



## Publisher's Notes

We at the Airy Faerie apologize for missing an issue, but time just got away from us, and when we took a look at what we had, it was more of a Samhain issue, so we decided to just hold off until now. We are not as young as we use to be, so the thought of pulling a couple of all nighters to crank out a Mabon issue was not an option. We hope you feel it was worth the wait. Now, on with the issue!

"High on a hilltop near your home there stands a dilapidated old mansion. Some say the place is haunted, but you don't believe in such myths. One dark and stormy night, a light appears in the top-most window in the tower of the old house. You decide to investigate, and you never return..." Queue the spooky sound effects.

Greetings Foolish Faeries, and welcome to the Mabon/Samhain issue of the Denver Faeries' Airy Faerie. I am listening to the old "Chilling, Thrilling Sounds of the Haunted House" Disney record, as I get ready for the season. Oh who am I kidding? I have been ready for this season since July! My obsession with ghosts and ghouls is one of the reasons we decided to merge the Mabon and Samhain issues together. Most of the art I submitted for the Mabon issue was more in line with Samhain. You may remember that last issue the cover ghouls went to the beach, and I said in my pub note, that since they were on the cover, it was not a nude beach. Well the little perv in me started wondering, 'What if the ghouls did get naked?' To answer that question I did a few scenes with naked ghouls. The best one appears in this issue. Who knows? You might get to see others next year.

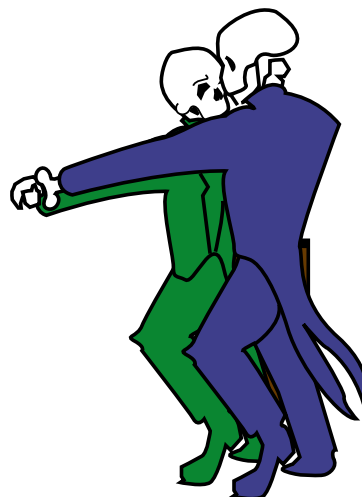
Naked ghouls seems like a good enough lead in to the nudity warning. For anyone new, the Airy Faerie contains nude graphics and writings intended for an adult audience. If you do not wish to view, or read about naked men, or gay sexual situations, please do not go any further. We would also ask that you wait until later if you are not old enough, or on a work or public computer. We don't want

anyone to get into trouble. OK, enough warnings.

Aside from the nudity and sex, the Airy Faerie has a lot to offer. Phoenix takes a look into Mabon and Samhain, in his continuing study of the sacred days. We have a few more cards for the 4-F Tarot. The Quest continues with young prince Apollo stuck in the past. Recent vacations have inspired art and stories including one from our returning guest ghoulish faerie, Lazarus Graves. Cubby shares one of his summer tales. We have a classic piece of poetry from Uncle Walt (Whitman not Disney that is). Tom dropped off a new journal for us to read and use - so thank you, Tom!

OK, enough telling you about the treats in store for you, it is time to turn you loose so that you can enjoy them. I hope you enjoy the Mabon/Samhain issues of the Denver Faeries' Airy Faerie. Enjoy the spirits of the seasons.

Many Faerie Blessing, and Naked Hugs,  
DragonSwan



## Airy Faerie



## Mabon/Samhain 2008

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

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# The Once Great Forest

By Phoenix

Tree trunks twisted in black and white  
Locked in the rigor of fire caused death  
Row after row, ridge after ridge  
Lifeless remains of the once great forest

What cruelty it seems to make them stand  
Forever trapped in the last horror of a flaming death  
Why torture them? Show some respect  
Cut them down and let them rest

"It is not time," I heard on the wind  
"Look around and you will understand."

As I looked again I saw something I didn't see before  
These weren't simply burnt trees  
This was a cemetery of a grand scale  
Arlington and Normandy pale in comparison

Each tree I see is a tombstone  
Marking the grave of the dryad trapped inside  
A grieving Mother has come every year  
To lay flowers on Her daughters' graves.

Year after year Her tears have flowed  
The flowers have grown into a living blanket  
Shading the resting spirits from the heat of the sun  
And keeping them warm in the depth of winter

One day in the stillness of the cemetery  
Under a blanket of flowers  
Mother Earth will cease Her grieving  
It will be time for Her to embrace Father Sky once again

The Mother's tears will turn from grief to joy  
The Father will smile and bless this day  
For it is said that a rainbow shines  
On the day a dryad is born.



# The Cathedral

By Tom

In the woods I found the rib cage of an elk,  
Clean and white,  
No skull,  
Carried off by – wolves, bear, lynx?  
There were ant hills less than a foot away,  
Was this their holy cathedral?  
Did they have their festivals there?  
Milling around,  
Climbing up the ribbed vault  
To see further  
and to try to touch the sky?

# Mabon: His Mother's Son

By Phoenix

This year's study of the wheel has been interesting. We started at Imbolc with a Celtic Goddess, Brid. We moved into Ostara with an Anglo-Saxon Goddess, Ostar. We danced around the maypole to honor Belenos, a Celtic God. We didn't find a central deity at Litha, but found that the origin of the name had Angle-Saxon roots. We celebrated the first harvest festival at Lughnasadh and honored Lugh, a Celtic God. Do you see a pattern here? Cross-quarter Sabbats have Celtic foundations and the quarter Sabbats have Anglo-Saxon foundations. Mabon breaks that cycle and stays with the Celts. For the record it appears that Samhain follows the cross-quarter Celtic origins and Yule goes back to Anglo-Saxon roots. Mabon appears to be the exception to the rule.

Without much needed to be said, this is the Autumn Equinox and the opposite of Ostara. Since I spent a lot of time with the balance aspect of the Sabbats previously, I think I'll go directly to the deity aspect of this Sabbat.

In reading things up to this point, I know that there is a God named Mabon, so we can avoid some of my fears of generic deities. I say "some" because as I dug into this God's background and the harvest festival in his name, I discovered a whole new level of insight in Celtic culture.

Mabon means "Son." The general description of him is a young man and he is often presented as a young version of Apollo...oops, I mean Lugh or Belenos. There I go again, mixing pantheons, but the truth is many people describe him with the Greco-Roman reference rather than sticking with his Celtic roots. Interestingly enough, some of that actually seems to come from the generic deities. The Celtic culture actually covered a vast amount of territory (see the Make You Think for this issue) and each area would have its set of deities. People would recognize the archetypes represented by the local deity and thus it was easy for them to make the connection that Apollo, Lugh and Belenos were really one and the same energies. But I stray from the topic.

Mabon's full name is Mabon ap Modron, which translates to Mabon, son of Modron. Modron is a fairly generic Earth Mother type goddess and her name means "Mother." So Mabon ap Modron is really, "Son, Son of the Mother." It is felt that the relatively base meaning of their names is an indication that these are some of the oldest gods in the Celtic pantheon and their original names have been lost to time. Add to that the fact that Mabon is linked to his mother in name rather than his father puts his origins back to a matriarchal society, which also sets the origins prior to the Tuatha de Danaan, family to Brid and Lugh, and their more patriarchal relationships. So based on his name, Mabon's link to "power" is through his connection with his mother.

This plays out in an interesting way in the few stories that are told of him. There is little said about the things that Mabon did. Rather, his key role is to be a part of his mother's story. The core story is that he was stolen from his mother when he was only three days old. Modron, in the various tales and various incarnations in those tales, is accused of eating her child and is forced into hard labor for her crime. Meanwhile, Mabon is locked away in a magical realm. He is eventually released and returned to his mother. He is now a young man. The tales even weave in King Arthur and his court as Mabon is yet again locked away and the knights rescue him

as part of one of their quests. Age after age it is his fate to be born to the next incarnation of the Mother, only to be taken from her soon after birth and returned to her at some future time as a grown man.

This is all very interesting, but I was missing the connection the deity to be honored at a harvest festival since his other talents are music, horses and hunting. And then on my search, one website (<http://www.widdershins.org/vol3iss4/m9703.htm>) got me thinking (a very common theme this year).

One of the common themes at this harvest Sabbat is the saga of John Barleycorn and his life as the grain that is raised, only to be cut down in his prime to become ale. That is great for the honoring of the cycle of life from birth to death to reincarnation as something else but that didn't help me understand Mabon. What the site added to that story is that the harvest is also centered on the peak of the apple harvest. But unlike the consumption of grain which eats up the seeds of the next crop, the enjoyment of apples (and squash) will still leave you plenty of seeds to plant for future crops. Therein lay the key to enlightenment for me.

Mabon as a child was taken from his mother, locked away and then returned to her. In the common cycle of the year it is often said that child born at Yule later grows up to become the lover of the Mother and thus the father of child born at a future Yule. How does that relate you might ask? Well, Mabon isn't the God of the Harvest. He IS the harvest and more to the point, he is the seeds that will be saved for next year's crops. The Earth Mother was pregnant over the summer and represented the harvest to come. Well, in the time between Sabbats, She gave birth to the crops and now, we gathered those fruits and took them from Her. In the spring, we take the seeds from those fruits and plant the seed in the Mother. That seed grows into a new plant, which then with the Earth Mother's blessings yields a new "child" which is born and then stored away to be planted...and the cycle continues.

With this understanding, to me, Mabon has become more than just a simple celebration of thanks for a bountiful harvest that is complete. It is also celebration of things we have learned that will become seeds of a future harvest. At Samhain, we will have the final harvest and the parent plants will be laid to rest. But at Mabon, the seed of hope for the future has been given that will carry us into the darkening days ahead.

Here are some of the websites visited during this journey:

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

<http://www.tylwythteg.com/Mabon.html>

<http://crystalforest3.homestead.com/mabon.html>

<http://www.geocities.com/articeagle20/celticgoddess.html>

<http://www.joellessacredgrove.com/Celtic/deitiesl-m.html>

<http://www.pantheon.org/articles/m/mabon.html>

<http://caeraustralis.com.au/mabonapmodron.htm>

<http://www.widdershins.org/vol7iss4/03.htm>

<http://www.widdershins.org/vol3iss4/m9703.htm>



# Samhain: A Dark and Mysterious Night

By Phoenix

Of all the Sabbats Samhain and Yule are probably the easiest to understand...well, after you strip away the commercial aspects of Halloween and Christmas that is. Of course, for anyone new to the Neo-Pagan communities that is one of the first tasks that have to be undertaken. To me, the intense feelings of the mega church around their interpretations of these Sabbats only goes to show how strong the energy of the season truly is.

At its simplest, Samhain is the third harvest festival that began back at Lughnasadh which is followed by Mabon. This is the celebration of the final harvest of the season. Crops are dying and tilled back into the earth. Back in the days when people lived a life governed by two seasons, Samhain marked the beginning of winter. Its name roughly translates to "Summer's End." Even though it is a celebration about bringing in the crops, it also engenders a reflective mood. "Did we grow enough this year to make it through winter?" In a ritual context, we often talk about figurative harvest of the things we have done during the year.

That final harvest also translates to the other aspect of the Sabbat which is honoring the dead. Those are the ones who have been taken by the Grim Reaper in his version the ultimate meaning of the word "final." In my mind, the feeling of wondering if we have what we need from this year's harvest is not all that dissimilar to the feeling of loss for the ancestors that we honor at Samhain. Did we learn all we could about making the family secret recipes from Grandmother before she passed? Did Father's firm discipline and insistence that we only get A's pave the way for us to win a Nobel Prize or did it only steal our chance at having a first childhood? Only you know the thoughts in your heart as you stand before the Goddess and place their picture on the altar.

In the mythology of the season, it is often said that this is the time that Persephone descends to Hades to spend her six months in the Underworld. Truthfully, I always thought that was an Ostara/Mabon thing with the equinoxes, but with the renewed understanding of how the Ancients related to the seasons I can see how that story fell to Samhain/Beltaine. In my recent journey, I found a tale of how the Cerna (The Horned One) fell in love with Brighid. Their resulting tryst and children brought the wrath of her father and Cerna was stripped of his oak crown and given one of holly and banished to the Underworld and he becomes Donn (The Dark One). Brighid was allowed to be with him for one season, which was Samhain to Imbolc. At Imbolc she leaves Donn's kingdom and the earth rejoices at her return. Certainly not unlike the Greco-Roman version only this time the duration is just three months instead of six, so by time this story was first circulated we had moved into a four season year. (for the fuller version of the tale go to <http://www.paganforum.com/index.php?topic=15642.0>)

In keeping with the thread for this year, who is the deity behind the Sabbat? Part of the myth of the season has the Horned God dying, buried and he will be reborn at Yule. Another part has the Earth Mother going either into mourning or just taking a rest after her long labors of the harvest. She presides over Samhain in her form as the Crone. If you have been following this series this year you probably know my feelings about generic deities. I will admit that I have come to accept them at one level since in the generic they are the archetypes of the deity rather than a specific one. This

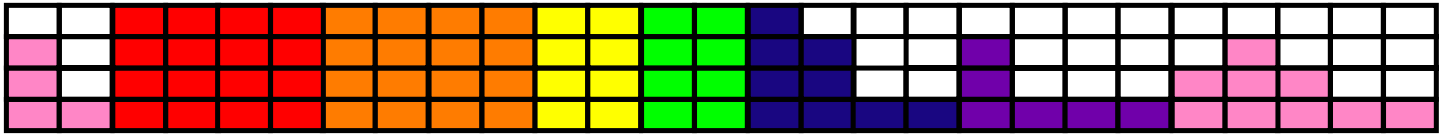
probably allows us to speak to the universal energy rather than being caught up in a sole manifestation of the divine. It does not mean I have to like it.

It once was said that Samhain was named after the god Samhain, God of the Dead, the Celtic version of Hades or Pluto. Modern scholars, being who they are and having to have proof, have discredited the existence of a god with this name. They say that there is no evidence in any ancient text that mentions him by name. They claim that the use of the celebration as the god's name comes from some 18<sup>th</sup> century writings and all newer references come from that original mistaken identity. Some scholars believe that the name is related to Samana, an Aryan God of Death. As I think about this mysterious god, I have come to the conclusion that we probably won't know his name until we are ready and he comes to guide us into his shadowy kingdom.

I think that the fact there are no ancient texts about this god is a reflection of the writers own fear of death. This seems to be a case of those people recording the oral stories not wanting to face mortality and thus avoided recording the tales about the Dark Lord and Lady. If you don't write it down, they won't exist. As I think about how the world was back then, Death was probably a common houseguest and people didn't need those stories because everyone knew the Dark Lord and Lady already.

There is much that I could wish to say but I will leave you with this thought that was given to us during the trip to Mesa Verde. Our relationship and image of Death has changed since those early times. For the people of Mesa Verde the average life expectancy was only 35 years. The face of the Sage/Crone was that of someone in their 30s. If we have changed during that time, so too has the vision of Death. This is probably why we of the modern world don't recognize his signs in the ancient world.





## The 4-F Tarot: The Growing Deck

by Phoenix

I will add my apology to DragonSwan's for a skipped issue but sometimes you just have to stop what you are doing and catch up on other things. This is pretty much the situation that our Kween of Earth (page 15) has found herself. Whatever has been keeping her busy she has finally had to stop and catch up on the laundry that has been piling up. Let's face it, we all have been there at some point in our lives. How many times did we procrastinate a school or work project via fun distractions with friends only to find us burning the midnight oil to get something done that we had known about for a month? Or maybe you are like me and don't even think about starting to do the laundry until you have run out of clean socks.

In our case, part of that distraction was a week long vacation to Southern Colorado. DragonSwan shares some of that adventure elsewhere. But it wasn't all fun and games on the trip. We actually spent some time fleshing out some things related to the deck. As we drove through the farm country in the mountains, we realized some small things that needed to be added to the Ostara and Mabon cards that were featured last year. As we saw the turkey vultures gliding on the afternoon thermals, we realized that our original vulture card needed to be updated. The more cartoonish nature of that first card (and truly that was the first new card that DS created) was not matched in other cards. With the inspiration of the living creatures, DS has updated the card to the one you see on this page.

Next to change in our discussions were the Magic of the Elements cards. The vision had been for those four cards to be something related to humans transforming to become something different as was the case with the mermaid last issue. As we reconnected with nature and its majestic grandeur we realized that

we may have been trying too hard. These four cards really needed to be about the element itself. For this issue, we decided to feature the Magic of Fire. Now, with that thought, I was tempted to focus on the fire at its inferno best but that image will be part of the God of Fire. Instead, as we walked through the burnt remains of a once great piñon forest, that was the image that spoke to us. Seeing the long lasting aftereffects of the raging fires is more haunting than seeing the fire doing the damage. And seeing the Great Mother reclaiming and rebuilding is a testament to the universal life cycle. The result of that image can be found on page 3. And in case you are wondering, the mermaid lives on in the Magic of Fins, which is probably a good thing since I hadn't been 100% certain what that card was supposed to look like.

That leaves me the third card for this issue, the Bathroom, that is staring at you on the opposite page. This is one that has puzzled people when they have gone through the working deck. I think that is one of the reasons I like this card so much. It makes you think just a little bit.

In the past, I have said that one of the best ways to get to understand, and thus use, this deck is to step inside the card. Don't look at them as a detached picture where you spend a lot of time analyzing the nuances of color choice. This is a card about putting yourself in that situation. Maybe you really have to go pee and walk into the scene before you. There is already a line and at least two of those guys look like they are ready to play and probably won't be in a rush to vacate their spot. The gentleman in green is probably wanting to prolong the stay because the playful pair is probably getting hard and he wants to watch.

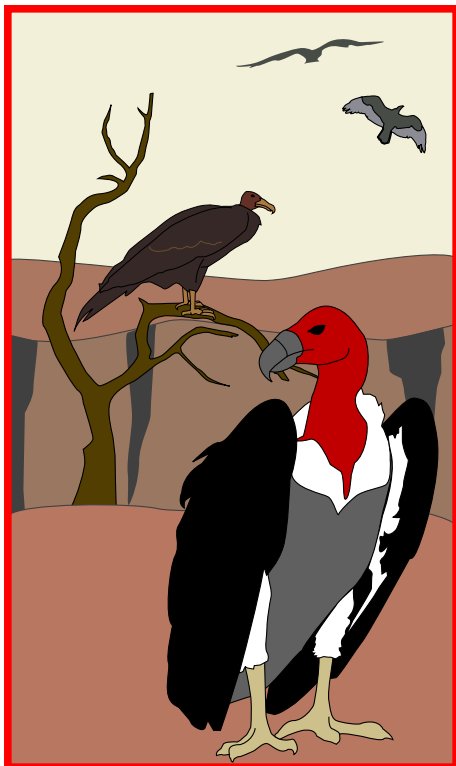
Or what runs through your head as you are standing there and the guy next to you is working on closing a business deal while peeing? Or how would you react if you were standing there and something grabbed your tush? Or have you ever called one of the people who put up ads over a urinal?

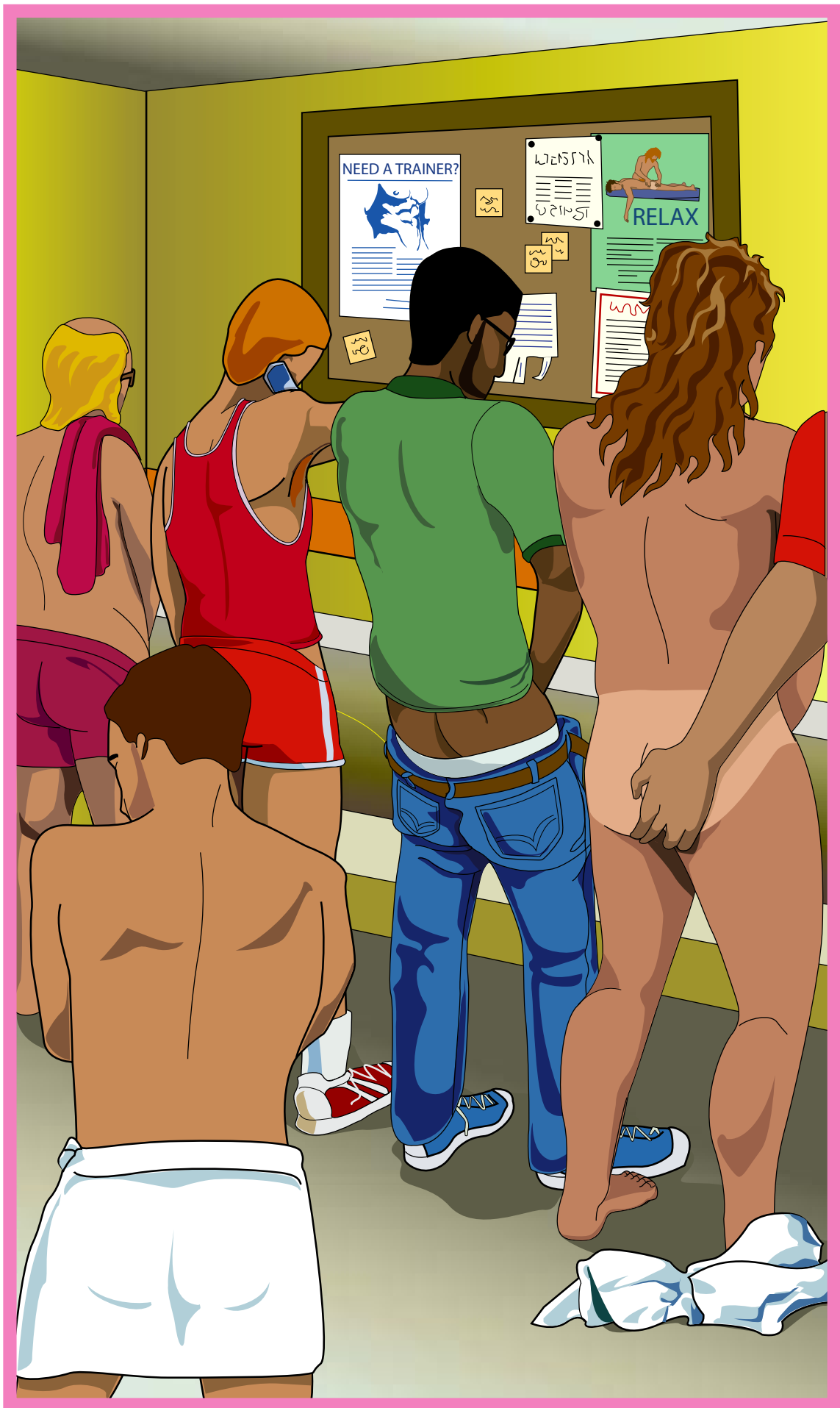
This card is partially about patience. There is something that you really want/need to do but you have to wait your turn. It is partially about hurrying up and getting the job done because people are waiting for you to finish. It can be about doing something you have to do (in this case peeing) while continuing to do something else (in this case talking on the cell phone). It could be about seeing the writing on the wall and taking action on what you saw.

It can be about the excitement you might feel about being naked while everyone else is clothed. How did you feel when someone grabbed you? Is that what you wanted? Or did they make the mistake of assuming that nudity equals sex?

Maybe it is as simple as just about having to go to the bathroom. Things have been building inside and you just have to unzip and let it go.

And lest I overlook another obvious possibility, do you think I could get you to look beyond that line of butts for just a moment? Did you see the urinal itself? Maybe it is just one of those days that you feel that the world is pissing on you.





# Quest for the Crystal Phoenix

## Chapter 30: The Unwanted Wedding Guests

by Orpheus

Queen Amaranth and Apollo stood in shock at the sight of the thousands of people gathered before them. They were standing in a meadow outside the palace in Resquad. Apollo kept trying to image how small this castle looked in comparison to the one he knew with all of the expansions that occurred over the five hundred years to his time. He kept imagining that the place they stood was destined to become the center of the Garden of the Queens in his time. In the barest whisper that was more wind than words, she said, "Just a little different than my coronation last year, isn't it? I haven't seen this many people in one place since King William took up his crown."

Just then, the fanfares started that announced the arrival of Queens Daisy, Ruby and Angelina and King Angelo on this their triple wedding day. Or was it quadruple? Apollo wasn't really sure since Angelina and Angelo were marrying the same person, Queen Amaranth's sister, Princess Aster. It had all started with Daisy's announcement that she was going to marry Laika, the Wolf Prince, as soon as the mourning period for her departed father was over. Apollo still smirked each time he thought of the fact that the former king hadn't died. Rather he had departed to places unknown and didn't want to be king anymore. Right on the heels of that announcement was Amaranth's coronation. It had taken two months for all of the guests to arrive. In the meantime, Angelo had fallen madly in love with Princess Aster, who had been responsible for tending to the burns he received the Night of Phoenix Fires as it had come to be called. During those months, the two sailed to his home in Adbalm to pick up his sister to bring her to the coronation. During the return trip, Angelina likewise fell in love with the Faerie Princess. Aster claimed it was due to her mixed gender history and she alone understood the dual needs of the twins. Whatever it was, Apollo was happy to see all three of them happy.

As the cousins discussed dates that would allow each to be at the other's wedding, they decided to ask Ruby Rose if she would host the double/triple wedding since her kingdom was located between their own. She quickly agreed since not only did she want to do it for her cousins, they all agreed that it would do much in relieving tensions between her country and theirs. Her people still felt that Rysbal was responsible for the death of their former queen's mother and that Adbalm was responsible for the death of their king.

The multiple wedding would do much to show the nonsense in such a belief.

With everyone gathered for the coronation, none were more surprised that day than Amaranth when GoldenRod, her husband, asked to be released from the family contract that had bound him to Amaranth so that he could marry his true love, Ruby Rose. Apollo could easily remember the dramatics that followed that announcement. GoldenRod finally won Amaranth's blessing by reminding her that in their one hundred years together, they only

had one fairly non-magical child and the fault must be his. Amaranth was destined to be a great queen and she deserved to have an equally great king at her side who would sire the next great queen. Already people were looking to Raven StormCrow as the hero of the Phoenix Fires and most had wondered why Amaranth hadn't brought him to her side already.

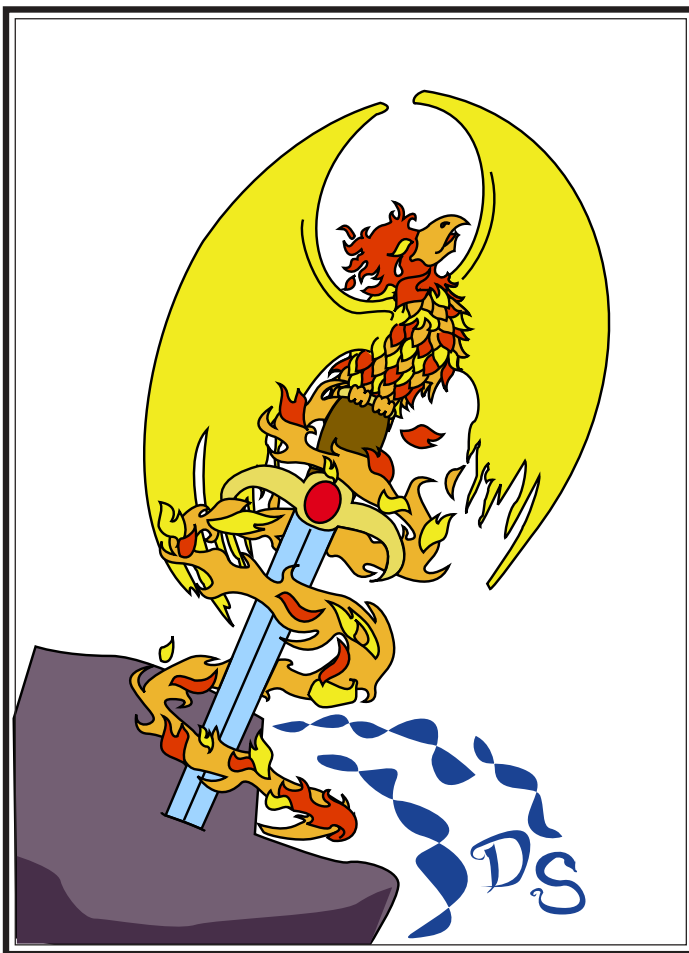
With each addition to the wedding plans Apollo sighed since he knew that it would only delay his going home. "Just after we finish this we will help you," they said but he knew that another 'this' would come along to prevent them from helping.

"I know what you are thinking and this time will be different," whispered Amaranth. "But that is later. It's showtime."

Apollo looked up in time to see Princess Iris skipping down the aisle casting petals in front of the royal procession. Apollo was amazed that she had grown so much in a year but Laika assured him that rapid growth in the first year was common for wolves. At

one year, her wolf body was nearing its mature size so it was only natural that her human body would need to try to match as quickly as it could. He promised that she would live a full human lifespan despite the early growth spurt.

Following behind the princess was Laika, dressed in a flowing robe in the earth tones that matched his fur when he was in wolf form. It stood in stark contrast to the vivid colors that Apollo could see lined up behind him but he had little thought of the aesthetics of the colors of the day. He missed his friend. They hadn't had time alone since Laika took up the responsibility of being a father to his brother's child. Any time they had been together during the past year was filled with the tales of Iris's latest antics. The opportunity for even a quick wrestling match had never presented itself. Apollo





had felt so cut off from the life of his friend that he had long stopped his habit of sending an earth magic hug.

"Go ahead," whispered the faerie queen. "He needs it as much as you do."

"Are you learning to read minds like your brother?" he whispered back.

"I don't have to. It's on your face. He looks to you as his pack leader, so a little energy from you will go a long way to calm his nerves. He is just beginning to realize how cut off from the pack he really has become."

Apollo did as both his great-grandmother and his heart told him to do. He was surprised by the energy that came back through the connection. Apollo got the strong feeling that Laika wanted to strip off his robe and have a wrestling match in front of the gathered guests. The prince smiled at the thought and sent back a thought of his own. "I'd still win."

"I'm counting on it," came the response.

Behind Laika came GoldenRod and Angelo. Each were in court robes, similar to Laika's only theirs were in pinks and lavenders and sparkled with the thousand's of bead and gems that covered them. It had taken Amaranth the better part of a month to make the pair of robes. Apollo noticed a pained look on GoldenRod's face every few paces.

"Is he alright?" he whispered.

"Oh dear," she gasped. "I think I forgot to take out the pins when I stitched his slippers. Oh well. Too late."

Before Apollo could spend much time wondering how deliberate that forgetfulness was, the fanfare swelled and the guests turned to witness the arrival of the brides. The four were gathered in a group. Their gowns were nearly matching except for the vivid colors of the elements. Queen Daisy broke the tableau and led the quartet in her gown of bright yellow. Following her was Queen Ruby in her gown of flame red. Queen Angelina was in the blues that were the watery home of her mother. Princess Aster, in the greens of the forest, was given the place of honor at the end of the procession since she was the eldest of the brides. Apollo had seen Amaranth working on the gowns and had even helped, but at this time his only thought was how he wished his grandmother was there to see them. He got a tear in his eye at the thought of how she longed to see some of the dresses of her mother's making and here he was seeing some of her greatest gowns.

When all had finally assembled in front of them, Queen Amaranth addressed them. "Each of you has made the commitment to people who look to you as leaders," and looking directly at Daisy and Laika, "and as parents. Are each of you prepared to make the commitment to give up your life as an individual and to be forever joined as part of a couple?"

"We do," came the unison response.

"Then let us call forth Those who will join us to bless this special day."

At the sound of the trumpets, a flash of light returned everyone's attention to the back of the gathering. The ball of light split and formed itself into four figures. Aphrodite, the Goddess of Love, linked her arm into Lord Apollo's offered arm. The two advanced

down the aisle, arms waving to all, much like the return of two beloved rulers. The other couple was Dion and a dark haired goddess that the prince did not recognize. Apollo could sense some tension in that couple. He noticed that the Moon God started down the aisle without offering his arm to his companion. It was only at a hiss from her that he halted so she could join him. While the first divine couple was all love and charm, Dion and his lady brought an air of discord. The prince had never felt such energy from his second godfather.

Apollo had the barest time to think about that, for Aphrodite had already started to bless the couples. She spoke to the couples in a voice for their ears only. When each nodded at her, she addressed the gathered witnesses and asked if anyone has reason that any of the couples should not be joined. Complete silence reined, not even a bird wanted to chirp at that moment.

"I have a reason," shouted a deep voice in the back.

"And I as well," came another.

Suddenly the gathered people found themselves surrounded by hundreds of wolves. Their teeth were flashing in the bright sunlight. At the sight of the wolves, a guard jumped from the crowd to stand front of Queen Amaranth. The guests screamed and started to run but the ring of wolves made them rethink that decision and pulled toward the center of the meadow.

"You can stand down, Hilda. My brother won't harm us," said Amaranth. "Will you Rowan?"

"No," he said, "but I should since you forgot to invite me."

"We did not," protested Princess Aster. "I told you about it and you said that you would never come running to me like some lap dog and be expected to do tricks for our entertainment."

"Well, I certainly provided some entertainment that's for certain. This is one wedding that your guests will never forget." Rowan ran forward and grabbed Aster by the waist and swung her around. "You look gorgeous." He looked at Angelo and Angelina and said, "You take good care of her. I know where you live." He gave a snarl and stepped away from his sister.

"Was that it?" asked Amaranth in a somewhat disgusted tone. "Did you have a real objection or was it simply enough for you to disrupt the proceedings?"

"Oh, my objection isn't with them. It is with that cur," he said pointing at Laika. "He is taking my mate and has yet to prove to the Council that he has what it takes to claim that which is mine."

Without a word, Rowan leapt at Laika. All were surprised when he suddenly flew sideways and landed with a thud. He tried to stand up but a gust of wind knocked him down again.

"You are welcome to keep trying," said Laika, "but I have learned things since we last fought. My human heritage comes with some gifts that I had never thought to explore until our pack leader encouraged me." He shouted to all of the wolves. "What say you all? Have I met your challenge or shall I send you flying as well?"

The wolves sat on their haunches and howled.

"Well done," said Wolfsun as he strode to the front of the assembled guests. "I have one question for the Queen." He placed a paw on the hem of her skirt and suddenly Daisy was transformed

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into a wolf. Her dress lay in a heap around her. Laika quickly changed to his wolf form and pushed the god away from his bride. He snarled as the god turned to face him.

"How dare you!" shouted the dark haired goddess. "She is mine to manipulate, not yours."

"Claws in Hecca," replied Wolfsun. "I know for a fact that she is not among your favored children, so I would think you would appreciate some assistance in reminding her of her basic instincts." He put a paw on Daisy and she returned to human form. Unfortunately for her, the dress did not magically reform around her. A quick flash from Amaranth's wand quickly corrected the situation.

"How dare you..." started Daisy.

"Silence," commanded the Wolf God. "I did dare and I had my reasons. How are you to know what your husband and child are feeling in their blood without having a taste of it yourself? Now look inside and tell me what you felt before you loose the memory."

She admitted to a feeling of awareness that she had never felt before. Each sense seemed to be stronger. She could smell the fear of the people. But most important, she could feel the absolute devotion of Laika as he stood up before his god."

"And would you do the same thing in return?"

"If you ever lay a filthy paw on me or mine again, I will rip it off with my bare teeth."

"Spoken like a true wolf. I remove my objection to this union. She has proven herself of sufficient spirit to be the mate of a pack leader."

"Aphrodite, if you please," said Amaranth, "the mood has been broken. Do you think you can do something the restore the feelings we held earlier?"

Apollo felt a wave of pure love wash over him. He added some calming earth energy in its wake. The people who had been huddling together began to relax and were soon settled back in their places.

The couples began to exchange their vows, but the prince barely noticed. Once Wolfsun had identified the dark haired goddess as Hecca, he began to study the patron of both Daisy and the former Queen of Rianglet. She moved with the sensuality of a cat. But he was surprised to see Dion back away each time she tried to get close to him. It was obvious to the prince that Hecca wanted more from the Moon God than he was comfortable giving.

Of equal interest to him was the lack of exchanges between Lord Apollo and Dion. In his time, the two were lovers and yet, at this moment Lord Apollo seemed to be hopelessly devoted to the Love Goddess. The two were always holding hands as if they were afraid of loosing the connection between them. With the exception of Hecca, these gods had been at his father's wedding and nothing seemed familiar as he watched the interplay between them. He gave up trying to figure it out and concentrated on the Dark Mistress. She seemed to be splitting her concentration between Dion and one of the guests but he never could quite figure out whom. He was so lost in that task that Amaranth had to nudge him to create the fireworks that were planned to conclude the ceremony. He had the spell prepared and sent the final energy to trigger the display.

The gods led the recession followed by the royal couples. As Apollo escorted Amaranth he heard the heralds begin the

announcement of the names of the people selected to attend the formal wedding banquet. With guests from three kingdoms, there was no simple way to seat everyone in the Great Hall, so it was decided to randomly select names from those in attendance. The rest were to be treated to a less formal feast on the castle lawns. There were squeals of delight as people realized that they were to be guests at the main feast.

Apollo felt torn. He wanted to be at the banquet but the Great Hall was nothing like the one he had known growing up. The cold stone walls were nothing like the warm wood panels installed by a future ruler. A part of him wanted to be with the revels outside so that he wouldn't have to face his feelings toward Laika or for the two gods whom were his friends and patrons. The combined feeling left him out of sorts and wanting to run away. But duty won out and headed toward the castle. Based on the receiving line that the cousins were going to have to endure, he knew that he would have time to work out some of his feelings so that he could enjoy some of the celebration without the cloud of doom.

The prince arrived in his quarters where a light meal awaited since it would be several hours before the banquet would be served. As he ate, a loud argument arose from the next room which was followed by loud crashing and a slamming door. He ran to his door to see if he could be of assistance. As he peered out of his door he saw Hecca storming down the hall while little flashes of lightning swirled around her. Dion stood in the next doorway, blood spreading down the arms of his tunic from the shard of glass that was embedded in his arm.

"Hold still," said Apollo.

He quickly grounded and poured healing energy in one hand while grabbing the shard with the other. In a single swift motion he pulled out the glass and covered the wound with the other hand. Dion covered the prince's hand with his own.

"I think I can take that from here," said the god.

"No, please let me. It is the least I can do to repay you for training me in the first place."

"I did?" said a puzzled god. "Oh, right, with you that is I will teach you someday. Next note to self, teach wound healing as soon as possible when we meet."

"It was actually several months after. I think it was about our tenth training session which was right after your birthday party."

"Whenever it was, it must have been in time for you to master the trick before coming back to this time." Dion raised his arm and flexed the muscle. "Nicely done. I can't feel anything and you did all of the work. You are destined to be a great healer in your time."

"With your training, could I do anything less? I certainly would not want to embarrass my teachers."

Dion stripped off his blood stained tunic. Apollo went to the nightstand and wet a cloth. He washed away the caked blood. "So caring and courteous. So unlike Hecca. You make me glad that I made the decision I did."

"Which is?" prompted the prince.

"Which is not important right now." He reached over and rang a bell for a servant. "Now take off that tunic. You cut yourself on that glass shard and have been bleeding on it since we started talking."

Apollo hadn't noticed but did as directed. He started to direct his healing energy toward himself, but with the barest brush of his hand, Dion had already closed the wound. He washed away the blood and tossed both rag and tunic to the servant who answered his call. "Please have these cleaned. The prince will be visiting me this afternoon. Please have his evening attire brought here so that we may have the fullest of time together."

The servant exited. "That really won't be necessary. My room is right next door."

"Humor me. By now, everyone in the palace probably knows that Hecca is not in my quarters so they will think that they will be able to come and have a private audience with a god. Now, the word is that I have regal company which will return some level of privacy to my afternoon."

"Why not just shimmer out as I have seen you do before?"

"I could, but I don't want to," said the god. "From my perspective, I first met you, what is it now? a year and a half ago? and yet I barely know you. This seems like the perfect opportunity to spend some time with my future godchild."

A knock on the door announced the return of the servant with the prince's clothes. A second servant followed with a tray of food similar to the one left uneaten in his quarters. "The Faerie Queen sends a reminder that you need to replenish your energy after this morning's display." The two bowed and exited.

Dion reached for some cheese. As he soon as he had finished the slice, he stripped out of the rest of his formal clothes. "Don't be shy," said the god. "No one will dare come in here and discover that Moon God is really a Nude God. Besides, your pants look as confining as mine and I can't imagine how anyone can get energy flowing with everything bound up so tightly. How I long for the days when loose comfortable caftans were the fashion rage."

It didn't take too much encouragement for the prince to strip and share the tale of when he helped celebrate the god's birthday. Dion said that sounded fun and wondered when the tradition got started since he wasn't familiar with that particular party in his honor.

"Based on the gleam in your eye, I am guessing that the tradition will start in the next couple of years," said the prince. Dion just nodded in agreement.

Apollo spent the afternoon telling the god all about his family and friends. He tried to avoid saying too much more about Dion's future self and the god didn't try too hard to find out. Rather, Dion asked a lot of questions about the Sun God. He said that since one was on duty during the day and the other at night, he knew little about his counterpart. With a shared godchild in the future, he wondered about what they had in common that would allow them to have dual guardianship over a single person.

All too soon the fanfares could be heard that announced the royal couples departure from the meadow after thanking the last guest for attending the wedding. Based on the hour, Apollo knew that it would still be a few hours before the bells would chime to call people to the feast. As he looked out the window a tear came to his eye.

"What's wrong?" asked Dion.

"It's silly, I know, but I don't want this afternoon to end. This room is mine back in my time and it has felt so nice to talk to you.



Of all the people I have met, you are one of the few that I already know. After you leave, I'll go back to being just the stranger in a foreign land again."

"Maybe I should try to make more time for visits." Dion stood up and walked over to the prince and pulled him into an embrace. The familiar touch of the god unlocked anything that the prince was holding back and tears began to flow.

"What's wrong" came Lord Apollo's voice as he shimmered into the room. Seeing Apollo crying in a naked embrace, his concern quickly turned to rage. "What are you doing Dion? Taking out your anger with Hecca dumping you on a mortal who looks to you?"

"Is that what she is saying?" huffed Dion. "Why am I not surprised? It was the other way around and I'm glad for it."

It took Dion a few minutes to convince the Sun God of the innocence of the situation with the prince and what had prompted the tears. "If you can be spared from Aphrodite's presence for the next couple of hours, why don't you join us and get to know our god child better."

"I think I'll do just that. She is giving beauty treatments to the queens right now, so I am free to join you." Lord Apollo quickly stripped and plopped down in one of the chairs. His legs were spread wide and he grabbed his cock and made a show of adjusting himself before putting his hands behind his head. "What are you staring at Dion? I have always told you that things grow better in day light and that includes cocks."

"Well there are showers and growers," retorted the Moon God, "And thankfully, I'm both."

"I guess things do look bigger in the dark," replied the Sun God as he stroked himself to fullness. "And luckily I'm in the both category as you can see. So far I'm not seeing much growing on your side of the room."

"I don't want to embarrass you in front of your namesake," stammered Dion, but the sight the prince getting hard at seeing his

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namesake's stiff cock had started a reaction of its own. He gave his growing cock a few strokes to encourage it to grow to its full size.

Continuing to stroke himself, Lord Apollo pulled the prince to his side. "Now, you get to be the judge. Which of us has the more divine rod? Measure mine and then measure his."

The prince spread his fingers as wide as possible and he placed his hand on the Sun God's cock. For all of the time he had seen the god naked and even had some jerk off time with him while his father and Rondar spent time alone, he had never touched the god's cock. It was that rule that prevented the god's from getting too sexual with virgins. He was not about to remind them of that rule now. His hand span was too short to go from base to tip so he had to mark the length on one arm with his hand.

When he measured Dion, the loser accused the prince of moving his hand and thus changing the size of the other. The prince was beginning to think that was possible because each time it seemed like the other god was the winner. In the end, the prince told both gods to stand in front of him and lay their cock heads on his hand and then step toward each other. When the tip of one touched the skin of the other, they would know the winner.

The gods put their cocks tip to tip in the prince's hand. Apollo wrapped his hand around both so that they would stay evenly tilted. At the contact of both Sun and Moon energies, he felt himself shoot a load without touching his own cock. The jolt was felt by the gods

and they too released streams of cum.

Lord Apollo collapsed into the chair. "Man, I needed that. Aphrodite had me all worked up when the call came to help the queens freshen up before the feast tonight. I was just going to take matters in my own hand when I felt your distress. That was certainly unexpected. Do we do that in your time?"

"Not yet," said the prince. "I think you have said something to the effect that I wasn't ready yet."

"I had been go get cleaned up before Aphrodite finds out. She'd say something about how I wasted all that energy on a mortal. See you at the feast." With that he grabbed his clothes and shimmered out.

The prince heard Dion mutter something. It sounded like "It wasn't wasted," but it was too soft to be certain. He noticed that the Moon God was a lot quieter than he had been before.

"Are you alright?"

"I'm just tired." He laid down on the bed and patted for Apollo to stretch out with him. As he did so, the god wrapped his arm around him in a familiar manner and soon the two were dozing.

The dinner bells woke them and they quickly dressed and headed to Queen Ruby's quarters where they were to gather with all of the honored guests to make the grand entrance. Hecca was noticeably cool to Dion and demanded that the procession be changed to allow the gods to enter as individuals. Ruby looked at her cousin for





guidance in dealing with her patron. Daisy merely nodded in agreement and Ruby sent the change in plans to the heralds.

Somewhere in those messages, she also managed to slip in a seating change. Apollo knew he was to sit at the end of the head table but he was surprised to see that his companion was Dion rather than his great-grandmother. She was busy deflecting the daggers of icy stares that Hecca was sending towards her former lover. Amaranth, in turn, was still being cold to her former lover who was seated beside her with his new bride and hadn't really forgiven her sister for deserting her to marry the twins. Apollo himself was avoiding watching Laika too closely. He was happy for his friend but missed his company. Daisy was busy watching Hecca and was constantly trying to see what her patron was staring at. Ruby was busy trying to keep everyone entertained with amusing stories. Apollo could see Hilda, Aster's daughter, prowling the outskirts of the gathering as if she anticipated trouble. Apollo thought it a trick of his eyes but it looked like she was everywhere but then he realized that after the wolves' appearance that morning, Hilda must have finally convinced the queen of the need for more protection and the Hilda Guard had finally been created. The only center of love at the table was focused on Aphrodite and Lord Apollo. The prince had to force himself to look away when they started feeding grapes to each other.

As dinner concluded, Ruby rang a small bell. As the clear crystal tone penetrated the din of the feast, everyone fell silent. "As is tradition, now is the time for us to present a token of our love for each other. My husband has asked to start."

She reached over and gave GoldenRod a kiss. He stood and walked to where Aster was seated and she joined him. Together, the two faeries walked around to the front of the table and faced Amaranth.

"Our Queen," said GoldenRod, "we have both pledged our love to mortals. For that we apologize for any hurt you may feel at our leaving the faerie community but there is only one gift that we can give to our mates that will show the depths of our love for them."

GoldenRod and Aster joined hands and started to grow several more inches. Apollo watched in the anticipation of horror as he realized that both had decided to follow Rowan and give up their faerie powers. As he hit the height of sixty-nine inches, GoldenRod started to double over in pain but quickly righted himself. Aster on the other hand collapsed on the floor as she struggled against the height barrier. Angelo and Angelina rushed around the table to her side.

"You don't have to do this for us. Stop the pain and shrink back down," they pleaded.

But it was too late. Aster pushed a little harder and suddenly a bright flash radiated out from her. As the light faded and eyes readjusted, a male figure was laying in the tatters of Aster's dress.

"Ambrose?" gasped Amaranth.

He looked at his hairy arms. "I guess there was a way to reverse the spell after all. Who knew?" He looked at Angelo and Angelina. "Does this change how you feel about me?"

"No," they said in unison.

Amaranth waved her wand and the tattered dress reshaped itself around Ambrose to match the garments worn by Angelo. Apollo

watched the trio and thought about Viola's curse. He wondered if that would help her and whether or not she would be willing to pay the price to try.

Lord Apollo prevented him from following that thought any further. The god stood up with goblet in hand. "Let me be the first to wish King Angelo, Queen Angelina and Princess Ast...um...Prince Ambrose many happy years to come."

He raised his goblet high as people cheered. The prince noticed Hecca getting a gleam in her eye and her lip started to curl in an evil smile. She caught the attention of an old woman at the first table and the smile grew. Something felt very wrong so the prince quickly opened himself to the energy around him and blackness surrounded every goblet in the room.

"Stop!" he shouted. "It's poison!"

But it was too late. Lord Apollo had already brought the goblet to his lips and downed the contents in a single gulp. Before the prince could take one step toward his god father, Lord Apollo collapsed on the floor.

"Poison? Ha!" snorted Hecca. "He's like all men and can't hold his alcohol. Drink your toast to the royal triad."

Her words had no effect and the sound of goblets dropping to the floor filled the room.

The old woman that Hecca had been watching was the only one not stunned by the death of the god. She alone started to head towards an exit.

"Stop her!" commanded Queen Ruby. "Even clouded in illusion I should have recognized my mother."

Belladonna started to run but the nine Hilda's flew across the room to surround her. Facing the points of nine swords and spears, the former queen dropped her illusion and called to the guards.

"Are you going to stand there and let these faeries pull weapons on your queen?"

"You are no longer their queen, mother. I am," said Ruby. "What punishment is fit for one who caused the death of a god?"

"Death!" shouted the guests.

"So let it be," ordered Ruby.

"Stop," commanded Hecca. "She is mine. I alone have the right to kill her."

"What?" gasped Belladonna. "I succeeded in killing a god for you why would you be angry at me?"

"You promised to take out the entire Charming family and yet they stand witness to that failing. You failed and have brought dishonor to my name. You seem to favor the guise of the crone, so a crone you shall be until the day you die or can deliver your promises."

A bolt of lightning flew from Hecca's hands and hit Belladonna in the chest. The Hildas backed away from the crackling energy and in its midst stood a withered crone. Belladonna screamed in terror.

"Now get out of my sight until you can bring the last member of the Charming royal line to be executed in front of me as proof of your faithful devotion," commanded Hecca. Another bolt of lightning struck the ground at Belladonna's feet to start her running. "If any of you catch her, she is now yours to do as you will. No favors do I grant her until she fulfills her promises."

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Daisy stopped Hecca before she could exit. "Release me as well. I know I no longer have your active protections and will need to seek assistance of the gods if I am to help protect my family."

Gesturing at the sobbing Aphrodite, "Who do you think could aid you? One of these weak fools? I don't know why I wasted my time with you. You are released"

"Thank you. I call upon Wolfsun, God of my husband, to come to our aid and clear this room of those who would harm us."

Wolsun appeared in front of Hecca. His bared teeth shone brightly in the dim light of the room.

"This could be interesting," said the goddess. "No need to be rude. I know when I'm not wanted. May today be but a pale hint of the happiness you will each share in the days ahead." With a cackle that sent chills down everyone's spine, she vanished in a flash of light. A foul stench remained in her wake.

With the disappearance of Hecca, all eyes returned to Aphrodite as she sobbed over the Sun God's still form.

"What poison can kill a god?" cried Aphrodite. "It can't be true. He can't be dead."

"He's not," said the prince quietly. He could still feel his god father's energy, very faintly, but it was still there. "Princess Laurel Lilac taught me of her mother's poisons, and this wine must have been made of the fruit of the papel sedoipen fruit. While there may be some antidote that we can try, the one thing that she noted that will always cancel its effects is the call to the spirit that comes from true love's kiss"

"But I have kissed him and he hasn't moved."

"But was that a kiss of true love?" asked Amaranth softly. "Did you kiss him from your heart or your head?"

"I think I should be offended by your implication but it true. I was thinking of my grief at being alone."

The prince felt the full power of Love radiate through the goddess and into the kiss she was now giving the Sun God. As she stopped kissing the still body, everyone held their breath in anticipation of the waking movement that never came.

Amaranth placed her hands on the goddess. "There is nothing you can do. In that gulp he must have consumed more of that evil fruit than the single bite that Daisy ate back at the cottage."

"But I'm the Goddess of Love. It has to work!"

"Maybe it is like my parents," offered the prince. "When my mother ate one of Belladonna's fruits father was unable to revive her. They loved each other but years later we learned that neither was the true love of the other."

"But he is my love," protested the goddess. "And yet your words ring true. He has not been happy as of late. In the past year he has grown cold and distant. I had to cast a spell to remind him of how happy we were when we first met. As the Goddess of Love, I should have recognized the signs that his heart had gone elsewhere."

"Ever is it said that love is blind," offered Amaranth.

"True," said Aphrodite. "If she whom he loves is within the sound of my voice, please come forth. I love Apollo too much to stand in his way of true love."

No one moved.

Apollo broke the silence. "I know of one who can help. But I don't know if they have come to realize the depth of the love they



feel for Lord Apollo. Lord Dion, you know of whom I am speaking. Do you think you can help open their heart to their love?"

"You want him to go find Hecca?" gasped Daisy. "Is that what you two were fighting about this afternoon?"

It was a long moment of strained silence that was not broken by Dion's response. The prince walked over to his god father and wiped away the tears that were starting to form. "My father had to face the same fears when he finally had to acknowledge the fact that he was not mother's true love, nor was she his. And I mean exactly the same fears. He faced his challenge and the three of you blessed his second wedding. Will you help?"

"I don't know if I can, but I will try." Dion gathered his strength and gave the prince a quick hug. "Thank you."

"Don't thank me. Go do what you know is in your heart."

Everyone was surprised when Dion didn't shimmer out of the room. Rather, he rushed over to where Aphrodite held her lover's still body. He knelt down and lifted Apollo's head and kissed him full on the lips. As he started to lay him back down, the Sun God reached up and returned the kiss.

"I think we now know how it is that we can both be patrons to the same person." Lord Apollo turned his attention to Aphrodite. "Please forgive me. I do love you..."

"Hush. As much as it might hurt me, my task is to bring love to others. If your love lasts to the future that Prince Apollo has seen, then I would say that I have done a very good job." She gave each of the newly realized lovers a kiss. "I think we need to go somewhere to talk. I think we need to figure out what we are going to tell King Zeus about today's events."

A bubble of light formed around the trio and they faded from sight.

"What a heck of way to start marriage," said Angelo. "How can we top today's excitement?"

"We don't want to know!" shouted the rest of the wedding party.

# Make You Think: Celtic Roots

By Phoenix

I will admit that going into my recent explorations of the Sabbats I only had the barest knowledge of the actual Celtic culture. I, like many others, stopped asking questions once I had the link between Celtic and Irish. And that is what folks in the commercial music industry want to have happen. They can record some basic pop songs, add some shawms (those mini-bagpipe instruments), fiddles, whistles and drums, put the picture of a smiling Irish step dancer, slap the name “Celtic This” or “Celtic That” on the label and sell millions of CDs or videos. Get out you kilts (and absolutely nothing wrong with men in kilts) and head down to the local Celtic Festival. Even the pagan stories are full of Irish lands with their links to Merlin and the Arthurian legends, the druids of Stonehenge and all of that.

And then there are all of the major pantheons that are commonly celebrated in pagan communities – the Greeks, the Romans, the Egyptians, and the Norse. Each of those comes with a very specific picture of the people who honored them. So it is a simple matter to say the same thing with the Celtic pantheon. We put them in their home in Ireland and there they stayed. Each pantheon had its own little world and I would keep them separate in my mind.

Then came the study of Belenos, our Celtic god for Beltane. In some places, he is known as Belenon Apollo, the merging of the Celtic and Roman traditions. I could rationalize that because of Roman expansionism as they pushed into new territories and people were trying to reconcile the old and new ways which resulted in a compromise.

Then came the Lughnasadh research and Lugh’s family, the Tuatha de Danann. This was the step that set my perceptions upside down. A few of the sites that I visited pointed to the linguistic connection between Danann and the Danube River. A quick check for this article resulted in this discovery – that lovely river of Viennese waltz fame, that flows through Austria has its roots in Celtic history. In fact, the etymology of the name Danube reveals that it comes from the Celtic word “danus”, meaning stream. (<http://www.yourdictionary.com/danube>).

Historians actually place the Celtic homeland in that region. Through the 500-200 BC time frame, the Celts had spread through most of central Europe, down into Spain, and up into the United Kingdom. With that vast territory came the splintering of the traditions. Each village would pass on their tales and gave deities more localized names. But each would retain its core essence and travelers were able to recognize the deities for who they were regardless of the names used.

And then the Celts did one serious strategic mistake. In 387 BC they decide to invade Rome. Now, this is before the era of Caesar and Rome was still struggling with all of the internal politics of the Republic. The Celts basically gave them “Public Enemy #1.” Rome soon stabilized and began to expand its territories northward and the conflict with the Celts grew until it became Rome’s mission to annihilate them. Rome pushed and pushed until the Celts were compressed into the lands we think are their homeland. And with the later conversion of Rome to the Christian faith they continued their efforts to remove even the theology represented by the Celtic gods and goddesses. Looking at it from this side of history, it looks like they did a pretty good job. Just look at how long it has taken us

to recover these traditions that were lost for generations. What we think of as Celtic today isn’t the birth home of that tradition – it was the final stand for its survival.

Now if you are a history buff, you are probably saying that it was the Gauls who attacked Rome. You would be right. Remember that I said that the Celts covered a vast territory? Want to guess what that included? You are right. Gaul. Gallic is one of the Celtic sub-cultures. Since it has a region bearing its name it is easy to forget its link to the larger traditions at its roots. In this case, Gallic and Celtic are fairly interchangeable.

One of the key things that I have learned on this particular journey of finding the Celtic origins isn’t that they came from the Danube. It is the lesson to not put gods and goddesses in neat little compartments and keep them separate from other pantheons and traditions. There seems to be a lot of interactiveness of the people honoring them (far more that I realized) and it only makes sense that the traditions were borrowed from each other over time.





# My Beautiful Life: Stories From Our Tribe

## A Journey Into the Past, a Journey Through Fear by DragonSwan

The last week of August found Phoenix and I traveling to various part of southern Colorado that have deep roots in the past. The first stop was a hot springs in the San Luis Valley that was once home to a small mining community. We got to witness the nightly flight of roughly 200,000 bats as they left their cave in search of food. The bats have made a home in part of the mine that collapsed, killing seven men and injuring five. The cave-in site was called the Glory Hole. Yes there are a ton of jokes that could be made, especially when you add that the colony of bats is mostly male. But I will save the jokes for a later time, in hopes of keeping this a brief tale.

Now I need to point out that from a very young age I have always been afraid of things flying too close to me. This fear kept me out of most sports, and doing funky dances whenever a pigeon or moth flies too close to me. Well, I had to face this fear of creatures flying near by to witness the amazing show of thousands of bats on their nightly journey. I also had to ignore the fact that I am an out of shape, overweight, middle aged man, with the grace of a drunken moose, and a bad leg. The hike to the caves isn't a quick stroll in the park, but even I was able to make it. The Great Mother and Father rewarded our journey by gracing us, along with the other guests, with a beautiful sunset that was beyond gorgeous. Then, as the sun disappeared, the earth grew quiet. A few bat "scouts" were seen flying from the cave. The earth seemed to be aware that the bats were waking up and starting their search for food. Then a cloud of bats filled the air, flying so fast that the small creatures were just a blur to my eyes. The fear I was trying to hide disappeared and was replaced by awe. Standing there with Phoenix watching wave after wave of bats flying out of the mine was something I will never forget. With the day's sun a memory, and having viewed the endless out flight of bats for several minutes, I suggested we start our way back to the cabin, while we still had a little light. We walked back down the trail in growing darkness. The colors of the sand, rocks and plants around us faded to shades of grey and black. It was interesting that even as the shades of grey began to blur and turn darker, fear did not creep into my mind. Not even with the thought that there were certainly a few bats hanging around the area searching for something to eat. Unafraid of the darkness I walked with Phoenix back to the cabin.

My journey of the past and fear did not end with finding my bed and pulling the covers up for a night's rest. The next few days would find me facing another fear that I seldom have to face, my fear of heights. Our journey led us to the ancient cliff dwellings at Mesa Verde. I will save the fascinating information I learned about the people who lived there so many centuries ago (450 AD to 1300 AD) for later. Instead I will focus on the cliff part of the journey. Many of the paths to the dwellings and the dwelling themselves left me less then a foot away from the edge of a high cliff, with only the air between the edge and me. I was amazed to realize that my knees seemed to weaken the more I thought about how much I needed their support. Fear did not keep me from traveling onward. I hugged the side of the cliff, took a deep breath, said a prayer to the Great Mother and ventured on. The dwellings that I explored, built on the side of the cliffs, offered even more challenges. These people loved to dig down into the earth, leaving many opportunities for us less

graceful creatures to fall a few feet. I believe some of the holes were about 6 feet deep. I know it is not that deep, but it is enough to cause pain and a cracked skull. With many prayers of both thanks for getting me that far, and requests for continued support, I made it through the dwellings. I also made it through a very challenging path, that hasn't changed much since the days the Native Americans traveled it. Well, it did look like a small cliff dwelling had collapsed upon itself. Thanks to a lesson about ghost walls, from some of the rangers, Phoenix and I noticed them without the aid of a guide. ANYWAY! With as challenging as the route was, I pulled the mountain goat skills out of my root chakra and made it to the end of the trail. Having completed the challenge only gave me the self granted right to bitch and moan about the difficulty of the path I had just taken. I was of course very grateful, and still am, to the Great Father and Great Mother for granting me the strength and for their protection on that trail.

So now I sit in the comfort of my third story apartment. Nice solid brick walls between me and the ground below, keeping me safe and warm. I know that the fears will once again rear their ugly heads, and cause me to freak out, worry about what is unseen in the darkness, and get weak knees when I need stability. But having faced them, they have lost some of their power. My fears are now weaker,

*—continued next page*





## Good-Bye My Fancy

By Walt Whitman

GOOD-BYE my Fancy!  
Farewell dear mate, dear love!  
I'm going away, I know not where,  
Or to what fortune, or whether I may ever see you again,  
So Good-bye my Fancy.

Now for my last—let me look back a moment;  
The slower fainter ticking of the clock is in me,  
Exit, nightfall, and soon the heart-thud stopping.

Long have we lived, joy'd, caress'd together;  
Delightful!—now separation—Good-bye my Fancy.

Yet let me not be too hasty,  
Long indeed have we lived, slept, filter'd,  
become really blended into one;  
Then if we die we die together, (yes, we'll remain one,)  
If we go anywhere we'll go together to meet what happens,  
May-be we'll be better off and blither, and learn something,  
May-be it is yourself now really ushering me to the true songs,  
(who knows?)  
May-be it is you the mortal knob really undoing, turning—  
so now finally,  
Good-bye—and hail! my Fancy

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### A Journey into the Past - continued

and I am stronger. If I had only this to bring back from this vacation, it was well worth the journey. I can not tell you how blessed I am to have so many more wonderful lessons and memories of this vacation to the past. Don't fear, in time I will share those memories with you. Phoenix and I do have over 1,600 pictures to share, and those are just the ones from our digital cameras. And some of this issue's art is just the beginning of the things inspired during the trip. Who knew you could get so much out of just eight days?

Many happy journeys without fear my faerie family,  
Naked Hugs & Faerie Blessings  
DragonSwan



## After All This Pleasure

By Tom

After all this pleasure  
We eventually become a rusted piece of junk  
In the cosmic junk yard of eternity  
So experience it all know-how  
Make love while you can.  
Let them go into a slow dance  
That abolishes the human  
And allows them to enter the fields of the gods  
The delicate choice of whom enters whom  
Then remember before they had bodies they were gods  
As thighs part for glory after glory,  
The orgasms of light,  
If I could I would be seeded by you  
And produce for you.  
But I'm not that way this time around  
So my body is an altar of passion for your worship  
And I'll exhalt for you  
In sweat, kisses and sperm.

## Dancing Out of the Woods

By Tom

He came dancing out of the woods  
Wet from the stream  
Shaking  
Sexy  
Skin shown with joy  
Looking for a rendezvous  
Settle for anyone  
Top or Bottom  
He was ready to play  
And I heard the music  
My heart beat as wings  
And the compass of my sex  
Pointed upward  
Willing to go through the torrents  
Swim up to lust.

# The Cubby Diaries: The Painter's Assistant

by Cubby

My day started off simple enough. I had taken advantage the cool of the morning to begin my gardening chores. I began in the front of the house and did my weeding and had deadheaded the flowers. The temperature was starting to climb as I made my way to the backyard. As soon as I got to the privacy offered by forty years of shrubbery and the secure knowledge that my property was higher than my neighbors' yards, I stripped to allow the last cool breeze offered by the morning shade to caress my skin.

I had just bent down, butt in the air, to pick up my tools when I heard the sound of the gate open behind me. I don't know who was more embarrassed, Sven, my neighbor, for finding me naked or me for having forgotten the number one rule of nudity, which is to lock the gate first. I tried to apologize but Sven said the fault was his for not knocking. We talked briefly about being naked but Sven admitted that he had never been naked in public. His wife never let him walk naked in their bedroom. As I thought about it, in all the years that he had been next door, I had never seen him without a shirt. Not once. Not even on the hottest day when he was out mowing. With a bit of a tease I tried to coax him out of his shirt as a first step but he got all flustered and I knew enough not to push the line any further. Sven had been a good neighbor and I wanted to keep it that way for the short time he was going to be around.

He and his family had moved in about the time Grams starting getting sick so I've known him a long time. His eldest daughter, Sharon, was Aeris's prom date and his youngest, Syndi, had just graduated. His wife, Susan, not Sue, don't make that mistake around her, had gotten a promotion that took her to the coast several years ago. Sven and the girls stayed so the kids could finish school with their friends. Now that Syndi had graduated I had noticed the "For Sale" sign in his yard. Once Sven got over the flusterment of being teased about not at least taking off his shirt in the company of a naked man (after all it would only be polite manners, right?) it was the sale of his house that had brought him over. He had seen me go out back so he knew I was home and had hoped I might be able to help him with some work he wanted to do that day. He needed to paint his upper story and needed someone to steady the ladder for him. He didn't need to tell me why he wanted help since I had been the one to find him on the ground the last time he had attempted it on his own. He had broken both legs and a rib in the fall. Not being one to tempt fate a second time, he sought out an assistant.

I started to follow him over to his house but as he stopped to hold the gate for me, he said "Aren't you forgetting something?" That's when I realized that I was still naked. He hadn't seemed too bothered by the disjoin in our attire so I had totally put it out of my mind. A quick moment later and my shorts and t-shirt were back on.

Sven made quick work of painting the front face of the upper portion of his tri-level house. It didn't take much effort to stand and hold the ladder for him but even so, the sun was getting warm. I asked him if he would mind if I got bare-chested and he said that he had seen me that way often enough that he was used to it. "But remember, just the shirt" he added with a wink. When we moved the ladder to the side of the house, I was surprised when he stripped off his own shirt, revealing a blond furry pelt that was matted with sweat. He noticed my surprised look and said that he realized that Susan wasn't there to reprimand him for his display of flesh. He had

to admit that it felt nice. We sat there in the shade for a moment before he wiped his brow and put the shirt back on. He pointed at all of the paint splatter on the shirt and said that it would be easier to wash the shirt than him. But not as much fun I thought.

When he finished the side, he called a halt. I carried the paint supplies to the backyard while he went inside to order a pizza for lunch. He returned outside sans shirt and we sat in the shade of the front porch while we waited. We chatted about how his girls were doing. Syndi had left to go to college back East and Sharon was planning to get married in December. We chatted about this and that. All the time, I felt that he wanted to say something but was waiting for me to say it first. Now, I don't know if that comes from reading too many porn stories about the "straight man" who is without a wife and allows the gay man to give him a blow job or if it was my own projection since I had always thought that Sven was a hot man. But, since he was both a family man and a neighbor, I have always kept that bottled up inside. In all the years we have lived next to each other, this was the first, and probably only, time we had any significant one on one interaction and I wasn't going to break my rule of making a pass at someone if I wasn't confident that it would be appreciated.

The arrival of the pizza ended the conversation and soon it was time to get back to work. A quick trip to the john on both our parts and we were ready to get back to work. With shirt back on, Sven climbed the ladder to start painting. I noticed, or more accurately, didn't notice the red boxers that had been peeking out from the bottom of his shorts. In fact, staring up at him on the ladder, I now had a clear view of his uncut cock and balls. OK, time to focus. I was getting some very confused mixed signals and if I wasn't careful I was going to have a very natural reaction that would get me in trouble. It took me a moment to realize that Sven was talking to me. He said that I could strip like I had in my yard if I wanted. I managed to say that I would if he would. He said that he bet I would like that but kept on painting without shucking his shorts. With the thought planted, I had to admit that I would like to see the full package. When he first moved in, I thought he was Thor from the comic books. He had a solid muscled frame and fairly long blond hair which he kept pulled back in a pony tail. Time had softened the frame to a sexy mature body that had lost the rigidness of regular workouts and the hair had been trimmed by a perfectionist wife. Only, now, when I looked up and avoided staring at his stiff cock, I realized that the hair was returning to its wavy past. Wait a minute, did I just say his stiff cock? Something was racing in his mind. The lure of being naked had stirred something. Maybe I should suggest jerking off. Or would calling attention to his hard on only embarrass him back into a withdrawl? I decided that it would be best to keep silent and enjoy the moment for what it was.

"Hey, Cubby, you had better get rid of those shorts before you rip the fabric with that hard on."

He must have been a terror in his frat boy days. He knew exactly how to push the sexual buttons of someone he knew wouldn't or couldn't do a darn thing about it. Before I could figure a way to turn the tide and actually say something about his cock that had freed itself through the leg opening of his shorts, Sven started swearing a blue streak – far bluer than the too blue he was painting

his house. In his twisting on the ladder to tease me, Sven had spilled paint on the roof and shouted for me to get the hose. I ran to the side of the house and turned on the faucet and pulled the hose to the back. As I started to climb the ladder to hand the hose to him, I watched in horror as Sven overreached for the hose and came falling, head first toward the ground. He fell in slow motion as I kicked into warp speed. The hose was thrown as I jumped to position myself under him to break his fall. I fell to the ground with a thud and weight of Sven's crashing body on top of me momentarily took the wind out of my lungs. We lay there for a minute, hearts racing at the thought of what might have happened when the flailing, snake that was the hose splashed us and brought us back to reality. Sven was more shaken than I, so I grabbed the hose and climbed the ladder and diluted the paint spill to near invisibility.

When I got down off the ladder, Sven was just standing there, staring in disbelief at the paint that was on his clothes. It appeared that the thought that he had ruined his clothes seemed more real than his narrow repeating of history. Something came over me and I decided that I was going to help him clean his clothes and after the sexual frustration of the afternoon, a cold shower was in order for my teasing friend. So I did what anyone else would do in that situation and turned the hose on him. It didn't take him long to snap out of his shock and wrestle control of the hose from me. Soon we were both dripping wet and he shut off the nozzle and tossed the hose to the side. "First one out of their wet clothes gets to suck off the other," he shouted.

Now, as I am sure you know by now, clothes and I don't stay together very long and I always win that kind of race with my clan. However, hearing that from my straight neighbor stunned me and suddenly Sven was naked and I was still wearing my shorts.

He dropped to his knees in front of me. His hands were trembling as he started to pull my shorts down. I put my hands over his, effectively stopping him. "You don't have to do that," I said. He said that he was nervous because he had never done this before. Danger, danger! Straight virgin gay sex warning!

I reached down and pulled him to his feet. I said that I was flattered but asked if he really wanted to spend time on the gay side of the street. He said that with the two households of gay men on either side of his house he figured he was already there and might as well come out of his closet and enjoy the company.

"How long have you suspected that you were gay?" I asked. He said that he knew about ten minutes before Sharon was conceived. He had gone to bed with Susan to prove to himself that he wasn't gay but the only thing he proved that night was that he had the equipment to make babies. When Susan told him that she was pregnant, they got married and he had denied his sexuality while the girls were growing up. And then, when his daughters went to stay with their mother during summer break, he took the opportunity to go on his own vacation down Gay Lane. Everyone had thought he had simply gone to California to join his family – which he did after stopping at every truck stop and rest area between here and there. Somewhere during those years apart, Susan announced that she had fallen in love with Janice and Sven and she quietly got divorced. But with his daughters still living with him, he felt he had to keep up the game of pretending to be a normal father since they were having a hard enough time coping with a Lesbian mother. With an empty household and watching the parade of men going in and out of my house, he had been hoping that he would find an excuse to ring the



doorbell during one of my parties. But that excuse never materialized.

As I listened to Sven, I thought back on something he said. "What do you mean when you said you had never done this before? Sounds like you have had some experience in that department."

He said he loved giving blow jobs. The feel of man flesh inside his mouth was like the finest gourmet treat. He had just never had sex with a man in his own home. He gave me a passionate kiss to stop the conversation. "Now, as the winner of the strip off, I've changed my mind. I need some plumbing taken care of and you have just the tool to clean my pipe." He spit into his hand and slicked up my cock before he turned around.

"Is that what you really want?" I asked.

He answered by thrusting his ass on my cock and taking its full length in a single plunge. As I fucked him, I could only think of all of the lonely nights between boyfriends when I had a hot ass right next door. And now that I finally had a taste of it, he was going to move away.

When we finished watering his lawn with cum, he grabbed me by the cock and led me inside. He poured me a glass of water and told me to stay naked. He disappeared for a few minutes and I heard him talking on his phone. When he returned, he had a hammer in his hand.

"That was my realtor. I just pulled my house off the market," he said. Sven told me that he hadn't really wanted to sell the house but it seemed too lonely with just himself. Now he had a reason to stay. "If you are up for it, I have an idea."

"Oh?"

"With all of the activity between your house and the other, wouldn't you like to take a short cut through my backyard? We could put some gates in our fences and you could go back and forth without having to put your clothes on."

"And would you want to join in the naked parade?"

"I thought you would never ask."

# Visiting the Ghosts of the Past

By Lazarus Graves

Oh how bitter sweet is the journey back home, especially when the ones you loved are just shadows on the wind. I haven't quite figured out, what hurts most about having lived so long. Is it the pain of not being able to forget the ones who have past on, or the pain of forgetting those who have gone? I was going to help the Denver Faeries out with their Samhain issues by offering a meditation of a journey into an old ghost town. Unfortunately that journey is a bit too personal for me to do a proper mediation. For so many people, the past is nothing more than stories we have read in books. Doc Holliday gets mixed all too easily with Peter Pan, and we loose touch with the reality of the past. It's different when John Henry Holliday was a man with whom you had shared more than a few drinks.

Last night as I was trying to think of what I would write, I sat in the light of the full moon, a bottle of whisky and the spirits of the past were my companions for the night. I looked out over the overgrown wild meadows, the old cemetery, and the decaying town. I could still see the community of folks just trying to survive, a lucky few striking it rich and moving on to the big cities, while others died trying. The old wooden buildings are not just crumbling glimpses of the past, when you know who lived there. Their empty rooms hold so many stories, like how you helped each other through the long winters. We shared with each other in the celebrations of life and the grief of death. There are so many stories that are now just whispers in the wind.

I have listened to some of the guides as they gave tours through the towns I once called home. They speak with such authority and yet are wrong half the time. I stop myself from arguing, realizing that it was so many lifetimes ago. No one would believe an old mortician. They have historians who have fancy degrees and archeologists who have written the books, so their tales must be true. I don't know if I should laugh or cry, sometimes I do both. They say that the winners write the history books, but sometimes even the winners are forgotten. Some will tell the tales of the great John Cleveland Osgood and his mines that gave him millions, but who knows his true story? It is a tragedy that his life has been reduced to a forty-five minute tour. What of the brave, strong men like, Anton Johanson, Isaac Nordland, Alfred Wallace or any of the men who worked the mines so that men like Mr. Osgood could make their fortune? Even the gravestones that carry their names have become faded and worn with age.

I am amazed at how just looking at a field of wild flowers brings back the misty memories of the young women who used to play in the fields or wore the flowers in their hair. I can still recall Irene Isabelle, Mildred, Mary Agnes, Vera, Florence and Olive Corine. The list of faded flowers goes on, and I alone remember them. They were all brave ladies, as strong as a wild horse, as compassionate as an angel and as beautiful as the wild flowers that blossoms with their spirits. I am blessed and honored to have known them all. And cursed to have forgotten so many others.

The mind can be quite fickle when recalling the memories of the past. I will never forget the day that I first met Ezekiel Bones while at college in the big city of New York. His face is forever etched into my mind, with his deep, dark brown eyes, his impish smile, the way his long brown hair and beard perfectly framed his

rugged face. I don't recall how many days of secretly flirting with each other it took before we were alone together, but the taste of strong whiskey mixing with tobacco when we first kissed is forever scorched into my mind. I can still feel the sweat that covered his sun darkened stocky build as we made love by the light of the full moon. Those memories share the same moment as the day he left, unable to bear the pressure of our curse. I hold tightly to the joys and pains we shared, but where are the memories of the all the times in between? How many nights did I lie awake listening to him sleep? What was his favorite meal? I don't even know if I knew what his favorite meal was. I guess that is the great tragedy of out living the ones you loved so much, the spirit of love may live on, but the memories fade.

I have to wonder, as I look out over the new cities and towns, where so much has changed and yet it all remains the same. Steel and concrete replace wood and mud. For all the attempts to make it last forever, in over a hundred years what stories will be told of the ancestors who once lived here?

