

A Priestess Path

by
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Rough Manuscript

Preliminary Notes:

- If you are reading this than you are aware that this is an incomplete piece and reflects the current version only of a much larger project.
- Some of the poetry is incomplete, a placeholder until I write sufficient verse to express adequately the feelings which need to be evoked at each step. Some is traditional but most is peculiar to the text in hand.
- In the various rituals it is not my intent to give everything away. As much as possible I hope to give only Nancy's perspective and memories as opposed to giving too much exposition beyond her experience. It is also not written as a ceremonial manual and as such is not blatant in its descriptions to the point where a novice may meddle but rather one must have sufficient background in ceremonial magic to fill in the blanks.

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Chaper 1: Magical Meetings

It was a warm afternoon in July, the sun was still high in the West as the girls got together for their weekly coffee clutch. Sitting on the patio of the small streetside bistro a soft breeze lifted the edges of her long auburn hair as she absently pushed the last bit of cake around on her plate. These weren't close friends, never close friends, and once they started talking about men her interest wavered. In her heart she believed that there was no room for her in that world so instead she watched the cars drift up and down the street.

She looked at the women around her, how animated they were, how beautiful they were. She twisted a bit of hair around her finger, a girlish habit, and wished that it were either brown or red, not something in between. That's how she always felt, in between, never one thing or another. She didn't have the poise of Rebecca or the shining beauty of Alia. Though she worked hard to stay slim there was little that she could do about her large breasts. She felt that they were ungainly, big gobs of flesh stuck on her slim frame so that she could never be like the models which appeared on every billboard.

From time to time she'd meet some man who told her how beautiful she was, how cute her face was, how her violet eyes enchanted them, how everything about her was captivating. She knew better. From the time she was a child her mother had told her how ugly she was. Her mother had told her that, even the men who thought she was beautiful, were either lying or making fun of her. Of course she believed it, she accepted it, it was part of her.

It only made it worse when, at twelve, she saw a pornographic film. It had been left in the video player and she'd turned it on by accident. What she saw horrified her. A woman tied to a wall being beaten by a man. The woman cried out in all sorts of ways but the torture seemed to last forever. Though she saw less than a minute of the film, it buried itself deep inside of her mind and forever altered her concept of men.

Since then, whenever a man so much as complimented her she imagined him wanting to tie her up in a basement. It became a constant anxiety bordering on androphobia. She was able to sit in class with men, she worked for men, but she could never let them be close, well except for one but that was years ago when she was still in university.

Her friends, on the other hand, had boyfriends galore, sometimes two or three at a time. They never seemed to have anything to fear, and often seemed to be the ones in control. Regardless, when the conversation came around to talking about men and sex she suddenly discovered an intense interest in the mosaic tiles which covered the top of the trendy table at which they sat. No matter how safe they made it sound Nancy was twenty six years old and still a virgin with no immediate intentions of changing that situation. No matter how hard she tried, she could not overcome the fear of being chained in a basement with no chance of escape.

The irony was that her fear was what made that exact situation so real. Not in the literal sense but she was always dominated by the people around her and even her job was a manifestation of bondage. Her boss was abusive, her mother was manipulative and even her father's ill health had, in many ways, been a kind of bondage, though unintentional.

In many ways she was alone in the world. Sure she had these superficial friends and they did do a lot of stuff together. They met weekly at a little bistro to drink expensive coffees and bitch about men, work and the world in general. They'd get together to watch the latest 'chick flick' or

go to hear someone speak on women's issues, or even just shopping for shoes or man-watching at the beach, but there wasn't a single one of them that Nancy would call 'close'. None of them knew her on an intimate level. The wall was high and strong and it would take more than these vacuous party girls to penetrate her defences.

The worst part of it all was that there was still the intrigue when she listened to her friends talk. They were never trapped in a basement or even in a relationship they didn't like. They were all stronger than she was, they were all more confident and self aware. Nancy really liked men. She liked the look of them, the smell of them, the shape of them. She even liked beards which seemed to be much out of style. She enjoyed going to the beach and looking. She was always uncomfortable when they looked at her in return, even though she sometimes felt a thrill in her belly. Hormones are a powerful force but in some cases they are no match for fear.

She'd actually tried to talk to a friend back in University about the fear, about the confidence and strength. About how she wouldn't be able to stand up for herself, to enforce the 'NO' with conviction and personal power. Her friend's answer was that Nancy needed one good man to fix her. One good man to take away the fear and pain and show her how much pleasure could be found by rubbing two naked bodies together. But even with a set-up date there was still the fear and things never progressed beyond dinner because she actually liked the guy and fear gave way to unmitigated terror.

As she watched the sun lower in the distance Nancy felt very lonely. Something deep inside hurt in a way that she had almost forgotten possible. The loneliness overwhelmed her, washed over her in waves. It was all she could do to keep the tears from rolling down her cheeks. The sheer joy, the giggles, the laughter all worked together to fill her with the need to find a way out. She needed to reach beyond the wall and touch another human being. Sex wasn't just getting off for these women, it was a celebration of life, it was reaching out and being reached out to in return. It banished the loneliness and fear and isolation of being human and for a few moments, made them real.

Real? What is real? If nobody ever sees you are you real? What does it mean to reach out and touch, to be touched, to make that connection on a deep level? For her friends sex was obviously fun but on some level Nancy wondered if it was also what gave them such amazing confidence. She felt surrounded by darkness, by perfect isolation, by fear and suffocation. All she could think of was reaching towards air, towards light, towards others.

The anxiety passed, as it always did. It was then that she really caught up to the conversation. They had moved away from discussing men in general and had moved on to a lecturer who would be speaking at the university later in the month. Apparently it was something about the Feminine Divine. The general consensus of the women was that it was obvious that God was a woman because it was men who screwed everything up. Besides the lecturer was apparently totally hot and that they simply had to go and see him.

Rebecca looked at Nancy. She made a comment about how smart Nancy was and how a lecturer would be perfect for her. Even made in jest Nancy could feel the pity in the other woman's words. Poor Nancy, needs to get laid. Regardless, Nancy knew that friendships required effort and, as unsatisfying as these friends were, they were all she had right now. So she agreed to go with the other four girls to hear about the ultimately superior woman. What she didn't realise was that the speaker of whom the girls thought so highly was someone she knew.

On the day of the lecture she met her companions at the University early so that they could get good seats at the front. Nancy didn't understand why that mattered considering that this was a proper lecture theatre with microphones and high resolution projectors but she played along. For some reason the advertisements all presented the name of the lecture, *The Feminine Divine and Sensuality*, but the lecturer's name was given as Frater D.M. Well wasn't that mysterious. Nancy thought that there should have been 'Doctor' or 'Professor' so and so, but Frater seemed an odd thing to call oneself. She remembered that the word meant 'brother' in Latin but not much more.

The lights went down and slides began to play on the large screen. Erotic images from Greece, India, Persia, China, Japan and elsewhere danced upon the screen. Then a smooth male tenor voice cut through the silence.

"The path of sensuality is the path of the Archtypal Venus who is also known as Freya, Aphrodite, and a dozen other names throughout the world. She is the Goddess of Love, the most beautiful inspiration of humanity. She is Isis Myrianymous and represents all things to all men."

A light illuminated a lone figure on the stage. Nancy was startled to see David, a friend of hers from University. He'd moved away after his undergraduate honours degree was completed to further his education. Nancy had always harboured a secret crush on him but was always too shy to say anything. After all she was always somewhat afraid of what a relationship might mean, and what it might mean was sex.

"The Christian world lost Her long ago when the sensuality and sexuality of Isis was stolen away leaving Mary, dutiful virgin and mother of God. By doing this we have suffered as a people and lost the sensuality which is our birthright. Tonight I will talk to you about the Goddess and Her promise of love, sex and sensuality as a path to understanding and knowing the Divine, as a path to God."

Nancy was amazed. She'd heard all kinds of things about the secret acts which pass between men and women, but never before had she heard this. This was not the ugliness she had seen that fateful afternoon on a video cassette. Nor was it the path of the aesthetic who vows chastity and drives the sin from his body as certain spiritual paths required of its adherents. This was not the Christian mystic or Priesthood. This was not the rejection of the flesh as evil, but neither was it embracing sin and the Devil. In fact David said time and again that there was no need for a Devil any longer, at least not as an external being. That which was above was as that which was below and so every person was the universe in small.

David talked about seeking the divine through the balance of male and female. He discussed pleasure and passion as the emulation of creation through energy and magic. He said that one could create the Magical Child through sensual and even sexual means causing the plastic universe to conform to one's own desires and goals.

Nancy was also appreciating what her companions had already known, David was very attractive and as he approached his mid thirties his face developed a dignity which enhanced his features and added a little salt at his temples. He was obviously very fit and, as he discussed the sensual side of worshipping the Divine, she began to feel the twinges of desire such as she had never done before. Despite her long cultured fears and a long standing panic disorder bordering

on androphobia, David was turning her on. And it was apparent from the glances and whispers amongst the other attendees, she wasn't the only one.

After the lecture Nancy approached the book signing table where David was signing his new book *God is Sex*. She was afraid he wouldn't recognise her. Unfortunately she was equally afraid that he would. What would she say to him? She was fretting so much that she had made up her mind to run from the line when she heard his voice like a steel trap:

"Nancy? Nancy? Is that you?"

She turned and he was there, large as life reaching out to embrace her in a huge hug. To the chagrin of the other girls around her she reluctantly hugged him back.

"It's been too long," he began. "Look, I have to finish this up here but you have to have dinner with me when I'm finished."

Nancy looked up at him and was suddenly overwhelmed by confusing feelings, mostly the ones in her lower belly.

"Yes, of course. Dinner." She allowed herself a smile and he beamed, his whole face alight. He gave her a time and place and returned to his seat, signing books, giving her only a sidelong glance as he returned to the duty of an author faced with his fan base.

Suddenly Nancy's friends descended upon her like vultures. They all wanted to know how she knew Frater D.M. and what was their relationship and a thousand other questions. Nancy wasn't even sure how to explain other than that they went to school together for a year, she was starting her degree while he was completing his fourth year and took a 1000 level course to fill out his timetable.

"Poor virginal Nancy, you could have hooked yourself a good one there if you weren't so timid," one of them laughed. Nancy blushed, partly from anger, partly because it was true, and partly because she knew without a doubt the subject would come up at dinner.

"So, tell me about your boyfriend," David started after they had ordered dinner at the four star restaurant. David had insisted on buying since lecturing and promoting the book were business expenses even if it was his home town. Apparently David had moved back into his parent's place outside of the city a few years ago but had not run into Nancy until now and he seemed acutely interested in getting to know her again.

"I don't have a boyfriend," Nancy replied looking shyly into her wine.

"Oh, I just assumed since I saw no ring on your finger."

"No, no. I'm still single. Still the same old Nancy."

"Oh, well that's a shame, I would have thought some lucky guy would have picked you up by now." David was admiring Nancy's beauty under the dim light. The candles caused her red hair to dance and her large violet eyes to reflect a constellation of stars. "I can't imagine that you haven't had offers. You really are very beautiful."

Nancy blushed down to her cleavage, which was ample in this dress. She was unable to even make eye contact with him and the squirmy something in the pit of her stomach was back again. She forced herself to look up at David. He was as handsome as ever she remembered him and it only made matters worse. He was admiring her capacity for capillary function when he suddenly looked up and locked her eyes.

She couldn't look away. Something had grabbed her, something impossible to break away from. She was about to panic when David whispered "Easy lass, it's OK." Four words and her panic was gone, though she was no less trapped.

She was aware of the power this man held, for he held her in it as surely as if he had tied her to the chair with chains. She suddenly remembered where she had heard the term *Frater* before. It wasn't just a Latin word for brother but it was also used in magical orders such as they had briefly covered in one of her more exotic electives. And at that moment she knew why he used it in his public life, for he had earned it in a way she could never understand other than to know that the power those dusty old mages wrote about was real.

"I, I don't know," Nancy began. The fear was gone but she had no idea what he wanted.

"Tell me. Tell me everything. Tell me why you're so frightened that I literally have to hypnotise you into staying at this table to eat a meal with me."

David lowered his gaze and Nancy felt the power disappear as though it receded back into his eyes and brow.

Dinner arrived and some fuss was made to make room for the large and generously adorned plates. As they dined, though, Nancy finally felt that she could talk, as though her fear was not allowed at this table even though she could feel it lurking just outside waiting for a chance to pounce, a chance she somehow knew David would not allow.

And so she let it all out. She told him about the fear, about the shock as a young woman, about the men that she couldn't approach because of the fear of what came next. She told him about the loneliness she suffered because most of her friends seemed to be no more than background noise by which she could pretend she wasn't trapped in a void. How she couldn't make connections to people and how it all wove together to result in a twenty six year old virgin.

David looked as though he was going to weep. His emotion was genuine, his heart ached with her story. Above all he told her how hurt he was that a woman, as beautiful as she, had never known the embrace of a lover. He told her how his research and work was not just intellectual curiosity but that the Goddess was truly his own and that he worshipped Her as one of Her chosen. He told Nancy how she was a child of the Goddess and how sensuality was her right, and maybe even her duty as a human being.

Nancy took all of this and began to grow more and more agitated. Finally she could take no more.

"And who, who is going to introduce me to this fantasy world you speak of hmm? Who is going to make love to me and not subject me to the nightmares I've heard about time after time from people who call themselves my friends? Who is going to take this poor virgin and 'fix' her, make her a woman, make her 'whole' since I'm obviously broken the way I am. You? Are you willing to make that sacrifice for poor, hard up Nancy?"

She had tears welling in the corners of her eyes and her lips were trembling. David looked as though he was going to cry himself as he had attuned his empathic powers to Nancy's energy at the beginning. When he spoke, though, his voice was strong and reassuring.

"No my dear, there is nothing broken about you, but there is something incomplete. You stand at the door of understanding, the gateway of a new world of being. I will not take you as a mercy and the sacrifice must be your own, and must be made willingly."

Nancy calmed down and asked him what he meant.

"I will initiate you into the rites of pleasure and carry you across the threshold of womanhood, but only as a sacrifice to the Goddess. If you are willing to place your fear and hate and anger upon the altar of sacrifice, if you are willing to give your virginity, your very childhood over to the Goddess then I will gladly, humbly and with great honour be the facilitator of such a sacrifice."

Nancy was surprised. She had ranted like that a dozen times before and it always had the desired effect of scaring away the would-be lover, but this time was different. David was not easily frightened and obviously was willing to call her bluff. She had offered herself in such a way as to ensure that it would not be accepted, but David *had* accepted. And what's more he had accepted in the very name of his Goddess of love and beauty.

Suddenly Nancy was overwhelmed with an image of David as she had seen him earlier. She saw him as loving, gentle and respectful. For him this wasn't a cheap shag but rather a sacred act, a solemn duty that he, as Priest would fulfil if she so wished it in the name of the Goddess.

"So what if I just wanted to get laid and get it over with?" Nancy said testing the waters.

"Then I'd ask why you haven't done so yet?"

"Oh." Nancy was now feeling embarrassed over her earlier explosion. "So what is this then?"

David reached out and took her small hands in his own. "If you want me to take your virginity then it must be done for a reason. It must be given to the Goddess. It must be a sacred ritual full of love, respect and worship of She who made me Her own."

Nancy wasn't sure she believed in magic and religion, not as solidly as David obviously did, but she also realised that this was an opportunity unlike any other. She would sample the world of delights that she was surrounded by, both through friends and the society at large who promoted sexuality in every media outlet from billboards to music to perfume and trouser advertising. Here was an opportunity to do so with someone who was kind and who obviously cared very much about making this a beautiful experience.

She looked him in the eye, resolve welling up within her. "If it's you, then it will be all right. As long as it's you, everything will be all right."

Chapter 2: The Sacrifice

It had taken him days to prepare the temple space. It was normally a place of quiet mediation and ritual. What he had planned for it this night was quite a bit different.

He'd designed the temple years ago with its large East window and expansive skylight. It was often his pleasure to meditate to the rising sun, or in a room filled only with moonlight and candlelight. About twenty feet on a side, this personal temple was perfect for his own work and those of a few friends from time to time. Tonight was something special though.

All of the furniture had been removed except for the altar in the East. Each wall had a small shelf in the center upon which a single candle stood. Except for this, the room was devoid of the usual ritual materials.

Each wall had a box placed against it, each one filled with the appropriate paraphernalia which would be used this night. The North Wall, the place of Auriel the Archangel of Earth, had a small table against it covered in fruits, cheeses, pickles, cut meats and other sustainable foodstuffs to keep them going through the night. Also were more decadent foods like rich chocolates and caramels.

On the West wall a similar store was set in; water, wine and soft drinks all representative of elemental Water.

The South wall had piles of blankets and towels, pillows and cushions. All symbolically placed in the position of Fire and warmth.

The East held the altar with its candles and tools. A great image of the Goddess sat upon it, venerated as the Great Goddess of Love and Beauty. Everything from the censor to the Athame had been cleaned and polished so that, even without the candles, the altar sparkled.

The East also had bouquets of flowers, signifying Air, which gave the room a heady, sensuous smell eliminating the immediate need for incense. He had also placed an electric fan in the window against the room becoming too warm. It was expected to be a cool spring evening and a breeze might be exactly the right thing at some point during the night.

The floor had several small candles in glass cups placed around it and a collection of thick cushions were piled high in one corner. The center of the room sat directly under the glass roof and David checked a small chalk mark which he had placed there the night before. Although the sun shone brightly through the light above, David had planned the room around the moon, and moonrise was still several hours away.

Once more he examined everything to make sure it was perfect. He wanted nothing left to chance because, for him, this night, Nancy would be the Goddess and he had loved his Goddess more than anything in the universe since he was young. Nothing but the best would be good enough.

He checked the time before he jumped into the shower. The soap and water rained down his muscular form as he thought about what had precipitated this day of ritual and worship, this day of sacrifice.

Nancy arrived at the large house outside of town just before dusk. She'd been following the instructions that had been given to her as closely as possible. When to shower, what to wear, what to bring and thought about all of this as she pulled onto the gravel driveway. It all seemed much more elaborate than she had ever expected it to be, but then, she had not asked any normal man to perform this office.

Though she had faith in David she was still quite anxious. At the age of twenty six she had never been kissed by a man other than the familiar pecks one grows accustomed to amongst friends and family. She certainly had never been loved physically and the prospect both frightened and excited her at the same time. After hearing horror stories from her friends about their "first time" she wracked her brain to find a safe way out. She couldn't bear it if her first time was with some guy she hardly knew, some guy who was just after a quick fuck and didn't care who it was on the other end.

Throughout the year she had known David, she'd been far too shy to let her feelings be known. Every time they studied together or worked together on some project she'd been acutely aware of his six and a half foot muscular frame, kind dark eyes and handsome features. Eventually she'd thought of him as a friend and thought that if she revealed her feelings it would be the end of their friendship. She had never thought that, had she expressed her feelings that maybe David might have had a reason to stay at the local university rather than attend graduate school overseas. After the intervening years, though, she thought: "if a friend can't make love to me, why would I want it from a stranger?" Now that she'd agreed to let David be her first she was confronted with the one thing she'd never quite understood about him: Magic.

She'd known that David was a magician of some sort, some kind of expert in the Occult and other sciences and religions, but had never allowed herself to explore that part of his life. She was interested, but real life had always gotten in the way. If it wasn't school it was work, if it wasn't looking after her disabled father it was dealing with her younger brother. Something had always come up whenever she thought about taking that particular step into his world. After he was gone the incentive to explore became little more than a mild curiosity and that was never enough to warrant the time and effort on top of her other responsibilities.

Nancy got out of the car and stood in the fading light. She had showered and dressed as instructed, button down blouse, tight, yet comfortable pants, somewhat sexy undergarments. She felt sexy and looked at herself in the car window. Slim of waist with rounded hips and long legs for her height, which was still more than a foot shorter than David. She stepped back to look at her large violet eyes which were set in a face of delicate features topped by thick auburn hair which spilled down over her double D breasts. Regardless of her usual tendency towards self depreciation she had to admit that she looked pretty sexy.

She took the overnight bag and headed to the house. She felt both anxious and excited and even a little embarrassed. Still, she was resolved to carry out this course of action. Standing at the door there was a moment where she almost turned around and got back in the car. Taking a deep breath to steady her nerves she rang the doorbell.

David answered promptly.

“Hello Nancy,” David said examining her. “You look absolutely gorgeous.” Nancy lowered her long lashes at the compliment. She wasn’t used to such things as her mother, who had died only a few years ago, had always put her down and insulted her looks.

“Thank you David,” she said meekly. David let her in while shaking his head.

“No need to be meek around me. You are a strong and wonderful person in your own right. Never let anyone tell you otherwise.”

Nancy raised her head and said with more strength in her voice: “Right. Thank you”.

David offered her a drink which she accepted as they sat in the living room.

“You’re nervous aren’t you Nan,” David said reaching for her hand. “Don’t be, just let me guide you and listen to the voices within and you’ll be fine.” He smiled sweetly at her.

“It’s just, so formal. I always imagined passion and love.” David couldn’t help but smile at this.

“Oh there will be plenty of both little one. Probably more than you would have ever known in a stranger’s arms.”

“But I don’t really understand what you mean by all of this. I mean, I got a general idea that there’s a ritual involved but, will it be... wonderful?”

“Yes. My sweet Nancy, it will be wonderful.” With that he took her arm and lead her to the temple that he had prepared for her.

As she entered she couldn’t help letting out a gasp at the beautifully decorated room. Many candles gave their warm light to what seemed like cosiness incarnate. As her eyes adjusted she took in each wall and what they contained, as well as the beautiful altar of the Goddess in the East. It was in front of this that David sat her down telling her to wait for his return.

Since the dinner where she had agreed to this sacrifice they had spoken at length about what to expect. She knew that there was some kind of ritual and that there was an ancient tradition involving virgins and blood sacrifice, but she didn’t really understand what that had to do with sex. As she meditated upon the altar and the Goddess image upon it, her mind drifted to what David had told her about his Goddess.

His voice always took on a different tone when he talked about Her. It was wistful and distant, like speaking of a long, lost lover. He spoke about the various forms she had taken throughout time, that all of the Goddesses were really the same Goddess, just appearing to different peoples at different times in different guises. Verdandi, Aphrodite, Freya, Ashtoreth, and Isis were but a few names by which She’s been known. Staring at the altar with its lovingly polished implements and carefully arranged candles she could feel the love that David put into tending this sacred place. If she let her focus soften she could almost believe that the Goddess image smiled at her, but that was impossible; after all it was just a porcelain statue.

Her thoughts were broken as she heard him enter the room and glanced behind to see him. Dressed in a robe which folded over at the front she could make out some kind of loose denim trousers belted beneath but what caught her attention more was the expanse of chest which the crossed robe revealed. He knelt beside her and began chanting.

One at a time he took the various implements from the altar and circled the room with them stopping at each of the quarters. He purified and consecrated the space, he formed a circle and called the guardians of the quarters. At each point he helped her to visualise what he was doing until the room was the center of a great wheel of energy, the axle being a beam of light from the highest above to the lowest below. At each quarter stood an archangel at a gate marked by a pentagram and a hexagram. And at each step in the ritual she could feel the changes in the atmosphere of the room.

The heady smell of the flowers along the East wall became intoxicating as he stood behind her kneeling figure, both facing East. Glancing up she startled herself because, for a moment, it was not David but a great, gleaming God that stood over her, his hands held out in supplication. The lyrical nature of his ritual voice and the timbre of his chant stirred her to the core.

Oh Blessed one of Heaven
Who was and always shall be,
Who dances at the place
Where the moonlight meets the sea.

Who chose me as her own
And loved me in my youth,
Who made me Her own Priest
And taught me Hidden Truth

I ask of you my Goddess
To be with us this night
Standing by my side
As I perform this Rite,
And accept this holy act
And the blood we shed this night.

Nancy blushed at the mention of blood, for she knew it to be her own. She tried to not feel too embarrassed, for this was the condition upon which they had agreed: that he would be her first lover and, in exchange, her broken hymen would be a sacrifice to his Goddess. She was surprised, though, that he could mention it in this way. She was even more surprised when she felt a definite presence enter the room, not from the door, for it remained closed, but from above. Suddenly there was a sensation as though love and life itself had wrapped them in its arms and that, this night, nothing could exist but this room in this place at this time.

David completed the ritual and pulled pillows out to the center of the room. He made a pallet and instructed Nancy to lay upon it. He made a second at right angles so that the pillows formed a sort of chevron in the center of the room. He then busied himself in the North and East, piling a tray with food and drink.

“Before we settle in, I want to explain the rules. First of all, if you need to leave the room you must perform a simple action as though you were parting a curtain and closing it behind you. Do this when exiting and entering the room for any reason, such as needing to go to the bathroom. Secondly, at any time you may stop what is happening by saying ‘halt’. If you wish you may

also use colour codes such as green for 'go', yellow for 'slow down' and red for 'stop now'." Nancy nodded her understanding and watched as he lay the food on the floor between the two pallets.

For a short while they ate bits of cheese and grapes, sliced vegetables such as peppers, carrots and cucumber, as well as pomegranate seeds. All very light foods which would not interfere with strenuous activities. The wine was watered so that they would not become drunk either, for David wanted this to be an experience Nancy would remember, not something lost in an alcoholic haze.

As they talked their faces grew closer and closer until finally David, propped on his elbow, reached behind Nancy's head with his hand and guided her mouth to his. Nancy felt electrified by the touch. Her own lips yielding to his gentle pressure, accepting the penetration of his tongue between her teeth. They shifted positions minimising any loss of contact until she was up on her knees holding his head and applying her own pressure.

There was fire in her belly the likes of which she had never known. Every inch of her tingled in that kiss and reluctantly she let him break away in order to push their dishes to a safe distance. But it was mere moments before they were kneeling face to face, her hands in his hair, her hot mouth seeking his.

Nancy had never known that a kiss could be so many things. It flowed from the depths of hard, yearning pressure that she feared would bruise her lips to heights of playful licks and tongue teases and back again. She'd never known that her whole body could be part of a kiss, her soft breasts pressing into David's hard pecs, her belly on fire as his one hand fluttered against the small of her back.

There was no thought, no planning, nothing that could guide her except for pure passion. The kiss was a living, breathing thing of its own and she could only be part of its livingness. She could only observe and remember, she could not guide or plan. She felt the swelling of her breasts pressing against the lace bra that she had worn this night, she felt her nipples turn hard, nearly painful against the material tied around her ribcage. And still the kiss went on.

Letting her hands slide down David's shoulders she pushed back the robe to reveal his torso. She pushed away from him then to look at him. She allowed her hands to touch his chest. To run through the light curls of hair which decorated the defined lines of his musculature. Years ago she had seen David topless dozens of times, at the beach, when cutting the lawn, and other occasions, but now the sight only further stoked the fires in her belly. With a deft movement he removed the robe and tossed it into a corner. Nancy reached again for the kiss but found a single finger on her lips.

"We shall not rush this my love, for we have the whole night ahead of us and now is only the beginning." With that he pushed her back into a seated position and piled pillows around her. "Tell me if you get cold," he whispered in her ear. Cold, she thought the room was burning up and the heat of his breath on her ear was the fire that kept the rest going.

David sat cross legged in front of Nancy and began very carefully unbuttoning her blouse. Each button seemed to take an eternity, she wanted him *now* and she couldn't see what waiting was going to do for her. Still David was insistent that they work slowly and passionately. She

wondered at his control for in this position she could plainly see the painful straining of his pants.

“Take me,” she whispered.

“I will, in time, my sweet,” he replied. “But is it not also my right to enjoy the beauty you have worked so hard to maintain all of these years?” After the kiss Nancy was surprised that she could blush, but the burning at the tips of her ears was all the signal she needed to know what her face looked like.

David removed the shirt and gazed upon her exquisite breasts still trapped as they were in that brassiere. Leaning forward he traced the line of her arm with his fingertips, sliding down through her armpit, around the gentle curves of her breast. Nancy thought her nipples would burst the fabric if she didn't get that damnable thing off of her. But David was in no hurry, little by little he explored her body with those sweeping fingers. His hand pressed on her belly. He enjoyed the smooth skin which made even his soft artist's hands seem coarse as stone. He stroked her belly in a downwards motion to increase blood flow to the mound below. Finally he brought his hands together and unclipped the bra pulling it away much to her relief. She only then realised that the relief was what he wanted her to feel.

Sitting back David let out a whispered oath. “Goddess! You're beautiful Nancy.” He reached out to touch her breasts almost as though he were afraid he would break them. Porcelain skin, smooth gentle curves, perfect in every way he finally brushed the exquisite skin. She grabbed his hand and forced it onto her breast, her hot, hard nipple pressing into the palm of his hand. A soft moan escaped her then as his touch was electrifying. He squeezed gently enjoying the resistance, the softness, the texture and weight. Everything about her breasts was beautiful.

She arched backwards in a sudden gasp and David took that opportunity to latch his mouth onto one perfectly rounded mound. He played with the nub of her nipple with his tongue, grazing it with his teeth while he massaged the other with his hand. Nancy pressed her breast into his mouth, the electric heat burning down to her womanhood as though there were a direct line from her nipples to her clitoris.

She then began to spasm. Her head tossed and turned whipping her hair back and forth. She grasped his head to her chest as the fire burned hot between her legs. Moans escaped her and David had to bite on his own lip to maintain control. Hearing the prelude of her lovesong nearly drove him to take her right then and there, but he had promised himself that he would wait, that he would be careful and, above all, that he would bring her to ecstasy before finally performing the blood sacrifice of a virgin, the breaking of the hymen with his throbbing member.

The first small orgasm passed and Nancy laid back into the pillows. She was feeling quite comfortable and more relaxed now that she'd had some release. David took advantage of this lapse in her passion. Readjusting the cushions again Nancy lay on her back, bare breasted except for the wisps of her own hair tumbling down from her shoulders.

Now David had time to enjoy her. He stroked the inside of her arms, bringing his hands down and around her breasts. He placed small kisses along her belly, and up her neck, once again locking her lips to his own. With hands and mouth he explored the sensitive parts of her body, quietly controlling his breathing which controlled his own passion.

Hanging over her, kissing her breasts he began to slowly descend. He kissed a line of sweetness down her belly, once again igniting the fires there. Bit by bit he approached the top of her pants until he could go no further. Already Nancy was arching her back, her want again growing hot. David deftly undid the button of her pants and the zipper, all hands-free, that he might bury his face in the black lace that covered the Venusian mound.

It didn't take him long to remove her remaining clothes and spend some time on her legs. Beautiful and long, shapely and soft he stroked them and kissed them until Nancy began to squirm. Here and there he teased and tickled her just to lighten the mood, to show her that lovemaking could be playful as well.

Then Nancy felt the smooth skin of David's back under her legs and his hot breath on her womanhood. She was about to protest, being inexperienced, having had no man touch her there intimately, but the moment David's hot tongue licked her sweetness she was lost. Every lick, every movement of his mouth was as though he were using a bellows on a forge fire. Hotter and hotter, the pain in her loins burned with desire. And yet, David's own member still remained straining against its fibre prison.

Lifting himself up David brought his hand between her legs. A cry of pleasure was wrenched from her as he slid a finger into her sacred space. Licking her nipples to fan the fires he worked the hard nub of her clitoris with his thumb while stroking the rough G-spot within with his finger.

Nancy thought it was as though an electric current burned between his mouth and his hand. She knew nothing of his powers to control energy, for that was just what he was doing, using energy to intensify her pleasure. Time and time again she shook her head, straining against the building pressure. Bit by bit he pushed her closer and closer to the overwhelming waves. With every breath Nancy let out more and more of her lovesong.

Finally she screamed, singing out a single note above all others. She gasped and convulsed. It was as though all of the air had been torn from her body and yet, for the first time ever she was filled. Lights sparked and danced before her eyes as every muscle in her body strained against the pleasure. David worked her long through the orgasm which only intensified with each new cry. Finally he let her go. She dropped to the cushions, not realising that, in her ecstasy she had held up most of her body with the back of her head.

As the last of the strain fled from her David pulled out a blanket and wrapped Nancy against any cold she might feel after such an intense experience. Propping up the pillows he lay back with her head and breasts on his bare chest and midriff. As she relaxed David concentrated on stroking her hair while maintaining the long, slow, rhythmic breathing that was his own control. Nancy absently stroked David's belly, feeling the warm glow of passing that first orgasmic gate.

"You still haven't breached me," she said dreamily.

"We have much time left little one," he replied. "I worship you as though you were my Goddess herself and as such it is my joy and honour to give this gift of pleasure to you."

They stayed like that for several moments, Nancy stroking his hard chest and back, until finally Nancy laid her hand upon the throbbing bulge in David's pants.

"I've never seen one before you know. Not hard like this."

“I know. You may look at it whenever you are ready.”

Languidly Nancy pulled herself up and began working the belt buckle of David’s pants. Even as she lowered his zipper the throbbing member remained behind a tight barrier of material. David helped her remove his pants but he was determined that she ‘unwrap’ his cock in her own time.

Nancy pulled down the underwear quickly and was startled at how David’s wand leapt to a standing position. No longer burning with passion, Nancy was more curious than anything else. Gently she touched it eliciting a reaction from her friend but also from herself. She had never expected it to be so smooth. She grasped the hot member in her hand and only then began to think about its size in relation to herself.

“It’s quite large isn’t it?” She inquired.

“It’s on the large side. You’ll find some bigger, some smaller. It’s a generous size and I can be very gentle with it.”

“Hmm...” Was all she could say.

Nancy spent some time exploring the penis with her hands noticing what parts were more sensitive to her touch. Putting her mouth over the head she was surprised at how hot it still felt against her tongue. Just placing it only an inch or two into the hot wetness caused David to groan with pleasure and the head of his cock to flare with need.

“Try placing your hand around the base of the shaft and then lick and suck the top. Don’t try to take it all in your mouth.”

Nancy found that she enjoyed the texture of his throbbing manhood. The heat made her feel as though this was his very life in her hand, not just a sexual organ distant from the heart. She gained pleasure from watching the control she had over David’s reactions as she experimented with pressure, positioning, touches, licks. Small short darts of her tongue could make him groan but placing it deep in her mouth, sucking on it hard and then sliding back and forth could make him scream.

“How do I, um, make it go?” Nancy felt embarrassed by the question.

“Rhythm. Slide your hand up and down evenly, lick it when it gets dry. Although one of the most pleasurable things you can do for a man is to suck him until he comes and swallow it down, I don’t recommend it for your first time.”

But Nancy was feeling adventurous and it was only by luck that she watched the sparkling fountain arc over his belly rather than filling her mouth and her belly. But this, by itself was a new experience and she’d had no idea that cum could go so high. David was going insane, bouncing his head off the pillows, writing in seeming agony all centred around the power she still held firmly in her hand.

He then started to laugh and quickly brushed her away from his depleted penis.

“Eventually it tickles and I can’t stand it, it’s not like a woman who can cum and cum and cum. We men need a break in between.”

Nancy looked at the, now softening meat in her hand and felt some disappointment. An urge had grown in her again, a fire that wanted nothing more than to shove that solid staff deep inside of her. And now it was fading fast.

David was about to get up and get a towel when Nancy reached for the pool of sparkling wetness on his stomach. On some intuitive level she felt that she'd missed out on something and wanted David's life-force within her. "I want to taste it. You tasted me, I want to taste it." David smiled as she covered a finger in the sticky mess and placed it in her mouth. She made an odd face before swallowing hard and reaching for a drink.

"Not what you expected?" David asked.

"Well, it's not awful, but, I don't know what I expected."

David smiled as he got up and cleaned himself off. While Nancy went to use the bathroom he set up the cushions, food and drink as he had placed them before except now they were both naked. They ate a little before David began asking Nancy what she thought, how she was feeling and what did she like or dislike so far.

"It's been wonderful David. You've been so gentle with me and yet elicited such power. I'd never imagined such pleasure, such intoxication could exist." David smiled at her.

"Not everyone can, or will, take the time in this way little one. Most men are very hammer and tongs about the whole thing. They're so excited just to have sex that they don't focus on their partner very much."

"I've always been afraid of that, not enjoying my first time. It's been a stress for me since I can remember."

"Hopefully I've dispelled some of that stress. After all, I am a Priest of the Goddess."

"Tell me about Her David."

"First, we'll set the mood to relax a bit after our previous exertions." David again gave her that smile which banished all worry and fear. He moved the cushions around so that Nancy could lie on her stomach without difficulty breathing. He covered these with towels and had her lay upon them before going to the altar to put on a thick incense.

The full moon had risen some time ago and shone brightly into the room illuminating the beautiful body that lay in the center of the temple. David was very aware of the lunar position, for She had told him how this must be done, and he intended to follow those instructions. He looked up through the skylight at the stars far above and knew that it was a matter of an hour, maybe, before Her light was in the perfect position.

"Are you cold at all Nancy?" David asked as he busied himself around the room.

"No, actually I'm feeling quite warm and fuzzy thanks."

David got them both drinks, replaced what candles had burned low and then sat next to her prone figure. Warmed massage oil was then drizzled over her back, the warmth penetrating her skin and muscles.

“Mmm, that feels wonderful,” Nancy purred as David began to massage her back. “Now, about the Goddess.”

“My Goddess is beautiful, more beautiful than anyone you can imagine.” David stretched as he stroked her long back muscles, his voice taking on a distant quality. “She is the Goddess of moon and sea, great and distant, filled with emotion and power. Her love is the love of the Divine. She is the Great Mother, Eternal Lover and Sacred Daughter. All of these and yet none. She is the beauty of the Divine Expression hidden in all things, she is Love and Light radiating throughout creation. She is the love of a man and a woman but also the love which draws together the very particles that make up the physical universe. Her love for me keeps me going, inspires me and makes me strong and in return I love Her. To make love to a woman is to worship the Goddess and to love Her with my entire body and soul.”

“When did you meet Her?”

“As a young man actually. I was feeling very lonely and hurt, crying alone in the night when She came to me first. I was praying to the Infinite Divine, praying to God you might say. I became aware of a presence in the room but I was too upset to care. I knew that there was a woman standing behind me as surely as I’m massaging your back right now. She took me in her arms and held me and wrapped Her wings around me. She banished all fear, all sorrow, all loneliness and for the first time in my life I knew perfect love and perfect peace. From that moment on I knew that no mortal woman could ever replace Her in my heart.”¹

Nancy turned towards him then in such a way that his hand, which had been on her back, was now on her breast. “Not even me?” she teased.

David smiled at her. “Even though there is potential there for love my friend, even you could not take me away from Her. I love many women, friends, colleagues, lovers, Priestesses, but none can own my heart for their own for in each woman I see some aspect of the Goddess, but none can be all of Her. Each woman I love is loved for different reasons, each woman is loved differently and because I am Her chosen Priest, my love is infinite. How can that be contained by a single person? How can a single person’s love fulfil me by comparison?”

Nancy returned to her position in the cushions. They spoke little as David continued to perform his magic on every muscle group of her body. He worked her legs and feet, arms, back, thighs, neck, shoulders, everything. Nancy felt relaxed and rejuvenated at the same time. She could not understand how his touch could at one moment be electric and at another soothing, but she had yet to learn the secrets of power which David knew. By subtly changing the energy of his hands David could play her body like a musical instrument.

After bathroom breaks and a bit more of the food, the moon slid overhead spilling her light into the skylight, granting them a second ‘moonrise’.

They lay on the towels now, staring at the sky, watching the moon move into view. David had been propped on one elbow staring at Nancy’s beauty. His fingers stroked her gently here and there, almost absently, in loving caresses.

“She’s beautiful tonight,” Nancy said about the moon above.

¹ Consider whether to include this here or relate this experience as part of Ben’s history in *Darkwatchers*. As a personal experience it’s hard to know which character to share it with.

“Yes, She’s beautiful every night.” David smiled lovingly at the sky. He turned his attention back to woman who lay beside him. “And tonight She is you and you are Her.”

Nancy looked at him. “I don’t fully understand, but it’s been wonderful so I don’t care.” She reached around the back of his head and drew his lips to her own.

They kissed for what seemed an eternity. Nancy was amazed at how quickly the fire she thought had been doused by her earlier release could be suddenly stoked by something as simple as a kiss. It was as though her lips and tongue were connected directly to her belly, willing the fires to burn hot and white.

David instantly responded to this change in his partner. He could feel the change in her energy flowing from languid to passionate. The touches were no longer soft caresses but stimulating fires of electric heat which flowed up and down their bodies. Nancy was nibbling his neck, brushing his ear with her lips when she grabbed at David’s now rock hard member and whispered “I want you this time, I want you inside me.”

They moved against each other, repositioning, changing, sliding, caressing until David’s body was above and she below. He quickly applied a lubricated condom to his straining cock and moved to the point of entry. Holding himself up with one hand he placed the other against the small of her back tilting her pelvis to better accommodate him.

“My dear one, there may be pain.” At this point the fire burned so hot in Nancy that she didn’t care if it tore her in half. She had never known such need before in her life. She thought that if she didn’t get that throbbing member within her soon she would die.

“Fuck me!” She shouted much to her own surprise. David lowered his head to caress each rock hard nipple with his tongue, enjoying the crinkled areola around each. “Fuck me now!” She screeched. David knew that the endorphins of heightened desire would lessen her pain and so he enjoyed her breasts a little longer. They were well worth enjoying, being perfectly shaped and placed. It also gave him time to focus his energy in his penis making it burn with power to those who could see such things.

Nancy screamed for him to enter her, even wrapping her legs around him to try and pull him in herself. Finally David said to her: “Look at the moon, stare at the moon.” The very moment her eyes locked on the silvery sphere in the sky he plunged deep into her, filling her in a way she had never imagined.

Pleasure and pain exploded through her body with the fullness of his love. His energy flowed into her, overwhelming her and for a moment she went perfectly rigid. David held his position until she was ready for more, waiting until the initial shock had faded.

To Nancy it was as though the world had exploded and the white light of the moon had enveloped her entirely. Suddenly she wasn’t looking at the moon through a skylight, but she was outside, near the sea, laying on a stone altar in a distant time and place.

She could feel the cool breeze of the ocean on her skin, a pleasant sensation on a warm night such as this. She could smell lilacs and other heady aromas in the damp summer air. The full moon shone down brightly stealing all darkness from the night.

She sat up and felt the discomfort between her legs. Looking down she could see blood trickle onto the stone upon which she sat. Blood sacrifice, they used to say, sacrificing a virgin. In this way the two concepts suddenly made sense.

“Yes, this is the way of sacrifice. One does not take a life, one only changes it.” The voice was soft and lyrical. Nancy looked around to see three women dressed in white robes standing beside the altar, their silver circlets shining brightly in the moonlight. The older woman smiled at her and took her hand. Nancy stood up but found that her legs were weak. “Ah now, you’re all right my dear, everything is fine.” The two younger Priestesses came and held her up. “Come along, She is waiting.”

Nancy had no idea who they were talking about or even what had happened to her, but she allowed them to lead her down a grassy path that felt fresh and alive against her feet. The way was not far and soon she was walking on sand towards the surf of the ocean. Upon the water was a silver strand of reflected moonlight and on this a figure walked upon the waters towards the sandy beach.

“Wait here,” the older Priestess instructed as the three of them stepped back and away. Nancy was surprised that she felt no fear, no trepidation at what was, clearly, one of the strangest experiences of her life.

Before long the figure reached the shore. Slightly taller than Nancy the woman stood out in silver moonlight. Nancy could not tell if the woman was bathed in silver light or made of it, either way she glowed. Nancy looked up into the most beautiful face she had ever imagined. Soft features accentuated sea-green eyes. Her long, silvery golden hair drifted in the soft sea breeze as the Goddess smiled. Nancy felt weak at the knees but, at the same time, her heart filled with joy and peace.

“I have waited a long time for you my daughter.” Her voice was a thousand strands of music from a thousand worlds all harmonised into a single voice, a single melody of love. “You have made the sacrifice and are now initiated into womanhood.”

The Priestesses then approached. One wrapped Nancy in a white, gossamer robe, the other placed upon her head a silver circlet like their own. Nancy was dumbfounded. Even if she could speak, she had no idea what she would say.

“It is not enough for me that you are now a woman my child. For long ere you were born did I choose you as my own. Life after life you have served Me as Priestess and as such we welcome you home once again.” With that the Goddess took Nancy’s face in her hands and placed a burning kiss on her forehead. She then drew Nancy into Her arms, holding her head against Her breast. Nancy could then feel the warm touch of wings as the Goddess wrapped the newly made Priestess in Her sacred embrace.

For the first time in her life Nancy felt perfect peace, perfect love, perfect light. She was filled with it, saturated with it, she felt that she would explode as there was not enough room within her for all of that light. For that one perfect moment she understood why David could never love another as he loved his Goddess. Yet she also understood that it was impossible for her to love but one man for she was so filled with love and light that no one person could be sole recipient thereof. She had enough love to fill a nation, to fill a world. She would have wept but there were no tears, for even tears could not convey the intensity and vastness of the love she felt at that

moment. Now and forever she belonged to the Goddess, she had touched the Divine and nothing else could ever replace Her in a mortal's heart.

After what seemed like forever the Goddess broke her embrace. Nancy felt herself riveted by the gaze of the Goddess who regarded Her newest initiate.

“You are my own Priestess. To love me is to be loved. I demand only love and honour, seldom shall I ask more of you. But it is also your duty to give my love to others, for you are now an extension of myself. Your work is my work, your love is my love, your body is my body, your heart is my heart. I love you and I give you life.”

Nancy could feel that this was true; that from this moment on she was a part of the Goddess and would be forever. She could feel the mark of the Priestess upon her brow where the Goddess had kissed her. Suddenly her life had meaning and power behind it, for she was an emissary of the Goddess in the manifest world. She also knew that this would change everything between David and herself, for he was a Priest, a consort of the Goddess and Nancy was Her representative. She suddenly understood a mystery of sacred sexuality and everything that had gone into this night of sacrifice became clear to her.

“Before you go my Priestess, I have a message for my Priest.” The Goddess whispered into the new initiate's ear. Then, standing back, the two stared into each other's eyes. Slowly the face of the Goddess began to change, the rest of her began to fade and before long Nancy was staring, once again, at the moon as it shone down through the skylight into the temple that David had prepared. The temple he had created just for her.

For the first time she could see the burning lines of power around the room, she could see David's aura filled with writhing light, the tendrils of which reached out to embrace her. And she could see her own energy, pinkish white, reaching back to him. He was rock still, staring into her eyes, waiting for her reaction. It had only been a second since he'd breached her, torn her virginity and plunged himself deep within her. To Nancy it had seemed like hours.

She looked away from the moon and looked to the altar. There, beside the image of the Goddess was David's own silver circlet bearing the crescent moon. Now she understood that David was Her chosen Priest just as Nancy had just become Her chosen Priestess. She locked eyes with her lover and smiled, understanding washing over her.

“I'm OK,” she said in soft tones. With that she reached up to him and pulled him down upon her so that she took his whole weight. She wanted to feel his life, to feel his chest close to her own. But David could see the change in her and he knew then that the Goddess had joined with Nancy and that he was making love to them both.

David slid his left arm around her shoulders, his right still holding the small of her back, and kissed her hard. She returned the kiss with ferocity but let out a moan of pleasure as David began to move.

Every rhythmic movement brought forth another cry of her sacred lovesong. Every rhythmic movement washed over her with waves of pleasure. She was acutely aware of every point at which they touched as well as being aware of his force mixing with her own. Another energy was also there, swirling around them, through them, with them, for She was with them and now Nancy could feel her presence. Together the lovers writhed in the throes of their intense

lovmaking. It was not long before David's song joined with her own and they sang a duet of passion which culminated in a dual cry of ecstasy and intense pleasure, her orgasm triggering his own.

Exhausted, David dropped upon the beautiful Priestess, nuzzling her neck and stroking her breast. He did not withdraw immediately, but rather lay there with their mixed energy swirling around them, not wishing to tear away too soon.

He rolled off of her and cleaned himself up with one of the many towels he had on hand. Nancy, on the other hand, was numb. She was not ready to move even to bunch up the towels between her legs. She could feel the slight burning where her virginity had been taken, but the tingling pleasure which still vibrated through her body made it seem such a small thing.

David lay curled around her head so that he could stroke her hair.

"Are you all right my sweet?" he asked gently.

"Thank you," was all she could manage. David smiled and allowed her to rest. It was not long before she was asleep, drifting off on the clouds of warm contentment.

David let her drift away, stroking her hair affectionately. After removing most of the towels and draping a clean one over her womanhood he covered her with a blanket and fluffed her pillow. He attended to the altar and the candles, snuffing all but the blue Presence candle which sat before his small statuette of the Goddess. Fire safety having been observed he crawled beneath the covers and cuddled into Nancy who had rolled onto her side in her sleep. Spooning with her he too drifted into a gentle, contented darkness.

They awoke to the dawn breaking through the Eastern Window. Blinking in the light David stood and adored the dawn. Nancy watched from her still prone position on the floor.

"Why do you do that?" Nancy asked.

"To align myself with the natural tides of the planet," David answered. "All life depends on the sun, even the moon's light comes from that center of life." David smiled at his friend with whom he had shared so much. He had always hoped that she would take an interest in his occult work, for he had recognised her from long ago but was afraid to approach her lest she be frightened away.

He quickly put together a breakfast for them from the night's leftovers. As he worked he told Nancy that the Temple had been closed and that if she wanted to leave the room for whatever reason that she didn't need to use the curtain technique. She left to perform her morning toilet and returned, still naked.

"Not in a hurry to dress?" he asked.

"Not really. I'm not cold and, I'm just not ready to be tied into clothes just yet."

David grinned. "You really are gorgeous you know. I don't know why you're so shy around men. Anyone I know would be glad to have you."

"And how many of them would have been such a gentle and responsive lover?" Nancy sat on the cushions and began to nibble on a piece of green pepper.

“I don’t know honestly, I can think of a few but they are all very special people” David replied.

Nancy leaned over and gave him a peck on the cheek. “Well, you were fabulous. I can’t thank you enough for being so kind, so gentle and so giving last night.”

“Well, to be fair, it wasn’t just for you,” David said glancing at the altar. “When you asked me to be your first I meditated on it and the Goddess inspired me to do what we did last night.” David sat back and looked at Nancy examining the many changes in her energy and demeanour. “I can see that I was right.”

“Hmm...” Nancy said as she thought. “What do you see?”

“Well, last night I knew that She was with you. I knew that I was not only making love to my dear friend, but also my blessed Goddess.”

Nancy nodded. “Yes, she was with me. In fact, She had much to say to me at that time.”

“What time?”

“Right after you entered me. Must have taken a lot of control for you to wait that long for me to respond.”

“No, a few seconds. I expected you to need some time after that initial penetration.”

“Seconds?” Nancy was incredulous. “It seemed like hours! I was in a place far away and I met your Goddess.” Nancy blushed at that. “I mean, *our* Goddess.”

David’s smile was ecstatic. “Yes, such things can seem to take a long time but only seconds pass here. Tell me what happened if you can.”

Nancy related her experience while they ate. David could not have looked more pleased.

“David, I now understand, I understand why nobody can ever take Her place in your heart. She’s done the same to me now.”

“I can tell by the way you talk about Her. She is all love and beauty and light. How could you not love her?”

“Oh, and she had a message for you.” Nancy remembered.

“Oh?”

“She said to tell you that she is very happy with you, that you have done well to bring this Priestess back to Her. That she loves you and is always with you no matter what happens. She is proud that you remain Her Priest and that, in all things but especially this, you have proven yourself worthy of being Her own.”

David had tears in his eyes as she related the message sent by his beloved Goddess. Never before had he been sent such a direct message of love and support through another. Nancy was truly a Priestess now and forever. He offered a prayer of thanks for the blessing he had received and the opportunity to be involved in the ritual he had performed.

Nancy moved over to take David in a warm embrace. She placed his head against her breast and held him close.

“I had dreamed of a Priestess for most of my life,” he told her as the tears dampened her chest. “I have wished for someone to work with in this way, to worship with, to pass on my knowledge to since forever. And now you are here. You are not like the others of my order. For some reason I feel like you are *my* Priestess, not just Her Priestess. Perhaps it’s because I had a hand in bringing you back to Her and that I was here when first you met that I know you will always be special to me.”

“But David, you said that this wasn’t that kind of relationship, that this was between friends,” she teased.

David pulled away and looked her seriously in the eyes. “It is between friends. I have no intention of owning you or binding you to any ‘relationship’ as our culture defines it. You are an agent of the Goddess, and must love and live as she dictates. I am happy only that I have the opportunity to work and worship with you. I would never bind you, for that would be like binding the Goddess and that would break my heart.”

“I’m not sure I understand,” she replied. “Do you not love me?”

“If I didn’t love you I could not have performed the ritual last night. But it is not the desire to possess, to entrap, to hold. I can love freely and I love you without strings or conditions.”

“I see, freely.” Nancy thought about the love which had filled her when she was in the Goddess’s embrace. That love, filling, overflowing, permeating every part of her very being was given freely. That kind of love could never be tied down or locked away. “Like the Goddess’s embrace.”

“Exactly,” David exclaimed. “That exactly right. Like the Goddess’s embrace.”

It was not long after that Nancy went home. She had a lot to think about, and was still rather tired from the previous night. She had felt things physically, emotionally and spiritually that she had never felt before, nor even imagined. And what did it mean to be a chosen Priestess? None of these things could be easily answered or addressed. As comfortable as David’s place was, she needed her familiar surroundings and space to meditate on how her life had just changed overnight.

It was a few days later that David found Nancy waiting on his doorstep. He smiled at her as he unlocked the door and motioned for her to follow.

“Don’t you want to know why I’m here?” David put his finger to her lips and motioned for her to sit with him.

“She’s in my dreams.”

“I know,” David said self assuredly.

“I mean, afterwards I thought maybe it didn’t happen, but...”

“But, She’s real and She’s always there,” David interrupted.

“Yes, exactly.” Nancy looked around the room. “I always thought religion was just to reassure us about death or something. Gods are supposed to be invisible friends in the sky right?” Nancy seemed agitated but David just smiled as he shook his head. “But this is so... real, so... constant.”

“I know. And that’s why I gave you the space you needed to figure that out. She has chosen you and now you have to come to terms with what that means.”

“What does it mean?”

“Well this is part of it, knowing that She is there, with you, with me, with others. Knowing that the Love of God is not an abstract concept but a living intelligence that can form itself into something we can face and talk to and understand, at least somewhat.” David took her hand and felt the terror within her. “Do you think She wants you to be afraid?”

“No, that’s not it. Rather there is so much, so much of my world just turned on its ear.”

“Yes, I can understand that.”

“Oh David, I’m so sorry.” Nancy’s eyes welled up with tears.

“What is it?”

“I, kind of always thought you were a bit of a kook. I went along with the ritual thing because I trusted you to be my first and, well, it seemed like there was a safety to it all. But I never believed in God, not really believed.”

“And now you don’t have to. The Ultimate Divine has revealed itself to you through the Goddess and now you know, you don’t believe, you know that She exists.”

“And now I have to ask more of you. After everything you did for me the other night, and I do appreciate it, I must now ask for more.”

“And I will give it gladly and in love as I did the other night.”

Nancy gazed at the floor. “David. Will you teach me to be a Priestess. Will you teach me your magic?”

“Nancy, I could no more turn away such a request than turn away my own Goddess. I will help you, I will teach you, and together we shall worship Her and serve Her as best we may.”

And so it was.

Chapter 3: The Party

It was a few months later that Nancy went to the house for a large party. She'd been learning much from David since her 'sacrifice' and now she was to meet others of like mind. David's exceptional wealth meant that this was to be a black tie affair and so she was dressed in a stunning black evening dress. Her long hair sparkled red highlights in the evening mist as she walked up the now familiar driveway.

David had hired in staff for the event and a butler came to the door. She handed him her invitation and he brought her to the main hall. Relieved of her wrap her ample bosom was cradled in soft curves of rich black. The dress hugged her torso and then spread in luxurious folds around her legs. She was comfortable with her body, this body which was a representation of the Goddess; this thing of beauty which the divine feminine had inhabited more than once.

The room was decorated like a fancy party in a James Bond film. The buffet was richly laid out and had the required ice sculpture and champagne fountain which spoke of details and wealth. But that wasn't what struck her at first. Rather it was the range of guests.

Men and women of various races and skin tones mingled in small clusters. Small bursts of laughter came from individual knots almost in time to its own rhythm. A string quartet played in the corner and yet with all of this affluence it was obvious that something was out of place.

It took her a moment to realise what it was. As her eyes became more accustomed to the light it became more and more obvious that this room also represented a wide range of social classes. Everyone was dressed well. Evening dresses and tuxedos, and yet in all of this similarity it was clear who was used to wearing such finery and who wasn't. She would have guessed by body language and the fit of their clothes that some of these people were quite poor indeed. Yet there was no separation between one and another. It wasn't obvious, but it was there.

Just as she was making this realisation David came up to her.

"Ahh, you made it," he said smiling.

"Yes, quite the party you're throwing here." Nancy shifted uncomfortably. "I'm not really used to wearing something like this and the heels are murder."

David laughed. "Don't worry, nobody cares." Nancy found that hard to believe. David continued, "We all dress the same because we *are* all the same. Sure, there are times we've had to buy something nice to wear for others from time to time, but it is good for us all to get together."

"I don't understand what you mean," Nancy said quizzically. "Why would you buy someone a tuxedo just so that they can come to your party?"

David tapped the side of his nose conspiratorially, "That's a good question. See if you can figure it out." Nancy just shook her head.

Before she could ask anything else a rather dashing older gentleman probably in his mid forties came up to them with two glasses of champagne. He looked Nancy over in clear appreciation.

"Oh David, she's gorgeous. I can't believe that you're her first."

Nancy glared at David. "Who is this?"

"Oh, Nancy, this is Gary, a long time friend of mine." Gary handed David the champagne and took Nancy's offered hand. Rather than shaking it, he bowed low and gently brushed his lips against her knuckles.

"It is a pleasure to meet you m'lady."

At his touch Nancy felt a chill run through her. A small shock of pleasure that sat for a moment in the depths of her belly before melting away. A small weakness in the knees was also noticed for a split second. When he looked up at her their eyes locked and she saw a small glimmer deep within his pupils. Like a single star at midnight.

"It's, um, nice to meet you Gary," she managed.

Releasing her hand Gary took the champagne from David and handed one to Nancy. She took it from him and drank a little to steady herself. Nobody had ever done THAT to her before.

"Gary," David began. "I have some things to attend to, would you be kind enough to introduce Nancy around and make her comfortable?"

"Gladly my friend. It isn't often I have the pleasure of such a beautiful woman." He winked at Nancy and offered his arm. She took it but shot David a look. She was unsure about this, but seeing David's eyes she figured that he was trying to do his best by his guests.

Gary was an excellent companion. He waited on her and made sure she had food and drink. He guided her from place to place, introducing her to people who all seemed to have been looking forward to meeting her. What really surprised her was that she felt perfectly at home with all of them. Awkward Nancy, forever unable to fit in, was surprised at how easy it was to talk to these people. It was as though they had all been friends a long time ago and only now were getting together again.

As she met more and more people she realised that this must be the reason that so many social classes and cultures were represented. And it was starting to dawn on her that there was something about the eyes; always the eyes. Absently she rubbed the spot on her forehead where the Goddess had kissed her during the sacrifice.

Gary left her in the company of a charming young woman with whom she had started a conversation with about art and music. They sat on a pair of chez lounges and sipped their drinks as her guide went to fetch a plate for them all to share. Finally she got up the nerve to ask a few questions which had been bothering her.

"OK, what is this anyway? All of these people, all of these different people getting along? I mean, I've never met so many people that I can talk to comfortably. It's almost creepy." Her companion laughed.

"Yes, it is at first. You'll get used to it though."

"How do you mean?"

"Well, basically we're all wallflowers. We all started out as kind of, off kilter. Out of tune with the rest of the world. Do you know what I mean?"

“Absolutely,” Nancy sighed. “I’ve never fit in, except for here. I never thought losing my virginity would suddenly engage social skills.” Again her companion, Martha, laughed.

“Oh, that’s not what’s changed. Actually it’s probably just the different people. Since we’re all out of whack with the rest of the world it stands to reason that we must be ‘in whack’ with someone.” She took her glass from the small table to make room for Gary who was returning with a small tray.

“I can see that, sort of, but there’s more to it than that isn’t there?”

“Oh yes,” said Gary sitting beside Martha. “There is much more to it than that.”

“It’s the eyes isn’t it,” Martha joked. “She does something to the eyes.”

For a moment Nancy was uncomfortable. “Who does something? Me?”

“No, no,” Martha said shaking her head. “The Goddess. She marks us. Surely you’ve noticed it”

Nancy had noticed. “Like a star in the distance. Or the moon reflected on the water.”

“Exactly,” Gary punctuated. “That’s it exactly.”

“Especially you, after what you went through,” Martha added.

“What do you mean? Does everyone know about my virginity?” Nancy was feeling quite defensive.

“Don’t be upset dear,” Martha reassured her. “We’ve all had similar experiences. Maybe not as intense as yours, but something similar.”

“We’ve all met her at some point, in some way,” Gary said popping a sausage roll into his mouth.

“And this light, this spark in the eyes?”

“It’s a mark, it can be thought of as a scar.” Martha explained. “If you touch a hot stove you burn yourself and a mark is left. When you meet the Goddess something changes in you, and a mark is left behind. Those who know it can see it.”

“We are all Her own,” Gary said, a wistful smile on his lips. “We all worship Her as best we may.”

“In a way you’re lucky Nancy.” Martha leaned over to speak more quietly. “You will never have to endure a bad ‘first time’. You’ll probably never know bad, empty sex either. Not knowing these people anyway.”

Nancy began to blush. “How do you mean?”

“Well, when two people make love in the name of the Goddess it is different. It is a celebration of Her beauty. Your partner worships her through you. You become radiant and beautiful, more beautiful than any mortal woman.”

“And sex can therefore become worship. It becomes a ritual to Her beauty, to Her wonder, to Her Love.” Gary’s eyes began to mist. His words carried all of the love, desire and passion he

had for his Goddess. And watching him, watching his energy as David had taught her, she began to see the truth.

No Priest of the Goddess could ever truly be in love with a human woman. Certainly people fall in love all of the time, and people can love each other very deeply, but nothing can compare to Her in the eyes of Her chosen. Now she realised why David had never called her his girlfriend even though a deep bond seemed to exist. She also saw why he didn't introduce her around himself, because he didn't want people to make a mistake about their bond. For as much as they had feelings for each other, she could never be his one and only.

She sat quietly sipping her drink, her companions waited patiently, smiling, knowing what was occurring to her. She understood that no one woman could be enough for David. And at the same time, no one man could ever be enough for her. For she was a Priestess of the Goddess. She was Her emissary in the world. Through her the Goddess could heal, could revel, could enjoy the world, and could make love. She was an expression of the Goddess.

"And she looks through our eyes," she said aloud.

"Exactly. She looks through us into the world of manifestation. Through us she feels skin on skin, the rain on our faces, the ecstasy of love and sex and joy." Martha smiled at the new Priestess awakening in Nancy.

"And that's why all of these people are together. Why they all get along, why they are all special," Nancy surmised. "They are all Priests and Priestesses of the Goddess."

"Exactly," Gary replied. "But it takes a long time to fully understand what that means on a visceral level." He thought about it for a moment, forming his words carefully. "It's like, every Priest is her consort and lover and every Priestess is her own flesh and blood. If I kiss Martha like this," he turned to Martha and placed his hand behind her head and engaged in a passionate kiss. "I am kissing the Goddess, and the Goddess is kissing me."

Martha withdrew and smiled warmly. "The Goddess fills me when I kiss her Priest. I am She and he is Her reflection in the mirror of the manifest universe. My heart is filled with love, as though Her very essence were pouring into me like thick liquid light."

It was then that a young man in a long white robe entered the room carrying a large staff. He struck the ground with it three times and said in a strong clear voice: "O yez, O yez, O yez², the temple is ready and She is near. Prepare yourselves to the temple of the Mysteries." With that he turned sharply and left.

Nancy stared after the young man. "What was that about?" She asked.

"It's the ritual, it's why we're here; well other than to meet with friends." She stood up and straightened her gown. "You don't have to go. Not everyone will go down to the temple every time. Some people will just enjoy the party."

"Oh I'm not missing out on anything," Nancy said getting up herself.

"That's why he likes you," Gary stated flatly. "He sees that in you. That's why you're here."

² Yez, pronounced "Yey" used in old English heraldry. Still used in English and Canadian courts as well as the Mysteries.

“Oh?” Nancy inquired. “I thought it was because I asked him to ‘deflower’ me.” She laughed.

“Well, if you hadn’t had that spirit, that seeking curiosity, I doubt he would have agreed, even though you are totally his type.” Gary looked her over once again. “Mmm.. Maybe mine as well.” He winked at her and Nancy blushed slightly. Martha slapped him playfully on the arm.

“Don’t go scaring the young woman off. She’s not used to this life yet.” With that she put an arm around Nancy and lead her towards the hallway which lead to the temple. “Don’t listen to him, you never have to do anything, or anyone, you don’t want to. She wouldn’t allow it anyway.” With that she turned her head to stick out her tongue at Gary who was following behind them.

They travelled with a stream of partygoers down a long tunnel and up a flight of spiral stairs. A long hallway allowed them to line up before an ornate door. It was an old-fashioned door with a great lintel above it. In the lintel were carved the words “Know Thyself”. In front of the door stood the summoner who had called them together, his heavy wooden staff blocked the open doorway.

As each person approached he locked eyes with them for a few moments. Seeing some unspoken signal he would remove the barrier to allow them access and then block the way for the next person. Nancy worried for she had no idea what the password would be that would allow her access. She said as much to Martha.

“Don’t worry, he’s looking in their eyes for the mark of the Goddess. You have it, clear as anything to one who knows what to look for.” She patted Nancy on the back but it failed to reassure her.

Finally it was her turn with the summoner. She blushed slightly in worry but the tall man smiled warmly and looked deep into her eyes.

“You’re new here,” he said flatly. “Only recently marked. Do not worry so, Her star shines within you as brightly as any of us.” Removing the staff from the doorway he said, “You may pass”.

She entered the temple seeing something akin to what she had grown accustomed to in David’s private temple. There was an alter in the East but above it, on a dais, was an elaborate throne. It was empty and yet somehow she felt there was already something there. Beside it and to the south was a small chair, a regent’s seat she recalled from her history classes.

Chairs lined the other three walls and people were sitting in no particular order. Some were together in groups she had recognised from earlier in the evening. Friends sitting with friends at church she surmised. Her assumption was confirmed when she was invited to sit with her new friends, Gary and Martha. The three of them chose a place on the West wall “to get a good view” Gary said.

She noticed that conversation was kept to a minimum and so sat in quiet meditation as each person was tested at the portal and allowed into the temple space.

Once everyone was seated the summoner entered the room and secured the door. Nancy had a moment of hesitation until she realised the door was barred from the inside, meaning that she was not locked in, rather the others who were still at the party were locked out.

The summoner then crossed to the altar along the North wall and rang a gong. “O yez, O yez, O yez, the congregation has been tested and tried and found to be chosen of Her Mysteries. If it is Her will then the ritual shall commence.

The summoner returned to his place at the portal and from a door in the East, behind the throne, came David. He was dressed in an elaborate set of robes. A white undergarment, bound with a rope of azure, was covered with a beautiful scarlet robe which hung open down the front. In his hand was a white wand and on his head a silver crown. He sat in the regency seat and struck a gong with the wand. The necessity of the precision layout of the room was apparent to Nancy and she gained a deep appreciation for the various symbols involved. Though something about David’s dress nagged at her mind as being familiar.

David rang the gong again after a few moments of silence. He then stated with a clear voice “Prepare the temple according to the ancient rites!”

At that cue one of the congregation stood and walked around the temple until he reached the altar. Nancy recognised this as the first of many movements that would be performed ‘with the sun’ as David had taught her. At the altar the young woman struck the gong again and lifted a beautiful silver chalice from the altar. She saluted the East and then began a slow walk around the temple sprinkling water towards the outer walls. At the South she stopped and saluted, raising the chalice above her head. She continued this to the West, North and back to the East. Nancy twitched slightly when small drops of the cool water touched her skin, but she also felt the cleansing power of it do its work on her.

Back at the altar the woman again raised the chalice above her head in salute and struck the gong after replacing the chalice. She bowed to David and then returned to her seat, always walking around the outside of the temple in a clockwise motion. Nancy thought of how this continued movement created a current of energy the same way one created a current of water in a swimming pool by marching around the outer edge over and over and over until the water swirled on its own. Once it was moving you could run faster and faster making the current stronger all of the time. She tried to visualise the same thing here and she thought of how the Spiral Dance achieved the same thing in the Wiccan rituals she had studied.

David again struck the gong and an older gentleman rose from his seat. He moved with the sun to the altar and picked up a beautifully wrought thurible. The incense within it was smoking furiously. He took the chain and wrapped it in his hands making a triangle. He raised the burner above his head in salute as had the woman before him. He then walked around the temple censing towards the outer walls. Using the bottom of the chain triangle as a spring he kept the censor swinging so that it belched great plumes of smoke towards the outer walls. Again he stopped at the South, West and North to salute those gates.

The incense was sweet and heady. It filled the room with a cloud of perception blurring the lines between the physical and the astral. Nancy thought that she could see forms twisting at the quarters as though knowing they were meant to be there but were not yet ready to settle down to the work at hand. She saw swirls of colour from the corner of her eye and wondered at the things she had read in the last few months concerning the elementals.

Finally the man saluted the East and replaced the censor. He rang the gong and returned to his seat. The ritual was elaborate and yet exciting at the same time. Each circumambulation seemed to raise the electricity in the air another notch.

Now David rang the gong and rose from his seat. He walked around to the front of the altar and struck his wand upon it once. From the front he then, again, struck the gong. He then raised his hands and began to sing. Nancy's breath stopped for a moment. She didn't understand the words, or the shape of words, but the strange melody was otherworldly. It was magic on a level she had never known. Suddenly the low level charge which was in the room jumped several notches and for a moment she felt dizzy. She saw him describe various symbols in the air, but was too intoxicated by the work to make them out. He then carried a line of white light to the South and again began to sing. The song was different but the circle of light that he projected towards the outer wall was clear as candle light to her now active psychic vision.

When David came to the West she felt the full force of his ritual power hit her. It was like being blown over by mist, yet it filled her and charged everyone around her. Everything was glowing, everything was so very 'alive' for lack of a better word. He repeated his performance in the North and then returned to the Altar in the East. Finally he spoke in words she could understand:

Blessed one of Heaven,
 Lover, Mother, Child
 Eternal Star, Blessed Moon
 Come to us this night.

Oh beautiful one, beyond night's grasp
 Who fades only to be reborn again
 Selene, Diana, Hecate
 Skuld, Verdandi, Urd
 The temple is prepared
 Come to us this night.

Beautiful Aphrodite, Lovely Freya, Voluptuous Venus
 Goddess of Love, Life and Light.
 Your love is as deep as the oceans
 Your beauty as vast as the starlit sky
 We have prepared this space for you alone
 According to the ancient rite.
 So we pray that it is thy will
 To come to us this night."

Again he struck the gong and with that signal the door opened behind the throne. Ascending the steps was a radiant beauty. Her long golden hair hung freely around her shoulders except for that which had been braided into a crown around her head. Bare breasted she wore a sheer dress of blue and white which danced around her lithe form giving the impression that she was formed of living water. It hung from a multicoloured band which sat tight around her ribcage just below her breasts allowing their generous forms to interrupt its colourful continuity. She wore jewels of amethyst and amber, jade and jet and upon her arms were drawn spirals in deep wood.

Martha leaned over to Nancy and whispered in her ear. “That’s Angela, the temple’s High Priestess.” Nancy nodded absently her eyes locked on the dazzling figure across the room.

The High Priestess sat upon the throne and the room was silent, yet alive and empowered. There was no doubt in Nancy’s mind that the Goddess was present.

The Goddess surveyed the room and smiled warmly at each person who had entered Her temple, for each of them had known Her at one point or another. Then She spoke and Nancy could hear both the voice of the High Priestess as well as the rich voice of the Goddess layered one upon the other.

“My children, My heart and My love, all who are Mine own, I bring thee blessings.” She raised her hand and a wave like cool water splashed over Nancy. Each person in the room felt the blessing of the Goddess fill them with love and light.

“My lovers, My selves, all whom I have touched; tonight I hear the prayers of your hearts. Whisper them to Me, whisper to yourselves, and My love shall be as a beacon guiding you towards your desires. Pray for healing and let My love flow over those whom you love in turn that My blessing shall give them strength and health and guidance.”

The Priestess closed her eyes and shone with a brilliant radiance. All around her Nancy could hear muffled whispers and each person gave up their prayers to the Goddess who, through the body of this Priestess, was here in the room with them. Nancy thought of what she wanted and whispered a prayer to give her confidence, strength and understanding of this strange world in which she had found herself. And as she did so she felt a tiny spark within her resonate with the woman in the throne across the room. There was no doubt that this was real, and yet there was still part of her that stood in the darkness screaming that it was all impossible. But that voice was quieter and quieter with each new experience, with each new confrontation with the Goddess.

Soon the whispering subsided and when all had finished their prayers the High Priestess opened her eyes and looked upon David who knelt before her.

“The prayers have been give in love and in love are they received. Have you further need of Me this night?”

David looked up and said “There is one amongst us who has never before stood within this temple.”

The woman looked up and locked eyes with Nancy. Unbidden she stood up and crossed the temple, drawn by the Goddess. She knelt beside David and the Goddess stood and stepped forward. She took Nancy’s face in her hands and kissed her. Nancy had never been kissed by a woman, and yet, in some way, she felt that she still hadn’t. With that kiss Nancy’s whole body was electrified. She felt transformed yet again, as intensely as she had that first time. But this was no astral initiation, this was grounded in the physical world.

Slowly, as the kiss continued, she began to understand what was happening. The Goddess was attuning her, setting up a resonance the way one can set the string of a cello humming from across the room with the right keynote at the right volume. And like a stringed instrument Nancy was being tuned to the Goddess’s own keynote.

The High Priestess ended the kiss and looking into Nancy's eyes whispered simply "I love you".

Nancy returned to her seat in a daze. The rest of the ritual was a blur of movement and song. Nothing registered except that vibration within, that humming, dancing, attunement. She swooned. Gary and Martha held her in her seat, looking after the new initiate as brethren should.

Nancy saw visions of light. She saw the divine spark within her, the glowing white light which is a spark of the Ain Soph Aur, the Light Without Limit beyond all human comprehension. But now beside it, or within it, somehow sharing that light, was a pink spark, like a diamond shining, focussing the radiance of the Limitless Light. And Nancy knew, deep in her heart, that this second light was to the Goddess what the Divine Spark was to the Eternal, Ineffable One. It was Her love, Her light and Nancy knew that she could never be separated from the Goddess, for She was now within her, She was now part of her and no doubt, no fear, no anger nor hatred, nothing could ever change that singular truth. And that gave Nancy an intense feeling of security, for she knew she was loved and would be for all time and space.

Chapter 4: The Sigel

An uncomfortable silence had settled upon the office. The VP reception area was normally busting with noise. A dozen secretaries sat at a dozen identical desks in front of a dozen identical doors hiding a dozen seats of corporate power. Normally a hive of activity the storm that had just blown through had stolen the sound and heart from the room.

Nancy had born the brunt of that storm. Her boss felt it was his right to use her as a target for all of the frustrations of his life. He tore her down in every imaginable way. The months of training in the occult had taught Nancy to see that when he attacked her clothes he was really thinking about his frigid wife, that when he called her lazy it was because of his son dropping out of college, when he called her work sloppy it was because of his own fears concerning his own work. Everything was about something else and she was only a convenient target. Being able to make these connections, though, didn't take the sting out of his words. It didn't make it any easier to take.

With infinite control, her jaw clenched painfully against the tears, Nancy stood and walked stiffly across the office to the restrooms. Every eye in the place followed her, every eye in the place burned with empathy. Nancy made it to the restroom, locked herself in a stall and burst into tears. Her sobs, muffled by the heavy doors, evoked anger and frustration in the rest of the office.

Alia stood and looked around the room.

“Are any of you going in there? Anyone?” She stood up and marched to the Lady's. “Bunch of cowards” she whispered loudly enough to make sure they heard. But being cowed was part of the job, these women were almost all chosen for a level of weakness which made them malleable to the power brokers with their six figure incomes.

Nancy sat on the closed toilet crying into her hands. Why did this keep happening? Why didn't she have the power to stand up to that man, to tell him that she didn't deserve this treatment, that she was a person deserving respect. She was one of Her own chosen, so why, why couldn't she even look at him while he abused her in this way.

Nancy was vaguely aware of someone outside the stall. Alia. Pretty Alia with her long blonde hair that she kept in a beautiful braid. Nancy had started growing her own hair out. What an odd thought to have now. He boss thought it looked messy, dirty, offensive. David and the others thought it was beautiful. Why did the opinions of people she loved and cared about mean so little right now. Why did she just want that playground bully... playground bully? Oh, that was Alia talking trying to comfort her ...why she needed that playground bully to treat her nicely, to treat her with some modicum of respect?

She knew it wasn't fear for her job that stopped her from standing up to that man. She was excellent at her job. She was sought after in the company and had offers elsewhere, but no matter what she was bound to this place, this job, this person. The cycle of abuse and she was too weak to break out. And that was the hardest to face. She knew she was too weak. With everything she'd seen, everything she'd done, she was still too weak.

She could stand in the temple and call forth the angels with power behind her voice. Confidence exuded as she formed the signs and sigels in the air and called forth their powers.

But it was in a different world, in a different life, and none of it was here to help her as she was reduced to an emotional rag doll.

Eventually she cried herself out and unlocked the stall door. Alia was upon her like a mother hen.

“Oh my girl,” she said, giving her a huge hug. Holding her up both physically and emotionally. “Let’s get you cleaned up. There’s no reason that you should look beat up like this. We won’t give him the satisfaction.”

“But, you’re not at your desk, don’t get fired on my account,” Nancy said trying to protect Alia in turn.

“Old Edwards? Ha! His wife would never allow it. We’re friends,” emphasising the last with a conspiratorial wink. “Now come over here and let me get you cleaned up.” Nancy, still numb let her face be washed like a child who has been playing in the garden. With a few strokes of this and that Alia looked at her handiwork and declared Nancy ready to return to the breach.

Looking as though nothing had happened (but feeling it deep down) she smiled sweetly at her boss as he left early for the weekend. He only growled in his own hateful frustration. Once he’d entered the elevator Alia giggled. Nancy looked over questioningly.

“Oh, that was the best thing you could have done. There’s nothing as bad as feeling as impotent in their rage as they are in bed.”

Nancy laughed. At the end of the day, they went for coffee, but Alia couldn’t resist calling the other girls cowards one last time. They just looked away guiltily, knowing their weaknesses and never knowing anything else.

Later Nancy related the incident to David. Now she was angry at herself for her weakness.

“Why do I let him do that? Why do I take it? It’s not like I can’t get a job somewhere else. I’m damned good at what I do. I can organize almost anything or anyone and yet I let him bully me time and again.” Nancy paced the sitting room back and forth.

A fire burned on the hearth as the weather was turning towards winter. The room, though cozy and warm was icy with her wrath. David sat and let her vent out the frustrations knowing that until it was spent there was little he could do. Actually, his brain was busy analyzing the problem and looking for a solution.

It seemed to him that the problem was one of personal power and since it was men who kept taking it from her, it made sense that it must be the male power to give it back to her. She’d met the Goddess in various forms, but that wasn’t the problem. She had that power, he’d seen it time and time again. And yet she still lacked the firey force of Mars, Geburah, Chockmah and so on.

Little by little he realized the working to be done. Once again he would combine the power of sex magic with the manipulation of sigels and talismanic magic to create the desired effect. This was a combination he used often. Creating the form is worthless without being able to fill it with power, and power is worthless if it is not shaped and directed. The Magician directs the power,

the High Priestess forms it and the result is the pregnant Empress who gives birth to the Emperor who is the culmination of all that came before. The Magickal Childe so to speak.

Yes, this would work, but she'd need some training first. She'd need to be able to handle the level of power he was planning to expose her to, and the only way to do that was to teach her the Tantric method as that would both expand her capacity for the power as well as making her used to the TYPE or 'flavour' of the force he intended to use. It also meant that she'd be able to perform another ritual he'd had in mind for a long time, but that would be later, for now he had to create the right talisman and train her to handle the force he planned to employ.

Finally she finished her rant and looked at him thoughtfully.

"So, what do you think?"

"I think, you need more contact with the Masculine force. You need to be able to access that power to face his own projected force in this fashion."

"And how do I do that?"

"I have some ideas, but they will take time. You must learn some new rituals, and learn to handle a large amount of a specific type of force. This will not be easy for you and it may take a lot of practice, but I believe you can handle it."

"Time? I don't want it to take time... I can't take this abuse, it's horrible, but I can't break out I can't..." David stood up and grabbed her in a hug to stop her from returning to the rant, or entering into a panic.

"Yes, time, and when it is completed you will never be in this situation again, ever."

David's chest was a huge reassurance. She pressed her face into him thankful for his comfort and his caring. She knew that she could love him, but that she could never let herself fall 'in love' with him. He wasn't that kind of man, and she understood his Goddess and knew that no one woman would ever, could ever, fulfill him. But there are different types of love, and she knew without a doubt that he loved her, and that she loved him. He had enough love to go around, he'd never run out. It flowed from him like the waterfall of a mountain stream, never to be depleted.

When she finally stepped away from him he smiled warmly and then exploded into action.

"Now we need to build the talisman!" He said as he ran off to the library.

Nancy followed and saw him pulling books from the shelves, almost at random it seems. He threw them on the large study table, one after another, piling higher. He pulled battered notebooks, ancient looking things, and tossed them on the table risking losing pages from the deteriorated bindings. He then went to a cupboard and pulled out drafting tools and geometry sets and then went to the back of the room and pulled around an old drafting table. He then took four objects wrapped in different coloured silks from a chest, each about a foot to each side and maybe a half inch thick and laid them amongst the books. The collection was completed by a collection of coloured pencils, pens, and a thick notepad.

Once the flurry of activity had died down, Nancy asked him what he was doing.

“Well, as I said, you need to learn to handle the sheer amount of force which is going to be used, but that force also has to be shaped. Like a mold or blueprint so that the subconscious mind knows what to do with the force we’re generating.”

“I’m not sure I understand,” Nancy said.

“There are two parts to any magic, the force and the form, or Chockmah and Binah on the Tree.” Turning he pointed to the battered Tree of Life poster on the far wall. “It’s like making a mold for something and pouring in the material for the mould. Like making a candle or a drop-forged tool. But the mold needs a blueprint, something to tell the subconscious how to shape what is being built. That’s what the talisman will be. It will shape the power into something specifically useable to our purpose.”

“So why a talisman and not just a description of some sort?”

“Because we have to get our brains out of the way. By focusing on working with the energy, by using a method by which our minds are preoccupied or even totally removed in some way we gain access to the subconscious mind directly. It is because of this that we have to build up a talismanic image in order to create something that the subconscious will understand. By creating a compound symbol for the subconscious we can give it the blueprint to form the shape of the magic which will be filled with our power and create the result.

“Much of the work we do is expressed in this way, using symbols to instruct the subconscious mind. The subconscious wants to help us and is very powerful if given the correct symbols. Many of these symbols are universal, some take time to learn but you’ve done enough basic study that I believe this will work if done correctly.”

All this time David was also going through the books and laying them out open to specific pages. He reached for the wrapped packages and stopped for a moment. He looked up at Nancy who was watching everything with interest.

“I’m going to be a while” he told her. “You might want to find something to do other than watch me read.” Nancy looked up, “Oh, yeah I suppose. How about I put on some tea or something?”

“Excellent,” David agreed sitting down to his task. He unwrapped the coloured packages to reveal painted tablets each with different colours and alphabets. To each in turn he took a pair of dividers and traced out symbols and patterns making notes on where the points landed at each turn. He then began working through astrological books, a birthchart and other materials.

Throughout the day Nancy brought him tea, water, lunch and dinner. Crumpled, discarded attempts lay in piles around the room and the sun had long set when he finally declared his task completed. Excitedly he jumped up from the drafting table and ran to find the talisman blanks he had stored in another room. Unable to control her curiosity Nancy walked to the drafting table to see what he had worked all day long to create.

Nancy was stunned. Not in any literary device sort of way but literally stunned. The figures and shapes, meaningless to her, swarmed her consciousness. Like being hit with a sap she could do nothing but stand staring blankly into space. Nothing existed but a veil of dark incomprehension.

When David saw this he immediately ran to the board and slapped on of the blanks over the diagram breaking the visual contact with Nancy. As though he had broken the last string holding her up she began to slump to the ground. Dropping the blanks David slid to the floor catching her before she could strike her head on the hard wood. Placing her head in his lap he guarded her sleep using very gentle psychic probes to see that she was all right.

Slowly she began to come around. At first she seemed startled but that passed as David soothed her back into wakefulness.

“You weren’t meant to see that yet,” he began. “Though this reaction tells me you’re not ready for the working I had in mind. It will take some time.”

“What happened?” she asked groggily.

“We have self defence mechanisms built into our consciousness to help deal with situations where there is too much power or too much force. We blank, the subconsciousness cuts off the senses to protect us. It’s why traumatic experiences tend to disappear or change in our memory. We protect ourselves.”

Nancy had begun to get up and David helped her to a chair. “But why? It’s just a picture or something isn’t it?”

“Sort of. It’s a talisman specifically designed for you based on your astrological birth chart and name data. Using that as a basis I was able to create a composite symbol which will fill in certain lack in your nature, namely the ability to stand up to that bully. The symbol is tuned to you specifically.”

“But I don’t even understand any of the symbols.”

“You don’t need to, they operate on a subconscious level. Your reaction proves that I did my work well and that you’ll need a lot of training before you’re ready to be empowered by the ritual I’ve designed.”

“A long time?” Nancy looked down at the floor. “I need something soon. I can’t stand that man, I can’t wait a long time.”

“I know,” David said taking her hand. “I have an idea for the short term.” David then looked across the room, staring at nothing for a moment. “But you’re going to have to trust me when we begin the training you’ll need for the other ritual.”

“David, I trust you completely.” Nancy looked into his eyes. “And I trust you not to let me down.”

“That I won’t do. We both have a covenant with the Goddess. To abandon you in this would be to abandon Her and I can’t do that.”

David got up and removed the talismanic image from the drawing table. He put it in an envelope with the two blanks and set them aside for later.

“I’ll transfer those later. Tomorrow we’ll do a small working which should help you in the short term. Next week I’ll teach you an new technique which will help you to expand your capacity for power.”

“And tonight?”

“Tonight, we’ll eat something to help you ground and then you need to get some rest. Your usual room is empty and there are only a few others in the house this time of year. I’d rather you didn’t drive home though after something like that.”

“I feel fine, though something in my stomach would settle my nerves.”

“I know you think you’re fine but driving in the dark can cause a sort of hypnosis. As the headlights hit the dotted lines on the road it becomes the same as flashing a light or reflecting from a watch. After what just happened you’d be hard pressed to remain conscious under those conditions. I won’t have you running into a pole on my account.”

“Hmm.. I’ve noticed that about the road but I never thought of it as hypnosis.” Nancy got up and headed towards the Kitchen. “OK, I’ll let you look out for me then. I’ll see you down stairs.”

David nodded and began cleaning up the books and reference materials he’d used over the last several hours. As he swept up the failed designs he wondered how she might have reacted to any of those. Even though she’d been doing meditative and basic ritual work for some time now he’d forgotten that she was still a fledgeling in the magical realm and had overestimated her ability to handle this much power in such a focussed way. It would have been terrible had she not seen the talisman beforehand.

As David locked away the talisman envelope for later he silently thanked the Goddess for Nancy’s curiosity and the reminder that he was not infallible.

Nancy looked at the paper before her. She'd been working for about an hour trying to design this sigel. She had followed David's instructions exactly. She'd started with a positive affirmation about being strong, had removed various letters and started piecing them together. The letters stuck out in various ways, here and there. She flipped them, moved them, tried to make a cohesive shape out of them. Then she began drawing. Doodling absently, almost as a meditation. She made this line longer, added a swirl there, even removed or reshaped a line here and there. Little by little it began to grow into something new.

Now she was trying to think about it too much. She turned the paper this way and that.

"David, I can't even see the letters anymore."

"That's fine," he said from his armchair. He put down his book and walked over to survey her work. "What do you think about it?"

"It's kind of pretty," she remarked thoughtfully. "Kind of like a flower or something."

"Is it done?" David's question made Nancy once again turn the image around and around.

"Yeah. I think it's done."

"Then copy it one last time and ink it in thoroughly." Nancy followed the instruction noticing small variations again creeping into her work. The final image was perfect though. It gave her a sense of strength just looking at black lines displayed upon the white page.

"OK then, now what do I do with it?"

"Give it to me. I'll enlarge it and we'll work with it later on." Nancy surrendered the drawing to David's care.

"What are we doing now then?"

"Well now we have to get the image out of your head. We're going for lunch with Gary and Martha and a few other friends. It should be fun."

"Excellent," Nancy said. "I'll get changed into something more 'Sunday Brunch'." She hurried off to the small room she kept and picked out something suitable to wear. Meanwhile David scanned the image and printed it out on a large sheet of paper. This was then mounted above the bed in his own room. Later he would use a powerful method of internalization to make it take effect on her.

Lunch stretched into dinner. The group was cheerful and free enough with food and drink orders that the staff didn't mind. In fact the party seemed to be growing as the occasional patron was dragged into the good cheer of David and his fellows.

It was beginning to get late when the party decided to move to a club they often frequented. David hired a car and took Nancy back to the house. Both were well relaxed by the alcohol and David had been flirting with Nancy all evening. A touch here, a glance there and Nancy was certain that something sexual was going to happen. When they got in the door she turned on him in an uncharacteristically aggressive move and kissed him hard. Their tongues intertwined as their hands explored each other's bodies.

David knew this was best, if he could keep Nancy thinking about sex it would be more effective. Seeing the sigel should be a surprise if at all possible. And it should be at the appropriate time. So they continued to kiss and caress as he lead her to his room.

Little by little they undressed each other, David making sure to keep her attention away from the ceiling. He sorted pillows and created a wedge at the edge of the bed. Naked he lay nancy on her back as he caressed her breasts and continually maintained eye contact. A deft preparation had his member properly covered and he began to enter her. Slowly, little by little he discovered her wetness yearning for him.

Once things were moving smoothly he began to thrust deeply but gently. Nancy moaned in pleasure not knowing that all of this was specifically designed for a purpose. Her hips were well above her chest and head and David's explorations felt wonderful as she reached out to hold his hands.

David, finding what he sought, adjusted his angle slightly and bent down to whisper in Nancy's ear.

"When you've had enough, slap my arm" he told her.

"I don't think I'll ever get enough," she purred.

With that David made the first plunge past the lip of the cervix letting the glans of his rock-hard cock rub back and forth against this very intense bundle of nerves. On his second thrust she had her first orgasm.

It was sudden and unexpected and Nancy screamed aloud as it rocked her body.

"Look up" David commanded.

Nancy had only just begun to focus on the sigle on the ceiling when the second orgasm hit her.

"Look at it each time you come, don't think about it, just look at it."

Nancy could hardly understand him. She'd never experienced two orgasms so close together. She was totally oblivious to David's voice as he counted his breathing and timed it to his movement. Like conducting a slow waltz David's breathing and strokes were confined by $\frac{3}{4}$ time.

The third orgasm hit. Like waves crashing upon the beach they came upon her every 3 or 4 full strokes, maybe faster. Nancy couldn't tell anymore. All she knew was that she was being pounded by a sea of ecstasy. Nothing existed in her world except the waves of powerful, intense orgasms. She was dimly aware that David was also manipulating her clitoris, but it was like the call of a gull in the distant wind compared to the repeated cervical orgasms he was eliciting from her. And all the while she kept her eyes fixed on the black mark above her head. It was like an anchor keeping her from being smashed upon the rocks as the waves ravedged her body time and again.

David kept his breathing and thrusting under control. He knew Nancy couldn't hear him, couldn't think, could do nothing but take another and another. Each orgasm seemed more intense

than the one before and as much as David longed to let go he maintained his control in every sense of the word.

“Ten,” he counted to himself. “Ten orgasms so far.” Still he counted his breathing, deep and steady just like the movement of his hips. “Eleven,” he smiled wondering how long she could take this.

When Nancy hit twelve she slapped his arm and David stopped moving. As he withdrew he triggered number thirteen leaving Nancy a quivering mess. He pulled some of the pillows away from underneath her to make her more comfortable.

“Roll over,” he commanded. She obeyed which forced her eyes away from the black sigel on the ceiling. David stepped up on the bed and tore the sigel down, crumpled it in a ball and threw it in the corner. Nancy would never see it again, but it didn’t matter, David knew that its work had been done.

Nancy curled in a ball and then stretched out letting out a long sigh of pleasure and release.

“What just happened?” She asked sleepily.

“Sigel magic internalized using sex” David replied.

“No, we’ve had sex, this was different.” Nancy looked at David, her eyes drawn to his still erect member. “But you didn’t come off?”

David smiled at her. “No, that was not the purpose of the working.” He sat down beside her. “What I just gave you was multiple cervical orgasms. Most people never talk about them because they are hard to achieve. You have to have a certain length to make it work and a certain angle so that it doesn’t just stab you inside. Bottoming out is the term and it’s not pleasant.”

“Oh. But you can do it. I must have come ten times or more.”

“Thirteen actually,” David corrected with a smile.

“Thirteen. Wow. No wonder I’m so worn out.” She rolled over again and, though she tried to talk all she could manage was mumbling as she drifted off to sleep. David covered her against the chill and disposed of the crumpled paper in the corner. Stripping off his condom he donned a dressing gown and went in search of a hot cup of tea to relax him before he too tried to sleep.

Monday. She dreaded Mondays. She hated going back to that place, especially after the embarrassment on Friday. Still, she felt different than before. It may have been the baker's dozen of orgasms the night before, but she thought it might have been something else. There was a weakness in her knees, but a new strength in her heart.

She smiled at Alia as she came in and the blonde woman waved back with a smile. She mouthed "are you OK?" and Nancy nodded all without breaking stride. As usual there were flowers on her desk, as though it were payment for putting up with his crap. From the reading she'd done under David's tutelage she knew that this was a classic abuse cycle. Somehow knowing that and being able to break out of it are two different things. Jung says that identifying a projection should make it go away but abuse cycles seem so much harder to escape from.

As usual after a big blow up, her boss tried very hard to avoid her. What was strange though was that she didn't seem to care. She felt stronger and centered in herself in a way she couldn't remember before. She tried to remember the sigel she'd created but it was gone, sunk deep into her subconscious. Every time she fished for it she could hear David's words "forget it" echo through her mind.

She began eating lunches with Alia which were full of laughter and getting to know one another. Alia was actually a lot of fun and apparently was quite the flirt. She'd occasionally share bawdy stories about her weekend escapades and made a game out of making Nancy blush. Still, Alia became a ray of sunshine in an otherwise drab work environment and lunch gave Nancy something to look forward to every day. Sometimes they'd come back from lunch giggling about something or other and try to compose themselves while returning to their desks throwing off the small resentments that the other girls held for them.

Actually, it became evident that something had really changed in her. Nancy looked at the other girls in the reception area and couldn't imagine being one of them, even though it had only been week since she was crying in the washroom. That ritual had made a real difference. She could feel it in every part of her being. Even seeing her boss, as polite and reserved as he was after a tirade, didn't fill her with the fear and panic she had come to expect. She'd been lifted out of the mould that work and society had tried to force her into and become something new. She could see it reflected in the eyes of her co-workers and in the total lack of connection she had with them.

Contemplating this on the way home she was almost afraid of what changes might manifest when David revealed the ritual for which he had designed the talisman. He'd said so himself, that she had to do something in the interim because she was not yet ready to handle the other ritual. But what was going to be required for that she wondered. What was necessary that she'd not faint the moment she saw that powerful image that he'd designed for her. Such answers were not likely to appear soon but they troubled her on the train ride home.

Her flat wasn't fancy and she kept it well, but over the last months a paper monster seemed to be growing in her livingroom. She hadn't had this much study material since University. In fact she thought she'd put it all behind her. The difference was that this wasn't boring school stuff, this was 'real'.

She stopped to consider this thought. That this was somehow more 'real' than anything she'd studied at school. It was somehow more 'real' than her work life. It was more 'real' than

anything she'd ever encountered. She wondered if this was because of the touch of the Goddess or if it was because, for the first time, she was grounding something into reality. It is easy to read lots of books and write essays and get the paper that says you're clever, but none of it ever 'became' anything.

She sat down and looked it over. Paper was real wasn't it? The words were real, or were they? She thought about the pages of Hebrew she'd been given as part of her package, as part of a lesson in transformation. Right now there were no words on the page. It was a white paper covered in black marks. But one day she'd be able to read it, and then it would change into something else. So maybe words weren't real.

Magic was real though. She could feel it in her veins. Even when there wasn't sex involved the magic affected her whole body. She'd finally set aside a room as a temple and had put some old things into storage and that seemed real. She'd created a real temple space over the last few months and you could FEEL the difference when you entered. It was real. And now a working that made changes in her, changes that other people could see. That was also real.

She thought about her initiation, her being chosen of the Goddess all those months ago. She thought about how she'd changed then, how there was something new about her, something other people saw back then as well. Then she thought about University Convocation. One day she was a student and they put a hood over her head and suddenly she had letters after her name. Was it real? Unless she wrote it down nobody noticed. It didn't affect her. It couldn't be seen by anyone, not even the 'elite' that she had apparently joined.

Alia was real. She was engaged with life, she oozed livingness from her very pours. She enjoyed herself and others. She was sexually active, flirtatious, and extracted as much pleasure as she could from everything. Drinking coffee and eating cheesecake could have been the epitome of feasting in Valhalla from Alia's perspective. She enjoyed life in a way Nancy had never seen, a way that was infectious to all of those around her. And it was real.

Nancy did her evening adoration and meditation before making a small meal and heading to bed. She was tired after the work week. She'd had no plans to see David or any of the others this weekend. Maybe that added to her tiredness, not having any plans, and besides work and study, nothing else to do really. Most of Nancy's friends were, well, cursory. Arms length kind of people that she'd gone to a class with or that she'd known through one thing or another. There was nobody close, nobody she'd call at a moment's notice and go out with.

And that was real too. She realised that she had never found it easy to make friends. She'd never made real connections to people, they were always 'out there' somewhere. Even when she was in the same room she was never really 'with' them. That was probably why she'd remained a virgin so long. Her old friends were there, she'd seen them from time to time since her initiation, but they were even less real. Something about them was so, fake, so much facade and no sincerity.

Perhaps that was one of the most striking things about having met others in this order of David's. They never seemed like strangers, there was something 'in here' about them all as though she'd always known them. That was probably the Egregore, the group mind which permeated all members of the group. But also the connection that they all had with the Feminine Divine.

Nancy was about to go to bed when she changed her mind. She called up Martha who she had met at that first group ritual. She went out, she had fun and she realised the reality that she wasn't really lonely anymore. She realised that she did have people that she could call up at a moment's notice and that they were real, and most of all she realised that she, herself, was real.

Martha recounts the tale of her sexual experience with Marcus the Role-Player.

Nancy arrived early at the party as she was hoping to see Martha and Gary before going in to the ritual. She was, of course, gorgeous with her plunging neckline revealing her perfect cleavage. She'd used a new eye shadow that complemented her violet eyes wonderfully. They already appeared large but this gave one the impression of falling into their liquid depths with no possible escape.

She mingled and spoke briefly to the few people that she was acquainted with. There were a few new faces though she couldn't tell if they were new or simply people that she hadn't noticed before. One stood out against the crowd. He stepped out in front of her as one might to catch the eye of a taxi. One moment there was nobody in front of her, the next moment there was a presence.

"Hello, I'm Marcus," the man said.

Nancy looked at him carefully. She knew that everyone here was equal in some way, even those who couldn't afford it wore evening wear. David was very wealthy and he had no qualms about sharing that wealth with others that had been chosen.

"I'm Nancy," she said offering her hand.

Marcus took it and brought it to his lips. The result was electric. Nancy could never get used to this type of greeting because it always made her knees weak. Marcus, though, was like placing a 6v battery to her hand. He only brushed the skin with his lips but he might as well have tackled her. There was something very powerful about him.

Which was odd since he didn't really stand out otherwise. He wasn't hard on the eyes, in fact he was reasonably attractive but he wasn't like the other men she'd met so far.

Marcus was about 40 or 45 with a bit of grey in both hair and beard. He was slightly overweight which might have been unattractive on someone else but with his height it only gave him greater presence. Though he might physically be lost in the crowd the power he obviously held in check was formidable. His eyes were powerful with the tell tale spark that was Her mark in all of them. More importantly he was obviously checking her out.

"You're very beautiful Nancy," he began in a low voice. "Perhaps you'd like to come out and play with me some time."

Nancy was somewhat shocked by his brazen suggestion. Play with him obviously meant sex and Nancy wasn't sure she liked that level of forwardness. It seemed dirty somehow.

"Um, maybe sometime," she stammered. "Oh, I see my friends. I have to go now. Nice meeting you." All of this came out far too fast as she broke contact with him and hurried over to where Martha and Gary were seated with a small tray of assorted hors d'oeuvres. She sat on the chez and asked about the strange man who wanted to play with her.

"Marcus may not be much to look at," Martha began, "but he makes up for it in creativity, effort and sheer technique. I also suspect he's bisexual but I don't have any actual proof."

Nancy settled on the chez lounger. Gary sat at the end and took up her feet. He took off her shoes and Nancy was about to protest until she felt him begin to massage the sides of her heel. The result was so heavenly that she choose to let him continue. Martha related her story.

“So I’d heard various interesting things about Marcus from others in the group and decided that he would be interesting to sleep with.”

“But, I thought you and Gary were a couple,” Nancy interrupted.

“We are,” Gary clarified, “but we don’t own each other. We are all Her’s and make love when where and with whome we will”. Nancy just nodded not really comprehending. She was still new to this world.

“Anyway,” Martha continued getting back into her story, “I agreed to meet him at his place for a date. About two days before hand I get a package delivered with a note saying ‘I hope this fits’. Well if it wasn’t a beautiful haram costume with wispy silk and rayon sleeves and a skirt and even a collar with a short golden chain hanging from it. With it were a set of instructions as to how it was to be worn, when I would show up, and so on.

“So I think, kinky right, but I didn’t even know the half of it. So the day comes and I take a long bath with epsom salts and doll myself up to go with this harem outfit. I even did up my hair in a pony tail like in *I Dream of Genie* thinking of that as a guide. Anyway, I put the costume and some overnight stuff in a bag and off I go.

“The first surprise was at the door when it was answered by this large handsome fellow dressed as a Persian guard or eunuch or something, he even had one of those great curved swords. So he answers the door like this and leads me to a washroom where I can freshen up and get changed. He’s already in character and calls me his Lady. It was kind of odd but I was there for odd right?

“So I dress in this outfit and touch up my makeup and I knock on the door to let him know I’m ready. He opens the door and takes me by that little gold chain that was hanging from the collar. It was about a foot long I guess, and soft so I could have broken out at any time.

“Speaking of which, Marcus’s note had told me that I could ‘escape’ by saying ‘red light’ if I had to. That’s a common thing you know right? About the Light System”.

“No. Red Light means prostitutes or something?” Nancy said.

Martha and Gary chuckled at this. Nancy might have been annoyed except that what Gary was doing to her feet was too wonderful to stop.

“The Light System is used in sexual ‘scenes’,” Martha actually making the quotes around scenes with her fingers. “Green Light means everything is fine. Yellow or Amber means that you’re getting uncomfortable and Red Light means stop. Usually Red is only used if you’re about to panic or freak out. Like if you’re tied up and panic Red Light will get you out pretty damned fast.”

“Oh,” was all Nancy could say. She had vague horror about that much loss of control which went back to that shock when she was young.

“Anyway, anyway,” Martha said flapping her hands, “So he leads me to this room. Everything up to this point looks normal right, just some guy’s house but then he leads me into this room that Marcus has made up to look like a Persian Palace.

“And he’s done all kinds of stuff. He’s got pillars on the walls with painted screens between them and the floor is covered in these cushions and pillows. There’s a lounge like these ones also buried in pillows. There’s small tables some of them buried in candles, it’s all candle light by the way, and there’s other stuff all over the place, everything giving this Persian flavour to the place. Twisted glass bottles and crystals, chains and jewels, all fake of course, but priceless in the candlelight. It was amazing.

“So there’s Marcus dressed like a Sultan in these loose white clothes and a beautiful turban (the other guy is wearing plain white) with a great jewel in the center. He was even wearing dark eyeliner and a little makeup which is apparently not uncommon for that part of the world. Anyway I didn’t even recognise him at first. So I said “Marcus?” And the eunuch tugs my chain and says “You will address the Sultan as befits his station!” He then apologizes for me as though he’s expecting to be killed for my insolence. Marcus is cool and he gets up and walks over to me.

“He takes the chain from the guy’s hand and leads me to the center of the room. He then inspects me like a piece of meat. He holds out my arms and strokes the inside of the elbow as though looking for imperfections. He runs his hands down my waist and even gently squeezes my breasts as though choosing fruit at a market.”

“Didn’t you feel humiliated?” Nancy asked.

“At first, yeah, but then it was also kind of thrilling. It was something so far from ordinary and he was so serious about it, so intent on playing his part.”

“Anyway, so he does this and says in his accent, which I found sexy, ‘Truly you are the most beautiful of my women. Tonight it pleases me to treat you like a queen.’ So anyway, I try to play my part right. ‘Oh no, offendi, I am but a lowly harem slave, I would not presume.’ And then he says, ‘Do you not obey my every command? Tonight it pleases me to please you and so it shall be.’

“So he commands me to recline on the Couch and I do, getting comfortable on all these pillows. He then arranges the tables so that they are in various places which I didn’t understand at first. During this he’s talking about nonsense as far as I can tell. He’s going on about his meeting with the French King and so on. He also tells me how beautiful I am and how he shouldn’t be discussing matters of state.

“He then claps his hands and the eunuch guard shows up. Marcus orders delicacies and the guy runs off. Within a few minutes he returns with a large tray which has a chocolate fountain surrounded by fruit, some glasses and a jug of wine. He sends the guard away again and makes a big show out of feeding me mandarin oranges, strawberries, mango and other fruits dipped in the melted chocolate. He tells me about how the chocolate is a benefit of being Sultan and that those barbaric Westerners have only begun to discover such things as chocolate and coffee. The whole situation revolves around me and I feel like I’m in a dream.

“So he’s touching me gently and sitting on the lounge with me and we feed each other the dipped fruit. It’s messy and sensual all at the same time. He complements my beauty and says all of those outrageous lies that are so nice to hear. I know my eyes do not outshine the stars, but it doesn’t matter. Right then I’d have agreed that the moon was made of cheese and that he happened to have some to go with the wine later on.

“So eventually he claps his hands again and calls for the guard. He says ‘Slave, is she not the most beautiful woman in all the world?’ And the slave, of course, agrees. ‘Then you shall burn incense to her and read her the words of love and passion. Bring also fine oils and rich scents.’ Again the fellow leaves and he waits, he waits as though he’s actually running around the palace trying to find everything. It’s so intense and creative and everything. I got so into it I’d forgotten I was supposed to be getting laid.” Everyone laughs and they exchange a few comments before Martha continues.

“So, the guy comes back and lights up about four or five sticks of incense. Now I love incense and have tried many types over the years but this was different. It was spicy and exotic, floral and heady, even passionate. It was all of the best things you’ve ever dreamed of from an exotic land of magic brought aboard brightly painted galleys that sail down from where the sea meets the sky.

“The eunuch seats himself near my head beside a table full of candles and begins to read aloud this love poetry. He’s reading it passionately as though he really means it, as though we’d been lovers since the beginning of time. But before that he’d put down this tray of cut crystal bottles each with a different coloured liquid inside. They all sparkle like sapphires and rubies and emeralds. It’s then that I realise that the big flowy parts of my outfit are slit for a reason other than just to be flowy. Marcus takes one of the bottles, pours out a little in his hand and begins massaging my feet.

“The stuff was warm, the wine was wonderful, the smell of spices and flowers fill the air while I continue to sample the chocolate dipped fruit. Marcus begins working on my legs drawing long strokes stealing away the tensions and letting me relax further and further. Marcus takes the five senses and treats them like instruments in an orchestra. He’d taken everything, sight, sound, smell, touch, taste and brought them to a level of sensuality that was beyond my previous experience.

“As he massaged my body I discovered that the different coloured oils did different things. Some were warm, some were cool, some were scented. I’d never had the experience before of having a scented oil placed on parts of my body and smelling them as though they were on my own lips. He’d drop a little here, or there. Some he’d kiss off of my skin, others he’d blow on to activate their powers. He massaged my back, my belly, my arms, my breasts, even my face with a dry hand so as not to ruin my makeup.

“I can’t tell you what it was like. It was as though I were floating. He’d tap pressure points to relieve stress or to cause pleasure. He’d kiss and make small bites, everything amazingly sensual. Finally I was sitting across his lap resting my back on a pile of pillows listening to some Indian love poem from a thousand years ago. He was massaging the inside of my thigh when he whispered to me ‘you will not refuse me will you?’ Of course I said that I couldn’t refuse him anything. So with one hand on the back of my neck massaging the base of my skull he slipped the other hand up between my legs.

“His hand was covered in warming oil which increased the sensations he was giving me. The theme was Persian but his techniques were from India. With that soft smooth warmth he massaged my labia, and touched me in ways that were quite unique. He had the power to make the whole area swell up and become incredibly intense.”

“But there was that other man there,” Nancy protested.

Martha answered with a laugh. “Under other circumstances I might have even noticed him. In fact it wasn’t until later that I even mentioned him. At that point nothing mattered. Like I said, a symphony of sensuality. I could even feel the breath of the eunuch on the edges of my ears. It didn’t matter.

“So, there I was and I didn’t even notice when he slipped his fingers into me. He stimulated my G-spot and clitoris at the same time while the other hand was touching pressure points at the base of my skull. I was still floating and I can’t even describe the orgasm. It totally snuck up on me, I didn’t even know it was coming until I was coming.” Martha laughed at her play on words.

“But it wasn’t like coming,” she explained emphatically. “No, it was... It was something else entirely. It was, soft and floaty and intense and relaxed all at the same time.” Martha shook her head as if giving up. “I can’t describe it. And that’s why he’s famous. He has his own kind of sex magic but it’s more like magical sex.

“So I’d come and was still very relaxed. He signalled the eunuch to stop reading and then he kissed me softly on the lips. So gently it was like the wings of a butterfly. He then whispered in my ear that he wanted to show me what he had learned in India. He was going to show me what he called the Tantric Position.

“So the first thing he does is to command music from the eunuch who goes out and gets a flute. During that time Marcus is setting up cushions on the floor and describing the position. At this point I can hardly move but also don’t care. When the guard returns he commands him to undress me completely. Such was the magic that Marcus could weave that I never even resisted. I let this stranger undress me because my Sultan had commanded him to do so.

“Marcus then commanded the guard to undress him and the guard complied revealing Marcus’ enormous erection. In the back of my mind I wondered how long he’d suffered with it for my sake, but the scene had to be acted out and Marcus was going to suffer with that erection as long as he had to. He must have had it for at least an hour or so. I even wondered if the guard was hard or not, but he was wearing some kind of tied undergarment that wouldn’t reveal anything regardless of size or intensity.

“Marcus sat cross legged on the floor and commanded that I be placed upon his lap. At some point he’d donned a condom but I hadn’t seen when. Maybe it had been on for a while. Anyway, I was extremely relaxed but mustered enough strength that, with the guard’s help, I was able to take the offered seat. The guard then sat across from me, so behind Marcus and began to play his flute. It was a beautiful sound, the notes floating lazily around the room the same way I felt that I was floating.

“It wasn’t difficult in this position for Marcus to penetrate me while holding me up his arms wrapped around my back. I wrapped my legs around him and supported his back while he did the same with his arms. He told me to look into his eyes and I asked him if the guard was going

to stay. He then said ‘the guard pleases you, and also we do not wish to be disturbed. You may look at him if you wish.’ Marcus commanded the guard to bare his chest, which was promptly obeyed only briefly interrupting the flute music. It was a sexy chest, I’ll admit that much.

“Once the flute music was again echoing through the room Marcus squeezed his knees together which forced my buttocks up into the air. Until this point I was aware of the cock inside me, but I was dreamy, as though nothing was real. But then he dropped me back down resulting in a thrust.

“Suddenly I was awake, keenly aware and horny as hell. Marcus continued to use his crossed legs to lift me up and down his shaft. He only needed one hand to hold my back and with the other he caressed my body, enjoying every inch of it. He kissed my breasts, nibbled my neck all the while fucking me with a pattern of slow and fast, deep and shallow. I was overwhelmed with pleasure. No longer relaxed I began to touch him back, grabbing his hair, kissing his neck and squeezing his cock as though I wanted to keep it in me every time he lifted me up.

“And you know what, I’d watch the guard and found I actually got off on him watching me get off. It was hot and sexy and every nerve in my body screamed with pleasure. And then I came, I came and came. I wet the cushions, I wet everything and still I came. I’d never ejaculated like that before but it wouldn’t stop.”

Nancy was totally absorbed. “I didn’t know women could, ejaculate.”

“Under the right conditions,” Gary winked. Nancy hadn’t noticed that he’d moved up to her calves and knees. And right now she didn’t care. She was fascinated by the story.

“Anyway, so then he leans me back and with a twist and a flip I’m on my back and he’s pumping away like mad. We both scream out as the final orgasm takes us both. And here’s the amazing thing. I black out. Literally black out. For several seconds during that third orgasm I was out cold. It was like falling out of my body, a moment of nothingness, the ‘little death’ that the French write about.

“When he was done he withdrew and found a cool towel somewhere with which he was gently daubing the sweat from my face. He kissed me gently again and told me that I could stay there and sleep if I wanted to but that affairs of state called and he had to leave. He left the eunuch with me with strict orders to obey my commands as though they were his own.

“He took up a guard position beside me and said ‘you may sleep now, on my life nobody shall disturb you’. And he didn’t try anything. I felt safer than I have ever felt before in my life. So I slept and he waited, guarded my sleep. At the time I thought he was some kind of superman. I even tried to offer him a blowjob even though I was too exhausted to even move. He refused saying that it was unfitting for him to take such from the Sultan’s current favourite.

“Anyway, when I got up and left the room the spell broke. Once I’d used the bathroom everyone was themselves again. When I came back everyone was in normal clothes. The most amazing part was that Marcus thanked ME for being such a good sport and indulging his strange desires. I was blown away.”

“But, I mean... Don’t you mind Gary?” Nancy insisted.

“Are you kidding, do you know how much I learned from her experience?” Gary was getting dangerously close to Nancy’s thighs at this point. “Seriously, I’ve learned a few things from that and used them myself. I’m always willing to learn something new when it comes to the arts of pleasure.”

“And what about the guy?” Nancy asked swinging her legs around in front of her so that she was now sitting upright.

“I asked about that. Apparently he’s a severe ‘bottom’ and gets off on being a slave. He enjoys the tension more than sex. A voyeur extremist. He probably enjoyed the whole scene as much as we did.”

“I’ve never heard of such a thing. I don’t know that I could have someone watch like that.” Nancy shook her head as if clearing it of the very idea.

“It’s something you might try sometime. Now I sometimes secretly imagine that there’s a hidden camera in the room when I’m having sex and that I’m also performing for a secret voyeur. It gets me hot. Sometimes I’ll do things thinking ‘that will give ‘em a thrill’.

“And the props?” Nancy wanted, needed to dissect the story.

“Well the incense I never did find out about but the oils are all store-bought condom-safe sexual massage oils. He pours them into the glass vials and adds food-dye to designate them. It makes them seem exotic and special and very much not something you’d pick up in a drug store.”

“It sounds like a fantasy,” Nancy mused.

“It is, that’s exactly what it is. Marcus has a talent for creating fantasies and letting you live them out. It’s his fetish, to create fantastic worlds of pleasure and sensuality.”

“That’s a lot to take in. You wouldn’t know it by looking at him,” Nancy said.

“Well, he’s not bad looking you know. He’s not David or Gary,” Martha winked at her compatriot, “but he’s not hard on the eyes. Yeah, he’s a little soft around the edges and could stand to lose another forty pounds, but when you’re in his clutches, none of that matters.”

Nancy was about to say something else when the summoner walked into the room and struck his staff against the floor.

“Oh Yez, Oh Yez, Oh Yez. All who have been touched by the Goddess are called to their stations and places.”

“Looks like we’ll have to continue this later,” Martha said standing up. “Let’s go, tonight’s something special.”

They all began lining up in the hall that lead to the ritual chamber. Nancy had been given preliminary instructions for this ritual and had some understanding of it’s purpose but up until now she had never participated. Part of the reason was that they were required to disrobe as they entered and this had always been a problem for her. But now she had already begun to change and grow. She was more confident, even though the full ritual that David had designed for her

had yet to be performed. Even the sigle magic was working enough to allow her to be naked amongst these other naked people.

She was becoming more comfortable with her body and more open with herself. She was learning that her body was beautiful and that other's could appreciate her, even as she was both herself and a child of the Goddess. As she took off her robe and lay it on the pile she realised that even though she could never do this in full light with strangers, she could do this in the candle light surrounded by what had become, to her, a very supportive family unlike any she had ever known. So with confidence she stood tall and naked as she faced the summoner who, seeing that distant spark in her eye, blessed her and allowed her entrance into the temple space.

The temple was unlike she'd ever seen it before. All of the chairs had been removed and only a collection of cushions lined the walls. There was no Dias, thrones or other furniture. Rather in the center sat brazier with a burning fire and in the East was an elaborate altar. On the altar were many familiar items such as the thurible and the chalice and this gave Nancy some relief for even a little familiarity in a strange place can set one at ease.

As she followed the others in walking slowly around the temple she looked to the ceiling. For the first time she realised that the great window above was vented on all sides and that the high ceiling may have been for more than just dramatic effect. The placement of the window reminded her of her first visit to this house and the magical night she'd had with David. As the celebrants of the ritual continued their slow dance making themselves the rim of the wheel and the fire the center she thought warmly of her first encounter with the Goddess and wondered what tonight's full moon ritual would entail.

When the last person had entered and the wheel became complete the summoner entered the room himself. He then knocked three times upon the floor with his staff and spoke the ritual words:

“All were called and all have come
The rite's begun before the full moon's done.
Each clad with naught but sky
For nothing's hidden from her eye,
We gather here to worship you,
Mother of all, before this night's through.”

With this he struck the ground again and everyone stopped their circumambulations and faced the East.

Entering from a door in the far wall beside the altar was a beautiful woman that Nancy was certain that she had not met before. She strode forward with silent deliberation and stood before the altar. Facing East she raised her hands silently as though summoning or praying. Also in silence she reached around beside the altar and produced a broom. She held up the old fashioned besom before the altar to receive it's blessing. It looked to Nancy like twigs and straw tied to a gnurled old branch but she realised that this was more than sufficient to her foremothers in ages past.

Still in silence the Priestess took the broom and turned towards the circle. One man stepped forward and, bowing briefly, took the broom from the Priestess. Nancy noticed how strong and toned this fellow was and thought for just a moment what his muscled chest might feel like under

her fingers. She immediately tried to banish this thought in order to focus on the ritual. After all, they were there to worship the Goddess, not to think about sex. Though a nagging thought deep in her mind asked “what’s the difference”. She tried to ignore it though.

The young man then made his way around the circle sweeping outwards from the center with every step. This ritual action of sweeping was a psychological clue as well and she noticed that he made sure to sweep a stroke away from the back of each person, sweeping away their bad thoughts and any bad energy that they may have brought with them. When he stood behind her she felt a distinct sensation as though he’d brushed HER along with everything else drawing forth her tensions of the day, her thoughts about work and even her earlier libidinous fantasy, however brief it may have been.

When finished he returned the besom to the Priestess who, in turn, presented it to the altar before returning it to its place. This was repeated with the chalice from which water was sprinkled along the outside wall defining the circle as being everything within the room. Once again, the thurible was carried around the perimeter with much smoke being blown towards the outer edge of the circle.

When all of this was done Nancy noticed two more figures when this had been completed. One was David standing naked beside the altar with a bell and clapper in his hands and the other was a young woman, perhaps nineteen who carried a book. The preparations completed the Priestess took up a large dagger from the altar and stepped back slightly. The young woman stood to the Priestess’s left and David on her right, all facing East. The Priestess raised the dagger high into the air and Nancy knew this as a signal to follow suit.

She raised her right hand with the index and middle finger extended and prepared to follow the path of the Athame by mimicking the movements of the Priestess. David struck the bell and the Priestess began to slowly trace a pentagram in the air before her. Nancy realised that as each person followed with their own hands they all added to the powerful energy that was emanating from the tip of the ornate dagger in her hands.

As she formed the pentagram the Priestess sang.

“Oh great guardians of the Eastern Quadrangle. I summon, stir and call the up. Enter this place duly prepared and guard the Gateway of the East against all evil and inhamonious influences. None may pass save those who are privy to this work. Oh Slyphs of the Eastern Quadrangle, guard the East and grant us the sweet blessings of Air. Clear our minds of stray thoughts and join with us in our celebration and worship on this blessed night of the Moon. Hail and Welcome”

All then replied with a chorus of “Hail and Welcome”.

She then drew the Athame in a quarter circle before her as she walked from the East to the South. She repeated an evokation of the guardians and angels and did so again in the West and North before returning to the East. At every quarter the bell was rung and once again when the circle was complete. And always beside her the young handmaiden carried the open book of shadows that should the Priestess falter in her spells she might glance but a moment to regain her place.

She replaced the dagger on the altar and turned to the assembly.

“This space is sacred, out of time, out of place. We are as those who have gone before, and all who will go after, for this circle is eternal as all circles must be, without beginning and without end.” With this she gave a signal to the handmaiden who brought out more fuel for the fire and the Priest, David, went to a corner in the North East and pulled forth a drum. He piled some cushions until he was comfortable and gave his cue to the Priestess.

The Priestess stepped forward and between two of the people in the circle. She then took one of each of their hands in hers and that was a cue for everyone to hold hands. Slowly David began to tap out an even beat on the drum and each of them began to dance a shuffling pace to the left. Each step was in time to the drum which increased its rhythm slowly but steadily. Before long they were dancing, really dancing hand in hand creating the spiral energy as one creates a vortex in a pool or a coffee cup.

Nancy was swept away by the energy, the power of the building helix of force which seemed centered above the brazier. She felt that she was no longer just Nancy but a single facet of a whole being and that it alone had come at this time and this place to worship the Goddess.

Finally a series of beats signalled that the dance was done and Nancy felt both tired and exhilarated at the same time. One by one people broke their contact with each other and collected cushions so that they could sit on the floor. They all came together in a circle so that they were just as close as they were before. Nancy could feel the energy still flowing around them and through them unifying them and making them feel as one.

Once comfortable and with a powerful circle flowing Nancy felt very calm and centered. She thought that this was odd considering the dance they had just performed. When the ritual had first been outlined to her she couldn't imagine meditating soon afterwards but now that she was here, she understood. Sittin comfortably they began to sing a song of unity and the use of her voice made her feel as though she were vibrating all over, as though she were the string of a cello and that they were all vibrating in harmony.

“We are a circle, within a circle, with no beginning and never ending.” Some broke the notes and sang in harmony until the whole thing was a beautiful resonance together as one being, one thought, one heart, one desire burning in the brazier in the center of the room.

Little by little the singing became quieter until each word was a whisper. Then David's clear voice came though and began to lead them deep into a relaxed state and a guided meditation where they were not in a room in David's home but upon the Glastonbury Tor in ancient times seeing the moon rise in the distance. In this meditation they welcomed the Goddess to be with them and saw her enter the circle of stones to be with them.

The ritual and meditation had been so timed that as the Goddess entered their sacred space in the group mind so did the Moon shine down upon them through the clear glass of the ceiling. The room became very bright and each knew that, if not physically present, the Goddess resided in each of their hearts.

With this completed the Priestess and the Priest approached the altar. She took up a great chalice, different from the one in which the water was prepared and used to cleans the room. This she held aloft and called forth the Goddess.

“Thou who was and thou who is and thou who will always be

Mother of all, mother of none, mother of eternity
I am they Priestess, answer unto me.”

David then took up the Athame and holding it high he too spake:
“Father of life, Father of Death, Father of Eternity
The hunter, the lover, the bearer of the seed
I am thy Priest, answer unto me.”

When they turned away from the altar Nancy was startled. Something had changed in each of them and as in a badly developed photograph Priest and Priestess each had a shadow around them, as though two stood in the space of one. She could not tell if this was the God and the Goddess themselves or the shadow of every Priest and Priestess who had ever, and who would ever, perform this ritual. They then began a canticle where each would speak but one line of the prayers. It was very long and all Nancy could clearly recall was:

All Gods are one God.
And all Goddesses are one Goddess.
This Athame is my power.
And this chalice my womb.”

The Priestess held out the chalice before her and David raised the dagger as though about to strike. Slowly he lowered it into the chalice in an action that Nancy did not immediately associate with symbolically.

“All power is with me.
And it flows into me.
Who may create all things.
For I am ever the moon
And I the sun
And with this union
Are the two made one.”

The last line was said by both as the dagger struck the bottom of the bowl of the chalice. They held this pose for a moment and Nancy was amazed at the power flowing into the dagger, as though it were the point of an arrow of moonlight filling the bowl below. She saw the wine in the chalice shine like a beacon, like liquid moonlight in the hands of the Priestess.

As David withdrew the dagger Nancy could see the wine sticking to the blade and dripping wetly from the edges. Something about this also reminded her of something and it wasn't until much later that she fully realised that she had just watched two people have sex in front of a congregation. She had briefly read about The Great Rite in Token but until now had no idea that it wasn't just a representation of sex but rather that, on an energy level, was the exact same thing.

The Priestess then tipped the chalice towards the Priest and he drank a sip of the now energised wine. She then handed the chalice to him and he repeated this action with someone nearby who was still seated on the floor. Each in turn drank from the chalice while the person before them held it, that the nourishment of the energy was given by the one before flowing around the circle. Nancy too drank from the chalice while it was held by the woman beside her and felt the warmth flow through her limbs out to her very fingers and toes. The white liquid was

still like moonlight and she felt as though she were glowing as she took the cup and offered it to the neighbour on her left.

At this point Nancy reached a kind of overload. She was aware of other things going on but was moonstruck as the wine began to course through her veins. This was magic. This was power. Above all, she felt that this was love. Love in a way that no man could ever give her. No mortal could ever express what she was feeling at this moment. She was only dimly aware that some small cakes had come past shaped in crescent moons or that she was standing and giving thanks to those who had been summoned to attend the ritual itself. She longed to get into a bed and snuggle into this feeling of perfect love and perfect trust.

David took care to put her up for the night. It was agreed that she was in no condition to drive. One or two people expressed concern that she had not eaten during the party but David assured them that all was well and that this was her first full moon ritual. Nancy was only dimly aware of these conversations, as though they were occurring on a different planet and she could hear them over a wireless set.

Before long she was walking along a dirt path through the grasslands beyond the river Skai in the distant lands of dream in a robe of white and speaking with an ancient wise woman with whom she felt infinitely close and deeply loved.

Nancy confronts David and learns much about Tantra

Nancy sat in the noisy street-side cafe sipping her espresso. She was finding it exceedingly difficult to explain to Alia what she and David had been doing lately by way of sexual exercise. It was not technically oathbound like some of the more elaborate rituals were but simply a method that she felt could be appreciated by her more experienced friend.

“It’s really a very spiritual thing, it imparts a sense of wholeness and peace.” Nancy was trying to explain.

“I’ve heard something about that before,” Alia replied. “But it was for extended sex sessions and multiple orgasms.”

“Oh, I don’t always orgasm with this.” Nancy said shyly.

“What?” Alia suddenly seemed angry. “That son of a bitch doesn’t make you cum? That’s a user right there I tell you. Any man who gets his rocks off without any consideration for his partner is a first class asshole.”

Nancy was unsure how to respond to that. She’d never thought of David as a user, someone who uses a woman just to get off. Rather she’d felt a very intense union during the tantric sessions they had done up until now.

“I know you’re inexperienced and used to letting men take advantage of you but you have to stand up for yourself here. What kind of relationship do you have anyway?”

“Well, I don’t really know,” Nancy said under the blond’s interrogation.

“Right. I may have three or four boyfriends at a time but they sure as hell know how to take me to the mountain top. Sure as shit he gets off doesn’t he?”

“Well, kind of I guess.”

“You guess? He either cums or he doesn’t, there is no guessing. Unlike a woman he can’t just fake it for you.”

“But, well. When we’re straddled like that and the energy is moving and we’re breathing in unison it just happens when it happens. It’s like, it slips out on him without him knowing and then we’re done for that session.”

“All about him eh? Yeah, I’ve run into that kind of guy before. You have to confront him and tell him that either he sees to your needs as well or you’re out the door.”

“I don’t know. I would certainly like to have more orgasms but I don’t think that this is the goal of what we’re doing.”

“Sex without wanting an orgasm? What kind of male chauvinist bullshit has he been feeding you anyway?”

“Well, I don’t know that it’s male chauvinist, it’s just a method of union, a form of Yoga...” Nancy was cut off.

“Yeah, a form of Yoga where he gets to stick his cock in you and cum all he wants. Condom or not he’s getting his fix and the feel of dropping his seed. You’re feeding his testosterone and he doesn’t have the decency to return the favour.”

Nancy was feeling steamrolled and it wasn’t until she agreed to confront David about this that Alia would let her leave. Nancy had to work hard just to stop Alia from coming with her up to the house to see David. In fact, Nancy had never seen Alia so angry. On some level, though, it was nice because it meant that the other woman was being protective of her less experienced ‘sister’.

In fact, Alia often talked about the sisterhood of all women and how they had to band together to protect each other from the world of men. She was a Feminist through and through and had no qualms about taking what she wanted or standing up for what she believed. Sometimes it made Nancy uncomfortable and on some level she felt that Alia tended to jump to conclusions from time to time. This time, though, she had agreed to confront David and would do so. After all, she was beautiful and desirable, why wouldn’t a man want her over and over again? As long as it was fair it was a good thing. But what was fair? What did that mean? Did she need a score card? It was all too new and Nancy had no experience in relationships to draw upon.

It wasn’t long after Nancy arrived at the house that she got into the discussion with David. After all, this was the scheduled night for their Tantric practice and she was letting Alia’s words worry her uncomfortably.

“David,” she began, as they stood in the entryway. “David I need to talk to you about something before we begin tonight.”

“Certainly,” he said with a wide smile. “Let me grab some drinks and we’ll sit in the livingroom.”

The room was, like the rest of the place, well furnished with odd object d’art in corners or on shelves. She noticed that David had a habit of compartmentalising his life. Each room was what it was for and nothing else. There were no books on the livingroom walls because books went in the library. She thought of this tendency when she sat across from him, tea in hand, and began tentatively to broach the conversation she was somewhat afraid to begin.

“David. What am I to you?” She managed to say it directly and without the quavering she felt within.

“To me? You are a beautiful woman, chosen Priestess of the Goddess, my student, my friend and perhaps one day even my lover. Why do you ask this?”

“One day?” Nancy was confused. “What do you mean one day?”

“Well, those women I consider my lovers are partners in lovemaking for the sake of making love. That is not you, at least not right now.”

“But we have sex all of the time, weekly lately.”

“Ahh, yes. And we do other things as well. Ritual work, training, meditation, parties, etc... But in none of these capacities have you been my lover, my ‘girlfriend’ if you use the term.”

“So maybe Alia was right, I’m just a fuck toy and you don’t care about my pleasure or my enjoyment. I’m just something for you to come into.” Nancy was petulant, on the verge of tears feeling somewhat battered and betrayed. “You don’t make love to me and yet I’m expected to sit on your cock whenever you ask.”

David put up both hands to ward off her accusations. “No, no, you have it all wrong. Where did you get this idea that I was using you?”

“Well, are you?”

“Not at all. You may leave any time. You may refuse any time. But what I am doing now, what we’ve been doing, is important work.” David was feeling like a failure. “Sex and lovemaking are two different things. The sex we’ve been having is for the purpose of magic. Have you really not felt the power flowing through you, the peaceful bliss that comes with the energy exchange and balance of the Tantric work we’ve done lately? Did you not feel the difference when we performed the sigel magic after which you said you were able to stand up to your boss, at least a little? Has none of this affected you at all? How have I failed you Nancy? Tell me how I have failed so terribly that you’ve not noticed even a little the power and benefit of what we are doing together.”

Nancy was taken aback. She had no idea that her accusations would hurt David. She thought that she was trying to stand up for herself but she knew that what David was saying now only verified what she had tried to tell Alia earlier.

“But David, it seems so strange. With the other work we both reached orgasm most of the time. With this, I never come off at all and usually we only quit when you ejaculate. I don’t understand what this means. I’ve never had a boyfriend, and Alia says that sex has to be enjoyed by both partners.”

“Alia? She sounds like she’s a good friend. But in this case she’s wrong. Oh, not about all partners enjoying sex, no that’s true. Sexual partners should please one another often. What she’s misunderstood is that the Tantric work we are doing isn’t about sex. The only reason we have to stop when I ejaculate is because I lose my erection. Because of the deep level of meditation, the intensity of the energy field and the loss of individuality within that space I am never aware of my body ejaculating until it is too late.

“If I were to climb to orgasm, on the other hand, I could use the orgasmic spasms to lock down the PC muscle and prevent ejaculation. In that case I would have a VERY intense orgasm and not lose my erection. What most people don’t realise is that ejaculation and orgasm are two different things for a man. We have come to learn that the two are identical but they are not, in fact they are slightly different processes altogether.”

“Wait, you can cum without an orgasm?”

“Well, ejaculate, yes. The word ‘cum’ is difficult because we use it as a verb and a noun. The ejaculate itself is often called cum, but the act of orgasm, for both men and women, is often referred to as ‘cumming’. If we use the word accurately then only men can cum because only men eject the material we call cum unless we take the word cum to mean all ejaculated material in which case, not all women would be able to cum since not all women ejaculate.”

“You’re getting pedantic again David,” Nancy said with a slight grin.

“I know, but I want to be very clear with you. Somehow I’ve managed to misrepresent something very important and I don’t want you thinking that I’m taking advantage of you in any way.”

“OK, continue.”

“Thanks,” he replied with a grin of his own. “What we are doing with the Tantric work is an energy exchange between two polar opposites, the Male and Female energies. We create a unified oneness between us, like the Yin and Yang becoming the Tao, or the combination of Chockmah and Binah in Kether upon the Tree.”

“OK, I got that part. I feel that sense of unity as the energy flows through us making a giant zero sign or a wheel,” Nancy interjected, not wanting to seem as though she’d missed the point entirely. “As the energy flows down through you it exits from the Lingam into my Yoni and then flows up through me to fill my skull and out through my eyes into yours. It creates a full circuit and as we breathe in unison it ‘pumps’ the energy rhythm through the circuit. As you bring down more energy eventually it fills us both pushing out all negative and inharmonious vibrations until we are a self contained oneness.”

“Exactly,” David responded with some pride in his student. “This helps you to balance and purify while at the same time breaking down the lie of separation by allowing you to join with another human being on a very spiritual level.”

“But...” Nancy was mulling over the whole conversation in her mind. “But it’s not sex?”

“It is sex, by definition, but it’s not sexual. It’s not lovemaking, it’s not fucking, its not any of those things because there is no orgasmic goal. As I’ve said, my orgasm is a side effect of the stimulation, not a goal in and of itself. As we breathe there is some stimulation which is required for the Lingam to stay erect. Eventually that stimulation will cause ejaculation. It’s simple physiology. Eventually, as you breathe you will learn to squeeze your Yoni in order to control that stimulation. When you become more aware of it you will be able to keep the Lingam erect without allowing it to ejaculate. Of course that may require more focus than you are capable of within the point of Yogic Meditation.”

“Conversely I could squeeze my legs together and push your body up and down on my shaft creating an intense sexual excitement. If you learn to control your inner muscles you can add to both your own and your partner’s pleasure gaining greater control over both orgasms. In this position two lovers can enjoy each other face to face. They can kiss, caress and tease each other in ways that other positions do not allow. Some people even use a combination of the Yogic Tantra Meditation that we have been practising and the sexual lovemaking that I have just described. It can be very enjoyable and is one of my personal favourite ways of making love, especially as a breast man.”

They both laughed causing Nancy’s double D breasts to bounce much to David’s delight.

“So basically we’re doing something sexual but we’re not ‘having sex’, is that about right?”

“That’s it exactly. We are using sex to perform a specific type of energy work. We are not having sex with each other. We are not engaging in sex for pleasure but as a means through which we can work with a specific type of energy.”

Nancy smiled. "Now I understand. I see where I went wrong trying to explain to Alia. But she really did play on my fears, insecurities and inexperience."

A flash of realisation struck David out of the darkness. "You've never taken a lover have you?"

Nancy looked down shyly, her hands fidgeting in her lap. "No. Since that time. Since the sacrifice, I've never known any man but you."

"I see. Now I understand."

"Understand what?" Nancy asked.

"Now I understand why this whole question about who we are to each other. This whole issue with Alia and sex. I had no idea that you'd never taken a lover of your own."

"I, I didn't know that I was supposed to," Nancy said, feeling again like she'd made a mistake in understanding.

"There's no 'supposed to' about it. There's no rule about how many lovers you take or how often you take them. You are a Priestess of the Goddess and that means that nobody owns you or your sexuality. It's just..."

"Just what?"

"Well, you're very beautiful and I had assumed that you would have taken a few lovers by now. Possibly Priests of the Order or men you know outside of our little bubble. But I certainly never imagined that the work we do is all you are doing."

"Oh. I didn't know. I don't know how really. I mean, I'm still quite shy and very inexperienced. Well, you're all I've known so how can I be... forward about it?"

"I see," David said. "I think it would be good for you to get some more experience then. I think you need to have sex for the joy of having sex, for the sheer pleasure of it and not just as part of our magical practices. All work and no play makes for a very skewed perspective of this most beautiful and powerful aspect of humanity."

"But who, how. I'm still afraid. Not as much as I was, and I thank you for that, but still a little. I cannot trust easily."

"Then it will have to be a Priest. Someone you know in the Order. Someone who serves the same Goddess as you do and therefore will not be able to do purposeful harm to you in any way."

"Yes. Yes, I think that I could be OK with that."

"It's settled then. Shall I let it be known that you're looking or would you rather look alone?"

Nancy thought about it but then realised that, in the end, her trust of David ran very deeply. "I would appreciate your help. Nothing specific just mention it to a few people that you trust."

"I will. Thank you."

Nancy was startled. "Why are you thanking me?"

David stood up and came over to Nancy. He put his arms around her and held her close. “Nancy, you are precious to me and I love you as my student, friend and Priestess. I thank you because you came to me with these concerns immediately and did not let them fester within. You came to me and said what was on your mind and that means that you trust me and have faith in me as friend, teacher and Priest. Thank you for confronting me and not being afraid. Thank you for your honesty. And thank you for showing me the strength that you have gained over these last months proving that the work you are doing has made a difference and that you are growing stronger as a person, magician and Priestess.”

Nancy was overwhelmed. She hadn't thought about what confronting David had really meant. Not on a deep level anyway. Suddenly she saw the whole situation from David's perspective. Here she was, timid, reserved, quiet Nancy sitting down with David and asking him straight out what was going on, what their relationship was and how there were concerns that she was being used in some way. Now that she thought about it she felt some of that old timidity coming back but also a sense of pride in knowing that what she had done would have been impossible without David's training and the magic they had done together. Briefly the image of the sigel that had been used in their sex magic session months before flashed before her eyes and it all became very clear indeed.

She smiled and pushed David away so that she could look into his eyes. “Now I understand,” she said. They both smiled and then left the livingroom to prepare for the night's Tantric practice.

This night preparing the sacred space was given to Nancy to perform. David sat naked in the center of the temple as Nancy began to light the candles and prepare the incense. To his right David had brought a rather strange contraption that resembled a keyboard but the top was covered with an intricate array of small coloured LEDs. Tonight he was going to take the tantric work that they had been doing to a new level.

With care and reverence Nancy prepared the temple space performing the ritual of preparation, the purification and consecration and even the circumambulations on her own. This was the first time David had watched her prepare a temple unassisted and he was very impressed with what he saw. Nancy never realised that this was a test to see how far she had come and to observe her ritual skills. David knew that this was an important point in her training and that any adjustments to her performance of the ritual needed to be done soon. As expected, though, Nancy was flawless. She sang the spells perfectly and called forth the guardians of the quarters with practiced ease. When she was finished she replaced all of the ceremonial tools upon the altar in the East and removed her ritual robe.

David always felt a surge of desire whenever Nancy appeared naked before him and his response was instantaneous. In the back of his mind he once more thought of taking Nancy as a lover but the more rational part knew that to do so at this point would make her far too dependant and might affect her ability to function as a Priestess. As teacher he had to be very careful, especially in light of the conversation that they had just had concerning their relationship with one another.

Nancy knelt before David who was sitting cross legged on a cushion, her long auburn hair dancing in the candlelight and her breasts full and firm. She gently stroked his lingam and felt it stiffen even further as his PC muscle responded unconsciously. Something sparkled in her eyes as she suddenly decided to take him into her mouth and wet his throbbing member. This was always at her discretion for unless both of their bodies were in a state of desire the tantric working would fail, at worse it would be painful and unbalanced.

Nancy had been reading about fellatio over the last months and, though she had little practice, was always surprised at the physical reactions that even a little mouth play could elicit from David. What was more surprising was how much her own body reacted to what she was doing as though somehow her body was resonating with the pleasure that she was imparting to the other. As David ran his fingers through her hair and gently down the back of her neck she thought about how this might feel to perform on a lover where she didn't have the restrictions of the ritual or the working to keep in mind.

David lifted her head so that he could see her eyes. She arched herself back and allowed his hands to explore her own body. Like butterflies his hands plucked and stroked and danced across her skin expertly arousing her whole body. It was as if his hands were electric and it was not long before she felt the wetness between her legs that meant her body was ready for the work ahead. She bent down and took David's cock in her mouth once more to wet it thoroughly before placing the condom on with the reverence due the Magical Wand of Light. Even with David's skill in ejaculation control he insisted on using condoms and stated that the energy was not hindered in the slightest by their use.

The Priest and Priestess were now prepared and the energy had begun to swirl about them both. Nancy stood and straddled David's seated form and her helped her to lower herself into his

lap. As his rock hard member slid home his whole body shuddered and once again he wished that he could simply allow himself to love this woman as a woman and not simply as student and Priestess. He knew that this was his half of the sacrifice and that his Goddess demanded it from him. He knew all too well what damage he would do to Nancy if he took her now as his own and knew also what terrible price such a breach of faith would be exacted from him. So as he held Nancy close, her legs behind him and her beautiful breasts pressed into his chest as they embraced all he could do was let out a deep breath and banish all thoughts which were not part of the working at hand.

Once David had composed himself he began the usual instructions for the flow of energy. By speaking them aloud it helped them both to focus on the same visualisation and further increased their synchronicity. He described the energy of the room and its spiral motion that had been set up by the various circumambulations during its preparation. He described the energy flowing down into his skull and filling it with light. Then the energy flowed down his spine and into his pelvis. Filling there it raised up his lingam and into the yoni and Nancy's breath caught as she felt it begin to fill her own pelvic area. Climbing up her spine she felt the tingling of the light and power awakening her to the subtle bodies until both her physical and astral were aroused with power and passion.

Finally the light reached the top of her spine and filled her skull with singing force. At that point Nancy and David locked eyes and the power spilt forth from Nancy and poured into David's eyes completing the circuit which would empower them both. The energy influx from above was cut off and the energy which filled them both began to flow. Down through David and up through Nancy the current of power made it's circuit like a sacred wheel of fire.

As the energy flowed their breathing became like a bellows forcing the liquid light through their bodies building power with each breath. They breathed as one, inhaling and exhaling together in a sacred pattern which raised their perception of the energy. As usual they found that less and less distinction existed between them and mind started to flow like water.

David, without breaking the rhythmic breathing, gave the next instructions.

"Have you been doing the colour-sound work which I gave you?"

"Yes," Nancy replied when she could.

"Then we shall do something similar now." David took his right hand away from Nancy's back and reached for the keyboard. Feeling his way along he could play the notes without breaking eye contact so the circuit remained intact.

"We will activate the inner planetary centers as you've done before but this time we shall do them together."

"I understand but I cannot see the archtypes," she replied.

"No need, you know them well enough. See them within and you will know them. Begin with the 21st key and we will activate the root chakra."

David allowed them to continue the circuit for a few more moments while they envisioned the dancer within the wreath before playing the first note of A. As he played the note the LED array on the back of the keyboard lit up a beautiful blue-violet bathing the room in colour. Together

they chanted the sacred names and felt the flash of power as the spinning blue-violet wheel of Saturn burst to life at the base of their spines.

“Now the heart, see the dance of the Sun.” Again he waited while the circuit between them flowed, but now it was no longer pure white but tinged with that violet blue which shone within them. He played the note of D and the array illuminated the room in beautiful orange light. Again they chanted and again a chakra burst into light. The energy they channelled between them changed subtly from one colour to the next while they repeated the process for the other sacred centers of the body. Red burning in their loins, violet in the solar plexus, green Venus, blue luna and yellow mercury all danced as they sang them to life.

Once the crown chakra was activated the light flowing through them once again became white, bright and pure. Together they glowed as beings of light the one flowing into the other. Each sacred center resonating with its partner. Whether they sat like this for eternity or a fraction of a second Nancy could never tell but as they breathed together and the energy flowed she began to feel the bonds on her intuition let go. She did not need to maintain the visualisation for it simply was truth and not an image in the mind.

Slowly she began to lose her sense of separateness. As the energy flowed up into her and out through her eyes she became aware that all of the energy she received was her own, it had flown through her hundreds of times already, and flown through him as well. Where was the distinction between them? Where was the barrier she always felt with other people that separated her from all the others making her Nancy? She became aware of David as being inside of her. Not just as his cock throbbed with the tiny movements of her own sex as she squeezed and breathed, but as an entity. David’s mind was within her and hers was inside of his and they were no longer people but beings of light merging into one.

She suddenly saw herself from an outside perspective. In that flash of insight she saw how the power had extended both of their auras until they were melded into one being. She saw the chakras as not belonging to two people but to one entity as though a column of colour existed between their bodies and their own chakras were but pale reflections of the one between them. Just as two notes can create a third through resonance the two rows of chakras had created a third between them, a sacred chord, a middle pillar.

She was aware of David’s mind there and he was talking to her. Well not talking, but impressions, ideas, thoughts were flowing between them. She realised that she could walk through his mind if she so desired and that he too could delve into her deepest secrets. A moment of panic was soothed over with reassurance and respect so that she knew he would not go anywhere uninvited. Within David’s mind signs and seals floated and Nancy knew that these places could only be entered if she herself knew the countersign to unlock those mysteries.

As she floated within a universe of Light she became aware of a third presence and knew that David had noticed it as well. Or had she been David noticing, or had he been Nancy? The third was immense, eternal and Nancy/David knew it instantly as the Goddess. With Her arrival Nancy was flooded with overwhelming love and peace. Perfect, eternal acceptance, understanding, love and benevolence. Behind the mind of the Goddess Nancy could glimpse the One Light beyond and almost thought that the void of Light and all that is/is-not lurking beyond, the Infinite Divine. Nancy tried to look deeper and was overcome with a sense of panic. Suddenly she thought that the light beyond brightness, blinding void, darkness, eternity... She

was being swallowed, she was dissolving into all that was before creation. The abyss threatened to swallow her whole, and yet the feeling of peace and love and oneness which came with it seemed so perfect, so right, so true that she began to reach out.

Suddenly the image of the Goddess rose before her filling her sight, her mind, her very being.

“Daughter, sister, Priestess, my own, unpurified and unconsecrated thou mayest not enter the path of the Abyss. You are not ready and have many, many lives left to live. One day, many, many aeons from now you will be prepared for that path and when you do the Light shall not burn you and you will be welcomed home with open arms. Take comfort in *my* arms my daughter, bask in my light and my love for I am forever with you.”

Nancy felt at peace, whole, perfect. If she'd had eyes she would have cried. If she'd had a heart it would have burst with love. Much passed between them, the Goddess and the mind that was sometimes called Nancy. The Goddess taught her that she was a being of light and that Her own light shone from Nancy's eyes. That the Goddess was never far away but always within the spirit that had incarnated as Nancy at this time, in this place and that no matter how many times this spirit was born into the world nor how many times it left the world, the Goddess would always be with her.

Nancy did not remember returning to her body. She did not remember the care David took with her body while she was out. David had experienced the joining of their minds and their souls, something he'd done dozens of times before with other Priestesses, and even the arrival of the Goddess to bless them and share Her love. It was then that something went wrong and Nancy began to slip away from him. He tried to pull her back and cried out to the Goddess for aid. He'd seen the spirit of Nancy begin to lose itself, diffusing around the edges, slipping away. His panic was only suppressed when he was filled with love and peace and heard the Goddess say “I have her, all is well. She will need you when she returns.”

David had kept the temple open and had slowly begun to break the rhythmic breathing in order to bring them both back to consciousness. As he became aware of his body he found that Nancy was slumped over him, unconscious and no longer in the meditative position which she should have held. Rather she was in a deep, healthy sleep, her soul safe and her mind intact. David gave a prayer of thanks to the Goddess but it would be a long time before he forgave himself.

He should have know that she wasn't ready yet. He should have know that she didn't have to control. She had been doing so well with the regular tantra work that they did every week that he felt that she was ready for the next step. He'd nearly lost her, and that hurt on many levels, not just professionally. He should have known better and his lapse in judgement had nearly cost him a student, a Priestess, a colleague and a friend. If she was meant to be more than that he could not let himself think along those lines. He'd nearly lost her spirit, her soul, her very existence and there was nobody else to blame.

It would be many months now before they could attempt this part of the training. He would not give up on her because of his own failings. He had promised to teach her and promised his Goddess to look after her training. He could not fail either of them any further.

It was hours before Nancy awoke and David, eyes red with regret and self recrimination, was with her as she regained consciousness.

“What happened?” Nancy asked groggily.

“She brought you back from the brink of the Abyss.” David began his voice wavering. “I... I failed. I nearly lost you because I thought that you were ready. I nearly destroyed your whole being because I thought that you were strong enough.”

Nancy was sitting up now and took David’s head in her hands. Tears rolled down his face.

“Look at me David,” she said lovingly as he forced her eyes to meet hers. “What did you do wrong?”

“I took you to a level that you were not ready for and you were nearly destroyed.”

“Why?”

“I don’t know. I should not have taken you there yet, you were not ready for that kind of power”.

“And yet I am still here. Do you know why? Because you brought me to the Goddess and through Her love and intervention was I saved. If it had been some hack, some idiot who knew nothing or had learned it from the internet I’d be gone by now. Because of you, your training and the Goddess that you consecrated me to I survived.”

David’s demeanor changed instantly. “What do you remember? I saw you slipping away, the edges of your very being dissolving into the Light.”

“I tried to look past the Goddess. I tried to see what was beyond. I had a glimpse, just a nanosecond and that was almost enough to destroy me. But She caught me David. She held me and healed me and taught me much. If not for you She would not have been there for me. Perhaps I might have never known Her in this life but for you. But now I am Her own and will never be without her. I tried to look into the heart of Infinite Light and she saved me.”

David thought for a moment. “Just like Moses on the Mountain. He could not look upon the face of God for to do so would have destroyed him so he had to be content with a glimpse of His back.”

“In a way. Have you seen the Abyss and the Infinite Light brighter than white burning darkness?”

David looked away. Something crossed his face that she could not understand. Finally he answered. “Yes. I have stared into the void of the Infinite”.

“Did it not devour you?” Nancy asked stunned.

“No. The pull is almost impossible to deny. The test...” David swallowed. “The test is to walk the path of the Abyss but not be destroyed. They...” David paused and curled up with Nancy so that he could feel a little more secure in his being. “They talk a lot about leaping the Abyss and coming to the grade of Magister Templi, but it is only the lesser Abyss that they are talking about. They are not talking about the Greater Abyss, the veil of the No Thing. We cannot comprehend God in Its Infinity for we are mortal beings, finite in our thoughts and minds. We can make a step towards the infinite, like what we did this evening, but we are incapable of comprehending the Infinite Divine and It will destroy us if we are not ready to face It when the time comes.

“It is a trial by fire in every sense of the term for to feel the heat of that light and not fall into its embrace is a test beyond the abilities of most at this point in our evolution. We are not ready for it and more than one mystic has been made mad by that fire for there is nothing within that Light that we can comprehend, nothing that we can look at and recognize as some-thing. We cannot even see the Light itself for it is beyond our ability to see, light beyond sight. Just as we cannot see heat with our physical eyes, we cannot see that Infinite Light with our spirit until we are ready, and even then... Even then it is the brink of madness.”

Nancy listened with trepidation and a little fear as she realised how close she had come to being burned. At best she'd be insane, at worse a vegetable with no soul to return to her body.

“Why do they not tell us about this David? Why are we not warned?”

David looked up at her. “We are told, we are warned but nobody understands. That's why I mentioned Moses on the mountain. We are told but people think that these are just stories, and they are, but stories with a message. We do not speak of it lightly for it sounds like madness, and to those who do not see the madness in it, it sounds like a challenge. People want to prove themselves strong so they take on the most difficult things that they can imagine to prove their strength. This is not a mountain to climb or a weight to lift in order to show off, this is the precipice of madness and truth and nobody who faces it unprepared can survive.”

Nancy gave a shudder. “I don't even think I saw it clearly, it was still so far away but I felt myself being drawn into it, being destroyed, losing myself, and it was less than a fraction of a moment. She caught me, She held me and She calmed me.” Nancy stopped for a moment and tilted her head as though listening to something far away. “And she says that you did nothing wrong, if anyone should be taking the blame it should be me for wandering away. Had I stayed with you and the chakra lights and welcomed the Goddess instead of wandering off nothing would have gone wrong.”

David gave a small smile. “But you did wander off and I should have known that you might. I should have known that you weren't ready to be in that space.”

“David!” Nancy snapped. “How powerful, amazing, awesome do you think you are that you should have known anything and everything that I was going to do? How special do you think you are?”

David was surprised and for a moment, angry. Then the truth of the words rang loudly in his ears and he began to laugh. He began to laugh so hard that tears returned to his eyes. Nancy was confused but that only seemed to inflame David's mirth.

“What is so funny?” Nancy managed.

“I just realised a truth in all of this. I was taking my role as teacher so seriously that I started to take myself too seriously. I'm not perfect by any stretch of the imagination and yet I'm angry at myself for not being perfect.” David composed himself and looked at Nancy again. “Thank you for that. I'm truly sorry that you had a scare but sometimes I forget the second occult maxim and think too much of myself.”

“The second occult maxim,” Nancy thought for a moment. “To Dare?”

“Exactly,” David smiled. “If there was never a risk, if there was never a fear to overcome, if there was never the possibility of something going wrong than there would be no reason for valour. To Dare only works if there is a risk, and if there is no risk, than what value is there in the reward?”

“It looks as though we both learned something tonight.” Nancy smiled.

“It seems that way.” And suddenly David was overwhelmed with the warmth of the moment. He was acutely aware of Nancy’s body, her sparkling eyes, her smile, her hair, even the smell of her. He was aware of the emotional upheaval that they had just been through and the connection that they had made beforehand. His heart filled with warmth and energy shot like lightening up into his skull and down into his loins. He stood quickly and looked down at the shapely figure of Nancy’s beautifully proportioned body. Her soft lips, her rounded hips, her perfect double D breasts all called to him as a man, a friend, a Priest and lover.

David then let out a shuddering sigh and bolted from the room.

David travels to Dr. Lazarus to discuss the near failure with Nancy. They discuss remembering and multiple lives. Though technically not from Nancy's point of view consider it's place in the story.

The room he sat in was much as David had remembered it from so long ago. He couldn't count the hours he'd spent in this library reading ancient books or just sitting by the fire talking to his old mentor. It had taken him hours to get here by car and he had left in haste much to Nancy's protests and that of the valet who insisted on packing a few necessities for him. His hurried apologies did little to dispel their concerns but he'd explained that the situation warranted immediate consultation with another Adept and when it came to truly personal discussions Dr. Lazarus was the only person David trusted implicitly.

As always the older adept saw to the niceties first. After all, no good would come from discussing important matters on an empty stomach. After a meal, during which Lazarus refused to be rushed, the time finally came for sherry and cigars and the leisure to discuss the events leading to this impromptu visit. David was used to this tendency of the old professor who often said that no good ever came to magicians who rushed things and that all of the universe must be appreciated. Every meal should be an appreciation of the Divine Beauty in all things and so David succumbed to the older man's idiosyncrasies.

Once seated by the fire, cigar smoke curling lazily about them, David told the story of how he'd nearly lost Nancy into the Abyss and how it was only Divine intervention that had saved her. David grew more and more agitated as the story went on but Charles Lazarus, who had seen much in his long and illustrious occult career, continued unperturbed.

"It's the fact that I couldn't help her. She was obviously out of her depth and there was nothing I could do to save her. She's my student, one of the Goddess's chosen and I nearly let her die. I should have known better."

"Really?" the old adept replied. "How many times have you performed that particular ritual with a woman? How many of your initiates have done this particular energising of the chakras?"

"Well, several I suppose. It's a common method within our order though it's seldom done with two people like that. Still, it's not unheard of, I've done it several times myself with a priestess. Still, they were always ready, they were always fine, they never wandered off like that."

"And you think that she wasn't properly trained to handle it and, therefore it's both your fault for putting her in that situation as well as not training her properly is that it?"

"Exactly," David replied. "It's my fault and it scared the hell out of us both."

"And yet you came to me rather than stay and comfort her." Lazarus took a long pull on his cigar and blew out the smoke. "Most interesting. Quite unlike you. What are you afraid of?"

"Afraid of?" David seemed taken quite off guard.

"Yes. You do occasionally look at your own mind don't you? Why are you here? Do you want me to tell you what you did wrong or do you want me to assure you that you are without blame?"

“Well.” David was quite for a moment. Yes, running did seem to indicate a sort of fear. What did he expect of the old wizard though. Did he want to be punished, scolded for being a bad teacher? Would such a scolding wash the sin of his failure from his soul?

“I’m not your father David, and after you passed the Portal you’re not even my student. I can give you neither absolution nor admonishment. That you must do on your own, I can only guide you. That’s all I’ve ever done you know.”

“I know.” David thought about it, about everything. Since Nancy had shown up he often questioned his own motives with her. After all, he’d treated her somewhat differently than the others. He was always involved in the training of the Priestesses just as Angela³ took the young Priests, but perhaps he’d spent a lot more time with Nancy. Maybe he was afraid of something else entirely. As though reading the younger adept’s mind Lazarus spoke his own interpretation.

“It’s the memories isn’t it?” Lazarus knew that David didn’t want to hear that. He knew how much that old wound festered but as a magician he also knew that it had never healed either. “You recognised this Nancy from before.”

“Yes. When I first saw her at the university. It’s why I befriended her, but never allowed her to really develop an interest in my work. I had vowed never to approach someone I remembered unless they remembered me as well.”

“And the last time you remembered someone from the past, from before this life, and was drawn to them...”⁴

“Yes.” David was subdued, quite, lost. Thinking about the past, thinking about ‘her’ was hard for him at the best of times. He’d always been afraid of making that mistake again. Was that why he ran? Was that what happened to him? Was losing Nancy suddenly the same as losing Callie so very long ago?

“You loved her. You allowed yourself to love her because you saw in her a connection to the past, a fellow traveller from a past life. You had not learned discretion, nor discrimination. You had not learned to protect yourself.”

“I couldn’t help it. I loved her the moment I saw her. It felt as though I’d always loved her, since the beginning of time. Even now I cannot face the truth of it.”

Lazarus sighed deeply. “My son, it is the curse of us who have been initiated life after life to know who we were and to see those we’ve known before. But not everyone who is born remembers and many will never know who they were, who they loved, who they cared for. You frightened her away and, perhaps, it was never meant to be in this lifetime, but what you felt was genuine, what you felt was true. I know it hurts still, but she is not the only love you’ve had throughout time and often it is fate that decides what we will do in this incarnation regardless of how we feel about it.”

David was weeping. Great sobs escaped him as Lazarus discussed the first and only time David had ever experienced love at first sight. For him it was a great failure and no amount of

³ Consider adding more about Angela in the earlier parts of the story. She may be important later on as High Priestess.

⁴ Consider this as akin to that other incident.

time or ritual could erase the pain from his heart at driving away the one woman whose very presence made him feel whole.

“You see her in Nancy don’t you. You see another one that you’ve loved life after life. She is not the same, but the love is no less because it has always been. Yet you know your duty, and you know hers as well. What did the cards tell you? What did the runes say?”

David found it hard to talk. He knew the catharsis of allowing Lazarus to talk to him in this way. Charles was not cruel he only hoped to burn away the infection of a wound that had eluded them both for years.

“Nancy is my student. I cannot allow her to become more than that. It would be inappropriate for me to fall in love with her. I can love her as I do now, as friend, Soror, Priestess, lover, but not as partner, never as wife.

“You and I both know that the time will come when I must take on that duty we have discussed so many times before. The time will come when I must leave that lodge and the Priests and Priestesses who run it to take my place elsewhere. When that time comes it will be Nancy who takes over the temple as master. By that time she must be strong enough and I fear what that strength will do to her.

“If I allow myself to love her in that way she will also love me and when the time comes for me to leave she will be devastated. If that happens the temple will fall, the Priests and Priestesses will disperse and a great center of learning and worship will fall. Even though no one woman can truly be the Goddess to me and sole recipient of my love, I would have made her my sacred bride and thereby built a household and a family.”

“And if you don’t leave,” Lazarus interjected. “If you don’t leave we both know what that will mean for the world. You know as well as I do that you must fight in that war that is coming upon us the same as I fought in the wars years ago. Human ambition has never been above using magic for evil purposes and it is for this reason that we serve as we must.”

David thought about this. “Then I hold my pain within. I suffer for the sake of both Nancy and Callie. At least I can love Nancy in some way and prepare her as best I can against the day that I must leave.”

“My poor boy. The iron does not feel comfort in the forge fire nor does it rejoice upon the anvil but the sword that defends the kingdom cannot be forged otherwise.” Charles rose at that point. “You will stay here tonight and leave at your leisure. You are always welcome and do not visit often enough. And with that I shall retire.”

They said their goodnights and the older adept made his way to his rooms while David stayed behind. He spent a long time staring into the fire thinking and hoping that he could rejoice in the love he had rather than the love that was forever beyond his reach.

Fellatio Ritual notes 1st draft

The temple is set out as per normal except for a throne in the East with a small stool below and the Talisman upon the Altar where David can view it. David is dressed as the Magician except that his under-robe is yellow. (Maybe he should be wearing white with a yellow stole?) The robe opens at the front and around his waist is another copy of the talisman. Nancy is dressed in similar fashion with a two sided mantle. One side is blue, the other green. She begins with the blue side out.

She knocks upon the temple door.

David: “Who is without that seeks entrance?”

Nancy: “It is one who wishes to achieve their desire.”

David: “Enter and state thy desire.”

Nancy enters:

Fear and Doubt to cast aside,
To forge within, Power and Pride
To make me whole and strong and true
This is why I come to you.

David

I am the Priest, and through me flows
The stars that shine, the wind that blows
The dawn, the dusk, all force and power
From the yellow sun to the common flower.

Nancy

I am the Priestess, and I am she
The blue moon at night, the distant sea
A dreaming form, a shape, a plan
Unfinished in the sleeping sand.

David

Than come to me, oh shaper of life
Come to me and feed on Light
That flows to me from the stars above
and out from the wand, the Lingam of Love

Nancy comes and kneels before David.
I am ready to receive the Living Light”

David reveals his erect penis as well as the talisman.
This symbol, most holy, will attune this Light
Take from me, drink this night
Take within you the power Imperial
The sacred Light both Spiritual and Material.”

Throughout the fellatio David must maintain his focus on the Talisman. It is vital for the shaping of the energy flowing down to the altar. It then flows out from there into his eyes and down to the Wand of Light. Also, the force of the Dawn is channelled from the center of his back. This is also “attuned” by Nancy’s focus on the second talisman.

When the moment comes she must swallow the Spark of Life.

Nancy:
The Spark of Life I have received
Shaped by Desire and Need.
To begin the inner transformation
I accept the holy living libation.

(Nancy changes from the Blue to the Green)

For now am I the Empress reigning
Pregnant with a new beginning
Giving form to the Priest’s own Fire
And giving birth to my Desire.