pipes now blast
Mother of a million faces essence of our Earth
Come they call her to her husband
and the maiden is given birth
Ohhh the flames now reaching higher blaze of
magic seeds to plant
Calling on the ancient names come the children
hidden by the Moon
Now jump across the bonfires plume

Many years have come and gone yet our Beltane lingers on
For it's a time of realization of our place in all creation
We as withes ache for this the chance to meet in places of retreat
To implore the "Ones of Old" to grant us barley and fields of gold
As a child and unto now I have come to circle here
Into the greenwood seeking Pan and to my Goddess splendor
I shall ever turn this wheel.

Beltane Dance

by Raven Bear Paws

Dance with me around the Beltane fire
Soul bared, naked and free
As winters touch has all but faded
And summer comes forcefully this way

Fairy Folk from slumber awaken
Grace the flowers with their touch
The sent of spring does fill the air
As Green Man calls his children forth

Sing for me my children
And awaken the sleeping Mother
Tell her to spread her arms
And once again summon forth the Green of Spring.

Weave together the new sprung flowers
And place it upon the crown
Dance the naked dance of love
As the Beltane fires burn round.

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Great Mother of Light

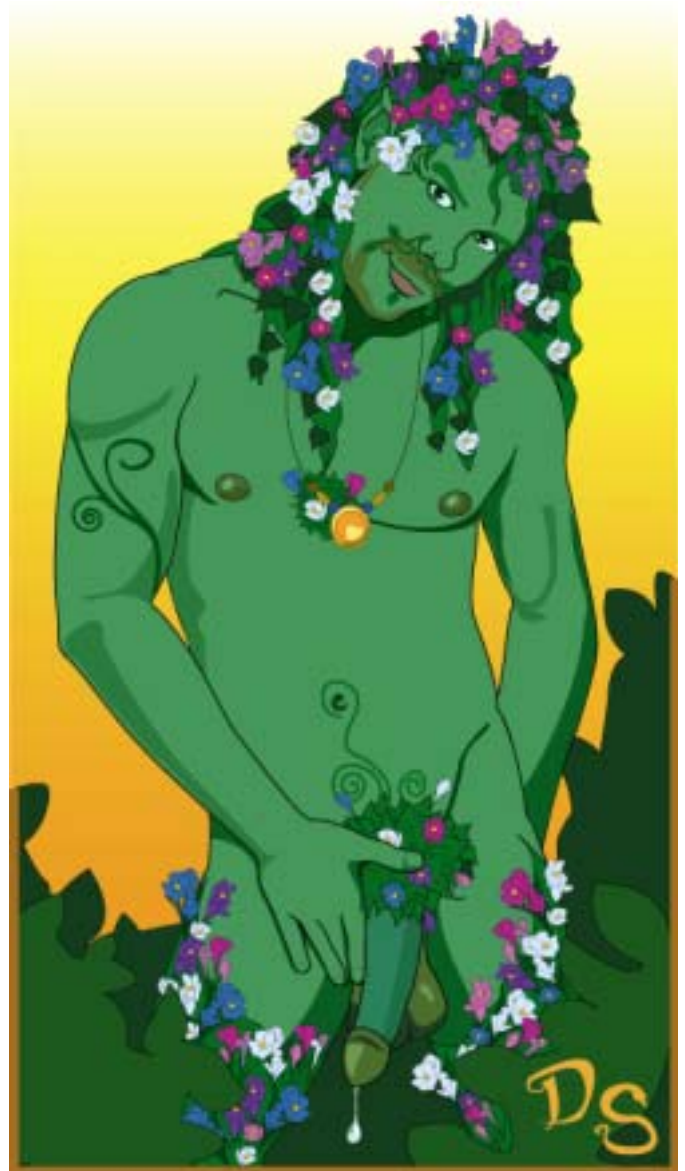
by Raven Bear Paws

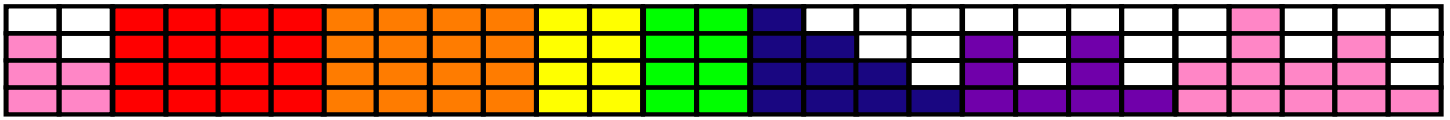
Oh Great mother of light
I sing to thee
I sing to thee of love and honor
of hope and understanding.

Oh Great Mother of light
I cry to thee
I cry to thee of hurt and confusion
of pain and self doubt

Oh Great Mother of light
I speak to thee
I speak to thee of scared whispers
of loyalty and faith

Oh Great mother of light
LOVE ME
for I am your child
for I am your will!





The 4-F Tarot: Special Edition

by Phoenix

After showing you four or five cards per issue for the past three years, we thought it was time to show you all 83 cards that have been designed so far. The desire to do this has given us a fun challenge - how to put all the images in a single issue and still be able to email it to you. As you will already know, we had to improvise a bit and send the issue in three parts. And even then, we still had to be creative. You will see two different qualities to the graphics. Some will be the sharp images that you are used to, while others are a bit fuzzier. This is due to how we had to reduce the images to be able to put everything in such a compressed format. Be assured that when the cards are actually distributed, they will all have the sharper images. We have provided an index on pages 38-39 with which issue you can go back to to find the original full sized version of each image.

We are at a fun stage in the process of developing the deck. We have been at this for three years and knew that it was going to be nearly a five year project. At the end of three years, we have completed the first drafts (those that you have been seeing) of 80% of the cards. Now that we have gotten a solid foundation going, we are starting to see the things we need to do for the second drafts. Several of those new visions of cards you have already seen are being presented in this issue. With these second drafts, we begin a fun, new phase of development. With each of the first drafts, we had an overall idea of what we wanted on the card and we pretty much designed an individual card. With the next round of creation, we get to start to weave their energies together to create a unified deck and not a collection of 108 unrelated cards.

As part of that shift into the second phase of development, we are starting to get feedback from friends on some of the cards. We are starting to see how people relate to different aspects of the cards. Those questions and insights have proven invaluable to us. I will talk about some of these with each of the articles about the cards.

But that is all part of the logistics of creating something new. What do I want to say about the deck itself?

One of the common questions we get is "Where can I buy the deck when you are done?" One of the key things in my mind is that each person who uses the Airy Faerie 4F Tarot will be a co-creator in its making. We are not planning to take this to a publisher and printing up a couple of thousand boxes to sell in stores. These cards will be available electronically for you to print for friends and for yourself. And then the magic begins. You will take a printed piece of paper and cut out the images and turn them into cards. Your personal energy will be the final ingredient in the creation. The deck in your hands will be your unique property. Each printer will be slightly different and the color may vary from print job to print job. Your cutting skills may not be the same as someone else's. Your cutting skills will improve as you progress through the deck (trust me - I get faster each time I have to cut out new cards to add to the working deck). You may choose to laminate your cards while someone else doesn't. Each deck will have its unique quality and not be something mass produced. And for those who have limited

access to printers, we will have an option where we do the printing, but it will still come four cards to a page for you to do that cutting part. Our intent is to offer the deck as our gift to the community who supports us but there may be nominal costs for postage of CDs or printed pages for those who don't access whatever web based option we select for housing the electronic versions. But whatever the cost, it will be on a sliding scale for those who are suffering economic woes.

The second most frequent question is "Will there be a book to go with the cards?" There will be something, but probably not what you are used to having. I have been at readings where the person sat there and thumbed through the manual and read verbatim the text in the book. My job will be to introduce you to the cards and let you find your own relationship to them. I will save thoughts on that process for other parts of this issue.

That being said, let me introduce you to the God of Fire, the firemen. I resisted the temptation for this image for a long time and was aiming for Smokey the Bear and the held the idea that the god knew the power and danger of his element and thus was taking an active stand to prevent it. But with the Kween doing her thing in the kitchen, the Kings with their fireplace and candles, the Goddess with her raging storm and the Magic with its burnt out forest, it became pretty evident that the God needed to be a bit more of a hands on, take control kind of guy.

So how best to design this as a card? First, since we aren't generally doing poster boy type images, going for the calendar fireman didn't work. We needed him in action and what can be more dramatic than a house fire? Then add in the impact of said house fire on the homeowners and the drama starts to emerge.

Our firemen need to have some animal energy around them, so naturally they have their Dalmation with them. Well, what is the Dalmation doing while the firemen are doing their job? Hmm, what if our homeowners are the guys on the Kween of Fins, Goddess of Flowers and Goddess of Air cards, with their dog, the retriever? Well, if the Dalmation and retriever start to connect amidst the disaster, that gave us that little bit of flavor of the new beginning promised in the traditional Death card. While it is hard to think about the future when faced with a disaster, it will still be there whether we see it or not. I have a feeling that our fireman and his dog may be making a couple of other guest appearances on some of the other cards as I have a feeling that the two dogs will find a way to bring their human companions together after this night is through. After all, where are they going to stay that night now that their house is burnt to the ground?

















And I have to add - didn't DragonSwan do an amazing job capturing the inferno? Talk about an intense card!

Who else is new for you this issue? We have three other new cards, five with their phase two make-overs and one with a complete overhaul. And just for grins, on several of those make-overs we are presenting you with the before and after images just to give you the feel of how things are changing.



The 4-F Tarot: Work and Play

by Phoenix

	Feather	Flower	Fin	Fur
Air				
Fire				
Water				
Earth				

These thirty two cards represent the basic energies of the deck. These are the energies at their simplest. If you were to see these images in dream time, how would you interpret them? That is one level of understanding to think about when viewing these cards. If you know about these creatures and their habits, that is something you can bring to the table when you view these cards. If you think of old saying such as “busy as a bee” and “sly as a fox,” that is also something you can think of when viewing these cards. If you want just go with the cartoon images that go with a creature such as the road runner, you are totally free to do that as well. And if you know of a religious practice that honors these creatures or a god or goddess who uses these creatures as one of their symbols, that is equally an option to bring into a reading when one of these cards shows up.

In other words, these can be a simple or as complex as you, the card reader, want to make them. Part of the thoughts behind the deck were that this group of cards would present the animal energies purely as themselves. As we move through the deck, the various humans will start to manifest their animal energies, combine multiple energies and even draw additional energies to them. As such, those cards become more complex and have added meaning

beyond the basic animal. But with these cards, we want you to have that gut reaction. How do you feel when you see the vultures circling overhead? How does that feeling relate to the question being asked? Or compare that to the feeling you get with the swallows flying in their aerial dance? And again, how does that relate to the question being asked?

The cards on this page are the “Working” cards while the ones on the opposite page are the “Playful” cards. The concept behind selecting the creatures for the working cards was that they had to, well, work for their element. There is a lack of the element in their lives and they have had to work to compensate. The two obvious ones are the Fires and Waters as a lack of fire gets pretty chilly and a lack of water gets pretty dry, so the polar regions and the desert became natural environments to look for inspiration. Thinking of a lack of air led us to think “no air = no life” and thus we focused on attention on creatures who work with death energy. And a lack of earth led us to a lack of space (hence the cards all having a thick dense population of creatures) which then also led us to a lack of individual identity. Let’s face it, how often do we think of a single guppy or piece of clover? We tend to think of all of this group as a

	Feather	Flower	Fin	Fur
Air				
Fire				
Water				
Earth				

group and not the individuals.

You will notice two distinct art styles on these pages. Some have colored backgrounds and some don't. The original art concept for these cards were that they were going to be more of the nature of an artist sketch. Simple and clean, no frills. The colors on the working cards would be muted with maybe a spot of more intense color. The playful cards would have a bit more color. The brighter intense colors were going to be held in reserve for the upper level cards. Please take note of the "original art concept" phrase. Well, in terms of the "artist concept" that lasted until we got into the playful cards and those sketches turned into DragonSwan using as much care in his renderings for the creatures as he does for his male nudes. And then, the more that the color filled in around them on the other cards, the more the stark white of their background stood out. The cards with the colored backgrounds are a "quick fix" that allowed us to get some more life into these cards. The Vultures and Hummingbirds have been completely redone since their cards were introduced (and redone in such a way that the Hummingbird once looked like a Cardinal). These cards will set the standard for the others when we come back to revisit them in phase two of the

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process of creating a deck.

Now, one of these cards is a new image to the set. The original playful fins of fire were the jellyfish. The more I worked with the cards, the less I was satisfied with the quiet fire that is held in their tendrils. And visually, there was not a lot of difference between their effortless floating and the same floating quality of the turtles. We needed a bit more active fire for these cards. And then, one day I was reorganizing the bookcase in the den and came upon one of my old aquarium books that was all about *Betta Splendens* or Siamese Fighting Fish. Now what that book was doing about the books on Colorado history is beyond wondering. But certainly the Divine instructed me to leave it there years ago so that I could rediscover it at the right time. The fighting spirit of this fish was just the fire we needed. And the fact that they can be a beautiful red only helps us with that overall fire concept. So thank you Jellyfish for your time with us. Be free and be well.

You can find a larger image of the newest member of our tarot family on page 15.

The 4-F Tarot: Babies

by Phoenix

I love our 'babies' as they grew into a fun concept. When the deck was going to be of a semi-traditional nature featuring four semi-traditional suits based on the animal energies, these cards were our "aces" and were going to be fairly literal in being babies of the animals represented. The first struggle with that concept was related to the sameness of the energy of person interacting with a bird egg verses interacting with a fish egg. Now, a person with a puppy or kitten...now that is a fun image which bubbled up and eventually become the image of one of the Goddess cards. But I get ahead of myself.

We lived with that imperfect thought until we started expanding our thoughts to ultimately have eight cross-connecting suits with both the elementals and animals. Now the struggle become how to have an air baby or water baby that matched a baby bird or seedling. Then we hit upon the concept that you see on this page. The babies of the elements became things that our future Kweens, Kings, Goddesses and Gods need to learn about controlling their elements. At the same time, the babies of the animal energies became things that those creatures need to learn about in order to survive.

Baby of Air: Kites, balloons, bubbles - all toys that one can pick up to learn about air or just to have fun (but the more you know about how things work, the more fun you can have with your high flying kite) And if you think you really can't learn something by playing with these toys, just ask Benjamin Franklin what he learned from his kite flying days.

Baby of Fire: Matches - I don't think I really need to say much on this one. Just remember to close the cover before striking and

don't give anyone a hot foot lest they return the favor.

Baby of Fins: Water Toys - are you ready to go exploring or are you about to head into deep water and need to be prepared?

Baby of Earth: Sandbox toys - it could be time to have some fun and build an elaborate sand castle or maybe it's time to start digging (or stop digging as the case may be)

With all four of these, they have no life on their own. They come alive once someone picks them up and starts to use them. Sometimes the challenge is knowing when to leave them on the table or when to put them down.

Baby of Feathers: A birdcage - it looks so nice and cozy in there. Is it a prison to escape from? Or is it a safe place to escape the clutches of the evil cat?

Baby of Flowers: Weed and insect killer - maybe you need to get to work to clean out the weeds and pest of your life - but if someone is trying to apply this to you, then you had better learn how to adapt to the poison in order to survive.

Baby of Fins: Fish hooks - are you the fisherman trying to catch a meal and needing to know which lure to use to get your dinner? Or are you the fish needing to recognize these things lest you become dinner?

Baby of Fur: Leashes and hamster wheels - are you trying to control something with that leash? or is it something that you strain against to gain your freedom from the one holding it? Are you stuck in the wheel and don't know how to stop?

For these four babies, part of the challenge is knowing whether or not you are the one using these things or needing to recognize them so you don't get caught in their traps...and if you do get caught, how are you going to adapt and escape?

Air



Fire



Water



Earth



Feather



Flower



Fin



Fur



The 4-F Tarot: Love Connections

by Phoenix



Over the past couple of months, these cards have grown into more than just reflecting different aspects of love. They have become the heart of the deck. As the energy builds as we move into the Kweens, Kings, Goddesses and Gods, the energy of these cards serves as the foundation of the personalities that will eventually emerge on those cards. We had several cards that we were still debating what the exact image was going to be. With the understanding of the love connection, those cards came into focus.

As we design the “court” cards I just listed, we are looking at which cards “live” together on the grid. The Goddess of Flowers shares space with the lover standing at the window, while the Goddess of Fire does not share space with one of these eight cards. But both of those cards can connect to the love that radiates out from each of those eight cards. However...one of the rules of the deck is that the God controls shared energy and in the case of our fiery couple, he is keeping her isolated. Any wonder why her nickname is “The Fury?”

Do you as a user of the cards need to know any of that? Probably not. But I mention it as a way of introducing one of the

next tasks that we have ahead as we move into phase two - that of making sure that if a card shares a love connection with our playful otters or our battling rams then that card needs to have some level of playfulness or competitive spirit involved. One example of this is the Goddess of Earth (not published yet). She lives at the Temple of Earth and Fin and is our dungeon mistress. Some poor soul has forgotten the lessons he learned from the baby cards and is now trapped in her cage. Her smile and sensuality will be the lure that draws her victims in, much like the tentative touch of the guys in the sauna. When she pays attention, her victim is so focused on the passion of the lip lock that he doesn't see anything else. And like the love at first sight quality of the locker room - is she just playing with you or is she serious? On the other hand, she is not about patiently waiting at the window, quietly watching a sunset with a friend and she does not operate from a space that fills you with a passion that lights the night sky. And, she does not operate in a space that is filled with love. If I said that her totem will be a crocodile, would that surprise you?

—continued on page 40

	Feather	Flower	Fin	Fur
Air				
Fire				
Water				
Earth				

Quest for the Crystal Phoenix

Chapter 33: Crystal Visions

by Orpheus

Apollo felt an odd detachment as he watched himself heal the earth around Sir Evan's grave. He remembered everything he did and felt that day, but was now experiencing it from the outside. He noticed the small pool of green that formed at the base of the tombstone as he touched it. He watched his friends' eyes grow wide as that green energy expanded and everything started to blossom in the wake of his apology. But most of all, he watched himself with a sense of hope. He watched himself start to mount his horse when someone tapped his shoulder from behind. With Rondar, Johnny and Cetee already mounted, Apollo jumped at the unexpected touch.

"Please forgive me," said Renaldo, "but you were starting to turn as pale as the Princess's crystal and you said..."

"And I said that if anything was strange to call my name," said the prince in a voice as cold as the crystal before him.

"Which I did, many times, my friend," without a tinge of apology in his voice, "For the past half hour I called your name but when I could start to see through you, I thought perhaps a little stronger attempt was needed."

Reluctantly, Prince Apollo broke his physical connection to the crystal surrounding Princess Lilac. "Perhaps you were right to be concerned," he said with a warmth starting to come back to his tones. "I think I had gone deeper into her thoughts than ever before and was about to be trapped in them. I've finally managed to get her to stop thinking about her mother and found the memory of when she used her crystal and first found me. Having found that memory, I might be able to find the memory of how she projected herself to my time. Maybe I can do the same and have Johnny grant my wish to come home."

"Do you have to go?" came a soft voice that filled the cave.

Turning away from the crystal, Apollo said, "We have been through that before. You know that I don't belong here."

"I know, now t...tell her!" said the dwarf at the woman standing beside the crystal.

"Princess Lilac?" gasped Apollo. "But how? You're..."

"Dead?" she said as she offered her hand to him, which he kissed.

"Yes, I know and have finally come to terms with that. But the touch of your earth magic called to me and I could no longer remain in silent slumber. Stay with me here and I will teach you all my secrets

and you will heal this land and end my mother's reign of terror before it really begins."

"Your words echo the thoughts that I have had many times. But if I stay here and change the past that I know, how will there be a future me to come back here to change things?"

"How like my father and uncles you are. Ever swift to run from where you are needed. And when I met you in your time you led me

to believe that you would be different. I should have known that the cowardliness of the male members of the House of Charming would live down through the ages," chided the princess.

"But you are wrong, My Lady. I do not run from where I am needed. Rather I am running to where I am needed. Your time still has its heroes in your sister and cousins and their mates. They are the faerie tales and legends of my time. But I have to return to be King to reunite the land of your birth."

"Reunite the land now!" she demanded. "Take up Eartaifiwa and rally everyone to your side. You have the power to take command of all three kingdoms."

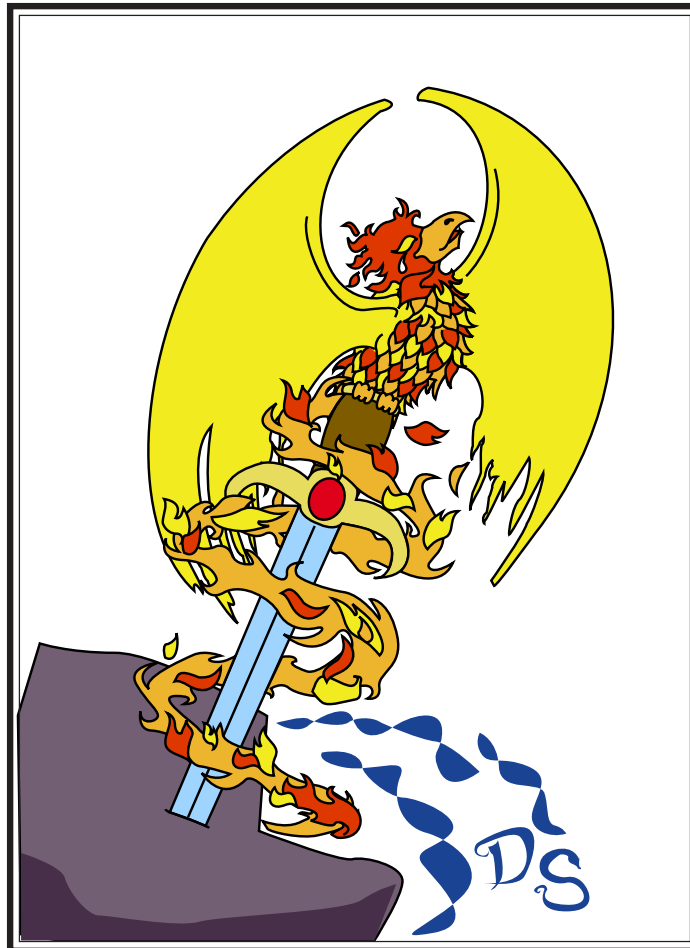
"You are your mother's daughter after all," chided the prince. "Take power from my friends? I dread the day that I have to assume power from one of my kin. It will be mine by right of heritage but will I be ready to lead? Will I have earned their respect or must I be forced to rule by the sword as you

suggest?"

"What need have you for respect?" asked the princess. "You will be king. Your word is law. You hold power over the very elements around them and can force them to bow before you. Why should you care what they think?"

"I would be a very lonely king if I didn't care. The abuse of power you suggest goes against every vow that is made between monarch and the people. The petty uses of power and neglect of its true worth is what brought your family to its ruin. I can't begin to imagine the horrors the gods would bring upon me should I give in to such selfish motivations."

Her eyes flashed with a lavender fire. "It's all about you, isn't it? Can't be lonely and what if I'm not worthy. You sound like the worst qualities of my father and uncles all rolled into one. It's shame



that Mother found out about Rupert before we were ready. Now, he had the fire to be a great king. All he lacked was Earth Magic and Amaranth promised that our child would have it being the child of two of the family lines.”

“What happened to your child?” asked Apollo.

“My child is...” She struggled to find the words. “My child is...” and she disappeared.

“I have never seen her like that,” said Renaldo. “I apologize for her behavior. With me, she was ever the perfect lady and never spoke in those tones.”

“And when was the last time you talked to her after her death?” asked Amaranth stepping from the shadows. “I’m sure that has tainted her feelings about life.”

“What are you doing here?” gasped Apollo, offering her a hand to assist her to the bench that faced Lilac’s crystal. “I thought you couldn’t portal this close to the birth of your daughter.”

Amaranth accepted his offer and sat down. “I didn’t have much choice. I felt a surge in the Earth Magic so I knew you were doing something. Then, this ungrateful child,” she said as she rubbed her swollen belly, “projected some horrors happening here at the cave and suddenly the portal opened. When I didn’t walk through the arch, it started to rain in my quarters...everywhere except the arch.”

Apollo laughed.

“Don’t laugh at me. I’m drenched.”

It was only then that Apollo noticed that her hair was hanging limp and that, indeed, her clothes were creating puddles on the floor at her feet. He called to the Fire Magic to dry her clothes. “I’m not laughing at you but at your daughter. It seems that her use of rain to get people’s attention started at a far earlier age than I imagined. I had the impression that it was something she came up with to deal with her children.”

“Apparently, she started practicing with her mother. I am going to have to start keeping an umbrella handy when I have to tell her she can’t have something she wants.”

Apollo chuckled. “That sounds like a good plan but I had better not say anything to my friends about that particular idea or she’ll never forgive me.”

“You’re probably right,” said the faerie queen. “Now what was going on here? I came in at the very end of that conversation and was more than a bit surprised to see Lilac standing there.”

The prince explained how he had been digging further into the princess’s memory crystal to try to figure out how all the various things he had collected fit together to create the spell to send him back to his time. He had found the memory of when she found that he had earth energy. Renaldo had gotten concerned for his well being and broke the trance and suddenly the princess was standing there talking to them.

“So, somehow you connected with those memories in a very real way and your various magics gave them form. That certainly is an easier way to get answers from her.” She paused and rubbed her chin a moment. “Now, how to do that deliberately and connect with her true spirit rather than connecting to one connected to her fear of becoming her mother.”

“What about when she was with Rupert in her tower?” offered Renaldo. “She often spoke of the time with him as the happiest times of her life.”

“And they may well have been,” replied the faerie, “but even so, she was under her mother’s control. I know for a fact that she was happiest here in the cave with you.” She ruffled his hair a moment in a loving sign of affection. “You gave her shelter and love because you loved her for herself and not because she was the King’s Daughter and she deserved it.”

Renaldo blushed at her attention and words.

“Do you think I could use that connection to call her back?” asked the prince.

Amaranth thought about it for a moment before speaking. “The desire would certainly be strong enough it were your own. I have a feeling that to call her will require her connection to you.”

“But I never met her when she was alive,” said the prince as he sat down next to his great grandmother. “I don’t have a direct connection with her.” He buried his face in his hands.

Renaldo placed his hand on the prince’s shoulder. “Wasn’t there the time that she journeyed through the crystal to talk to you?”

“That’s right!” The prince’s face brightened.

“Somehow you connected with her then to bring her forward in time,” offered Amaranth.

“So if I can connect to that memory, I should be able to do the same thing in this time.”

“That might work.” Suddenly, the faerie queen gasped. “Oh dear!”

“What’s wrong?” asked Apollo. “Did something happen to the baby because of the portal?”

“It isn’t the baby I’m worried about. It’s the Hildas when they come in to check on me and I’m not in my quarters. Could you be a dear and go bring a couple of them here before they decide to kill me and ask questions later? I’ll stay here and try to remember what I did to create this crystal. Maybe I can figure out something to make it easier to communicate with the princess inside.”

Apollo kissed Amaranth’s hand, “As the queen commands.”

“And bring Raven StormCrow with you. He’ll want to know what His daughter has done.”

“His daughter?” asked the prince. “Don’t you mean ‘our’ daughter?”

“When she opened the portal she was mine. But the minute she started dumping rain on me she became his. He is going to have one heck of a grin on his face when he learns about that talent until he learns that he’s going to be responsible for cleaning up after her tantrums until he can train her to control them.”

Apollo opened his portal and stepped through to his quarters in Fransancisco. He set out some earth energy and quickly found one of the Hildas and called her to him. As Amaranth suspected, the sisters were in a frenzy trying to find where the queen had disappeared. The forest was not helping matters as it shaped a face with hands playing peek-a-boo. They knew by that playful energy that the queen hadn’t been harmed and they felt that she was playing a

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game on them. They were getting upset with themselves for not being able to find her which would mean she won the game. He had Hilda Arrowroot have her sisters find Raven StormCrow and bring him to the prince's quarters and then he would take them all back to the cave.

Well, that was the plan. Once Raven StormCrow heard that Apollo was in the palace, he insisted that the prince join him in the Queen's Quarters. Once he stepped through the door, the damage from the indoor rainstorm was still evident. The king consort was sitting on a wooden stool. It was one of the few things in the room that was not soaked.

"I have been told that you know what happened to the Queen. Is she all right? Are you responsible for this mess?" he asked as he rose at Apollo's entrance.

"No," offered the prince. "She is fine but desires to talk to you about what happened."

"If you want me to go with you, tell me what happened."

"And spoil her surprise? She'd kill me for telling you something that she wants to see your reaction. Now shall we go?"

Apollo saw the dry spot where the original portal had been and created his portal in the same spot. At his invitation, the eight Hildas stepped through. Raven StormCrow hesitated for a moment and looked at the prince. "This had better be good. We were worried sick."

"Better than good. After you," said the prince as he gestured to his friend to step into the portal.

As they stepped into the cave, the Hildas had already positioned themselves around the perimeter. Hilda Harbell was checking the queen's pulse.

"I'm perfectly fine," protested Amaranth. "Any increase in my blood pressure is probably due to your drawn swords in this memorial cavern. Now please stand down."

"We were worried about you, Your Majesty," said Hilda without any sign of apology in her voice. "You disappeared without a trace and without warning. We feared the worst."

"I do appreciate your concern and when my daughter is old enough to understand them as well, you may reprimand her for kidnapping her mother without leaving some kind of message. Meanwhile, please alert King StoneHeart that he has a royal visitor and ask how you may help in patrolling these caverns."

With a puzzled look on their faces, the Hildas did as ordered. "I'll explain it later," shouted Amaranth as the last of the sisters looked back at her before exiting the cavern.

"That may work with your guard," huffed Raven StormCrow, "but it will not work with me! What is this nonsense about our daughter kidnapping you? That's a bunch of rubbish and you know it. You have been aching to get out of the palace for weeks and you finally found a way..."

The faerie king suddenly found himself in a torrential downpour.

Amaranth snickered. "It seems like your daughter doesn't like you yelling at her mother." She hooked her arm around her husband's and led him to the far side of the cavern. "Apollo, would you be a dear and dry this up while I go talk to my husband. I wouldn't want anyone to slip on the wet floors while I tell him about our daughter's

latest antics." Apollo thought he saw a lightning flash from her eyes. "But first I shall remind him of the basic rules of never contradicting the Queen before you listen to Her."

Apollo watched the faerie couple for a few minutes before doing as requested and asked the fires below the cavern to heat up a small spot on the floor. The water turned to steam with an audible sizzle. Once done, he turned his attention back to the crystal surrounding the princess. He stood at the side of the crystal and placed his hands on its smooth surface and sent his thoughts back in and tried to reconnect with the memories held inside.

He was uncertain how long he had been standing there without connecting to anything new when he felt his great grandmother's touch. Apollo looked at her and saw love and concern in her eyes and shook his head to indicate he hadn't found anything.

"You are trying too hard and need some rest," she said, brushing her hand on his cheek. "Some food and a fresh perspective will greatly aid your quest."

"I keep feeling like I'm almost there but I'm missing something," he said as he allowed the queen to pull him into a hug. "I just don't understand the crystals as well as I should. Maybe we can find..."

"Maybe you need to find the teacher who taught her," came a rough voice from behind them.

"Maewyn!" exclaimed the faerie queen. "What are you doing here?"

"That's a fine howdy do," said a faerie dressed in bright colored garb. "What kind of psychic would I be if I didn't anticipate when someone needed me."

"It's not that," offered Amaranth, "it's just that Mother said you were dead, all of you."



Airy Faerie

"So that's the rubbish Aunt Jade Rose was spreading about us. Well, if it means we died when we left Fransancisco, I can tell you that the afterlife among the gypsies is more fun than city life ever was. But I'm not here to talk about me. I came because your great grandson needs something."

"Why do you think he's related to me?" asked Amaranth.

Maewyn looked at the queen in shock that she asked the question.

"What kind of psychic..." said Apollo.

"Exactly!" said Maewyn. "It looks like your side of the family finally married someone with some brains. A refreshing change. Now how long do I have to wait for you to be born and what are you doing here anyway?" She got a distant look in her eye as she looked at Apollo. "Don't tell me. It is too far for my sight to see so I probably don't want to know."

"He's going to be friends with my grandson," said a small girl as she poked her head out from behind Maewyn.

"That's nice, Mimosa Rose. We'll talk about your family later. Now go with Auntie Amber to go find some food while I talk to my cousin and her friends." She gave her daughter a kiss and sent her to the woman who was standing at the archway. Turning back to face the prince, "Who taught you hold a memory crystal from the side? Everyone knows that you need to go with the flow that runs from point to point. Trying to insert your thoughts from the side is like going cross stream. You may eventually get what you are looking for but it is so much easier to do it the other way."

"No one taught me," said the prince with a hint of defiance in his voice. "The princess handed me a memory crystal and said that I would figure it out and be able to unlock its secrets. It never occurred to me that holding the crystal in a certain way would make a difference."

"Exactly the way I taught her. But not my normal teaching technique, I'll tell you. She was in a rush to learn things but I never knew when her mother, even thinking of her leaves a foul taste in my mouth, so I had to resort to packing lots of lessons in a single crystal."

"I thought you were the great psychic," humphed Amaranth. "Why wouldn't you know when Belladonna would show up?"

"You and your world of love and goodness are blind to the effects of hate," said Maewyn as she pointed a finger at her cousin. "Hate as strong as hers is better than any invisibility spell. The only way to see one such as her is to find a place where you can't see anything. And thanks to your bumbling, there are many who think faeries are evil and that hate is growing so there are more things I can't see everyday." Turning to the prince, "And for you, dear child, to find one such as the queen, you will need to unite all of the rulers in your time to find the places where someone hates the group of you. A person may have a grudge against their monarch but would not have a reason to hold one against another monarch."

"So is that why I can't sense Laika?" asked Apollo. "He hates me?"

"If it is of comfort," said Maewyn softening her tone, "I can sense him and he's hurting inside. He doesn't hate you as much as he hates what you represent and the pain he feels."

"That very nice, cousin, but how does that get this young man

home? Your protégé has given us many clues as to the things we need to cast the spell but nothing of the actual spell."

"Crystals I understand," she responded. "Spell crafting is something she learned from her mother. You will have to ask her directly."

Amaranth sighed. "Which is what we have been trying to do."

"I was getting to that when we got sidetracked. Now, young man, go stand at the end of the crystal up by her head." Apollo did as directed. "Now send your thoughts into the crystal and ask your question. Be specific or you can get lost in her memories."

Apollo thought for a moment before connecting with the crystal. As he placed his hands on the crystal, he felt a rush of energy he had not experienced when he stood on the side. He sent some earth energy along that energy flow and thought "Princess, I need to understand how you connected with my time and the spell to send me home. Please manifest yourself as you did before."

At first, Apollo felt like he was still doing something wrong. The crystal felt cold to his touch and he was only catching a random thought or an isolated word. But suddenly it felt as if he had stepped into a stream during the spring run off. Thoughts were flying by. When they stopped he found himself sitting in a tower room. Maewyn was sitting before him chattering about something but all that mattered was the small crystal in his hands. The sparkles that reflected as he held it up in the light danced around the room.

"Lilac, when you are done playing with your new toy, send your thoughts into the crystal as I have taught you and you will be able to gaze into the future as I do." Maewyn came over and gave him a hug. "Your mother is coming. I have to go." She shrunk down to flying size and zoomed out the window just he heard a door being unlocked. The memory snapped closed and Apollo found himself back in the cavern.

"That was not kindly done, good sir," said Princess Lilac who stood before him. "That day was a very painful one as Mother found that crystal and smashed it to pieces. Why have you brought me out of my slumber?"

The prince told her his story. When he said that they had met in his time, she thought a moment and said that she had begun to think that had been just a dream and then let him continue. He explained all of the things they had learned about from her thoughts. They had collected them all and hoped that she could help them put them into the spell to send them home.

The princess got lost in her thoughts for a moment and then laughed. The sound of her laughter echoed in the cavern.

"That is not nice, my dear," chided Maewyn. "Crystals I can help with. But you are the one who dabbled in the magics your mother taught you."

"It is not that," said Lilac once she stopped laughing. "It's the fact that those things aren't part of a grand spell. Those all are from the stories that the faeries and my cousins told me on the rare occasions that I got to see someone. They were my way of seeing the wonders of the world since I could not leave that tower."

"What?!" exclaimed Apollo. He felt a rage build inside as he knew for certain that the cousins recognized them and allowed the charade to grow instead of focusing on the real solution. He built a

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portal to both palaces and took an example from the unborn future faerie queen and herded the monarchs through its arches with both wind and rain.

"How dare you!" shouted Daisy as she stepped into the cavern. "Ever have I come when you asked. Why force me to join you against my will?"

Amaranth stopped his response by placing her hand over his mouth. "Take a moment to calm down, Apollo. Princess, if you would be so kind as to tell your cousins what you just told us."

Only then did Daisy and the twins notice the ghost of Laurel Lilac standing next to the prince. As she told of her memories of the stories they had told her, their faces grew paler.

"So you see, my dear children, why the prince from the future is a bit miffed right now. You knew the situation and allowed him to believe that you were actually helping him craft a spell to go home. Now is the time for one of you to come clean and tell us how you brought him here."

The silence that filled the chamber was only broken by the sound of the wind howling in the corridor. This deep inside the mountain they all knew that the wind had been caused by Apollo trying to control his rage. "It was a spell I cast on the crystal," confessed Angelina after several strained moments as everyone looked at each other to see who would speak up. "Lilac had been so convinced that she went to the future and we didn't believe her. I cast a spell that said that when all three of us made that connection and the crystal dissolved in his hand, the dust that would be absorbed into his body would bring him to us should ever the need arise that caused me to blow Oceania's Horn. Since I have never made that connection to the future, never in my wildest dreams did I think of that when I sought help after Daisy was kidnapped."

"Well, dear," said Maewyn, "you had better spend more time crystal gazing because apparently at some point in time, you will finally be able to join the princess in making that journey. While you didn't put much faith in it, the spell you cast was far more powerful than you imagined."

"Send me home!" demanded Apollo. "You brought me here and now you can undo your spell and send me home!"

"I wish I knew how," sobbed Angelina. "If it truly was my spell that brought you here, then its effects should have worn off as soon as Daisy was rescued. I don't know what went wrong that caused you to remain."

"Let me see if I understand this correctly," said Maewyn taking the attention away from the sobbing queen, "you, Lilac charmed a crystal that would allow the three of you ladies to connect to someone in the future. And you, little mess that you are, went and mucked up the charm by overlaying it with one of your own?" Both women nodded. "Well, then, show me this crystal and I will see what they did."

"But it dissolved in my hand," protested the prince.

"That may well be the case in five hundred years," Maewyn said, "but that is not the case now! That crystal still exists in the here and now or it would have been in your hands later."

Renaldo led them to the chamber where Lilac stored her magical crystals. "This one," the princess said as she pointed to a pyramid shaped one.

Maewyn picked it up. "Very nice. You would have done well if you...if you had a chance to continue. You were lucky to find a crystal with a triple converging time line. Now, let's see..."

Nearly everyone stood still as the faerie examined the crystal. The lone person fidgeting in the chamber was Apollo. He paced around the room and picked up various crystals. He noticed that there were far fewer in the room than when he first saw the chamber in his time. Without thinking, he spoke out loud, "I wonder who added to the collection."

"I suspect my two new pupils," said Maewyn. "There are two spells layered on top of the one cast by Lilac. The one with Queen Angelina's energy would have worked as planned if not for other spell with a different energy." The faerie had a distant look in her eye as she continued to *read* the spells cast into the crystal. "This other spell..." she paused a moment and then handed the crystal to Daisy. "What is an Eartifiwa? The spell with your energy says something about an Eartifiwa. The combined results of the two added spells is such that the one with the earth magic to activate the crystal will be drawn to the princesses at the sound of Oceania's Horn when all three maidens have done their part of the spell. The earth energy will only be released when the three maidens hold Eartifiwa in their hands and release the energy."

"You knew about the sword?" demanded Apollo.

"Why didn't you tell us?" asked Angelo. "Anytime it was mentioned you always said it was just a crazy story told by your father."

"At first I thought it was," said Daisy with a bit of defiance in her voice. "But Belka told me the story of the truce between the wolves and humans and the sword played an important part. Their description matched the one told by Father so I knew it had to be real."

"But why not tell the king you believed him?" asked Apollo.

"There are two things that motivated my father – a beautiful woman and someone challenging his manhood. What better way to encourage him to search than to publicly doubt the sword's existence?"

"How is the sword supposed to help get me home?"

"If the sword has the power I believe it does, then that energy will burn out the crystal that has gotten into your blood and you will be sent home."

"Then why didn't you say something before?"

"When I learned of the protections, I didn't want to see you risk the challenge until you were ready. After your demonstration today, I think you are more than ready. Don't you, Faerie Godmother?"

"It is not what I think that counts," she replied. "Apollo?"

The prince did not respond. Everyone looked at where he had been standing but he had disappeared. They saw the last of a portal close up.

"Eartifiwa! He's gone to claim the sword!" shouted multiple people at once.

"Quick Faerie Godmother," pleaded Angelina, "open a portal so we may witness this event."

"I dare not lest we interrupt his concentration. Renaldo, you will have to lead us to the Cave of the Sword through these

corridors.”

By the time the group navigated the twists and turns of the passageways, they found Apollo standing on the small island contemplating the sword itself.

“I was wondering how long it would take you,” said the prince.

“How did you get past the protections?” asked Amaranth.

“It was simple once I remembered two things. Faeries don’t have elemental powers so you had to have another way to set up the magic. And I remembered something Angelina said in a lesson. ‘One doesn’t control an element. It is more like we ask them to help.’ I asked and they let me pass.”

“You will be a great king,” offered Amaranth. “You passed the test of humility yet again. It takes a great man to ask for something when he has the power to force something to his will.”

“A lesson I learned early today when I forced others to come here. I didn’t like myself afterwards and have been standing here wondering if I truly have the right to draw the sword from this stone sheath?”

“Of course you have the right,” said Daisy. “You are the future king of all this land. That is my sword.”

Apollo reached for the sword and could feel its energy calling to him. It needed him as much as he needed it. A jolt of pain shot through his leg just as he was about to touch the hilt. The pain brought him to his knees. “Laika!” he shouted. He quickly sent out some earth energy to find his friend. “Someone is hurting him. I have to go!”

A portal started to form. “Wait!” shouted Daisy. “Grab the sword and take it with you. It might help.”

Apollo stopped and looked at the sword for a moment before speaking. “I dare not. I don’t have time to learn its powers. I will need to rely on what I already know.” He muttered something and stepped through the portal. As the portal closed behind him, the flames returned to swirl around the sword.

“Where did he go?” shouted Daisy. “What’s wrong with my husband?”

“I recognized that grove in his portal,” offered Renaldo.

“As did I, said Amaranth. She waved her wand and a small window sized portal opened and Hilda Harbell’s face appeared. “Hilda, please alert King StoneHeart that there is an enemy at the base of his mountain. Gather your sisters and go out the West Gate. Prince Apollo may need your assistance faster than the king can rally his guard.”

“Understood.”

“Now, what do we do?” asked Angelina. “Wait?”

“It’s my mother,” said Lilac. “I can feel her hatred all the way down to these caverns beneath her feet. It makes me want to seek out the slumber she has already granted me to escape its stench.”

“Do you think you can project your spirit to her side?” asked the faerie queen. “The ghost of her dead daughter might be enough to distract her.”

“I don’t think so,” said the princess. “I think I have been away from my body too long as it is. Already I feel the crystal calling me back. I will go tell the king what I know of the situation before I have to return to my tomb.”

“Rest well, my child,” offered Maewyn. “I will attend to you



while the others attend to their friend.” She gave Amaranth a hug and quickly disappeared down the passageway.

“Are we agreed?” asked Amaranth. Everyone nodded. “And ready?” They nodded again.

She waved her arms and a portal started to form.

“Surely you are not going to join us?” said Raven Stormcrow. A little rumble echoed in the chamber. “I guess so,” he said quickly. “Do you think our child would help us?”

“Who do you think opened the portal?” She waved her wand and everyone’s outfit changed into battle gear. “I don’t know what to expect, so I want us prepared.”

“Let’s go!” shouted Angelo.

He led the charge through the open portal. As they entered the scene they saw Apollo cradling Laika in his arm. He was in a bubble of air that was being battered by hundreds of wolves. Across the clearing was Belladonna; a pair of unconscious wolves, one blond and the other russet, lay at her feet.

“Iris!” shouted Daisy as she recognized her daughter’s wolf form. “What have you done to her, you witch?”

“And hello to you, too,” cackled the queen with a youthful voice that didn’t match the old body that stood there. At a signal from the wolf next to her, the other wolves backed away and formed a giant ring around them. “I am just claiming what is due to me. You promised payment for the lessons I gave you. As I don’t have that sword in my hand, I am claiming an alternate price – your first born child.”

“You cast your spell just to get the sword to pass to her?” said Apollo. “Is that why you said that it was your sword when you were urging me to take it?”

“That’s what I wanted her to believe,” protested Daisy. “Right now, we need to rescue my daughter.”

Apollo only half listened to the diatribes being shouted between the cousins and their aunt. The other half of his attention was spent in sending checking on his three injured friends. Laika was wounded

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from many bites from the wolves. When he came upon the scene Rowan and Iris were trying to defend him from the attacks of the pack who had found the renegade and were taking turns meting out the vengeance as issued by Wolfsun. The pack had been waiting to dish out the final verdict until the representatives of the Wolf Council had arrived to witness their triumph. No sooner had Apollo appeared than Belladonna stepped out of the shadows cackling "Far better than I dared dream! I knew if I watched this wolf child, I would get one prize, but I've gotten three! Keep up the attacks my friends of the woods and soon the three kingdoms will be yours to rule!" After that, Apollo was too busy fending off the attacks to listen to the dark queen's negotiations with the pack leader. Rowan and Iris tried to attack Belladonna but she threw some powder at them and they fell at her feet. As the prince sent healing energy into Laika he was confused by the emotions he encountered. As his healing touch worked on each wound he felt as if Laika was resisting him; as if he wanted the wounds; wanted to die. Apollo couldn't sift through that part so he focused on just the physical wounds. The emotions would have to wait. With the worst of those wounds tended to, he turned his attention to the other two.

As soon as his energy touched Rowan he felt a familiar mind faintly reaching into his. "How's my mate?"

Apollo quickly assessed Iris before responding. "She seems unharmed, just asleep." He turned his mind toward Daisy and projected to her mind. "It appears that your aunt used some kind of sleeping powder on Iris. What do you know of that magic?"

Daisy whispered something to Angelina, who then slowly backed away from her side and eased over towards Apollo. The prince could hear Belladonna's protests but the dark queen found herself in a sudden deluge. The wolf pack snarled in protest and attacked. Several of the Hildas came flying into the grove with swords held high.

"Daisy says that only the sound of a call that can not be resisted can shake of the effects of my aunt's powder. Ingested, it needs something specific such as true love's kiss, but as a powder it isn't as potent. It needs something like..."

"Oceana's Horn!"

"Oceana's Horn," she agreed as she pulled out a small pouch from around her neck and removed the horn from inside. Its broken chain was dangling. "I know father said to lock this away, but it keeps coming in handy."

Apollo pulled out the future version of the horn from under his shirt and the two blew their horns simultaneously. As the sound filled the air, the clearing filled with humans, faeries and dwarves, who quickly attacked the wolves. Apollo could see Rowan start to stir and sounded his horn again and Angelina joined his call. Amaranth, now at flying size, landed next to him and grew back to size.

"That is my last flight for a while. I'm too heavy for most air currents," she puffed. "Look up!"

At her command, Apollo looked up and saw a swirling vortex high in the sky. "We long ago suspected that the sound of Angelina's horn and yours connected to create the portal that brought you here," said the faerie queen. "And now we know that she stacked the deck and crafted a spell to help force the issue. It seems that your twin calls have done so again."

"But how am I to go through it? I can't fly!"

"How did you go through the first time?" she asked.

Apollo looked at the hillside and pointed. "I was sliding down that hill and was falling when I blew my horn just hoping that someone could help me."

"I don't know about someone being able to help stop your fall, but have you learned something from us that might help you land without injury?"

"Maybe air magic could cushion me as I fell!"

"Then keep that in your thoughts as you jump through," she offered. "Sound your horn just before you jump and listen for its echo; focus on the memory of why you needed to sound the horn. That should guide you back to that moment."

Apollo hugged his great grandmother. "Thank you. I am glad to finally have had the chance to know you."

"And now I have something to look forward to in my old age," she said as she hugged him back. "Now scoot! That vortex looks like its shrinking."

Apollo started to run up the hill. He got up to the top and tried to judge the angle he had come down the hill. He had just spotted the entrance to the caverns when he was knocked down from behind. He managed to roll and face his attacker.

"Belladonna!"

"That's Queen Belladonna, you common cur," she shouted. "I don't know who you are and my divinations keep coming up blank when I seek information about where you come from but this is the last time you interfere with my plans. You may think you are pretty impressive with your wind tricks but you don't stand a chance against me. I won't underestimate you again!"

Apollo felt a charge in the air and knew that Belladonna was planning something with lightning. He reached down to the rocks and used his earth magic to urge the rocks to shake beneath her feet.

"You!? You're the one with the earth magic?" She started laughing. "How wonderful. I can take you out before the game really begins. I don't know what that vortex means but once I get rid of you I'll figure it out."

A lightning bolt flew from her hands and the prince barely had time to jump out of its path. A second was right behind and he was not so lucky. He fell to the ground with a yelp. He kept an eye on the vortex as he rolled away from Belladonna's onslaught. He raised Oceana's Horn to his lips and sounded the call.

"I don't know how you got the meddlesome fish girl's horn but it won't do you any good. Your friends have all gone chasing after the wolves as I knew they would and now this valley is shrouded in a fog so thick that the only thing they will find is the path to Hades once they learn that the wolves can see in the dark." She cackled as she prepared another lightning attack.

"It's a good thing then that I followed you instead of the wolves," shouted Daisy. "Apollo, get through that vortex while I destroy this foul creature." Daisy's eyes glowed in the darkness as if lit by the same lightning that Belladonna was wielding. She ran up and tried to pin the older woman's arms.

"You and what army?" Belladonna said as she slipped free. A well placed backhand sent the younger queen to the ground. "You are nothing."

"How dare you strike my wife!" came Laika's.

Apollo looked at his friend. He had been focused on his still form and cuts and hadn't realized how wild he looked now. His hair was long and his beard looked like his ruff when he had been in wolf form. He choked back the thought that his friend blamed him for tricking him into giving up his wolf nature. Belladonna directed one of her bolts towards him and he leapt out of the way. He landed next to the prince.

"Please forgive me," said Laika. "Amaranth finally made me see the truth and told me that you had saved my life. I don't want you to leave but now I understand why."

"I don't want to leave but I have to, forgive me." Apollo looked at the vortex and it was rapidly shrinking. "I have to go now or it will be too late."

"Oh, how touching," howled Belladonna. "'Just like two love sick puppies, licking each other's wounds. Now to get rid of trash!'"

As she raised her hands the phoenix swirled around her. Laika got a pained look on his face. "I love you," and in the next second he was in wolf form leaping at Belladonna.

Apollo started to run toward the edge of the hill. As he leapt in the air he raised the horn yet again and blew. As the sound died he felt the talon's of the phoenix grip his shoulders and carry him further than he could have leapt on his own. He tried to look back to see what was happening on the hill but heard the sound of the horn emanate from the middle of the vortex. At the horn's call, the phoenix let go of the prince and he fell into the vortex. Just as it

closed around him, he felt the fire of one of Belladonna's lightning bolts strike his flesh..

Apollo had not time to think of the pain as he gathered his thoughts around his air magic and tried to tell the currents that he wanted an updraft when he felt someone go "Ummph" under him.

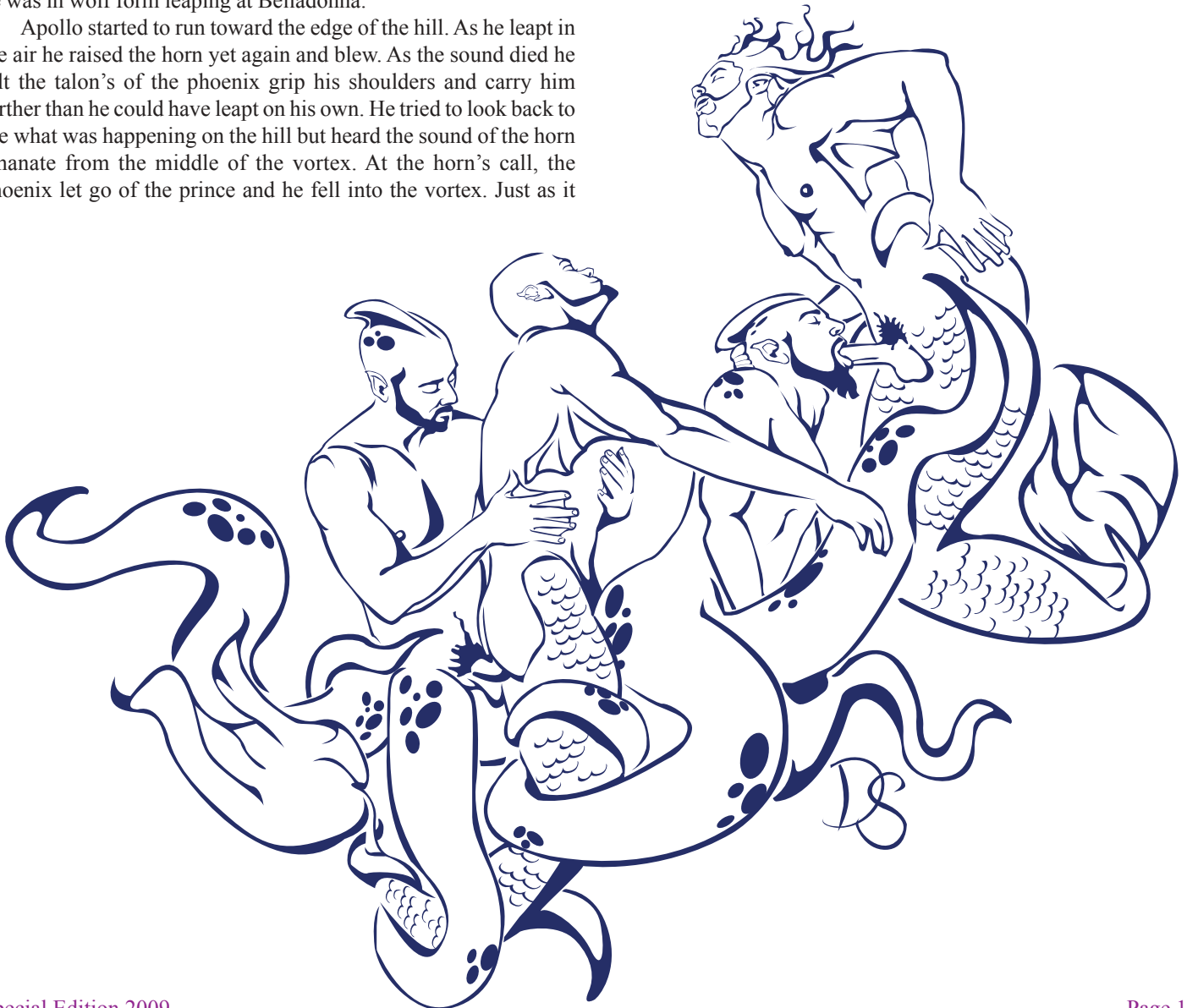
The sudden chill of winter penetrated his bones as he tried to sit up.

"Stay still," came soft voice full of concern. "That was some nasty fall. I barely had time to position myself to try to break your momentum."

Apollo looked up into a pair of blue eyes framed by a golden halo of hair.

"Your Majesty! My god, what happened to you?"

Apollo didn't respond. His eyes went fuzzy and everything started to spin. He heard a loud rumble echoing in the valley. Somewhere in the distance one of his savior's companions was shouting "Avalanche!" At that cry, everything went dark.



Desperation of the Blind

By Raven Bear Paws

Desperation

desperate to see through the eyes of the blind
through the eyes of darkness
a darkness ever inching forward
clawing, scratching, ripping
my eyes are wide open
but yet I see nothing.

I do not see the old man
huddled in the doorway
shivering in the bitter cold
the tattered remains of a
worn out blanket
most likely pulled from a dumpster
wrapped tightly around him
his out stretched hand, cracked and bleeding
begging as people pass him by
“Hey buddy can you spare a dime?”
His death in the morning will not matter
Because I do not see him
I pass by like all the others

Darkness

a darkness veil, thick with mourning
shuts out the light of the world
the cold of the black surrounding
strips me soul-less
my eyes are wide open
but they refuse to see

I do not see the teenage mother of seventeen
Snatch her playful toddler son’s arm
in a blaze of heated hatred
his shirt pulls away from his wrist
four inches
Exposing the purple flesh of his
mothers furry
And even as his cries of fears reach
Epic proportions
She swings back to deal the finale blow
But I do not see them
For what am I but another blind
witness to another FUCKED up childhood

I try to pull away the rose tinted glass,
have I become desensitized to the human race?
Have I become the social illiterate afraid
to see my world as it truly is?
Or do I cover it with dreams of
false promises of better tomorrows in hopes
that things will get better.
My eyes are wide open but yet I see nothing

I do not see the servant of the Christian God,
as he reaches beneath the robes of the altar boy,
playing him like a ventriloquist’s dummy.
“It’s all right my child. It is your seed I will give to Jesus.”
It is the devil’s words he whispers
as tears stain the child’s gown.
His suicide will mean nothing
for I can not see
what is not there.

Again I try and remove the blinds
that cause me to be come less human
To lift the Veil and push away the darkness
The desperation to see through the eyes of the blind has grown
My eyes are wide open
But yet I see nothing still

I do not see the sixteen year old high school Jock
mowing his coach’s lawn
The money and glances exchanged reek of
sex and excrement
the look of shame and disappointment
from the neighbors
as he pulls the wet, sticky underwear from the crack of his ass
The Jock doesn’t know it yet
but he has aids and will die within the year.
All for a car his parents couldn’t afford
His death will go un-noticed
for I will not see past the end of my nose
while another life misery slips down
into the cracks of a blind society.

Desperation

desperate to see through the eyes of the blind
through the eyes of darkness
a darkness ever inching forward
Diening, abusing, raping, fucking
my eyes are wide open
but yet I see nothing.