

Historic Museum of Snowmen



Publisher's Notes

Welcome fae faerie friends and family to the Denver Faeries' 2009 Mabon issue of the Airy Faerie. The days grow darker, the trees change color, the fields offer their harvest as the wheel turns into the dark time of the year. This is the time we take inventory and give thanks for what we have harvested. It is interesting to see how many holidays and festivals there are during this time of year. Not only do we need the fruits and grains of the fields, but we also need the companionship of friends and family. I know that I count my blessings everyday for the people in my life. I feel equally blessed to have an ever growing Airy Faerie family, a family that includes men and women. A tribe that falls into so many categories and some that do not fit into any. I do not know most of this family personally, and yet I know we share a connection. It is these connections our friends and families that help us make it through the darkness of season. They are the light that helps to lift our spirits. This also works the other way around. You are the light for the ones in your life. You may not even be aware of the connections that you have with other people but they know how your light encourages them. Take in the energy, the light, which is freely given by the divine mother and divine father. Use what you need to heal and keep yourself strong, and allow the rest to flow to those people in your life who need some of your light. Be always thankful for what you have and the people you have to share your life with.

Ok, onto the issue at hand. For anyone who may need to be reminded and anyone who has yet to find out for themselves here is the traditional Airy Faerie Adult Content Warning. The Airy Faerie does contain material intended for adults. That is, adults who like to view and read about naked men and gay sexual situations. If this is not you, please stop here and go no further. If you are on a public or work computer, please stop now and save your enjoyment of our

e-zine for when you are in a less restrictive location. Bosses and the general public tend not to share your enjoyment of adult gay e-zines.

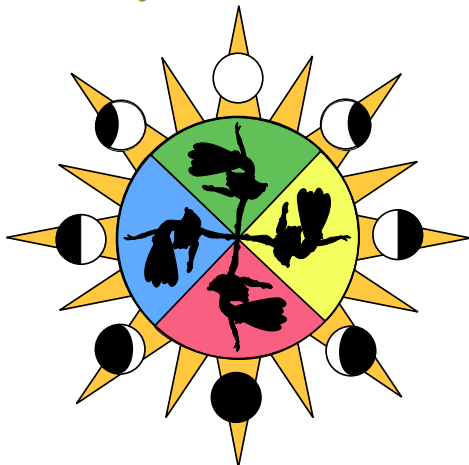
Besides the adult content, we offer a bountiful feast for our readers in this issue. Our young prince Apollo, now not as young, deals with the years spent in the past now that he is back in the present. The Professor and Cubby offer tales that are sure to please. The Four F Tarot continues to grow. The Story Game takes us on an unforeseen twist. Hermes Polyandros, one of our dear friends and readers continue to supply us with his works of poetry. If you feel called to share your artistic efforts, art or writing, please send us a note and we can let you know how to make that possible.

I am grateful to all who contribute to, read and share the Airy Faerie. It is a connection that I am honored to be apart of.

I hope you enjoy this issue. Please feel free to contact us and let us know how we are connecting to you.

Many Faerie Blessings and
Naked Hugs,
DragonSwan

Airy Faerie



Mabon 2009

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

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Bright Spirit by Hermes Polyandros

To Ursus

You have freed me from the joke
Which Eris and Eros do entwine me, in mirth.
You have freed me that my heart may soar
On the wings of a hawk,
That I may see all about me,
All the world in a different light,
A light that is radiated by the love you give,
Which cannot be matched by a celestial body,
For it shines forth from within
And lights the dark places within me,
As the celestial bodies do to the shadows,
Rising to mid-heaven.
There will always be shadows,
But neither shall they overcome me,
As long as you are my bright spirit.
May I ever soar in your sky,
May I ever unfold my wings in the warmth of your light,
That is your love.



On a Labyrinth by Hermes Polyandros

You are the twists and turns of my body's journey.
You are the twists and turns of my life.
You are the twist and turns of my inner journeys.
Always leading me within.
Always leading me back out.

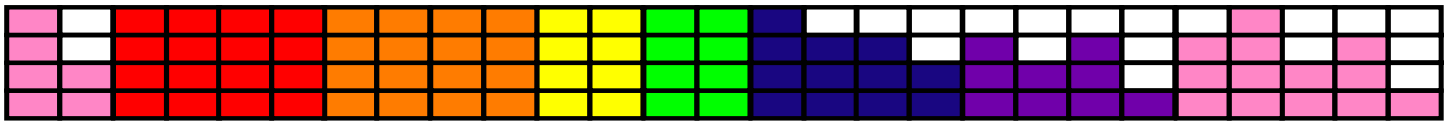
I began my journey at the center,
And ever my life did expand.
But my life's journey was not straight,
But bent back upon itself
As it expanded outward,
Obstacles and moments of revelation,
Mark my passing.
At some points I return to nearly the same point,
But that point was not the same point,
As I had the journey to that point
And back again and that journey
Had all that journey behind me;
So that though I was near the point again,

Yet I was not,
And so on through my life.

You are the spiral that takes me into my inner regions.
You are the spiral that leads me within.
You are the spiral that seeks the center;
But in that seeking lay the twists and obstacles
That grant me the wisdom I seek
Or set tasks for me to overcome.
Ever inward spiraling
Seeking center
And returning through that journey
I bring that knowledge from within.

O mystic labyrinth;
Ancient symbol of journeys,
Of Life,
Of Self;
You are the teacher
You are the Center
Mother's womb,
Spiritual center.
It is that which we seek.

O labyrinth
Open your door that I may journey
Along your convoluted path
And find in that journey
Whom I was. Whom you were.
Whom I am. Whom you are.
Whom I will be. Whom you will be,
Being all at once.
All at once.
At once.
One.



The 4-f Tarot: The M and M Guys (Mudmen and Magicians)

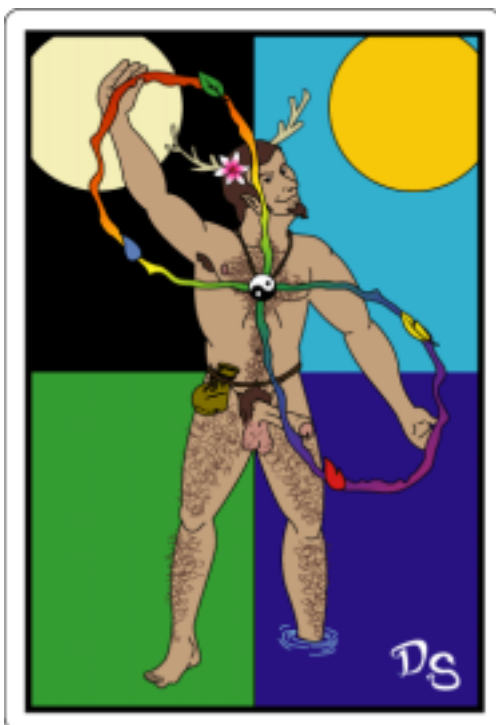
by Phoenix

This issue we present two cards, The God of Earth (the Mudmen on page 3) and the Magician (opposite page). You may wonder why there are only two cards when we have often presented three or four. That is simple to explain. We've done the easy ones. Now we are getting into the cards that have had shifts in their identities as things have settled in the other cards. Now that is it time to give them life we are taking just a bit of extra time to make sure that we really have found the energy of the card.

For the God of Earth, I have had many ideas including the mudmen. With the adding the layer of the Love Connections that I talked about earlier this year in the special edition, it became clear that the mudmen were the right icons for this card. They have the fun of the otters. They are passionate about their love of mud. They like to use the opportunity of getting everyone in the mud as a way of starting the connections with people. And once they get connected, what more fun can be found than wrestling in the mud which can up the ante on that passion part?

These guys want you to join them for some fun. They want you to get down and get dirty. But true to any deck, how these guys interact with the energy of the other cards in your reading might be a warning that "mud" is going to start flying. It also might be that you just need to get dirty to get your job done. Or it could be that you just need to take a break from your problems so that you can return to your task with renewed energy.

And lest I forget, I want to take a quick moment to thank my friends at MMNG and BITO, both held at Camp Gaia, for introducing me to the mudmen. It was your playfulness that inspired me to include this energy in the deck.



Now it is time to verbally focus on the images on these pages that have probably held more of your attention than my words. I know that a picture is worth a thousand words, but I will take one of DragonSwan's pictures over a thousand of my words any day

The magician on this page is from the deck that DragonSwan had started many years ago when he was working on the idea of creating a more traditional deck. He built his image on the standard images seen on other decks and added his own touches such as that lovely hard on which is not to be found in most commercially released decks.

Zoom forward to the present and you now have the gentleman on the opposite page serving as our Magician. My personal opinion is that once things get started in the ritual he has planned for us, his robe is going to be dropped to the floor and by the time we are done, he's going to reveal that lovely hard on that we saw before the fog rolled in. Is that wishful thinking on my part? Perhaps, but we shall have to see what energy arises from the other cards in a reading.

Much like the traditional images of the Magician, this Magician is ready for just about anything. He has it all. If you need it for a ritual, it's there. Now, in your quest for the answer to the question that brought you to the cards, are you wanting him to do the work? Are you wanting to borrow one of his tools? Do you want him to teach you? And what are you willing to offer in exchange for services rendered?

But before you take his offer to help blindly, take some time to think about the things he has on his altar. He truly does have everything. All four elements and their traditional magical tools are represented as are the 4-Fs (Feather, Flower, Fin and Fur). What are the different oils that the Magician might have in those vials? What is the incense that you smell on his censer? What is the crystal on the altar? or the one on his chest? Whatever they are, you can bet they are listed in his book. But the grandest question of them all is did he just finish reading the book or did he write it?

At some point, you are going to have to face him in a reading and will have to ask yourself whether or not you trust him. He certainly knows how to set the stage. But is he the real thing or is it all smoke and mirrors?

I will let you in on a little secret. The figure you see behind that altar is the second one to stand in that position. DragonSwan had been busy working on the card and showed me what it looked like so that I could start planning what to say about it. As we stared at him, pretty much like you have been doing with the figure who made it to the final version, we tried to figure out what his energy was and we came up with "a wild and crazy guy." Somehow, that didn't quite seem right for the darker, more mysterious mood we wanted with the mists. He faded into the mists and a few hours later, this version of the Magician emerged. Its little things like this that take time. But step by step, card by card we are making progress. According to the meter at the top of the page, there are only twenty more cards to create. And then the fun begins when we go back through the set and add the finishing details.



Quest for the Crystal Phoenix

Chapter 35: All in a Day's Hug

by Orpheus

The shock of seeing the faerie teacher of his dreams, or was it really his past from five hundred years ago, emerging out of what he had thought was the God of the Wolves was too much for Apollo. He quickly stepped through a portal that hadn't been there the moment before and left the campsite.

Manin was nearest to him and followed him before the portal closed. At least that is what it looked like to the others. The truth was, Manin turned so quickly to see what was happening that he tripped himself and fell into the portal. He picked himself up and saw Apollo heading toward a small pond.

"Where are we?"

The prince looked back. "What are you doing here? I need to be alone."

"I would be happy to oblige but you will have to answer my question first. I can hardly be expected to grant you your solitude if I neither know where I am nor how I got here."

"He's got you there, young man," came a soft voice from the pond.

"Good day, My lady," greeted the prince as he saw a pure white swan swimming toward the shore. Something inside him said that she was part of the reason he picked this place. He started fumbling in his pockets and didn't find what he was looking for. "Manin, do you have any bread or crackers in your pockets?" Manin quickly did as Apollo had done and shook his head when he too came up empty handed.

"My apologies. If I had known I was coming here today, I would have brought you a treat," said the prince.

"Seeing you after such a long absence is treat enough for me," replied the swan in her dulcet tones. "What has kept you away this time? I was beginning to think you had forgotten me."

"Excuse me, my prince but is that swan talking?" gasped Manin.

"How rude! Talking to someone about me as if I wasn't there."

"Forgive me, Your Swanship...um, Lady Swan. I did not mean to be rude but neither did I trust my ears. If I asked you and you responded, how was I to know that my madness continued or not? But if my prince were to tell me, I know that he is bound to tell the truth."

"Manin, let me introduce you to..." Apollo hesitated. "My apologies, I have forgotten your name."

"You cannot forget that which you never asked." Her feathers were visibly ruffled as she turned to swim off.

"Dear Lady Swan, please don't swim away angry at us," pled Manin. "You are only the second creature who has spoken to me in my language and I'm not used to it, especially considering the first one was ready to kill me. My prince has just awoken from a coma and rescued me from certain death, so I doubt either of us are at our most courteous at the moment. My name is Manin, formerly from Star Corners. What name may I use to praise your beauty to the gods who watch over us?"

"I have had many names over the years, but Lady Swan will serve as well as any of the others."

"You humble yourself," said Apollo. "If you are of the lineage of my memories, you must be the queen among your kind. Are you not the Swan Queen who lives in the legends of this time?"

Apollo detected a shade of pink starting to color the swan's feathers. "Long have I forgotten that title. Equally long has it been since I dared hope that my reign may actually come to an end after all these centuries. Do you remember my first lesson to you?"

Apollo thought for a moment. "It was to look beyond what I saw in the surface of the water."

"What do you see now?" she asked as she swam away.

Apollo looked in the water and almost got caught in the reflections when some motion caught his eye. He turned just as Rowan grabbed him.

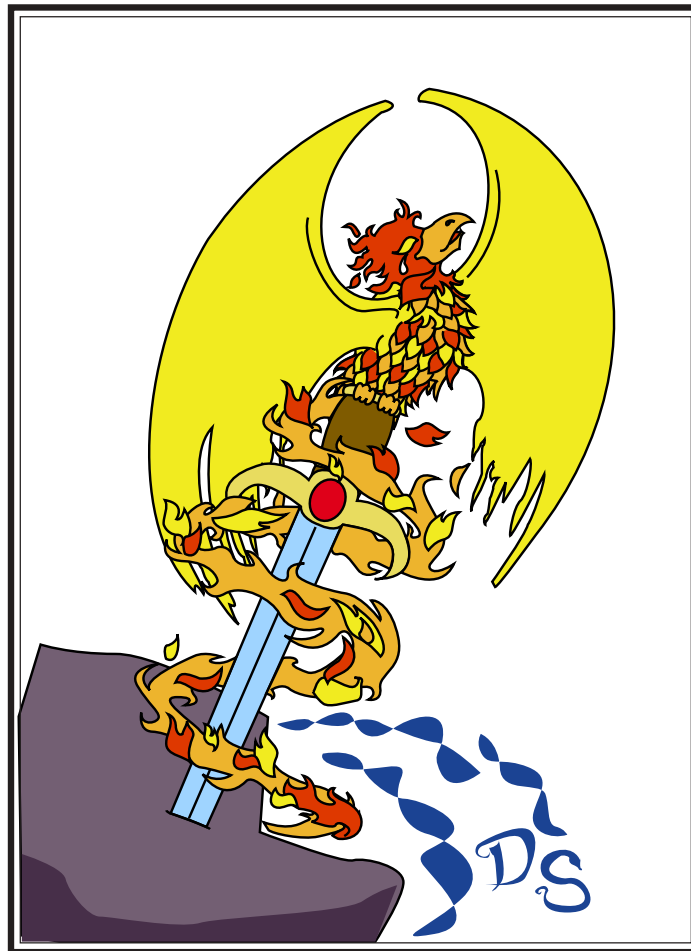
"Not so quickly, my friend," said Rowan. "You had everyone frightened when you pulled your disappearing act. Everyone was

convinced that a new threat had emerged to claim your life. Fortunately, Holly remembered tales that Amaranth told of your former life and your talent for creating portals. Your father saw water through your portal and was convinced that you had gone to the Valley of the Kings. I, on the other hand, saw enough to recognize this place."

"If you did, why didn't you tell them?" asked Manin.

"They didn't believe me. I figure it will be about a half hour before your Godfather remembers the truth to my words and thinks about this place. Meanwhile, that gives me just about enough time to..." Without warning, he pushed Apollo in to the cold water of the pond.

"Hey, what was that for?" said Apollo as he gasped for air after



his sudden dunking.

"After that challenge, you stink," responded the former faerie.

Manin was doubled over laughing at the sight of the wet prince with dried leaves tangled in his hair. He had just enough time to dodge Rowan's attempt to toss him into the pond but didn't see the splash that Apollo was directing at him.

"Hey, what's that for?" asked Manin. "He's the one who pushed you."

"And you're the one who didn't catch me before I fell in."

Manin was so focused on what the prince said that he forgot about Rowan and found himself flying into the pond. "Now are you two, just going to stand there in the water dressed in your clothes?" asked Rowan. "Or are you going to strip and have a bit of fun before duty comes rushing back in?"

Apollo noticed that it didn't take much encouragement to convince Manin to get naked. Perhaps the setting of being naked in a pond was more natural to him than sitting naked around a fire. Either way, he didn't think about it much. He hadn't had much of a chance to appreciate Manin's smooth body when he had taken off his shirt earlier. For a lean frame, he had strong muscles which the prince guessed were a result of daily chores of chopping wood. He felt a stirring in his loins as he watched Manin strip and was surprised to see that Manin's cock was semi-hard. Before he could think about it, Rowan pulled them into a group naked hug.

"Just like the old days," proclaimed Rowan. "A group hug with you, me and..."

The prince's body remembered a group hug and sent the memory flooding into his mind, Apollo pulled away. "But that was Laika. What happened to him after I left? What happened to you? How is it that you are still alive all these years after you..."

"After I went mortal and gave up my faerie heritage?" asked Rowan as he placed a hand on Apollo's shoulder. "Your questions aren't unrelated. Your companion is showing signs of goose pimples in this winter chill. Use your fire magic to dry your clothes and I will tell you."

Manin watched in amazement as steam rose from the wet clothes he had left on a branch. Apollo handed him his trousers and they were as warm as if they had been laying on a rock on a summer day. "Who is Laika?"

"He was my friend," said the prince as he sat on the bank and tossed a stone absentmindedly into the water.

"Don't forget that he was your enemy too," offered Rowan sitting down beside him. Before he told Apollo the answer to his questions, Rowan felt that it was important to tell Manin the base story of how Laika had married Queen Daisy, how he gave up his wolf energy to Rowan and how he felt betrayed when Apollo announced that he was leaving that time.

"You really went back in time?" gasped Manin.

"I don't understand it myself," said Apollo. "But Laika thought of me as his pack leader and felt that I was betraying his trust by giving up my position. He challenged me when I wouldn't agree to bring him back with me. I think he wanted to die rather than be an outcast without a leader."

"You would be right," said Rowan. "But by pack laws, he was an outcast. After you left, the wolves who had been supporting Belladonna pounced on Laika and demanded that Wolfsun appear and pass judgment on Laika and carry out the execution. I had been holding Iris back from the wolves. She was crying that she had to do something since Laika was her father. When Wolfsun appeared, I knew what I had to do to save Laika and issued a Leadership Challenge to the God of the Wolves himself."

"That was suicide," gasped Apollo. "He nearly killed you in the cave."

"But he didn't and we both knew it."

While Rowan couldn't fly anymore, his life as a faerie gave him better control over his body changes than the average wearwolf. He could be full sized wolf to something about half his size. He could even stop the transformation so that he had both human and lupine features. The constant changes confused Wolfsun and Rowan gained the upper hand. It wasn't much longer before the witnesses heard the sound of bones breaking and Wolfsun lay still on the ground. Rowan delivered the mercy bite, severing the veins in Wolfsun's neck. In that taste of blood, Rowan's senses grew and he became the new God of the Wolves, Rowolfsun.

"And Laika?" asked Manin. "What happened to him?"

"His is a sad tale for another time, I fear," said Rowan. "I can sense energy building and we are about to have company."

Apollo tuned into his earth energy and found Queen Holly building a portal. He quickly sent a message on the wind that he was safe and would join them at the Queen's Retreat shortly. The emotions that came back on the energy currents were a mix of being amazed at his gift and 'Don't you ever pull a stunt like that again.'

"I just secured our solitude for a few minutes," said the prince. "But I have a feeling that I shouldn't keep them waiting for me too long. Now, about Laika?"

Rowan said that his first official act was to declare that Laika was the pack leader of the human oriented wearwolves, thus receiving the leadership he had tried to claim from Apollo in battle. Rowan declared that Apollo had abandoned the position so all rights were to pass to the one who questioned his leadership. Laika returned to the palace and nearly lived a hermit's life within those walls. Iris left the Wolf Council. With her mate now a god and her father in despair, she too returned to palace life and tried to coax her father out of the darkness that filled his mind. Belladonna managed to disguise herself as a midwife and killed Daisy when she was giving birth to her tenth child. Iris took the throne and Laika disappeared into the night.

"Where did he go?" asked Apollo. "Surely as the god, you know what happened to him. He gave up so much to be at Daisy's side that it doesn't seem right that he should be feeling so alone."

"Aye, that he did, for both of us," said Rowan. "I tried to reach out to him, but he claimed the right of all wolves and went to the place where he was happiest and lay down and waited to die."

Manin sighed. "That sounds like one of those tragic love stories that that Crystal and her friends would share while doing

—continued on page 8

Quest/Crystal Phoenix continued

their needlework.”

“It seems like many of the tales and legends of our time have their roots in the long forgotten history of those early years.” Apollo got silent as he listened to something on the wind. “We had better go. I can hear them getting worried that we haven’t shown up yet.”

Apollo tapped the earth energy to locate the spot to direct the portal. He immediately recognized the energy of the space as being the country cottage where Belladonna had taken the kidnapped Princess Daisy. He was surprised at how saturated the ground was with the taint of the foul deeds that had been done. He opened the portal.

“You go ahead,” said Rowan. “I need to go check on my children.”

“What will happen to Belkaro?” asked Apollo. “I made him lose status among the pack.”

“He will have to decide for himself. He could choose to be an outcast and live as a pack of one until he can start gathering others to him. Or he could choose to stay with the pack as the lowest of the low and work his way back to pack leadership.” Rowan’s eyes flared as he shifted to wolf form. “Now my daughter is another matter. Why she insists that any gods before me are false is beyond me, but to lie in my name when I’m standing there is not something I can permit to go unpunished. I will have to think of something most unpleasant.” He stepped into a shadow and disappeared.

“Can we go?” asked Manin. “As wondrous as this day has become, I think it is becoming too much for my mind to absorb and I need to lie down for a few minutes.”

Apollo put his arm around his friend’s waist. “I have a feeling that I need that as well. This has been a busy day for being the first day out of bed.”

The two stepped through the portal and were immediately assaulted with questions. Apollo gave everyone a hug and promised to answer questions once he had a chance to rest. When Dion asked if he was alright, Apollo said that it was nothing a bit of rest wouldn’t cure. And when his stomach rumbled, “And a bit of food would probably help as well.”

Apollo started to head towards the cottage but was stopped by Queen Susan. “Not that way. That is the ground keeper’s cottage. She tends to the retreat when we aren’t here and we send her away for a vacation when we are here.”

Apollo stared at the cottage. It didn’t seem to have changed since he first saw it. Only now, the hint of evil deeds now reeked to his senses. He reached out with his earth energy and nearly fainted. Lord Apollo steadied him.

“What’s wrong?” asked the sun god.

“That is where Belka killed Queen Lucrecia and King Myron killed Belka.”

“If someone killed a queen they deserved to be killed by the king,” commented Susan.

“Not when the Queen and her daughter were the ones responsible for kidnapping the king’s daughter and her fiancé had come to rescue her.” Everyone stared at him. “Aunt Holly, surely your mother told you the tale.”

“It doesn’t matter if she remembers,” said Rowan stepping out of a shadow, accompanied by Belkaro and Iris Angelica. “I



remember. It was the day I became human.”

“That’s right!” exclaimed the prince. “But that was so long ago and this smells fresh.”

“Perhaps you are right,” said Susan. “Ever has that place given me the chills, but the woman who lives here has been there for years. It never seemed right to tear it down because I didn’t like it. Mother rarely came here. She said the memories were too painful. I never understood and of course, she never talked about her life as Faerie Queen.”

“And the day we are talking about,” offered Rowan, “was just the beginning for her. Soon afterwards, Mother was killed in an attack by Belladonna and Amaranth became queen.”

The prince was only half listening. He started to walk away from the cottage and toward the old well. “But the worst isn’t there. It’s down here.” He called forth a small ball of fire and started to toss it in so they could see. Queen Holly stopped him. Her mouth was covered with her scarf.

“You are right, there is something foul down there. I fear your human fire might ignite something.” She created a faerie light and directed it in. “My ball is magical and can’t start a fire.”

Apollo looked into the well and quickly turned away. His father, King Adam, was at his side. “My god!” In the pale pink glow of the faerie light, the well was nearly full of bones. Queen Susan directed two of her guards to go into the cottage. Once the door was forced open, the stench of decay filled the area. Apollo called upon the winds to direct the smell away from them. On the floor of the cottage lay a decomposing body. They could only guess that the Queen’s party’s unexpected arrival had prevented the completion of whatever foul plans the resident had and likewise prevented his

bones from joining the others.

While guards began the sad task of searching the cottage for information about the identity of the corpse, others undertook the sadder task of removing the body so that it could be given a proper burial. Susan sat on the small bench in shock and disbelief. Her position reminded Apollo of finding King Myron sitting in that same spot after he realized that he had killed his future son-in-law. She wracked her brain trying to remember details about the woman who stayed in the cottage. "How could I have harbored such a foul creature? It seems like the house has been in the care of this woman's family forever. She herself served as ground keeper for my mother, and her mother before that and on back as far as family memory can remember. Her name was Bea Charming, so we always assumed that she came from some distaff branch of the family and had been granted residence here as their inheritance."

They turned their thoughts to the unknown bodies in the well. All agreed that it would be a nearly impossible task to remove them. But they also agreed that it would be wrong to leave them. Lord Apollo called upon his solar powers to start a fire that would consume the bones. They watched in silence as the funeral pyre of the unknowns was kindled with the dying rays of the day.

"Who dares disturb my home?" demanded the woman emerging from the forest. She took a look at the assembled and started to run. But then she saw Apollo. "You!" In a sudden burst, a bolt of lightning flew from her hands towards the prince. He barely had time to react and created a wall of air. Lightning crackled along the wall but some still slipped through the hastily erected barrier. The prince fell back under the force of the unexpected attack.

Adam helped his son back to his feet while the Hildas flew after the attacker. "She seemed to know you. Who was she?"

Almost as one, Rowan and Apollo answered, "Belladonna!"

The prince turned his attention to victims that were in the well. "All those bones share an energy. I can see that same energy in Aunt Susan and my father. It is like they are all related to us."

"And well they may be," reminded Holly. "Don't forget your ancestress vowed to kill all the members of your family. This is probably where she brought the bodies. What better place to store her trophies than in her childhood home?"

"And what better way to snub the royal family than to hide right under their noses?" offered Rondar.

"But how could we have been so blind as to not question our feelings about this place?" asked Susan as she buried her face in her hands. "All those people in that well. And I had always believed it had just dried up and had long ago been abandoned."

"Don't feel bad, child," said Dion. "The priestesses of Heca are well versed in the dark secrets and the art of keeping them secret. At the height of her favor with the Dark Mistress, Belladonna had a way of making the ordinary practitioners of Black Magic look like heroes. Losing favor of her patron only hardened her heart only further."

"And don't take all of the pain on yourself, sister," said Holly as she sat on the bench. "Mother knew the evil in Belladonna's heart and didn't even see this for herself. We can't worry about how we were blind to something. What matters is what we do now that our eyes are open."

"Thank you," said Susan as she hugged her sister. "I needed that council. You sounded like mother just then and knew exactly what I needed to hear. So what is next?"

"I think we need to learn more about what the Dark Queen is capable of doing," suggested the prince.

"But for that, you would need to talk to a priestess of Heca and they don't share their secrets," countered Dion. "I barely knew the surface of what Heca was capable of doing for all the time we were together."

"And little do we know the depths of her hatred for anything you love after you spurned her affections," reminded Lord Apollo. "She is well known for waiting to spring her revenge and she has had centuries to plan."

"I think I know someone who can help," said the prince. Everyone stared at him waiting for him to elaborate. "Her daughter."

Anything else he wanted to say was interrupted by howls from the two wolves.

"Quiet children," snapped Rowan.

"No. Look!" shouted Manin pointing at the flames from the well. They had turned to a deep purple with a red face laughing at them from its depths.

"If there was any doubt about who the mysterious stranger was, that certainly seems to be Belladonna's signature colors," said Apollo. He turned his mind into the flames and spoke to the fires. He felt the lurking spell that had turned the sun's cleansing touch to one that could only harm anything it touched. Apollo reached down to the earth and pulled on the living energy in the forest. He reached to the flames and started feeding them healthy energy. Adam and Susan were never sure why they put their hands on the prince's shoulders but something drew them to his side. The prince felt their energy and drew from it. It was a struggle but there was an audible snap when the flames changed from purple back to their natural orange and yellow brilliance. Out of the center of the flames flew a phoenix. It circled the area and landed on the roof of the cottage. In an instant, the thatch roof was ablaze and the phoenix flew into the funeral flames and disappeared.

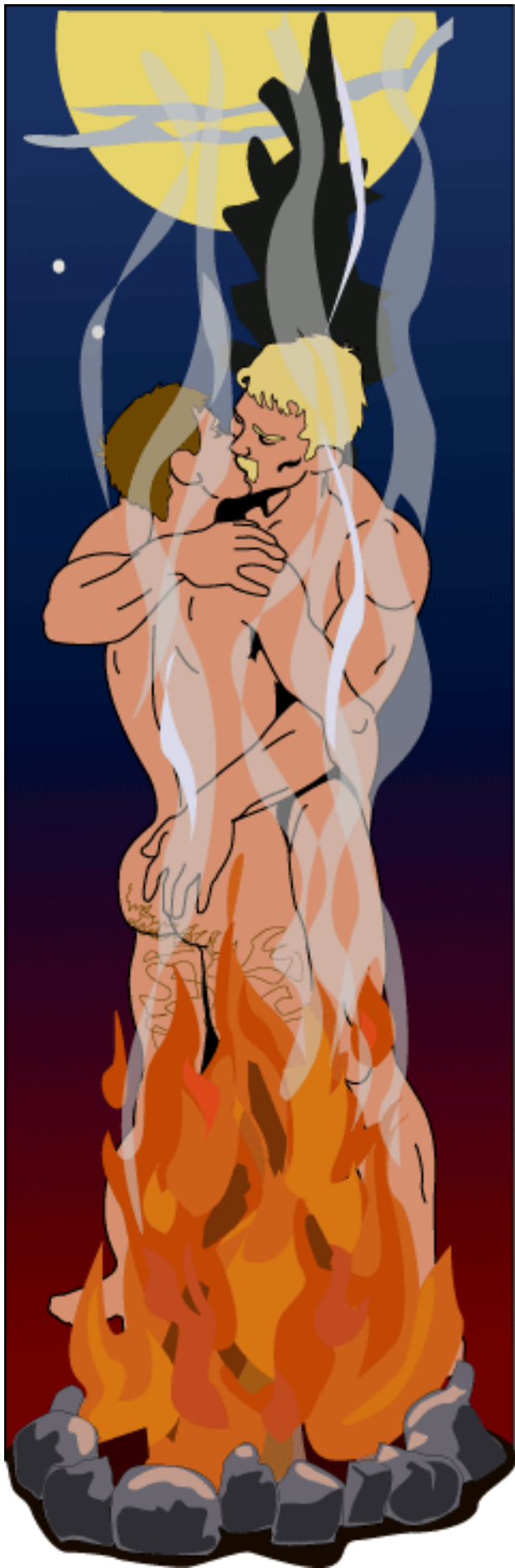
Toby and Patrick were already rushing to the new well to get water to battle the blaze. "Let it burn," ordered Susan. "Only fight the flames that go beyond its walls. If the phoenix has the strength to do something I have resisted all these years, then who are we to say nay to something we have all been thinking?"

Everyone stood in silence as they watched the cottage burn to the ground. Not one spark flew into the nearby trees. As the last of the flames of the cottage walls died, they looked back at the well and discovered that its flames too had died out.

Lord Apollo whistled and Sunbeam and Moonbeam descended from the clouds. After giving the prince a quick hug and a promise to check on him, the two gods mounted their winged steeds and disappeared into the sky. Queen Susan led everyone up the road. Apollo looked back at where the cottage had been. He had been surprised to see that it had survived to this time. He was torn between the loss of such an historic building and relief that chapter of the past was completely closed.

Rowan and his children remained in the old courtyard. The

-continued on page 10



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former faerie beckoned to the prince to join them. “My son has something to ask you.”

Belkaro snarled for a moment and Iris started to translate. “He says that he is sorry for not recognizing your status and that he is not worthy to have been spared. He says that since you would not claim his life, he must serve you if you would accept his service.”

Apollo looked from the darker wolf to the lighter. “How do I know your words are true?”

“Father!” she protested. “I did what you asked and he’s calling me a liar!”

“Now you know the lesson why you must always tell the truth,” said the wolf god. “What say you Apollo? Do you accept this outcast into your pack?”

Apollo looked at Belkaro. His eyes were downcast and his tail curled between his legs. How like Laika he looked. The prince squatted so that he could look Belkaro in the eyes. “Is this what you want?”

Again, Belkaro made a sound and Iris started to translate, “He said...”

“He said it would be his honor,” said Manin loudly as he returned to the courtyard. “He said that he had much to learn from one with such a warrior spirit yet was tempered by mercy.”

“Then I accept,” said Apollo. He watched Belkaro’s eyes light up as he had seen Laika’s eyes do many times when he got praised by his pack leader. “My first task to you is to help hunt for the woman who lived here in the cottage that just burned down. Do not do anything to her, just locate her and report back to me. Understood?”

Belkaro gave a quick yip and bounded over to where Belladonna had attacked them. He sniffed and raced into the forest.

“I guess that was a yes,” said Apollo.

Manin chuckled. “He said he thought you were going to challenge him to something difficult.”

“And now for you, daughter,” said Rowan. “You and I have much to talk about.”

He shifted to wolf form and touched his nose to hers and disappeared.

Manin said that Queen Susan sent him back to check on the prince when he didn’t follow them. He said that she had something important to ask him. As Manin led him up the road, Apollo saw the reason that Susan hadn’t been too concerned about the loss of a building. Somewhere in time, a new two-storied country manor had been built. The queen greeted them outside the door. Adam and Rondar were waiting with her.

“I have been informed that while I have two new guests to accommodate there is but one chamber available for lodging.” She looked at both Manin and Apollo as she put her thoughts into words. “I had half thought about opening up the ground keeper’s house when we decided to close camp and bring you here but we won’t think what horror that might have been. So what do I do with you young Manin?”

“I could bunk with your guards or kitchen staff,” offered Manin. “I have done that enough times during my travel to find Crystal.”

“That might work except for two things,” said Susan. “First, those quarters are already full with the added healers we brought in

to tend to the prince once we determined what healing he needed.”

“I don’t need healing,” said Apollo.

“Yes, we know that now,” she said as she ruffled his hair, “but we didn’t know that a few weeks ago when they arrived after our summons. And second, my daughter would have a fright were she to learn that her favorite nephew was a guest in my house and I made him sleep in the servant quarters.”

“You are right Aunt Susan. For all that she gave up palace life to live in the country, she still expects the royal privileges when she comes for visits.”

“Is the chamber large enough for two to share?” asked Apollo. “I have often had to share quarters during my recent journeys.”

“There is a lovely daybed in the room.”

“Then it is settled,” said the prince.

“I am sure you are weary,” suggested Adam, “but could I entice you to join us for dinner? Or would you prefer to be alone?”

“I was weary earlier,” said the prince, “but find that I am famished.” Apollo sniffed a second. “But I fear that my recovery and today’s exertions have left me less than fit company. I think a shower would be in order first.”

As Adam led his son upstairs, Apollo noticed that his father hadn’t said much. When they got to his room, he asked, “What’s wrong?”

“Nothing,” said Adam a bit too quickly as his ring turned black. Adam spoke directly to his ring. “Yes, it is true. It is nothing. I just need to work through something.”

“And that is?” prompted Apollo.

“Do you need to be alone?” asked Manin.

“Thank you for offering, young man but the simple matter is I wasn’t prepared to see my son grown up. Apollo, when I last saw you, you were a boy just starting to grow up. I have spent the past couple of weeks seeing you in a coma, wondering if we were ever going to see you released from the spell you were under. Now, we have learned that you are my son but you are nearly my size. I blinked and now you are grown. You have done some things today that I only thought possible in bedtime stories. That takes a little time to get used to.”

“I missed you, father,” said Apollo. “All the time I was gone I kept wondering how you were reacting to my disappearance. Even though they promised to return me to the right moment, I just knew that you would know that I was gone. The longer I was gone, the more I was convinced that I could feel you giving up hope.”

“I would never give up hope as long as your flame burned,” said Adam. He reached out and hugged his son.

Manin stood in awkward silence. He figured that despite the words, it was probably best for his to absent himself for a while. He had just started to open the door to the hall when it flew open, forcing him to step backwards. He tripped on the edge of the rug and landed with a thud on the furniture behind him. A loud crack could be heard as the old daybed caved in under him. Patrick and Stane, two of the reasons for the sudden burst helped him to his feet.

“Sorry about that,” Patrick said. “I guess we just got carried away when we heard that the prince was finally in his quarters.”

“Nothing broken, except my bed,” said Manin as he stared at the splintered legs of the daybed.

“I have one in my room that we don’t use,” said Adam. “I will ask someone to bring it here. Now we had better let you freshen up. There will be time enough to catch up later.”

As soon as everyone left, Apollo grabbed a robe that was laying on the corner of the bed and headed to the washroom across the hall. He was almost finished with his shower when he heard the door open.

“I got a whiff of myself and thought I should take a shower as well,” said Manin as he entered the communal washroom.

Apollo left the water running as he stepped out of the shower. “It’s nice and hot and all yours,” he said as he began to try off.

Manin had taken off his shirt and starting to take off his trousers when he winced out in pain. That’s when they noticed that he had gotten hurt during his fall. Apollo dropped his towel and stepped behind Manin and sent some healing energy into Manin. Apollo placed his hand over the gash on Manin’s hip and felt a bolt of electricity as his hand connected with Manin’s bare flesh. Manin stood up quickly and gave the prince a quick hug before he dashed into the shower. “Thanks,” he said as he pulled the curtain closed.

Apollo put on his robe and gathered his dirty clothes and headed back to his room. He was puzzled by Manin’s actions. It seemed like he wanted to be around the prince but when they were alone, he would retreat into a shell. And when they touched, it felt so familiar to him, as if they had embraced before. He opened the wardrobe in his room and dropped his robe as he decided what to wear. He had just selected a pair of deep blue trousers covered with golden suns on it and started to put them on when Manin returned to the room. With one look at the prince attempting to put on a pair of pants that obviously several sizes too small, Manin began to laugh.

“Don’t laugh, these were brand new when I left Resquad. Grandmother said that she spent two weeks doing the embroidery on this outfit and I never got to wear it.” Apollo stepped out of the trousers and stood there naked. “It seems like that when they unpacked my traveling bag, no one, including me, thought about the fact that I’ve changed a little bit since I set out on my journey to Aunt Susan’s. Dinner is in a few minutes and as much as like being naked I can hardly go like this.”

“I don’t know, it looks like a great outfit to me, your majesty,” said Manin as he bowed low. “The elven tailors did an excellent job with the magic threads of your new clothes. Only a fool would not see the shimmer as they catch the light.”

“If only I thought I could get away with it, but father has already tried that trick and made me promise not to do so outside of our birthday suit celebrations back home,” said Apollo with a sigh. “That still leaves me without something to wear.”

“We are about the same size,” offered Manin, “so you should be able to wear some of my things.”

They quickly got dressed and headed to dinner. Apollo was almost relieved that the outfit he selected hadn’t fit. Everyone, including his father, at dinner was dressed in fairly simple country attire. His heavily embroidered outfit would have been out of place.

All through dinner Apollo felt everyone’s eyes staring at him. The mayor of one of the nearby villages commented that the prince seemed much older than he imagined. To him it didn’t seem like it

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Quest/Crystal Phoenix continued

had been that long ago that the prince underwent the Prancing Ceremony. Adam responded that it felt like that to him as well and the two went into a conversation about how quickly children grow up. He heard his guards telling the tale about the wolf attack. He knew that Toby wouldn't lie about anything but from the looks that came his way, he was certain that everyone thought he had single handedly fought every wolf in the pack to save his guards. Some of Susan's maids who had been in attendance at the cottage were talking wildly about the ghosts that they had seen hovering when the cottage burned. They just knew that no one would be safe at night since the ghosts would certainly be seeking revenge against all who had assisted in destroying their home. The mix of awe and fear that permeated the atmosphere at dinner was enough for the prince to almost cheer when Susan announced the end of the meal and left the dining hall.

Apollo was just about to exit when one of the ladies screamed "Wolf!" which was quickly followed by other screams. He turned to see Belkaro enter the dining hall. His guards quickly surrounded him but he ordered them to stand aside. Belkaro approached him with his tail between his legs.

"Halt!" commanded Apollo as Susan's guards rushed to seize the wolf. "I recognize this wolf. He won't harm us."

Belkaro uttered a low growl as he crept on his belly the last few paces to the prince's feet. "I have failed you, my leader," translated Manin. "The one you seek has lived here many years and her scent is everywhere. It is too hard for me to say for certain which was the path she followed today or the one from the day before to one from a year ago. If I were a better tracker I might have been able to follow her."

Apollo led Belkaro back outside. "I do not fault you. The one we seek has been hiding for nearly five hundred years. It would be unreasonable to expect that you would succeed in one night when others have tried so many times before you. It just means we need to keep watching for that time when she appears outside of her next hiding place and start the process anew."

"Begging your pardon, my prince," said Toby hesitantly, "But how can we trust this beast? A few short hours ago he was trying to tear your throat out."

Belkaro snarled.

"See?" added Lance. "Even now the beast shows his inner nature."

"He said that he gave his word to his god and pack leader," translated Manin.

"I trust him," said the prince. "I trust him to follow my lead as long as I am worthy. If I show weakness and don't deserve to lead, he has every right to challenge me. If I am so foolish to turn my back to someone and get attacked for my lack of attention, I deserve every ache and pain I get as a result." Turning to face Belkaro, "Now, go to your night's slumber and rest after your day's exertions. Tomorrow we shall see what we can learn together by light of day. I shall spend some time with the others of your new pack helping them learn to trust their new pack mate."

Belkaro growled. "He says that he would like to listen. He may not speak our language but he does understand it," said Manin.

"Very well. Let us find a quiet corner inside and I shall tell you

a tale of the Wolf King."

They went inside and found an unoccupied study. Apollo lit the fire and everyone settled down for his story. He told of how Belka had been killed by King Myron and the resulting Wolf Wars. He told of how Laika had gave up his life in the pack to help Queen Daisy raise his brother's child and ultimately gave up his wolfhood to allow Rowan and Princess Iris to run with the wolves. "They have more reason to not trust us," concluded the prince. "They live in the forest and we hunt them because we are afraid and don't understand. That is why Queen Daisy established the Wolf Preserve, a place where the wolves could live without fear of humans." He yawned. "Now, it really is time for bed."

They led Belkaro outside and he quickly ran into the night.

"I don't trust him," said Patrick.

"As is your right. What matters is that I trust him. If you feel that trust is misplaced, you have the right to challenge me."

"That is not right," said Lance. "I feel the same way as the others but it would be wrong to challenge you. You will be the king."

"And Belkaro feels the same way about me as you do, only to him I am already the king. You are right to be cautious but rest assured that he already knows that he won't earn favor with his pack leader by attacking his pack mates to move up in ranks. He is the one who asked us to accept him so he has the challenge of proving himself." Apollo started to head up the stairs but turned back. "Besides, he won't attack one of you until he knows that you have lost my favor and his successful attack would raise him up in the ranks."

"Meanwhile," reasoned Manin, "if he finds your enemy as you commanded, he wins much favor from you."

"Exactly," said the prince. "Spoken like a true wolf."

The guards started to follow him upstairs. He stopped them with the reminder that he had his protection spell. He assured them that he would put it in place the moment he got to his room. Upon entering, he turned to face the door and cast his spell and turned back toward the room and found Manin staring at the broken pieces of the daybed. "It looks like my father forgot to have someone move the furniture from his room. It is probably too late to get someone to fetch it. But it doesn't matter. Look at the size of that bed. I bet we could get four or five people in there and never know the others were there."

"You would want someone like me in your bed?"

"Why not?" asked the prince. "I've been told that I don't snore."

Manin walked to the window and looked out for moment. Apollo tried to figure why his friend had gotten silent. "It's not that," Manin said slowly. "It just that you are the prince. You did all those things earlier, like some hero out of bedtime stories and I'm just a woodchopper's son. I should be down where people like me are supposed to be."

Apollo sent a light pulse of earth energy to his friend. "What do you mean people like you? You are the nephew of a princess. There are hundreds of people back in Resquad trying to claim royal privileges because their old auntie knew someone who was related to the horseman who once helped Queen Rose enter her carriage. And you have an actual claim to a piece of that privilege once in a while."

"But that is only by marriage. I'm not special like you. I can't fight off a pack of wolves with a wave of my hand like you can."

"I can't understand wolf talk like you can. I would call that pretty special," countered the prince.

"I can't flick my wrist and suddenly find myself, who knows where, in an instant."

"The pond near the castle in Sharpeton."

Not being distracted, "With a talking swan who knows you."

"I have to admit that I'm a bit puzzled on that part. I knew a swan like that in my journey and it seemed like she was the same swan. That would make her nearly five hundred years old," said Apollo. "But I can't stop from cracking my head open without you to catch me."

Manin laughed. "You do seem to have a talent for that."

"Well, do you think we can stop saying what we can't do and just be friends? Right now, I'm tired but more than rest, I need a hug. I have to admit that I was scared when I faced Belkaro today. I really didn't know if I could do the things that I remembered in my head. Was it real or just a dream? And if failed, you would have been killed."

Manin felt the shift in Apollo's energy and left his window seat to join the prince who was sitting on bed. He pulled Apollo to his feet and gave him a hug. At first it was just a friendly gesture but at their connection, Manin opened up to his own emotions. "I was scared too. I thought I was going to lose you." Both were loath to let go of the other as they released their fears of what could have happened.

Manin broke the connection when his buckle pressed into his flesh. He pulled away and released the buckle and dropped his trousers to the floor. He struggled with a thought for a brief second and his shirt quickly followed. He stepped back into Apollo's embrace, flesh to flesh. They held each other for several minutes, hands caressing each other's bodies. Apollo reached down and started caressing Manin's cock. Manin responded in kind. As one they stroked each other and Apollo started to kiss Manin and was greeted by an open mouth. With tongues entwined, each started to stroke their own cock and were soon rewarded with a shower of cum.

"Thanks, I needed that," said Apollo as he pulled them onto the bed.

"Yeah," echoed Manin. "There's nothing like sex lesson number one to release tension."

This time it was Apollo's turn to laugh. "I should have known your Uncle Johnny would have taught you that."

He kissed Manin lightly on the cheek and the two snuggled in silence for a few minutes. "Do you think there is an truth into what folks were talking about when they said this place was haunted?" asked Manin.

"If it was, it shouldn't be now. We cleansed those bones of whatever evil deeds Belladonna had done with them and freed those spirits to move on. If there were some evil spirits lurking in the surrounding forest, we certainly would know about it by now."

Just as he finished that thought, the room shook and a loud moan filled the air, rattling the latches on the windows.



The Pumpkín Runs Amok : Part 2 of 2
By Professor Percival "Perry" Grinn

[illegible]

I don't know how long those words echoed in my mind. I barely remember anything after that. It's kind of sad that I don't remember Chief Bungler putting the handcuffs on me. I normally got a thrill when he did that but with the thought echoing in my mind it was hard to focus on the simple pleasures of life. I do remember Chancellor Fancypants asking if it was alright to host the Samhain ritual at my house even if I wasn't there. I shrugged an affirmation and the Chief's team quickly checked the house for evidence of my foul deeds. Having done their job, they cleared the Chancellor for going into the scene of the crime. As the Chief put me in the patrol car, the Chancellor shouted that he would have Rhett head over to the jail as soon as the ritual was over. One of the fringe benefits of working at Faerie University is that they do provide legal counsel for staff members in trouble with the law. After all, they don't want just anyone representing the university's interests. So they keep the best on retainer. Unfortunately, Mr. Jargon was on vacation so I was going to get Mr. O'Ric.

We went downtown and they took their pictures and fingerprints. But I listened to what they said and refused to answer their questions until my attorney was present. This frustrated Chief Bungler to no end because when he asked “For the record, what is your name?” I wouldn’t answer. That sounded like a question to me and my attorney wasn’t there. The Chief tried to convince me that it was a routine question but I said that he was trying to trick me by starting with innocuous questions. I watch television so he couldn’t fool me. While we waited, he pulled out a deck of cards and we started a game of Go Fish like we normally played on game nights. After he dealt the cards, he asked “Do you have any sixes?” What’s with the questions he knows I can’t answer until Mr. O’Ric shows up? It made for a very long night.

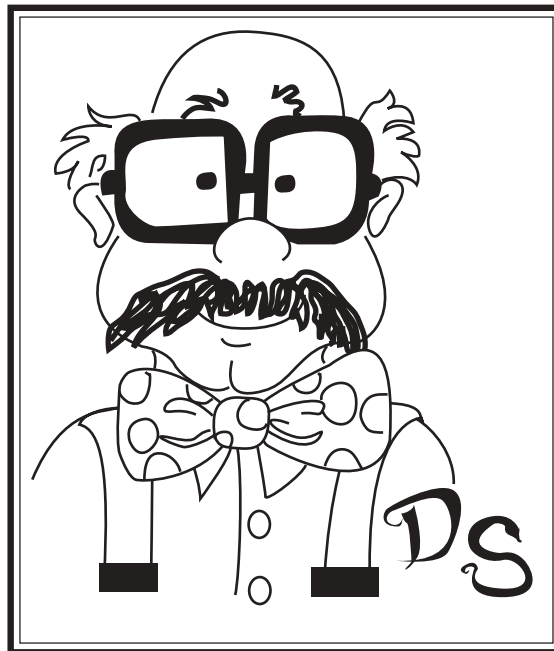
Mr. O’Ric finally showed up shortly after noon. I was surprised that he was that late since rituals usually only last an hour. He told me that the ritual sex was so great that everyone stayed the whole night and had just finished breakfast before he came over. That made me feel great. I just hosted my first all night ritual orgy and I wasn’t even there. It didn’t take too long and after a few questions, the Chief and Mr. O’Ric led me across the street to the Justice Center. There, they had me fill out some paperwork and sign up for some workshops. I just love Continuing Education and pulled out my

calendar and dutifully signed up for everything offered.

Mr. O'Ric took me home and then asked for my university building security badge. I asked why. He said that until the trial, I was now a Registered Sex Offender and couldn't be on campus. I was officially on Leave Of Absence until such time as I was proven innocent of the charges. WHAT? What happened to being assumed innocent until being proven guilty? Apparently the moral leaders of our fair community declared that anyone accused of a sexual act must be taught lessons on how to avoid situations where they may be tempted to actually commit the crime, while those who are guilty will have a head start redeeming themselves.

I was numb for several days but I went to my classes. The first were more like group therapy where I had to tell people why I was there. I had to say that I honestly didn't know since I hadn't done anything. During the trial that lay ahead, Ms. Knottedknickers said that I was unremorseful and unwilling to accept my responsibility for my actions. She recommended that I be neutered so that I would not be a threat to others.

On the other side, there were my sessions with Ratticulus Taile, or Rattail as he was called in class. As a former student at the university he rarely ventured outside of his beloved lab. As a graduate, he got a job in the city's psych evaluation labs. We chatted for a while and he had me strip and connected all sorts of probes on my body. He winked at me and said he was giving me the special friend treatment. Some friend! I sat down on that metal lab table and it was ice cold! Any sexual thought related to being naked in public with fun



things attached to my dick were quickly purged from my mind. During the trial he testified that I was reformed and hadn't registered a single sexual thought during his tests. The fact that all of the photos he showed me were of the sorority girls from Harpy Heights or their aunts or second cousins (depending on which side of their family you looked at) probably accounted for part of that. Now if Rattail had shown me his latest film that would have been a different matter. After the trial, he did tell me that he only chills the table for special friends and then handed me copy of his film. Ah, that that is now. I wasn't allowed to have films like that in my home back then.

Another bright moment in that dark time was when the journalism students came over to interview me for F.U.N. (that's the Faerie University Newspaper in case you don't subscribe.) Reverend Erthan-Howe had held a press conference saying that she was glad to get her son away from those heathens at our university. The students asked if I wanted to make a comment. It took me a while to figure out one that they could print. But I

eventually said that the university celebrates all beliefs but our heathen brethren tended to spend most of their time at double campus of H.U. & C.R.I (the Heathen University and Centaur Research Institute, whose most recent ad campaign is “If you are going to be a horse’s butt you might as well come to C.R.I and be a Smart Ass”).

We didn’t see Fleet, my accuser, until the day of my trial. The official word from this mother’s flood of press releases was that he was so frightened about what had happened that night that he dropped out of class. The word on the street had it that his mother had shipped him off to some reprogramming center to restore him to the grace of her church. He sat there at the trial and listened to everything with downcast eyes. I wanted to look him in the eye to see why he would accuse me of rape when I was offering him sanctuary after the fiasco of the annual pumpkin run. The prosecution slowly built up their case against me. My campus activities as one of the instructors of the Sexercise Program were being used as evidence of my sexual aggression. It didn’t matter that the classes were fully sanctioned on campus. Outside of our hallowed halls the classes were immoral and we leading children into unsafe activities. Reverend Holly Erthan-Thowe took the stand and spoke of the vast moral wrong doings of a teacher luring a student to a place where they could use their position of authority to force an innocent child into an indecent act. The pure fact that her child was naked was proof enough that my devil worshipping ways were to blame. Devil worshipping? Obviously she doesn’t know me since anyone around me knows that I don’t worship Ms. DeVille. She’s the only villain I truly find villainous. She tried to kill puppies for criminy! Now, if she said worshipping Malificent, it might be a different story.

Deputy D.A. O’Daire rested the prosecution’s case without putting Fleet on the stand. I was being denied hearing his tale, which by now must have been very carefully crafted by his mother’s publicity team.

Mr. O’Ric began my defense in an unusual way. To say the least, I had been a bit miffed when he refused to ask questions of the prosecution’s witnesses. When I asked about it after the trial, he said that he could have asked but since he knew the defense plans his questions would just delay the trial rather than add anything to the defense. I had to trust him. Everyone assured me that he was the top graduate of the first class at the new F.A.G Law School (that’s the Faerie and Gnome Law School that just opened last year if you haven’t been keeping up on your F.U. Alumni news). The fact that the class only had one graduating student did not escape my notice, which did not bolster my confidence since it also meant he was the bottom of his class.

His first witness was Beagle, one of the pre-law students trying to get into F.A.G Law next semester. Beagle was one of the core group who had been most interested in learning the full history of the tale of the Jockolan Tern Memorial Pumpkin Run. It turns out that in his research he discovered that my house was built on the ground where Chief Magistrate McBroom’s house had stood for a hundred years. As it was a publicly owned building at the time of Jockolan’s disappearance, the property technically belonged to the university based on all laws that had been passed. As such, any sexual



activity between student and teacher would be governed by university standards, not city standards. Beagle pointed out the official pumpkin run registrations that showed the Fleet had voluntarily stripped that evening in preparation for the run and that several witnesses had placed me at my home during that time. He concluded that the fact that Fleet was in my home voluntarily and when a student enters an instructor’s classroom of their own free will, they should expect to be given the proper lessons. Deputy O’Daire asked if proper lessons included rape to which Beagle simply asked “Did you ask him if he said the Safe Word?”

I was very surprised when Mr. O’Ric called his second witness, Fleet. Huh? He’s the one who accused me of attempting to rape him. And here he was called to be my witness. Was he going to apologize for lying? The prosecution objected since he was the victim but Fleet insisted and the judge overruled the objection. Mr. O’Ric asked him to point out the person who attempted to rape him. He looked around and started pointing, but it wasn’t at me. He was pointing at Chief Bungler!

Pandemonium ruled for the next several moments. It took the bailiff, Mr. Bellows, several tries to get folks to quiet down. Fleet began to tell his tale. During the mass arrests during the pumpkin run he had fallen into the pumpkin covered stairwell to Cucubina Hall. He entered the long forgotten door of that building and hid until things quieted down outside. He had just stepped outside when he was grabbed from behind and thrown to the ground. When he

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The Pumpking Runs Amok continued

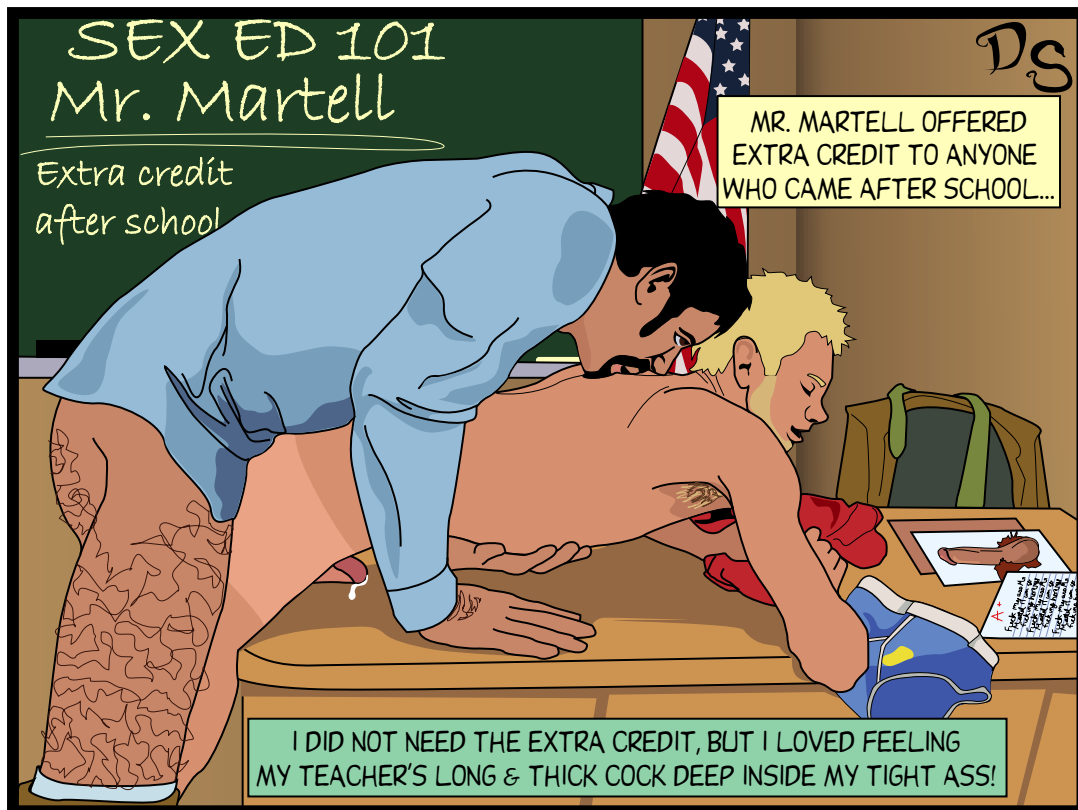
tried to get up out of the mud, he saw the Chief pulling down his pants saying that after all those naked bodies he was horny and Fleet was to be both his relief and to be taught a lesson. The Chief grabbed Fleet's legs and started to try to penetrate him. Fleet tried to protest that the Chief wasn't wearing proper protection to which he said that if it was important to him Fleet should have kept a condom in his pockets before venturing out at night. Fleet pushed hard against the Chief and sent him falling into the pumpkin patch. He heard him hit the stairs and cursed up a blue streak, saying that he would make Fleet pay for that. Fleet didn't wait for the Chief to find his way out of the pumpkin patch and did what he did best which was to run. Mr. O'Ric asked if Fleet had intended to come to my house. He said at first no but as he ran he realized that my house was nearby and that he could trust me. And when asked why he didn't tell me about the attempted rape he said he didn't because he didn't think anyone would believe him. And then, when he saw me his elation about finding out what happened to Jockolan the night he disappeared came back and that was all he wanted to talk about. When he saw his attacker standing next to his mother he knew he had to tell the truth but everything went wrong when the Chief deliberately misinterpreted the statement and quickly acted by treating me as the object of Fleet's outcry. Fleet said he kept trying to tell his mother the truth but Chief Bungler is on the vestry of her church and she knew that there was no way in this world or the next that someone of that high moral fiber could do just a heinous act (Boy was she wrong – now that is out in the open 315 victims have stepped forward to talk about his abuse of power during his 25 years as Chief of Police.). She did everything to keep her church out of the

situation and thus did everything to keep Fleet from speaking to authorities.

Sad to say that Reverend Erthan-Howe's trial for obstruction of justice is constantly being delayed. She claims that as a church leader she can only be judged by God and is not subject to laws made by humans. The city is having difficulty getting God to respond to their request for him to attend her trial as a co-judge. I'm not sure how I feel about the news that Chief Bungler committed suicide. He had always seemed like a nice guy and I enjoyed his company. Until this story came out, I had no reason to hate him. But I think I'm sad for the victims who won't have the chance to tell their stories in court and purge it from their souls. They have formed Faeries Abused By Bungler, a truly F.A.B.B. organization that is leading a group lawsuit against the city.

As for me, well I first had the challenge of how to get my name off the list as a registered sex offender. Apparently, our city leaders in their infinite wisdom did not include a provision to take someone off the list. They had to pass some new laws and now I can proudly claim I am an official Unregistered Sex Offender.

And Fleet? Well, let's just say history is repeating itself. He graduated and changed his name. He is now calling himself Widest. Why the new name? Well, unlike history, he did not create a twin brother. However, the big smile he had on his face the day after he came over for private Sexercise instructions was the start. And the smile after the next session...and the next...and the smile on my face when he moved in after graduation had my friends saying that I was the Professor with the widest grin and the name stuck.



Story Game

Chapter 6: by Phoenix

...the necklace around his neck began to burn his skin. It was as if a hot cinder had sparked from a campfire. Brian reached up to try to take off the necklace but the chain was too hot to hold long enough to unclasp it. He was about to try to yank it off when he felt Apollo's hand cover the burning Pan. His touch was cooling. The heat in his loin continued but he felt as if a soft summer breeze had come to caress his body after being baked in the hot summer sun.

Brian started to reach up to cover Apollo's hand with his own but discovered that he couldn't move. The coolness that he felt wasn't a breeze, rather it was a cold stone slab upon which he was chained. He strained to break free but the ropes binding his wrists and ankles were tight. The strap that bound his neck to the slab only had enough give to allow him to turn his head ever so slightly.

He discovered that he was on top of some type of pyramid on what had to be the darkest of nights. Torches were flaming in the corners of that space. Drums were beating out slow rhythms in the distance, just out of sight. Brian had a feeling the drummers were on the steps below. Around him, he could see several figures in the dark. Ornate feathered headdresses gave the figures alien-like silhouettes. They were chanting in some language that Brian couldn't understand.

He could feel someone fondling him but his restraints wouldn't allow him to look down. The person had cold, rough hands and it seemed like their goal was to keep Brian hard. They would stroke just enough to stimulate him but not enough to make him climax. When Brian started to wilt, the hands would spread some type of warming oil on his cock and coax it back to life.

As the drumming picked up the pace, several of the robed figures gathered closer and Brian could almost pick out their features in the torchlight. One of them slathered something on his chest. It was cold and foamy and soon he felt the distinct feel of a razor. "Damn," he thought. "With Jeffery gone, I had just about begun to hope that I wouldn't have to suffer the itch of chest hair growing back." As perfect a lover as he had been, the biggest argument between Jeffery and Brian was over Brian's thick pelt of chest hair. Jeffery loved his men smooth from top to bottom and even shaved Brian's arms and legs. But strange as this situation was, these strange priests were shaving him with more love than Jeffery ever had. It was as if they were loving him and preparing him for a special honor that was yet to be given to him. The thought caused his dick to spring to life and now, it was not just hard, it was fully erect and free from his body.

He heard one of the priests gasp and utter some type of command. The drummers picked up the pace and Brian felt his blood begin quicken. The priests began to paint circles on him; first on his chest, then his forehead and finally one with his dick in the center. After the circles, they began to paint lines like rays on a child's drawing of the sun.

The sun! That's what's motivating them, thought Brian. He glanced to the side and sure enough, the faint colors of the predawn were starting to emerge from the darkness. He felt multiple hands stroking his cock. One priest kept fingering one of the painted lines.

Brian pictured a child watching a sundial and began to think that is what these priests were doing with his dick. When the shadow of his dick crossed that line, then they would let him climax just as the sun broke froth and granted them daylight.

The pace of the drumming began to reach a fevered frenzy and he felt his cum churning to be released. He was just starting to moan when he noticed the glint of a knife being held over his heart.

"No!" he shouted as the realization of the sacrifice of his life to a strange dark god was to be made just as his was to shoot his seed into the air.

In some act of mercy, one of the priests covered his eyes so that he could not see the knives. Even through the thin cloth, he could still sense the growing light. The strange mix of fear and pleasure was overwhelming him.

Just as the drummers reached their final cadence, he imagined the downward thrust of the knives but a thunderous boom filled the air and suddenly everything was pitch black. Brian couldn't even sense the flicker of the torches.

"Who dares harm my chosen?" came a booming voice that seemed to be everywhere at the same time.

Brian heard the screams of the priests and drummers as the fell down the pyramid stairs. He felt hands begin to loosen his bonds when he felt something brush against his leg. It was silk-like fur, much like the goat he remembered at a petting zoo. When the cloth was removed from his eyes, he spied a pair of fauns scurrying away.

Brian tried to sit up but a dizziness of the realization of what had almost happened overcame him. The stranger steadied him and came around to the side so that Brian could see him. A shaft of light broke through the darkness and illuminated the stranger's face. Dark hair cascaded from under an ornate headdress which was being removed.

"Apollo?" questioned a very bewildered Brian.

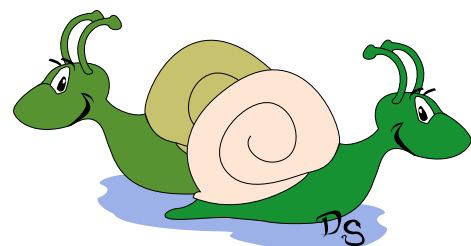
"This is not how I wanted us to meet again."

The stranger brushed his hand on Brian's face. He closed his eyes to enjoy the tenderness of the gesture. When he opened them again, he found himself back in his kitchen.

"Are you OK?" asked Apollo. "You looked like you weren't able to breathe."

Brian was struggling to find a way to tell the naked man in front of him of the strange visions that he had been having without sounding crazy. But words were starting to escape him as he felt a surge of cum boiling inside. The two had barely touched and Brian was already about to shoot a load when...

*Tune in next issue to see who picks up
the next chapter Brian's tale*



The Cubby Diaries: The Hospice by Cubby

It started off as one of those super fantastical mornings. The night before had been a spectacular thunder and lightning storm with the booms so close the windows rattled, which only inspired Peter to surpass the storm's passion with our own. And beyond that, it was the first major storm of the season; the one that signaled the death of Winter and the beginning of Summer. The morning was crystal clear with that lovely freshness that can't be packaged. Kevin and Buck came over for breakfast and I made the most super light waffles that ever absorbed syrup. The summer was upon us and the sun was shining. I had good friends and good food. I knew better than uttering the thought that the day was so perfect that nothing could mar the bliss I felt. But I did.

No sooner had my friends left for their day's errands than the phone rang. It was Twinkle. Now, in retrospect I can tell you what he said but that is only because I now know what it was he was calling about. At the time I could only utter the appropriate vocal sounds at those few moments when he was forced to catch a breath. I gathered it was something about a fate worse than death, his mother, his sister and Hell freezing over. I gathered the emotional state was some form of mix between total shock, panic, "OMG how could she", paranoia, rage, a tinge of guilt, a bit of glee at someone else's misfortune and a huge portion of pure hysteria tossed in for good measure. When he finally got to the "What should I do?" moment and paused long enough for me to respond, I told him to come over so we could discuss it. He said it would have to be after dinner and I said that would work out.

As I did my housework that afternoon, I tried to remember all the things that Twinkle had said over the course of our friendship about his family. I wasn't coming up with much. His dad died when he was young and his mother remarried. He came out to his family on his sixteenth birthday and found his things on the front lawn when he came home from school the following day. It pretty much goes without saying that his parents did not take the news well. He got a trash bag from the garage, grabbed the few things he could carry and began his life of going from one friend's house to the next to a lover's house and to the next that finally stopped when he met Steve at our Yule party a few years back. It has been nice to see how he's grown with the nurturing of a supportive lover. When he called he must have been between classes over at the community college. With his love of holiday lighting, we had been trying to get him to turn professional and with encouragement from Steve he finally decided to get a degree as a Lighting Design Engineer. Twinkle says that he's never seen his mother since he came out so twenty some years later I was intrigued as to what could have happened to get him so worked up regarding his family.

Twinkle arrived just as I finished the dishes. My lovers had

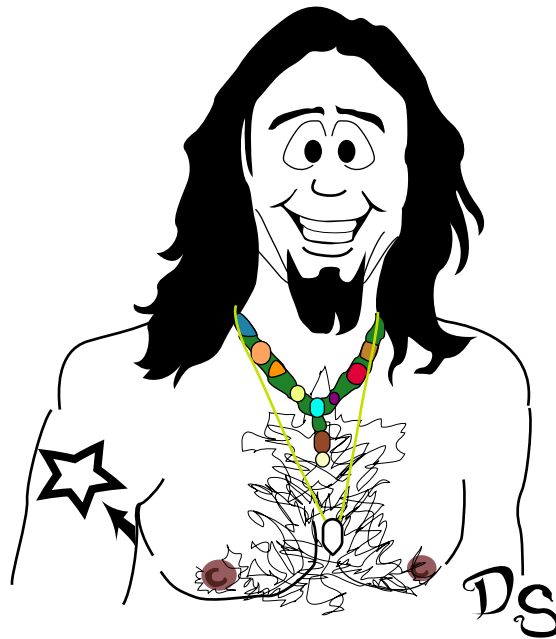
gone to the latest blood and guts horror flick but had promised to check in at the end of the movie to see if they should come home for Heart Circle time or would a cocktail at The Cave be more appropriate. Twinkle apologized for keeping me from going to the movies. I stopped him by telling him that the group doesn't let me go see those movies because I tended to laugh at how transparent some of the set ups are and somehow the sound of my laughter breaks the mood of the moment on screen. We settled down on the back porch and listened to the fountain for a while. Hamlet came and placed his big head in my lap. I don't know what made me realize it but I suddenly noticed how grey his muzzle had gotten and

I had to stop and think how old he was. Eight years or was it ten? Meanwhile, Lady Macbeth jumped into Twinkle's lap demanding the proper attention to Her Royal Self. After a few moments of silence, Twinkle reached into his shirt pocket and pulled out a letter and handed it to me. "It's from my sister," was all he said.

I opened the letter and began to read. Based on my limited knowledge, I started to see what had prompted the call. His mother had been diagnosed with an aggressive form of cancer and was now in hospice care. Adrienne, Twinkle's sister, said that their mother regretted what they had done to him and never could figure out a way to bridge the distance between them and say that she was sorry. She had few regrets in her life but that was one that she hoped to correct before she died. She asked Adrienne to try to convince her brother

to come to her so she could tell him in person. His sister explained that it had been difficult to find him since he had changed his name, but she had seen him on television during my remodeling project so she had the clue she needed and started researching. She ended the letter with her phone number and "If you can find it in your heart to forgive her, call me. Don't take long or you won't have that chance."

I handed him back his letter, reached into my pocket and pulled out my cell phone and handed it to him as well. "What are you waiting for?" I asked. I then waited for the flood gates to open and wasn't disappointed. I learned more about Twinkle in the next couple of hours than I had during the five years I'd known him. And just in case you are wondering, I do have his permission to share some, not all, of what he told me. I don't want you to think I tell tales outside of heart time with my friends without asking first. Anyway, he affirmed that he was five when his father died, a victim of a robbery gone bad while he was on the road. His dad was some kind of salesman so he didn't see him much so it wasn't too traumatic for him. With two kids to raise, his mother quickly found a new husband who treated the kids as his own. He was shocked by his parents reaction to his coming out. Both of his parents had always seemed liberal and free love and all that groovy kind of thing. They



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were always proud at how diverse their friends were. When he made the big announcement his mother just said, "We won't talk about this again" and then left the room and slammed the door. Those were the last words he heard from his mother. His step-father sat there in awkward silence and eventually got up and followed his wife to the bedroom. Twinkle could hear the sounds of a heated conversation but it wasn't loud enough to carry down the stairs to the living room. He didn't see his mother when he left for school and I already told you what he found when he came home. It must have been cool to have gay friends and friends with gay children. Apparently, from their reaction it was not cool to have a gay son of their own. He went to his best friend's house for the night and started the game that it was his idea to run away. It only took so long for his classmates to start to figure out the truth. Twinkle dropped out of school and moved as far away as he could, which was to the other side of town where he lived with his first lover. He changed his name and started working odd jobs. He made some new friends and spun the tale how he was an orphan and that his parents died in a horrible crash ("They were dead to me," he justified). When he turned twenty-one he changed his name legally. Twinkle said he never could feel attached to anyone or any place. He felt that his mother would be chasing after him, weeping and wailing how sorry she was and he knew deep in his heart that he could never forgive her. He tried to leave town but something always brought him back until he gave up trying. He concluded with a bit of mixed emotions as he thought about her cancer and now her body was catching up to the emotion in his heart. "She's dead."

I sat and listened. "Aren't you even a little bit curious as to what she wants to say?" I asked. I said he had been running from the thought of her all these years. Even if it couldn't change the past, it was time to put the demon behind him, look at her in the eye and tell her what he thought. And if he couldn't forgive her after listening to what she had to say, then he could simply tell her that she will have to ask forgiveness from her Lord when she answers to him for what she did to her child.

"You make it sound so easy," he said. I told him that it is easier from my side to say it than it would be on his side to do it. "Besides," I added, "would it be better to let her die thinking you hated her or go for the gusto and let her last words be an affirmation of it?" He wiped his tear stained face with a towel I had prepared for just that eventuality and got an evil grin on his face. "Where's that phone?"

As he talked to his sister, I found myself agreeing to join him the following day when he went to the hospice for the visit. I picked him up on campus after his morning class. He admitted he was a nervous wreck, hadn't slept a wink all night and really couldn't tell me anything about the class he was just in. We drove over to Sanctuary Life Care Center in silence. As I drove up the long driveway, I thought that the property probably looked gorgeous in its time but now it showed the serious signs of neglect. I truly hoped it was not a sign of the care they gave the patients. We walked in and were quickly greeted by the staff and directed to Twinkle's mother's room. The door was slightly open and we stood there quite a while. I was sure that Twinkle was trying to convince himself to turn around and go home when that decision was taken from him. "Who's out

there? I can see you in the doorway," came the weak voice from inside.

I pushed open the doorway and at the first sight of the woman who cast him out anything he had planned to say was gone as he rushed to her side. "Please forgive me," he sobbed as he rushed to her and dropped to his knees. "Marvin? I'm supposed to be asking you to forgive me." "No, it's me. I never thought about you and how you would react. I have hated you all this time and wished you dead. And now...now I'm sorry I didn't try harder." I stepped back into the hall and let them work through who was the sorrierest between the two of them.

I wandered and found the visitor's lounge. Amid the shabby conditions of the décor, I watched the nurses duck in and out of rooms. Any buzzer that sounded was answered within a minute or two. Despite the less than perfect aesthetics of the space, it seemed like they were providing top notch care. I got tired of the limited fare offered by the network television and started to wander around the halls. The sound of a radio lured me to one door in the north corridor which was open just a hair. I could hear those famous words "Who knows what evil lurks..." and a faint echo of matching words came from the feeble voice inside that room. I was straining to hear which actor was playing the Shadow when the voice called out. "Who's at my door? Either come in or leave but it is rude to lurk in the doorway. I won't bite." Having been caught for the second time in one day, I pushed my way in and waited for my eyes to adjust to the darkness. Curled in a chair in the corner was a frail elderly man, arms propped on the dresser as he leaned in to listen to the story. I started to say something but he hushed me. "Just listen," he whispered as he pointed at another chair in his room. I did as commanded and we shared a half hour listening as Margot got herself in trouble and Lamont rescued her. As the story ended, I realized that it was a recording rather than a broadcast. The man stopped the player and lovingly extracted the disk and placed it back into its jacket. "Thank you for sharing. The nurses don't join me for Story Hour. No one joins me anymore. My friends are gone. My family is gone or doesn't want me." He held the box of programs to his chest before placing it on a shelf with others. "These are my friends now. Now you had better skidaddle before you are missed."

No sooner had I stepped into the hall than Twinkle came rushing toward me. "There you are!" He grabbed my sleeve like an excited kid at Christmas and pulled me toward his mother's room at

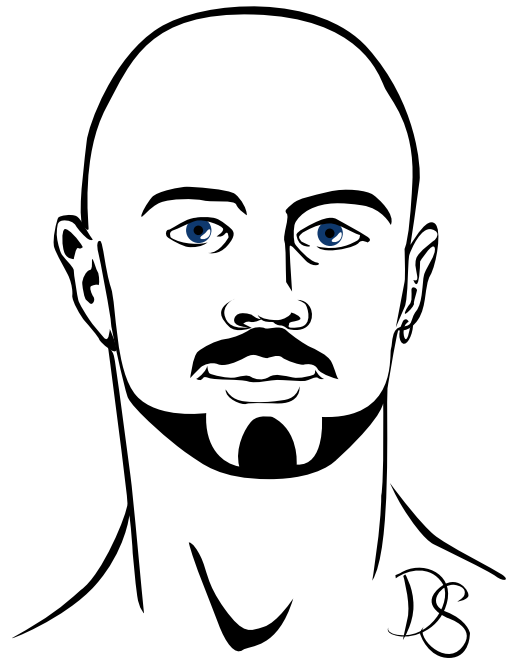
—continued on page 20

The Cubby Diaries continued

the opposite end of the hall. “You have got to hear this for yourself. You will never believe what Mom just told me.”

I followed him back. He had helped his mother sit up and spent some time getting her into a silk robe and had brushed her hair. Gone was a weak body on a hospital bed. I was now seeing a vibrant lady waiting to receive a guest. At his urging, she told me her side of the story. She admitted to the foolishness of her actions that day, but the shock of her son’s announcement had been too much for her. Her husband hadn’t been killed in a robbery as she had told her friends and children. He had been fag-bashed outside some bar in a little town in Oklahoma. All of the memories of that came back to haunt her as soon as Marvin (I had to translate for a moment since I’ve known Twinkle as his chosen name Mason for all these years). While she was in her room that night and alone in the house during the day she thought of all the dangers in the world facing a gay man and knew she couldn’t protect her child. She was scared to the bones that her son was going to meet that same fate. And then an older darker memory came to her as she thought about her father. He had left her mother when went to college. When she confronted him during semester break she asked why and he told her those fateful cruel words of truth. He had only married her mother because she had gotten pregnant and now that she was grown, he was free to leave. She learned that he was gay and upon hearing that she did the only physical act that she has ever truly regretted and slapped him in the face and shouted at him that her father was dead and the stranger before her was to get out of her life and never see her again. “And he didn’t,” she said as she wiped away a tear at the memory. When it was time to get married, Anna Marie thought about all her friends who had gotten married and their fathers as they walked the bride down the aisle. She had missed her father and decided it was time to make peace and have him at her side. Her mother agreed and they sent him a letter asking him to be part of the wedding. Twinkle’s grandmother had known about her husband’s gay lifestyle when she met him and had prayed that by getting pregnant she could turn him away from his sinful life. She learned that it didn’t work that way but also learned to love the gentle loving soul that slept on the far side of the bed, never touching her. She had released him to find his love and was proud that her daughter had finally come to peace with the situation. The letter came back. Handwritten across the front was “DECEASED – Left no forwarding information.” The day after Twinkle’s announcement she found that letter in her wedding scrapbook and knew she was cursed. She was fated to love gay men and watch them die. She went into a rage and focused on the object of that rage and tossed Twinkle’s things where she wouldn’t see them. If he died after school then they wouldn’t be staring at her all the time as a constant reminder. Once Stanley got her to calm down she realized that she never had the chance to resolve things with her father and even her husband and she would regret it to her dying day if she couldn’t mend things with her son. She tried to find him, but she was always one step behind him and found out where he had been after he had already moved on to the next sanctuary.

They say that confession is good for the soul. I don’t know about everyone but it certainly was good for Anna Marie. She had a



radiance about her as she told her story. Gone was the pain from her face. If she were to die that night, I knew it would be a peaceful passing. It was not to be that night for Twinkle had several weeks to reconnect with his mother before her condition deteriorated to the point where she couldn’t speak. But moreover, the confession was good for the listener as well. Gone was the darkness that was always lurking in Twinkle’s eyes. I saw him have a true twinkle in his eyes as he looked at her with pure love.

As it approached the after work hour, Adrienne stopped by for a visit and brother and sister met for the first time in all those years. She had been at college when Twinkle’s life unraveled. She loved her mother but their relationship had been strained from that point forward. I sat there listening to the three of them chatter about Twinkle’s childhood. He was always over decorating the house for holidays. He told his mother that she should have known long before he came out to her. She said that she did know. She just wasn’t prepared to admit it to herself at the time. Several of Anna Marie’s bridge friends came by to check on her. It was a festive time and one could almost forget that it was a hospice.

I took Twinkle home and promised to pick him up after class so he could visit his mother as often as time permitted. As we got in the car, Twinkle was a’witter about learning his gay heritage. He vowed to find out anything and everything he could about his father and grandfather. I drove past the weathered benches and dry fountain and thought about how cheerful Anna Marie’s room had been once the clouds of the past were cleared and family was reunited and friends had gathered to celebrate love and life instead of wallowing in the doom and gloom. And then I thought about the lonely man sitting in darkness with only recordings of ghosts from the past to keep him company. I’m not sure which made me wipe away a tear as I turned into traffic.