

FAE TV

Tombstone Acres



Luke was a Forest Lawn guy who thought he had it made when Oliver said he had a country estate. Will either one be able to rest in peace? They are sure to dig up some fun that will tickle your funny bone.

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Plus Fae TV Listings

Complete local listings of all your favorite shows, news & sports.

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Airy Faerie



Samhain 2010

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

We distribute 6-8 issues per year,
usually in conjunction with one of the
major Sabbats of the Wheel.

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Back issues can be found at:
www.radfae.org/arts#airyfaerie

Publisher's Notes

Hey Faeries, what a crazy wild time the Gods and Goddesses have given us this year. I get dizzy thinking about everything that has happened as the wheel of time spins ever faster. One of the fun challenges we are currently dealing with is a playful sprite that is currently hiding two small tubes of colorful beads and a box containing a four foot Christmas tree. We have looked every where but they are no where to be found. Ok, enough about our challenges...

Yes! The Samhain 2010 issue is here and ready for you to enjoy. Thank you so much for your understanding as we balance life and publishing. To reward your patience we have packed our little Airy Faerie goodie bag full of treats. Sorry no bags of candy corn, but you may get a few Snickers, and a couple of Big Hunks. The eye candy has some "Fun Size" bars, as well as some sweet treats to make your mouth water. I think we are all well aware of the 'Adult subject matter' in the Airy Faerie. Please be careful where you view and with whom you share the Airy Faerie.

One more note on the art work and I will move on. There are a couple illustrations that I hope inspires a ghost story for you. To help set the stage, think of getting a few friends together for a little camping trip. The twist is that all of you will be sleeping in an old haunted cabin. You will be able to see what would happen in my gay ghost story when you find the two cartoons.

We are very grateful to all of our contributors: Hermes Polyandros, Orpheus, Raven Bear Paws, Cubby, Phoenix and DragonSwan. I think you will agree that we have a tasty collection here of poetry, stories, artwork and a pagan interest article. A special thanks goes to Hermes Polyandros for his poem *Medicine Wheel Song* which can be found on the back page. This was the starting point for our Samhain ritual this year as we "walked the path of remembrance." And thanks to you, our readers, who joined us that evening by sharing with us those you wished to have remembered.

We have it all, stuff to make you think, to laugh and wish the boys would walk right off pages. Go ahead and dig in. No worries about calories or cavities with this goodie bag!

I would like to take this time to also thank our readers! We are very grateful that you all enjoy our little fae zine. What began as a Denver newsletter has grown beyond our wildest dreams. Thanks to the fabulous faeries behind RadFae.net who keep back issues on their web site.

We are already looking ahead as the wheel of time continues to spin. Yes, the Yule issue may be a tad bit late and not getting out until early 2011. November and December bring with them a glorious but dizzying holiday extravaganza. Juggling work, families, holiday parties, theater, and our sanity is always a challenge. We want to make sure to wish you all a bright and warm holiday season. We hope you eat plenty of turkey & pumpkin pie, drink some egg nog, kiss someone under the mistletoe and raise a glass to usher in a new year. Whatever the holiday and however you celebrate it, we wish you all much joy and peace.

Many Faerie Blessing,
Naked Hugs and Kisses,
DragonSwan

A Moment of Eternity

By Hermes Polyandros

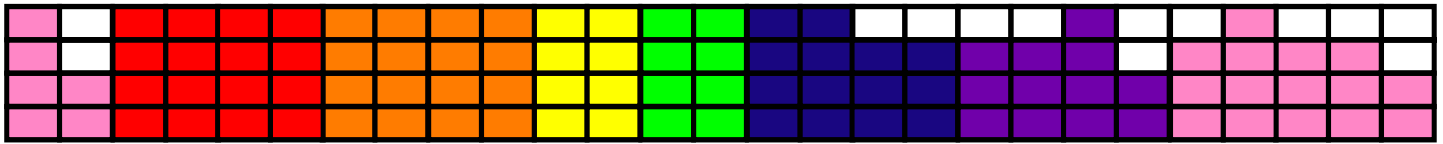
I look at you, my friend.
 I see the wonder of your being
 You are the gift manifold,
 Where god and goddess is seating.
 I look at you and touch you
 An excitement grows exceeding,
 Marveling at such construction,
 Though you may see only your hairline receding;
 But each hair a forest nest
 Where I can lay my head to rest,
 Or draw my hands to seek and test
 Where you are exceeding;
 For in that form burns the ash
 Of suns lost billion years receding;
 Yet those suns still warm you
 With each breath you are breathing.
 I hear the heart drumbeat of life
 While your eye watches me,
 Candle flames of knowledge within.
 In them I am seeing
 You are perfect in just who you are
 Though deny it is just who you are
 But none but is only you.
 Never before, never after, I am seeing
 As you join and seek that deep need.
 It is not just seed that yearning pulls
 But knowing and knowing, yet separate feeding
 What words can not speak
 That you and I at one moment know
 All eternity.

Painter

By Hermes Polyandros

I saw him first in morning light
 After the setting of the Moon,
 He danced a dance, exotic step,
 But away he danced too soon.
 Then I caught a glimpse
 Underneath the apple and thorn
 In an afternoon near the quince
 As billowing the clouds before the storm.
 Again he caught my eye
 As fields he was wondering
 While his hand he touched the grain
 It to gold at his touching.
 Then amongst the vines he walked
 There I did aspy him
 And as he walked the grapes ripened.
 A chill filled the air now in the morning
 I saw him go with slower pace
 His eyes glittering as in mourning.
 But long I saw him again
 When he touched trees with gentle hands
 That sent them to changin'
 As if he held a brush;
 As if the leaves he was a paintin'.
 Oh who are you that I saw walk
 In morning light after the Moon's setting?
 He heard me and stopped
 My heart began aracing.
 He spoke strange words I hardly 'stood
 Which sent my mind a wondering.
 "I am he who makes the world
 Come to its most wonderous fruiting.
 And then again I am the wood my canvas a painting.
 You need know no more,
 For I can't stop, I have work awaiting,
 For before Jack Frost comes
 My work needs finishing,
 That all be well
 While you and yours are aharvesting,
 For I am the man that paints the trees,
 Autumn's bright coloring.
 And with his words, he was off
 His like I'd never seen before
 But then I've changed a lot
 Since I opened that mystic door.





The 4-F Tarot: Time Management

by Phoenix

Since time seems to be a constant factor in getting our issues out before the Sabbats, I might as well start there for this issue's card article. I'm constantly amazed at how zoom, fast, gone a year can pass. It has been only seven months since mom was in the hospital but it seems so long ago. And yet, here we are rapidly approaching the winter holidays and it seems like only yesterday that we put away the decorations. Do you remember that time when you arrived at school that first day after summer break? It was going to be an eternity before you got to the winter holiday break. And summer break was, oh God!, we had to wait all the way until next June before we got out of school again. Now, we look at things happening nine months down the road and think you have plenty of time. Only to get there and discover you really want a couple of more weeks to finish. What changed?

Time really isn't getting faster. A day is still a day. An hour is still an hour. A minute is an eternity when you are stuck at the traffic light and are already late to get to that oh so important meeting. Don't even think about the five minutes stuck waiting at the train crossing. And then there is our friend the second. A single tick on the clock that is that difference between getting my foot on the gas pedal and the hand to the horn in the car behind me. Have our lives gotten so full that we have to rush through life without taking a breath?



As to that zoom fast year? Think back on those school days. Our deadlines were really driven by tests and papers. A few here and there during the year. We got older and more things needed to be done on a regular basis. We got older and learned about multi-tasking so we could do more things in a compressed amount of time. Only to our chagrin, we find there are that many more tasks that need our attention. How to handle that workload is the lesson our two Kweens our currently learning.

The Kween of Earth, on this page who was presented in the Mabon/Samhain 2008 issue, has adopted a linear way of approaching her tasks. She's let things pile up until the last minute and then works on them. She's not whittled away at the pile of laundry by doing a load each morning/evening. After her day of fun, she's having to burn the midnight oil to get caught up on her task.

On the other hand, our Kween of Fire, on the right, is taking the multi-task approach. She has everything under control...so she thinks. The cake is prepared. Food is on the stove and in the oven. She can take some time to socialize with her party guests. It's time to head back to work on the meal when someone whistles at her cute butt. She has time, right? So she poses for her adoring fans. She is about to discover that she has some serious decisions to make when she turns around. Which gets her attention first? The burning food in the oven? The pot boiling over? Or will she spend time reminding Rover why he shouldn't get up on counters?

As a card in a reading, you have so many layers to play with. Are you the person observing the scene? Are you going to get the Kween to turn around in time for her to rescue the meal? Or are you the one who is distracting her? Are you the Kween herself trying to do one thing too many? Or you the puppy taking advantage of the Kween's distractions?

Are you coming to the party shaking your head at how old the Kween's kitchen looks? Are you thinking that it's time for a remodel? Or are you a fan of avocado appliances and country charm? Since that is a common thought on the house buying/selling shows, it's fair game when looking at how to interpret a card in this deck.

As always, take some time to enter that room and feel the energy of the moment. Is the rooster a wake up call? Where are you in that scene? What is catching your attention? What should be catching your attention? What has been going on? What is going on? What is about to happen? Somewhere in there, is how this card relates to your reading.

As to us and the creation of the deck, we are making slow but steady progress. As you can see with this card, we are putting in more details with each card. These are the part that makes this a slow process. The first cards were done with that first burst of energy and we wanted to capture the overall feel of the cards quickly. Now that we are working on the last cards, we are spending a bit more time to make them look closer to their finished form.



Quest for the Crystal Phoenix

Chapter 4!: Games of Love

by Orpheus

Apollo had been looking forward to this time with his grandparents all day. Ever since they arrived in Fransancisco he had been kept busy helping with the celebration preparations and he had little time to sit and ask their advice about the ladies in his life. Today Queen Holly gathered all of the maidens to practice something for the gala celebration so he would have his grandparents to himself for a few hours and he desperately needed their guidance. Viola, Lily and Cory had been acting uncharacteristically nice to each other while being cold and distant to him. The morning after they arrived, each of them sought out the faerie queen to see what they might be able to do to assist her with the upcoming feast. Little did the prince know that their asking meant his help would also be required.

The first to seek him out was Viola. She had been assigned to gather banjana fruit. As they headed to the forest, Viola told him that banjana fruit gathering always required two people. The banjana tree was incredibly tall and the fruit was incredibly tender. Bruises to the fruit rendered it useless for the celebration. As such, the person cutting the fruit couldn't simply let the fruit fall to the ground to be picked up once everything was cut. Traditionally, a second faerie would fly to the fruit and support the fruit as it was cut. Then together, they would fly the heavy fruit to the ground. It was a slow process as the fruit was cut and delivered one fruit at a time.

Viola figured that Apollo's air magic could be used to speed up the process as he could manage multiple fruits at the same time. The prince was a bit puzzled at first as to how she knew so much about his new found abilities since he had little time to talk to her since their arrival. Viola said it was all in the *Vidalia Gazette*. Indeed, the headline in the evening edition the night before had a headline of "Human Prince Trounces Queen. Is She Getting Old?" Apparently enough people were upset by the headline that they issued a retraction the following morning. They said that they apologized for saying that Queen Holly was getting old and they meant to say that she was old. Rose was upset over the headline but Holly pointed out that the paper will say what they want. As Viola and Apollo headed out of the castle, they heard the *VG* crier announce that the noon edition would be slightly delayed while they dried out from the unpredicted isolated shower that struck their offices that morning. Holly may be nearly five hundred years old, but she still knew how to remind folks of her vitality. Within the

original article, the *VG* had a play by play description of his challenge with Holly and the others. She never believed Johnny when he told her, but there it was in the pages of *VG* so it must be true. Viola learned of how strong his magic had become and she just knew that he would be able to help her.

"With all that magic at your command, I don't know what you are doing with little ole' me," she said batting her eyes. "My only magic is that I can make people's eyes bleed when I walk in a room." While not in the most unusual outfit he had seen on his friend, the hot pink halter top and bright peacock blue and green skirt was also not her most subdued outfit. "With Lily at your side on the throne it would be like the sun and moon coming together. No one would notice me."

"I hadn't really thought of it like that," responded the prince. "Do you really think we look that good when we're together?"

"Oh, look! It's the banjana tree," she said, avoiding his question.

Apollo could see why it was a team chore. The tree was easily 60 feet high with the fruit only on the uppermost branches. They talked about the best way to use the prince's air magic to aid in the task and finally settled on creating a massive column of air that stopped right under the fruit. Once Viola cut all the stems, Apollo would slowly drain the column from the bottom and the fruit would descend as if being carried on a

tray. Viola made quick work of her task

and flew down to join the prince while he lowered the fruit.

The faerie carefully laid the fruit in the boxes they brought for the purpose. When Apollo started to pick one up, Viola waved her wand and the box floated away from him. "I can handle it from here. Thank you for your help. I believe your darling Lily needs you now."

Apollo felt a slight chill in the air as she flew off with the boxes trailing behind her like ducklings following their mother. She was right in thinking that he had to go help Lily. Johnny's sister had asked for help gathering Virgin Creepers. When he met Lily, he learned that Virgin Creepers were a magical vine that grew from the canopy of the Rainbow Forest. They got their name and magic from the fact that they never touch the ground when they are growing. When a vine touches the ground it hardens and starts to grow roots. If it in a pile at the time, it becomes a Knotty Tangle, "Which is entirely different magic and impossible to reverse," explained Lily.



As a team, Lily would fly to the top of the vine, wrap it around her waist once to stop it from falling before cutting it. While she descended with the cut end, Apollo was to coil the vine as it came down, ensuring that the vine never touched the ground. At one point Apollo asked her why she didn't simply coil the vine as she flew toward the top.

"It just isn't done that way," she huffed. "Besides, the coil would be way too bulky for me to carry while flying."

The prince studied Lily as she descended with the fifth and final vine. "You know, Viola is right," he said. "Your skin does have that soft glow of moonlight."

"Why that Viola! How dare she..." Lily stopped short as she realized that Apollo had just said her chief rival had given her a complement. "...how dare she praise the moon when Cory's complexion is that of the morning sun. In fact, she and you are so well suited for each other it is like twin suns shining in the sky."

"She did look radiant last night, didn't she?" commented Apollo.

The forest turned to a very pale blue. "Thank you for your help today," Lily waved her wand "Higitus Figitus" and the coils shrunk down and flew into her carry sack. "Maybe I'll see you at dinner."

Apollo just stared at her as she flew out of sight.

At lunch, Cory asked for the prince's assistance in gathering blossoms for the decorations for the feast. She had planned to go on her own but heard reports that there were wolves in the woods and probably should have a big strong man to help her. Apollo thought a moment and said he would ask Patrick to help her.

"That's not..." she stopped for a moment. "That would be most welcome. So is it true?"

"Is what true?"

"That you and Viola are going to announce your engagement at the ball? It seems like you two are fated to be together since you are the only one who can break her curse. It would simply be a cruel joke if you married another and condemned her to be trapped in that body forever."

"I hadn't planned on asking her to marry me."

"You beast!" She got red. "You would bring a child into the world without marrying the mother? And here I thought you were supposed to be the great moral leader of three countries." She stormed off without giving him the opportunity to explain.

"That went well," said Manin coming up beside him.

"Well?" gasped Apollo. "She thinks I'm a womanizer like the princes in the past who just want women for sex."

"And she still thinks Viola and I are having an affair. She's convinced that is the only reason why I'm here in Fransancisco. If she's mad at both of us, we won't have to worry about her finding out about us."

That was something that had worried both of them when they learned that Cory had traveled with William and Rose. They agreed that they weren't quite ready to be so public with their affections around her.

"Don't underestimate the determination of the tigress who has her prey in her sites," offered Hilda Arrowroot as she approached. "Now, Hilda Ironwood already knows about your dalliances and would be the perfect faerie bride for the future king. I could pretend to be young Manin's companion and no one in the outer kingdom would ever suspect the real relationships. I'll see you at practice in a hour." She flew off before either of them could ask her questions.

"That's odd," commented Manin.

"Not really," said Apollo. "She does have a point in that with their acceptance of our relationship it might work."

"That's part of the oddity. Why would that Hilda say something about another Hilda when she would also have that same understanding?"

Thus began the pattern of the past few days. Each of the trio sought out his company for a task as a way of not letting him spend time with one of the others. When they were with Apollo, they would sing the praises of one of the others. When one of the others was with the prince, he could feel the rest watching his every move. He had begun to anticipate that if he was getting too cozy with his current companion that one of the others would suddenly need his help only to have that person start telling of the marvelous accomplishments of the one who wasn't there while downplaying their own accomplishments. He tried asking Toby about how to handle the situation and all he could say was "Enjoy it while you can, laddie." He thought any guy would want to trade places and have a dozen lovely ladies seeking his company. Johnny wasn't any help, especially when it came to Viola and Lily. If he wasn't laughing at the latest exploits he would tell him about how great Lily would be as his queen.

Apollo laughed. "I never thought I would hear you saying good things about your sister."

"Well," said Johnny, "as Hilda Hazel pointed out, if you married Lily then we would almost be like brothers."

"That funny," added Manin. "Hilda Goldenrod pointed out that Viola also understands our need for male bonding time and that she only needed you for a baby. She said that Viola would be perfect for your queen since she would give you an heir while at the same time giving you freedom from Cory's views of the marriage death grip."

"The VG is currently favoring Cory," said Rondar. "They think that a faerie princess, however beautiful, would be too exotic for the people to accept. Cory, with her country charm, would be 'one of them' and would instantly win their hearts."

Rondar's ring was white. "So is that true or wise?" asked Apollo.

"Who knows? It could be simply reacting to the fact that it is a true statement that the VG said that about the Competitors, as they call them."

Apollo groaned. Not only were the competitors driving him crazy, they were starting to recruit his friends to do it for them. He wished his father were there to talk to and air magic to air magic conversations worked best for short communications not long conversations. He knew his father would be arriving soon but not soon enough. That left him his grandparents as potential advisors.

"So they are playing that game now, are they?" asked William, once the prince told the tale of his woes. "I didn't think they had it in them."

"What game is that dear?" asked Rose.

"The one where I remind you that Baron Smitherton was the handsomest man at last night's Fourth Night Festivities."

"That may be the view from your side of the table, Love, but from what I saw the handsome man was sitting across the table from me," responded Rose.

Apollo was puzzled. He had never heard his grandmother use such openly affectionate terms about her husband. "Wasn't grandfather across from you last night?"

"Exactly, my boy," said William. "What do you think each of those girls really think of each other?"

"I used to think they hated each other," replied Apollo.

"And they still do," groaned Rose. "Trust me, I know better than most. I usually spend an hour a day with each of my trio listening to all the awful things the others did the previous day. Between the three perspectives of any given situation, I've gotten pretty good at figuring out the real instigator of the more serious catfights."

"If they hate each other so much, why would they tell me of all the virtues of one of the others? And worse yet, why do they get upset when I agree with them?"

"Your father taught you well about honesty, my boy," said his grandfather. "Too well, perhaps."

"How can one be too honest?"

"It isn't a matter of being too honest. It's more of a case of knowing how much honesty to share."

"Remember the question my sister asked at your father's wedding?" asked his grandmother.

"Do you mean 'Do I look old?'" he paused. "Oh! You mean that the honest answer isn't always the wisest."

"Exactly," said Rose. "Only in this case, they don't want you to agree with them. They were hoping that you would say something nicer about them."

"Something like..." William looked at Rose like one of the love starved actors in a show. "Yes, Cory was lovely in that amber chiffon caftan but you never looked more radiant in the sapphire taffeta gown."

"But what if I hate taffeta?" asked Apollo.

"You find something else nice to say."

"Like what?"

"Anything except 'You are the fairest of them all,'" came a frail elderly voice from the doorway. "That's what got this family in such a mess in the first place."

"Lord Ctholbêahâssêsbut," exclaimed Apollo.

"And son," came a voice from behind him.

"Cetee!"

Apollo quickly got up from his chair and gave his teacher a hug.

Rose gasped. "What creatures are those? And why would you call the one by your teacher's name?"

"My apologies, Your Majesty," said Cetee as he bowed to Rose, "but this is my natural form. My father and I have been the teachers of the Adbalm royal line for centuries. For many years no one questioned the presence of centaurs at the Royal Academy. One day, the tales grew that magic was evil and magical creatures were the worst evil imaginable. Amaranth granted me a wish of the ability to change to human form so that I could continue my role as teacher. Coming to the Faerie realm, I did not think about your reactions to seeing me this way."

"There's no need to apologize for being who you are. A year ago perhaps or even a few weeks ago but since we've been here I've met all sorts of magical beings so I think I was more shocked to find another that I had not already seen." She paused a second. "Centuries you say? I still find that hard to believe."

"I know you," said the elder centaur pointing at the prince.

"Of course you do father," responded Cetee. "I'll admit he's grown a lot since last summer, but this is Prince Apollo who is my student."

Ctholbêahâssêsbut stared at Apollo a moment. "I can see the

resemblance but that's not what I'm remembering. Where else have we met?"

"That was the only time you met him father."

"I wasn't talking to you. Answer me child."

"Do you remember the day when a young man came to you asking for the arrow that killed without touching a bow?"

The centaur took an involuntary step backward. "How do you know about either? I've never told anyone about that arrow, not even my son. And I haven't thought about that young man with his empty promises in years."

"They weren't empty promises, your majesty. I told you that it would happen when you were old enough."

Cetee's father laughed. "I am over five hundred years old. I am certainly old enough to know when someone doesn't live up to their promises."

"But are you old enough now to help undo the damages done by your family?"

The two stared at each other as an awkward silence filled the room.

"Apollo, that is rude," chided Rose. "My apologies, good sir. I know I taught him better manners when talking to his elders. I don't know what you were talking about Apollo but please show some respect."

"No need to apologize, especially when he was right. My family did cause this mess. I remember those words and never appreciated how long it would be before I would be old enough. Now I'm way past old enough to have known better." He looked Apollo in the eyes. "I miss Annette every day. Today would have been our anniversary." A tear formed in his eye. "Am I old enough now for you to keep your promise?"

"Are you?"

"I am here now, aren't I? I can feel hope surge through the land again like when Father was alive. The Horn feels it too and has grown restless."

"I have a feeling I'm missing something," said William. "An introduction would be a good place to start."

Both Cetee and Apollo looked to Ctholbêahâssêsbut for guidance as to what he wanted to reveal. "You might as well tell them," he said. "They already know about my brother. Would one of you be so kind as to bring that stool over here so I may rest my hind quarters? This is going to take a while."

William and Rose listened intently as Apollo and the two centaurs filled in the tale of Oliver and Annette, how they met and how Belladonna drove them apart before.

"How awful," said Rose as she wiped a tear from her eye. "I'm sorry. The faerie tale of the mermaid giving up everything to be with her human prince always chokes me up. Now I find that not only is it true, my mother is responsible and it didn't end up with happily ever after."

"It was happy while it lasted, Madame," offered the elderly centaur. "And it would have continued longer if it wasn't for Belladonna."

"From what I heard," said William, "the blame doesn't rest solely on your brother's wife. Something in you listened to that witch's lies and believed her. If you loved your wife the way I love mine her words would never have landed on fertile ground."

"You love me?" asked a stunned Rose.

"Ever since the day I met you when our parents sealed the



marriage contract. I knew that in their desire to bind our countries together to ensure peace that they had found the perfect bride for me."

"I don't think I've always lived up to your standards."

"You are the standard to which all others are compared."

"I never knew you felt that way."

"Always," said William. "I've just never been good about expressing it. Somehow, this time away from Court has allowed me to say what I want to say instead of saying what I am supposed to say. No, that's not right. I've been too busy to say them and assumed you knew. We'll talk later."

Apollo noticed that his grandmother beamed which filled the room with the love she felt for her husband. That grew into a glow that lit the room and he felt a shift in energy. "I knew you had it in you," came a gentle feminine voice. The glow intensified and Aphrodite stepped into the room.

"I felt a swell in love and had to see who was responsible. It's about time you two admitted your true feelings for each other. As for you," she turned and pointed at Oliver, "I'm tired of your pining away for Annette and not doing a damn thing about it. She sits on her rock day after day, year after year alternately cursing and blessing the day she met you while you sit around and moan with 'oh woe is me.' I had always thought your family had more backbone than that. At least the modern generations didn't inherit your mule headed stubbornness and stupidity."

Oliver cowered under the goddess's tirade. "You are right. I have been weak and selfish. But I've thought about it over the years and know that Annette is better off without me. I took her away from her world, her family." He gestured at himself, "I'm no good to her this way. I can't change the way I am any more that Amaranth could really change Annette. She may have looked human but her

heart and soul always belonged to the sea."

"That's so sweet," said Aphrodite. "Misguided and wrong, but still sweet. You silly man, her heart belongs to you. She fills the sea with her tears because the man she loves has never tried to find her. She knows that he's spent five hundred years in the arms of one who is fairer than she."

"There are none fairer than Annette," protested Oliver.

"I'm not the one you should be telling that to," said the goddess as she placed a hand against his face. "You two had such potential. Myron loved Ashleigh because they looked so good together. Kenneth loved Belladonna because of the power she controlled. But your love came from the heart and you were willing to defy a god to be together."

"That sounds like my brothers," admitted Oliver. "But if she loves me so much, why didn't she come to me?"

Almost in unison, everyone, including William and Rose who just heard the tale, said, "She's a mermaid!"

"Did you expect her to flop across the country?" chided the goddess. "No, you are the one who needs to get on your four hooves and trot to her."

The water phoenix flew into the room and landed on Apollo's shoulder and cooed. "He says he knows where she is. I could take you there now if you want."

"This one is on me. Well, Oliver?" Aphrodite held out her hand. "Are you ready to face the woman whom you've stood up for nearly five hundred years?"

Oliver gulped. "Suddenly I not sure if I'm old enough for that challenge. Ask me again in five hundred years." Aphrodite stared at him. "But I miss her laughter and music, so I guess I'm as ready as I'm going to get."

He took the goddess's hand and her glow engulfed them and

flared into a ball of white light. When it faded, they were gone.

"Was that really King Oliver of Adbalm that you have spoken of in history lessons?" asked Rose.

"Indeed which is something I only found out myself last year," offered Cetee. "He kept the memory of those early years after the sundering alive but he would talk about Oliver the King in the same way as he talked about any other historic figure."

"Makes sense," said William. Everyone stared at him waiting for what he meant. "He accepted his curse and his new life. He stopped being King Oliver."

"I wonder what she is going to say to him?" pondered Rose.

"Probably the same thing you say to me when I miss a meal."

"I don't say a word."

"Exactly, my love." William gave his wife a quick kiss on her cheek. "And it drives me crazy as I keep trying to find the right words to apologize."

"I know." Rose likewise gave her husband a kiss on his cheek. "But it's all part of the game."

Apollo groaned. "Is that all love is? A game? How am I to understand the rules?"

Rose left her husband's side and went to the prince. "Love itself is not a game and it doesn't come with rules."

"Love is the prize for playing the game," added William. "From what he said, King Oliver had won the prize and lost everything when he thought he could add to his winnings."

"I think I almost wish that someone would arrange a marriage for me," said the prince. "Then I wouldn't have to play the game and no one would get hurt when I picked the wrong person."

"You don't get out of it that easy, my boy," said his grandfather. "Someone will still get hurt and you only shift the blame to someone else for having made the selection. Besides which, there is no benefit for us to arrange a marriage for strategic purposes. The kingdoms will unite under you so there is no princess to wed to make it happen. In all the generations of our families, you have the opportunity to choose your mate based on whatever reason you feel is best suited for you."

"You don't need a game to pick the wrong person," commented Rose. "That is easy to do without games. The purpose of the game is to help you pick the right person. They give you insight into seeing who really does play fair, what they are willing to do to get what they want and even insights into what they aren't saying."

Apollo thought a moment. "Like how Viola has stopped talking about needing to have a baby while everyone else makes sure to make a point of it?"

"Exactly, my boy," responded the king. "Enjoy the game while you can. You are certainly in the enviable position of having a dozen lovely maidens vying for your attention. When it's time to name your Queen, you will eventually have to narrow down the playing field."

"Why choose just one if each of the competitors is equally suited?"

"Would you want to start your reign by being known as someone who can't make a decision? Don't worry. When the time is right, you will know and there will be no question as to who is the right one."

Rose joined hands with her husband. "And if you have to ask the question, chances are that it isn't the right person."

Apollo thanked his grandparents for their counsel and excused

himself to prepare for dinner.

The conversation at dinner focused on the exciting news that one of the Ancient Kings had come to join the festivities. "What I don't understand is how the Dark Queen's magic has lasted so long," pondered Lily. "After all, she is only a human so what kind of magic could she possibly work that would have that kind of staying power?"

"Amaranth wondered that herself," said Hilda Harbell. "Any magic Amaranth knew came from Her was never that impressive but somehow it has endured through the years."

"But something I've learned from you during Efgee training," Viola contributed, "is that not everything has to have the flash and dash, bells and swelling orchestra to be effective."

"And even a small pebble has massive impact when it's in your shoe," added Cory.

"What would you know about shoes?" asked Lily dismissively. "I thought women in your backwards community were kept barefoot and pregnant."

"At least I don't always have my legs in the air," retorted Cory."

Viola chimed in. "She has you there, Lily. You do get around."

The trio continued in that manner for a moment before Rose halted them. "Girls!"

"She started it," they exclaimed in unison.

"You forget that I was sitting right here. We shall talk about this tomorrow."

In an equal unison, "Yes, your majesty."

"Can any of you make it sound like you looked forward to the conversation?" Silence followed as Rose locked eyes with each of them. "I thought not. Where were we?"

"Cory does have a good point," Apollo said. Cory's eyes brightened but Rose's glare stopped her from saying something that might start the feud again. "But how has she managed to keep that pebble in the shoe?"

"She has something you don't" commented Oliver. He had a glow about him since he returned from his visit with Annette. He almost seemed younger. "What is the most enduring power through the ages?"

"That's easy," said Lily. "Love."

"Love changes everything," agreed Viola.

"That may be true," said Oliver, "but we aren't taking about something that has changed in over five hundred years. So if it hasn't changed, what is the opposite of love?"

"Hatred," said Apollo. "And we know that Belladonna has that in abundance."

"Exactly, child. Even before she discovered the dark arts her hatred was a force to be reckoned with. Everyone knew to stay out of her way when she had a mad on."

"I can see why you were such a great teacher," commented Rose. "You were masterful in coming up with something that eluded my mother. I could only wish that I had such a great teacher in my youth."

"You did, my dear," said William. "You just never wanted to listen to your mother."

"Mothers don't count. They are all full of love and goodness."

"Which is probably why she never understood the source of my sister-in-law's power," said Oliver.

Apollo listened as the conversation shifted to the roles of parents verses teachers. His personal thoughts were focused on how to combat a hatred which had lasted for over five hundred years. He

looked at his friends sitting absorbing the wisdom of their elders and noticed that Cory was no longer among them. Manin said that she told him that she wasn't feeling well and excused herself. The prince sent a thread of energy toward her to see if she was alright and found her energy just outside the door to the banquet hall. He excused himself to see if he could help her. When he stepped into the hall, he saw her sitting in one of the ornate alcoves to the side of the doorway."

"Why so sad?" he asked as he sat beside her.

"You saw how they treat me; some backwards know nothing. I'll never be able to be as special as they are."

"You're right," agreed the prince as his grandparent's words echoed in his mind. "Why would you want to lower yourself to their level? You are more special than they are. A crown princess raised you. The Queen of the Faeries watched over you. You can embroider the most exquisite things while they can only dream of creating such marvelous art without the use of magic."

"But they have magic and I'm nothing."

"If you were, I wouldn't be talking to you. I will let you in on a secret. If I had to pick a bride today, it wouldn't be Lily after what I saw." He pointed a finger at her. "Don't think about saying anything to anyone. I'll know."

She made a criss-cross over her heart. "I promise. Would I be on that list?"

"I don't know. You still love Manin and blame Viola for taking him away from her."

"If I had your love, I could let her have him."

Apollo thought carefully before speaking. "But I would be second choice." He stood up and turned to face her. "Seek me out when I am your first choice and we will see where it goes from there."

He had similar chats with the others the following day. With the Hildas, they had been trying to force him to say which one of the nine sisters he favored over the others. "You are facets of a single gem. Each facet is beautiful on its own but the collective outshines a single facet. Tell me who the diamond is and I'll enjoy all the facets equally." With Lily, it was her faeries are superior attitude that finally caused him to stop her in her tracks. "It's a good thing your ancestors didn't feel that way otherwise their blood would not course through my veins. Would you sacrifice your faerihood the same way as Amaranth when she married Charles?"

Viola decided her time was running out and reminded Apollo that she needed his help in ending her curse. "I need to have your child before you take the throne or I'm stuck this way for eternity."

"I know there is another possibility." He explained how Jade Rose had turned Amaranth's brother into a girl so that he might be able to work the great magics of the female faeries. Aster worked the greatest magic and had a child and remained a girl.

"Like Gaydar?" asked Viola thinking of the beginning of her woes.

"Pretty much. When Aster married Angelo and Angelina she went mortal and broke Jade Rose's spell. If you did the same, it might have the same effect."

"But what if it didn't? I would be human."

"If you loved me more than a friend and more than just an end to a punishment for a botched job, then you might be going mortal to be my bride. Which means any child we created would be born of love not obligation."

The morning of the gala, Apollo created a portal for his father to use to attend the affair without losing time for the journey. They both admitted that sometimes the journey is as interesting and important as the destination, but this wasn't one of those times. Adam had just caught up on the backlog of things which needed his



attention. Almost everything had been done in his absence but there were those matters which needed his personal touch to satisfy the law. As such, he didn't want to create more work so he was grateful for the shortcut.

"What is this I hear about you planning to pick a bride at the ball?" asked the king once he gave his son a hug. "Don't you think you should tell your father about it beforehand? And what does Manin think about it?"

"Who?" questioned Apollo absently. "Oh, him. He's too busy laughing at how everyone is tripping over me to care anymore. Actually, he's happy with my decision."

"Which is?"

"Even if the bride for me is among the Competitors, none of them are ready to be my bride or to be Queen of Wobnair."

"Are you ready to be husband and king?"

"No. Which is why I've spent more time trying to avoid the appearance of picking a bride than I have courting one."

"So what's happening tonight?"

"We sat down after dinner last night and the girls agreed to draw numbers for my dance card. They counted the number of dances planned for the ball and put in something for each dance and drew two dances each. There are more dances than girls as Hilda agreed to a single person to be fair to the others. This gives me time to either sit down or ask someone else to dance."

"It sounds like you have things well under control. You don't need me anymore," said Adam as he wiped a fake tear from his eye.

"I might not need you any more, but that doesn't mean I need you any less."

Apollo spent the afternoon telling his father everything that had been going on. Adam listened intently and said he agreed with William and Rose's advice. "I couldn't have said it any better." He looked at his son with pride showing on his face. "You have handled a challenging situation very well but the real challenge still lies ahead."

"I know," sighed the prince. "Eventually I have to find a bride."

"I was thinking more like how to break the news to Manin when it is time."

The hours with his father flew quickly and soon it was time to dress for the gala. Apollo had been surprised to find the outfit Amaranth had made for him among his things which had been in the trunk. He had hesitated to wear it but once Rose found out that her mother had made it she insisted that he wear it in her honor. He admitted it felt good to put it on. It was a solid reminder that his adventure had been real. As he thought about the one time he wore it, the garment was also a painful reminder of that time.

"You're thinking of him again, aren't you?" asked Manin.

"How did you know?" replied the prince.

"You get a sad look on your face. It reminds me that there is a place in your heart that I can't touch."

"If we didn't need to be someplace soon, I would show you how you touch me." He hugged his lover and kissed him. "Let's get going before Holly sends someone to find us."

The celebration began an hour before sunset when it was anticipated that the forest would display its rainbow bands as the sun set. Apollo assured Queen Holly that the forest was primed to perform on queue. The hour was filled by several of the faerie elders recounting the tales of the dark years of the forest and how the future king of the land brought it back to life almost single

handedly. Apollo felt embarrassed by the lavish praise being piled on him. Holly assured him that in the days ahead it would be balanced by the folks bemoaning the end of a perfectly good Black Forest and those who loved the colorful forest but hated the constantly changing colors. One of the orators was cut short by the thunderous cheer of the crowd as the Rainbow Forest revealed how it got its name.

As the cheering ended, the musicians struck up the opening refrain for the traditional Airpole dance. Groups of nine faerie maidens hovered over someone standing on the ground. It took a moment for Apollo to realize that the standing maidens were Cory and his female guards while Viola, Lily and all nine Hildas were among the flyers. Those on the ground held an end of one of the five Virgin Creeper and eight ribbons. The other ends were held by the nine flyers. As the musicians started to play, the faeries performed an intricate dance which wove the ribbons around the Virgin Creeper. At the end of the dance, the faeries let go of their ribbons while Cory and the others placed their ends on the ground. Apollo had watched in awe as the patterns wove up the Airpole and joined in the cheering when everyone let go and the poles stood on their own.

"How long will they be able to stand?" whispered Apollo to Johnny.

"If they don't topple tonight, it will mean the Virgin Creeper has taken root."

Apollo directed a little earth magic toward the five poles and found that they had already formed tiny roots. A cry from the sky and a gasp from the crowd drew his attention away from the poles. The four phoenixes did their own aerial dance as they raced around the poles. Several faeries took up the dance and joined in the flight of the phoenix. The dance was as graceful as the chase the night the forest came alive had been comical. The dance ended when the phoenixes perched on four of the poles.

Apollo saw that Cory had a tear in her eye. "That was beautiful wasn't it?"

"Yes," she sobbed, "but why didn't one of them pick my pole?"

"There were only four of them. Perhaps the fifth and most special phoenix has yet to be born," offered the prince.

"There is supposed to be another of those retched creatures?" gasped Holly. "Four is four too many as it is."

At the feast, Apollo and Cetee explained what they knew of the mysterious phoenix, including the yet to be seen Crystal Phoenix.

"Do you think it's been hatched yet? You have to go to that First Father fellow and find out." asked Cory excitedly. "Viola and Lily are never going to let me forget how my pole wasn't special enough to attract a phoenix." While she was dramatic in her statement, Apollo had to agree that she was right since that was the only thing they had talked about since the feast began.

As the plates were cleared, a sparkling beverage was poured for the evening's toast. When Apollo commented on the delicate flavor, Viola informed him that the wine was made from the banjana fruit they picked. She said that bruised fruit had the same taste but it made lovers quarrel while unblemished fruit was an aphrodisiac. "What does it make you feel?" she asked.

The musicians started the first dance of the ball. "I feel that it is time to start dancing." He held out his hand to Lily. "I believe the first name on my dance card this evening is yours."

Apollo was ready to take his first break from the dance floor when Queen Holly summoned him to the Royal Dias. "As the guest

of honor this evening, you have the enviable task of selecting the Rainbow Queen. Each of the maidens who participated in the Airpole Dance first had to accomplish a task which demonstrated that she had the dedication to maintain the discipline required for the dance.” She announced what each had done from the gathering of the materials for the Airpole to the gathering of the fruits for the feast and flowers that were used in the floral crown she held in her hand. “They proved they can not only meet their individual challenges, they can also work in harmony with each other in the dance. But only one can be the Rainbow Queen. Who among the maidens here this evening shall it be?”

As she handed him the floral crown he dreaded the decision that lay ahead. While he would make one of them very happy, he would also disappoint the rest. And within the group of Competitors they would never understand why his didn’t pick one of them should he chose to go outside their little group. He stood there staring at the crown and at each of the hopeful maidens. He didn’t know most of them and he didn’t know how much of a challenge it was to collect their items. If they were like the ones he helped with, he would want to reward the maiden with the greatest challenge. But then, when he looked at the Competitors he remembered helping them so how much real effort did they put into the challenge in comparison to the others? He wanted to ask someone for advice but knew this was his decision to make. He sent out a thread of earth energy to the crowd and made up his mind based on the energy that came back along the thread.

“I chose...”

A loud knock rang through the hall. The heralds opened the doors and in streamed a mixture of humans and wolves. The humans all wore tunics and gowns of rich browns and greys. The coats of the wolves had been brushed to a silky luster. They carefully arranged themselves on the stair as honor guard for the entrance of their god. “Sorry for my late arrival,” apologized Rowulfson. “And I hope you don’t mind my bringing my children with me. It has been ages since they had been to a gala of this magnitude.”

“Your family is ever welcome, Dear Uncle,” said Holly.

“In that case, let me introduce you to them.” He gestured to his right and a black wolf, larger than the others emerged from the shadows of Rowulfson’s cloak. “I believe you have already met my son, Belkaro.”

“So that’s were you have been these past few days,” said Apollo.

Belkaro gave a light snarl. “He says...” Manin started to translate.

“Hold that thought,” said the wolf god. “Let’s see if my niece will grant my wish.”

“And what could I possibly do that you couldn’t on your own?” asked the faerie queen.

“Turn my son human for a day so that he may understand life from his pack leader’s perspective. My magic will work to turn a human into a wolf but not the other way around.”

“You of all people should know that I can’t grant a wish from one person that impacts another,” she held up her hand to stop the god from speaking, “without their permission. Is that what you want?”

Belkaro yipped and walked up to her and sat at her feet. “I will take that as a ‘yes.’ Unless someone objects to my granting a favor to the Wolf God...” she looked around and no one spoke. “Then let

it be done.”

With a dramatic flourish, she touched her wand to Belkaro’s nose. A giant ball of light erupted and engulfed the wolf. When the light faded, a pale skinned youth dressed in a jet black tunic was kneeling in front of the queen. His equally jet black hair flowed over his shoulders. “Thank you.”

“You are welcome.”

“There is one other whom I want you to meet,” announced Rowulfson. He gestured to his right, “I present my daughter.”

A gasp filled the room as a maiden stepped out from behind him. Her pale golden tresses cascaded down to her waist over a forest green gown.

“Iris Angelica?” asked a stunned Adam.

“You know my daughter?” asked Rowulfson.

“My pardon. For a moment I thought my late wife had returned.”

Rowulfson held out his hand to his daughter and escorted her down the stairs. “And you, young prince? What do you think?”

Apollo’s thoughts were racing. He had only seen paintings of his mother but in every way she resembled Queen Daisy’s daughter and Rowulfson’s wife. She locked eyes with him and instantly he was lost in the blue pools that had no end. He went to greet her and realized that he still had the floral crown in his hand. “I may be breaking with tradition, but I name you Rainbow Queen. May I have this dance?” She accepted both the crown and offered hand as the musicians started to play.

Johnny and Manin laughed at the stunned faces of Lily and the others as they watched the prince dance with the wolf princess. “Well played, don’t you think?” asked Johnny.

The musicians moved into a second song and Apollo made no move to change partners. “Indeed. I would say that it is game...”

“Set...,” added Johnny.

“And match,” sobbed the competitors.



Our Brothers and Sisters Behind Bars: Pagans in Prison

By Raven Bear Paws

*The Bill Of Rights
(Ratified December 15th 1791)*

Article I

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.

When I began to write this article it was a kind of personal movement for a friend of mine who I will call Bob. Bob and I met through a letter exchange program called Healing Hands. It was a program designed to help pagans in prison cope with being in jail and issues they had with their faith. When I asked Bob if he was practicing while incarcerated his letters became short and irrational. I pushed to know what was going on, but it seemed like he didn't want to talk about it. Then one day his letters stopped all together. Fearing the worse I took a trip out to the prison to check in on Bob, and what I found out infuriated me. Not only was Bob OK (which was a good thing), but I could see by the look on his face that he was severely depressed. After a short time talking with him I found the root of his problem. Since his incarceration he had been denied any and all right to practice his religion. I had to find out more. After months of threats and willfulness I was granted a meeting with the warden. The stout man was rude to say the least! When I asked him why Bob was being denied his right to practice, the warden simply said Paganism is a false religion and he didn't feel that being a Christian he could allow such a sacrilegious faith to pollute the minds and spirits of the other inmates. Well needless to say this set me off on a rampage. I reminded the warden that Paganism was now a federally excepted religion and he was violating the First Amendment. I have to say this man reminded me a lot of the warden in the *Shawshank Redemption* movie, cruel, uncaring and not going to be moved from his beliefs. It was only after taking the prison to court and an out of court settlement that the warden changed his mind. But was this enough?

According to Wikipedia the amount of incarcerated pagans reached a staggering estimation of fifteen thousand in the year 2009 nation wide. While this number may not seem like a lot, the fact is that number is still growing. This estimation is expected to double by the end of 2010 bringing the total of our brothers and sister behind bars to an estimated thirty thousand if not more.

In 2000, Congress passed the Religious Land Use and

Institutionalize Person Act which guarantees freedom of religion in correctional facilities which accept federal funds. This was upheld by the Supreme Court in 2005, in *Cutter vs. Wilkinson*. Since 2007, religious discrimination cases against pagans in jail have been on the rise. One out of three correctional institutes nationwide has reported religious discrimination against pagans in some way, shape or form. The majority of these cases go unheard or unchanged even though the law clearly states what prison facilities are supposed to allow. When is enough, enough?

Since May 2007, the race relations policy in prison was extended to include religious discrimination, the impact of which is anyone who chooses to declare themselves pagan, or change their

religion to pagan while in prison are entitled to have a pagan chaplain if they so request this. Even though Paganism is now a federally recognized religion, why is it our brothers and sisters behind bars still suffer from religious discrimination? It would seem when we take a step forward we have to take ten steps back. Just this year California defied the Race Relations Policy and created the Five Faiths Policy in their prison system. Which means only the Christians, Jewish, Muslims, Native Americans and Buddhists would be allowed state paid chaplains. This outraged the pagan community of California, but no one has stepped forward to correct this. The Five Faiths Act will be voted upon sometime in 2011.

Unless our voices are heard the act

will be put into place. My question to you is should it stay or should it go?

As of August 1, 2009, the Right to Practice Act was put into place in correctional institutes in Massachusetts. This Act entitles inmates two days off work detail to celebrate two of the pagan Sabbaths, one of which is Samhain the other being of the inmate's choice. The other thing that was granted was a small list of ritual tools and objects with a list of rules to go with them. The list and rules are as follows: tarot cards (for personal use only and an inmate can not divine for another inmate), incense, one piece of jewelry pertaining to the faith, a flexible twig to use for a wand, a hoodless robe, runes and a bag or box to carry them in, the use of wine during rituals is allowed (but only a sip for each person) and skyclad is not allowed at all (which not a bad thing considering it is a prison after all. Sorry Gerald Gardner) While again this is a big step for our brothers and sisters in jail, the question is, is it being enforced? After doing a little digging into the three local correctional facilities nearby, I found that "no" would be the correct answer. And why is this you might ask? The simple answer; because there is no one to monitor what goes on behind closed doors. The



vast majority do not care what happens to pagans (or anyone else for that matter) in prison, but where do we go from here? Where do we begin, and who should make these changes. You? Me? That is the biggest question of them all? What can we do that will help?

When I began my research into pagans in prison and the discrimination they face, I began to wonder what resources were out there to help. I typed into Google "Pagan prison ministries" and got articles on pagans in prisons and not much of anything else. The sad thing was I found maybe a handful of pagan prison ministry sites such as W.A.R.D. (Witches Against Religious Discrimination) Prison Ministry and Witch Vox has six listed. Most sites that I found are specific to a specific state. Do we not care about our people enough to extend our hands in brotherly and sisterly love? Are we just looking for our palms to be greased green before we lend a hand? It's time we took a stance and stand up to the injustice that is going on. I recently began the work for a central data base for pagan ministries, and within a month's time I am hoping to get it up and running. I am currently working with the three correctional institutes here in my home town to better the communications between pagans and the administrations, and thanks to the Right to Practice Act of 2009, Bob is doing much better and leading the religious life, while in prison, he was so desperately missing. It's a small step but at least a bridge is being built to help our brothers and sisters who seem lost in a world of bars.

Information related to this article:

Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Religious_Land_Use_and_Institutionalized_Persons_Act)

[Religious_Land_Use_and_Institutionalized_Persons_Act](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cutter_v._Wilkinson)

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cutter_v._Wilkinson

http://www.justice.gov/crt/housing/housing_rluipa2.php

Five Faiths Act

<http://californiacorrections.crisis.blogspot.com/2010/02/five-faiths-prison-chaplain-policy.html>

<http://wildhunt.org/blog/2010/02/patrick-mccollums-case-hits-the-mainstream.html>

Prison Ministries

<http://www.listenmedia.org/InterfaithPrisonerResources.php>

<http://w.a.r.d.prisonministry.20m.com/>

http://www.witchvox.com/lx/lx_prison.html

Other Court Cases

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Religion_in_United_States_prisons

US Prison Count

http://www.pewtrusts.org/news_room_detail.aspx?id=57795

Full Moon

By Hermes Polyandros

I went walking in the moonlight,
On a Full Moon night;
I went walking in the moonlight.
In the woods, the shadows abounded
In the moonlight the wind made the leaves dance,
Autumn colors muted, silvered under the Full Moon's light.
The winds sighed in the branches
The dark standing in stark contrast
To the silvery moonlight.
There in the Full Moon light,
In the dark of night.

World AIDS Day Prayer

By Hermes Polyandros

Hear us in our prayer, O Divine Spirit.
Hear us and grant this our wish.
Here, on this day, we are gathered to remember those that have
passed into your Grace;
Here, on this day, we are gathered here in the hope of that soon
there shall be a cure;
Here, on this day, we are gathered here that we may call upon
your Gracious Healing for those that are afflicted;
Here, on this day, we are gathered that together we shall bring
peace of mind,
closeness of heart,
the joining of hands;
For those that have passed,
For those that suffer,
For those that find no rest or comfort,
For those that need healing,
of body,
of mind,
and of spirit.
So mote it be.

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The Cubby Diaries: Underwear Night

By Cubby

Have you ever had one of those Facebook moments? You know, where you start thinking of someone whom you haven't seen in years and suddenly, there they are sending you a friendship request usually without a word of hello. Well, Doug wasn't one of those. He actually sent a note along with the hello. It started with "You may not remember me, but we..." How could I not remember him? He was one of the hunkiest guys I knew in college and his profile picture was one I took of him holding the Division Championship trophy for the Men's Gymnastics Team. I had a crush on him but liked his friendship too much to risk making a fool of myself by making a pass at him. He would come over to my room in just his gym shorts fresh from a practice while I sat in my underwear typing up his paper. It was \$1 a page as written or \$5 a page if they actually wanted me to edit the document as I typed. Doug was one of the smart ones. After paying the higher price for a couple of papers, he learned how to self-edit his papers and I never had to add silly little things like commas and quotation marks. Every so often he would ask if I wanted to see what he could do with an exclamation point. I was so tempted to take him up on that but I remembered his pretty girlfriend and didn't want to get caught in that mess. Of all men I've lusted after and had the opportunity to do something about it, Doug is probably the only one I never connected with in an intimate manner.

It was that thought which caused him to be on my mind. Peter was with his mother at a funeral back in Rhode Island. She didn't like traveling alone and Jordan didn't want to go. During one of his calls home Peter told us that he had finally found out the reason why his father didn't go. The deceased had been Shirley's first love. Everything had been set for them to marry when he got shipped to Korea. When he came back, like so many others, he was a changed man and pushed Shirley away. She never lost her love for Frank but had to accept his decision and moved on with her life. Through some old high school friends they connected on Facebook and both realized that they probably were better off with the partners they married and renewed their friendship. Frank's death hit Shirley hard and she knew that she needed to pay her respects. That information made everyone at dinner that night start to think about their own "one that got away." It took me a while to think about Doug. All the faces that came to mind were the ones I wished I hadn't caught. There were a lot more on that list.

After dinner, Kevin and Buck headed back to their house while Sven stayed to help Jim with the dishes. I headed upstairs to check the day's emails and there was the friendship request from Doug. After a couple of quick exchanges in chat mode we agreed that it would be faster to catch up in person so traded phone numbers with a promise of calling to set something up. His last note of the evening made me chuckle when he added "It's going to be so great seeing you!!!!!!!!!!" with a follow up of "See how you are? You still get my exclamation point stuck." He signed off before I could respond.

The following day, Jim and I were shopping when the call came. Doug asked if I was free for dinner that night. I was supposed to go with Jim to the next stop on his tour of various events in the area to round up some volunteers for Doggie Bowl, a bowling tournament/fundraiser for the P.E.N.I.S. Foundation. Jim quickly said that he could do it alone so I agreed to meet Doug.

It was great seeing Doug. I won't say he looked exactly the same as he used to, but who does after 25 years? In this case, he looked better. His baby face had matured nicely and he had that lovely hint of silver threads among his golden mane. He obviously had been keeping in shape, which was to be expected since he was the gymnastics coach at one of the local high schools. At one point I nearly choked when he asked why the two of us had never got it on in college. He knew there were sparks but never understood why there wasn't any fire. I mentioned my hesitation because of his girlfriend. He got a puzzled look on his face as he tried to recall which girlfriend and started to laugh. "You mean Sarah? She's my sister." When I asked why he never introduced us, he said that he knew the perverts on the floor would start hitting on her and that would have been gross.

About halfway through the meal one of Doug's friends passed by and asked if he was going to see him at Ray's party that night. Doug told him that he probably wouldn't since he was catching up with an old friend. Before Stevie flounced away he gave me the look over and declared the Ray would love meeting me. I told Doug that if he really wanted to go to the party we could catch up there just as easily as we could at the restaurant. He explained that it was an underwear party and it was because of the event that he started thinking of me and decided to look for me on Facebook. I laughed and told him that when he called I was out shopping for new underwear for an underwear party. I sent Jim a quick text that I was going to be joining him after all.

The party was in one of those rooftop party rooms with a spectacular view of downtown. We were greeted by Charles, one of our hosts for the evening who informed us that Ray was set up in the back room and to see Stevie to set up our appointment to see him. That struck me as odd. It was Ray's party and we had to set up an appointment to see the host? He informed us that Anthony J. McDoogan, one of the richest men in town, was there and the rumor was that he was looking for someone to take home with him. I heard someone add that his previous boytoy turned 25 so Anthony kicked his out on his rear. "Well that knocks you out of the race doesn't it" commented Charles. "That means less competition for me." The fact that he was likely the eldest person in the vicinity made everyone laugh. As tempted as I was to say something, Jim had long ago accepted that the gossips were going to say what they wanted and it didn't do any good to waste energy on correcting them. We were handed plastic bags and directed to the disrobing area. As I stripped I had to stop myself before I went into autopilot and shucked everything. The brief tenting I saw in Doug's briefs made me tempted to flash a little extra skin but that's when Stevie walked in with clipboard in hand. "Oh, you made it! And you brought the fur fr...your furry friend with you." Doug declined to set up appointments for us so Stevie said he would put us down for back to back appointments at 11. He knew that first time visitors got scared and figured that Dougie would want to hold my hand. I could see Doug cringe and as soon as Stevie left he said that we would be leaving at 10:30. What could be so bad that you deliberately plan to leave the party before meeting the host, who needed appointments to be seen?

-continued on page 18



Cubby Diaries: continued from page 16

We headed out to the party itself. The room was filled with the glorious site of half naked men. OK, so it wasn't that glorious. Now underwear can be sexy but for the most part, this group did not shop at the International Male Outlet. I pictured Josh in his black jockstrap. I superimposed that image on the crowd and began to realize something. I was one of the furriest people present. Doug introduced me around and we wandered over to bar before heading to one of the window seats to continue our conversation. He asked if my friend was there. I could see Jim holding court on the far side of the room. I had to shake my head and stopped myself from laughing at the sight. There were 20 or so folks gathered around him forming a wide circle. Each man was trying to get close to him but not wanting to invade his personal space. I told Doug that Jim was busy in conversation so I would introduce them when things died down.

As Doug and I talked it was almost like time had rolled back. It almost seemed like the old days. Doug talked about all the trials of his gymnastics – the diva children and parents who thought their precious darling should be the next Olympic champion. I sat and listened and once again lusted after his smooth silkiness. He had the lightest arm fur and a small of fur patch over his heart and upper chest. He asked me about all those handsome men in my photo gallery. He said that he wished he could be surrounded by such handsome bears. He had fantasies about being Goldilocks with her three bears. Knowing how my clan would lust after him, I asked him what he really thought about group sex. He admitted it was a fantasy that never came true but if I were one of the bears he might be willing to participate. I reached under the table to adjust myself before my dick escaped its confines.

My lustful thoughts were interrupted by Stevie having an overly loud conversation with folks at the next window seat. He said that it was a shame that such a rich man couldn't afford some electrolysis or laser removal. Stevie said that there wasn't enough money to make him go to bed with a fur freak but he would be willing to see if he was wrong. But even with his money, they couldn't figure out why Charles would let a fur freak in the door and they couldn't wait until he met Ray. Then he would be rich and beautiful. When one of the others nodded in my direction Stevie just told them that was going to being taking care of that little problem soon enough. At their words I had multiple flashbacks and quickly sent a text to Jim.

Do you see a fur freak on your side? No they say he's on your side <next note before I could respond> O Exactly – this is a house of the ultimate evil. Tell your friend hello <next note> Play along. What did the impish member of my clan have in mind? Be nice to him how nice? got plans for after? I saw him first

I had just given Doug Jim's message when Stevie came over to us to take us to our appointment with our mysterious host, Ray. It was that late already? We couldn't come up with a good excuse to escape so we were escorted across the room. As we rounded the corner to meet Ray I let out an involuntary yelp as I faced one of my worst nightmares. There stood an older man with cases of shaving cream and an old fashioned Sweeny Todd type razor. I'm not sure which was brighter, the glint of light off the sharp blade or the gleam in his eye when he spotted my fur. I started to turn and run but was restrained by two of the muscle boys. "Now don't move and it won't hurt a bit," he said.

"Back of Todd, he's my guest not Ray's. In fact, as you can see he's no friend of Ray Zor. In fact, after spending a night with my friend, I don't think Ray is my friend either. He is demanding and constantly needs attention. I'm tired of his sharp tongue." I thought about how he seemed like my knight in white boxers. That image was reinforced as he turned to me. "I'm sorry. I should have thought about that before we came."

"Someone came and I wasn't invited?" Everyone parted as Anthony McDoogan came into the space saying "Here's where everyone went." Indeed, a large crowd had formed. Apparently my furriness had caused quite a stir and they were ready to see my transformation to join their vision of the human race. He started talking about how the rumors were true that he was looking for a lover that night. He had found one and now it was time for him to reveal his choice. "Shouldn't that be at midnight?" asked Stevie. "Do you want to wait that long?" The consensus was no. He started looking over everyone like someone picking out the perfect piece of meat at a butcher shop. He looked at one of my muscled guards and said "You're too hot for me. You're so hot all your fur burned off." Indeed, every hair below the chin was gone. He looked at the guy with the razor and said that he was too cold. Any friend of Ray Zor's is going to eventually be cut by his sharp wit and Jim said he hated blood. He locked eyes with Stevie and slinked over to him. "And you baby..." Stevie was visibly quivering. I wasn't sure if it was in anticipation or in fear of being selected by a fur freak. "...if I wanted someone who looked like a boy, I would pick a boy instead of a man trying to look like one." He wandered over to me and kissed me. "Ah, just right." He gave Doug a kiss. "And you, Goldilocks, would make this bear very happy if you slept in my bed." Doug looked at both of us and grinned as he connected Jim to the bears my photos. "I warn you," he said rubbing his hands on both of our furry chests, "I sleep in the nude and I thrash around and have a hard on most of the night." I don't think either Jim or I saw a problem in that.



Story Game

Chapter 12: by Raven Bear Paws

"Terra! Terrafirma is what I will call him" he said choking back the tears.

"Brightest blessing, what a noble name!" She said touching his cheek.

"You have done well my child. Take care of him and help him to grow. He will be young for many a eon, and it is up to you to make sure he grows big and strong."

"I have but one question for you My Lady!" Brian said almost a whisper. He inclined his head to show his respect for her.

"May I ask you your name?"

Her smile widened and her eyes grew soft. It seemed that every fiber of her being began to ooze love and understanding. Brian could not help but look into her eyes. It was there he could see the whole universe spinning and creating within their depth.

"I, my child have been called many names, for I have lived longer than you can imagine!" Still hold her tender hand to his cheek.

"I am known as Bridget, Dianna, Hecate, Isis, Maiden- Mother-Crone, along with thousands of other names; but to you my child, you may call me Gaia."

Brian fell to his knees and kissed her feet in total worship of the Mother of all creation. Bowed in total submission he sobbed uncontrollably.

"Mother, what have I done to honor such a visit. Surly I am unworthy of such a gift!"

She bent down and touched his shoulder.

"Please my child stand. You are more worthy than you think!"

Brian looked up from the floor through tear stained eyes. He was everything he had every imagined she would be. He began to rise.....

Story Game

Chapter 13: by Phoenix

Brian blinked as he stared at his altar. The candles were nearly burnt down to their holders. "Shit," thought Brian as he quickly blew them out. "Maybe Jeffery was right to be scared of this witch stuff. Man, those were some of the craziest dreams that I have ever had." He felt the warmth of the Pan pendant on his chest.

"At least you are real," he said out loud. He shivered in the cold apartment. The blanket he had wrapped himself in had fallen from his shoulders while he had zoned out at his altar. "It's cold in here. That's what's probably what's affecting my brain. I gotta go someplace to warm up."

He quickly showered and put on three layers of clothes before adding his coat. He didn't really know where he was going but he knew he would know it when he got there. After a while of wondering, Brian noticed something strange. There were times when his new pendant felt like a warm coal against his chest, but at other times it was like an ice cube had been dropped down his shirt. He noticed that when it was getting colder he could reverse his path and it would start to get warm again.

He pulled the pendant out from under his shirt and looked at

the Pan figure. "Are you playing some kind of 'Hot/Cold' game with me?" The figure flared in temperature so that Brian had to drop it. "I take that as a DUH! Well after those dreams, who am I to argue with a necklace? Lead on."

As soon as he gave into the guidance of the necklace Brian began to recognize the path he was taking. It led straight to Midnight Magik, the store where he had first seen the necklace. "Maybe you're right in taking me there. If anyone could help me understand those crazy dreams, it would be them." Knowing where he was going, Brian quickened his pace and soon found himself on the block where the store was located.

He slowed to catch his breath as much as to collect his thoughts. How does one explain what he had been experiencing? As he approached the door, he noticed that the lights were off and the big CLOSED sign was staring through the door. He looked through the glass hoping that someone might still be inside. Maybe he would be able to catch their attention if they were still around. He was about to head home when he felt a wave of cold from his pendant.

"You want me to stay?" He felt the warmth return. "But there is no one here."

"Excuse me," said a tall thin man approaching him. He had a long, triangular face and the curls of his sandy blonde hair almost looked like horns. He was wearing a trench coat, and as he got closer, Brian could tell that he must not be wearing pants underneath because he could see flashes of the hairiest legs imaginable.

"Shit," thought Brian. "Just what I need to cheer me up; a flasher."

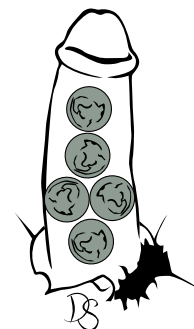
"You must be Brian. I have something for you," said the stranger.

He reached into his pocket and pulled out an envelope and handed it to Brian. As soon as the paper touched Brian's hand, the stranger turned and walked away.

Brian's name was written in purple ink. He turned the envelope over and it was sealed with gold wax. The imprint on the wax matched the Pan of his necklace. Brian stared as the stranger disappeared around the corner of the building. He wanted to chase after him to ask his name and why he knew Brian's name and why he had something for him. But he knew that even if he ran, the stranger would be long gone from sight. He turned his attention back to the envelope.

With trembling hands he started to open the envelope...

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



Medicine Wheel Song

By Hermes Polyandros

Air:

I walk the Path of Remembrance,
A path of voices now silenced
Yet ringing ever in my head.

Fire:

I walk the Path of Remembrance,
A path of visions of you
Walking together under sunlight,
stars, and moon.

Water:

I walk the Path of Remembrance,
A path of tears, pain, laughter, joys,
Feeling all that you were
Now that we are apart.

Earth:

I walk the Path of Remembrance,
A path of stones and brambles and vines,
That send pains of love through my mind,
As I know you are gone

Spirit:

I walk the Path of Remembrance,
Knowing that you were with me,
Knowing you are a part of me
Knowing you will always be there with me,
Though we are apart.

But my heart sings a solo
Of remembering that you were here beside me,
That we walked together in our own light,
That we shared tears and laughter,
That we embraced, touched, kissed.
And that now that you are no longer with me
In remembering you I walk.

With This Light I Remember

By Hermes Polyandros

With this light I remember.
With this light I am closer,
yet far from my love.
With this light I recall tender moments,
fiery heat, cold silence, a smile, a joke, a joy.
With this light I light a path of remembering
that shall light a path for me to travel,
Though we are parted,
Though we do not touch hand in hand in this life;
But with this light I touch, I remember,
And shed a tear of love.



Hurricane Earl

By Hermes Polyandros

Earl, I watched your birth
Off Afric coast
Into the Atlantic winging.
Prediction say with word
Of growing magnificence
Your short life leading.
They say the sea is angry
With your passing,
But is it not a joy they dance high
With your passing?
Roaring bull howling
The Carolinas watching in fear your coming,
But you a joyful dervish
Your dance of heat and water
Towards stupid humans
That fear you, nature's beast
Dances, nearing;
We watch you pass
Seas rolling below your voice,
But you ignore pleas
And pass ignoring
Puny humans, on your mission.
New England watches
Long Island blanches
Your joyous song sung on notes
Poseidon's chariot wheeling
Brushes by your energies
Spent over inhospitable waters.
Maritimes watching you die,
Your tears exceeding
Flooding streets, you die your death
Warming, moistening the northern regions.