

MEMORIAL of the GREAT HEAT WAVE of DECEMBER 1858

STORMY ARCTIC
WENDY ARCTIC
FROSTY FLAKES
ICY FROST
JANE FROST
GRACEY GLACIAL
SLUSHIE GI
SNOWFAL
AURORA
CHILLY NIC
FROST M
FREON

NORTHON POLAR	SN
CRYSTAL SNOW	FL
SNOWEY SR.	AR
SNOWEY JR.	CR
ART TIC	ST
ICEY WATERS	SN



Publisher's Notes

Greetings Faeries, and welcome to the 2009 Samhain issue of the Airy Faerie. Several years ago I came across an interesting phrase in a most unusual place. The phrase was, "Memento Mori" the place was the Haunted Mansion at Disneyland. Some cranky spooks interrupted our ride, causing our doom buggy to stop in the graveyard. This gave me plenty of time to look around and notice that most of the grave stones were engraved with two words, Memento Mori. I looked it up on the internet and discovered that it was any item that helped remember the dead. This year the Airy Faerie seems to be full of these memories of the dead. Quite fitting for a Samhain issue don't you think?

One of the activities that the Denver Faeries enjoyed this year is walking through the old cemeteries here in Denver. Our first was Fairmount Cemetery founded in 1890. This is the second oldest cemetery, still standing, in town and is the final resting place for many of the men and women who created the rich history of Colorado. I enjoyed the sculptures and designs on some of the old markers and mausoleums that are all over the old graveyard. It was interesting to see what graves the old ghosts drew us to so that they might be remembered one more time. The Procter family plot drew the faeries in so much that we researched the death of some of the family. This inspired two poems from the faeries. Eisbear joins us for the first time with his poem. Phoenix also wrote a poem and a brief explanation of this graveyard inspiration, so I will let him fill in the details about the Procter family (see page 15).

The second visit to a graveyard came on October 31. We gathered at Riverside Cemetery for a walking tour where several volunteers told the life stories of some of the historic figures buried in Denver's oldest, and still standing, cemetery. I am inserting the phrase "still standing" because the oldest Denver cemetery no longer has the grave markers, but most of the bodies are still there. It is one of the downtown parks and also one the higher priced neighborhoods. Did anyone see the movie Poltergeist? It is the same

basic story but without the pop up coffins, or kids saying "They're here." The short version is that when the city condemned the cemetery it was too expensive to move the bodies, so they didn't. Anyway... While the day was very enjoyable and I learned a lot, no poems or stories made it into the Airy Faerie from that trip.

What did make it in was Anja's return to the Airy Faerie family with another memento mori entitled "'Locking the Door". Hermes Polyandros also returns with a poem about masks. Cubby and Prince Apollo return to tell their tales. We also have a faerie writing his spin on the story game. His name is DragonSwan or something like that.

Speaking of DragonSwan, he has created some artwork for the issue. With that here is your warning. Adult Content! Please be careful where and when you open this issue as it does contain male nudity and gay male sexual images and writings. The artwork isn't so much a memento mori as it is a fantasy combining working in a haunted house and gay sex.

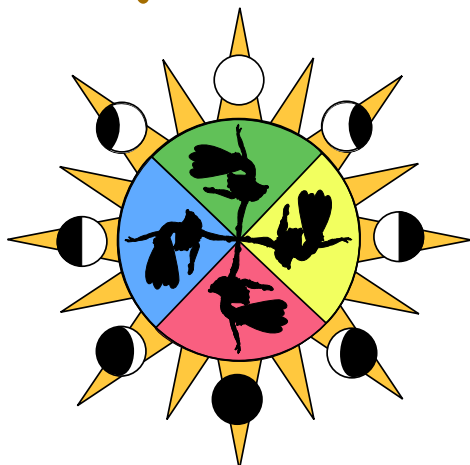
We also inch our way closer to getting round one done on our 4F tarot cards. We have two new cards for this issue.

Well that about does it for what awaits you in the 2009 Samhain issue of the Airy Faerie. We invite you to keep the spirit of the season in your heart through out the year. Take time to remember those who have crossed over through out the year. Take a walk trough an old cemetery and see what spirits call to you. They might inspire you to celebrate your own life. We hope you enjoy the issue.

Many Thanks to all of those who have gone before and forged the way for us.

Many Blessing and Naked Hugs,
DragonSwan

Airy Faerie



Samhain 2009

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

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In Memoriam: the Procter Family

July 24, 1896

By Eisbaer

Summer morning sings / as sunshine mounts
Mountainside shadow shelters / from summer heat
Cascading streams / charms children to sleep

Lanterns' flickering light/ faces in luminous fire
Son's murmurs, mother's smiles / shimmer in the summer moon
High heaven holds and warms / worlds and hearts and home

Who could have seen? / Who could have known?
Summer sun swept aside / by water's waxing wave
Timber-tall torrent / tears through the town

Children torn from caring arms / crash into the chasm
Love's gentle leisures / a twisted tryst tossed away
Sun-filled summer sighs / a moonlit maelstrom of moans

All-Mother Herself helpless / Her own man-child hurried to Hel
Mourning Mother of Mothers / marsh-bound that mother bears
Mother and brood together / to infinite Fensalir

Summer's sun swept away / by Samhain's somber scythe
Leaves lightly weigh on those / washed by Slidr's waves
Headstones hint / at stinging horror

Who now remembers? / Who now that ravage recalls?
All-Mother's memories weep / as mute we wait
Washed by Her tears / transformed into witnesses.



A Banshee's Howl

By Phoenix

A family day in the sunshine filled with laughter and thrills
Playing in clear waters of the Creek of the Bear.
Away from the dust in the city
Where children can run free.

A banshee's howl down the canyon walls
Causes a mother look up to see the sky turn green.
Hurry, children, hurry! She yells.
Get inside! Get to safety!

She counts them - one, two, three, four.
All are here. All are safe.
Her friends have done the same.
Thank the gods, all are safe.

The littlest one is held to her trembling breast
While the others cling close to their mother's skirt.
The pounding of the hail on the wooden roof
Like the sound of the nails in the coffin lid.

Don't think that! We are safe.
See, the hail has stopped, so too, will the rain.
A rumble of thunder makes her pause in her words.
We are safe inside. Thank god, we are safe.

A rumble far louder than the ones they have heard,
It must be the echo from the canyons we hear
We are safe inside, my child
There is nothing to fear.

A rumble is heard that can't be denied
It fills every corner and no other sound can be heard.
With a lurch and a creak, the room spins around
And what was above is now below on the ground

The door flies open, a strange man appears.
He looks around and counts all the heads.
Thank god you are here
Can you help us get out?

He grabs one child and hurls her outside.
The toll has not been paid, no free rides from me.
Screams by the mother as he slams shut the door
She's done you no harm, she's only a child.

Once again, the door opens wide.
This time he stands as the walls melt away
Leaving them standing on the decks of a ferry
With him at the helm.

In the power of the storm, the creek changed its course
And the Creek of the Bear no longer exists
For the ferryman is Charon
As they travel on the River Styx.

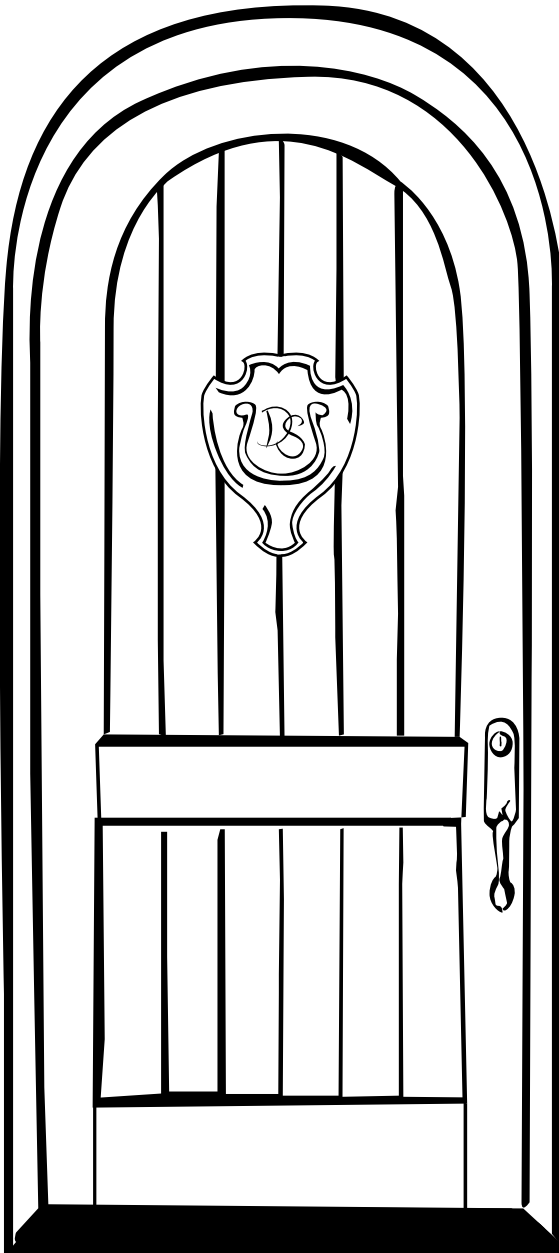
Locking the Door

By Anja

I called you and you didn't answer, as usual,
Then I let myself into your house with my key.
When I saw the back of your head
Tucked into a pillow over the arm of your sofa
It was the same as every other time you had fallen asleep waiting
for me.
Seeing the little black curls in your now-thin hair
Your TV was on as always
"Loud enough to wake the dead."

I called out.
"Morning, Mom!
Did you drop off to sleep again?"

Walked around the end of the sofa
And then....



"Oh, I guess you're not asleep."
I touched your throat at the pulse point
Knowing that there was no reason.
Your skin was cold
Hard
Yellowed
Mottled

But you were lying in the same pose as always
One hand tucked over your stomach
Mouth open and eyes closed
Feet tucked up
The other hand on the thigh whose knee pointed away from the
rest of you.
How many years had you snoozed on the sofa like that?

But this was the last time.

After I made the phone calls with you lying right there
I wandered
I couldn't leave you
But I couldn't stay right by you.

I needed to think you were just asleep.

I went into the kitchen
And saw your supper dishes
Rinsed and in the drainer
And your leftovers in the fridge.

The gravy carefully saved from your "treat",
From your Salisbury steak TV dinner that you loved so much
And a small bite of mashed potatoes.
You had eaten all the carrots.

An ½ slice of cheesecake
In a dessert bowl so that your shaky hands wouldn't betray it to
the floor.
An ½ cup of milky tea,
As always
Saved for a midnight snack
Always eaten at 2am.

An handful of grapes in another bowl,
Rinsed and ready for morning
Set in a soup bowl next to your hard-boiled breakfast egg
And the yogurt cup you had been working on for several days
With a carefully washed and saved lid that must have come from
Store-bought potato salad.

I shut the fridge door and the tears came.
"Mom! Mom!"
I clung to the handle and cried...

For all the things that we wouldn't do.
 For all the drives to the grocery, necessary no longer,
 Where you would sit in the car and, grinning, wave to all and sundry.
 For all the trips to watch the ocean and the spouting horns and mountains that we wouldn't take
 For never hearing this spring your cries of "Pinkies!"
 As we drove past the blooming wild rhododendrons.
 You missed them by only a couple of days, but I guess you couldn't wait.

"Mom!" I cried out.

I sat at the dining room table.
 I talked to you.
 Hoping that you could still hear me.
 I told you all the things that you didn't want to hear.
 How I loved you even when you drove me crazy because you couldn't remember.
 How you insisted that I buy you a new packet or 6 of sunflower seeds every summer, but you never planted them.
 How I loved you even when you were as whiny as a 4-year-old who has missed a nap.
 How you were re-reading Harry Potter and the book was on the cluttered coffee table and the rest of the set on the floor on the other side where you couldn't see them along with everything else that you had shoved off the pile because you couldn't see it.
 How glad I was that you were able to be at home when...

I remembered your pitiful cry when you were in the hospital a year before.
 "I don't want to die here! You promised! You promised!"

And you came home
 Puttering with plants that died when you forgot to water them.
 Making new starts of your favorite violets in saved containers from grocery salads and sandwich spread.
 From your chive cream cheese that you ate on bread since crackers made your gums hurt
 And most of those starts died, too.

But some were flourishing in strange places.
 On top of the stack of magazines in Dad's empty chair.
 On the bathroom counter behind rinsed bottles and folded up product boxes.
 One shut into the cupboard where you kept your box of curlers.
 Why?
 On chairs tucked under the dining room table.
 Sitting by the withered unused potatoes in their bin.
 In the middle of the shelf where you were saving the throwaway clamshell boxes from croissants and muffins.
 How did that stack get that high?
 How many times had I tossed those containers only to have you fish them out of the trash and scold me for "wasting them"?

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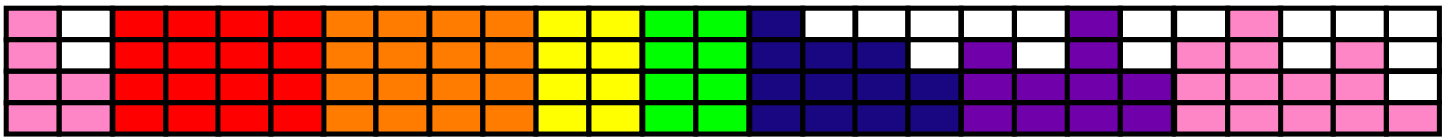
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Vase after vase of dried, withered flowers that you didn't want to throw out,
 Pile after pile of catalogues,
 Stack after stack after toppled stack of books,
 I put those back on the shelves.
 I walked around,
 picking things up
 Weeping when I dragged in a large trash can and started putting all that carefully saved trash into it.
 Hoping that you would scold and insist on putting them back where they belonged.

And then I would sit and talk to you and get back up and go back to putting things away and sorting out the junk

Finally they came to take your body away.
 I didn't watch.
 I couldn't,
 And then I locked the door behind them,
 And went back to my house
 Without you.

2009



The 4-F Tarot: Furry Woodsman Come Rescue Me!

by Phoenix

If you look at the tarot meter above, you will notice that we don't have that many cards left to create – just 18! It will still be a while before we finish the first drafts since we are now at the point in my initial production plan that we would only be doing two or three cards an issue instead of the five or six we did in the early phase. This was a deliberate plan since I knew that by the time we got to these last cards, the art was going to become increasingly more intense which was going to take longer to create. I also figured that DragonSwan was going to start to get tired of the challenges I was going to present to him with these final cards and was going to want to stretch his artistic senses for a little bit before we move into Phase Two of card creation. I think you will agree that he has been filling this “slack” time by creating some pretty fantastic new graphics for Airy Faerie. If you haven't already flipped through the issue, I think you will enjoy his Samhain fantasies. Of course, with each graphic he plays with and tries something new, he's also learning and honing his skills for adding the layers and special effects to the finished cards.

What can I say about the God of Fur who is staring at us from the next page? WOOF is probably the first thing that comes to mind, followed by OH DADDY! And that he is. As we balanced the energy of the deck, this one settled into “fall” and “mature male in his mid to late forties.” When doing graphics of male nudes, it is pretty easy to get trapped into thinking about youthful beauty. But I can say that when I was in that youthful age range, I always loved the images of the mature man. And now that I'm in that mature age range, I still love those images. And you eagle eyed readers will be quick to note that I did not say that I was mature, just in that age range.

I don't think that it is much of a stretch of imagination to think that he worked hard for those muscles. Chopping wood is hard work. It is fall, so I'm sure he's working extra hard to get his woodpile stocked up for the winter that lays ahead. He's been busy today and if we could add scent to these pages, I have a feeling that we would all be getting a head rush from the smell of his sweat.

But what has caused him to pause in his labor? What is going on in his mind? Has he heard something in his forest that he shouldn't have heard? Did he think he was alone but something rustled in the trees? Is it the witch who has come to curse his axe and start the process of turning him into the heartless Tinman? Is he tired of trying to tuck his balls back into his pants and wondering if anyone is out there who might see him working buck naked? My thought is that if we hold really still maybe we can encourage that last thought and have this God grant our wishes.

When dropped into a reading, this card is generally about the hard work. It is about planning ahead and doing the tasks that are needed to be prepared. It is about being alert to things while you are focused on something else. And it is about anything you associate with someone of this relative age. He's neither youth nor ancient

sage but he certainly has some life experience to share. Do you think you can work up the courage to approach him, get him to lower his axe and share some of his stories with you? Or are you just going to be one of those people who stands around and watches him work? But I have a feeling that if you really want to win this God's favor and respect, your best bet is to take off your own shirt, grab another axe and start helping. With your help, the job will be done lickety split and he might reward you with an offer to join him in the hot tub to relax.

Our other card this issue is the God of Feathers, which can be found on page 14. Once we started having the 4F energy, this card has always been “The Eagle.” However, when the deck was going to feature both male and female figures, this God was going to be one of the cross-gendered cards where we had a female cast in the role of a god. She was going to be one of those hawkish faced, white haired Lesbians who always seems to be at the center of keeping groups organized, especially the baseball or volleyball team. She was our “coach.” As you know by now, that line of thought proved to be a bit type casting of the stereotype nature and we went a different direction. I am sure that if someone were to create an all female deck, this same image would still be appropriate but it would be balanced by a fuller range of female archetypes and wouldn't seem as much a statement that I felt all Lesbians were like that. I certainly don't. I just happen to have a couple of specific friends in mind who fit that particular image and it matched “Eagle” in my brain.

Zoom to the present and the card that we have. Part of the struggle with this card was that we knew he was a lifeguard. He sits up in his station watching for problems and then swoops down to rescue folks. That's fine. But the picture of someone either sitting or standing on their station is extremely passive and we needed a bit more energy on the card than that. Thus, he became our action hero and is now in the process of rescuing our King of Water. Remember him as he surfed while daydreaming about skiing? Remember him on the God of Water card as he wiped out? Apparently his day didn't get any better. But then, when he wakes up and sees those big brown eyes and furry face looking at him full of concern, he may have different thoughts about his luck for the day.

I don't think I need to say too much about how this card might be interpreted in a reading other than the basic reminder of taking some time to understand which character are you? The lifeguard? The victim? or one of the people holding the spotlight?

This card does represent something fairly new as it does have the beginning of Phase Two energy. You will find one of the runic “Easter Eggs” on this card. As these will be for you to discover as you work with the deck, I'm not going to call all of them out, but as this is one of the first, I will. The rune selected for this card is “teiwaz”. Among many meanings, it represents duty, discipline, the warrior's path, protection and healing a wound. Not a bad fit for a card about a lifeguard. Where is it? That is for you to discover.



Quest for the Crystal Phoenix

Chapter 36: Father Knows Best

by Orpheus

Apollo and Manin jumped out of bed and stared around the room to see if they could discover any sign of the moaning ghost. The prince started to stretch out his senses when a loud crash was heard outside and the room shook. As one, the two raced to the window and strained to discover the origin of the sound. Once again, Apollo started to stretch out his senses but stopped before his awareness went much further than their room. He left the window and grabbed their robes which had been discarded on a chair after their showers. The prince tossed one to Manin.

"Quick. Put this on," he ordered. Manin stood dumbfounded and the sudden shift in the prince's attention. "We are about to have company," he added as an explanation.

True to his words, a loud pounding began on the door. Apollo released his privacy spell and with the next pound on the door, Danna, one of Susan's guards, came tumbling into the room.

"Give a girl warning before you open the door, why don't you?" Her eyes got big when she realized that all of the room's occupants were nowhere near the door. "This place is haunted."

Apollo stepped over to help her to her feet. "Not in this case. Just well protected."

He had to explain his protection spell before she was satisfied that there was not a more immediate threat to his life than the one Queen Susan had sent her to warn him about.

"The Queen needs to see you. There is a giant on the rampage in the area."

The prince dismissed her to let the queen know that he would join her as soon as he dressed. With Danna's departure, Manin handed Apollo the clothes that he had leant him earlier in the evening. "I guess you'll be needing these again."

"Thanks." He gave Manin a hug before accepting the offered clothing. He felt Manin tremble in his arms. "Hey, what's wrong?"

"It's just that I remember all the tales of the Giant Wars and how many people were killed. I don't want to see that happen again."

"I won't let it happen if I can stop it. I'll use one of my portals to get people out of harm's way if I can. And if not, I'll open a portal in front of the giant and send him into the heart of Mount Phlash."

"You would really do that?" asked Manin.

"I don't know. It sounds good but then I remember what

happened after the people killed the first giant. His people claimed that it had been an accident when he fell on the family. He hadn't intended to kill anyone. He just wanted his things returned to him. After he was murdered, the giants started their campaign of revenge and the real killing spree began." Apollo finished lacing his boots. "Now, let's go see what my aunt knows."

"You want me to join you?"

"Of course. If something happens and I trip and fall, who's going to be there to stop me from cracking my head open? And then, who's going to save the people?" He ruffled Manin's hair and then gently smoothed it back in place. "That looks better."

They opened the door and found Patrick waiting to escort them to where Queen Susan and King Adam were waiting.

"There you are, son," said Adam as he stood at the prince's entrance. "As you have heard, there is a giant in the area and we want to get you to safety."

"But I can help," protested Apollo.

"I am sure you can," said Susan gently. "But the truth is that your father and I are expendable. We both have heirs. You are one of a kind."

"But you can afford to not have someone who can do this," with a thought Apollo caused the fire to flare up, "at your side?"

"I told you he wouldn't accept your decision without a fight," said Adam.

"You're his father. It is up to

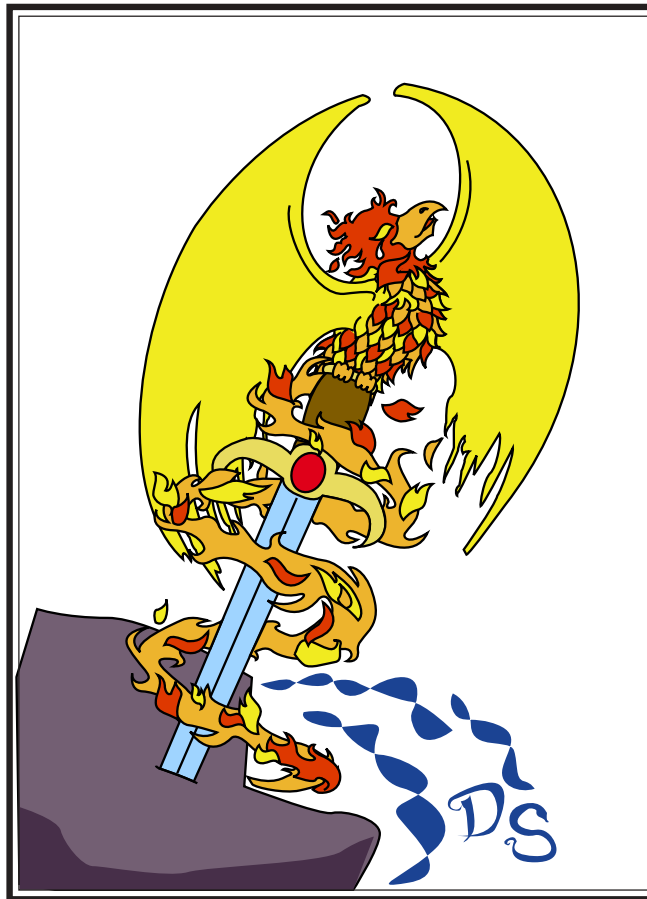
you, Adam," deferred Susan.

He looked at his son. He struggled with trying to forget the child he had last seen and only see the confident, defiant young man staring at him waiting for his decision.

"You are right. We need you even if we don't understand all that you seemed to have learned when we weren't watching."

Susan explained that the reports from the nearby villages were that the giant hadn't harmed anyone yet although he had caused a lot of damage to property. The reports said that it seemed like the giant was distracted by something, perhaps looking for something. At other times, it seemed like he was stumbling around drunk. The mayors knew that it would only be time before someone got hurt so they petitioned the queen for assistance.

They had just started to see if anyone had ideas on ways to subdue a giant when a loud voice boomed outside. **"Flee, fly and make me wince, I need the blood of a charming prince!"**



Susan's face drained of color. "That's why he hasn't killed anyone. He wants royal blood!"

"But that was settled long ago," said Adam. "What possibly could make a giant want to break the treaty after all these years?"

"There's only one way to find out," said Apollo as he headed out the door before anyone could stop him.

Everyone raced after him. Shanna was faster and got to the door before him and held it closed in front of him. "I may not be able to stop you from doing something stupid, but could you please give us guards the honor of doing it first? That's what we are trained to do."

"Trained to do stupid things?" asked Toby as he joined her. "I kept telling you our training was better in Adbalm and you just proved my case. But she's right, lad."

Shanna laughed as she realized what she had said. "Now, please, Your Majesty, wait here and let us go first to see what is waiting outside that door."

She opened the door and Danna and Patrick slipped out with her. Toby stood watch through the opening. The trio fanned out starting to look for signs of danger in the shadows of the manor's courtyard.

"What are you doing?" shouted Toby. "You are looking for a giant not a leprechaun. Look up!"

The trio gasped as they turned to face the direction Toby pointed. Everyone inside rushed passed Toby to do the same thing. A giant's head and shoulders loomed over the forest. The darkness of the night made it nearly impossible to see the giant's features.

Apollo started to gather the energy to make a fireball to light up the night sky when the giant screamed out in pain. Apollo dropped to his knees grasping his head in pain. "Johnny! He's done something to Johnny and I can feel his pain."

"Can you tell what?" said Adam with a voice filled with a mixture of concern and anger that someone would dare harm a faerie.

"No, but it's like..." Apollo started to run.

"Get back here," shouted Susan and Adam in unison.

"I can't. I have to go save Johnny."

He ran into the forest with everyone chasing after him. His heightened senses allowed him to avoid many of the branches that blocked his path. He could hear the others curse as they encountered the things he had avoided. He ran until he found a giant foot blocking his way. He could hear his father shouting at him to get away from the giant but Apollo wasn't listening. He grabbed the ankle in front of him and held it as he sent energy into the giant. In an instant he was rewarded as he found himself no longer holding an ankle, but rather he was hugging his Faerie Godfather, Johnny Jump-up. The loin cloth that Johnny had been wearing came floating down on top of them. Apollo pulled them away from being covered when the motion caused Apollo to lose his balance and the two tumbled to the ground.

"It's about time," huffed the faerie. "Where have you been? You were supposed to be back at the grove where I could find you."

"Well, where were you when a wolf pack attacked us this morning?" countered the prince as he stood and offered a hand to Johnny to help him get back on his feet.

Just as the two were standing, a dark grey and brown shape launched itself at Johnny, teeth bared and snarling. Johnny quickly shrunk to flying size just as the wolf tried to snap his leg in two.

Johnny shot back to full size with his wand at the ready. Sparks were starting to flare from the tip as he gathered magical energy to protect his friend.

Apollo jumped in front of the wolf as he prepared to leap. "Belkaro! Johnny! Stop!"

"But he attacked you," came Manin's translation on top of Johnny saying the same thing.

"He's wondering if he did something wrong?" translated Manin as Belkaro growled. "He felt your anger and saw you running this way and ran as quick as he could. He saw that person was attacking you and those others didn't stop him. He is asking whether this is some form of Leadership Challenge that he interrupted?"

"No. If it had been someone else, you would have done right to attack as you did," said Apollo directly to the wolf. "But Johnny is a friend and we were greeting each other. And Johnny, Belkaro is my responsibility."

"I thought you said the wolves attacked you," said a puzzled faerie.

"I did and he nearly had the best of me, but I won," said the prince. "But you two are my friends. Belkaro, please make note of Johnny's scent so that you will recognize him in the future."

The wolf started sniffing Johnny. His whiskers brushed the bare flesh of the faerie's buttocks and Johnny shot up into the air.

"Hey! No fair tickling!"

"He says he's sorry," offered Manin. "He also says that he should have recognized you as kin to Rowolfson and thus his kin as well."

"Who's Rowolfson?" asked Johnny.

"The God of the Wolves," responded Apollo as he yawned. "We can talk about this in morning. Right now I think it is time to head back to our interrupted sleep."

"Right now," said Queen Holly as she emerged from one of her portals, "Johnny has an overdue appointment with the Ege Ethics Council."

"I thought you said that was taken care of," protested Apollo.

"On paper, yes," responded the faerie queen, "But there is still the formality of EEK officially closing the investigation with the accused present. And then, we have to start finding out if Johnny can actually control the Great Magics or is that something he tapped into via your abilities, young man. And once you are rested, there are many who question your abilities even though I witnessed you creating a portal myself."

Apollo projected himself to the other side of the gathered group and made his real body invisible. "Does this help address the question?" said the projected prince. "Or this?" said the real prince as he returned to visibility and people were faced with two princes.

"Most definitely," said Holly. "You do know that you will have to do a demonstration for the faerie elders."

"I look forward to the opportunity," said Apollo concluding with another yawn. "But not tonight."

"Agreed," said Holly. "First things first." She picked up the fallen loin cloth and draped it over Johnny's shoulders and tapped it with her wand. It sparkled for a moment and changed into a formal robe. "That is more presentable for the council. I'm sure they are wondering why we haven't already appeared now that you have returned to normal size."

"Now?" gasped Johnny. "Surely it can wait until morning."

"It is morning already in Fransancisco," reminded the queen.

—continued on page 10

"Besides, you know the saying, 'The Efgee Ethics Kouncil never sleeps...'"

"...because an Efgee's ethnics shouldn't either."

"Let's go." She led Johnny into a portal.

Just as he was about to enter it, Johnny ran back and gave Apollo a hug. "I'll be fine," he said before Holly called him back. Apollo thought he heard him add "I hope" as the portal closed.

Queen Susan led the way back to the manor. Apollo heard Manin speaking to Belkaro in soft tones. From the little he heard, he figured that his friend was giving the wolf a bit of family history. His suspicion was confirmed when Manin asked him to confirm that Rowan was Amaranth's brother.

"You know," said Adam, "I still find it hard to belief that Iris's grandmother had once been the Faerie Queen. I only met her twice, once at your mother's and my wedding and again at your prancing celemony. What was she like?"

"Is that what you really want to know?" asked the prince as they emerged from the forest and saw the lights of the manor ahead.

"Not really, but it seemed like the shorter conversation. Part of me is wondering what it would be like to do some of the things that I've seen you do. I hear things in the wind but you seem to be able to control fire and far more impressive things."

"I suspect that you could do more than just listen to the wind," offered the prince. "I am sure you have the ability but it seems that our family has not passed on the knowledge over the generations and we have forgotten the gifts we have been given."

"Or attitudes such as my father had deliberately ignored the abilities because it was too much like an evil thing," said Adam.

"Evil? Never! Rare? Possibly. I suspect that if I taught you some of the things I learned from Queen Angelina about Air Magic, you could do some pretty amazing things yourself."

"The son teaching the father?" questioned Adam as he placed his hand on his son's shoulder. "You have grown up, haven't you? We'll talk about this when we meet in the morning." Adam hugged his son and headed down the hallway to his quarters.

As Manin and the prince entered their room, the first thing they noticed was that while they were gone, someone had finally come in and cleaned up the pieces of the broken daybed. In its place was the daybed that must have been in the king's quarters. The bright pink and magenta floral print stood out in a room filled with rust and brown.

"I can see why my father was so eager to offer to have it moved," said Apollo.

Manin looked at it a moment, "I can only guess that it was a gift of some type for one of the queens and she kept it around just in case that noble ever visited."

"If I received something like that, I don't know if I would have the designer executed or the noble who felt that I had to have it."

"Do you think I could still take you up on that offer to sleep in the bed?"

asked Manin. "I think my eyes would bleed if I actually tried to lay in it."

Apollo turned his back to Manin and set his protection spell. Part of him was disappointed when he saw the daybed and another part of him wasn't sure how he felt about Manin. "I think I agree. I would turn it invisible but I haven't learned how to keep things invisible when I sleep. What do we have to cover it?"

They looked through the prince's wardrobe and found a couple of cloaks to cover it.

"Much better," said Manin.

"I wonder what my aunt would say if another daybed got broken."

"Well, if she is anything like Ama, she would say," Manin started speaking in a frail elderly voice, "What? Two broken daybeds? What do you think I am? Your faerie godmother who can magically fix things for you? No more daybeds until you learn to appreciate them."

Apollo laughed. "I can picture her saying that. But right now, I think I can appreciate that bed more."

The two quickly stripped and stretched out on opposite sides of the bed. Manin started to get out of bed when he realized that they had forgotten to blow out the candles. Before he could slip out of the covers, Apollo reached out with a thought and doused them magically.

"Show off."

"Maybe a little," admitted Apollo. "But it beats getting out of a warm bed on winter nights. Good night."

Apollo rolled on his side and faced away from Manin. His mind was racing with all the events that had transpired that day, but his mind settled on the one constant that wove through everything – Manin. He hoped that Manin didn't think it too weird when they jerked off earlier that evening. "I needed that relief," he thought. "And it seemed like he enjoyed it. But I hope he didn't think I was using him." Whatever his mind decided was lost to him as he drifted to sleep.

The first shaft of the morning light woke Apollo. During the



night, he and Manin had rolled toward the center of the bed and the prince found his arm wrapped about Manin. When he started to pull away, Manin held his arm in place.

"Don't move," whispered Manin. "Just let me hold on to the dream for a few more minutes."

"What dream?" asked Apollo.

"You would think it foolish."

Apollo snuggled into his friend and found his cock hardening as it pressed against Manin's buttocks. When he started to shift, Manin shifted in such a way that the prince's cock rested firmly in the crack and pressed in. Apollo found he liked the feel of his cock against his friend's flesh and held him tighter.

"You'll never know what I think if you don't tell me," he said.

"It feels so good in your arms; so safe. It feels like we've done this before but it is almost like a dream come true and I don't want the dream to end."

"Dreams are good," said Apollo. "But how does my holding you fit into your dream?"

"In my dream, you are holding me because you want to and that the connection I felt last night was mutual and not just because you were horny and I was available." Manin rolled so that he could look Apollo in the eyes. "Pretty foolish, huh?"

Apollo listened to a voice in his heart and answered the only way possible. He kissed Manin. "I don't know about dreams but I do agree that holding you feels good. I feel like something that has been missing has been returned to me." He caressed Manin's face. "And if I'm honest with myself, I was disappointed when I saw the second daybed and was afraid that you were going to fall back on that 'I'm not worthy' routine and actually sleep on that monstrosity."

"And I was afraid that you were going to make me."

"It sounds like you two need to start being honest with each other," came a voice at the end of the bed.

Manin and Apollo quickly sat up and discovered King Adam standing at the foot of the bed.

"Father!" gasped the prince. "How long have you been standing there?"

"Long enough to know that you two are going to have some rough days ahead if you continue the path you are on."

"I have a feeling that I should leave," said Manin.

"No," said Adam. "This involves you too. I could see how you looked at my son while you were caring for him. I just didn't know how he would react to you when he was awake." Looking at his son in the eyes he continued, "I will support you as long as I can, but I will remind you of the one thing I couldn't escape when I first met Rondar and that is you will be king one day. With that comes a duty to your country and you will have to produce an heir. You can enjoy your dalliances and trysts while you are young but you will ultimately have to face that responsibility."

"I know," said the prince. "That is why I said that I didn't know about dreams. As good as it feels to be with Manin, I don't know if I dare dream of actually finding someone as perfect for me as Rondar is for you."

"You can dare to dream," said the king, "as long as you remember to keep one foot firmly on the ground while you reach for it." Adam sat on the edge of the bed. "I forgot that lesson and hurt people when I fell. I know you will have to discover things on your own, but at least listen to someone who has gone through it."

"I don't know what that dream is yet," admitted Apollo. He looked at Manin as he picked his next words. "I don't. But I do know that at the moment it feels right to include you somehow in them. What that means, is anyone's guess."

"I can live with that," said Manin.

"I don't need any special gift to hear the sound of a heart breaking," said Adam.

"Not broken, sir," offered Manin. "Just one that has learned that his dreams usually don't matter outside of his head."

"Dreams always matter, my boy." Adam stood up. "I think that is enough heavy talk for the moment. You two have much to talk about based on what I've seen and heard but that is for later. Right now, it is time to have the physicians we called check you out to be sure that there are no lasting effects to having gone through that faerie circle other than the obvious one that is."

"I keep telling you, I'm fine."

"You may know that and I might even believe you," said the king. "But the fact of the matter is we did call the physicians here and now we need to let them see you otherwise..."

"Otherwise they will spread rumors of my pending death." Apollo sighed.

"Exactly."

Apollo stopped his father before he opened the door to leave. "Just how did you get in here? I set the protection spell to prevent any one, including friends, from entering without my permission."

"You may have some impressive magics that I don't even begin to understand but I have some magic that trumps yours," he said. "I'm the king and I'm your father. Do you think you can really hide something from me?"

"No," said the prince. "And I don't want to, either."

"Which is probably another reason why your spell let me enter. Now get dressed and meet me downstairs."

Apollo spent most of the morning wondering why his father made him go downstairs as he spent most of time in his room with the physicians. Not knowing what was wrong with him, all three monarchs had called on the services of the different experts in their countries. After the fifth or sixth session of prodding, Apollo found himself starting to draw on healing energy to prevent the bruising that was starting to develop from everyone poking his with their "Does it hurt when I do this?" One physician was a bit over aggressive in his examination that the prince felt himself wanting to throw a fire ball him and ask the same question. Instead, he sent a thread of energy to Belkaro and called to the wolf to join him. In a few minutes, the screams in the hall could be heard and hastily opened door had Channa escorting Belkaro into the room.

"Forgive the interruption, Your Majesty," apologized the guard, "but it seemed best to not make your companion wait in the hallways."

"You did right, Channa," said Apollo. "Was there anything else you needed Lord Protor?"

The physician hastily gathered his instruments, never taking his eyes off of the wolf. "No. I think I can report to the queen that you are in perfect health."

"Channa, would you please find Manin and ask him to join us out in the courtyard?"

Apollo led Belkaro back through the manor. Manin joined them just as they reached the main entrance.

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"Thank you both for coming," he said as they stepped into the sunshine. "I needed a break from those well-intended physicians and thought this might be a good opportunity for us to talk. Manin, since I'm going to be tied up for the rest of the day, could you please spend some time with Belkaro and learn more about his past? In return, you can help him understand how Johnny and Rowolfsun are related."

"I'm not sure I understand it myself," said Manin.

"The short version is that Rowolfsun is Amaranth's brother. He gave up his faerie powers when he rescued Princess Daisy from Belladonna. He took up wolf powers when took up regency of the leadership of the Wolf Council in my place."

Belkaro growled. "He says that he knows some of those tales but never realized they were true. He says that he will tell them to me."

"I look forward to hearing them from the wolf's perspective," said Apollo. "Now go have some fun even if I can't."



Apollo went back inside and asked the doorman where he should go to find some food. He realized that some of his irritability came from the fact that he only had time for a muffin before the first examination. He was directed toward the kitchen. Upon entering, he was greeted by an older faerie with a round face with an equally round body. His eyes were sparkled and a big smile was framed by a trimmed goatee.

"Theadorable Faerie at your service," he said with enthusiasm. "If you call me Adorable, I'll call you Sweetheart." He batted his eyes for a moment and his voice dropped a couple of tones, "Or most of my friends call me Teddy. Welcome to my kitchen. Whom do I have the pleasure of serving today? How may I be of service?"

Apollo introduced himself and Teddy started running around, flapping his hands as if they were extensions of his wings. "Oh God! A prince in my kitchen?! No one told me! The Royals never come into the kitchen unannounced. The place is a mess! Oh god! My apron has a stain. Please don't think my sloppy attire is any reflection on the food that I prepare. Oh god! The Queen is going to have me fried for not maintaining the Fransancisco standards of having an impeccable kitchen when royalty is on tour."

"I'll put in a good word with my aunt so that she only sautés you instead of frying," offered Apollo.

"The Queen is your aunt?!" he screamed. "I'm doomed."

"Please settle down, you are worse than Viola. At least she can act. If it makes you feel better, you can forget that I'm the prince and focus on the fact that I'm just a hungry young man who is starving."

Teddy placed his hand on the prince's cheek. "You may be a young man but it is I who is starving and only someone like you can ease my hunger." But before the prince could say anything. "You know Viola? The last I heard she had her claws out trying to catch some charming fellow living with his granny back in Resquad. I heard that you were traveling from that direction, what's the scoop?"

"Well, to start my grandmother hates to be called granny."

"Oops. I think I'm going to have a Foot-in-Mouth sandwich. Whatca want to eat?"

They chatted while Teddy prepared a sandwich that seemed to have something from every cupboard in the kitchen in it. The prince learned that Holly had offered Teddy's services to assist Susan with all the extra meals that were needed to feed the physicians. He said that he knew the real reason was that the last time she stayed at one of the country manors the food was so bad that she turned the cook into a pig since that was the only thing fit to eat the food he prepared. When he was working at full speed zooming around the kitchen, by the time your eye realized that he was at the stove he was already at the oven and it would look like he was in two places at once.

"Much like when Johnny plays faerieball."

"That sluggard? How is Johnny? I would have thought he would be hanging out here with you, with him being assigned to you and all that."

"He's back in Fransancisco facing the Efgee Ethics Kouncil."

"EEK!" shrieked Teddy. "Sorry, I couldn't resist. Don't worry, kid. I know Johnny and he might bend the rules a bit and skate around the edges, but he's always ethical about it. He'll be fine."

Apollo finished his lunch and thanked Teddy for both the food and the conversation. With a full stomach, he was ready to face the second round of examinations. Before he headed to his room he

sent a thread of energy to see how Manin was doing. He felt the energy of both Belkaro and a female wolf, probably Iris Angelica he thought, having some fun. He wished he could join them, but duty called.

He turned his thoughts to Johnny. His energy felt worried so the prince sent him a burst of energy but he felt it being blocked. He sent a stronger pulse of energy and this time he knew it was blocked. It felt like someone took a giant pair of scissors and cut the thread. Apollo grounded his energy and put his full thought behind sending his energy and found himself projecting himself to Johnny's side. He was standing in a spotlight in the center of an otherwise dark room. His eyes were downcast. Holly was sitting in a chair to one side. As the prince's eyes adjusted to the darkness, he saw a ring of elderly faeries sitting in a ring around them on a raised platform which allowed them to look down upon those in the center.

"How dare you interrupt a meeting of the Efgee Ethics Kouncil!" boomed one of elders.

"How dare you block my connection with one of my friends!" countered the prince. He could see the signs of unlit torches on the wall so he directed fire energy into them and they flared into life. "Let's have some light so I can see whom I'm talking to."

The elders covered their eyes against the sudden brilliance of the torches.

"Thank you, Prince Apollo," said Holly as she stood up. "I always thought these chambers were too dark."

"You know the reason, Your Majesty," said one of the female elders. "It is to put the spotlight on the accused."

"But not the truth?" asked Holly. She walked over to Apollo and put her hand on his shoulder. At least that was what she wanted but her hand went right through the projected image.

"A projection?!" gasped several of the council members.

"Now, you see why I've been saying that this case is special," said the queen. "He can tap the Great Magics. As such, he is my responsibility to train and oversee. It is my responsibility to select the proper trainer and I have no reason to fault the training he has received. I continue to believe that Johnny Jump-up is the most suited as both Faerie Godfather and teacher of magical arts to the future ruler of the combined kingdoms."

"But as a Efgee, that imp is responsible for shaping a child's dreams," came a voice from behind Holly.

"What say you, Apollo?" asked Holly.

"I am responsible for my own dreams, just as I am responsible for my own actions and decisions. I stand by my friends."

"I think you made that clear, my friend," said one of the faeries who left his chair and joined them in the center. No one spoke while he slowly made his way across the circle. At Holly's subtle nudge, Johnny left his spot to assist him "Remember me? You look the same as the last time I saw you but I fear that I've changed a bit since then."

Apollo stared at the older face and tried to find something familiar. His amber eyes reminded him of one of his tumbling companions. "FallGuy?"

"I'm more like a Winter now, but that confirms it. I haven't used that name in years. My friends, I will attest to this young man's abilities. He often spoke of his friend and mentor Johnny but I never connected that to the imp before us."

"Thank you for joining us, Apollo, but it is time for you to get back to your body. You are starting to fade. I think it will be safe to

say that your EfGee will be returned to you by nightfall."

A chorus of affirming sounds filled the air as the prince returned to his body. When he opened his eyes, he found himself surrounded by a sea of faces.

"Get back. He's awake," said the face nearest to him.

"What happened son?" asked Adam. "Teddy said you just ate and then suddenly collapsed."

Apollo could see Teddy being restrained by a couple of guards. His eyes were begging him to tell them it wasn't something he ate.

"I'm sorry to cause you concern," said the prince, "but I had to go help a friend. I forgot that when I project that I can only control my body if my projection can see it."

"Projection? What do you mean?" asked Susan making her way to the front of the assembled.

Apollo felt drained so he quickly gathered some energy before demonstrating. He projected to the back of the crowd and spoke, "It means I can do this."

Everyone turned to face the new voice and the projected prince waved. People parted as the duplicate prince came forward. With some help from Adam, the real prince stood up and both princes stood side by side for a moment before Apollo stopped projecting.

"I knew it," exclaimed Lord Protor. "I could tell when I examined you that you were cursed. That's what you get for hanging around those evil faeries!" A chorus of "I thought so too" and affirmations punctuated the statement.

"They are not evil!" shouted Apollo over the din. "I have some special gifts because I am the child of all four royal blood lines, the three kingdoms as well as the faerie. I am the combination of all of the gifts that my elders have to offer."

"But it's not normal," came a voice from the back of the crowd.

"Do you want the king of the combined kingdoms to be normal?" Apollo started to look at each of them in the eyes as he walked among them. "Ordinary? Or even common?" He looked at each of them a second time before he continued. "Or would you like to have people five hundred years from now look back on these times as being the time when legends were made?"

He started to leave. "Thank you, good physicians but I don't think there is any further need for individual examinations. I am in perfect health."

"But what about that month long coma?"

"If you were trapped in an avalanche and had the ability to project to a sunny beach, would you have any reason to want to hurry back to your body?" He left the room before the person answered.

Adam and Susan followed their heir, "Neatly done, child," said Susan, "but lying isn't the way to win an argument."

"But I didn't lie. I simply asked a question."

"He's right, Susan." Adam held up his ring with its white stone. "It never changed. Now what, son?"

"I'm feeling pretty stiff and need a good workout. Where's Rondar?"

"That's not what I meant," said Adam who was trying to look down at his son even though they were nearly the same height.

"I know, but I don't want to think right now. I just need to do something for a little while to work out the kinks that grew from being in bed for nearly a month. After that, we can talk about tomorrow."

"He's growing up, Adam," said Susan.

"I know," responded the king. "It doesn't mean I have to like it."

"But I will always need you father," said Apollo. "I just need a little while to adjust. As much as you weren't ready for me to be older, I never expected to be older. They always told me that I would be returned to that moment in time as if nothing ever happened. More than anything, every time they tried to make me accept my fate and to stay with them, my answer was always that I had to get back to you."

He hugged his father.

"I love you, son."

"And I love you, father."

"You two need to get a room," said Johnny as he popped into the kitchen. "Hey, I'm going to like this portal thing. It certainly beats a week of flying."

"Get in this hug," commanded Apollo.

"With or without the clothes?"

Susan humphed. "With if you don't mind."

With his father and faerie friend in his embrace, Apollo finally felt like he was home again.

The Procters Remembered by Phoenix

It started off as a simple trip to honor the dead at a local cemetery. While walking among the carved tombstones it is easy to wonder about the lives of the people lying under them. In this particular cemetery, there are many names that are talked about in Colorado history classes. And there are "ordinary people" resting right next to them. That fall afternoon, the glance at the dates on a tombstone led us on the path to unraveling a mystery.

It started when Fálki, Eisbaer and I stopped at a family plot and decided to figure out the family relationship. We found father Alfred resting in the middle of the group. His sister and her husband were to one side while his two wives were to the other. Alfred's mother and brother were in the second row along with three children by Wife #1. DragonSwan asked the question about how old the children were. The youngest had just turned two while the oldest was eight. We thought about the heartbreak of the mother to lose three children so young. That's when we noticed that the trio died on the same day. A look back at mother's grave led us to discover that she too died on that day – July 24, 1896. What could have happened to that family in 1896 that would kill mother and three children in one stroke? A house fire perhaps? We felt that something like that would surely have been news back in that era in the fairly small town that Denver was in that time.

A search on the internet on their names mostly found listings of books in the library that contained the index to where we would find their obituaries. That's nice, but the library is closed at that hour. A search on the date proved to be more fruitful. On July 24, 1896, Bear Creek in the nearby mountain town of Morrison flooded. Could this be related?

Digging deeper, Eisbaer found detailed articles about the flood which included a listing of the names of the twenty-nine victims. Among those names were Mrs. A. S. Procter and her children, Grace, Robert and Edith. The family was one of many who were enjoying a summer camping trip in the foothills over Denver when the storm hit. By one account, nearly .7 inches of rain fell in just ten minutes. Several families sought shelter in a nearby cabin.

By the time the water came cascading down the canyon, it had grown to a ten foot wall which dislodged boulders and smashed buildings, including the Wolff cottage where the Procters were huddled. The cabin was dislodged from its foundation and tossed into the river. Can you imagine Mrs. A. S. Procter's horror as daughter Irene is hurled out of the cabin, away from where Mother could help her? Daughter Irene survived the storm. Mother did not.

It is interesting to note that in the stories from that time, they never mention Mrs. A. S. Procter by her name, which is probably one reason my searches did not find much. In fact, most of the mothers who died that day are only identified as wives of someone. The children who died are remembered by their full names without linkage to father. Having connected with the family, I am honored to be able to share what the newspaper didn't – her name was Isabella.

After learning the family story, I felt called to place flowers on their graves. I had a dozen roses, one for each grave with an extra rose for mother and father. As the last rose was placed, a gentle rain began to fall as if to say that someone is still sorry for what happened on July 24, 1896.



Story Game

Chapter 7: by DragonSwan

BAM BAM BAM

“Who the fuck could that be,” Brian thought. He wanted to scream, “JUST GO AWAY!”

“It is probable my lover,” Apollo said as he waked naked and still hard to the door.

Brian’s head was spinning, tonight was becoming way too much for him. What gay melodrama was he in for as lover finds partner naked with another guy ready to blow.

“Brian this is my lover, Hermes,” Apollo was saying as he ushered his lover into the kitchen. Brian opened his eyes and first focused on Apollo’s face. His wide grin and sparkling eye, made Brian a little jealous of the man who brought so much joy to Apollo. Why couldn’t it be him? When he turned to look at Hermes, his mind went blank. Before him stood the hot pagan man he had lusted after every time he went to the pagan store, Midnight Magik. He never knew his pagan fantasy man’s name but he had every other detail permanently etched in this mind. Standing before him was the long red hair and wild go-tee; the impish smile that always made him wonder what was going on behind the deep green eyes that always smiled; the tall beefy frame that filled every shirt perfectly; the hairy arms that had tribal tats on the left arm, and ivy that wrapped around a Caduceus on the right; the slight sent of Patchouli mixed with man sweat that always make Brian’s dick stir; not to mention the thick legs, the perfect ass, and that always visible bulge in the front of his jeans. It was that ever noticeable bulge that Brian realized he was staring at when Hermes broke the silence.

“I always thought that he would be the first to get you naked.” He said with an impish smile that melted Brian. “Well I will leave you two alone. I just came over to tell you I just got off the phone with the apartment manager, and he said he is having someone come out today to fix the heating. I’ll let you to get back to what you were doing.” He gave Brian a wink and kissed Apollo.

“You could join us if you want,” Brian final found the courage to say.

“Do you want a third?” Hermes asked Brian.

“Oh god YES!” Brian started, “I mean, umm I would like you to stay.” He felt his face burn.

“You are so cute when you blush,” Hermes said as he took Brian’s face in both hands and kissed him. Brian could smell the Patchouli and sweat. The kiss tasted of wine as Hermes’ tongue pressed into his mouth.

Brian let his senses take over as he got lost in the kiss. The air around him seemed to get warmer and heavier, almost like it was water. He could feel water around his legs and waist. Red wine filled his mouth and ran down his chin and chest. He opened his eyes and found himself in a place that felt like he had been there before. He was naked, waist deep in a lake with a tall waterfall on one side and a lush forest on the other side. Three naked faeries were attending to him. One held a golden chalice of wine that never seem to empty. Another one held a golden container of sweet smelling incense that he was using to cleanse Brian with. The last one had a silken cloth that he would dip into the lake and then wash Brian’s chest and back.

“Oh most honored one,” the faerie with the cloth said, “we are

all so very honored to be of service to you today as you prepare for you initiation. I pray that once you have been chosen, and it is your turn to honor someone, you will remember us who have taken care of you today.”

Before Brian could respond the faerie with the wine replied, “You should hope that he does not remember you, and the lack of attention you have paid to your duties. There is still sand on his honored one’s left horn.” The faerie with the cloth was shocked and began begging for forgiveness. He quickly dipped the cloth in the lake and flew up to Brian’s head. He felt the warm wet cloth as it moved about his forehead and hair.

“His horn?” Brian asked himself. He reached up with his right hand and felt his forehead, until his hand found a long twisted horn sticking out of his head. He could not believe what he was feeling. He took a deep breath and felt his legs under the water. His fingers where running over thick wet fur.

“Have we offended you, your most honored one?” The faerie with the cloth asked seeing the puzzled look on Brian’s face.

“No, not at all,” Brian tried to comfort the faeries who were looking like they were being scolded. “It is just that I am a little...well, I guess I am a lot...I don’t...It is just that I am...”

“A bit overwhelmed,” said a deep sexy voice. They all turned to see who had spoken. The three faeries quickly bowed. Two great horned Gods stood on the edge of the lake. Both were tall, gorgeous well built men, with the long twisted horns of a goat. They were both naked with a forest of fur covering their broad chest, a trail of hair leading down to their enormous uncut cocks and hairy balls that swung between their thick goat legs. One of them had long thick black hair and a full beard that did not hide his handsome face. His dark eyes sparked in the sun. The other one had a mane of red hair and long go-tee and eyes at green and the forest.

“Greetings, oh great God Apollo, and God Hermes,” the faeries said in unison.

Brian bowed, “Good day my Gods.”

Hermes brushed his long red hair back over his right shoulder before asking, “Now are we to come and pull you from the lake or will you come to us?”

“I shall come to thee,” Brian said as he began to walk towards them. He took a few steps and paused and turned to the faerie attendance. “I shall never forget the great service and care you three have shown me today.”

“Thank you, your most honored one,” they all said. The smile on their face beamed, and Brian thought that he noticed a tear of gratitude in their eyes. He tuned back to the Gods and walked out of the lake. As soon as both hooves were on solid ground a young naked faun came running over with a soft towel to dry him off with. Once the faun had finished drying Brian off he picked up a blue clay pitcher.

“I believe that is my job,” Apollo said stepping forward. The faun handed Apollo the pitcher and left back into the forest. God Apollo poured the thick liquid into his hand and then rubbed it over Brian’s chest. The liquid was warm oil that was intoxicating; it seemed to relax Brian while also awaking all of his senses. God

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Hermes came up behind Brian and began kissing his neck and massaging his shoulders before hugging him from behind. Brian could feel Hermes massive member rubbing against his ass cheeks. Apollo filled his hands with oil and reached around between Brian and Hermes to oil up Brian's ass. Brian's dick sprang to full erection when it rubbed up against Apollo's cock. "Are you ready to service us, and by serving and honoring us become one with us?"

"Yes my Lords," Brian said and was soon being forced to kneel. The two Gods moved so that they stood over Brian with both their cocks in his face. Apollo pulled on Brian's new horns forcing his head to turn and rub up against Apollo's thick man meat. The musky smell of Apollo's crotch sent Brian over the edge and any fear or self doubt he had about servicing two huge Gods disappeared. He took Apollo's limp dick into this mouth and began licking and sucking. Feeling the cock getting hard and starting to grow with the moans of Apollo let Brian know he was doing a good job. Brian went back and forth between Apollo and Hermes, sucking and licking both cocks and balls until they were both rock hard.

Hermes knelt down behind Brian and grabbed the oil. Brian felt the oil being poured on his back. The oil ran down his back to his butt crack. Hermes used his hands to add more oil to Brian's ass. Soon, well oiled fingers found Brian's tight hole. "I need you to relax for my baby." Hermes whispered in Brian's ear. While Hermes played with Brian's ass, Apollo worked his throat. Hermes replaced his fingers with the head of huge cock and pressed it into Brian's hungry hole. Once the tip of his cock was in, Hermes grabbed Brian's legs and spread them as he pulled them back, causing his dick to slide deeper into Brian. The deeper Hermes went into Brian's ass

the deeper Apollo went down Brian's throat. Once Hermes was all the way in, Brian realized that he was sitting on top of the God's cock. Brian surrendered as one god fucked his ass and the other fucked his face. Brian ran his hands up the legs of Apollo and began to play with the God's ass, rubbing a finger around the tight rosebud.

Apollo let out a loud cry as he pulled his cock from Brian's mouth. Apollo ran his hand over his swollen meat sending large waves of white honey. The God's nectar covered Brian's face, but he was able to get a fair amount into his mouth. Hermes gave a soft laugh, "My brother always comes first."

Apollo knelt down in front of Brian and licked off the cum from Brian's face and neck, feeding it to Brian in several kisses. Apollo whispered in Brian's ear, "I may cum first but I am quick to come back. Are you ready for the real test?" Apollo grabbed the pitcher of oil and poured it over his rock hard cock. He rubbed the oiled cock head over Hermes' dick and Brian's hole. "Are you ready to really service us both?"

Brian looked into Apollo's deep dark eyes and whispered "YES." Brian soon felt the cock head of Apollo joining Hermes' cock inside his ass. A quick gasp escaped his throat.

"Just relax my love," both Gods instructed. Brian let the taste of Apollo's man juice, the musky, sweaty smell of man sex take him away, as he opened his ass and let both Gods in. Once both Gods were deep inside of him, Brian started working his hips to match the thrust of the Gods. Soon he was not sure who was setting the tempo, him or the Gods. Time seemed to stand still and go fast forward as both God's cock worked in and out of Brian's ass. The one blessed moment of eternity was over too soon. Brian felt both God's dicks start quivering, as they began moaning their pending orgasms. Both cocks exploded deep inside Brian, filling him with the God's nectar.

Brian tried to catch his breath as both God began kissing his neck, back shoulders, face and lips, keeping their still hard cocks inside of him. Both Gods whispered in each ear, "Friend, Lover, Brother, all three are one. Now and forever, all three are one."

Brian closed his eyes to fight back tears of joy. "All three are one," he echoed.

"All three are one what?" Apollo asked hugging Brian from behind, his hard cock rubbing between Brian's butt cheeks.

Brian opened his eyes and was not surprised to find himself back in his kitchen. This time a naked Apollo held him from behind while a naked Hermes held and kissed him from the front, their hard dicks rubbing together. "Are you OK?" Hermes asked noticing the small tear in the corner of Brian's eye.

Brian was about to say that they would never understand, but he felt such a strong connection in the few moments he shared with these two hot strangers, that he offered to try and explain everything to them. He wanted to tell them how his lover, who never really let him be who he truly was, dumped him for a barely legal boy toy; how he had received a mysterious gift; his unbelievable luck at having two hot men in his apartment, and specially about the odd, fun sexual dreams, memories he had been having. He pulled out of the tight embrace to look both of them in the face. "Ok this is gonna sound like I am crazy, but..."

He had to stop because just then....

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



The Cubby Diaries: The Hospice - Part 2

by Cubby

I had to discontinue my volunteer work at the rehabilitation hospital. I didn't really want to but I found something and someone who needed my help more than they did. The hospital has a steady supply of former patients who somehow always like to show their appreciation for their recovery by coming back and helping others achieve the same results. Sanctuary Life Care Center wasn't so lucky. For some reason, the patients at the hospice don't come back to help... well, at least not in a way that we mere mortals can tell.

Twinkle got to spend nearly three weeks talking to his mother before her cancer spread to her brain and she passed away. During that time, he spent every hour he could trying to catch up on the lost years. She insisted that he finish his classes, so I played taxi driver while his lover was at work and ferried him between home and hospice and campus. When he was in class, I went over and kept her company until it was time to fetch Twinkle and bring him for his afternoon visit. If he was with his mother, I spent time with Mr. Shadow as I called him. The name at the nurses' station board was simply "T. Bahr" and try as I might, I couldn't get him to talk about himself. The difference between the two rooms was like life and death, only the person on the hospice side of the care center seemed more alive than the person on the nursing home side.

Anna Marie fell in love with Steve the moment Twinkle brought his lover to meet her. The following day, when Twinkle was in class and I was alone with her, she admitted her regrets in having pushed her son away. She realized that her fear for the "what if's" that lurk in the shadows for gay men blinded her to the possibility of how much love could be waiting to illuminate the world. Now that Twinkle and she had reconciled, she did everything she could to help her son fill in the gaps of knowledge of his gay heritage.

Anger filled the room as she told about the lack of investigation into Twinkle's father's death. There were no witnesses so the local sheriff put next to no energy into solving the case. Anna Marie only found out about the gay aspect when she did a pilgrimage to the location and found out the truth about the patrons of the Bent Nail. If any of them knew something, they were too afraid of bringing too much attention on themselves for fear of retaliation. She never found any signs in her husband's things that gave a clue to his secret lifestyle. A search by Twinkle on the internet found a story that said that the bar had been burned down by 'parties unknown'. Eleven people died that night and again, there were no witnesses. The sheriff's investigation blamed the fire on a smoldering cigarette and some spilled alcohol. For some reason the fact that the doors were chained closed when the fire department arrived didn't seem to be important enough to alter his opinion.

When it came to talking about her father, she didn't have much to offer. He was "Father" and that was all she really knew. He worked long hours or far away so that he often got home after she had gone to bed. She told us where to find boxes at her house that had been moved many times without being opened that contained old family scrapbooks from a time she had tried to forget but couldn't let go. Steve fetched the first box and we spent hours looking at the books with pictures from her childhood. Anna Marie told her son the few stories she remembered from her mother about the man in the photos. Armed with knowledge, Twinkle began a search for everything that wasn't in those books.

As hard as Anna Marie was trying to make up for the mistakes of the past, Mr. Shadow spent an equal, yet opposite, amount of energy hiding from his. The secret about his name was but the beginning. He wouldn't say anything about his life before arriving at Sanctuary. His curtains were kept closed so he wouldn't have to acknowledge that there was a world outside.

Now, I can almost agree with some of his feelings about not wanting to look outside. The grounds were anything but pleasing to the senses. I learned from the staff that the Board of Directors had made a hard decision several years ago. They could meet their budget by cutting staff or by putting off maintenance as long as they could. Contrary to most places, they chose the people providing the care over the aesthetics of where they worked. All it took was Jim bringing Twinkle over to visit his mother when I had a dentist appointment to change things around and our family had a new "cause" to work on. Jim worked with the board and came up with a plan to renovate each room as they became available. The one exception to that was Anna Marie's room. We didn't want the last thing she saw be shabby curtains and faded paint so we started with her room. We discussed redecorating a room and moving her to it but her room had more light than the one that was available. We arranged to have her moved to that room for a day and got out the full force of magic that can only be found in faerie power. Within a matter of minutes, the room was stripped bare and the transformation began. Aeris got busy trimming the bushes outside her window and by the time Anna Marie was returned to her room, it was a sun filled cheerful place. The smile on her face grew and tears filled her eyes. We all felt a shift in the energy in the room. It was as if the room itself knew that someone now cared about it so it, in turn, could offer more comfort to those within its walls. It gave me an idea on what I needed to do for Mr. Shadow.

The following day, I directed Aeris to make the trimming of the bushes outside of Mr. Shadow's room the next phase of grounds maintenance. They had the same western exposure as Anna Marie's room but the bushes on his side of the center were so overgrown that a passerby would never know there were windows hidden behind them. I timed things with Aeris and headed into Mr. Shadow's room for story hour. Aeris waited fifteen minutes and started up his saw just as we got to the quiet spot where Lamont was about to interrogate his first witness. The din from the saw was so loud that we couldn't hear anything. Mr. Shadow was upset and wondered what all that racket was about. "What the hell are they doing out there?" he asked. That was just what I was hoping for. "Let me look," I offered as I rushed to the window to open the curtains before he could stop me. With the curtains opened, we were rewarded with seeing Aeris's furry belly as he used his shirt tail to wipe sweat from his eyes. I certainly had expected Aeris but the furry part was an added bonus which was a result of the heat reflecting off the sun baked walls. I heard Mr. Shadow gasp so I started to close the curtains when he stopped me. In more than one way he stopped me when he said "Don't do that. If I had known the view outside the window looked like that, I would have let you open the curtains a long time ago."

"Yes, the mountains are gorgeous aren't they?"

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“Mountains? I can’t see that far. I’m too busy looking at that lovely piece of man flesh.”

I waved at Aeris and he waved back. “He wants you, you know,” said Mr. Shadow. “I may not be young anymore but I can still pick out a Friend of Dorothy when they are on the hunt.” I knew that I now had an opening to his past that had not been there before but didn’t want to push. He needed to open it wider himself. “No, I think he wants you,” I said. “No, it’s you,” he insisted. “His eyes have never stopped watching you even though he’s trimming that bush.”

I asked him what he thought my husband would think of me flirting with that young man. He retreated back into his silence for a moment. He had met Peter when he joined me for a visit. Mr. Shadow asked me about him the following day and I confessed our relationship. He just nodded that day but didn’t say anything else so I didn’t know what he would think. This time, when he finally answered my question, it was in a quiet voice. He said that it was so different now that he didn’t know how to answer. He could only dream of a time when he would actually feel comfortable with flirting with a stranger. He had worked with Matt for several years before the boss’s kid opened his eyes to the fact that Matt had been trying to get him alone for a long time. “He wants you” was all that the kid said before he scampered off. That weekend, Mr. Shadow’s wife went to visit her mother and took their daughter with her so he agreed to join Matt for a drink after work. One drink led to another which led to the weekly night out with the “boys” when in truth he drove to Matt’s apartment and slipped in the back door of the building so no one would suspect. He said they made love in the dark with curtains closed so no shadows would betray their secret.

“Is that why you kept the curtains closed?” I asked. I told him that he didn’t need to hide his secret around me. He said that he realized that but it had taken him a while to work up the courage to say something. The half naked young man outside had caught him unaware and for a brief moment he had felt young again and cast all care to the wind. I honestly hadn’t expected that. I had just wanted to get some light into the room. Mr. Shadow got up from his chair, the first time I had ever seen him do that, and stood at the window watching Aeris wrapping up his cords. I decided that even with his days of hiding secrets, Mr. Shadow must have been a bit of a matchmaker in his day. He warned me that I needed to do something before that prime specimen got away. Partially to humor him and partially because the sight of a sweaty Aeris always gets me horny, I grabbed my crotch. Aeris matched the gesture before he disappeared from sight. Mr. Shadow started to push me toward the door. I asked if he was trying to get rid of me and he said he was trying to get me moving so I didn’t miss the chance to catch that young man. I barely took a step when the door opened and it was Twinkle, who was ready to head back to campus for a final. I went to introduce the two of them and Mr. Shadow finally filled in the missing name, Ted.

A couple of days later, Anna Marie finally remembered what her father did for a living. She had thought that he worked in construction but that was about it. We came into her room that day to find her holding one of the photos that had haunted me. Something seemed familiar and I couldn’t figure it out. As we walked in, she called out “Mason!” It was the first time that I had heard her use the name Twinkle picked for himself after he left home. “What is it” he asked. “Oh, hello, Marvin. I didn’t see you come in.” Well,



so much for that. She had finally remembered that her father was a mason. The photo was from some award that he had gotten at work. All of the suits worn for the banquet were making us think he was one of the architects rather than one of the workers. I’m not sure if Twinkle really heard anything else his mother said about that award. He was in shock that the name he picked for himself was his grandfather’s profession. I left them for my visit with Ted.

I was proud of him. Each day since he came out to me, I found his curtains open. The light was cheerful but I personally thought he was hoping to see another half naked youth outside. I had convinced Ted to get out of his room for a while and enjoy the sunshine. He was all dressed and ready to go when I knocked. He was holding an old teddy bear and looked sad. When I asked if he was alright and if he still wanted to go for a walk, he said he was just thinking about Matt and how he would have loved to have been able to go walking around holding hands. He kissed the bear and put it back in the drawer where it had been hiding all this time. We wandered out to the courtyard. I could see Aeris’s hand in the revitalization of the flower beds. It was too late in the season to do too much, but he had cleaned things up and planted some large annuals to give it some color. We saw Aeris working on some bushes and Ted said it was my chance. It was time for me to work up the courage to go ask for his phone number. I was going to confess our relationship when Aeris saw us and waved. Ted wopped me on my butt with his cane. “Now scoot and go do what I only dreamed of. He wants you and you want him.” I looked at him with a ‘how do you know’ kind of look and he pointed at my crotch. “It quivers when you look at him. Now scoot.” I couldn’t argue since he was right. I did as I was told. Aeris gave me a kiss when I got to him. From the corner of my eye it looked like Ted was doing one of those touchdown victory cheers.

I brought Aeríc over to meet Ted. When he saw the two of us together he said “I may have been born at night but it wasn’t last night. How long have you two been having an affair behind that handsome husband of yours back?” We told him the story of how Peter had figured out Aeríc’s long love for me and then helped Aeríc realize his dream. Aeríc headed back to work and we headed inside.

I got him to his room and went back to see if Twinkle had come back to his body. Steve was there with a new box from Anna Marie’s collection. On the top of the box was an old teddy bear wearing a faded yellow shirt. They passed it around and when it got to me I got a jolt and shivered. I dropped the bear and grabbed the photo that was still on Anna Marie’s tray and stared at the man presenting the award. I knew what I had to do. I excused myself and held onto the photo as I left the room. I placed a call and was rewarded with an immediate affirmative response to my request for a visit. It only took my aunt fifteen minutes to arrive. When she did, Aunt Becky had a panicked look on her face. “What’s wrong? Who’s here? Are you alright?” That’s when I realized that I probably had left out a vital piece of information when I asked her to join me at the hospice. After calming her down, I showed her the picture and asked if that man was Gramps. She looked at it and confirmed my suspicion. Then I asked if she remembered anything about the man receiving the award. I told her that his name was Matthew Edward Anderson. She nodded and started to say something but I cut her off saying that there was someone else who needed to hear what she had to say. I led her to Anna Marie’s room and made the announcement. Twinkle’s jaw dropped as he heard that his grandfather had worked for my grandfather and then it snapped back in place as the rapid fire questions started.

Becky said that Matthew was one of the best stone workers in

town and named several prominent buildings that displayed his craftsmanship. I could see the wheels turning in Twinkle’s head as he thought about the route he would take to visit them and place his hands on something his grandfather made. The award he was getting was because of job he had done that had gotten noticed in one of the design magazines. She said that she was one of the few who knew that he was gay. Matthew had been very discrete about it but he had gotten extremely upset one day when one of the other workers had an accident. It had been more than the normal “Oh My God!” reaction that a crew gets when something happens. She had just taken over management of the company and called him into her office to let him know what the hospital said about his friend’s condition. Phil had been in her office that day and she sent him out so that she could talk to Matthew alone. Phil dropped his beloved teddy bear and Matthew had picked it up to hand it to him when Phil told him to keep the bear. He had said that Matthew needed it more than he did especially since he was going to be sleeping alone that night. He left the room and equally left Matthew dealing with his unexpected Outing by a ten year old. Becky spied the bear sitting next to the box and picked it up. “This is the bear,” she said. “See how he trimmed the paw fur to form his initial?” She said she learned to watch for when Phil gave away his bears since she knew that Phil thought those were the “special” guys. Becky said that her mother was getting fed up with Phil giving away his teddy bears so Matthew and she started to keep a supply in the office for him to hand out when he felt called. She admitted that she had missed seeing Josh with his but said that Phil had been getting more discrete by then.

I picked up the bear and held it to my chest. I felt that shock again and realized that it was as if Uncle Phil had entered the room.

I was dumbfounded. Not only did we just learn that there was a connection between Twinkle’s family and mine, we just learned that because of Twinkle’s grandfather my uncle began his Teddy Bear Campaign, as he would call it in his later years.

Becky said that Matthew was a changed man after that. He came into the office one day to tell her that he was divorced and that he was changing his name. When she pressed him for information, he said that his family was better off without him but he had someone who really loved him and that it wouldn’t be fair to his lover to do what his family wanted. So he did the only thing he could do which was to change his name and let Matthew Anderson die. It broke her heart when he handed her a letter from his daughter and asked her to say that he was deceased. She only agreed because she was struggling with her own feelings



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towards her partner and wondered how her family was going to react and knew that she might need him to return the favor someday.

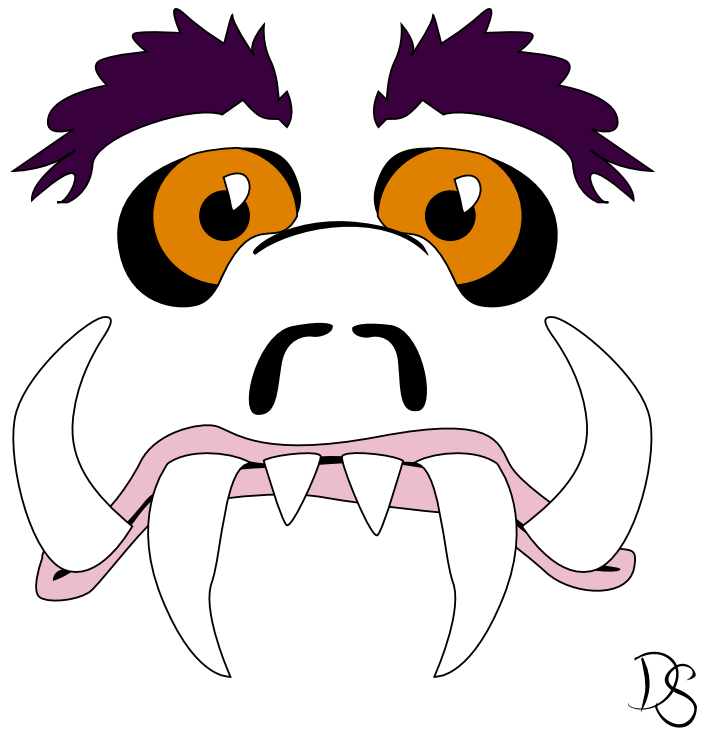
We talked a while longer. Aunt Becky excused herself for a moment saying that she had to do a quick errand and would be right back. She had just gotten to the door when I remembered another teddy bear that I had seen that day. "Did his friends ever call him Matt? She stopped and put her hand on the doorframe and shook her head and didn't say anything else. I followed her out into the hall and led her to the visitor's lounge. I explained that there was someone in the center with one of Phil's teddy bears and the holder of the bear was talking about his lover Matt.

"Yes, that would be Ted." She said that she was just on her way to deliver his pension check to the center when I called. I dug deep inside before I found the courage to ask the next question. "Was his Matt my friend's grandfather?" She sat down on chair and struggled with something. "No. Matt Bahr was his friend who had the accident the day Phil gave him that bear you're still holding." I looked down and indeed I had left the room holding both the bear and the photo. Now it was my turn to sit down. Becky said that the two were so close in appearance that people often thought they were brothers and they did nothing to discourage that thought. I sat there absorbing what I had just heard. "You said Matthew changed his name after his divorce." Becky simply nodded. Her eyes begged me to not ask the next question and make her betray a long held secret. "Thanks Aunt Becky. I knew you could help. Now it's my turn." I got up and gave her a hug before I left to go find Ted.

He wasn't in his room. I found him back in the courtyard sitting on a bench. To his side was the teddy bear I had seen earlier in the day and he was holding the bear's paw. He said the bear had been given to Matt by the same kid who had opened Ted's eyes to the possibility that another man had the same feelings for men as he did. He figured that since Matt was gone, maybe he could at least pretend for a while via the bear. I sat down beside him and showed him the teddy bear I held. "See? I have one just like yours." He looked at me a moment. "Actually, I think this one is yours too." I handed him the bear, looked at it and then held it to his chest "Where did you find this?" I ignored his question and sat down beside him and showed him the picture and asked if he recognized the people in the photo. He confirmed that it was he who was getting the award. I told him that his boss was my grandfather. "Where did you get this?" I said that I had the powers to cloud men's minds to learn their secrets. Then I said that Mason's mother found the picture in an old family scrapbook and teddy bear was found with it. I told him that anything else would have to come from them.

I led him back inside. We went to Anna Marie's room. Without fanfare, he spoke up as we entered the room. "Where did you find my old teddy bear and know that it was mine?" he demanded. Then he saw who was in the bed and sobbed. In the next few minutes I don't think there was a dry eye in the room as father and daughter were reunited after nearly forty years.

He was with his daughter when she passed a few days later. Someday I hope that he'll tell me what they said to each other. Meanwhile, he's promised to tell me some Uncle Phil stories. I don't know if Aunt Becky has told him about Uncle Phil's death but in case she hasn't and he asks, I'll have a teddy bear ready.



Masks

By Hermes Polyandros

Sometimes we wear the mask of Comedy;
 Sometimes we wear the mask of Tragedy;
 Sometimes we wear the mask that hides the true being,
 The one that you really are.
 Sometimes that mask hides wounds inflicted on the soul.
 Sometimes we wear the mask of sadness and woe,
 When they mirror that which we did sew.
 Sometimes the mask hides our feelings,
 For without it we are vulnerable,
 Naked faced,
 And without this we would be bleeding,
 And we don't want anyone to know.
 Sometimes we wear a mask that holds back the tears;
 Sometimes this mask holds back the fears.
 Our masks are many and varied;
 Our masks keep us from being harried.
 Masks can hide our true feelings
 For these feelings we most fear;
 For this mask is a sealing,
 That keeps out of sight, whom we are,
 Except for those that do see through it.
 Take off your mask, behind which you're hiding,
 And look close and near,
 See it as only a mask behind which you're bidding,
 And see it for what it is, and conquer that fear.