

The Pendlebury Witches

Part 2



Deena Gomersall



A "New Woman" Novel



Reluctant Press TV/TS Publishers

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For information address
Reluctant Press
P.O. Box 5829
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USA

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The Pendlebury Witches

Part 2

By Deena Gomersall

Day 12 – Wednesday 26th–October

The following day Dan was to be completing his Level Four powers and there were many incantations and chants made to help him achieve that level. It was significant and Harriet said that it would only be for three hours as it would take a lot of energy from all of them. Dan planned to follow Stewart's advice and keep with the programme... as Stewart had said, he may need his extra powers before it was all through and he didn't want to raise suspicions.

After the session was over, Harriet was all smiles. "You have done well, Phoebe, and you are now just

one level away from where you need to be,” she told him. “We have raised the most power you had within you, you have to build more; greater levels come with time and much more work. If you stayed as you are, you could build on what you have and become a greater witch and do far more good for the Earth.”

“Stay as I am? You mean stay female. No thank you,” Dan laughed. “After three more days and doing whatever it is I am needed to do, I am keen to going back to being male and returning home, to the States and to my girlfriend.”

Harriet cast off the remark. “Ah, who knows what the future has for us, eh? You may yet change your mind. Meanwhile, now that you are a Level Four, I want us all to go outside and see what you can do with your new powers.”

Dan followed the others into the grounds of the house. By concentrating and directing his thoughts, Dan again managed to produce fireballs in his hand but he also managed to levitate various objects, including some large, heavy boulders. He was also able to look at objects such as boulders and use his power to send them hurtling forward. He could create fire just by staring at a space. It was all amazing to him and made him feel very powerful.

“Well done, Phoebe. Of course, moving and levitating objects can be useful but the prime reason for gaining your full potential of powers is for spell casting. With our powers and yours combined, we can bring a magic to save the world,” Harriet told him, smiling.

“And does that include using it for necromancy?” Dan asked, not able to help himself.

Harriet shot Dan a hard, questioning glare, then composed herself and smiled. "What do you mean by that, Phoebe dear?" she asked.

Dan knew he had spoken out of turn and tried correcting himself. "You said to me something about how we needed to raise a witch from old... a powerful one, didn't you? Isn't that a form of necromancy?"

Harriet seemed to look right through him before replying. "Well, yes, I guess so dear; I didn't say we were raising the dead, just her spirit... if we can. But that doesn't concern us right now."

They returned indoors for lunch with nothing more being said.

After they had eaten and as the day outside was mild for the time of year, Dan thought he would be brave.

"Harriet, would you mind if I went down to the village again today? I went back to the church yesterday whilst Connie and Flick went to a bar. I found they keep lots of old books, records of things to do with the village. I'd like to look through them to see what there is about my great aunt and family."

Dan was using the same tactic he had used with the vicar but wasn't sure how Harriet would feel about his delving into historic records. Harriet had been well aware that Dan had gone to the church yesterday, from Constance, and had wondered if he would get around to disclosing the fact.

"That's a wonderful idea Phoebe, it is good that you want to learn more on your family history and, as I have said to you before, be seen around the village by the locals," she replied.

So it was that Dan, dressed in jeans and a white sweater and leather jacket, made his way, yet again, down to the church.

As he arrived in the village, he saw a newsagent's along the main shopping street and it occurred to him, although he had been up on global affairs when he had left the States, that he hadn't any knowledge of recent world happenings.

Picking up one of the daily tabloids made it easy to see that what Harriet had been talking about, world events that could escalate and bring about the end of the world: North Korea was testing long range ballistic missiles with a range such that a nuclear warhead could reach the United States, South Korea too were concerned about this and both America and Japan were objecting strongly. The States were looking at building missile launch bases in South Korea and China was protesting about that.

Another paper told of how Russian jets were attacking Syria with the loss of many civilian lives and there was worldwide condemnation over that, too. Meanwhile, tensions between the States and Russia were at a high. With a change of American presidency imminent, who knew how that was going to affect relationships between the two countries?

It gave Dan a chill when he thought of all the consequences and Harriet's warnings now seemed to be ringing true as he made his way over to the vicarage.

Hector wasn't home in the vicarage. For some reason that was much to Dan's disappointment, but his wife, Mary, opened up the archive room for him.

Now that he had some idea of where to look, Dan soon found books that told of the witch trials which took place in Lancashire between 1564 and 1630.

Specifically there was quite a lot written on the witch trials around 1612 which described various witches who had been executed. Not surprisingly Dan found reports of The Chatterns, Pendencyes and Storragers and of the hanging of Bernadette.

In everything he read, he found at that time the hunting and killing of witches had been outlawed by the British government and it stated that only the Storage family had evidence against them of evildoing.

So, in both cases, what Harriet and Stewart had told him was true, but was Harriet really now planning a murderous revenge on the innocent ancestors of those who had persecuted her family? He wanted no part of that.

In another book Dan read about Pendlebury Hill where many witches were hung on the gallows or burnt at the stake. He was interested to read of a road that led up to the hill and, in a field nearby, there was the grave of Bernadette Chattern.

The time was quarter past three and Dan wondered if he had time to visit the area, his interest was so piqued. No matter what, Bernadette was part of his family history.

As Dan had worn jeans and flat shoes into town, he decided they would be suitable for such a walk. There was a miniature book that had a map inside, created over a hundred years ago. Dan decided he could borrow the book and a magnifying glass to help him locate the site.

As he followed a road out of the village, in the far distance, dark and foreboding, stretched Pendlebury Hill. That was his compass; to aim for the hill.

Perhaps the whole idea had been unwise. As he got close to the area marked in the book the time was already five minutes to five. It had taken him an hour and forty minutes to get there ... downhill and the sky was already starting to get dark.

Dan was wondering whether to cancel his mission and just turn back for home when he saw a square block of stone over on the left side of the road. This stone had been described in the book along with a drawing of it.

The stone stood about three and a half feet high and probably a foot along each side. On top of it were deep but very weather-worn engravings. Dan had no idea of what they stood for but they made him shudder. The stone was very old.

There were three pointers also engraved on the stone. Dan took the little book out and used his magnifying glass to see which of the pointers he should follow across a wide barren area of moorland.

Deciding he had the correct one, Dan went in a straight line, using a distant tree to keep him on track. Then he saw it... a little to the left of the direction he was heading. Dan had expected to see a headstone but what it was, was just a grave-sized area bordered with old stones and a large round rock at its head. Many of the border stones had been cast aside long ago and the grave itself was sunken down. To Dan it appeared as though, many years earlier, the grave had been dug out.

The large round boulder had words engraved upon it, very worn, but Dan eventually made out the words to read: Hereth lay the body of Bernadette Chattern and unnamed baby. God rest their souls. 1612.

Dan turned cold. This was his ancient ancestry. He knew not whether her body still lay beneath the ground.

Returning to the square stone, Dan wondered what the other two markers pointed to. He had forgotten how time was getting on but he felt he wanted to explore further.

Following the direction of one of the other pointers, Dan found himself walking away from the track he had come down and over moorland. Looking ahead and to the sides for anything on show in the gloom, Dan spotted something in the distance. He headed for the dark shapes he could see, and, although the light was now fading fast, he began to make out that these were, large, looming, headstones that were very old. Some were broken, many tilted or fallen.

There had to be fifteen to twenty headstones, randomly rising amongst a set of trees. This was no usual graveyard... it was out in the middle of nowhere.

Again the stones were extremely old and the inscriptions hard to read but Dan had little doubt these were graves of the persecuted witches put to death. It was confirmed when he made out surname of Pendyke, Harriet's family. And he was shaken when he found one stone that had the name Pretoria Pendyke. Was this just a coincidence?

He did not know the surname of Pretoria, it had never been mentioned. Was the Pretoria back at the house related to Harriet and that name had passed through the generations. Or... could it be that this was Pretoria's grave? Had Pretoria been executed and had Harriet already used necromancy once before to bring her back?

The idea chilled Dan and he was starting to feel very uneasy. It was already quite dark and he needed to get back. Harriet would wonder what he had been doing all of this time.

Dan turned in the direction he had come... or so he thought, but the ground he was walking on was becoming increasingly marshy and wet. Then the last thing he needed, it began raining heavily.

As all around became gloomier and Dan's long hair became wet and sticking to the sides of his face, he felt himself walking upwards rather than on flat ground. He had not gone down hill at any point since he had left the road... he was now increasingly worried that he was lost.

There were more random trees scattered about... trees that he had not seen before... and then, another set of gravestones... this was not the same set; some of these stones were very tall.

Panicking a little, Dan, no longer wishing to investigate, turned away to walk in another direction, he had obviously gone wrong somewhere. He looked vainly through the dark, through the rain, hoping to see sign of the road. He couldn't even see anything of Pendlebury Hill, That, at least, would have helped if he walked in the opposite direction to it.

Now his feet were sinking in boggy ground and he could make out a large pool of water ahead of him. If he wasn't careful he could get bogged down, sink and drown. He almost felt like staying put until the light of the morning, but he was cold and wet. Could he survive that long and not die of hyperthermia?

Then Dan felt his blood run cold again. He suddenly had a feeling that he was being watched. He

now felt more scared than he had ever been in his entire life.

Shivering from the cold, Dan suddenly thought he heard a noise coming from the direction of the large water pool and glanced his eyes sideways.

In the gloom and seemingly walking over the top of the stretch of water was the shape of a person coming towards him. Within a few seconds Dan could make out it was the shape of a woman. Was this a spirit of some long dead witch out in these wilds? Dan would believe anything now.

Then as the form, seemingly floating rather than walking towards him, became even clearer, he saw that it was Harriet. Harriet had a very hard stern look on her face. Rather than being relieved at being found by Harriet, Dan was even more concerned now... she was a powerful witch after all. He was considering dashing away from her in fear, as she was fast and silently approaching.

Dan was terrified by the glare in her eyes as she came within arms' length of him and he turned, ready to run. Right at that moment, Harriet rose from the watery ground, rising upwards in front of him into the air. As her feet left the watery ground, streams of water ran off of her sandals. Harriet levitated right over the top of Dan's head, coming back down in the direction he had aimed to run in.

"What on earth are you doing right out here, Phoebe?" Harriet then asked calmly.

Dan paused to think before replying. "I said I had wanted to look at my family's history. I found a book that said Bernadette's body was buried out here," he responded, sticking to the truth. "I did find the

grave site. It looked as though it had been disturbed a long time ago.”

“You silly child. It is quite dangerous out here; these marshes could suck you in. Had you said you wanted to come out here, I would have accompanied you and shown you where to look and kept you safe.”

“I’m sorry Harriet, I was just intrigued and it got dark so quickly. How did you know I was out here and how to find me?” Dan asked, mystified.

Harriet just laughed. “I’m a witch, remember? Not much gets past me.”

Harriet then held out her hand for Dan to take. “Come, I’ll get us back to the road and home. It will be a late meal for us tonight, it has already gone seven o’clock.”

“So, did you do anything else while you were out this afternoon, Phoebe?” Harriet quizzed as they made their way back to the village on foot.

Dan had expected a roasting from Harriet, after going all that way out without informing her and possibly getting totally lost, but she was surprisingly calm and pleasant. He knew not to mention anything about her talk with Stewart though.

“No, nothing. I went to the church like I said and started to read through a few books. I found one about Bernadette and it said she had been buried around here.” Dan repeated his story. “I was just curious to go to the grave; I thought I could get there and back easily.”

“And you haven’t been talking to anyone at all, over the last couple of days?” Harriet asked.

“Well, none other than the vicar and his wife who let me into the archive room,” Dan lied.

Harriet asked no more but her face hardened briefly from his reply.

Back once again at her home, Harriet had Dan quickly take off his wet things and gave him a soft gown to wear and a blanket to wrap around him. She had him sit in front of an open log fire in the snug to get warm. She gave him a hot drink that tasted like blackcurrant.

“We can’t do with you getting your death of cold dear, not when we are so close. You won’t have enough energy to get through your Levels of Power Five with a streaming cold,” Harriet gently chastised him after getting herself into a nightgown and sitting by him.

The drink was a special cocktail that she had made up and would continue to feminise Dan’s mind as well as allowing her to get into his head.

“Phoebe, sweetheart. Remember I told you how the villagers were responsible for the deaths of many witches... persecuting us and murdering us?”

“Yes, Auntie. One of the books I read today gave a long account of what had happened around these parts,” Dan honestly replied.

“Indeed. The government had already decreed that it was illegal for the common folk to execute a witch... but that did not stop them. There are still people today of that same mind... still wishing us harm. Beware of whom you speak to as some will try to get into your head and lie about us, tell you untruths about both ourselves and them.”

Dan knew just how powerful a witch Harriet was by how she had managed to stop him from returning to the states. He guessed she may have some idea about him talking to Stewart and decided to come clean about her talk with him.

“I did actually talk to someone in the village yesterday, I should have told you. But he told me that all that you wanted was to get revenge on the people who had harmed you. He... he said that Connie, Flick and Bridgette had once been men, sons of some of the villagers that had harmed your family.”

Harriet looked directly into Dan’s pretty face. “It is true that those three were once male and yes, I did it as an act of revenge. I took their sons and heirs and made them wanton females... to shame them. Maybe I acted impetuously but you must consider the anger that I felt at the time, watching my kindred burned to death... watching my unborn grandchild burned in her mother’s belly...”

“All of my family, Phoebe, we had done nothing wrong. Our spells and potions were only ever made for good purpose. We never killed anyone. I could have done far worse to those three boys. Look at them now, they are happy, and they have an endless life of youth if they want it.”

Dan was almost feeling sorry for Harriet and how unbearable that period of time must have been for her, but her mention of doing far worse suddenly hardened him. “Far worse? You mean like killing them slowly with a deadly painful disease... like Ebola, which you threatened to do with my family and girlfriend if I did not do as you wished,” he stated in an icy tone.

“That was wrong of me, Phoebe, and it was just that, a threat. I never would have done it. I was just

desperate to save the world, save its entire people... over seven billion souls. You know yourself; you are intelligent enough to be aware of what is happening in the world today to know I speak the truth to you."

The potion that Dan was drinking and Harriet's words were working on Dan's mind. It had been wrong of the villagers to illegally burn and behead witches. It seemed there still was resentment to this day, even though Harriet was trying to save mankind. He decided he would not waver in trying to help her.

"I saw graveyards out there, at least two different sites. I found that one had the inscription of Pretoria Pendyke upon it," he then said, wanting to know that truth.

"Yes, Pretoria was one of my family, a Pendyke like me. That is my family graveyard, all of my kin. As witches we were not allowed to bury our dead amongst the common folk of the village. We had to bury them out in a remote spot on the moors. There are five graveyards out on the moors, including the Chatterns."

"So, did Pretoria die and you raised her from the dead?" Dan questioned.

Harriet laughed. "Oh no, my darling, that which you found was Pretoria, my sister, Our Pretoria is from a different family, the Storrages.

"And I was told that you had a son. What of him?" Dan then asked.

Harriet looked grieved. "Yes, I do have a child. He would have been the father of Bernadette's baby. He also practiced the arts, he was a warlock."

"You say he was; is he dead?"

“They executed him along with Bernadette,” Harriet said sadly.

“The man that I spoke with yesterday told me that your son would be returning, coming back to exact his own revenge.”

“I wish. The man is a fool... and don't protect his name, dear. You have spoken to Stewart Forsythe, a so-called white witch. He knows nothing. White witches have very limited powers and have been jealous of true witches for centuries,” Harriet revealed, shocking Dan with her knowledge. Nothing seemed hidden from her.

The two talked long into the night and Harriet calmed the concerns that Dan had been harbouring. He went to bed feeling less anxious than he had been and he was determined not to listen to anything more that Stewart would try to poison his mind with.

Day 13 – Thursday 27th October

Thursday brought about the start of Dan's Fifth Level raising. When he came down from the bedroom, the other witches all noticed a difference in him, how he was walking, how he was conversing and, most of all, certain feminine mannerisms that he was using. Harriet herself was not surprised; she had been slowly giving him potions that would eventually feminise his mind to go in tune with his body, together with the talk that they'd had together the night before.

As it became time for them to start their incantations, asking the witch spirits to raise what was inside Dan from birth, on this occasion Harriet gave

Dan a metal hairband to wear. The band looked very old and was a burnished gold with three rubies set on each side. There was also a matching ring, again set with three rubies, for his second finger.

Each day so far the incantations had taken lots of energy from the seven but on this occasion it exhausted them all. The three main witches and Dan had stood around the Cauldron reciting words that were still foreign to the feminised man. The three younger witches, whom Dan could now not help but view differently, clasped their hands together with eyes closed as they echoed some of the words. By its end, though feeling like he had just run a marathon, Dan sensed a new degree of power within his body.

The whole phase only lasted for two and a half hours and then the witches all rested until it was time for lunch.

Dan was still in possession of the miniature book and the magnifying glass that he'd borrowed from the church and he went into the study to continue reading through its pages. It appeared that, by time Bernadette had died, she had already risen to a powerful witch even though she had not been a true witch in the beginning.

Along with reading positive things about the Chattertn family line, Dan also read about some of the evil witches that had been in Britain and parts of Europe in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries. Amongst those were the Storage family and one of the most powerful of that line was Griselda, the witch that Harriet had mentioned about raising from the dead for her powers. Griselda, it read, was known for eating the hearts of children she had lured and killed.

Dan shuddered. How could Harriet even contemplate raising a person like that? But then, he sup-

posed, if it was in order to save the world from destruction, maybe it was her way of rectifying the wrongs she had done, to free her soul from an eternity in hell? He really didn't know. But he suspected Harriet would know what she was doing.

Then there was mention about Harriet herself. It said she had been a practicing witch but had not done harm to anyone up until the slaughter of witches and her family from 1610 to 1614. It was supposed she had died somewhere out on Pendlebury Hill where she had fled. Her son, whose name had never been known, was believed to have been hunted down and slain for being a Warlock, but there were questions about the accuracy of this story.

Dan wondered afresh about Harriet. She was centuries old, what deep magic did she have to keep herself alive and looking so young for all of those centuries? He also wondered about Rosella. How old was she? He had made love to her. He had fucked a woman over four hundred years old!! That made him feel very queasy.

After midday and a nice lunch, Dan again asked Harriet if he could go for a walk into the village. Knowing now that Harriet was aware of his actions, Dan was certainly not intending to try finding more about the witches, or to try talking to anyone against the witches. "If I may, I have this book and spy glass that I took from the church, it contains a map that helped me to find Bernadette's grave. I'd like to return it," he said, showing Harriet the book.

"Yes, of course you may, my dear. Just return at a reasonable time this time, and do not go wading into any dank marshes."

“No, I won’t, I promise,” he said as he set off up to his room to get ready.

Harriet also was sure that this time Dan would not be trying to make conversation with people who meant to disrupt her intentions.

Even she was surprised though when Dan resurfaced from the bedroom. He was wearing a just above-the-knee black dress with white feathers and blue lines detail. The dress had a plunging neckline that showed lots of cleavage as he was bra-less. On his feet, Dan was wearing a pair of slingback stiletto-heeled shoes with a slender three-inch heel. He had put his hair up into a high ponytail that bobbed and swung with his walk and he had applied a light blue eye shadow, mascara, pink lipstick and painted his finger nails in the same colour. The others in the house just looked but passed no comment on his appearance.

“Okay, I’ll be off, Auntie. I promise I won’t be late,” he said with a confident smile.

Dan had brought a black purse with a long shoulder strap down with him which he slung over his shoulder. “Okay, bye everyone,” he said as he set off.

As he left the house, Constance clasped her hand over her mouth and Pretoria turned to Harriet. “Do you think you may be overdoing the feminising potions?” she asked with a rare smile.

Dan enjoyed the forty-minute stroll into the village; there was a nice cool breeze over his bare legs and on his somewhat exposed chest.

He was aware of the many stares he was getting from men, and some women, at the amount of cleavage he was showing from the low-cut dress, but he just ignored them.

Soon he was at the vicarage and it was the vicar that answered. “Phoebe...” He smiled happily, clasping his hands in front of him. “What is it that I can do for you today?”

Dan felt his heart race a little. “I’m just returning some of your property... Hector. I borrowed these yesterday,” he replied idly, rubbing his hand softly on his chest with his finger tips before reaching into his purse for the small book and the magnifying glass, “I hope it was okay for me to borrow them?”

“No, that’s not a problem, Phoebe. If you leave them with me, I shall put them back later.”

Dan smiled at the handsome vicar. “Okay Hector, catch you later!” With that, Dan spun on his heels with a swish of his ponytail and began walking away with a sway of his butt, feeling the vicar’s eyes on him.

With plenty of time left, Dan decided to try find his way to his great aunt’s, now his, cottage which he had not been back to for the past week. He rested there for an hour before setting off back to Harriet’s house, a little upset that he couldn’t make himself a coffee as the milk had gone off.

Day 15 – Saturday 29th October

For the following two days the witches and Dan put all of their concentration into casting enough spells to create the power that would raise the energy in Dan to its fullest potential. It was tiring and all of the witches, even the young ones, stayed in the home all day Friday. Now Dan felt more of an urgency to

reach his full potential after what he had read in the newspapers.

Harriet felt they had achieved their goal by one o' clock on Saturday afternoon. Dan felt exhausted but also could feel a vibrancy coursing through him. He felt as if he could move mountains and he and the other three witches could prevent an apocalypse once they had raised and had the help of Griselda.

"We've done it! You have achieved Level Five, I can sense it in you," Harriet congratulated. "Tonight we should let our hair down and celebrate."

"That has really taken it out of me; can't we stay in again this evening as we did last night?" Dan asked, looking extremely exhausted..

"No way!" Constance exclaimed loudly. "It's Dance Night in the village tonight... and are you forgetting, you have a date with that tall handsome man. What was he called?"

Dan had not forgotten, at all. "It's Dominic and I do not have a date with him. I said that maybe I would give him one dance, but that was all," Dan protested, flushing.

"You say just one dance and it's nothing special, Phoebe, yet you remember the young man's name," Rosella teased.

"I have a good memory for names but *your* memory seems to be failing you, Rosella. Beneath this façade I am really a man and I have a lovely girlfriend who I intend to marry," Dan responded indignantly.

"I was hoping, now that you are truly one of us, that you would stay here with us and work at gaining even more levels and power. We could do so much

good for the world as a powerful coven of four,” Harriet joined in.

“We’ve been through this before, Auntie. I’m a man and I want to return to being a man. Staying a witch would mean staying as a female. Plus I am feeling homesick, my home and my heart is in America. I promise I’ll do all that I need to do here and then I shall return to the States.”

“Do you know that now you are at Level Five, transitioning from female to male would be much easier and less painful? I know that concerned you,” Pretoria revealed.

“That is good to know... only because I still have to make that transition one more time,” Dan countered.

The afternoon was taken as time for relaxing and recovering. Harriet would have liked to see what Dan could achieve with his powers at full potential but she wanted him relaxed and ready for their night out. She wondered if the arms of a man may change his ideas about returning back home. To that end, Dan was, unknowingly, given one more of her special cocktail potions in the late afternoon.

By early evening everyone in the house were getting ready for the dance, some much more enthusiastically... Felicity, Constance and Bridgette. Another, Dan, was much less so.

In his wardrobe Dan found a long-sleeved, full-length black dress that had a rounded collar and fell to the ankles. It was perfect for covering up his body, although the figure-hugging velveteen dress had a long side split for walking. With this, he had a pair of black strappy sandals with a slim three-inch heel to wear.

Since the time that Harriet had ‘helped’ make him more able to walk in high stiletto heels, Dan now found them more comfortable to wear than flat shoes, which tended to hurt the tendons at the back of his ankles.

They arrived early at the village hall, where only about twenty people were present so far. Many came over to Dan to ask how he was settling into their country. Dan, whilst talking, scanned around and saw that Dominic was not there.

As others arrived, so did Stewart Forsythe and Ben Arkwright. Dan was on his second alcoholic drink by then. Stewart was able to approach Dan whilst the other witches mingled.

“There is something about to happen. We are not sure just what yet, but we can sense it through our magic. Do not get involved with anything, especially on the 31st. All Hallows Eve. There is a definite Red for Danger then. If not avoided, there could be a great shift,” Stewart whispered quickly.

“Stewart, why don’t you just stop hounding them? Harriet has been very upfront with me about everything, all that you have mentioned she has confessed to. I am well aware of how your ancestors treated the witches back in the day, persecuting them because you didn’t understand them. Even now, in more enlightened times, you are still hell bent on doing it,” Dan snapped in his feminine voice.

“No! Don’t let them get to you, Dan. Remember, I am a witch myself...” Stewart began to reply.

“Oh! Yes, poor you. You must be so jealous of those witches more powerful than you could ever be, Is that the reason, jealousy? And I am not Dan, I am Phoebe,

remember? Now please leave me alone to enjoy myself at this dance.”

With that Dan walked away to distance himself, leaving the white witch looking shell-shocked and bewildered about what must have been said to Dan earlier.

Dan had several dances with the others in his party and was then led by Connie to be introduced to some of the younger villagers; he was feeling much more confident this time around.

Throughout the night, he kept looking around to see if Dominic had come in but there was no sign. By ten o’ clock he had still not shown and Dan was unsure if he felt relieved or if he felt jilted in some way. After all, Dominic had been promised a dance the week before and even if Dan did not want to dance with the tall handsome man, he had promised and he was letting him down.

Dan was on his fifth cocktail and standing talking to Harriet, Rosetta, and Pretoria. Occasionally he would glance across the room where Stewart, Ben, and now Adam Millington were standing. They were looking back across to him and obviously discussing him.

Dan jumped slightly when he felt a sudden hand touch his shoulder. “My darling Phoebe! Why, you look more ravishing than you did last week,” a voice behind him spoke. Dan knew the rich well-accented voice and he felt a shiver run through him. Turning, there was Dominic, looking very handsome..

“I am so sorry that I have been held up on other business this evening, but I did promise you a dance, did I not?”

Dan looked at Dominic with a look of disinterest. “Yes you did. You also asked if I would be your date, did you not? If I *had* been your date, would your business have made you still very late for it?” Dan asked, surprised at his own coldness and acidic reply.

“Had you agreed to being my date last week. then nothing in heaven or hell would have stayed me from being here on time, my enchantress.”

“Well then, luckily for me I did say no.”

Dominic pulled a pout. “But you did agree to a dance,” he continued.

“Well yes, had you been here earlier, I may have danced with you, but it’s now late.”

“Phoebe, you are such a cruel heartbreaker. Well, let me at least buy you a drink as an apology,” Dominic continued with a smile.

“I have one, thank you.” Dan returned, with his three companions listening to every exchange. Dan may not have noticed it but the three of them did. Dan sounded just like a typical female being bitchy about being jilted. There was even an element of flirtatiousness in his responses.

Whatever Dan did from that time on, he would find Dominic around him. After he had drained his last cocktail, Dominic was there with another. The man’s persistence even had Dan smiling to himself.

At quarter to midnight, slow music was being played to wind down the evening as husbands and wives took to the floor.

Dan was still standing with the older witches joined by Flick when Dominic reappeared once again

and took Dan's drink from his hand, setting it on a table.

"Why did you do that?" Dan asked.

"Because it would be totally in the way and could spill," Dominic answered as he took Dan's hand and, with no room for rejection, led Dan to the dance floor. Dan was too surprised and it had happened too fast for him to formulate any kind of protest at the action. Before he knew it, Dominic's strong arm was around his tiny waist and holding him firmly.

Initially Dan's body was unyielding but as Dominic took control, he began to relax into the big man's arms and was led around the floor. Dan's mind was a whirl and desperately tried to understand what his feelings were. At the end of the dance, Dominic remained in front of him.

"You are the most beautiful of women, my dear Phoebe, you have captured my heart." Dominic told him as he held Dan by the shoulders.

Dan felt weird, totally strange. Another man was professing his feelings for him. In a way it made him feel awkward but it he also felt very flattered.

Dominic's hands moved from Dan's shoulders to holding him just under the ears as his mesmerising eyes stared at him. Dan felt almost weakened by the gaze from his piercing blue eyes.

Dominic began pushing Dan's soft silky hair back from his face as he had done on their first encounter. On that occasion Dan had felt Dominic was going to kiss him and he had almost yielded to it. He was now scared that this was going to happen again. Or was he more concerned that it wouldn't?



“You enchant me... a beautiful enchantress. I want to look after you, protect you, for the rest of your life. Isn't that strange that I feel this way when I barely know you?”

Dan lowered his long, mascara'd lashes, almost submissively. He felt unable to say anything or do anything. He felt his head been tilted up and he lifted his gaze to look back into those blue eyes. He could feel his lips quivering.

Dan was almost unable to function, to think properly. He tried to picture Jodie's face so as to pull himself out of the trance-like state he felt he was in, but her face was just blurry with no proper features.

Then Dan's eyes felt heavy and he closed them, feeling the breath of Dominic on his cheek. Dominic's face was close to his. He forced his eyes open again as he brought his hand to rest on the man's shoulder, whether as an intent to try push him away or to try stabilise himself on legs that now felt like Jell-o.

Dominic's hand slid under Dan's long hair and to the back of his head as he gently brought Dan closer to him. With lips still quivering in excitement, Dan felt Dominic's lips gently touch his own, his mouth parted slightly in submission.

Dan had never felt like this in his entire life, his lips felt like there was an electric current going through them, his whole body felt weak.

His and Dominic's lips began to roll together, a murmur escaped from Dan's mouth as he began to hold Dominic's shoulder more tightly, his other hand coming up in support.

His lips parted more, allowing Dominic's tongue to intrude and explore. He gripped Dominic's tongue with his teeth and gently bit down upon it before

gasping again in enjoyment. Then it was his own tongue invading Dominic's mouth and both their tongues now fenced for supremacy.

Dan was breathless by the time the kiss ended and he felt covered in goosebumps. His body was shaky, so shaky that he readily took Dominic's hand for support as the man led him towards the bar.

Dan had no idea what was happening to him but he was happy just to allow it to happen; he felt as though he had been swept off of his feet. He didn't even register that he had just been snogging with a man and that it was, in some ways, gay. But then Dan was not a man at this time and Dominic certainly wouldn't be viewing him as a man.

As they sat at the bar together, Dominic buying them both a drink, they made small talk. Dominic wanted to know about Phoebe. He loved her accent, accentuated with her soft sweet feminine voice. Dan told him how he had inherited a cottage nearby and that the people he was with were family.

Dominic said that he had been living in Europe for a number of years but he had come back to these parts to visit family himself. They talked so easily and relaxed together that Dan felt he could almost tell Dominic anything but decided it best not to say he was practicing witchcraft and that he was living with witches. He certainly didn't want to ruin the moment by saying he was really a man.

After their drink and talk, Dan made his way, almost giddily, back to the others as people were now starting to go home.

"You seem to be doing much better with that young man than you did last week, Phoebe," Harriet suggested cheerily.

“His name is Dominic. He lives in Sweden,” Dan replied.

“He’s a hunk,” Flick announced, “Are you going to see him again?”

“He has invited me to go with him to Manchester tomorrow for a day out. He said we can go shopping. He said if I will be his date for the Halloween Ball, which is on Monday, he will buy me a new dress for it,” Dan told the five who were all eager to listen.

“That’s so cool; I wish a good looking hunk would buy me a dress. So are you going to go with him tomorrow?” Connie asked excitedly.

“That’s up to Auntie,” Dan replied, turning to look at Harriet, “It may mean I will miss the church service.” Dan was unsure if he wanted to use missing the church service as an excuse to get out of the date, or whether he wanted her blessing to go.

“I’m sure the church will carry on just fine without you, if you want to go,” Harriet chuckled in acceptance.

Now there was no excuse not to go and, in a way, Dan was quite excited about going. Whether it was the potion than Harriet had given him earlier or if it was other forces working away, Dan felt different. He was just about to make his decision when Dominic joined them.

“I asked your lovely niece if she would accompany me out tomorrow. I am going to Manchester. I will look after her, I promise, if I have your permission to take her, Mrs. Pandyke,” Dominic asked. “I hope I am not being any way forward, we have been chatting together at the bar and she told me your name and that she was your niece,” he added to answer any possible questions.

“Yes, Dominic, I have already given my blessing, so long as you keep your word and look after my niece. She is very special to me,” Harriet said with a smile.

“I will. Forgive me, ladies, but I really do have to rush now. So I will come and pick you up at ten o’clock tomorrow,” he said as he turned to look at Dan.

Without taking their present company into consideration, Dominic leaned to Dan for a goodnight kiss. Dan brought his hands up to Dominic’s face to hold him and responded.

It was Dominic that broke away, smiling. “till tomorrow then, fair maiden.” Then, touching his head with his hand, he said, “Ladies, I bid you all good-night” to the others.

When Dan stopped to think what he had just done, he blushed furiously but all three younger witches danced about him happily.

All along the way home he tried working things out in his head as he walked in silence with the others talking about the evening. He had never been attracted to a man before. Sure he could admit if he thought a certain man was handsome, but never was he attracted to them, yet Dominic made him feel giddy.

He had kissed a man! Could that be regarded as cheating on Jodie? He had agreed to go out to a city the following day with him. Surely that did have to be regarded as going on a date! He had agreed to go out on a date with a man, as a woman! Never, when he left the States, could he have foreseen such events happening.

“Phoebe... Phoebe...” He heard the voice of Harriet. “I’ve been trying to talk to you. Are you with us, girl, or are you dreaming about your handsome man?”

“Oh! Sorry, Harriet, my mind was in other places,” he apologised.

“Yeah, you *were* thinking of being out with your man tomorrow, weren’t you, Phoebes?” Bridgette suggested, making the other two young witches giggle.

“Actually, I was more thinking about cancelling. I am a man, after all, and I am spoken for,” Dan remarked.

“So you keep on trying to say. But can you tell us how you propose to cancel your date? Do you have his number or any means of contacting him?” Pretoria asked.

“Just go along, Phoebe. You will have a lot of fun and it will only be a date if you want it to be,” Rosella added as they entered the grounds of their home.

Day 16 – Sunday 30th October

With Dan having now reached his full potential of power that had been dormant in him all of his life, there would be no early morning chanting or incantations; instead the main topic of the day was on Dan and his ‘date’.

“He seems like such a nice man, Phoebe. You are very lucky to have someone like him interested in you. You should go for it,” Rosella suggested as she brushed through Dan’s long silky hair.

“I’ll help with your makeup, you need to be perfect today.” Connie offered, “You may be a Level Five witch now and much more powerful than me, but re-

member, when you are chasing a man, the only power you need is the power of seduction.”

“And the only wand you need is a mascara wand,” Flick added, laughing.

Dan placed the cup down that he had been drinking from. He wasn’t aware of it but it was another mix of feminising and love potions mixed together from Harriet.

“I don’t know what to wear. I don’t want anything too girly or over-th- top.” Dan responded. He had butterflies in his stomach and was feeling edgy. “What time is it now? What time did he say he was coming?”

“We have plenty of time. It’s only quarter past nine and he’s coming at ten. After getting you ready, lady, we have to get ourselves ready for church at twelve,” Harriet playfully scolded.

For late October it was a sunny day outside and the clothes the young witches chose for him reflected that.

He had a low-cut black top with three-quarter sleeves and black hot pants with a black cardigan. The hot pants showed a good deal of his long shapely legs that were even more emphasised with a pair of three and a half-inch heeled black shoes with a peep toe and ankle strap.

His makeup was light for daytime wear with a pale shadow and mascara for his long lashes, a pale red lipstick and his finger and toe nails were varnished red. He had large silver hoops threaded into his ears and his hair was brushed back and tied in a ponytail.

“Do I look okay?” Dan asked nervously.

“You look fantastic and those legs of yours are to die for.”

Dan realised just how much leg he was actually showing... just as Bridgette shouted out that Dominic had arrived.

Now the butterflies were really fluttering and Dan repeatedly questioned himself about just what he was doing going out on a date with a man, to a big city he had never been to.

Dominic had arrived in style, in a gleaming black Bentley. Coming to the door, he took Dan’s hand to lead him to the car and open the door for him. With a wave to the watching six, they were off. It was too late to turn back now.

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Once his nervousness eased and Harriet’s potion had kicked in, Dan really started to enjoy himself. The city centre of Manchester was bustling with people and so he didn’t feel exposed as he did when in the village.

They looked around a few stores, then went to a museum before having lunch in a restaurant. In the afternoon, it was all shopping. As a guy, Dan usually hated clothes shopping with Jodie. Dominic was more than happy to, though, and helped by making suggestions.

As they walked through several malls, hand in hand, Dan was actually beaming. He was happy and enjoying himself, he had a handsome man at his side and felt proud of that fact each time he noticed girls giving Dominic a second glance. He felt like saying,

“He’s mine! Look, we are holding hands. We are together.”

Dan even wondered if he could allow himself to stay in England. If this thing with Dominic was serious, having him as a boyfriend. Was that even a possibility? He had grown close to the witches again now that he was aware of all the truths. He could help to heal so many things in the world. Maybe Dominic would even accept him as being a witch, if he knew? And Dominic was certainly a catch... so handsome and such a gentleman. Was being female so bad? In fact, it was fun and it felt good.

Dan had a spring in his step as they walked through a mall later that day. He and Dominic constantly chatted. They seemed to have much in common as Dominic revealed so many things that he liked that Dan also liked.

They were set to leave the mall and walk out onto the main street when Dan’s expression changed. “Let’s go this way,” he suggested and pulled at Dominic’s hand.

“What’s wrong Phoebe?” Dominic asked, sensing something.

Dan replied that there was nothing wrong but, standing at the entrance were Stewart, Ben, and Adam.

In spite of veering off in the opposite direction, Dan saw the three men on two more occasions, always standing watching them. “They’re following us,” Dan cursed under his breath.

“What? Who’s following us?” Dominic asked. He could see that Dan seemed distressed and he suggested that they went into a bar for a drink while Dan calmed down and told him what was happening.

As he sipped on a glass of wine, for some reason, Dan decided to open up to the man he was with. Dominic seemed nice enough and the worse thing that could happen would be for him to drive them straight back to Pendlebury and dump him.

“Do you believe in witches?” he asked straight out.

“I beg your pardon. Do I what?”

“Do you believe in witches? Yes or No? Don’t laugh, but I am a witch... apparently. I didn’t know until I came to this country, but I have witch blood in me.”

Dominic’s face remained set and he listened without smiling or disbelief.

“My family were persecuted by local villagers centuries ago. They tried to eradicate witched by cutting their heads off or burning them to death but there are still a very few witches about, as well as some villagers, relations of those who hunted them down, still around and meaning us harm. There are three men following us. They say they are white witches but they hate my family and have tried to turn me against them.”

Dominic took Dan’s hands and held them comfortingly.

“You do believe me, don’t you?” Dan asked.

“I believe anything you say. If you see them again, let me know. I said I wanted to protect you, and I will.”

After their drink the two, still hand-in-hand, went looking for clothes for the following day’s Halloween Ball.

“You don’t intend going dressed as a witch, do you?” Dominic laughed.

Dan pulled a face. “No, I intend going looking super nice. You are coming, aren’t you?”

“Wild horses would not prevent me, dear lady,” Dominic answered.

Not only did Dominic buy a new dress for the night, he bought several dresses and several pairs of shoes to go with them, plus costume jewellery and lingerie.

They were carrying two bags each as they walked back to where Dominic had parked his car when Dan stopped. “Those three men, over there. Those are the ones I mentioned were following us.”

Dominic looked across the road. “Those three? You stay here; I’ll go have a word.”

“Oh! Be careful Dominic; don’t get hurt, there are three of them,” Dan shouted after him.

Dominic waited for the traffic to clear and then jogged across the road to confront the three men. There were raised voices, shrugged shoulders and looks of denial from the three white witches before Dominic returned after three or four minutes back to the waiting Dan.

“What did you say to them?” Dan asked anxiously.

“I warned them to stop following you and harassing you or they would have me to deal with,” Dominic replied with a serious expression as he placed his hands to the side of Dan’s face. He then returned to smiling.

“So, you should have no further trouble with them. Now, let’s get you back home so that your Auntie doesn’t turn me into a mouse.”

Dan didn’t quite know how to take the remark. Was he just making a lighthearted joke or was he poking fun and really didn’t believe the witch’s story? He felt like bringing it up again along the drive home, but then decided against it. At least the fact he was a witch had been mentioned now, whether Dominic believed it or not.

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Dan had to recount all that had happened on his date practically as soon as he was inside, with Flick and Connie grabbing a hand each and ushering him to an armchair and settling themselves alongside. Everyone but Pretoria sat around to listen to the tale, and even she stood nearby to hear how things had gone on.

Harriet, more than anyone, seemed to take everything in and she smiled widely when Dan spoke about the three men who had followed them and how Dominic had gone over to remonstrate with them.

“That Stewart has been causing us trouble for a long time,” Flick told Dan crossly.

“Well I think that Dominic shook him up quite a bit,” Dan hinted with a smile.

“We should have done away with him long ago. He has been poisoning Phoebe’s mind.” Pretoria said coldly to the three girls who knew nothing about his encounters with Dan.

“Perhaps ‘doing away’ with someone is a bit too harsh. It makes us no better than those villagers who persecuted us,” Dan spoke out.

“You say ‘us’, Phoebe and you are right to say ‘us’ as you are as much a part of this coven, this family, as any of us,” Harriet then voiced. “Has meeting Dominic changed your mind in any way about leaving us after we have completed our business? Would you be willing to remain here and be a part of our coven?”

“Oh yes, Phobes... you must. I’m sure Dominic is interested in you enough, you could both live in the cottage together and we can still see you every day... you’d be our sister,” Connie suggested in excitement.

Dan blushed. “I don’t know, it’s too soon to say, I’m not even supposed to be dating men and I still feel a bit funny about it. I didn’t want to be female and I wanted to return to being a male, I was so keen to do so... AND I have a girlfriend.”

Harriet didn’t press her question any further, she had got her answer. Dan had not said No, he had said he didn’t know and he had said he *had* wanted to return to being male, not that he did want currently.

She had succeeded in bringing out the witch power that was in him and with a few more potions she felt sure she would keep Phoebe forever. Indeed, if the following evening was a success, there would be no way of Dan going back to being male, and, as such, no point in returning to the States where he would no longer be recognised.

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Day 17 – Monday 31st October : **HALLOWEEN**

The following morning Harriet met with Pretoria and Rosella down in the cellar whilst Dan slept in.

“Today is the day we have waited for. The signs are all looking good, ladies. At twelve midday we shall attempt to resurrect Griselda’s spirit from its long slumber and bring her into the world. Only in spirit will she return to us until we have the true force of four.

“Tonight my hope is for Phoebe to find herself. Remember we must obey the laws of magic. We have done all that we can to ready her... only she can give herself. She must willingly take a man as a woman and she must utter the words ‘I want you,’ ‘I need you,’ ‘I love you.’”

“What if she doesn’t?” Pretoria asked.

“Then we cannot fully resurrect Griselda, she will remain just a spirit amongst us, unable to use her former powers. Although Phoebe has reached her level in the form of a woman, she is only in that state as long as the spell lasts. Only by surrendering herself to a man and uttering those words will that magic be permanent and she will then, forever, be a woman.

“By her becoming a woman permanently we will have the full force of four which will give us the strength to cast Griselda into a host body. We are fortunate that my son has now returned to us and that we have ourselves a sacrifice. Soon we can undo the wrong that was done to us. Finally, we shall get our

REVENGE!” Harriet’s eyes grew cold and the tone of her voice was icy as she spoke.

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At eleven-thirty the witches and the young witches gathered down in the cellars. Dan was edgy as he was being told they were going to raise a powerful witch from ancient times. It was frightening to think of raising someone from the dead, especially something very powerful.

He chewed nervously on a necklace that he was wearing as Pretoria and Rosella set up candles and placed jars around the already bubbling cauldron.

“Will she harm us?” he asked Harriet

“No dear... she is very powerful but she is here to join us and enforce our powers, not jeopardise them,” Harriet answered, “I have been able to communicate with her and she is ready.

And so the witches began their incantations and danced around the cauldron as the three younger witches chanted. Occasionally things would be thrown into the bubbling cauldron and huge puffs of different coloured smoke would rise into the air.

Rosella, Pretoria and Dan all linked hands and began chanting “Bring her” over and over again as Harriet called to the spirit world.

“Bring the one who was cast and slain; bring the one to this world again.

To correct the wrongs that were done to us, bring Griselda to join with us.

We summon you, oh mighty one, come to us and be with us.”

Plumes of grey smoke rose from the cauldron and there was a flicker of blue light strobing the darkened cellar. Dan’s chanting began to falter as he saw an image materialising. It wasn’t the kind of thing that he’d expected but the image started to become clear enough to see a bedraggled, aged woman with rotting teeth tied to a post with flames licking around her.

Dan was looking upon a scene from many centuries ago, a scene when Griselda was being burned at the stake.

Her head turned to look at the four witches and then a slender and wrinkled arm with long, broken and blackened nails pointed over in the direction of the three younger witches.

Suddenly there was a blinding flash of light that made everyone shield their eyes and then nothing more. Bubbling oil was spilling over the top of the cauldron as the smoke died down and wafted away.

“What’s happened?” Rosella asked, startled.

Harriet was smiling. “Griselda has entered this world in her spirit form, she is now amongst us.”

“Why was she pointing at me?” Felicity asked, actually sounding frightened.

“Why is she only in spirit form?” Connie then inquired.

Ignoring the first question, Harriet answered the second. “We are not yet powerful enough to do more than raise her in spirit form... but she is here. And she will soon be given a host body to live in.”

“Why were we not powerful enough? Wouldn’t we have had more power had we waited until midnight when magic is at its highest point of the year?” Bridgette spoke again.

“We were not yet ready and we need that powerful magic of midnight to perform something else this evening, something which will then make us ready and tie in with everything, giving us the power we need to place Griselda in the host. Trust me, dears, everything is in hand, this has been successful,” Harriet replied in a satisfied tone.

Dan felt very shaken by the ordeal and by what he had just witnessed. He wasn’t taking in much of what was being said and just wished that Dominic was there to comfort him.

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A little later, Dan said he wanted to go out and take some air; he still couldn’t get the image of that witch, tied on a stake, materialising from the smoking cauldron, out of his mind. He certainly hoped never to meet Griselda, she looked gruesome.

“Don’t forget it’s the Halloween ball tonight, it should be special and everyone I know is going... including that nice man of yours,” Harriet reminded, “You need time to get ready.

Dan nodded his understanding and went up to his room to change clothes, pulling on a black sweater, a pair of blue jeans, heeled ankle boots and the leather jacket he had worn the time he had gone to see Bernadette’s grave... he had no intention of going back there again, however.

Walking down towards the village, Dan cut off the track to follow a public bridleway on the right which led to a small copse. There he paused and tried to think about all that was going on, everything still seemed like a crazy dream to him.

So much had happened in just eighteen days since he had got on the plane to travel to the UK. He had been turned into a female and was learning witchcraft, he had dated and kissed a man and now he was joining in with some necromanical ritual to bring some long dead witch back into the world.

Dan hugged a thick tree branch for comfort as he idly watched a pair of squirrels chasing each other. What had he got himself into? He would be relieved when, in a couple of days or so, he could put everything behind him.

He was startled from his thoughts as he felt his cell phone vibrating in the shoulder purse he was carrying... he still carried the phone with him even though he hadn't been able to use it in a long while.

Text messages! he had text messages! Eagerly looking, he saw he had forty-two texts come through, mostly from Jodie, but he was disheartened when he found that most of them were blank and had no messages attached.

He did find one from his Dad, suggesting that they meet for a drink and to catch up on things. Another was from a friend, William, asking how a business plan was going. Inspired by actually having a couple of messages, Dan continued to look through them all. Finally... a message from Jodie from ten days ago; sent on Saturday 22nd October. The message was incomplete.

Hey silent one. What happened to texting each other each day? I've been trying to phone you but you aren't answering. I have some really exciting news; you're going to...

Dan cursed that the message had cut short. What exciting news? Had she won a large modelling contract and he was going to be thrilled for her? It certainly wasn't anything bad.

Dan smiled. He had been wrestling with himself on what he should do after the witches were done with whatever they had to do... would he stay living with the witches, as a female and continue seeing Dominic or would he become male again, returning to the States and to Jodie?

The answer had always been simple. He was a man, not a woman... a heterosexual man... he shouldn't even be considering dating another man... he loved Jodie.

Just then he heard the crack of branches from behind and turned to see Stewart approaching, again!

Since turning into a woman Dan had lost much of his machismo, he wasn't as confrontational now as he had been as a male, but now he felt his temper boiling.

"What do you want? Weren't you warned yesterday to stay the fuck away from me?" he said as aggressively as his feminine voice allowed.

"It's vital that I talk with you, make you believe me, make you see sense," Stewart responded.

"You mean try to get me to swallow more of your lies?"

Stewart stayed where he was, not approaching any further. “Look, we know that you have raised a spirit this morning... we tried to warn you against it yesterday... she is evil, do not give her embodiment. They are using you and you are playing a dangerous game, do not return to the house... without you, they cannot continue.”

Dan laughed. “Don’t return to the house? Are you for real? Are you kidding me? If I don’t go back there, if I don’t do what needs to be done, how the hell am I ever going to return to being male? Being me again?”

“I don’t know, I don’t have the answer for that but you do need to walk away,” Stewart continued.

“What you need to do, buster, is walk away from me, or do I have to tell Dominic that you are still harassing me so that he kicks your butt?”

“Regarding Dominic... we believe he may be the son of Harriet, it’s hard to say as her son is a powerful warlock and has had the ability, over the centuries, to veil himself. Nobody really knows his name or what he looks like.”

Dan laughed out loud again, mockingly. “Really? Is that all you have? First you try turning me against Harriet and the witches who have been nothing but kind to me, now you are trying to alienate me with Dominic... trying to tell me he is Harriet’s son and a powerful warlock... yet you do not know what Harriet’s son looks like, or even his name! You are pathetic! Get a life and leave me the fuck alone.” With that, Dan turned and began walking angrily away.

“I am not lying, DAN, they are controlling your mind... you’ll see,” Stewart shouted after him.

The encounter had annoyed Dan and he felt it best not to say anything when he returned home, however

Harriet was quick to sense something had happened whilst he had been outside.

“Come along, Phoebe, it’s time to start getting you ready for the ball, Constance is wanting to do your hair and Felicity is insisting on doing your makeup, and before any of that Rosella is going to prepare you a foaming, perfumed bath.”

“Why all the extra fuss? I haven’t had any of that before,” Dan asked.

“Well, you will be meeting Dominic tonight and all of us just want you to look enchanting for him.”

“I think it best that I don’t associate with him tonight, Auntie/ I have thought about it and after you have done with me, I would like to return to being myself please, and go back home... to Jodie.”

For an instant Harriet’s face showed disappointment but she quickly masked it. “You know best, dear. I still think you should make an effort for tonight... more so if the days of your being one of us girls is numbered, enjoy the experience whilst you can.”

Dan did enjoy his bubble bath and as he looked down at his body emerging out of the foaming water, it dawned on him how fast he had become used to the body of a woman. In fact, he found it hard to imagine himself back to having a broad hairy chest or having his cock and balls back between his legs.

Once he was dried off, the younger ones wasted no time in making him look extra glamorous.

Dan’s long hair was gathered and pinned up on top of his head so that his face was clear for Felicity to start doing her work; she loved applying makeup. She tweezed Dan’s eyebrows, put on concealer and

foundation, then began applying dark eyeshadow heavily over his eyelids and taking time to draw around the rims and lower lashes with a dark kohl pencil.

Flick drew out the dark eyeshadow to make the eyes look larger and more dramatic and then began lining his lips with a lip pencil before filling in colour with a brush. Then she returned to the eyes, coating three layers of mascara on Dan's already long, thick lashes. Putting on powder and blush, she then used a large brush to sweep across everything and touched up where she felt it was needed. Finally she used a curler to curl Dan's lashes.

Everyone praised Flick for doing such a good job, then Connie took over brushing Dan's hair out and using lots of spray to give it volume.

Once Dan's hair was styled, Flick returned with her brushes to add a lipgloss to Dan's lips. Of course Dan thought it all quite boring and a waste of time and effort... who cared how he looked?

Dan then perched himself on top of one of the kitchen worktops as the others started getting ready themselves. As far as he was concerned he was all ready, he was wearing the dress that Dominic had bought for him and only had his shoes to put on.

He munched on a slice of cake that Harriet had baked the day before, oblivious to the fact that it contained the same ingredients Harriet had been putting in his drinks for the last few days.

He realised he was not fully ready when Flick and Connie returned to him saying they had some special underwear which turned out to be a black corset with garters and a pair of sheer black stockings. Con-

stance aided in attaching the stocking tops to the garter buttons.

Dan had only worn hosiery once previously, a pair of black opaque tights when he had gone clothes shopping with Harriet. He hadn't been overly happy wearing them then; stockings were a different thing altogether and much finer and silkier. And yet he didn't protest about trying them on at all, or the silk and lace black panties to go with everything. Thanks to Harriet's cake, he was now quite eager to try everything

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All of the witches had made an effort in their appearance. Harriet and Pretoria had gone for long, elegant black gowns and shawls. Rosella, whom Dan had always thought the most beautiful and sexy of the witches, looked stunning in a lacy black, knee-length dress which was sleeveless and plunging to show a lot of cleavage from her large breasts.

Connie had thought it fun to actually go dressed as a witch. Rather than conventional, her dress was a modern day costume fancy dress and fell to mid-thigh showing off her long shapely legs adorned in black pantyhose. Bridgette wore a lacy red dress to go with her flame red hair whilst Felicity just had modern day wear, a simple black shift dress with pink shoulders and a pink sash which she wore with black fishnet tights and black high-heeled ankle boots.

As the seven of them took their usual walk down to the village, youngsters were walking or running everywhere about them in a variety of spooky or ghoulish costumes as they either went to parties themselves or walked around trick-or-treating.

The three younger witches were talking excitedly and giggling. Harriet was in some conversation with Pretoria and Rosella and Dan were discussing whether Dominic would show up. If he did, would it be wrong to be with him? Dan was near the end of his time as a girl... maybe, just one experience making love to a man as a girl. Would that be cheating on Jodie? Not really because he wasn't really Dan now.

The Village hall had been decorated out since Saturday with all kinds of Halloween trimmings: Spiders and cobwebs, Witches, Ghosts and spirits, monsters of every kind. The Witches were portrayed in the usual fictitious description of having long grey straw-like hair, long beaky noses and wearing long black dresses and a large black pointed cap. Fictional characteristics and yet, Dan thought that the image he had seen of Griselda wasn't far off the mark.

Tables had been laid out around the perimeter of the large room so that all guests had a seat and Dan wandered around looking at the name plates whilst the rest of his party were buying drinks. His name was there, under Phoebe Chatterton, of course, along with the names of the other six.

He screwed his face when he saw the names of Stewart Forsythe and Adam Millington but he couldn't disguise a smile when he saw a plate with the name Dominic... it bore no surname but then, Dan didn't even know Dominic's surname.

As they began taking their seats and gathering food from an open buffet, just about all of the 150 guests had arrived. Dan kept his eye across the room to where Dominic would be seated but he had not yet come. Neither had Stewart or Adam.

Music played as everyone ate and drank. Dan got into conversation with Flick and Bridgette and when

he next looked across the room, there was Dominic, looking dashing in a black tuxedo, silver embroidered vest and a bow tie. Dominic was looking across and smiling.

“Your man is here,” Harriet needlessly informed.

“Yes, I know. I’ve seen him,” Dan responded, curling a lock of his hair around his finger and not even thinking of challenging her words that ‘his’ man was there.

Stewart and Adam never turned up, it seemed that they had finally been warned off and would not spoil the night.

For the next hour whilst everyone ate, drank and socialised, Dan constantly made eye contact with Dominic. At one time he was playing with and pulling at strands of his hair whilst smiling across at the man, not realising how feminine and flirtatious his actions were.

“I thought you said that you weren’t going to associate with him tonight?” Felicity questioned, breaking him from his eye contact.

“Well I’m not, I’m sat over here, aren’t I, and he is over there,” Dan contested.

“Tell that to your body language, you’ve been flirting with him across the room for the past twenty minutes,” Flick laughed.

Dan was shocked at the revelation. “No, I’m not,” he tried protesting. “I may have smiled at him. I mean, after all, we are friends.”

Everyone in his group laughed, knowing better whilst Dan just blushed.

With all the guests dined and food and plates cleared away by staff, the music changed its tempo and people started to make to the dance floor, Flick, Constance and Bridgette amongst them.

A man whom Rosella knew approached and asked her to dance and Harriet and Pretoria were in some deep conversation. Dominic constantly made gestures across the room, making Dan laugh. He nodded towards the dance floor suggesting they dance and Dan slowly shook his head, making Dominic pout which had Dan laughing again.

Dan looked around the room at everyone enjoying themselves, about half were in Halloween costume and some of them in masquerade masks. He felt happy and light-hearted at that point of time.

Dominic didn't know what to do, whether to go across and sit with Phoebe, try again to encourage her to dance or stay put and let her make the moves. She was laughing at him so she hadn't fallen out with him for any reason but he didn't want to rush anything with her; there had to be a reason for her staying where she was.

Dan was actually aching for Dominic to come across and sit with him but he felt conflicted in his heart about what he should or shouldn't be doing, what was right and what was wrong.

In spite of talking to Pretoria, Harriet was monitoring what was happening between her young sex-changed witch and the man across the room.

Like Felicity, she had seen the flirtatious gestures from Phoebe and had been both surprised and happy to have seen them, but even she hadn't been prepared for what she witnessed from Dan next.

Looking across to Dominic, Dan raised his right hand, slowly opened his mouth and even more slowly placed his thumb inside and sucked upon it suggestively, before pulling it back out. All the time 'she' was keeping eye contact with Dominic.

Even Dan himself wasn't really aware he was doing such a thing; he had never in his life, even as a man; made such lewd of flirtatious suggestions like that; it wasn't in his character.

But he knew, burning inside of him, he wanted Dominic and he mouthed the words across the room to him. "I want you."

Dominic responded, mouthing the words back. "I want you too."

For the next ten minutes Dan sat in silence, feeling a sensation between his legs he had never experienced before, there was a yearning in his body. Finally Dominic made the move and came across the room as slow dance music began to play.

"Could I join you at this table, ma'am?" Dominic asked Harriet politely. Having received consent with a smile from her, Dominic took a seat next to Dan.

"I was concerned I may have offended you somehow, my darling," he suggested as he sat looking into Dan's face.

"And why would that be?" Dan replied, holding back a coy smile.

"When I first came in, I just had a feeling that you would sooner avoid me," Dominic answered truthfully.

Dan took a sip of his wine and then smiled. "After such a lovely day out yesterday?"

“Well, when I dropped you off, you seemed a bit different with me and I wondered if you had taken my joke about your aunt turning me into a mouse the wrong way. I didn’t mean ill by it and I most humbly apologise if I offended you.”

Dan then had to laugh. “No, you didn’t offend me, Dominic,” he assured.

“Well then... may I?” Dominic asked, offering his hand out for Dan to take. Dan felt almost weak as he took the hand and rose from his chair to be led onto the dance floor.

Dominic slid his arm around his dance partner. “I have been so eager for this moment ever since I arrived and looked across to see how stunning you are this evening... truly a vision of beauty.”

Dan blushed. “Am I? Thank you. You look very manly and handsome this evening, too,” he replied in a small coy voice.

Dominic looked deep into his eyes, almost like he was penetrating his very soul. Dan felt his body trembling, his heart pulsating and his lips starting to quiver as Dominic leaned in and placed his lips softly to his own, gently sucking in. He couldn’t help but respond.

Breaking away, Dominic again looked at his dance partner. “You said that you wanted me... *do* you want me?” he asked almost in a whisper.

His heart still racing, hardly able to think clearly, Dan looked back into those piercing blue eyes.

“Yes... Yes, I want you. I... I need you,” Dan found himself replying.

Dominic's mouth closed upon Dan's once more in a lustful kiss. Time seemed to stand still. The Halloween party just faded away and it was as though just they were standing, alone, as they kissed passionately.

It was Dominic who broke the kiss again.

"You told me that you have a cottage which you inherited from some Aunt or other... Could we go there, together, tonight?"

Dan began to realise just what he was allowing to happen, that Dominic was wanting to go some place where they could make love, but he had no desire in trying to stop it. He wanted it to happen.

"I have keys... but they are at Auntie's house. Why go there, though?"

"Because I want to make passionate love to you all night long, and I would rather not be disturbed by an house full of drunken women returning after the party, and maybe wanting to pry at what we are doing."

"I would have to ask Auntie for the keys to get into her house... I hope she doesn't mind, or try lecturing me," Dan replied, feeling excitement.

Breaking away and leaving Dominic standing on the dance floor, Dan tripped over on his high heels to where he had been sitting. Harriet didn't seem concerned at all and told him to go enjoy himself, but be careful.

Rosella, who had returned from her own dance and had been watching the two in their embrace, gave Dan her own set of keys.

Dan thanked them all with the smile of an excited schoolgirl going off with her first crush and promising to be home bright and early the following day.

It was twenty past eleven as the two hurriedly left the party, holding hands, as they made their way over to Dominic's Bentley.

Once they were at Harriet's, Dan opened the car door and ran towards the house, unlocked the front door and made his way up to his room and to where the keys to the cottage were. He was back inside the car within four minutes and they then drove down to Dan's inherited cottage.

"Please don't mind the mess; I'm still midway through cleaning and clearing," Dan apologised as he led his man to the front door. Before they went inside, Dominic grasped Dan's arm and pulled him in, kissing him deeply. "Are you sure about this, darling?" he asked.

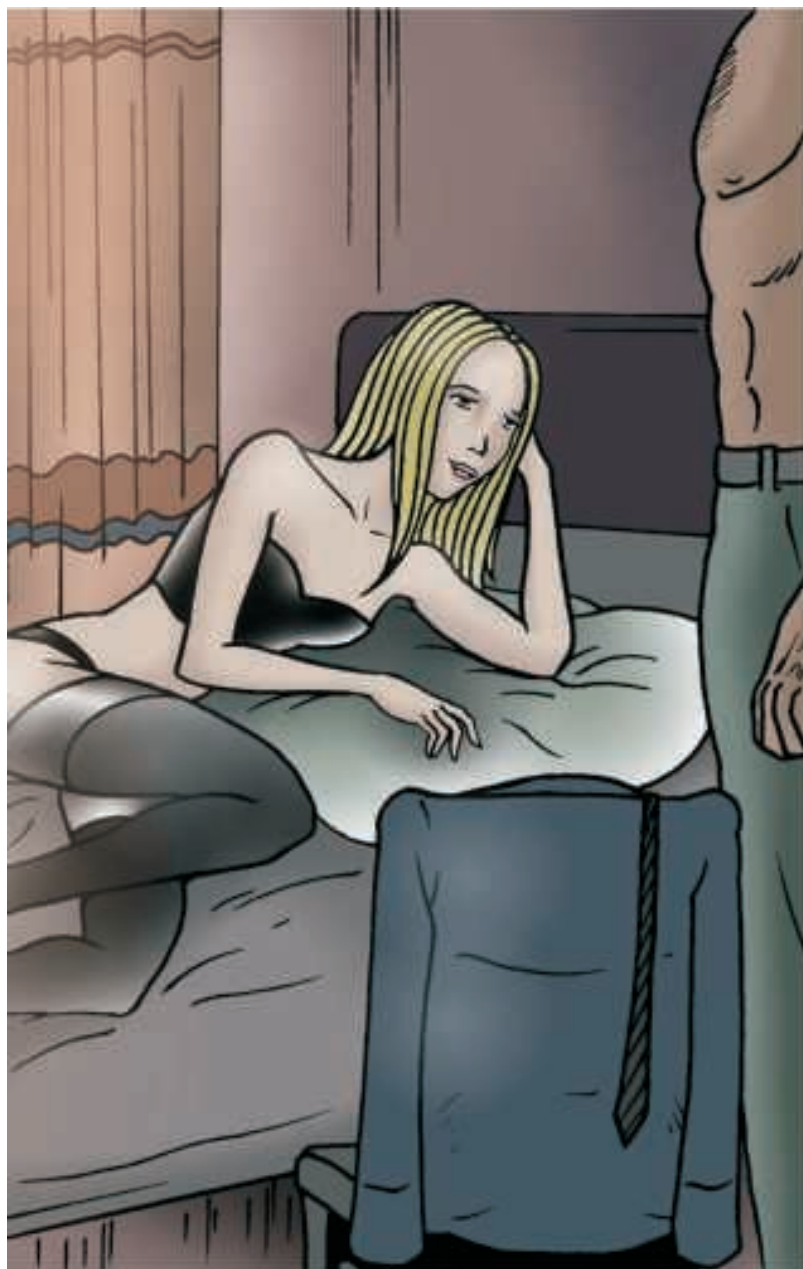
Dan just nodded with a smile and a gleam in his eye.

"Find yourself a seat while I go and make up the bed. I'll give you a call when I am ready," he offered before tripping off upstairs.

Dominic did as commanded and chose the threadbare armchair over the rocker. It seemed ages before he finally got the call.

"I'm ready, you can come up now."

Dominic made his way upstairs and opened the door to the bedroom. There perched over the top of the bed, propped up on his right arm was Dan, wearing just his black corset panties and stockings.



Dominic's eyes never left the sexy image as he removed his jacket and unfastened his vest, putting both onto a chair. He fumbled to untie his bow and then took off his shirt, revealing a manly chest. Finally he opened his pants and let them drop to the floor.

Dan was nervous as he watched the action, this was going to be something entirely new to him, but he could not resist it, he wanted it so much.

Dominic climbed up to join him on top of the bed and then took him in his arms, kissing him deeply.

If Dan had any doubt or concern over what he was allowing himself to do, it was lost in the moment as he felt his body ready to receive Dominic. He was going to let a man make love to him, insert himself into his body. Somewhere in his thoughts he wondered what it would be like. Would it hurt? Would he enjoy it?

Dominic was still smothering him with kisses and feeling his breasts through the corset. It felt wonderful and Dan brought his hand free and fumbled to pull his right breast over the top of the corset cup. Dominic immediately seized the opportunity by lowering his head to suck and bite on the nipple, making Dan groan with delight.

Dan's whole body was trembling with desire but he needed to speed things up so that he didn't get cold feet. In his mind he was still agonising over the thought of having a man's erect penis inside him.

His free hand now wandered down to Dominic's hip and to the top of his boxers, working the hand under the elastic top and down to his groin where he felt the erect penis. It felt huge, and so hard!

Freeing his other arm, Dan now used both hands to try and tug Dominic's boxers down. It had to be now before his nerve gave in.

Dominic laughed, gave the nipple a playful kiss, then helped free himself from his boxers, casting them to the side of the bed.

Dan could now feel Dominic's penis resting against his thigh and he paused to look up into his face, trying to make sure he really wanted to do this. Briefly he was aware of rain lashing against the bedroom window outside.

"You are so beautiful. I love you," Dominic almost whispered in a lustful voice.

Dan gazed into Dominic's eyes. "... I love you, too," he almost whispered before Dominic sealed his mouth with his lips again as he adjusted his body, ready to mount his lover. With one tug, he tore Dan's panties from his body and they fell to the floor besides the boxers.

From years of being a mature male, Dan knew what he needed to do and he took hold of Dominic's cock... he was holding another man's stiff erection... then helped to guide it to his slit, opening his legs wide and lifting his groin upwards.

He could feel Dominic's penis now resting between his pussy lips... he was self-lubricated from desire and he pushed himself against it to slowly feel it sliding inside.

At the moment when Dominic pushed to fully insert himself, there was a crash of thunder outside and the bedroom lit slightly with a lightning flash. Dan moaned with desire, the feeling was incredible. He was experiencing making love to a man, as a woman. Almost without thinking, he brought his legs

up to hook them around Dominic, in a subconscious act of preventing him from slipping back out or pulling more tightly in.

As they continued to make passionate love, the rain persistently pounded against the window and there was a deep boom of thunder that rent the air, followed shortly after by lightning that forked downwards in a blue flash, strobing the darkness of the bedroom. Dan was oblivious to what was happening outside as he kissed Dominic passionately and his hands stroked over the man's body.

Not so oblivious to the weather was Harriet who knew that something was about to happen as she looked outside the door of the village Hall whilst people outside ran for shelter from the downpour..

Back at the cottage, Dan and Dominic's lovemaking was becoming heavier and more passionate as lightning again illuminated the bedroom and the rain fell even harder.

Thunder clouds rolled over the entire village whilst, indoors, without even being aware of it, Dan's body had become shrouded in a vale of translucent blue light. Je was only aware of its warmth on his skin.

Right on the stroke of midnight the village church's bells began to chime and another huge crack of thunder rent the air just as Dominic began pumping his seed into Phoebe's body. The spell had completed its cycle and as she moaned in pleasure. Phoebe was totally unaware that her body was now and forever permanently female.

It was the most satisfying sex Dan had ever experienced... making love to a man as a woman was awesome. After Dominic had dismounted, Phoebe just

cuddled up, resting her head on his shoulder and soon fell into a contented sleep.

Only a very strong magic now could ever break that spell, a strong magic that would have to be conjured up by ancient high witches who, themselves, could only ever be raised by Griselda and Harriet... if they wanted to.

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Day 18 – Tuesday 1st November 2016

Phoebe woke the following morning feeling like she was on top of the world. She felt different this morning, more alive and vibrant than she had felt in a long while. She wondered if it was an aftermath of the great sex she'd had the night before.

She grabbed a silk wrap to cover her naked body, then yawned and stretched contentedly with a smile on her face as she revisited the night before in her mind.

Dominic was not in the bedroom but that didn't concern her as she could hear movement downstairs.

Walking to her dressing table, she began pulling a brush through her tangled hair and then her nostrils were assailed by the delicious smell of frying bacon.

Tripping downstairs, barefoot in her wrap, she saw Dominic at the kitchen stove cooking breakfast.

“Morning lover, did you sleep well?” Dominic asked.

“Mmm... Very well, thank you. Hey! Where did all this stuff come from?” she then asked, knowing she

didn't have anything in the cottage because of living at Harriet's.

"Oh, I got up early, drove down to the village and went to the convenience store; I thought you may be hungry."

Phoebe walked up to Dominic and put her arms around him. "You figured right, I'm ravenous," she told him, stealing a kiss.

The two of them sat down to bacon and eggs, and coffee, as they discussed the events of the night before. Dominic wanted to know if she had any regrets and she shook her head without speaking. No.

"What are your plans for today?" Dominic then asked.

"I don't know... I'm not sure if Auntie Harriet has anything planned," she answered truthfully as she really didn't know if it was today that they intended to do the other thing with Griselda. "I'd have to ask."

Dominic looked through the kitchen window. "In spite of the downpour last night, it's looking like a nice day again, how about so long as your auntie doesn't want you for anything, that we spend the day at the seaside?" he suggested.

That actually sounded nice to Phoebe. "The seaside... that would be lovely. What seaside are you thinking of?"

"Well the best and closest one around here is Blackpool."

"Blackpool, I haven't heard of that. I've heard of Bournemouth and Brighton. Are they anywhere around here?"

Dominic laughed. “No, they are right down on the South coast. Blackpool is famous for its promenades, Pleasure Beach, amusements and especially its tower... Blackpool tower is like a smaller replica of the Eiffel tower in Paris.”

Dominic sold the idea easily to Phoebe but first they had to let Harriet know.

Harriet was, in fact, delighted, when Phoebe came in forty-five minutes later. “It is fine, sweetheart. We were all out celebrating last night and we need full strength in order to do what we need to do to bring back Griselda into a host body. I think some of us may have exerted more energy than others,” she added, knowingly.

As she spoke she looked at and into Phoebe. She knew without doubt that the person before her was now entirely female with no way back. As well as anything else, it would increase the powers that Phoebe now had.

“Thank You, Harriet. Dominic is waiting outside in the car. I’ll just change out of last night’s clothing,” Phoebe gushed, giving Harriet a kiss on the cheek, then rushing to the door to signal to Dominic that she had consent, then up to her room to change.

She quickly shed what she was wearing, her dress, bra, panties and shoes and put on a fresh bra and panties, black pantyhose and a black top with a short black leather skirt. To go with it all she wore black, lace-up ankle boots with sturdy three-inch heels. She realised that everything she had on was black but, she rather liked herself in black.

She then freshened up her makeup, finishing with a bright red lipstick, then returned down the stairs to

say bye to everyone before going off to the coastal resort with Dominic.

The day remained sunny and warm even though there was a chill coming off the Atlantic, but the pair were most often inside... going into amusement arcades, theme places and on rides in the pleasure beach, including the Pepsi Max roller coaster ride.

Dominic took lots of photographs of Phoebe and a passer-by used Dominic's camera to photograph both of them, cuddling up together.

The one thing which Phoebe did not enjoy though was a theme attraction called the Blackpool Dungeons which was based underneath the tower.

The show contained lots of actors portraying people and scenes from sinister Lancastrian people that also included the witches that she now knew so much about; portraying them in an evil light. At the very end of the show, visitors stood on a gallows as though they were witches, with nooses and a drop ride made as though they were being hung. It gave Phoebe a chilling insight as to what those Sixteenth Century witches had been put through. Dominic seemed to enjoy it though.

They then went into a seafront bar to eat and later took their shoes off to walk arm-in-arm across the beach. All in all it had been another enjoyable as well as romantic day out with Dominic

It was dark as they drove back to Pendlebury and Dominic suggested calling in at the cottage again before driving Phoebe back to the house. Phoebe was easily persuaded as she was eager to experience being fucked by her man again; the night before had been mind-blowing

As soon as they had reached the cottage and gone indoors, Phoebe threw her arms around Dominic's neck and kissed him passionately. "Mmmm, I've been dying to do that all day," she revealed to him.

"Then why didn't you?" Dominic asked with a grin.

"Because if I had, I'd have ended up not being able to keep my hands off you and screwing you on the beach, in front of everyone," she replied, grinning herself.

Dominic looked into her eyes, then easily swept her up off her feet to sit in his arms as he carried her upstairs, their lips locked together all the way up.

So it was that within a day Phoebe had made love to a man twice. This time it was even more intense than the previous time because this time Phoebe knew what to expect and what to do, so her body was more relaxed.

They lay in each other's arms for a while afterwards almost as though they did not want the moment to end.

"I have really enjoyed having your company these last few days, shopping in Manchester, the Halloween ball and today at the coast, as well our lovemaking," Dominic told her as he softly combed his fingers through her hair.

"Me too," Phoebe replied almost dreamily.

"You have? So... can we start seeing each other on a regular basis, dating each other?"

"What? You mean like boyfriend and girlfriend?"

Dominic nodded. "Would you like that?"

Phoebe smiled and then nodded herself as she stretched out languidly on top of the bed. “Uh-huh.”

Dominic shifted slightly so that he could press his lips against the sweet lips of his new girlfriend, Phoebe responded, rolling her lips against his as her hand made its way down to his crotch. As she hoped, he was getting hard and she wrapped her fingers deftly around his growing manhood.

“I thought we should be getting back. Aren’t you worried about what Harriet may say?” Dominic asked softly.

“Are you?” Phoebe replied before pressing her lips to his as she began deftly working and stroking Dominick’s penis.

“You are insatiable, you naughty vixen,” Dominic laughed. “But I will only make love to you again if you show me you really want it.”

“But I do want it... I want *you*,” Phoebe told him with a pout at having to break from her kiss.

“Then tell me, tell me what I need to know.”

“Tell you what?” Phoebe inquired.

“I want you to say these words to me... “I want you, I need you, I love you,” Dominic told her. He knew she had already said those three words to him before, but he wanted to hear them again, to make sure for he was, indeed, Harriet’s son.

Phoebe paused, a questioning look on her face. “What? You want me to say I love you? I don’t know, Dominic.”

“That’s okay,” Dominic told her as he made to be getting out of bed.

Phoebe wanted that incredible sex again. “No, wait... okay, I want you... so much, I need you... I love you... I love you,” she told him as fast as she could.

Dominic smiled and got back onto the bed, lying over Phoebe in the missionary position as she took his penis and guided it between her legs. Dominic sucked on one of her nipples, causing her to gasp, as he slid into her. She wrapped her legs around him as her nails scratched over his back.

Soon they were in the throes of sex again, their mouths frequently meeting to kiss, other times pecking at other parts of their body as their hands stroked over each other's bodies.

Eventually Dominic erupted in a shuddering climax just as Phoebe had her own. They were covered in sweat but their bodies were vibrant.

“Well, I guess we had best get up and dressed and I'll drive you back home, it's getting late,” Dominic finally suggested.

“Aw, do we have to? Why can't we just stay here all night and keep making love?” Phoebe suggested with a pout.

Day 19 – Wednesday 2nd November **2016**

Phoebe had been up early the following morning, unable to sleep well. Her mind was full of all kinds of crazy things, mostly about Dominic and herself. She had all but decided she wanted to stay in England and continue seeing Dominic. He had changed her life; she had never felt like this before nor had felt such intensity when having sex. He was the perfect gentleman... husband material. He would look after her.

She could, in a way, adopt the witches as her true family and, as she was one of them, she could do so much good in the world... make it a better place.

Of course she still loved Jodie but there was a slight case of “out of sight, out of mind.” Jodie was a career girl and her modelling job took her all over, often for long periods. Was that what Dan wanted for a wife?

She walked out onto the patio at the back of the house. There were seats on the patio where she could sit, get fresh air and reach a decision on her future.

Dressed in a long-sleeved black minidress and high-heeled shoes with a wide ankle strap, the cool morning air wrapped around her naked legs, she sat herself down and was just in the process of relaxing when she saw Stewart approaching.

“Oh no, that intolerable man,” she cursed under her breath as she got up to go remonstrate with him.

“Are you just dumb? I thought I had made it quite clear for you to keep away,” She said loud enough for him to hear her angry tone but not to disturb anyone

in the house as she stood legs apart and hands on her hips in a threatening manner.

“Well, yes you did, but serious times mean I have to keep trying. There is something very urgent that you need to know. I can’t say here but please believe me. Will you come and meet with me tonight, at seven o’ clock, where we talked last... that small copse?”

“Why should I? Why don’t you just go? I am a Level Five witch now, you know, and I could cast you asunder with just a flick of my hand,” She warned without ever having tested to see if she could.

“Yes, I know the level you have reached. And I am a Level Seven and could block your power bolt and aim it back at you... if I was here to play games, but I am not. This is serious and involves someone you know. Please come.”

Stewart did not wait to exchange any more words with Phoebe, nor did he wish to be spotted by one of the higher witches. He turned and walked off, not even waiting for a reply. Phoebe just watched him as he disappeared into the distance.

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Although Harriet hadn’t even suggested anything, Phoebe fully expected that today would be the day to embody Griselda, whatever that entailed. There was to be some more spell casting but giving Griselda human form was not to be the case.

Gathering all of the witches together, all seven, Harriet had everyone call to the witch spirits of old to bring about a deep magic as they all held hands around the bubbling oil in the cauldron.

After about twenty minutes there was a glow in the cellar that seemed to surround and go into everyone present. Almost immediately Phoebe felt something shift in her body... there was a glow which slowly dissipated.

After it was over, Phoebe was curious to know what had happened.

“This morning’s spell casting was to give us continued life, Phoebe. You are already aware that we have been on earth for centuries but every once in a while we have to ask for an extension to our longevity. Your own great grandmother joined in with us on the last occasion,” Harriet explained.

“Longevity...? You mean like extended life? Who has it affected?” Phoebe asked, feeling alarmed.

“Why all of us, child. We each will now live for at least a further one hundred and twenty years and our bodies will not wither nor grow old and weak, we will retain our youth and looks.”

“What? But I do not wish to live past my years. I want my body to take its natural course. I want to grow old with the person I love and live with; I don’t want to outlive my children,” Phoebe exclaimed.

“Do not fret... all is taken care of and think, now there are more years for us to do good in the world,” Harriet soothed.

“No, I don’t want that... and how do you mean all is taken care of? You should have asked me. You should have told me your intentions before having me join in with this.”

“Stop being so boorish and ungrateful, Phoebe. As well as raising Griselda, it was another reason that we needed to have you become part of our coven. We

couldn't have done it without you, and we here are nearly spent from our last revitalisation.”

“Raising Griselda and giving you all longer life... and not a mention about saving the world from war and ruin... what happened to that?” Phoebe yelled. She was not pleased and took herself away from the cellar. She could not believe she was going to be alive for at least a hundred and twenty years.

The younger witches tried consoling her through the day and telling her that they had all gone through the ritual several times. Her great aunt had done the same ritual once but she did not have the power that Dan had been born with and could only help in the spell casting just the once. She then had decided to see out her natural life.

The three older witches weren't pleased with Phoebe and scowled at her several times through the day for her outburst. In the afternoon Harriet had a stern word with her.

“We cannot have you fighting against what we do, Phoebe. As a coven we need to work together in order to raise the magic. Tomorrow is a special day... when we give the spirit of Griselda an earthly body. She is very powerful but she cannot do anything at all until she has been given a host body.”

“And just what is that? How does she get this host body? Are you going to capture some innocent and force them to give up their body and life for the sake of Griselda?” Phoebe challenged snappily.

“No. A host body has already been chosen for her... it is Felicity,” Harriet answered rather callously.

“What? Flick? Does that not bother you? Felicity has been with you for all of this time, for centu-

ries...and you'll just give her up?" Phoebe responded, hardly able to believe what she was hearing.

"You already know the situation from that meddling white witch. Felicity was the son of Jasper Moore, a chief malefactor in the hunting and execution of my own kindred. I changed her and the other two as an act of revenge. I knew, even then, that the day would come when one of those three sacrificed their lives so that Griselda could be reborn.

"Do you remember when we raised Griselda's spirit on Monday, she pointed to the three. She was choosing which body she wished to contain her spirit. Felicity has acquired a few small powers over the centuries but she does not compare to Griselda. Griselda is a Level Eighteen witch, there are none more powerful. I myself am but a Fourteen. Griselda is a mother of witches... she created me. To sacrifice someone like Felicity in order to bring back someone of Griselda's magnitude... it is, as they say these days, a no-brainer."

Phoebe was not pacified. Poor Felicity. First she was forcibly feminised as an act of revenge, now she would be dispassionately killed off for some ancient witch to use her body.

"And I think I still had a right to know of your intentions to lengthen my lifespan by a hundred and twenty years. I did not want that," she grumbled.

"Get over it, Phoebe, none of us get what we really desire. Everything that is done is for the greater good. Make sure you have corrected your tedious petulance by tomorrow morning as we all need clear heads and to focus," Harriet snapped back as she moved away, tired of hearing Phoebe's complaints.

Phoebe had seen Harriet in a different light now and she wondered on the accuracy of the truths she had been told and how impassive she was in regards to Felicity.

With what had occurred and been told that morning, Phoebe was now wondering about what Stewart had to say. Perhaps she should at least give him another chance of winning her over.

She waited until it was getting dark and then said to Constance that she was off for a stroll to clear her head. Constance offered to accompany her. "No, Connie, I would rather be on my own. I mentioned it to you in case Harriet inquired as to where I was," she replied and then set off on her way.

It took longer to reach her destination than it had when it was light. Phoebe was a little concerned being out on her own in case Stewart and his friends actually meant to hurt her, but she was ready to use all of the powers she had honed, if that was to happen.

"Phoebe, over here." She heard the voice of Stewart calling from some bushes. He was also wary in case she had brought other witches with her and he had been keeping a close watch.

Stewart led her over to where he had a small concealed campfire blazing.

"I'm glad that you came, this is probably my very last chance to persuade you," he told her, offering his hand to lead her, which Phoebe ignored.

"You said something about needing to talk to me as it involves someone I know. Who?" she asked in an unfriendly and demanding tone.

Instead of answering the question immediately, Stewart just stared at Phoebe. "There's something

different about you... you've changed, but I'm unsure what it is."

"And you've also changed... the subject. Who is this person?" Phoebe persisted to know.

"Oh. Sorry," Stewart apologised with a sound of confusion in his voice. "Yes, a young woman. The vicar informed me. She came into the village inquiring about Dan Hamilton yesterday. Of course Hector had no knowledge of anyone with that name but asked me if I was aware of anyone."

Phoebe was now anxiously wondering who it could be. "What did this person look like?"

Stewart shrugged his shoulders. "I didn't see her, you would have to ask the Vicar... but Hector did say that she had said to him... let me get this correct, 'if you do hear of him, will you tell him L-Y-A-T-F. He'll know who I am.' Does that mean anything to you?"

Phoebe's face went ashen and she had a sense of panic. "That's what my girlfriend in the States and I say to each other, it's our crazy little thing. It stands for 'Love you always, together forever'." she told him.

Phoebe was now worried and panicky. What was Jodie doing over here? She should still be on her shoot. What on earth was she going to think if she saw he was now a woman!

"She must have come across looking for me... probably worried because I haven't been able to keep in touch with her. Where did she say she was staying? Mind you, I can't really let her see me like this, she would freak out."

"Well this is the thing... and don't panic Phoebe, remember we are here to help you, we promised."

“Freak out? Freak out about what?”

“Well. She had an American accent and Hector of course, knowing that you have an American accent, told her that an American woman had recently been in the village as she had acquired a cottage from a relative. He advised her to try High Fell Cottage or Harriet’s address where he knew you were staying.”

“What?” This was now disastrous for Phoebe. Jodie could easily link a connection; she knew he had inherited High Fell. How could he possibly explain? She may even believe he had brought another woman with him, cheating on her!

“The thing is, Phoebe, we think she may be in danger. We know she intended going up to Harriet’s to ask. She has not been seen or heard of since. We think they may have captured her.”

“No, that can’t be true. She is not in the house and nobody has quizzed me.”

Stewart looked nervously around believing he had heard something. “Come with me, out of this place where we can talk more safely,” he advised.

Phoebe allowed herself to be led to a small house in the village. Already there were Ben and Adam. They shared Stewart’s concern that something had happened to Jodie.

“Is it tomorrow when Harriet intends to lift the spirit?” Adam asked as they all sat around a table to talk.

Phoebe, still unsure which side of the fence he should be on, nodded as an affirmative reply.

“Like I have mentioned earlier, Phoebe, do not go back to the house. Stay here with us, we will keep

you safe and look for your friend,” Stewart then spoke out.

“My girlfriend,” Phoebe firmly corrected.

Stewart felt like responding about Phoebe having been with Dominic, but this was not the place and the matter didn’t concern him.

“Stewart is correct; they cannot perform the necessary witchcraft without you. They need you there,” Ben confirmed.

Just then Phoebe heard a noise from outside the window. She put her finger to her lips and used her eyes to indicate the window behind him. A moment’s silence fell in the room and then everyone heard a rustling from the other side of the window. Ben got up from his seat and quietly stole towards the front door as the rest resumed talking.

There followed the sound of a struggle and a girl’s voice protesting.

A minute later Ben returned, holding a kicking and aggressive Bridgette, pulling her into the room.

Bridgette looked at Phoebe with narrowed eyes. “Traitor! Collaborating with these whites.” Phoebe suddenly pounced from her seat and took hold of a clump of Bridgette’s thick red hair with one hand and gripped her by the throat with the other.

“What do you know about my girlfriend, Bridgette? Where is she?” Phoebe demanded to know.

“I don’t know nothing about your girlfriend. I swear. Now gerroff me,” Bridgette responded as she tried to get free from Phoebe’s grip.

Just then Stewart got up from where he had been sat and picked something up from a desk top. It was a dagger.

He raised it up in his hand with the blade pointing down as if ready to strike.

“What are you doing?” Phoebe asked in alarm.

“Making one less witch to deal with,” he replied coldly.

“No, Stewart... I can't let you kill her. Bridgette is my friend and, remember, she was an innocent victim in all of this herself,” Phoebe pleaded with him.

“Then I shall force her to talk and tell us everything,” he continued, now putting the point of the dagger to Bernadette's throat.

“Let me deal with this. There is no need to hurt or threaten her. Sit down and speak, Bridgette,” Phoebe then commanded with a stare.

Bridgette was unable to do anything other as Phoebe used some of her newly-created powers on her.

“A woman did come to the house... asking about you. Harriet spoke to her but I swear I do not know anything more,” Bridgette responded.

“And why are you here? How did you find where I was?”

“Harriet sent me out to tail you. I went up to the woody copse behind you; Harriet felt something was wrong from how you were reacting this morning.

“You see, there is no need to kill anyone,” Phoebe then said, turning to Stewart. “What blade is this?”

The dagger that Stewart had been holding was a very ancient looking weapon. It had a narrow blade and a black grip with a pommel and with a bronze quillion. The double hollow grind had intricate designs carved into it.

“This is one of four medieval blades used by the Pendlebury coven for the past two centuries as sacrificial knives,” Stewart began to explain. “Four knives for the coven of four... before you, or your great Aunt, it was Harriet, Pretoria, Rosetta and Jasmine. As you can see, we have acquired one.”

“These daggers have magic attached to them. As well as sacrificial they are a blade that can kill a powerful witch like Harriet, instantly.” Adam then added, “The thing is, what do we do now? What do we do with her?”

“Lock her up in here; I can put a spell on the door and window making it impossible for her to escape,” Phoebe suggested. “Then I am going back to the house.”

“No, you can’t. That would be very unwise,” Stewart pleaded.

“I have to, they may have Jodie. I have to at least see if I can find out what has happened to her... find out if she is safe.”

“They will force you into casting the magic to bring Griselda back if you return to the house,” Stewart tried to beseech.

“I will not let them, I’ll refuse. But if I do not return and there is also no Bridgette, they will come looking for us for sure... do you want to battle three powerful and angry black witches?”

None of the three men did and so Phoebe set off back home to Harriet's.

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"It is late Phoebe, where have you been?" Harriet asked as she walked in through the door.

"Sorry Aunty, I've just been out for a long walk, trying to clear the mess in my head. I'm sorry for being brattish earlier today; I understand the importance of it all now. I won't protest any further, I promise," she apologised.

"That's okay, dear... I know a lot of this is new to you and you don't fully understand all that needs to be done, or why. Have you seen Bridgette along your walk? I sent her out looking for you."

"No, sorry, Auntie, I haven't seen her... she may have gone into the village looking for me. I went out down the country lane towards the river ribble," Phoebe continued to lie.

"Well, it's late and we all need to be up at the crack of dawn. I just hope that silly girl comes in soon, we should all be turning into our bed," Harriet recommended.

Phoebe waited several hours after everyone had gone to bed and then scoured the entire house and grounds looking to see if Jodie was being kept prisoner somewhere. There was no sign of her or any indication that she had been.

A few hours later Phoebe returned back to her bedroom hoping that Jodie had just gone off somewhere. In a way she was now grateful that she had gone with Dominic to Blackpool that day so that Jodie did not see her as she now was... not that she would have in-

stantly recognised her... just the odd marks and moles.

Day 20 – Thursday 3rd November 2016

Phoebe was woken early the following morning by Harriet who was not looking very happy. “Out of bed, Phoebe, be quick, we need all to be down in the cellar to start our ritual/ It has to be as the sun arises. I have laid out a full length black gown for you to wear; we will all be dressed similarly.”

Having not got much sleep through searching for Jodie, Phoebe was tired and grumpy. “I am not doing the spirit rising with you,” she said, firmly.

Harriet turned and laughed. “Oh... you actually think you can stand up to me and refuse, do you, my dear? Did you really think I had no clue as to where you had been last night, or that you have locked Belinda in a magic? You have no choice my dear, now stop this nonsense and come along.”

“No, you cannot make me. I am not raising some ancient evil witch and having Felicity sacrificed for it. I know that you intend to do bad things once you have Griselda, not good things.” Phoebe stood firm. “And as you say, we have Bridgette.”

“We?” Harriet scoffed. “Bridgette is dispensable, we only really need the power of four... meaning that you are included. You need to come with me now, you stupid girl or have you forgotten what I said I could do to all of your family?”

“No, I haven’t forgotten... and I am not a girl,” Phoebe countered.

Suddenly Harriet laughed loud and mockingly. “You WILL do as I command, Phoebe; you have no choice in the matter any more. Even if you are so cold-hearted as to not concern yourself on the fate of your family... you ARE a female now... your only identity is that of Phoebe Chattertn. You either do as I command or I will not undo the magic that made you female and you will remain that way, forever.”

“That’s a lie,” Phoebe countered again. “You told me when I first agreed that you have to abide by some high magic law or other... you promised to change me back and you said that the spell would only last so long before it was broken anyway.”

“That is true. And yes, even witches have to abide by the laws of ancient dark magic, but you see, Phoebe, you made yourself permanently female when you slept with my son, and when he impregnated you.”

Phoebe was suddenly shocked, the fight knocked clean out of her. Immediately she recalled Stewart suggesting that Dominic could be the son of Harriet. She had been deceived. Worse still ...had she heard correctly?

“I’m... I’m pregnant?”

“Yes, indeed you are, my dear. The first time you made love to Dominic that changed you permanently into a female... which included all of your reproductive system. The second and third time that you had sex you were able to conceive and I had also given you a potion to make you highly conceivable. All of these centuries... all of this time since they burned my grandchild along with Bernadette... and now, now I shall be a grandmother at last.”

Phoebe was too stunned to speak; so much was whirring around in her head. She had believed she was in love with Dominic, to the point of ditching Jodie... but that belief was an enchantment and he was part of the whole scheme. She was now being told that she was irrevocably female, no going back... and, that she was pregnant!

“So... I am this way, for the rest of my life!” she gasped.

“That depends on you. I need for Griselda to be given human form, only she and I can call on the spirits of the ancient witches to change you back to whom you were. I have no intention of doing that until you have given birth to my grandchild. But if you ever want to become Daniel Hamilton again, then you must do as I say,” Harriet told her firmly.

“Of course, you can fight against me and stay as you are... but who are you? You have no legal identity, you have no money nor passport and without proof of identity you can not get a job, or even state benefits... you have no way of returning home to America.

“Oh, but silly me! Of course, you could go to your American embassy and tell them exactly what has happened to you... that a bunch of witches took you and turned you into a girl. Who knows, they may examine you to see if you were given a sex change but sex changes do not give you all the internals of a female like you have... so, good luck with that. Now stop being so stupid and let’s go prepare this ritual to bring Griselda back so that we can really begin our business. Time is pressing.”

Phoebe was stupefied. If what Harriet had told her was all true, she really had no choice but to go along with what was commanded. Otherwise she would re-

main female and in order to live, the only way she could make money without any identity would be to sell her body. But even going along with Harriet, she was going to have to continue living as Phoebe for at least another nine months.

Without any other option, Harriet took Phoebe by the wrist down to the cellars where Pretoria, Rosella, Felicity and Constance were gathered, ready, all in long robes and dresses like Phoebe and Harriet wore.

Very much against her will, Phoebe began to join the chants and incantations that would resurrect Griselda. Harriet made a sign to the two young witches who walked out of the cellars, returning five minutes later, holding up and dragging a nude female who had clearly been drugged into the room. The girl had a cloth bag pulled over her head. Felicity and Constance then laid the young woman onto a long slab of bare stone and tied her wrists and ankles.

“Who is that? What are you going to do with her?” Phoebe asked in horror.

“That is our sacrifice... we need a sacrifice in order to make the deep magic work,” Harriet responded and then immediately started her chants again.

She broke off momentarily to order Constance. “Connie, inflict the first wound.”

The three witches started chanting again, Phoebe murmured but watched as Constance went over to the girl, lifted up a knife very much like the dagger that Stewart had, and stabbed it into the girl’s side. The girl screamed out in pain.

“This is sick,” Phoebe gasped.

Harriet opened an eye to look at him. “Remember all that we talked about... do you want to spend the next hundred and twenty years in poverty and without identity?” she then continued chanting louder.

As bad as it was that she was witnessing, Phoebe was scared by the thought of her own future... the future of a lonely and desperate woman. She began joining in the chanting as Felicity now walked to the girl and also inflicted a wound to the side... blood was now pouring off the stone slab which she lay upon and into a metal vessel.

Phoebe felt torn between right and wrong. She felt she had to put an end to this murder somehow.

Harriet walked to the girl and dipped her finger into the blood oozing from her side, smeared some on her cheek then approached Rosella, Pretoria and Phoebe in turn with the vessel and did the same, smearing blood upon their faces. Phoebe grimaced at the feel of the warm blood. Then came the words that crushed her.

“Phoebe, you must inflict the fatal blow, stab the dagger into the heart.”

“What? Why me?” she begged.

“Just do it Phoebe or say goodbye to ever being a man again,” Harriet warned.

Sullenly and remorsefully, Phoebe approached where the girl lay. She needed to do something to stop this. She looked at the blooded dagger, it was indeed identical to the one that Stewart had and she recalled his words.

“These daggers have magic attached to them, as well as sacrificial they are a blade that can kill a powerful witch like Harriet, instantly.”

The three witches were chanting loudly again and a smoke was building up from the caldron.

“Felicity, are you aware that Griselda is going to take over your body for herself?” Phoebe called across to the young witch.

Felicity looked suddenly shocked. “Is that true, Harriet?” she asked in panic.

“Griselda needs a host body... she has chosen you to be it,” Harriet replied in rushed words. The image of Griselda was now starting to take form in the billowing grey smoke.

“No, you can’t!” Constance called in alarm at losing her close friend.

“Why me?” Felicity sobbed in panic.

Griselda’s evil spirit form now had full clarity, ready to take over Felicity’s body. With the stabbing of the sacrifice, the deed would be complete.

Harriet’s attention was now drawn to the two whimpering young witches as Phoebe looked down on the body of the sacrifice. She seemed to recognise the body, then it struck her about Jodie disappearing... why had she not connected to that? Desperately she grabbed a wrist and pushed the binding rope down enough to see a small tattoo... ‘Dan’ was tattooed on the wrist exactly as she had ‘Jodie’ on hers.

She pulled the cover from her head. It was Jodie!

Now Harriet was turning to pay attention to her. Without a moment’s thought. Phoebe picked up the knife and threw it at Harriet. It was a bad throw and not very strong but she used her new witch powers to

change both its force and trajectory and the ancient blade buried deep into Harriet's chest.

With a scream, Harriet staggered and fell against the large black cauldron, knocking it over from its fire and its boiling oils ran across the floor towards where Pretoria and Rosella stood. Flames followed running with the oils and instantly caught on the long gowns the two witches were wearing.

As this was all happening the materialising spirit of Griselda turned and snarled at Phoebe before vanished in a puff of smoke as the two young witches fled, running out of the cellars.

Phoebe desperately tried to untie Jodie as fire was now catching everywhere, ignited by the oils but her long shaped nails were a hindrance and making her fumble. Suddenly she was brushed aside as Stewart took over. He and Adam had been waiting for something to happen and had now sprung into action.

With the final rope untied on Jodie's leg, Adam scooped her from the stone and into his arms to make a dash for safety, Stewart and Phoebe followed but Phoebe's heel caught and made her trip on the hem of her long skirt and fall to the floor as burning oil moved towards her. Now it was Stewart lifting Phoebe into his arms and he made it to the door of the cellar and up the stone stairwell as the whole cellar enveloped in flames.

The four of them got outside of Harriet's house and collapsed to the ground as the fire took hold of anything combustible and it was only a matter of minutes before the house was fully on fire. In the distance, unnoticed by them, Constance and Felicity ran across a nearby field away from the house, never to be seen in the village again.

As the house burned to the ground, only then did Phoebe come to the realisation and acceptance that, by killing Harriet, she had condemned herself to a female existence.

As the last embers of the fire of the house burnt out, the remaining burning question was, had Harriet planned all that she had with Phoebe just as a form of revenge and giving herself extra life or had she also intended the coven of four assembling to prevent the world from destroying itself?

It was half an hour before fire and ambulance services arrived at the scene during which time Adam and Steward helped to stem Jodie's wounds using both first aid knowledge and witchcraft. She was then rushed to a nearby hospital for treatment. Phoebe went along with her in the ambulance.

Along the way Phoebe's cell phone began to buzz. With the death of Harriet, the hex that she had placed on her phone was now lifted, along with everything else she had blocked. The messages that had been blank now appeared and the incomplete text she'd received from Jodie was now fully received. As she read the message tears welled up in her eyes.

Hey silent one. What happened to texting each other each day? I've been trying to phone you but you aren't answering. I have some really exciting news; you're going to be a daddy... I'm pregnant. Please get in touch if you can, I'm starting to get worried about you. xxx

So, Jodie was carrying her child and she was the father. She had also just found out she was a mother, carrying her own child. If the baby had survived the stab wounds to Jodie she still could now never now be a real father to the baby but did she want to give birth and be a mother to the one she was carrying?

Stewart picked Phoebe up from the hospital later that evening. Jodie was going to be detained in hospital for a few weeks. She had to have an immediate blood transfusion due to the amount of blood she had lost. She was still unconscious and sedated when Phoebe left the hospital but Phoebe had been informed she would be okay and none of the stabs she had received had affected the baby.

“You won’t have eaten anything since breakfast; do you want to stop off somewhere to eat before we drive home?” Stewart asked.

“Actually, I didn’t even eat anything for breakfast, I’m starving, so.... Yes please,” Phoebe answered with a smile.

Stewart pulled up by an Italian restaurant and opened the car door for Phoebe; they walked in together and were found seats at a table for two.

“I’m pretty much fucked, Stewart,” Phoebe began, “I’m stuck like this, Harriet and Griselda were the only ones that could change me back to who I was... and I have ended that opportunity.”

“You did what you needed to do, Phoebe... they were going to have your friend killed and once they had the power, they would have done lots more terrible things. They were hell bent on revenge... not just to local people, but to the government. If they could have summoned all of the old witches with Griselda’s powers, who knows what mischief they would have played?”

“But what of me now? I have no identity as Phoebe, no passport, no birth certificate, no way of making a living. I have a girlfriend, pregnant by me, who won’t even know me.”

Stewart smiled and took Phoebe's hands in his. "You are a witch. One thing that has come out of this is you have powers now. I am a witch too. That means we can use our magic to create you a true identity. You will be and will always have been, Phoebe Chattern."

"Can that be done? Is it possible?" Phoebe asked, looking into Stewart's face.

"Of course it can. And with your hex lifted, your access to your money will now be clear, you have your great aunt's cottage to live in... you will be fine."

"And pregnant." Phoebe added, shocking Stewart.

"You're pregnant?... By Dominic?" Stewart then asked, looking concerned.

Phoebe nodded.

"You do realise that inside you, you have an infant witch... sired by Dominic, a powerful warlock and mothered by a Level Five witch. The child will have great powers and, Dominic may return wanting his child and his or her powers."

"So what do I do?" Phoebe questioned.

Stewart squeezed Phoebe's hand. "Let me look after you. I'll help you raise the child and keep it on the side of good."

"Look after me? Like being my partner? Lover? Husband?" Phoebe questioned.

Stewart nodded. "Would that be such a bad thing? You won't have to be lonely and I will be fully aware of your secret and your powers. I wouldn't be surprised when you turn sixty and still look twenty-two," he added with a smile.

Phoebe smiled back and now gave Stewart's hand a squeeze. "That is really sweet of you, Thank you, but no..." she replied, blushing slightly, "I am still with Jodie, still in love with her. She is recovering and I have been assured that our baby will also be okay."

Stewart looked disappointed. "But she may not want you as a woman, have you thought about that? And she is going to be in hospital for at least two weeks. You don't need to put your life on hold during that time. At least give me a try."

Phoebe blushed again. "I am flattered at your interest in me, but, anyway, no disrespect to you, and I really am grateful for all you have done for me, but I'm really not into guys," she answered.

Stewart made an insincere laugh. "You mean unless they are evil dark warlocks..."

Phoebe looked embarrassed by the response.

"I'm sorry, that was crass of me," Stewart quickly apologised. "Though, you do need to come to terms with what you now are. For over thirty years you have been raised with the mindset of a heterosexual male but you are female now, things have changed. Until the day you die, you are going to be living long years as a young and attractive woman.... four times longer than the period you lived as a heterosexual man."

Stewart then warned, "Even if Jodie accepted you as you are now, she is going to age and become old while you are still a young virile woman and she will pass away while you are still youthful and beautiful. It may be that you can live your first few decades as a lesbian but it is more likely over the years that you will become bisexual and, as the decades go by, I would think you will only have distant memories of

ever being an heterosexual man and your female body and hormones will work so that you only become attracted to men... you just need to be aware of those facts.”

Phoebe smiled in a kind way to the man. “Yes, I guess it’s possible that I will change over the long years I have been given. I am aware that I may at some point start developing just an interest in men, and who knows, when Jodie starts recovering and sees the female me, she may well not be able to accept me as I have become, sexually... but I first do have to wait and see.”

Phoebe then leaned forward towards Stewart and pressed her lips softly to his, holding her lips to his and softly sucking on them before pulling away causing a small ‘Putt’ sound as she did.

“Thank you for all that you have done for me and saving me and Jodie. If things do change between her and me, then I would be happy to explore if we could have a future together,” she told him.

“I didn’t save you; you saved yourself and rid an evil that has been around these parts for hundreds of years. Jodie is a very lucky woman to have someone like you in her life,” Stewart told her sincerely as their food was set upon the table by the waiter.

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It was a week before Jodie was well enough to receive Phoebe as a visitor as it would be a great shock to her. That this attractive but unknown woman was telling Jodie that she was really Dan was only believed by the whispered ‘LYATF’ and the tattoo that Phoebe had on her wrist. The whole story took a lot of explaining, and retelling, so incredible it was.

"I'll understand if you cannot accept me, the way I am now, as your lover, but I hope that we can still remain the closest of friends and you will allow me to take some part in raising our child," Phoebe put to her.

Jodie smiled. "I'm a model, darling."

Phoebe looked confused. "What does that have to do with anything?"

"Models work closely together, spend lots of girl time together, we get close. Many models have lesbian flings; I myself have had one or two lesbian experiences before I met you," she revealed.

"You never told me that?" Phoebe replied in surprise. "But does that mean that...?"

Jodie smiled again. "I love you for being you. It's going to be crazy different for me because it's like looking at a whole new person, but at least you are a very beautiful different. I'm quite envious; you have a more curvaceous body than me. Hey! Maybe we could model together? You will need a new job now," she laughed.

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Jodie was released from hospital after another two weeks and they lived in High Fell cottage for a few weeks more whilst she fully recuperated.

"With the help of a little bit of witch magic and additional help from Stewart being on the local council, a passport was produced for one Phoebe Chattertn. American citizen, age 21.

The pair flew back to America six weeks after the burning down of Harriet's house to live back in their



old residence. It was widely believed in the neighbourhood that Dan Hamilton had elected to stay living in England at his inherited cottage and had chosen not to have any contact with his family or Jodie.

Jodie and Phoebe's children were born just ten days apart from each other, a boy born to Jodie, a girl born to Phoebe. Immediately after her birth, Phoebe looked at the new born girl's shoulder. There, faint but discernible, was a mark, the birth mark of the Chattern family. Phoebe told Jodie she wanted to name her baby Bernadette.

Although the little girl was the youngest, woe betide anyone who bothered her brother as they grew up.

Because Phoebe was not going to show sign of age, the couple would move home every ten years to an area where nobody knew them and ask questions of how she stayed looking so young.

As Jodie grew older through the following years, looking ever into a cauldron, Dominic watched. He was vigilant. One day Jodie would pass away with age and then he would return... return to claim his daughter and to win back the heart of Phoebe Chattern... however long that may take.

The End