

Witch-III

All At Sea Celebrations



Philippa Peters



An "Adult Tv" Novel



Reluctant Press TV/TS Publishers

This story (including all images) is a work of fiction. Any similarity to persons living or dead is entirely coincidental. All situations and events herein presented are fictional, and intended only for the enjoyment of the reader. Neither the author nor the publisher advocate engaging in or attempting to imitate any of the activities or behaviors portrayed.

Persons seeking gender reassignment surgery, hormone therapy or any other medical and/or body-altering process should seek the counsel of a qualified therapist who follows the Benjamin Standards of Care for Gender Identity Disorder. This material is intended for persons over the age of 18 only.



Copyright ©) 2015

Published by Reluctant Press
in association with Mags, Inc.
All Rights Reserved.

No part of this book may be reproduced without the written permission of the publisher, except for brief quotes contained within a critical review.

For information address
Reluctant Press
P.O. Box 5829
Sherman Oaks, CA 91413
USA

Call toll free (800) 359-2116

www.reluctantpress.com

ALL AT SEA CELEBRATIONS

by Philippa Peters

Continuing of Another Fine Witch and A Plague Of Men.

Dowd shook my long, swishing dress as I just stared, wild-eyed, beyond him at the still, fallen body of my lover, my husband, and my friend. I didn't want more missiles to strike Robady as he lay there, unmoving and unresponsive to all to that was going on.

“Doesn't matter who it is,” Dowd was yelling at me, my emotions overwhelmed by seeing Robady fall and the blood spurt. “Ours or theirs! We've got to get that fire out!”

But my husband, I wanted to scream, dreams of Robady kissing me as I had so desperately wanted him to do. Oh yes, I knew I was drugged then as he made love to me, telling me all the time I was his wife. Oh, I believed him! I was his wife and I loved him as he told me that I did. I loved what he was doing to me

and how womanly he made me feel as he kissed me as he penetrated my pretty tush. He'd told me how much I loved him doing that and I did.

And now he was just lying there on the deck, the man who I knew loved me so much, my husband. Oh, I wasn't a wife any more! I was a widow! I realized in horror as my dress swirled about me. Dowd tried to break me away from the controlling 'dream' that Rob, soaking us both in lovebane, had kept me in, even as the fighting had begun. I had to save him. I had to save my husband.

I screamed like a little girl, I know, the throat clasper changing my voice so that I knew I would sound like my little niece, a really flighty, little girl.

Dowd had some kind of shield that wouldn't have stopped a harquebuss shell but he held it in front of me, anyway, holding the squealing girl, me, from dashing out into the husband to use my witch's skills on my darling Rob. His shield would stop an arrow or a blade, I supposed numbly, as I let him hold me as we moved backward, away from my darling husband's body.

The other great ship was two ship's lengths away from us by then, the glow of its fires, Ooo, I'd made that happen with the potion I'd concocted for Rob's harquebuss shells. The front of *Silvery Seas* was completely covered in smoke. I moved in the direction Dowd indicated, teetering on my high heels, in my long dress, swaying like the shocked men who were still standing.

Ooo, sense was returning to me. Oh, gosh, what was I doing in a dress, me, Arrat, and grieving as a wife! I wasn't a witch! I couldn't be as it was all these men using potions and powders on me. They shouldn't be able to do that, I thought as reason finally returned to me. I wasn't a woman! That was all what Robady was doing to me with whatever potions he'd brought aboard with him from *Silvery Seas*. In our



bed, they were so powerful in controlling me that I'd do anything he wanted me to, including, the thought shook through me, be his loving seawife as he said I must be.

"Control them!" shouted Dowd. "Make them obey you! Witches can do that!"

I didn't know how, as I hadn't really known how to make fire burst from the shells I'd covered in terogal. It had just seemed right in answer to Robady's anguished call for something to stop our ship, *Zephyr of Serenity*, from being overcome.

A man staggered blindly into us. I recognized Maresey, who had been third mate on *Sword* before being made a captive, like me. No, not like me. He hadn't been made into a cabin boy, dressed and assaulted as a woman at a revel, nor had he been then called a witch and dumped on this 'plague' ship and told to cure it. His eyes were vacant as he moved as if in a dream, brownish powder spilling off his whites. He had no weapon as far as I could see.

"Control him!" Dowd yelled again.

"Rob!" I whimpered.

"They're pulling away!" Dowd was hoarse with yelling at me. He jerked me savagely. I put out my hand to stop Maresey crashing into me. Almost immediately, I felt something I'd never felt before. It was almost as if I was touching a mind. I wished him to follow me and Maresey did as I requested him.

"I have to touch them," I gasped at Dowd. He and Sleek, as masked as Dowd was against my pomanders, began to grab men walking in dreams, bringing them to me. It was easy to get them to follow me, but harder to get them to actually work the water hoists and put out the fires. It was desperately slow and laborious as I didn't know the routines of *Zephyr's* fire fighting, either.

My head was aching. I felt as if it was going to explode when Sleck turned to me, pulled me to him, and hugged and kissed me. Oh yes, he thinks I'm a woman!

"It's out!" I think Sleck yelled at me as he pulled his mask back. I stared at him, wide-eyed, the fessare and controller potions having little effect on me with the antidotes I'd consumed while below with Rob. But the antidotes hadn't changed the way I felt about Rob, my 'husband', when I was close to him, under his control, the effect of whatever was on his skin and in my bathwater, which I knew couldn't be true.

"Time for that later!" growled Dowd, stopping Sleck kissing me. Dowd pulled me away from his second-in-command. "Get these men bedded down, my lady! Take them below decks where we can control them."

Some of the cutter's men were mixed in with the men from *Silvery Seas*. I had Dowd separate them and showed him the antidotes from my wrist purse that they must have to awaken.

"Good girl!" smiled Dowd, putting his arm about me. "I was wondering how long the potions would last!" Dowd hugged me himself, giving me a hasty kiss that chilled me through and through. He looked down at me grimly, his face shadowed. The sky was darkening as the terminator passed over us.

"Use merenthe," I gasped at him, fatigue as I'd never felt it before sweeping over me. "Keep everyone asleep until I can ..."

The deck rose up to meet me and thankfully my lovely dress and soft hair. I felt Dowd's arms cushion me as blackness, total and dreamless, turned the world into oblivion.

I awoke, feeling Rob beside me. I turned to him, my eyes still closed and kissed him. I snuggled into him and made love to him. He was my husband and I his adoring wife. So he told me and I obeyed, knowing it was just the drug he was using to control me, his wife. I kissed and kissed him, pushed my legs about him, and lifted my long nightie, guiding him into me. He seemed a little reluctant but then warmed to the task. I was a woman beneath my man, his wife, drawing in all the lovebane I could and gloriously enjoying being made love to by a hard-bodied man before I relaxed after enticing him into filling me twice.

I drifted for a while before I leaned over again and kissed the warm man beside me. A calloused hand, that wasn't Rob's at all, caressed me. I struggled to open my eyes for the first time, wishing then I hadn't, as it was Dowd inside me, kissing me hungrily, making the most horrible of feelings run through me.

"Rob!" I screamed, sitting up. How had I ever been able to dress myself in this frilly, sleeveless, frontless, almost-nightdress, that Dowd pawed at? He pulled me down to kiss me as I sensed my fragrance on him, on his face and bare chest, as if I'd kissed him, a lot, before.

I pushed at him. "Robady!" I gasped. "I must get to him. I must save him!"

"Too late, my love," said the man beside me, holding me, his fingers doing a walk, as if he thought that would amuse me, down my soft, womanish body. "He was dead when we got to him two days ago!"

"T-Two days!" I screamed, managing to free myself from his hold, in the grief and terror I felt. "I just fainted ...!"

“You’ve been out cold for two and a half days,” snorted Dowd, sitting up beside me. “Doing all those potions and controlling spells tired you, my lovely witch. Now, we need you, Lady Arrathee, we really do. We’re fast running out of merenthe and Captain Brisard demands to council with us.”

Star of the mist, my perfume, rose up about me as if I’d been doused in it. “How? ... Who?” I asked in a shudder as I felt long hair at my neck. It was braided with ribbons attached that sent shivers through me as I moved.

“I told Rosee the truth about Lady Arrathee,” growled Dowd, his caresses slowing. “She bathed you, changed your hair ribbons, panties and girly things. I helped since you called me your husband as you offered yourself so sweetly to me.”

The leer on his face made me feel sick. “I must see Rob’s body,” I said, grief for the friend who’d made me treat him as a woman, overcoming me. Revulsion for Dowd also surged through me, after what he’d done, the same as Rob did to me, pretending to be my husband and making love to me. Yes, by the tone he used, Dowd knew I wasn’t a woman at all. Well, of course, he knew it for sure, now.

“You wouldn’t have wanted to see Robady’s body,” said Dowd gruffly. “He was really torn apart by those arbalests. Hit over twenty times, several in his face. We had to cut him loose from the deck. He went over the side to Haruva’s ocean goddesses, my lady, Buthan as well.

“We’re really short of active bodies on deck; so we need you, Lady Arrathee.”

Ugh, I shuddered and tried to stop Dowd stroking my thighs and panties, hugging me as if I was a girl. “If it wasn’t for Rosee and the cabbies she’s got to help her, we’d have been attacked again. Her girly friends strut around the decks and check lines as if they know what they’re doing. At least, it amuses the

few men who can really get up on deck and wave harquebusses or swords at *Silvery Seas*.”

“I need to dress,” I said slowly to him, tingling with fright. Oh, I was going to have to dress as a woman again, even though this mutineer, this pirate, who’d used me as his wife, knew I was a man like him.

“Don’t let me stop you,” said the grinning ‘captain’ of *Zephyr of Serenity*. Oh yes, like all the men on a great ship, he knew what cabin boys were for. We were substitutes for real woman on the long voyages these ships took. We were called by girls’ names and caressed and treated like girls, even in bed.

I felt foolish as I stood, wobbling. My nightdress swirled all about me as I headed to the closet where my dresses were hung. I had to find panties and undies. I never expected that Dowd would slide over the bed and catch me from behind and caress my tush as I shrieked and wriggled to get free.

Rosee came bursting into the room. “Let her go!” she yelled at the captain of her ship. Then, she must have realized who she was yelling at. “Sir,” she added in her nervous, girlish shriek. Yes, we cabbies not only called ourselves ‘girls’ but we also responded to girlish pronouns which we used all the time for one another.

“My, my,” sneered Dowd, letting me go so that I could scamper girlishly to my closet. “Don’t we girls stick together now!”

“My Lady,” said Rosee, swishing in a long, dark green gown, over to me. “Are you all right, my lady? Do you know what’s happened?”

“She knows her lover boy’s dead,” said Dowd, his words stinging like drops of acid as he spoke. “She knows she has a real man in her bed from now on.”

“No,” I said weakly. Rosee heard me and looked at me anxiously but didn’t say anything to Dowd who was pulling on his captain’s trousers and boots.

“My lady needs nourishment,” Rosee said anxiously. “Could you order the cooks, Captain Dowd? They complain, every time I go near them, that I’m just asking privileges for myself.”

“I’ll go and kick some ...” began Dowd.

“They’re not lazy, Ermas,” my maid said to the captain, reminding me that she, a cabin boy as I’d been, had also been Dowd’s lover before me. She was welcome to him, I thought wildly, wondering if I could arrange that. “They’re just tired, recovering from the cure as we all are.”

I hadn’t realized that Seafarers had more than one name. Baracts did, like Lady Sherrene Perisord, but all of us knew her as Lady Sherrene and rarely used the other part. Oh, what had Panella called Undercaptain Peveret? Pev? And now Dowd was Ermas. We were called the Methers, my family, after the large holding my father had inherited.

Arrat Metherd, that was me, I thought with a shudder, as my girlish-looking, highly fragrant, heavily makeup maid helped me out of my nightie, into a woman’s bra and false breasts, panties and pads, before dusting me with the fragrant perfume, stars of the mist, that I thought of as ‘mine’. Such a silly thing, I thought, my skin breaking out in goose bumps as I thought how much like a woman I’d become. Rosee tightened my padded bra and whispered that she’d attended to me, bathing me just a quarter shift before I’d awakened.

Dowd left as I wept at the thought of Rob and his body lying out on the deck. I should have gone to his body. I could have saved him! Tears came as if I really was a woman. Rosee was so nice about it, not telling me to take his death in stride, to take such news like a man. She hugged me as if we were both women.

She sounded like one, obviously using the cordial I'd given her.

It seemed so natural for me now to have Rosee put a short underdress on me and do my hair for me, brushing it into feminine waves before she re-attached the long fall to the back of my head.

"I don't think we'll need this for long, my lady," said Rosee as I sat in front of a mirror and shakily tried to apply woman's paint, as she had to herself, to my eyes. She turned me and wiped my eyes. "You mourn Robady?" she asked me huskily, as she re-made my eyes, vividly and femininely like hers.

"He was my friend as well as ..." I hesitated, unable to say the words on the tip of my tongue.

"Your husband," said Rosee without a blush at all. "That's why I've laid out the black dress for you, my lady. Now you're a widow."

I had to blush at that. "Rosee, the captain said that he'd told you all about me! And you bathed me!" I whispered, wondering if I'd been dosed with throat clasper as my voice was so girlish, like hers.

"Yes, my lady," said Rosee, staring into my face as she applied lip gloss to me, continuing with my jewelry that I was so used to wearing. The perfume made me feel weird as it enchanted me, Rob must have contaminated it so that it would, as much as it did on another woman. No, I can't say that. I was not a woman to be able to say, "Another woman".

"You know ..." I began as Rosee said nothing more.

"You are Lady Arrathee," said my maid, lifting her pointed, little chin. She looked me right in the eyes, hers so girlish, her lashes curled and dark and thick, little veils in front of her blue, Seafarer eyes. "If I know your personal secrets, my lady, well, I'm supposed to. I'm your maid. You can rely on me to help you conceal any blemishes from grasping menfolk."

Men can be such brutes when they find one of us girls has a tiny blemish, can't they?"

I stared at Rosee in my mirror. She stared back defiantly at me, her hair in a loose, golden braid down her back. She clearly had false breasts like me beneath her dress. She padded me a little more before she tightened my bra for me and then scented my chest again.

"Not all men will respect you as they should, as a widow," said Rosee, putting black ribbons in my hair and about my neck. The dangling earrings she inserted into the holes Gennee had made some time ago. I also had black glittering pearls in a string down the softened, lotioned skin of my neck.

"I, I had to share my cordial with the other girls on the ship, my lady," said Rosee, her voice husky, somewhere between what it was under the influence of the throat clasper and the boyish voice she'd had when I had first talked to her. "Do you think that ...?"

"If I can get into Dasell's workroom and Dowd doesn't command me to make a hundred new and old potions, I'll make more of the cordial," I said to her. It was an easy promise to make as I knew we had the active agents necessary.

Dowd was standing in a hatchway arguing over something with Sleck, whom he called his second, but not the undercaptain of the great ship so far as I'd heard. Sleck's mouth dropped open when he saw me prancing, I had to in the shoes Rosee put on me, along the deck. The ruffled, black dress Rosee insisted I wear as a girl was padded around the hips and bustline. The way that Sleck looked me over made me flush and die inside as I could almost hear what he was thinking. I'd thought it of me when I'd looked at myself in the mirror. I felt sick as I saw the sharp glance he gave Dowd as if to call him a lucky man or something.

“My lady,” said Sleck formally, bowing and taking my gloved hand. Rosee had insisted that I wear a woman’s gloves, and a hat, of all things, that she’d curled my hair around. Then she’d put a half-veil, a mourning veil, that I’d seen women wearing before, over my face and hair. I’d no idea where she’d got it from.

“Oh, there’s all kinds of places, my lady, to find everything one needs on this ship,” Rosee said as I queried her nervously about what she was doing to me. I had to look at myself and was flummoxed at the shapeliness I’d acquired and the vividness of my face paint. I felt really uncomfortable in my dress as I looked at the dark, beautiful woman I’d become.

I have to stop doing this, I swore to myself, as the heavy, dark petticoats swayed and swished about me noisily as I clicked along the deck towards Dowd and Sleck. Rob’s words about me being his woman for years could come true, I sensed in terror, at Sleck’s look and greeting. I had to curtsy to him as if I was really a woman and that made goose bumps appear all over my skin, I was certain. And yet I did it gracefully and femininely, Rosee beaming in delight at me. I wanted to snarl at her for making me so pretty that men wanted me to act even more girlishly towards them than I normally did.

“*Silvery Seas* is coming in on a collision course,” said Dowd testily. “We’ll have need of more of those magical shells of yours, Lady Arrathee.”

“I, I don’t have any with me ...” I said and Dowd cut me off furiously.

“You had several left in your hand!” Dowd roared at me. “I saw them!”

“I had them when I passed out,” I said to him as reasonably as I could. “But I don’t have them now. Perhaps in the pockets of the dress I was wearing if they haven’t been exposed to salt water ...?”

Rosee's face was a picture of concern. "I didn't know, my lady!" she gasped.

Dowd lunged at her but Rosee danced away from him, moving so easily in the lovely, high-heeled slippers she wore as if she was going to a ball. "Go to your laundress friends and check!" Dowd snarled at her.

I shouldn't have allowed that as I knew exactly where the shells were that I'd once been holding. I'd put them in the wrist purse with my lip gloss and perfume. They were still there. I'd checked after I'd dressed. Now, I had a new, black purse, dangling from my wrist.

"Put out the parley flag?" asked Sleck, not using markers of rank and respect to the 'captain', I noted. Yes, this was a gang of mutineers, I was sure, taking advantage of the 'plague' that had afflicted *Zephyr of Serenity*. I couldn't let them shoot any more crew, not with enhanced shells that I'd made, not killing my former shipmates.

Thinking of that made me wonder about my loyalties. How could I be loyal to people like the captain or undercaptain of *Silvery Seas* who'd forced Rob and me to face death on this 'plague' ship, a death Rob had found? I teared up, wanting to dab my eyes with a flimsy, lace pad that ladies used. Oh yes, I thought miserably, taking in a deep breath and seeing my chest rise in such womanly fashion in front of me, I really was a woman, a widow, wasn't I?

"I don't want another hail of shells shredding the sails any further," grunted Dowd, referring to actions I hadn't seen. There must have been further sniping while I was in a womanly swoon, my maid changing my nightie, panties and bra, each dawn and dusk, she'd said,

"The Clan Elder isn't going to let us head to Bridgewater," said Sleck dourly, as I'd expected him to talk from the start. "They'll want us to land in Cunya, if we can get there before scurvy breaks out."

“We’ve got a witch to see us through that,” said Dowd with a leer at me.

“I can’t change sand into gold,” I had to say, referring to famous stories of alchemists who always wanted to do that and were always doomed to failure.

“I bet you could, my lady,” said Rosee with one of her giggles that was spoiled a little by the rasp of her voice. I had to make her more of the throat clasper. She must be sharing it with lots of other cabbies to be running out so soon after I’d given it to her.

I tossed my hair as Rosee had had me practice, she laughing at me as she did it so much better and more haughtily than I could. I’d teased her that she could do that because she was a real woman.

“If only I was,” Rosee had said, smiling at me coyly so that I knew what she was going to ask me. “Could you, my lady, if it’s possible, make me more comely, like you are, more woman-like?”

“You’ve seen me, Rosee,” I told her with a shivery smile. I’d heard about Lady Sherrene, and how she was supposed to be able to turn men into women. But that fable was only from Robady. There was just so much that I didn’t know that I’d never been allowed to talk about in my household.

Rob, with his aristocratic background, knew so much more. If we hadn’t spent so much time mauling one another in lovemaking, oh, how I shuddered thinking about that, we could have just talked. I could have learned some things about witches that no-one would ever talk about at home. It was a forbidden subject, given my ability with potions.

“You know that I’m not really woman-like at all,” I’d said to Rosee.

“Oh, but you are, my lady!” said Rosee. “Your face, your skin, your mouth and your nose, you’ve altered them in some way, haven’t you?” I had to stare at her

in surprise as there was nothing about me, or my face that wasn't the same as when I'd been Arrat Metherd.

"And the way you move in your dresses, my lady," Rosee had gone on hurriedly. "All the girls below decks sigh when they watch you, you know! They all put your grace down to being a real woman, but now I know you must be charming yourself. You are, aren't you, my lady? Oh, could you do that to me as well, my lady? I would so love to have the seamen looking at me the way they look at you."

"They've hardly seen me," I'd said, blushing and feeling warm all over at what she was saying. I wasn't charming myself at all. If anyone was, it was Rob, charming me with lovebane. Could it have all the effects on a boy that Rosee was claiming? No, it must all be the voice. The throat cordial made me sound so female that it was no wonder the men of *Zephyr* thought I was one.

"The crew all know exactly how many times you were in the sleeping halls, my lady," Rosee had said to me, seriously. "Some of the riggers who got into the fight said they only did it to watch you, protect you, my lady, and die happy! They really did!"

"I need to see how the men are recovering," I said with a quiver to Dowd, leering as my maid said such nice things about me.

"Frig the men," Dowd snarled. "We need to keep this ship alive. Get into Dasell's workroom, Lady Arrathee, and make more cartridges, stronger ones, to fire from all the harquebusses we have!"

"I can't make something from nothing," I tried to tell him again but Dowd still wasn't listening. He seemed to think I could do whatever Lady Sherrene had done but I couldn't. She's the greatest witch who's ever lived, said my father, as did Dolora reverently to Polwer and my stepmother, who'd added that it was true.

I wished I could've made a potion that would've enabled me to know when people were telling me truth or not. But I don't think anything like that really exists save in the legends or fairy stories told in every 'Foreshore' village.

Someone was yelling from the deck. Dowd and Sleck raced off, leaving me to go and resume work, I supposed. A cook with a covered tray came bounding up the steps from a lower deck.

"My Lady Arrathee," Glossen, the smiling cook, said to me. "I hope you're feeling hungry, my lady, as I made a breakfast for two."

I thanked him 'prettily', as Rosee had showed me to do. Glossen led me to 'my' workroom and set up a table for me. Before he left me, he joked that there were deadly poisons all around him, he could smell them in the air. My widow's dress didn't seem to be making much impression on crewmen like Sleck and Glossen.

I mentioned Rob when I'd thought to pump Glossen on what was happening on the ship. He'd scurried off as if the sea hag was behind him. I didn't know, since I hadn't been able to ask him, how what was left of the crew was recovering or even if they actually were.

I started a small kettle to prepare more of the cordial I'd promised Rosee. I started several kettles and stills for the common potions I was sure to need just for cleanliness, thinking about what else Rosee wanted, me to make her more of a woman. I found it so hard to move in my dress, bra and panties as I thought about such strange ideas.

The late Dasell had many dried herbs, herbal solutions, and many containers of active agents that I couldn't name. I tried to envision what I could do with them.

While I was contemplating what was in front of me, Merren, one of Dowd's men from the cutter, arrived, out-of-breath after running from the deck down to Dasell's workroom.

"*Silvery Seas*," Merren gasped. "They're on us! The captain's been hit!"

"Dowd?" I asked him, thinking that really the only captain appointed to that rank by the island consortiums who owned the great ships was Clan Elder Brisard of *Silvery Seas*.

"Of course, Captain Dowd," snarled Merren. "Who else would you think I meant?"

Rosee, along with two cabbies whom I'd seen before, was standing over Dowd, pushing cloths into a huge wound in his shoulder. A couple of men I hadn't seen before were pushing more pallets behind the grouping to protect Dowd.

"The shot came right through the pallet," said Rosee in her lilting voice that made one of the men stumble as he looked at her in shock. She gave him a coy, sweet smile, sparkling, I think, in the male interest being displayed at her. She indicated to me where the wood had been splintered by the shot. Her fingernails were a bright, gleaming red that the seaman stared at in surprise. An arrow whistled right past him, burying itself in the deck, making everyone quickly huddle down in the safest place.

"Do something," Dowd snarled at me.

I reached for the dressing that had been thrust into his wound.

"Not that!" groaned Dowd. "Get the men from *Silvery Seas* under your control again. March them out on deck. Tell Sleck," that was directed to Merren, "to kill one of the *Stormclouds* for every one of us who's hurt or killed by sharpshooter fire. Do it, Lady Arrathee," the last was said with a real sneer, "Or I'll

give you to the men who didn't want a witch aboard in the first place. I'll let them play with you. Look at Merren. That's what awaits you if you don't obey my commands."

One glance at Merren and I was shuddering all over. The hatred on his face was so evident I knew I'd be dead sooner or later after a man like Merren found out that he was playing with a man like me.

"My lady," whispered Terro. I had to stare at 'her' as her voice wasn't the masculine voice she'd had before. 'She', sounding like a woman, smiled and glanced at Rosee, who bit femininely at her thick, lower lip, dark red as she liked to gloss it. Rosee nodded as I realized that Terro must be one of the 'girls' she'd shared the throat clasper with.

"My lady," Terro went on softly, as if she didn't dare to be loud and destroy the lilting tones that came out of her mouth. "I used to assist Dasell with knife wounds. I can help with the captain."

"I can make a coagulant," I said. Blank looks were turned my way, "a blood clotter, a blood thickener," I told them, "and a fortifier like we've given all the men to get well. It should get the captain," I felt awful calling a mutineer that, "back on his feet."

"You heard me," gasped Dowd. "Make sure she gets those Cunian cargo jumpers out there on the dock!" I shuddered as I knew I was going to have to fight former crewmates. But why should I care? They were all Seafarers, weren't they? I shouldn't fret over helping them all kill each other.

We retreated from the deck, me to the workroom to make a lot more of the honeymind controller, as I was calling it to myself. I did make more of the lovebane as well but shuddered at the thought of having men trying to crawl all over me, thinking me a woman. I wondered if I could get someone else, Rosee for instance, to control *Silvery Seas* men on *Zephyr* with

lovebane. She'd probably love to try, I thought with a shiver.

Rob hadn't had any problem using the lovebane on me, had he? I don't know why but I wanted to cry again, thinking of him. Why oh why was I doing that? I was actually wiping away tears as I worked. It was such a girlish thing to do. And I was not a girl, I said to myself, despite my dress and makeup. I repeated it many, many times to control myself, as I did what I'd been told to do.

"They've taken the wind," Sleck said as I went up on deck with a long line of vacant-eyed men behind me. Some were crew with the invaders. Not Dowd's followers, I suspected. The air sprays Terree, Terro had shyly asked me to call 'her' that, had used with me in the sleeping cabins, were in balloons, fastened along the decks, ready for use. There were a lot more of the crew than I'd thought, even though most of the former invalids were still below decks.

I looked up. The little canvas sails that *Zephyr* had put up were flat and limp on the spars or against the masts.

"We're not going to make land without scurvy breaking out," said Sleck to me in his dourest fashion. The 'my ladys' had disappeared from his speech as he stared at me. "What can a witch do about that?"

"Nothing," I said, the truth being the only thing I could say.

"Did they tell you over there," Sleck pointed at the great ship with few sails up, just enough to block any wind from us. Riggers were aloft, I could see. They were shortening *Silvery Seas'* canvas even more so that it wouldn't sail away from us, "how long we've been out of Marashan? Did they tell you about our cargo that's going to make us all rich?" The last was said with definite sarcasm.

"I, I never heard that talked about," I said.

“And this plague,” Sleck went on, frowning. “We’ve been eating so much to stay alive. All the greenies gone, Grossen tells me. We’re on roots and drypacks, precious few of them, for two, three tendays. And us so far from the Many Isles and not able to make speed with so few men in the rigging.”

Merren was looking at me, almost drooling in the way he was admiring me as a woman, the black dress hugging the padded girlish figure I was presenting. I must have some of the lovebane on me, from my work, for him to look at me like that. “The last weeks to Faroy,” Sleck went on gloomily as others who’d gathered about him to gawk at me in my dress, nodded in agreement, “are always the hardest of any foraging trip. If men start dropping from scurvy, we’ll go slower and slower, as the Trades don’t blow for three months and more.”

“Can’t she use that stuff she used,” Merren asked Sleck with a strange grimace at me, “to strengthen us? We’ve got the sick off their backs and behinds the last two days. We can start sailing properly again if that thing over there will let us.”

“Not going to happen,” muttered Sleck. He uttered an oath and pointed a bony finger at two of the men in front of him. “You men!” Sleck said firmly. No, I’m not a man any more, I thought with a shiver, crossing my arms in front of me but that only pushed up my padding and made my breasts seem as if they were mobile. One man grinned at me, a leer on his face despite all the trouble we were in.

“You men, put up the parley flag,” said Sleck to the two who watched every sway of my skirts about my high heels and bare ankles. As usual, when I’m nervous, I shudder and my earrings seem to take on a life of their own. They did that now, huge, golden loops that dug sometimes into my neck.

“You can’t do that!” snarled Merren. I could see his fingers clutching at the dagger in his belt. Sleck

turned his back on the man who hated girls like me, or that was his reputation with Terree and Ervo, no, Vernisse, as 'she', still looking in need of a shave, had told me to call her.

"Merren!" I had to call as the dagger cleared its sheath. Two honeymoon balloons popped in Merren's face as Sleck spun around. Merren's eyes widened briefly with horror as he looked at me, feeling me controlling him. He fell to his knees, his knife falling to the deck. Sleck smiled at me as he kicked it away.

The men Sleck had instructed stood there, staring. "Go on," Sleck commanded them. "And thank you, My Lady Arrathee, for saving my life. At least, for as long as it takes our captain to learn what I'm doing."

Sleck should have left it there, but the lovebane caught him. The honeymoon controller, infused with lovebane, had reduced Merren to a simpering slave at my feet, babbling as he caressed his face with the hem of my dress, his rough hands on my dark stockings. I suppose Sleck couldn't help it, but I couldn't object, could I, nor slip him the antidote right then, not with everyone watching me to see what I'd do when the older man, the man whose life I'd saved, kissed me voraciously, pulling me against him, mauling my glossy lips worse than any man had that day.

The two great ships looked awfully powerful as they sailed so closely together. Yes, the fighting was over and now came the talking. I had to dress in another pretty black dress, for Rob, to be accepted as a witch by the crew of *Silvery Seas*, my former ship where I'd been taken on as a cabin boy. They lined the riggings and decks, to stare at me. I couldn't recognize anyone as I was swung in a seachair from *Zephyr*, clasping my dress to me as the men stared

up at me, several of the most ribald shouting out how pretty my legs, and panties, were.

“You look most delightful, My Lady Arrathee,” said Undercaptain Peveret as he assisted me from the seachair. He was in a male, dress uniform, like Dowd, while I had to wear the short, swishy, black dress, padded in all the right places to make me appear to be the girl everyone now said I was. “I do believe you’ve passed the test I set for you, in a most exemplary way. There’s not a man on this ship who’ll question your femaleness, nor your right to be acclaimed as a witch!”

“But they all know,” I began uncomfortably as he bowed to me as if I was indeed a lady, taking my hand, forcing me to curtsy to him, my black dress rustling so femininely about me.

“They all know what they were told about you,” said Peveret, kissing my hand and making me quake in my padded, female, body-forming dress. “And they know what we officers are now saying about you. They know that officers lie, of course. What they believe, until they have personal experience, is what they see with their own eyes. So, My Lady Arrathee, you’re a witch, not a warlock, sure to go mad some day. I hope that you enjoy your journey into femininity.”

I almost threw up as he said that to me. Journey into femininity? Was he deliberately trying to turn me into a girl? Yes, if I was a warlock, the men of either ship would have knifed me or strung me up, right there. Peveret was warning me in his usual, oblique way, letting me decide if I wanted to live or die. I wanted to live and so I was a girl, and I was a witch.

“Your makeup is so refined, and your perfume,” the undercaptain was going on. “I didn’t realize that you were so skilled, my lady, in the female arts.”

“There are cabbies with talent on *Zephyr* as well as on *Silvery Seas*, my lord,” I said to him, hot flushes

sweeping over me as I pranced, yes, that was the word for what I was doing, in my new high heels, beside this man. “They, they’re the ones who deserve your praise for what you see in me.”

I shivered convulsively, unable to stop myself. Peveret smiled sympathetically. What I’d told him was the truth. Rosee had found the best ‘girls’ to assist me in feminizing myself. Marea had staggered from her bed, still weeping for her lost love. Looking as if she was at death’s door, she’d forced herself to style my hair for me, her choices of shampoos, conditioners and gelling solutions giving off uniquely feminine fragrances quite unknown to me.

Vernisse had assisted Rosee in choosing what was right for me to wear - from the small, clingy, white, embroidered panties to my new, flowing but short, black gown. Vernisse had been most forthright in getting certain ‘sick’ cabbies out of their beds to the seamstress machines assembled in one cabin aboard the *Zephyr*. Rosee had to have new dresses as I did. They were made quickly. But most of all, mine had to fit my figure in my new undies as perfectly as they’d have fitted any woman.

“All the girls wanted to work on dresses for you, my lady,” Vernisse said in her new, lovely, contralto voice, the cordial having a strangely wonderful effect on her. “They aren’t complaining at all, knowing the clothing is for you. The cobbler, of course, wants more than he’s entitled to for new shoes. It’s a pity Berreck and Stansy died of, of the plague.” There was a quick glance at me then. I guessed it might have been in a plague of knife wounds aboard *Zephyr*. “They did such good work and were reasonable in their requests.”

I had to ask Rosee what Vernisse meant by that. I gathered that, for all jobs that were ‘extra’, not ordered by an officer, favors, sexual favors, were the currency of exchanges.

“What does Osteck, the cobbler, expect from me for these,” I asked her, the gleaming, black leather, high heels decorated and stitched as befitted my station as a Lady, Rosee had told me.

“Oh, that, my lady,” said Rosee with an impish grin. “That fee is reimbursed by your maid, my lady, or one of her girl friends. Don’t look at me like that, my lady. I really don’t mind! Osteck is really gentle, for all the size of his manhood. Some girls get hurt when he penetrates them. He’s always sorry about that!”

I’d been sore, often, when my lover, Rob, had been at me all night. There were creams and salves for all sorts of injuries. Why wasn’t there one for the ravages of sexual congress? I thought about what I’d need myself if Dowd was to be my man for a long time. I could make wound cleansers and fortifiers. I could surely make a salve that would help Rosee, and me. I had to shudder at such thoughts running through me on that topic. But making a salve was fairly easy. Rosee, once I’d explained what I was doing, wanted to try it out.

Dowd had given in, with very bad grace, to Sleck’s insistence we must parley with *Silvery Seas* to find out, at least, what they wanted of ‘us’. Dowd had recovered well, my fortifier really assisting him. He’d come to my workroom, disrupted my work, taken me by the hand, and led me back to our cabin where everyone on *Zephyr* must have known what he was doing to me.

I didn’t get a chance to take any lovebane and Dowd didn’t care. He wanted me as a woman and kissed me most cruelly and forcefully from the start. He made very little effort to make me feel womanly in any way as my other lovers had, even when they were rough with me. He did let me use the salve on my tush, telling me it was just what he needed to slide right into me.



How like a man, which I wasn't! I had a fleeting, female thought as I wriggled and slithered over Dowd's aroused manhood. I know I squealed like any girl taken as forcefully as I was. But the worse part was that it wasn't awful as before, with Rob. The salve really made the sensation of my male lover jerking into and out of me no more than a little uncomfortable. If I'd wanted him doing it, as I'd wanted Rob inside me so often, it could even have been most pleasant, I thought in alarm.

Dowd wanted what he wanted from me to please only himself. I didn't feel at all like a girl though he was doing to me what Rob had done to me, often. As I rode on his pole, I wanted to die in shame, in the soft, girlish clothing Dowd barely took from me. He forced me to kiss him and caress him as I was penetrated, my pretties caressing me. I felt so perverted to be doing such with a man, he holding me and forcing me to do things that I could remember doing lovingly with Rob, wanting to please him.

I was numb after making love to Dowd, crying like a little girl at the thought of being forced to be a woman every night with a man like him. I'd be begging for lovebane, I thought miserably, very soon, to make such lovemaking tolerable to a boy like me.

I was so glad the officers of *Silvery Seas* insisted that 'the witch' be at the parley. I wanted to be anywhere else but on *Zephyr* with Dowd. He followed me back to my work and mauled me in front of everyone in the *Zephyr* workroom, marking me, I think, as his woman, his seawife. So I was glad to go to the parley where 'Captain' Dowd didn't dare to go, or so I thought. But at the last moment, he came with us, saying his injuries were much improved, thanks to the special care I'd given him. He smiled lasciviously as he said that. His followers growled lewdly as they looked at me.

It was strange to see the cabbies on *Silvery Seas*, those I knew, in shorter dresses, showing off

stockinged ankles and pretty, girlie shoes, I noted. I'd heard that the cabbies had had to take up some of the slack for some of the men *Zephyr* was holding. I supposed that cabbies couldn't work in long skirts, not in deck occupations. Why weren't they made to go back to their boyish greys, I wondered. I'd have loved to have done that.

A host of officers, riggers, marines, sharpshooters and several, beautiful, striking 'women' were waiting in reception lines for us, the *Zephyr* members of the parley, as the talkative Undercaptain Peveret led me from the seachair to join them. I couldn't believe I was back on board the ship that had been willing to sacrifice me to the plague. I was so glad there wasn't going to be any kind of parley unless I was there, the Baract witch, a priceless commodity Dowd had said, with the 'officers' of *Zephyr*.

Panella, so beautiful in pearls, wore them at her throat and wrists, but particularly hanging from her earlobes. She had more woven through her golden, gleaming hair, one black pearl, surely a rare one, lying on her forehead, rolling each time she shook her lovely hair which she did often. She moved with a feminine grace that left me feeling like an idiot. Envy, wherever did such an emotion come from, swept over me as Panella, a former cabin boy, now a 'mother' to those who'd succeeded her, she, dressed in a gorgeous, golden-colored gown, curtsied to me. Goddesses, her perfume was so sweet, so perfect, as she swept forward to embrace me.

"So you really are a witch!" Panella whispered to me, as her real breasts bounced in the very low cut dress she was wearing. "But who is this lovely, lovely man?" she asked me in a louder, feminine voice, indicating a goggle-eyed Sleek. She moved in gracefully to talk to him, to distract him, while Peveret led me on to speak to others whom I scarcely knew.

It was so weird. It was like one of my father's 'garden parties' where I'd played waiter and host. I'd

never expected ever in my life to be one of the female guests being paraded about, curtsying to powerful men, smiling and pretending that I enjoyed all the compliments I received. All the time, Peveret held my arm as if he was a male out for a stroll with a pretty girl, me.

I'd never met Mirrie, Captain Brisard's 'seawife', before. She had masses of red hair and wore a green dress, tiny straps at her shoulder. That allowed the front of her dress to drop down and show off her breasts, and all her female loveliness, in full. She had to be a woman, I thought, with male urges rising up in me. I looked at green eyes fringed in heavy black, smiling provocatively at the injured, scowling Captain Dowd, who mellowed almost instantaneously, looking away from me, as Mirrie put her thin arms about his neck.

I couldn't believe how Dowd reacted to her as she moved inside his arms and insisted he kiss her. She proclaimed herself to be a gift from one captain to another. I wasn't going to have to use many potions I carried in my purse to change minds, I thought, amused, and glad not to have to do it. Dowd had told me to be ready but the way he and Mirrie were smiling and flirting with one another, I didn't doubt that *Zephyr's* captain was soon going to be too busy with the lovely woman in his arms to worry about a little thing like controlling the negotiators on both sides.

I glanced at the man holding my manicured, feminine hand. Peveret smiled at me, making my body run cold. It seemed as if he understood everything in my mind. I hoped that he hadn't bespelled me already. I couldn't feel anything, or sense anything in the air or on his skin, where he'd touched me, that could harm or control me.

The procession towards the parley room began with Captain Brisard joining his amorous 'wife' and 'Captain' Dowd. He didn't seem to be at all put out with Mirrie's scandalous behaviour with Dowd.

Undercaptain Peveret and I were at the very rear as I'd been the last to arrive from the *Zephyr*.

"I'm sorry to hear young Rob perished," said Peveret as I placed my gloved hand on his to stroll the upper deck. We might have been a Lord and Lady of Terraire, mincing about the harbor, retainers and maids all about us. Peveret politely indicated differences in the construction of the two great ships to his female companion, me.

"Do you miss him, Lady Arrathee?" the undercaptain asked me seriously as we stopped to look at the differences in sailing jibs in the two great ships. "I still fail to understand his actions. He betrayed us completely and became an officer of *Zephyr*? Is that what happened? And you, my lady, what of you? Were you coerced into making those harquebusses fire as they did? What a scare you gave us!

"You had everyone thinking that you were going to sink us as Lady Sherrene did *Tempest of Distant Oceans*! Did you plan what you did, my lady, to betray the ship that rescued you from a watery grave? Do you have potions in that pretty purse you carry to use on us if we do not agree to everything *Zephyr* wants from us?"

"I, I'm not p-planning anything, my, my lord," I said to Undercaptain Peveret, my girlish blushes surely contradicting what I was saying. "It's you who insist on my presence here at this parley!" He stared at me and glanced at my purse. "I, I have to protect myself and the, the captain, if you attack us!"

"Your voice is so lovely," said Peveret, edging me to a sheltered spot on the deck where he stopped, some of the following officers of *Silvery Seas* streaming on past us towards a wide hall where liquor and delicacies were being served by glamorous waitresses in short dresses, one of them Gennee and another

Mollee, I noticed, being able to tell them from a distance.

“I think you’ve been making more of that cordial I made Panella give to you,” Peveret went on. “Your maid was chattering like a cliff swallow hen anxious about the first flight of her brood. Most attractive voice she had. If you’ve made some to spare, I know Panella would love to have some back. And if the gift came from my hands, well, the goddess’s reward I’d receive would be like attending the Fire God’s banquet as an honored guest.”

“There were ingredients, active agents, in Dasell’s workplace,” I said cautiously to the undercaptain. I wondered if he’d ask about the term I’d used but Peveret didn’t.

“And did the honorable Dasell ...?” began the undercaptain, steering me ahead again after the rest of the strollers.

“Dead,” I had to tell him, thinking of the body in the workplace. I didn’t tell him how the man I’d seen had died but the undercaptain seemed to understand what I didn’t say.

“So you are proved to be a witch,” Peveret went on. “Even Brisard understands that, my lady, and will not contest your status. The shells Rob was using in that harquebuss, quite ingenious and something new, wasn’t it? Planned before we even sent you to be tested?”

“It was spur of the moment,” I said nervously to him, my dress rustling and my earrings and hair jiggling about me as I sashayed femininely with ‘Pev’. “Dowd wanted what Lady Sherrene had done but I don’t know what she did or how she did it. All I could do was fortify the black powder in some shells. The effect was light and smoke. Lady Sherrene and the great witches of the Kingdom of the Baracts can produce real explosions, I’ve been told repeatedly, since.

Dowd is annoyed at how little I really did, as a witch, to help him.”

“Interesting,” said Peveret with that cynical smile of his again, making me very nervous as he kept me beside him, a female conquest, his arm through mine, strolling with me slowly so that I felt like a show dancer on tiptoe. I should never have worn such high-heeled shoes at such a time.

“I have a proposal to make to you, Lady Arrathee,” the undercaptain said, slowing and stopping, the crowd some distance from us. A breeze was coming up and making my skirts clasp my legs more tightly. My hair blew about my painted face again as my earrings were in motion as well. I felt silly and effeminate as Peveret’s hand slipped about my waist so familiarly.

“It’s a proposal your new friends cannot match,” the undercaptain went on most seriously. “I’ll let you bespell me so that you can test me on what I say.” I gasped as he held onto my hand more firmly as I tried to slide away from him. “I’ll give you honesty, Lady Arrathee. I’ll give you my father’s book to guide your studies in becoming as great a witch as the lamented Lady Sherrene, whom we treated so badly and let get away from us.”

“You’ll let me go back to the Kingdom?” I asked the undercaptain boldly, the thoughts that pressed upon me, all the time, working their way to the front of my mind. An odd, tingling passed through me as Peveret sighed and lifted my hand to kiss it. Several of the *Zephyr’s* crew were turned to look for me. They watched that gesture, staring at me, the ‘girls’ they were with having a hard time engaging them in the flirting that Lurina and Fessee did so easily to Merren and Rangoll.

“Yes, I promise I’ll let you do that,” said Undercaptain Peveret looking me directly in the eyes and sounding so convincing. Oh, I wished I’d the

nerve to take out a controller, cast it upon him and ask that question again, right there. “There are many here who’ll fight not to allow that. But so long as you’re on this ship, in my care, and support this clan and this line, I commit my line and house to doing what you desire.

“We, of the Komer Line, will live up to an agreement we make with you and give Lady Arrathee passage back to the Kingdom of the Baracts when you’ve done what we ask of you.” He smiled. “I don’t actually think, in a year or two, any Cunian will be able to contain you or stop you getting what you want, will we? There, I’m being honest.”

“What is this book of your father’s ...?” I had to ask him, my insides reeling, as I thought about what he wanted me, a witch, to do. He wanted me to spend the next two years of my life, at least, as a woman! I couldn’t do that! I had to get out of this awful, pretty dress that I was in.

I didn’t want any man, any more, to have me in his bed. I wanted the undercaptain, to start with, to stop stroking my arm so gently. Couldn’t Peveret see that I was in a black widow’s dress, and hating being in women’s undies and makeup before him? I was in mourning for a man who’d loved me. That thought almost made me choke but Peveret didn’t seem to be bothered by my agitation at all.

“My father is Elder Wesset of the Komer Line of the Yaro Clan,” said Peveret, answering directly the question I’d asked him. “He was an alchemist and aboard *Tempest of Distant Oceans*, the great ship Lady Sherrene destroyed in Bridgewater Harbor. He kept a record of everything Lady Sherrene did, what ingredients she used, the proportions she used in potions, and what was used from the stocks he provided her with, where he could.

“Many of the things she did, he’d no idea what they were intended for. There are several concoctions he’s

tried to make that he daren't test on anyone. A witch like you can probably tell what they're for. You may not have heard the saying but there is one that says that the first subject a witch works on is herself. She makes herself more beautiful.

"Lady Sherrene did that, my father says. She also changed her maids to look like her, you know. She gave the cabbies, who attended her as maids, breasts and feminine tushes. Their hair became thicker, curlier. She gave them dyes to change the colors of their hair and lotions for their skin that made them appear more girlish.

"Ganasate was the name of the one concoction that brings about the bodily changes you see in Fessee most acutely. There was some rescued, scavenged, from *Tempest*. Most of it went with the girls who went with Lady Sherrene.

"My father examined what those who stayed had with them. The saved concoctions became the source of the materials you see lovely Panella using today. My father was the only one to recognize the love potions, the one called 'lovebane', the cordials, like your voice-altering clasper, as he called it, and other potions for what they were. There were many for cleaning rots that afflict wounds.

"Wesset can tell the difference between potions for beautiful hair and others that control a person's thoughts and, even, their desires. But many concoctions eluded him. We've tried to keep a little of everything we had in salvage until at last we could kidnap a witch and she could make more of whatever it was Lady Sherrene made. And no, we don't know the secret of swamp gas. Wesset thinks she actually did concoct it in the workplace she was provided with."

"You want me to make potions to make your cabbies more like real women?" I asked Peveret with a shudder passing through me. No, I couldn't talk about swamp gas and the powers the great witches

used to keep the Foreshore or Kingdom of the Baracts safe from invasion. Besides, what would it be like to have real breasts like a woman, instead of the pads taped to my chest? I could scarcely believe anyone could do that. Mirrie then came dancing along the deck, her hands in Dowd's, her breasts bouncing.

"The captains are worried about what the two of you are planning," Mirrie announced, flicking her long hair over her thin shoulders and arms. Her pink, glossy mouth curved in a lovely smile at me. "You can make more ganasate, can't you, Lady Arrathee? Peveret has promised you will, now that we all know you're a witch! We girls all want to look as lovely and feminine as you, my lady!"

"You're not taking her from us!" Dowd said angrily, fending off Mirrie's little, girlish attentions to him. "We made that clear in the conditions for this parley!"

"We could change those," said Peveret lightly. Dowd gave him a furious look. I thought he was going to pull a knife and attack Peveret. Several other men clearly thought so, too, as several of the Watch, no, what do they call them on a Seafarer ship, bluebands. Yes, bluebands appeared all around us as Mirrie moved her arm and held her hair from her face with languid, feminine fingers. I wished I could do it as easily as her.

"But we aren't changing the terms of this parley, at all," said Peveret as Dowd tensed. "Remember, though, captain," I don't know how Pev could say that to Dowd with such a straight face with no mockery at all, "we did send Lady Arrathee to you, didn't we, to assist you in conquering the plague your ship was infested with. Why should we not wish her returned to us now she's so admirably concluded that task?"

"You tried to take our ship!" snarled Dowd.

"Ah," sighed the undercaptain. "I do believe you're correct in that, Captain Dowd. But that was when the

highest council on this ship thought we were dealing with a mutiny at sea. We were most anxious to help you, Captain Dowd, against such a catastrophe. That's why we sent men across to aid you and protect Lady Arrathee and her companion, Sailing Officer Robady."

"You don't get her back," snarled Dowd, turning on a heel, leaving Mirrie standing, hands on hips, smiling in surprise to be so treated by a man. She went after him, her long skirts rising about her as a breeze was really getting up.

"You understand what's going to happen?" Undercaptain Peveret said to me, signalling to one of his men who opened a door. I was let into a room right there on the captain's deck. My mouth must have fallen open in amazement as I saw neatly arranged shelves, glass bottles and vials with labels announcing their contents. And there was a huge, black ledger, just like the one I'd seen Peveret with, before.

"We'll have to divide you between the two ships," Peveret went on as I looked about me in awe. "We'll have to send some of the crew over in any case, to get that hulk to Greenhaven. They're short on supplies, aren't they? You'll have to help us with that, as a witch, my lady. There'll be fights, and accidents, when two crews mix, there always are, but when you, the witch, save lives, your position on both ships will be secured. And, on this ship, lovely Lady Arrathee, I promise you, you'll never be forced to sleep with any man you don't want to." He paused and looked sheepishly at me. "You were Rob's seawife, weren't you? It was what he was yelling to you when he was shot down?"

I nodded, unable to add to what he'd said. Cold gripped me as I stumbled after him, my grace as a woman, if I'd ever had any, seeming to have gone.

The ‘negotiating’ went on for several days to end the war between the ships. I shared a bed with Dowd wherever we were, on *Zephyr* or *Silvery Seas*, he getting grumpier by the day as I told him that I couldn’t control the negotiators. They’d come in wearing antidotes to everything we had, I told him. Peveret was some sort of alchemist. That was safe to say, I think. I’d passed his test in curing the men of *Zephyr*. He offered to help me become a better witch. Maybe I could find out something to help Captain Dowd if he’d let me, I said to Dowd.

“Find out how to give yourself breasts like that Mirrie,” said a leering Dowd. “You’d be twice the woman you are if you had breasts like her.”

I didn’t want to tell him that Peveret had already said he’d show me how to do that. His father’s book was explicit on that topic.

I’d almost no time to myself. I wished Rob was there to help me when I was back on the *Zephyr* with kettles and stills working all the time to make what the crew needed to get back on their feet.

“If I could just have someone like Robady to help me,” I complained to Dowd in front of a gang of men gathering up completed potions. Some were for transferring to *Silvery Seas*.

I saw Maresey, once a mate on *Sword*, the ship I’d been a cadet on so long ago, it seemed, staring at me. I was sure it was because he’d recognized me as the boy cadet I’d been. I thought he wanted to confront me about my being now so girlish and claiming to be a witch.

I tried to avoid him but he sought me out. “My lady,” Maresey said respectfully to me, as he drew tea from the great urn in the kitchens as I was doing.

Several days had passed since the treaty had been agreed to. There were a lot of men from *Silvery Seas* now aboard *Zephyr*. “You were saying you needed Robady to assist you in your potion-making.”

I felt tremors pass through me as I looked at a man who’d ordered me about as a cadet, now looking at me with admiration in his eyes for my womanliness. He didn’t seem to see Arrat Metherd at all, only Lady Arrathee.

“He’s dead,” I said with a little choke in my voice. “Are, are you volunteering to assist me in the work station, making potions?”

“Oh, no, my lady,” said Maresey. “Not me. I’m a rigger, or, well, I was an officer on another ship once. No, my lady, it was just that you mentioned Robady. He was your sea husband, wasn’t he?”

“You knew him?” I asked lightly, knowing what the answer would be.

“Oh yes, my lady,” said Maresey, once a mate on *King Tatheren’s Sword* where I’d ‘served’ under him, to speak the words properly. “I know him well. He’s not dead, my lady. He was hurt in the fighting but he’s not dead. But he’s a Baract, my lady, isn’t he? He’s like me. He knows all about witches and how dangerous they can be to poor fellows like us.”

“He’s alive!” I gasped at the third mate, as I still thought of him, one of the few men from *Sword* I still recognized. Of course, he’d know I was a Baract, a witch. He’d trust me as a fellow, well, a female, from the Kingdom, our home.

“He doesn’t want the captains, or undercaptains, of a certain ship, my lady,” Maresey said, frowning as he studied me intently, “from finding out he’s still alive but he did say to tell you, my lady, that one day,” Maresey glanced about the kitchen as if frightened of anyone else hearing what he was about to

say, “one day, my lady, he says, he will be home with his wife, introducing her to his family.”

Maresey saw Dowd enter the kitchen then, looking around until he saw me. The leer on Dowd’s face was terrible. Goddesses, forgive me, I beseeched them, if they truly existed. I minced over to my latest sea husband and slipped my arm under his, lifting up on tip-toes to kiss this man who still wanted me, every time he saw me.

I eased the vial of lovebane out of my purse. If I took a strong dose, it would seem to me at least that his having me as a woman was a wonderful, feminine pleasure, until I woke up in the morning. I’d even think of Rob as Dowd had me, imagining in my girlish moments that I was still in love with the man who’d first called himself my husband.

There has to be homage to Haruva, the Fire-god, Seafarers say, when a ship passes by the smoking mountain that rises from the sea. It takes just over a tenday to pass, normally, in a ‘slow’ great ship, from the Many Isles. Celebrations, revels, costumes, dances and a great feast take place on all ships which pass Haruva’s Isle. We were no exception as both of the great ships traversed the Ocean of Clouds together.

Because of me, the witch who ministered to both ships, there’d be two different Celebrations, *Silvery Seas* first, as it was the lead ship. Then, I and the men aiding *Zephyr* to sail the oceans would transfer back by cutters to a second, raucous Celebration on that vessel.

My captain and lover, Dowd, refused to let me miss the ceremony on the *Zephyr*. He let his great ship lag a long way behind the guardian *Silvery Seas* while I

went back and forth on a swift cutter. I would be all his once the festivities began on the mutinied ship. I wasn't looking forward to it at all as all the other 'cabbies' were.

On *Silvery Seas*, all the 'girls', as we cabbies called ourselves, were in the highest state of excitement as we prepared for the 'rites of passage'. Gennee kidded me that once upon a time virgins had been sacrificed to the Fire-God, the prettiest cabbie being flung into the sea to propitiate the god.

"I'll be sorry to see Mirrie disappear beneath the waves," I said to my maid who was sharing not only my warm bathwater, but also shared the depilatories I used on my feminized body to make me soft and pliable to a man's touch.

Gennee pouted and laughed. No-one any more believed a volcano was a god or that the dolphins that swam in the waters about such an island were fish-goddesses, competing for the love and affections of Haruva.

"They couldn't throw her in," said Gennee in her sweet, soprano voice. "She isn't a virgin, is she?"

"So all of us are safe," I said to Gennee, making us both have a girlish fit of the giggles. It was, of course, quite true. By the first Celebration on any great ship, there were no longer any virgins aboard. I could attest to that. Not even being a witch and arming myself with potions had saved me from two different men who'd claimed my 'maidenhead' as a woman.

I wasn't as pretty as Mirrie, the captain's seawife, either. My breasts weren't developed as I hadn't been taking ganasate, the changing potion, for as long as Mirrie had. She had such beautiful, womanly breasts on an incredibly feminine body that everyone, man or girl, well, sort of girl - the best that could be done on a ship that traveled so far from land and any kind of harbor - everyone, we all lusted after or admired her, often having both emotions at the same time.

Gennee stood up in our bathwater to reach for a towel. I couldn't believe how she'd developed in such a short time of taking the potions I'd made for girls on both ships. I was now having to take them, too.

"You'll soon be as developed as me," laughed Gennee, knowing why I was staring so enviously at her chest, her nipples so large and pronounced, 'just like my mother' she'd blushing told me. She meant her real mother and not the senior, older cabbie, called 'mother' by us all. 'She' made sure we 'girls' were as girlie and girlish as we possibly could be, our sole purpose being to pleasure the ship's crew and keep them working.

Both of the men who were my lovers, the captain on one ship and the undercaptain on the other, thought I should fit in with the other girls. I'd tried to protest but it was a token gesture. Peveret, the undercaptain on *Silvery Seas*, made sure that I took my ganasate once he'd learned Dowd was making me take it, with the other girls, on *Zephyr*.

"I don't want to be as developed as you," I said to Gennee who actually had breasts pronounced enough now to bounce when she moved. Her bra moved when she donned it. She wasn't using padding any more, as I was.

"You know they won't let you stop, the men," Gennee laughed as she ran a bandage about my chest and so my cleavage appeared, seeming so real with the padded bra I still wore. "Look at Fessee! Have you ever seen such pearapples since she's been taking your potions!"

I'd noticed Fessee, just as every man on the ship must have. She'd had access to some of the concoctions Mirrie, Panella and Lerrina, the seawives on *Silvery Seas*, also had, thanks to Undercaptain Peveret, definitely an alchemist like his father. All of the seawives and mothers had breasts, like women. Fessee, who had been a seawife, had really 'blos-

somed' since she taken the new ganasate I manufactured.

Fessee wore really low-cut dresses. She must have had them remade for her. She swished more than any other woman I'd ever seen but, in fact, we were all practicing swaying walks in imitation of real women. We imitated Fessee's imitations as she wobbled down the ship's deck which she found time to do almost hourly. How the men whistled and clicked after her and how she loved the adulation she and her bosom were getting.

Sometimes, I felt a little sick when I saw the evidence of my handiwork on girls like Fessee. I saw so many girls with protruding, shapely breasts, wobbling as they minced in their high heels about the ship on whatever task they were on. I saw and heard more than that, of course, even though the men seemed to have their tongues hanging out mostly over a pair of pretty breasts.

I saw how the masheen I'd made was making the girls' hair so bright, shiny and curly. Peveret insisted I have my hair dyed the same blonde color as the other girls, so that I fitted in with them. I no longer stood out with my brunette hair. I think the same arguments must have been presented to the other cadets, captured with me, who'd been assigned 'cabbie' status with me.

I couldn't see any of the seven cadets who'd been dark-haired at that first Celebration with me. They'd 'disappeared' into the mass of 'girls' on *Silvery Seas*. It made me think of Robady, my husband who'd disappeared. Dowd said he was dead but Maresey of our old crew had assured me he wasn't.

What would Rob think of me now, I asked myself with a shudder as I painted my face to be that of the goddess, Anuree. We all had to have red, red lips, 'kissable', in Peveret's words, but he'd never found my lips to be anything less than that. He shouldn't

have, either, because he openly used double and triple lovebane with me, on me, from the first time he'd taken me into his bed, making my wits disappear. I had such longings under that strengthened potion. I was a woman, desperate to make my man, Peveret, love me and be pleased by me.

But not just in our hair and our busts were we 'girls' changing, I was noticing, and many of the men were noticing as well. I couldn't believe the wiggly hips on so many girls, tushes, rounded and feminine, and legs, girlishly shaped. Faces were softer, I was sure, but whether that was because of the ganasate or all the lotions we girls had to use, I didn't know.

We all had lilting girls' voices, the product of the throat cordial I made in great quantities for my shipmates. Our jingling jewellery announced that we were around as much as our high-pitched, girlie greetings for one another. And, on both ships, we all dressed like girls all of the time, not waiting only for a Revel or Celebration.

I wore short, rustly, ruffled dresses, like all the other girls, but, for this Celebration, I had to be in a costume, just like all the other girls. And these girls wanted to show off the changes that I'd made in them, encouraged of course by Peveret. He'd found me the recipes for masheen and ganasate in the book of potions that he had. He called it Wesset's Book, claiming that it was what Wesset had observed Lady Sherrene, a true witch, concocting for other cabin boys when she was a seawife.

"Now, my lady," Gennee said to me as I tried to put on a bra beneath the brief costume that was all that would cover my upper body. "I would be removed as your maid if I let you go out to the Celebration in that mother of a bra!" She knew how to tape me and pad me so that it appeared as if my breasts were real.

"There hasn't been a Celebration like this," said Gennee, repeating what Peveret had said to me. "Not

since Lady Sherrene have there been so many girls like us! It's going to be the most wonderful Celebration ever!"

Later, my maid on the *Zephyr*, Rosee, would say the same thing to me. Both were right!

The feminine perfumes of our bathwater had concealed the lovebane that was in both the fragrances we wore and in the water itself. I could sense it but it was better that I didn't object or take antidotes to feeling that I was a girl as, then, my days, and especially my evenings, would have become a living nightmare. Being taken by Dowd when I had no lovebane in me was a hellish experience, all my male feelings affronted by the way he made me behave as such an overly feminine, bordello girl.

I let the giddy, girlie Gennee make me into a goddess like her, letting the lovebane surge through me as it did. It was so much easier to feel like a girl, act like a girl and survive as a girl, on these long-trip ships, so much easier for someone like me whom all the men said was a girl.

I let Gennee twist strands of black glass 'pearls' through my hair. I let her fashionably, that is girlish fashionably, brush and pin my golden hair into place. She secured a ponytail, that's what I would have called it, though she called it 'mermaid' hair, so that I had the feel of long, soft hair down my back just like all the other girls.

I wore the skimpiest of dark green panties over my taped masculinity. How Gennee found the cavities into which she forced my malenesses I've no idea. I didn't understand either why she affixed a pad over the front of me, white and gleaming, that I knew my lover would soon rip away from me. I only know that it was uncomfortable but the potion I'd developed soothed even that. Gennee made sure that I was salved with the potion that I'd developed for girls who

were hurt in being made love to by ardent, largely developed men.

I couldn't help a shudder as I knew what I was being prepared for. I pulled my panties up but there wasn't much material in them. I wore a thin, frilly garter belt, as Gennee did. We slid on netted stockings that fastened over our hips and looked so womanly sexy on us. That's when the heavy breathing and excitement really began to rise in me as I saw the slender goddesses curling their eyelashes and painting their lips together in my long mirror. Oh yes, one of them was me.

The skirts we had to wear were so short, just to the tops of our stockings, and there were slits in them as well that made sure that the men could see everything about us as we cavorted and danced before them as they wished, even though we were still 'clothed', if barely.

Gennee put my earrings on for me, large and golden bangles like hers. I wore a necklace and arm bangles as she did and, like her, I stood and pouted at my awfully female image in the mirror that I had in Peveret's cabin.

My fingernails gleamed, as scarlet as my mouth, just like Gennee's. We had high, high heels, held on by tiny straps, to wear on our feet, our painted toes clearly visible to anyone who wanted to look down there.

"Remember, my lady, to walk like a goddess," Gennee instructed me, opening the door to let the two of us parade, our tushes weaving like drunken sailors, over to the line of girls just like us.

"Oh, my lady," said a girl whom I couldn't recognize as she looked exactly like me. She put out her arms to me and her breasts bounced against me as she hugged me. "Thank you, thank you, thank you, from the bottom of my heart, for what you've done for me. I've never felt so womanly in my entire life before.

I have to thank you, my lady, no matter how this Celebration ends. But I'm sure it's going to be so wonderful!"

So much for being just one of the girls! All of the girls had to thank me for what I'd done for them, for how I'd made them into women. I couldn't stop the weird, shivery feelings running through me as breasts pressed against me, strange, lovely perfumes spreading over me as girlie bodies caressed mine.

"And tonight," Gennee reminded us all as she hugged me last of all, "my lady is just a girl, one of us; so don't you girls go telling anyone who she is. The god will be angry with us all if we reveal that there is, there is, a mortal woman, in our midst. Let him find my lady if he can and enjoy Haruva, girls, if he cannot, and he chooses you!"

There was a fanfare of music, pipes and drums playing so incredibly together as we girls danced forward on our slender high heels and pouted and vamped the male audience watching us as we circled the great god on his fiery throne. We pirouetted and tossed our long hair. I forgot entirely who I was as I swirled past the god and let his hands rove over my rounded tush as I smiled and caressed his bearded face with shining tips of soft, girlish fingers.

The roar from the men on the ship must have been heard all the way to Cunya, I thought, as we girls raised our arms and twirled and twisted, shimmering and shaking as we tried to entice the great god with our femininity. We certainly were arousing the crew of the ship. The bluebands had to wade in and rescue laughing girls whom the men grabbed and were trying to kiss even before Haruva made his choice of the 'sacrifice'!

"Choose! Choose!" the crew was calling as girlish figures bounced all around me. I knew I looked like one part of the visions of loveliness on all sides of me as well.

Haruva didn't seem to know what he was doing. He seized goddesses and pinched their breasts making all who were caught squeal like women before he let them go. He stalked the circle as girls thrust themselves at him, pouting and flipping their tiny skirts, showing off their panties to the God of Fire. He caressed and slapped lovely tushes and even accepted lingering kisses from many who flung themselves at him.

“Choose!” the men were chanting impatiently and suddenly the god moved. He came straight across the dais behind which I was well hidden. I was smiling for all the men leering at me from the riggings. The girls around me scattered, shrieking and giggling as the ‘god’ bore down on his chosen one, me. I screamed as I felt his strong hands sweeping beneath my stockings and panties. He lifted me up, holding me over his head, my skirt torn right off as I tried to keep it over my tiny panties, my hair and earrings falling back behind me and over his face.

Haruva lifted me to his throne, my panties being torn from me as he forced me to sit facing him. The men were cheering, shouting something about sacrificing me as the god slowly and dramatically drew me to him. “My panties!” I squealed at him, clutching at the white triangle that was all that served to conceal me from the hungry men but the god choked off my warnings by kissing me, his tongue deep in my throat.

My legs were caressed and kissed as he put them up over his chest and then behind his neck; Haruva drew a brilliant red silk sheet around me, over the white pad that was still in place. Passionate kisses poured on my lips as his hands seemed to be everywhere to move me into position to be taken by a man. It was obvious, despite the silk covering, that he was working his way inside me. All around me, goddesses were squealing and jumping and clapping girlishly as I was ‘sacrificed’ to the god. The men began to beat the rhythm of the drums and cheer, calling on

Haruva for permission to sacrifice all the goddesses to him.

“You- you never said ...!” I screamed at the god who was bouncing me on his manhood as he pulled away just one part of my bra and feasted so wonderfully on my nipple. He lifted a dark flag beside the throne. The crewmen exploded in cheering as the goddesses lifted colorful silk sheets and twitched their bodies in front of the salivating men.

“I’m just glad that it’s you!” Peveret whispered in my ear as he rolled me over onto the silk-covered platform and drove himself into me as everyone was cheering as if they had never seen a man and a ‘woman’ making love before. The silk sheet didn’t prevent anyone from seeing what we were doing as it molded itself to our bodies. By then, I was so aroused with the lovebane that poured from him that I didn’t care at all what anyone saw my lover, Peveret, doing to me, a quivering, feminine goddess on Haruva’s throne.

And then, suddenly, all of the other goddesses were hauling men into the circle and onto the raised platforms that I’d avoided when I’d danced. Oh, it was frenzied all around us as girls squealed and urged the men they’d selected to make love to them. The short, silk sheets, like the skirts and panties the goddesses wore, didn’t stop anyone from seeing what was happening between crewmen and girls. The white triangles of material, however, ensured we all appeared only as women as we were penetrated at that moment.

“Oh! Oh! Oh!” I screamed, having to kiss my lover, such an understanding god, as I convulsed and spasmed beneath him, the huge roar in my ears from the audience who might have thought I was faking what I was doing. I couldn’t do that, not with the passions surging through me. I knew I was a goddess and was being mounted by a god who found pleasure in kissing and caressing me, even though I wasn’t as

rounded and as beautiful as some other girls. I femininely climaxed with Haruva as he climaxed like a man inside me, his mouth trying to kiss me everywhere as I wriggled in female ecstasy. I could hear other girls squealing as they clung passionately to their men.

“Welcome to the Many Isles,” whispered Peveret as I writhed beneath the god, encouraging him to keep on having me; and so we went on as other girls switched lovers, losing what little clothing they had, save for the affixed, white triangles, as the orgy wouldn’t let up until my wonderful man had bucked me on his manhood and emptied himself into me a half dozen times.

I still wanted more. I wanted his hands around my womanly tush and his lips suckling on my breasts, small though they were. “Privacy, my darling goddess,” Peveret whispered to me through his stage hair and makeup. “I must have you naked, darling Arrathee, and though no-one will notice now, I think, it is time to bring an end to this last vestige of uncivilized behavior, isn’t it?”

Uncivilized behavior? Sometimes, men are such idiots. Women like me are so civilized in public. It was only when we got below decks that I taught my lover what true unrestrained, loving, female behavior should be between a man like him and a woman like me. Oh, I was insatiable. I should really have invited other men to join us as others did. But he was Haruva. I showed him that he tempts fate when he doses a goddess with all the womanly potions he knew about. I could have used antidotes but I wouldn’t. Not when I was in such passionate, womanly ecstasy.

Before Haruva's Revel, both ships had crawled across the Ocean of Clouds. *Zephyr of Serenity*, the great ship on which I spent half of my time, did not have a full crew. It gave us all time, a new witch and new 'cabbies', to become 'girls'. I went back and forth between ships, being a wife to Dowd and to Peveret. Captain Dowd, everyone now knew, had assumed his post as the result of a mutiny. He was reluctant to 'borrow' crew from the fully manned *Stormclouds over Silvery Seas*.

Undercaptain Peveret of *Silvery Seas* had first wanted me, as a witch, to bespell Dowd, the captain of *Zephyr*, convincing him to borrow more sailors to put on more sail; especially when there was a great wind that the giant ships were built to take advantage of. I think Dowd must have what Robady had had. He controlled me when I was with him so that, what Pev had suggested I do, never entered my pretty, girlish thoughts.

Dowd, as the time for the revel approached, used all kinds of excuses to refuse more men on his ship. He told me, as we lay together in bliss, man and 'cabbie', a man and his 'girl', sated by our lovemaking, that he didn't want to be overrun with Pev's men.

"They want another mutiny," Dowd whispered to me. "Sleck told me they'd help him become captain here. It's the 'treaty' we made. I can refuse extra riggers if that means the number of 'strangers' on deck outnumbered our crew on *Zephyr*. You have to help me. Don't tell them the number of those well enough to work."

I didn't have a chance to tell that to Pev. There was a sudden storm, after the Revel on *Silvery Seas*, before the one to be undertaken on *Zephyr*, and the great ships lost each other completely. I'd never seen Dowd as happy as he was then. We sailed on a south-

erly heading, away from Haruva's Isle. I was really tempted to use my 'powers', but the few powders I had would never have allowed me to control all the men on the ship, nor did I know how long they would work. And I couldn't do more as Dowd or Sleck watched over me all the time, wanting to know everything I was doing.

So, what could I do? Mark our new path through the seas? About all I could think of was to fortify and cast, at night, 'balloons' of the dyes that the girls wanted me to use in the makeup that made their lips so red and hair so golden. It was nothing, I thought, but Peveret told me much later that spotting them was what led *Silvery Seas* on the right track to us.

I'd never been so glad to hear the lookout call, "Sail ho!" and look to the direction he was pointing. There it was, a moving castle overtaking us ominously, even I could tell, in just the few minutes of watching the blob on the horizon as I was allowed.

I got those minutes because Dowd fell into a black mood when he saw he hadn't escaped the ship that had promised to shepherd *Zephyr* all the way to Greenhaven on the island of Cunya.

The Seafarers on *Zephyr* were afraid of me at first when it was revealed that I was a Foreshore witch. They now treated me with elaborate courtesy as if I really was 'Lady' Arrathee' as they titled me. I was able to watch *Silvery Seas* grow distinctly, able to recognize its distinctive foresails as they chased us. I don't know where the thought came from but I knew that soon, Captain Brisard would have his warlock back. Yes, I had a distinctly Arrat, male, moment as the wind made my lovely hair and dress swirl about me so girlishly.

Warlocks, even Seafarers believed, always went mad. If they only knew, I was living proof of that. I was mad. I must be mad because, as I was petted by an angry Dowd, watching the other great ship grow-

ing on our horizon, I wiggled femininely in my short, girlish dress against him as other cabbies were doing with their men. Oh, I loved the feelings of womanliness surging through me.

As a lady, I wore stockings and high-heeled shoes, even on the decks of *Zephyr*. I'd learned to cross my legs whenever I sat and to flick my long, blonde hair over my shoulders just like all the other 'girls' like me.

I don't feel like a blonde. To us Baracts, who have dark, brunette, almost black hair normally, blonde is exotic. On men and boys, it's something effeminate, something to be laughed at. I was allowed to keep my dark hair until the 'treaty' was signed. Then, Peveret had 'persuaded' me to change.

Pev, across the sea from me, chasing after me, did that so easily to the 'controlled' girl I'd become with him. He must be charming me with a subtle potion I couldn't detect, I knew. He smiled at me sometimes with such admiration, telling me how lovely I was, sending the strangest of emotions through me as I fought against believing him that I was a lovely woman.

Most of the time I was with him, however, was for 'lessons'. I wasn't then under any controlling potion, I'm sure, but it's most disconcerting, and he knows it, to be caressed, as Pev did as he passed me, as if I was a woman.

Peveret called this 'training', training I hadn't had as a cabin boy! He said that he didn't want me to go to *Zephyr* and Captain Dowd when I had to, sighing when I haltingly repeated the terms of the 'treaty' that ended the fighting between the two ships. I had to go to *Zephyr* and be its witch, helping the men back to health.

Pev knew that. He was always affectionate when I left as he was, even more so, after the Revel. I sensed the lovebane he used to influence me to love Haruva,

him. Oh, he made me wish I didn't have to go back to Dowd. But as I kissed Pev goodbye, I knew it was lovebane making me feel so girlish, so romantic and so loving, making me think I wanted to stay with Pev, just as I had with Robady. Oh, he must have given Rob the powders that he'd used to control me, the supposed witch. Well, they wouldn't want a mad warlock to know what 'she' was really doing, would they?

Yes, previously, I'd felt the undercaptain 'gently' persuading me to change the color of my hair and to wear short dresses like the cabbies. Ooo, I felt that I really wanted to do that. It was strange, to me, that I could hardly tell any more what it was that I wanted, and what I didn't. I do know that I seemed to love everything I was doing to become a sweet, girlish, cabbie. Now, even on *Zephyr*, I fitted in with the 'girls', not standing out to the men who fear having a true witch on the ship. On both ships, they were smiling and whistling after me, just as they did after Gennee and Rosee.

The two who clearly feared me the most on *Silvery Seas* were the Captain himself, Clan Elder Brisard, and his surgeon, Mogen. They sneered at me in my pretty, summery dresses. They saw a 'witch', me, as a challenge to their rule over the men of the ship, I do believe.

"If they do anything to you," Pev assured me, "the powers-that-be in the Many Isles will have their heads. The Many Isles is obsessed with the idea of capturing a witch, and having 'her' work for the Isles against the Kingdom."

"But I'm not a witch," I told him several times. Of course, what I was then, a cabin boy with witchy powers, was threatening, even to Pev. No wonder he tried to keep control of me. What if I made some potion he didn't know about in Dasell's workshop? Yes, if I was a mad warlock, I might do that. Better to keep me as a compliant girlie cabbie, making me want to make love to another man.

I couldn't really figure out the position of Undercaptain Peveret. He was deferential to his captain, diplomatic to Dowd and romantic to his witch. Pev seemed to run *Silvery Seas* in everyday matters; yet, there were other things, such as his handling of me, a witch on his ship, that Brisard seemed frightened to question him about.

Despite my witchery, I was still a cabin boy on *Silvery Seas*, I'd quickly learned from Gennee. There, I was sexually available, like her, to any man on the ship who wanted me as a girl. If a man wanted me, she'd told me, I had to dress as a pretty female for him, especially as I was now 'crewed in' after the first Celebration at sea.

Despite her warning, no-one on *Silvery Seas* had demanded me as they did Gennee, even though we wiggled and giggled together. I thought it was because I wasn't as pretty as men kept telling me I was. Of course, it was because Pev, an officer, had claimed me.

Peveret, I'd thought, had a seawife, too, aboard *Silvery Seas*. Panella was very pretty and feminine. Seeing them together had made me think that she really was a woman and a wife to him. Oddly, Peveret said she wasn't his chosen seawife. Once the captain had accepted I was a witch, Pev had made me his seawife, I had no say in it, "to protect you from the captain," Pev growled, "and the crew, as I should have from the start".

"I am your only lover," Peveret told me, often caressing and kissing me as lovebane gripped my mind, convincing me I loved Pev and wanted him to be my only husband. I forgot about Dowd in his arms. He 'taught' me how to be a really girlie seawife, doubling and tripling the lovebane in me. Ooo, I wiggled for him as girlishly as I'd ever seen a girl in Madame Merenda's do, or that I'd ever done for Robady, my first 'husband'.

Yes, for short bursts of time, I even acted like a girl in one of the bordellos I'd frequented with Robady. I guessed Pev was directing me to accept my role as a woman and a witch, not necessarily in that order, on the great ship. And, when I had lovebane inside me, lots of it, I was exactly that, his willing woman and his sex-crazed witch, not necessarily in that order.

As long as I was under the influence of the drugs Pev used, I know that I didn't mind. How could I? Oh, but those times, when there was no light sense of honeymind or lovebane in the air, I knew who I really was. It happened a lot with Dowd, who only seemed to control me when he wanted me as a woman.

It was terrible, the nausea that overcame me. I was Arrat, a boy, I knew, dressed like a deviate. I doused myself with a girlish perfume with my own honeymind controller so that I could flirt with Dowd, the way he wanted me to, and who didn't seem feel me fighting the lovebane.

I broke from my dreams, not knowing if I'd really loved Peveret as I thought I had, that he'd praised me for, being so girly. It constantly amazed me how many witch's potions were in use on *Silvery Seas*. After the very first 'Celebration', where I was reputed to have had three men in one night, a kind, older rigger, Richo, caught me heading back to my sleeping quarters alone.

He'd been so nice, I didn't even know that I was being 'taken' by a man, making love to him, his woman all night long. Richo was an adept in his use of lovebane on cabbies, I found out. I think it was lovebane but when I made some later, it didn't seem to work as predicted. I wasn't besotted with someone smothered in it, but, when it was on me as a perfume, I was completely enthralled by whoever I was with.

I'd made love with Richo that time as if I was a woman, his woman. I'd wanted to kiss him, I'd wanted to look pretty and girlish for him, I'd wanted

to please him, my first time ever as a cabbie, a girl; and if his pleasure was to caress my tush and put himself inside me, well I'd wanted him to do just that. I wanted to be the perfect woman for him. He was telling me to be a woman. I was.

Oh, the terrible recriminations I went through when I recovered from whatever had been used on me. I'd barely worked it all out, why I'd been a woman so completely, enjoyably, when Robady, my friend, our first night on *Zephyr*, had definitely used lovebane on me, to make me believe I was his wife!

It isn't quite like the lovebane that's described in Wesset's Book, written by Peveret's father, about what Lady Sherrene, the most famous witch ever, used. She'd made it while she was a seawife in love with her captain, on a great ship, as I'd been for a little while with Rob.

When we finally didn't elude *Silvery Seas*, Dowd furiously dragged me off to our cabin on *Zephyr* after the sighting by the other great ship ensured they'd catch us again. He made love to me angrily, so many times, as if it was my fault *Zephyr* hadn't escaped. I was so glad that I'd managed to get some lovebane into me. I always had some in my purse, never knowing when Dowd was going to lift my skirts and push me over a chair or table so that he could insert his manhood inside me, his woman, now that my 'husband' had died.

I'd made a salve, not unlike a numbing fortifier that even apothecaries knew how to make for wounds. I'd made a lot of it on both ships as a cure for hurting that the girls needed but the salve also was an aid for smoother, more pleasurable lovemaking, all of us girls had found, as I did with Dowd.

Osreck, a cobbler on *Zephyr*, who'd had difficulties with his partners, even getting any girl to go with him, because of the size of his large manhood, now declared himself the most satisfied man on the ocean. Of course, he told everyone as well that it was all because of me, the witch, and the salve I'd made for his 'girls', cabbies like me.

"If she wants me for her pleasure," Osreck declared, "I'll give it to Arrathee wherever, whenever, she wants me. I'll prove to her how pleasurable it now is to be made love to by a man of 'considerable size'."

That wasn't the only thing I made for the 'girls' and 'ladies' of the two ships. I made a throat cordial, a copy of the vial that Panella, Pev's seawife, I'd thought, had possessed. All the girls were now speaking in voices, indistinguishable from those of real girls. That alone had given many girls confidence to improve their feminine appearance.

On both ships, there was a clear division now between the men, riggers, specialist workers, officers, cooks, bluebands and so on, and the 'girls'. Girls were dainty, sang like sweet-throated songbirds, wore short dresses and were developing outstandingly female figures.

That wasn't all because of me. I was cautious about making ganasate, but the only thing wrong in making it was that I didn't make enough. All the girls but me wanted it when they knew I was making it. I'd always been good at sniffing what was in a concoction. I only had to smell the last of the ganasate Fessee had and was able to make it, not just for her but for all the cabbies on both ships. Peveret's work station had huge supplies of active agents as apothecaries called them, since the workroom emulated that of Lady Sherrene's.

The original ganasate potion had given Fessee, Panella, Mirrie and Lerrina their breasts, thick hair, wide hips and glowing female girlskin, enhanced by

the lotions and powders I'd made for them as well. Every cabbie told my maids, Gennee on *Silvery Seas*, and Rosee on *Zephyr*, to persuade me, the witch they served, to make more ganasate, to copy the potions Mirrie and Fessee used, which I found that I could do, easily.

"Go ahead," Peveret laughed when I blushed and showed him nervously what I was doing on both ships. "And use it yourself, my lovely witch. I command you!"

It wasn't obvious at the very first that I was changing the 'girls' on either ship after the treaty-making parley. But when I started making large amounts of the solutions on both ships, for so many 'girls', it became obvious after the third tenday. Both ships were becalmed for so long, that I was able to produce the necessary amounts so that every 'girl' had something growing on her chest.

Yes, the girls couldn't disguise the two mounds projecting forward and neither did they want to. They adored the changes ganasate made in them. Many were throwing up in the mornings as their bodies changed according to the enormous amounts they were dosing themselves with in their hurry to be as much a woman as possible.

"Can't you make more?" Gennee begged me, flouncing down the deck in her pretty, flirty dress, men's eyes goggling at her.

"There's a limit to how much the body can absorb," I told Gennee. "Taking more than the dose I've told you to take is just wasted!" Most 'girls' were spending all of their ship's wages and savings on becoming more and more girlish, as both ships charged them for the drugs they doled out. And taking two doses a day would make them grow twice as quick, wouldn't it?

Dowd, of course, was furious when he found out I wasn't taking the mixture myself that I was making

for everyone. I was so frightened when he hauled me into the cabin I shared with him after I'd returned from one great ship to the other. He had Merren and Rangoll, his henchmen, waiting for me. They held me down and forced the ganasate between my lips, laughing as they did so.

"See this witch," laughed Dowd. His men still thought I was a woman. "She's got no breasts! She's like a little boy when she's undressed." Of course it was true, because that's what I was, a boy.

"Don't you dare to put that in me," I cursed the pair holding me, "or I'll turn you into huge, bloody eelfingers. I've a powder you'll never know is coming in the air. You'll be cemented to reefs, knowing who you are, fighting off all kinds of hunters that know eelfingers are delicacies! They'll love to eat you bit by bit."

Of course, I couldn't do that. "Don't listen to her," Dowd laughed, telling the pale-faced men to gag me. Which they did, after, they filled me with the ganasate I was making for Rosee.

Dowd wouldn't let me take a turn for a while, after having me dosed with ganasate, to go to *Silvery Seas*. He signaled Captain Brisard that I was so in love with him I couldn't bear to leave Dowd and our warm bed. Everyone on both ships read the message ship, of course, which my husband on *Zephyr* intended. Oh, how angry Peveret was with me for not using my witch's powers on Dowd.

"You're turning out to be a really silly, little girl, aren't you, my darling Arrathee," sneered my other husband at me when I finally was allowed to re-visit *Silvery Seas* as the winds got up, making my rise on a seachair quite an experience in keeping my dress in control as all the men gathered to cheer and whistle as I changed ships. I was the only 'girl' to be doing that, showing off my legs and undies to whoever could find the right spot to see them on me.



I never let Dowd know that part of Peveret's 'witch instruction' was on how to be a woman and how to make love to a man or he might not have let me go. Once Pev knew about the ganasate I had to take on *Zephyr*, though, he insisted I prepare myself not only as a delectable woman for a man but also take the potions to make me more so.

All the ganasate inside me, the lovebane and whatever else Dowd and Peveret used on me, meant that I was only thinking of being a woman, with my lover, almost all of the time.

In the first 'lesson' in that return to study with Peveret, ganasate in me, me knowing I was to be with Pev at the passage of Haruva's Isle, I felt a potion-driven shift in my emotions. I knew it was Pev, taking advantage of the controller in me. I knew then I was a woman. Pev didn't have to say it as Rob had always done. He just thought it to me and let his body and gentle hands do their work. I was sea foam in his arms. I couldn't get enough of his sweetness. I learned from him, that what I'd first thought so disgusting, was what men wanted me to do for them and what all women gave them.

Yes, giving men blow jobs would mean that I could, like some of the girls I'd thought were so fantastic, at that time, do eight to ten men a night, spreading my charms all over the ship. It was such a warming, pleasurable thought until I awoke the following morning, sick inside at such horrible ideas. But I could say nothing as the cheerful Gennee, my maid on *Silvery Seas*, was there to bathe me and to ask me what new and marvelous things I'd concocted for the 'girls' the previous day.

I gave them lotions galore for their lovely skins to keep them as they were. I made masheen, finally, in Peveret's lab. I had to set up a hairstyling cabin a little further below that all the girls lined up, during the day, to go to. They had their hair curled and styled,

delighting in how their hairstyles didn't change after a torrid night with a lover.

The whole ship's company of cabbies had turned out on *Zephyr* when I returned from the first Haruva festival, 'fashionably late', as Peveret called it. He wouldn't let me go until he absolutely had to, keeping me in his bed, curled about him and loving it so wonderfully. I hated surrendering such a considerate lover as Peveret to Panella. Oh yes, I knew she was his seawife when I wasn't there, though Peveret said she wasn't.

To prove it, he said, Peveret had me 'hard' then, with me tumbling out of any potion's control, we'd been in bed for so long. He did me without the controller arousing girlish feelings in me.

Oh, I'd been a girl too long. I found I was enjoying Pev just as much as when I was loaded with euphoric potions. I knew it but told myself it wasn't so. I wasn't changing into a girl in my outlook in any way. It was just a subtler controller. But I knew it wasn't as I hugged Peveret, my considerate lover, to me, and had him take me for a wonderful, pleasurable ride, me his woman. I cried when I had to leave him.

After the first Haruva Celebration, Undercaptain Peveret carried me down the rope ladders to the deck of *Silvery Seas'* cutter. I was re-dressed as a goddess, in the brief skirt and fishnet stockings I'd worn at the start of the Celebrations several nights before. Peveret, however, had discarded his Haruva disguise.

"Look out for her," Peveret said to Maresey, who was commanding the cutter for its trek across open ocean to the lagging *Zephyr*.

“I will, my lord,” said Maresey. Peveret smiled at him. Maresey looked a little nonplussed at using a title that was really only in use in the Kingdom of the Baracts.

“Just one tenday,” whispered my lover as I clung to him, wishing we could be man and woman again together as we’d been all night. I wrapped my legs about him, my arms about his neck. Pev could have had me as he stood there if he’d just adjusted my panties a little.

“Now, now, Lady Arrathee,” my lover said to me. “Our time together is over for a while. But you’ll return to me for the last stage of this interminable voyage to Greenhaven. We’ll be on land at last and, there, I’ll show you the wonderful clanhouse of the Line to which I belong. And you’ll also meet Lord Wesset himself.”

I caressed his chest with the little nubbins I had in the pushing up bra I wore, thanks to Gennee. I wanted the lying villain to have me again, even though his honeyed words about how much a woman I was becoming, how he loved me and how he’d miss me, were made into a lie when he said he’d take me ashore with him.

My maids, Rosee on one ship and Gennee on the other, had told me the status of cabin boys ashore. There was no status, of course. Once, seawives had never been allowed off ships. Now, almost all harbors in the Many Isles had Deviant Quarters, as they were called, where ‘girls’ like me were allowed to go.

Many cabbies stayed on shore, as serving girls and hostesses in the inns that thronged ‘their’ quarter. I listened to what the landed ‘girls’ did and couldn’t see the difference in what they did from true girls in all the bordellos in Terraire.

“Some girls are so rich,” Gennee had said with a sigh of longing, “that they can even buy an inn where

they don't have to be available to anyone but the men of their own choosing."

"And the Watch," Eseba had added as we worked together in distilling a tincture of eelfingers to make a numbweed mixture I wasn't quite sure I was going to use. "Girls like us always have to attend to the Watchers for free!"

That's how I learned more about 'girls' and their men, through girlish gossip. It was hard to get back to making the Seafarer version of numbweed I was trying out. The scent that the mixture gave off seemed to indicate it would make a good painkiller in setting broken bones. We'd had several of those on both ships as inexperienced men were doing work normally done by more proficient riggers.

Peveret gave me a last affectionate squeeze, swishing my dress and caressing my tush before a last kiss. He vaulted easily back into the riggings, scampering up to the lowest deck just like any top rigger.

I shuddered as Pev left me, feeling so strange as I'd been a girl, a goddess, in his arms for days. He'd made love to me constantly through that time as I'd provided him with the means of keeping going and going.

"He's a good man, that undercaptain, my lady," said Maresey, staring at me and my exposed, feminine body. Well, he should stare at me. Not because I was a woman or because I was a witch. No, he should stare at me because he'd been an officer over me when I was a cadet on *King Tatheren's Sword*. I hadn't changed in looks, had I, I thought, and, yet, here was this man, who knew me as a man, calling me 'my lady' and holding out his arm so that I could use him as a brace and not fall.

"Robady was a good man," I said to him uncertainly. Maresey's face clouded over right away.

“If you say so, my lady,” said the former third mate of the *Sword*.

“Could you give him a message from me?” I asked as I stepped over the wooden crossbar that acted as a seat. My panties flashed when I did that in the tiny, frilly skirt I wore. I saw Maresey’s eyes widen as he looked at my legs and the stockings and garter belt I wore. Oh, a leg man, Gennee would have whispered to me, blowing on my huge earrings, whenever we caught a man doing that.

Gennee said she loved leg men. That, of course, had been before she’d really developed her breasts. Now, she loved breast men, she’d confided in me, whenever we were able to bathe together.

“You intend to board *Zephyr* in a costume like that, my lady?” asked Maresey.

“I had to wear it in the Celebration ...” I said, pouting without even thinking about it as I glanced back at him over my bare shoulder.

“This won’t be the same, my lady,” said Maresey. “Oh, you, you’re entrancing me, my lovely.”

Yes, the lovebane kicked in on him. Well, I was still so aroused as a woman. “Did you have a woman in Haruva’s Revel?” I simpered at the man who’d once commanded me to climb to a lookout’s post in a storm off Liss Isle.

“Oh, no, my lady,” said Maresey, tottering after me, past a line of grinning sailors from *Silvery Seas*, travelling over on the cutter to have a second chance at Celebration if Captain Dowd let them aboard.

I sauntered into the curtained area of the cutter, drawing Maresey after me by just waving to him with a red-tipped finger.

“Why didn’t you have a woman?” I purred to him, putting my arms about his neck and drawing his re-

acting body against mine. Oh, how I felt the lovebane on me.

“Not right,” murmured Maresey, his eyes closing as he tasted the sweetness of my glossed lips upon his. Yes, I was still under the influence of the enormous dosage of lovebane Peveret had inflicted on me. No need to waste it, was there, the thought passed through me, as I drew the man on top of me on what passed for a bed or laying place for an injured man.

Poor Maresey. There were still some men who resisted us girls, as if they were immunes. Others knew we were boys and were repelled at the thought at what we'd allow them to do to us. Poor Maresey wasn't one of them. He couldn't ignore a woman like me any more, as I couldn't ignore a man rutting after me as he was.

Maresey hadn't had any kind of woman in a long time. I'd bespelled him on *Zephyr* when he'd been captured in an invasion attempt. Just as he did then, under the influence of the potions I'd made, he didn't resist, didn't seem to want to resist. The witch's potion chased away his reason.

Maresey didn't know how to mount me. I had to show him how we could do it face to face. I had to lift my legs about him; then it was just as it always was with men and me, and had been for so long. Pleasures ran through me in waves as I wiggled against my new lover. He seemed to be convulsing with me as well. And Maresey wasn't entirely a leg man. Even as he penetrated me, his hands running shakily all over my almost bare, soft body, he kissed and kissed me. His tongue possessed my mouth in a frenzy and then he emptied himself into me.

It was a pity that he didn't have the blue star potion in him as he fizzled out after having me three times. I expected my men now to last much longer than that. Maresey was fast asleep and snoring as I replaced my panties and bra.

I made a spectacular entrance to the *Zephyr*, the girls and men stunned to see a goddess descend from the seachair to the deck, her short skirt showing off her panties and garter belt as she pirouetted across the deck to her maid.

“My lady,” gasped Rosee. “That’s what you wore to their Celebration? Ooo, the men over there must be completely depraved!”

“Of course they were,” I gushed at her, flicking my long, blonde hair, just the way she did it to tantalize men. “It was a Celebration, wasn’t it? And all of us girls were dressed exactly the same! So I can claim I slept with every man there on that ship. They don’t know if I did or if I didn’t!”

“You slept with a shipload of men?” gasped Rosee in awe as she swished after me in her knee-length dress.

“No,” I laughed at her. “I slept with Haruva. Well, I didn’t sleep but he possessed me all night long just as the captain will as soon as he sees me.” And I wouldn’t let go of the potion inflicting such incredible womanly thoughts into my mind. He could have me and succumb to the lovebane holding me in thrall. And I would control him for once, I thought delightfully, as Rosee showed me the golden gown that Dowd wished me to wear as the Goddess of the Sea in the pageant and revels of *Zephyr’s* Celebration.

My return for the *Zephyr* revel was quite different to the time before that. Then, it had been Lady Arrathee, awakening from femininity, who’d ridden back to *Zephyr* to share a new way of styling hair before the second Revels even began. Oh, how the cabbies loved that I’d become a blonde like them all. Yes, I fitted in well with all the ‘girls’. It made me think of

Mollie, formerly Mantle, and the other 'cabin boys' who'd been captured with me. I hadn't seen any dark-haired cabbies in an age. I think they were all fitting in just as much as I was.

Rosee was way in front of me in developing, showing me proudly at the second Celebration how she was going to go with no padding. She was going to bandage herself to show off her new-found cleavage, which didn't disappear to almost when she was out of her bra.

"You'll be able to do this soon, my lady," Rosee eagerly 'reassured' me. She so much wanted breasts like Mirrie who was all the crew talked about, so beautiful and womanly, and young, she was.

So, I had the crew encouraging me to make the girls grow quickly just as the girls were after me to do the same. Some crewmen were now sympathetic to me but some, like Merren, whom I must get even with some day, just jeered at me, asking me if I would like to eat some eelfingers, gesturing to his pants as he said it. Dowd slapped Merren in the head when he saw and heard him.

"Idiot," Dowd snarled at him. "I should let Lady Arrathee put her woman-making medicines in you when you've a cut to heal, shouldn't I? She could do it and no-one would know, would they? You can't tell one potion from another, Merree, can you? How'd you like to be developing mounds on your chest like the girlies who love it so?"

Merren had blanched and stared at me.

"She asked me to let her do it to you," Dowd told the trembling seaman. "But I told her you're still someone I need, a man-killer like you. I don't need a man-kisser, Merrenee, so you be nice to my darling lady. I don't need another seawife."

Merren wasn't nice to me, of course, but he avoided me which was just as good. Dowd wasn't at

all secretive of his attraction to his now declared 'seawife' and witch. He paraded me in short dresses and costumes in front of the men as if to cement his hold over them by showing what he could make a witch, me, do for him. He was always kissing me and having me kiss and caress him in front of everyone. I shook as I played the part of a loving seawife, thankful he'd use lovebane and bespell me when we were before the other men.

Yes, Dowd had lovebane, as Robady had had. It could've been from Rob after the time I thought Rob was killed. Anyway, Dowd always had me doused with it thoroughly when I came aboard. I couldn't think straight at all, the antidotes I wore always overcome by the amounts of lovebane and controllers Dowd was willing to use on me.

I was his willing seawife, it must have appeared to everybody. Well, at times, I did feel I had to have Dowd. I had to kiss him, have him love me, make me into his woman as wonderfully as he did, or so I thought when the lovebane was controlling me. The recriminations were growing less if I even experienced them at all. So, between bouts of sexual activity with Dowd and Peveret, I occasionally got to the most important task on the two ships, making more and more ganasate.

In the great Celebration at the passing of Haruva's Isle by *Zephyr of Serenity*, I was Arussee, a Goddess of the Sea. As we passed, finally, days after *Silvery Seas*, the island was smoking. Red, molten rock was running down its sides, or so said the lookouts, using spyglasses to watch the eruption. The god was showing, they called down, how much he wanted the pretty goddesses of sea, us girls, as his seawives.

By this time, all the girls on both ships were quite developed, some spectacularly, matching Fessee in their womanly attributes. Rosee, when she stripped in front of me to put on her costume, needed no bra, so developed was she in such a short length of time. I was 'showing' as well but I was the last to develop in the group.

"Lady Sherrene spoke about that," Undercaptain Peveret had told me, as we lay sated after I'd been his woman a night before. He read part of Wesset's Book to me. He wouldn't show it to me, as he often did, as I learned about the recipe for the ganasate potion Sherrene had made.

"She'd been telling the cabbies," Pev went on, "on *Tempest* that she was transforming Grace and Choni, how long it was going to take them, a trip at least, before they'd see any development, until they looked like her. It was a real surprise to her that the girls budded - isn't that a lovely word to describe the process going on - right away.

"Sherrene said it might be something in the way she was making the potions. The ganasate that was administered to her before, to her knowledge, must have been given less frequently than she was prescribing it. As well, hers seemed stronger than before."

"They, they were using this on the Foreshore?" I'd gasped at Peveret, wondering whereabouts such potions could have found such a usage, and why.

"Definitely," said Peveret, with a smile. "I don't know if it was just something Orissiana the Terrible used, as a punishment or as a reward, but Sherrene was trained by her. So, we can assume that Sherrene learned the potion from her aunt!"

"But why?" I asked, bewildered. "There are no long sea voyages for Baract ships."

“There are deviant quarters in all seaports from Bridgewater to Greenhaven,” said Peveret seriously. “Yes, a lot are visited by seamen. Many of the mothers leave the ships and stay in the quarters, like Hecala, whom the other girls must have talked to you about. She was a Baract brunette, but with dark brown eyes, unlike you.

“Hecala runs a special house and entertains men from all strata of society on Cunya. She has a Haruva’s Ball at Midsummer Evening that even the most staid Clan Elders seldom miss. There are men who love other men, Lady Arrathee, even in the Foreshore. I should give you the names of houses some of the crew visit in Hillaire or Terraire never mind those in Quarrence.”

I think that was when I began to fall in love with Peveret. He talked to me about when I was back in Malesia or in the Kingdom, what I could do, what I should see. I actually began to believe him that, some day, I’d be set free of this servitude as a witch, as a girl, and be able to return to my own home.

Peveret was appalled at first at what Dowd was doing to me. But when he gently caressed my chest and found the nubbins there, he had to try them out with his mouth. He was delighted with the effect his working of tiny mounds on my chest had on the enraptured woman beneath him.

Oh, I was a woman in ecstasy as he, Peveret used his tongue on my aching nipples. Oh, how I clutched my lover to me passionately! Ooo, how I writhed beneath him as I kissed my darling Pev frantically, wriggling my salved tush so savagely against him. He had to do me several times, his mouth filling me with pleasure as he occasionally eased to a stop to make our union more comfortable for the changes in our lovemaking. That was when he told me that he’d never had a woman as wonderful as me, at sea or on land. I must stop changing, he begged me, or he was seriously in danger of falling in love with me.

I guessed that Peveret was only saying that. I'd made some kind of potion that Wesset had been afraid to try on anyone. It was labeled 'blue stars' and was sealed. Wesset didn't know what it was to be used for but guessed that terogal, a really strong inflammatory agent, was present in the potion. He thought it would explode if he left it open for long enough.

"Wesset coated shells from a harquebuss with the blue star potion," Peveret told me. "But it didn't do anything to the shells but once he actually set fire to and destroyed his firepiece. And why, girl," I loved it when we were all friendly, cuddling together, sated, I suppose, he being so masculine and tender, encouraging me to be all girlie and feminine as my thin nightie, washed in lovebane, swished against him, "why, girl, are you laughing at me the way you are?"

"You know that I used to assist Polwer, the apothecary, in Cormallen," I told my lover. Yes, I'd told him far too much about me but Peveret had a way of talking to me in bed that made me want him to understand me. He seemed so interested in me and what I'd been before he'd made me into a cabbie.

"Ah," said Undercaptain Peveret, in understanding. "You've smelled something like this before. Please don't tell me it's a latrine cleanser. Don't tell me my father experimented for twenty years to find the secret to this potion and all he should have done was pour a few drops into a latrine! Then, he'd have known by the sweet smell what he had!"

I had to giggle with Peveret at the images he conjured up in both our minds.

"There were lots of men, older men, like you," I murmured to my lover, who looked pained at my description of him. Well, Pev was ten, more probably, years older than me. That made him old, I'd teased him before. He'd really made me pay with a rough bout of sex that I'd loved as much as him. He'd prom-

ised me more sessions like that now that he'd discovered what a girl like me loved her man to do to her.

"What do you do when you can't perform with a girl?" I asked my lover, swishing my long hair over his face as he loved me to do.

"It's never happened with me," said Peveret smugly.

"But when you've had me three times," I whispered to him, kissing him gently, taking his hand and putting it on my nipple and what he sportingly called my breast. Well, I'd started later than the other girls. I couldn't be expected to be as large as them, could I?

"If I have you three times in one night," murmured my loving undercaptain, "that's as good a night a girl can expect from any man on this ship, isn't it?"

"Would you like to do me again?" I whispered to him from my freshly glossed lips and perfumed breasts. He went still against me.

"I'd love to," Pev murmured slowly, leaning back a little to stare into my madeup, girlish face.

I kissed him again, loving the taste of his lips and the way he moved them over mine, arousing womanly passion in me that I couldn't requite with him, either.

"The blue star potion has a fragrance that's common in potions to arouse a male's flagging spirits," I whispered to him, "or to enable him to satisfy his wife again and again until she's totally satisfied and can no longer be aroused herself. Would you like to ingest some, we can dilute it, and see if it works?"

Pev was most dubious about doing that. "You're out to poison me, aren't you?" he said several times. "I'm going to blow up into bits. They'll find pieces of me in holes that the parts of me will make in every officer's cabin on this deck."

“Which part would you like to land in Brisard’s lap?” I asked him with a smile as I diluted it and pressed it on him. But first he had me take some as well.

Oh, did it work so well! Once Peveret found himself erect again, it was as if we’d never been joined together in his bed at all. He couldn’t stop and I couldn’t either. I came and came all over him, each time he was straining inside me; yes, my salve allowed me to feel joyously every movement of his manhood.

After another four erections and tumultuous rolling around on the bed together, Peveret gasped at me. “I’m going to die! I’m going to die making love to you, my darling Arrathee! I never want this to stop! And oh, you mustn’t wiggle like that beneath me or lift your legs like that! I have to have you again, my woman!”

I let him have me twice more before I relented and let the man beside me lie quietly, me turned away. Of course that wasn’t enough, he cuddled to me and discovered another erection he had to satisfy. I became his little pony for more than one bout of ‘different’ lovemaking that finally did exhaust him enough. He fell from me and was in a dead faint, only his snores telling me I hadn’t killed him with the potion I’d administered to him.

It wasn’t like that with Captain Dowd as, dressed and scented as a goddess, a tiara in my long, flowing blonde hair, I was drawn into the group of excited men and ‘girls’ surrounding the throne of Haruva for *Zephyr’s* great Celebration. He was imperiously ordering guards to bring various girls forward to him.

I shook as I saw him inspect the growing breasts on each of the ‘girls’, making them wiggle and gyrate, with pleasure, I think, as he caressed their alert nipples and even kissed some, such as those on Rosee, my now well-endowed maid. He was promising loudly to make love to all the girls he was nibbling on as

well. That made me think of my wonderful night with Peveret again.

No, I hadn't mentioned the 'blue stars' to Dowd. He had lovebane and could control himself well enough, I knew, from the times Dowd wouldn't allow me to make him climax with me. Saving his eruptions must have been unbearable for him. He'd let me convulse and reach ecstasy several times before he permitted himself to climax; then he'd sleep to recover.

I couldn't imagine what it would be like to make love to Dowd all night long as I had with my darling Peveret. Yes, my darling Pev was a liar and a cheat, but he was normally so gentle and concerned about me, about the woman he was making love to. I loved him for that, making me believe I was a girl. But you're not, a little voice castigated me.

I scarcely believed it when Haruva's 'sacrifice' began. Dowd assaulted one girl after another on his throne. Mountains of red 'lava' poured over he and whatever girl was having her breasts kissed and exposed to all the rutting men around the twin thrones. He was actually bouncing girl after girl on his monstrous pole.

"My lady," murmured a nervous Sleck, approaching me on hands and knees. "If I may adore you ..."

The poor man began to kiss my toes, as I wiggled with the strange sensations going through me. My dress was so thin, and so low-cut, caressing me as lightly as Sleck's mouth on first, my toes, and then on my new, golden high heels that Osreck had made for me. Shivers ran through me as Sleck lifted the thin hem of my dress and began to kiss my ankles and then the thin silk that covered my legs. I glanced over at my sea husband. He was bouncing a giggling Vernisse in his lap. She of course wasn't able to resist the lovebane that drifted about Dowd and was already enchanting me.

“Are, are you allowed to do this?” I gasped as Dowd’s second-in-command, who had lusted after me, I knew, since he’d first seen me dressed as a witch. Sleck said nothing as he lifted my lovely dress over my knees, exposing my panties, just tied at the sides with long tassels, covering the thin garter belt that held my stockings in place. His kisses on my stockings and the touch of his hard, calloused hands on my soft legs and dress were awakening feelings of womanly desire inside me, which I’d thought that Dowd wished to keep all to himself.

“Oh yes, my lady,” gasped the dour-faced Sleck. I could tell he was possessed with a heavy dose of lovebane and that I was the object of his desire. “At Haruva’s Coming, it is expected that his consort takes her pleasures with all as well as the fire-god.”

“You never said ...” I began, just as I had in the other Celebration. “Oh, Sleck!”

Sleck’s head had disappeared under my lovely dress. I wriggled and bounced as I felt his tongue on my thighs. I twisted on my throne as the men were roaring, I think, because Vernisse’s large breasts were exposed to them. Dowd’s hands were caressing her and making her writhe in womanly anguish in front of him. She was leaning back, her red lips fastened on to those of the man called my husband on this ship. Her soft, wide hips began to shake at whatever he was doing to her beneath her uplifted dress and lowered panties. She didn’t seem to know that all could see.

“Oh! Oh! Oh!” I squealed as I felt Sleck’s mouth on my panties, gripping the tassels and undoing them. I betrayed what I was, a male, to another man. I’d thought he didn’t know that about me. It made no difference. Sleck swallowed my manhood as he pushed my dress up my legs and tasted me.

I squealed. I hardly knew what to do as I tried to fend Sleck off from doing what Peveret had taught me

to do to him. “Don’t!” I squealed at Sleck. The men in the riggings began to call his name and make it into a chant. Sleck suddenly released me and lifted himself up. I hadn’t realized that the throne would ease over and become a bed.

There I was, in my golden dress, my legs exposed to everyone, clutching the yellow panties in front of me. Sleck, to the chants of the crew, lifted my legs about his waist, trying to tear the panties from my hands. One set of tassels on one thigh stayed tied as Sleck penetrated my tush in full view of the chanting men. Someone, I think it was Dowd, sprayed us. All that filled my nostrils was lovebane. Desire rose in me tenfold for the dour, intent man making love to me.

“My lady, my lady,” my lover gasped at me as he went at me uncontrollably to the roars of men who seemed to be enjoying seeing me ‘deflowered’, made love to, in front of them all as if this was a show in a bordello. “You are so beautiful, my lady, but I can only take you as we men take all the goddesses tonight,” whispered my lover who had to kiss what little breasts that I had.

Sleck united his lips violently to mine as he came fiercely inside me, lifting me and making me wriggle all over the laid-out throne as if I was a woman being taken by her man. Oh, and that was what I thought that I was, a woman, loving being penetrated by her man. He seemed completely impervious to what I was clutching and covering against me. He ‘tapped’ me as all the men I knew had done to me, making me jiggle and bounce upon his erect manhood entering my tush.

“I love you, my beautiful woman,” Sleck murmured to his goddess, kissing me so tenderly. I found myself clinging to him, passion to be loved as a woman overcoming me, Oh, he caressed my nipples in my thin, padded bra so wonderfully.

Sleck drew silken bedsheets about me, hiding me from all the men who had watched me so avidly, being taken as a woman. I succumbed to the desires that the lovebane inspired in me, feeding upon his thoughts of me as a gorgeous woman. I let myself drift and be entertained by him. Oh, yes, I was the woman he wanted.

I was Sleck's loving woman, letting him roll and drive me into him as his hands caressed my girlish skin so enticingly. I was relieved, I know I thought that, in not having to pretend with Dowd that I loved only him. Sleck was so much more considerate, almost as nice as Peveret, I said to myself with a shiver of awful delight at what that lying man inspired in me nonetheless. I thought that I was Sleck's for the night. I wouldn't have minded at all.

But Sleck slipped from me, his manhood flagging, leaving me inside a sort of tent over the throne where I'd been his woman; and there was Rangoll, peering anxiously down at me, before kissing me tenderly, his shaking hands removing his male clothing. Then he was loving me feverishly, after first allowing me to cover the front of me, as Sleck had allowed, as well.

The gifts of the god and goddess were spread throughout the crew as each partner released had to find another. I hugged a rampant Rangoll to me letting him enter my tush just as Sleck had, my legs clasped over his back. Vernisse, hardly covered at all, was glued to Osreck, on leaving the captain, while a weeping Marea was Dowd's new, bouncy partner.

Sleck had said that he was spent and could do no more. Yet, he'd chosen Rosee who was bouncing and giggling in his lap as Sleck tried to maintain the erection that had once so stimulated my tush. Ah, I finally understood. I was to be passed all around the crew, to finally be exposed as what I was, especially to Dowd's friends. It was another humiliation he was forcing on me, showing his men how he could control me, his cabin boy witch.

Well, I could do that, too, couldn't I? I flushed as I felt Rangoll's severe attraction to me. I felt such a longing to let go and allow him further into me. I wanted to feel his passionate embrace. I felt his concentrated thoughts projecting on to me, trembling as I realized how strong this honeyminded lovebane was. I could actually seem to feel what Rangoll was feeling. Through him, I sensed and loved the touch of softness beneath me and how 'her' breasts moved in my hands and became so alert.

I don't know what made me do it but I projected, I think that's what I did, that the woman in Rangoll's arms, me, was a real woman and that Rangoll was actually making love to her as any man would make love to a woman. I imagined her writhing in heat as I simply lay in his arms. Then I was disgusted as Rangoll came all over me, soaking my panties. I shuddered but he was kissing me, telling me how he loved me, and how marvelous making love to me had been. Real women were so different from cabin boys. He wanted me again, but so did so many men. I was the only woman available, wasn't I?

I was shaking as I heard him saying that. I could sense that he really believed it as well. I was almost ill as Rangoll slipped away from me. I felt another naked body, reeking of lovebane, easing next to me.

No-one had told me what was planned for me as I allowed a dozen men and more, all drenched in lovebane, to think that they'd come inside me as a woman. I saw Dowd once, the honey blonde Kerrithee, her long, dark lashes flickering so prettily, so femininely, clinging to him, thin, girlish arms about him. Dowd was frowning as he talked to one of the men who'd thought he'd had me and adored me as if I was a woman.

Not one of the men I'd 'controlled' had questioned why I wasn't taking them all as if I was a cabbie. Had everyone been told by Dowd what I was, the kind of 'woman' I was, what they should expect, I thought in



despair at times? But then the ardent kisses of another loving man, lifting my legs about him, as I clung to my panties and kept him from touching what I was desperate he shouldn't, chased away awful thoughts. I had a task to do, to make him think that I was a real woman and that his captain had been wrong about me.

Yes, each man left me, like all his sea mates, thinking he'd buried his maleness into my softened, womanly opening. Pasen told me that he'd never had such a wonderful tryst with any girl, even at Madame Merenda's in Terraire, where the girls were so pretty and so willing. But none were as pretty and as willing as me. I had to thank him girlishly and so got to actually kiss a man, knowing that that was exactly what I was doing, the shame rising up in my throat as if it was a tangible thing.

Dowd finally rose over me, his clothing hastily drawn about him. All around us, a seething mass of humanity was engaged in the most ancient of copulating activities. Several exhausted men, Sleek and Rangoll among them, even Maresey, who looked at me with agonized eyes, studied us, the god and the goddess. She was in a stained, golden dress, soaking wet panties and torn stockings, as she retreated from the unrestrained orgy on the decks of *Zephyr of Serenity*.

It wasn't so serene a ship any more as the musicians had also descended to the fray. They were engaged with several girls still willing to take a man inside them, despite the dozen or so each must have taken already. No, it wasn't just me who was to be shamed and put into 'her' place, was it?

"My queen," sneered Dowd at me, holding my hand as he guided me off the deck to the captain's cabin that we shared. "When the music starts again, we must dance for the men. We divide again and so on until your last partner, when all the girls are engaged, is your last consort. He, you may entertain in

every way you can, reveal yourself in every way to him, and do everything for him that a loving seawife does for her husband.”

“This, this isn’t a Celebration,” I said, with a shudder I couldn’t control, at the touch of my ‘husband’s’ hand. Frantically, I’d managed to free my wrist purse and imbibe the antidotes I’d been trying to perfect against both lovebane and the honeyed, metallic-seeming controller that made my senses scatter and left me so open to whatever Dowd suggested I do for him.

Dowd grabbed the vial in my hand but it spilled on him, which was just as good for me, as it seemed to dampen the demands he’d been focusing on. It was so hard, working to keep at bay the tremendous pressure to concede to being a woman for him. I felt such an urge running through me. “It’s a debauch!” I said to him in answer to his smug, unspoken question on what I thought Haruva’s Celebration would be.

I felt pressure in my head as I’ve never felt it before. Dowd twirled me and began to kiss me. I could feel the desire in me to become a woman for him, to lie beneath him, to wriggle about him, to arouse his passion and to please him.

I don’t know why I fought him as I did. Perhaps I’d just had too many men, kissing and fondling me, and enough of sex acts all about me between men and, well, other men. I shuddered at being caressed so openly as if I was a woman. ‘I’m not that kind of woman’ was a wild thought that whirled through the little part of my mind that I controlled.

Dowd’s lips descended onto mine and his body pressed against me, his manhood pressing between my thighs where my ruined panties were no protection as his hand tore my panties away.

“See. You are just a pretty boy after all,” laughed Dowd, his hands caressing what I hated him to touch. “I don’t know what you did to some of those

boys. I guess they're really simple-minded, aren't they? But I'm not, my gorgeous, little witch. It's my turn to claim what I own, that rounded little tush of yours!"

"Oh, you're just a brute!" I know I thought as I pushed back, outward and afar, mentally, against the huge pressure in my head. Suddenly, the pressure seemed to crack and break. It stopped and the man who was pressing into me, his manhood sliding over my greased tush, fell onto me, bearing me down onto the bed.

It was awkward to get him off me. He was out cold. The pressure in my head was gone; worse, I didn't feel at all like a woman any more. The music began again. There was all kind of noise coming from the decks as I sat beside the silent Dowd, hardly breathing. There was a tap on the door. I could hear Rosee giggling with some man who was kissing her.

The door opened just a little. "My lord, my lady, the seconds have begun!" Rosee's high-pitched voice giggled into our bedroom.

"We'll be there," I gasped across the bed to her as Rosee giggled again. She turned towards the man who was running his hands slowly over her womanly breasts, I think. She moved back out, the door easing behind her, her pretty, girlish face lifted to whoever was holding her waist. She flipped up her short dress for him to caress, arouse, and have her while she leaned against the outer hatch to our cabin.

"Get up!" I thought at my so-called sea husband. Dowd stirred almost immediately. He stood woodenly when I told him to.

"We made passionate love," I told him, reveling in the power I had for once over Dowd.

"We m-made pashunned love," my captain said, his arm resting lightly about my waist where I'd put it. He sounded quite drunk.

“Walk with me,” I ordered him. “Be very nice to me.”

That was too imprecise a command. Rosee opened the hatch to see Dowd kissing me as passionately as any girl had been kissed in the Debauchery that had occurred on the ship that night.

“Release me, put your arm about my waist, and walk me out to the throne. Dance with me when I tell you to,” I commanded Dowd and, to my vast surprise, he did exactly as I wished him.

A breeze got up as the music changed to something ragged. Some of the musicians had partied too well with the girls, but the tune was stately all the same.

Quickly, all the groping couples fled from the stage area. This final dance was a stately walk along the deck and back. Dowd frowned as he moved under my control; I gloated. I seemed to feel his consciousness arousing and fighting against the control I was imposing on him.

Dowd went to Rosee and hugged her to him as I told him. I beckoned to Sleck to partner me. “My, my lady,” stammered the second-in-command as I let him twirl me, commanding Dowd to do the same to Rosee, all down the deck, past all the slaving lips of the *Zephyr’s* ‘male’ crew.

“M-my lady,” Sleck went on. “I, I’m supposed to be chosen last of all by you. Has, has he,” he indicated Dowd who was continuing to twirl a confused Rosee down the deck, “changed his mind and not told me?”

“You know how the captain is,” I told Sleck, showing him a limp wrist and pout. I reached out to Maresey as my next partner.

“My lady,” gasped the former mate as I let him swirl and make me pirouette for him. I commanded Dowd to release Rosee and select a lithe,

pink-dressed Eevee who was delighted to be asked to dance by the captain so soon in the sorting out.

“My lady,” said my worried partner. “I did not mean to ravish you as I did. I do not know what came over me.”

“It’s in the air, Maresey,” I told him as I put my arms about his neck and kissed him. Yes, he really was a great kisser. I could have gone on with him for much longer but the other couples had reached us; and so we had to dance back a little more chastely than we had on the way along the ship.

“It’s the air,” gasped Maresey, drinking in the fragrance that I was emitting. “I thought that I, well, after you, my lady, there was Vernisse, and Marea, whom I had to choose, and she’s sought me out ... but it’s all what you’ve put in the air?”

“Leave Marea till the last dance,” I whispered to him. “And then you can find out for yourself when it all wears off when morning comes!”

It was hard for me to talk to Maresey, to choose another dancing partner and to control Dowd. He turned to look at me, until I made him turn back into the host of girls waving to him and pluck out the green-dressed Terree, who kissed Dowd enthusiastically. She was also delighted to be chosen by him and paraded in front of all the other seamen whom she would get the chance to choose for her own partner.

By the time of the last change, I could feel Dowd rebelling against the compulsions I’d laid upon him. I hardly felt the hand that took mine as I was concentrating so hard on the captain, wondering if I should make him return to our cabin and go to sleep. Fear was running through me as well, even as my ruined dress swayed so seductively about me.

There was a vial of merenthe in my purse. I could make him take that with him, couldn’t I? I could get him to take it, couldn’t I? Then, I might be able to

control him if I was awake when he woke up. If I couldn't, I might well not wake up ever again, I thought in panic, as I fought against all kinds of compulsions that tried to make me love my husband and be kind and loving to him. I knew that I so much wanted to, didn't I?

"You don't recognize me at all, my lady?" said a tall, dark man who swirled with me along the deck as I stared back at Dowd and the way he smiled, trying to be nice to Loshee as I was commanding him to be.

I shuddered at the voice and looked up at the scarred, blonde seaman holding me. "Robady?" I whispered and he nodded down at me.

"What are you doing to the captain?" whispered Rob with his familiar grin. "This last dance hasn't gone the way that it was supposed to, has it?"

"W-What do you mean?" I asked, a hundred questions crowding my mind that I wanted to ask him.

"Dowd and Loshee, partners for the rest of the night?" Rob laughed easily at me. "And Lady Arrathee available for anyone like me to seize for the last dance?"

It would have been unfair of me not to let Loshee have the fun that she was radiating to me, through Dowd, I think, that she wanted to have as the captain's lady for a while. I commanded Dowd to take Loshee to our bed and to treat her as if she was me. He must satisfy her womanly needs in every way, I commanded, feeling myself shaking as I thought that. I felt opposition rising but, somehow, I batted such thoughts away.

Dowd wanted Loshee, I insisted. She was all he wanted in a woman. I envisioned the way they might writhe together and how she would be squealing in joy at what Dowd was doing to her. He seemed so shocked, so accepting, of the idea that he'd wanted her for an age. He was going to treat her as if she was

his Lady Arrathee, I commanded him, loving her until he, Dowd, could not function as a man any more.

Dowd had his arm about the giggling, dancing Loshee who went with him towards the captain's cabin, waving to her friends with her long, red-tipped fingernails as the pair disappeared.

"I would not like you to do that to me, my lady," said Robady stiffly, swirling my dress about me as he spun me one last time as the musicians relaxed from the long bout of playing. All around us, couples, even threesomes, were forming and disappearing below decks. I don't think that there was a girl who wasn't being hugged and caressed by one man at least as she went smilingly from the main deck of the great ship. And yes, Maresey was caressing the beautiful, blonde Marea who was staring into his face with adoring eyes, not moving his hand from about her breast at all as she went to the lower hatch with him.

"You did it, all the time, to me, my lord," I murmured back to Robady. "Aren't you happy with the way all your plans have worked out?"

"My plans?" asked Robady cautiously. I lifted a soft, womanly hand to stroke his scarred cheek. There was a tic in his chin as he allowed me, his former friend, his seawife, as he had acclaimed me, to caress him.

"You wanted me to be a witch," I murmured, looking up into his eyes. It was he, now, who couldn't hold my gaze, and looked away. "I am a witch. I can cure those last, tiny scars on your face for you, my darling."

I didn't mean to call him that so girlishly but it was wonderful to watch Rob's face becoming so uneasy. He opened his hand and familiar aromas surrounded me. But the antidotes worked well. All his attempted controlling of me did was to help me find a passage-way into him.

“Let’s sit on a bench on the deck,” I murmured to my former lover. Yes, the small boats that I’d spotted out on the ocean, advancing cautiously towards *Zephyr*, had stopped, clearly awaiting a signal.

I don’t know how I did it or if I could ever do it again. I wanted to know what they were waiting for out there. The answer seemed to float to the surface of what I would have called Rob’s mind.

I could see the answer clearly in my brain. The boats were awaiting a signal to advance. They needed a storm lantern to be lowered over the side, the blue glass turned outward. Then, the bluebands from *Silvery Seas* would know that all the lookouts and sentries, that Sleck had arranged on Dowd’s orders, were suppressed. Images came to me of men with throats cut or lying on the deck, asleep, drooling from whatever had been given to them to make them sleep. The lantern would signal that it was safe to come aboard.

I could sense Robady fighting, panic-stricken, against me. I smiled at him as I lowered the storm lantern over the side of the deck and reached out, I’m not sure if that’s the right expression, to the other minds on the water, shivering as I recognized Peveret’s comforting presence with the ‘invaders’.

I called softly to the deck sentry. Merren came to me suspiciously. I think he must have heard the splash of oars because he sprang away from the rail, staring as if he’d been shot by a harquebuss shell.

Rob’s powders served as well as my own as I controlled Merren. I had him sit on the deck at our feet. I searched and called to the others who were prowling about the ship. Most were envying the men who were in the shaking, groaning cabins where the ‘girls’ were entertaining so many men. Lovebane eliminated any thoughts of the dangers the ship might be in.

I had quite a party in front of me as I stood and let the sea breezes take my hair and swirl it all about my

face. "Is my golden hair pretty, Rob?" I asked him. "Do you like how pretty my curls are, the waves I have? Do you like the lovely earrings I'm wearing? Isn't it time for you to be paying me lots of lovely compliments?"

Robady was staring at me with tortured eyes. Oh yes, I'd commanded him not to speak as I had the other men. I shivered as I looked at him and saw my friend, who'd treated me as a woman when he was ordered to. Now, without orders, he looked lost. I let the breezes swish my long gown as well, clicking on my heels over to Rob. No, I couldn't release him right away.

I bent over him as he sat there. I made him make a lap for me. I had my lips locked on his when Undercaptain Peveret led his men over the outer rail, stopping when he saw the silent row of seated men and Rob, caressing and kissing me as I wriggled in his lap.

"You called us aboard," stated Peveret, a forced smile on his face. "I should have known. Brisard just doesn't believe how we've underestimated you, my darling Lady Arrathee, just as much as my father and his crew underestimated Lady Sherrene, so many years ago!"

The harbor at Terraire, the largest in the Kingdom of the Baracts, would have fitted into one corner of the huge bay that the Seafarers, the Cunians, called Greenhaven. I stood on the captain's deck of *Silvery Seas* and watched the procession of carriages that were taking away the girls who'd been my companions for so long.

My maids were in tears, begging me to remember them, and their particular needs, no matter where

the Cunians took me next. Each person seemed to think I was remaining on the ship. I was to be ready to depart with the great ship whenever it had been emptied of its cargo. It had been re-crewed and prepared for another long oceangoing mission. My really cute ‘maids’ wanted to come with me on *Stormclouds over Silvery Seas*, the ‘girls’ from both of the ships I’d been on.

I received girlish waves galore from the shapely, long-haired figures that paraded off the ships in their short, colorful dresses, mincing in their high-heeled shoes as the dockhands looked on, completely bemused, as so many girls, breasts bouncing, slim-waisted and wide-hipped, flirted with them from the carriages that took them into an obviously walled and separated harbor district.

I saw several special coaches draw up. Mirrie went off, all by herself. Lerrina, Fessee and Gennee, my maid, spectacular in her low-cut pink dress, went off together while Panella waited on the slipway, sailors obviously admiring her. She reached up her arms and put them about the neck of the officer who finally joined her, kissing him most passionately while the other men looked around, as if embarrassed to be watching a man they knew, being kissed by another man whom they knew.

Go on and kiss her back, I thought to Undercaptain Peveret whose bed I’d shared, chastely, the night before. Two-score days before, he’d stood beside me on *Zephyr* as Robady, whom he’d had me release from the thrall I had him in, led the bluebands about the great ship and captured the officers, the most dangerous fighters aboard the ship, as well as Dowd himself.

“You were used by all of those men, my lady?” Peveret had asked me, the casualness of his voice belied by the white knuckles that had gripped the storm lantern he’d hauled up from where it had been hanging, over the side of the great ship.

“You should ask the men who had whom,” I’d answered him, watching as ‘Captain’ Dowd was lowered, only a shirt on him, not covering his male appendages at all, down to the cutter tied to the great ship.

“Robady’s already told me,” Peveret had said angrily. “It must have been a terrible time for you. He says Dowd organized it to humble you.”

“He did,” I’d agreed with him. I don’t know why I didn’t tell him the truth about all the men who’d lain with me and thought they’d had me as a woman. If he talked to them, Pev would know what they really thought I was. Yes, it was only Sleck, I could have told him, who’d really been my lover in any way. He’d wanted me for such a long time and been as gentle with me as Peveret usually was.

“Whore!” Dowd had called me as I was lowered in a seachair onto the cutter’s deck. He might have said more but for the blood and broken teeth in his mouth, courtesy of the undercaptain awaiting me. Peveret then lifted me from the chair, into his arms.

“Don’t help him!” Pev had snarled at me as Dowd had lifted his head, trying to spew out more words at me. The bluebands had kicked his feet from under him and then had some fun using him as a rug that was in need of cleaning.

“If you make him too broken, I’ll have trouble healing ...” I’d said.

“You don’t need to heal that one, my lady,” Peveret had said shortly, staring out moodily as *Zephyr* was receding from us. In just a few moments we’d seemed to be tying up against it again, but it was a new ship, *Silvery Seas*. As soon as we and the prisoners were taken off, a whole new section of bluebands, armed and looking very dangerous, had taken our places in the cutter with other armed members of the crew, such as Richo, Kaddo, and Garrin, whom I recognized, disappearing over to *Zephyr*.

Even though dawn was coming on, I'd been bathed first, and dressed, by Gennee, in a long, light blue, silky nightdress and panties. She'd hardly said anything to me as she'd opened the huge bed for me. I'd crawled in and waited for the undercaptain to return and claim what would be, I believed, his daily tryst with me.

But Peveret didn't make love to me, not even when I'd asked him if I could have some of 'the potion', as we called the lovebane I knew he had.

"I think that you've had enough of that for one night, don't you?" my Cunian lover had asked me. "Eighteen men, wasn't it, and that doesn't count Captain Dowd."

I'd shuddered at the contempt in his voice. Perhaps I was too sensitive. Perhaps his remark wasn't directed at me. I don't know why but I didn't tell him he was wrong. Well, I didn't want to be loved by another man again, did I, I told myself, not by one saying such a nasty thing to me. Trembles ran through my femininely dressed and prepared body, my hair so soft on my shoulders.

"What will happen to Dowd and his men?" I'd asked my lover, feeling so weird to be lying there with a man who was neither caressing nor kissing me. I couldn't even feel his hairy leg against my soft, rounded, girlie thigh.

"Can you make parasane?" Peveret had asked me out of the dimness on his side of the bed.

"What is it?" I'd asked him. Oh, I'd heard of the truth drug as a sort of legend from Polwer, an age ago. I don't know why but I thought Pev wanted to use it on me to find the truth about how many men, and who they were, that I'd loved that evening.

"A truth-telling potion," Peveret said. "Lady Sherrene made it for her aunt, Orissiana the Terrible, the first time they met. She told Anjaro all about it

and he, the captain of *Tempest*, told my father, Wesset. My father thinks she made more and used it but she didn't leave any of that behind when she sank *Tempest* and fled with her supporters - and those stupid Bastro she'd bespelled."

"I, I've never heard the name," I lied to him as I lay all alone in the big bed with him. He'd grunted as if he didn't believe me and so I'd embellished the story. "I did once ask Polwer how they knew a husband whom the Count had hanged in the cages on Traitors' Gate was guilty and he laughed at me. He said I'd better watch out and not start drinking brandy or, some day, I'd be telling the Count everything I'd ever done or dreamed of doing."

"What did that mean to you?" Peveret asked, easing towards me, interested in learning what I knew.

I wasn't sure I wanted him that close. "Brandy must have concealed the taste of the truth potion," I'd whispered to him. "Which means that it probably tasted just like brandy." Of course it needed to be in brandy, I'd learned from Polwer, laughing. I'd thought he was telling me a story like the one about turning men into sheep. Its real taste, the truth-telling drug, was so bitter that everyone would know what it was, he'd said, if ever they really had to use it, even if it came from a diluted solution.

"But which one?" Peveret had asked, stopping his advance as if he'd realized what he was doing, his hand receding from caressing my thigh so lovingly. "There are many brandies, of all kinds of tastes."

I'd shivered restlessly, waiting for him to touch me more, to take my hand, to guide me close to him, to suggest that I kiss his cleft chin first and then slide gently against his lips and captivate him as all girls liked to do to a man. Oh, what kind of man or woman was I becoming, I thought, shivering at the longing for a man's love that came over me. Oh, how all the

potions I was taking were changing me. I could barely recall that I was a man any more.

I'd probably have told Pev about herisane, the finest of brandies, that Polwer said that Dolora, the town witch, used and how great it tasted, if he'd kissed me, loved me as a girl. Truth in drinking, I thought now as I remembered Polwer's leering expression.

"It must have been quite a bitter potion," I'd murmured to Pev who still resisted caressing my thighs so lovingly as he usually did. "Don't almost all brandies have strong aftertastes?"

"Not all," Peveret had said, easing back, away from me, making me feel so strange, yes, and so unattractive. I couldn't draw a man to me, not in my lovely nightie and delicate perfume. Oh goddesses, I could feel the lovebane, it must be that, coursing through me, making me desire this man to take me as a woman. I knew I must still have much of it upon my skin. That was why I desired him like, well, like a bitch in heat, I was thinking, blushing as I thought about it that way.

"But you may be right," Peveret had said out of the gloom.

"May, may I have some lovebane now?" I'd asked him, sure he was going to want me soon. I knew I couldn't bear him, as I couldn't bear any man, touching me and loving me unless I allowed myself to sink deeply under the influence of that potion. I tried to make him think that I wasn't already writhing as I was because the potion had a little hold on me.

"You've had too much tonight," the undercaptain had stated forcefully. "You need sleep. Take merenthe, if you think that you can't sleep. That's all you should have on a day like this one."

I'd tossed and turned and finally Peveret had got up and brought me merenthe. He'd said it was

lovebane but I knew it wasn't. He'd said he was going to love me after I'd taken it. I think I managed to breathe, "Liar," into his face before I'd sunk into the abyss.

I'd waltzed out onto the deck of *Silvery Seas* the following day after sleeping through the daylight. The sun was dipping below the horizon as I'd minced in my lovely, pink dress towards the officers' dining quarters where I was to meet my undercaptain. I'd felt so womanly after over an hour primping myself with Gennee's help, modeling for her all the pretty underclothing the seamstresses had made for me, the Goddess of Love! I felt so feminine and lovely as I swished out of my room along the foredeck and then saw the 'decorations' in the ship's mid-spars.

No-one had told me. Gennee later had cried and had whispered to me she'd had to promise not to tell me or she'd have been replaced as my maid.

So much for the agreement between the ships that had ended the previous 'war', I'd thought in despair. All the men taken by Peveret's bluebands the night before had been swinging gently in the breeze from long ropes from the upper spars. And it wasn't just Dowd and Sleck, the ringleaders. There were Merren and Rangoll as well and all the men, I think, whom I'd coerced into believing they'd made love to me.

"This way is polluted," I'd said with a shudder as Gennee had looked at me in sorrow. Beyond, I'd seen Panella, lifting her head from Mogen's shoulder, look down the deck to smile at me. She'd twirled her parasol, though she didn't need it for protection from the sun, and had strutted off with the surgeon, the sway in her walk, I was certain, directed at me to tell me how much more of a woman she was than me.

"But the undercaptain ordered ..." Gennee had begun, in distress.

"He can find me where he always does at night," I'd said to her, stalking off, my skirts swishing about me,

as I refused to pass under the bodies of the men I'd known so well, most of them anyway..

But Peveret didn't find me that night. He didn't come to 'our' cabin through the tendays that it took the now speeding ship, we'd traveled before so slowly, to reach the large island, Cunya. It grew from a speck on the horizon into a broad land. Only on the last day, before we entered the harbor, were the grisly trophies taken down from *Silvery Seas'* upper spars.

I watched the officers leave the ship, several, like Captain, Clan Elder Brisard, being greeted by a woman and children in a wide, well-upholstered carriage. Then, the riggers began to leave, bluebands everywhere on duty to ensure that their leaving was peaceful. New crews began with the help of a few of the original crew to empty the two ships, two piers having been cleared to allow us in, side by side.

There were over ten great ships in view against the shore, while others, much smaller, of a size with *Sword*, rode at anchor, as if ready to depart. Several had strange ports all along the decks, that I'd never seen before. One sailed from a dock near us. I smelled the heavy odor of black powder on the wind, the aroma making me feel very sick.

I turned away from what had seemed to me like the odor of death and watched the unlikely parade of femininity from *Silvery Seas* and *Zephyr*. I saw my 'lover' claimed by the 'mother' whom I'd thought of as his seawife. Yes, it was Peveret and Panella, together and loving, it seemed as they once had, riding in a fine, well-apportioned carriage, with a guard and a driver, heading right off the dock, quickly disappearing from my view.

I swirled my dress about me, looking up at the high, empty spars, wondering if any of the men who'd been up there would have changed places with me and been as girlish as they could be, as I was, in order to go on living. I was sure I was to be imprisoned

on this great ship, and what then? Taken away as some other man's seawife to a string of foreign ports? Was that to be my fate, a woman like those in the bordellos I'd visited who never thought of their work as imprisonment?

Across, the deck, Robady, back in his Sailing Officer uniform, came striding resolutely towards me, his face not looking directly at me, as he did when he was about to make love to me; no, his face wasn't the way that I remembered it. At least, I was to be the last, I was sure, of all the pseudo-women, to be allowed to leave the ship.

"I can fix your scars," I pouted to him, my voice high and feminine, I knew. "If you let me into the work station, that is."

"Undercaptain Peveret has specifically forbidden your use of that station on this ship at this time, my lady," said Robady, staring at me, letting his eyes wander all over me, lingering on the lacy frill over my now, alarmingly real, and, in my opinion, large, female breasts that were part of the new me.

"Pity," I murmured, feeling the urge to tantalize a man who had once treated me for tendays as a woman. "But I'm sure you have a pocket full of some powder that will allow us both to amuse ourselves in a most romantic fashion, don't you?"

Rob swallowed, staring again at the frilled lace, the tiny shoulder strap of my bra that was visible, and the fullness of my breasts. Yes, I really needed a bra now. It was obvious, even to man like Rob. So my breasts weren't as large as Fessee's, but they were just perfect on a girl of my height, or so Gennee had gushed at me. She'd showed me how hers had stopped growing but they were larger and softer than mine.

"Don't tease me, my lady," Rob said to me, most coldly after all we'd been to one another. I shuddered. This is how it would be if I was to become a man

again, a cadet, a future officer on a Baract naval vessel. All the men would treat me as coldly as Robady. I could never become a naval officer, I thought in despair, bleakness threatening to overcome me. No, I had a different future, I thought numbly, a future as a womanly dressed ‘cabbie’.

“I, I haven’t forgotten who you are, my lady,” Rob snapped at me as I studied him as he was studying me. I could see that he’d changed, as I had, “even if, if you’ve forgotten what I am.”

“Why, Officer Robady, sir,” I trilled at him, swishing against him and slipping my silk covered arm through his. “I haven’t forgotten what you’ve done to me, a cadet like you, either. Was it as much fun for you as it was for me?”

“Arr-, Arr-,” Rob struggled to say my real name as I twirled under his arm and swished my dress about him.

“My Lady Arrathee,” I giggled to him as I curtsyed, enjoying the discomfort he was showing. Rob deserved every bit of it, I wanted to tell him. I was still under the influence of so much lovebane, I thought. It must be that because I felt so giddy and so girlish as I taunted Rob, knowing I should stop. Maybe I would, when I’d had some of my own back.

“I have to escort you to Elder Peveret’s carriage, my lady,” said Rob, his face stiff and so unloving. He tried to stride with me as I pirouetted girlishly in my high-heeled slippers along the deck to the plankings that led down the side of the great ship to the dock where a familiar carriage was arriving.

“And, Arrat,” the man who had once declared I was his seawife, hissed at me, “I will get you out of this, you, Maresey and the other men, who’ll be assembling at Lady Folline’s in the Deviant Quarter. We won’t leave you here as the plaything of a man like Peveret!”

The last was said very quietly for the undercaptain himself came leaping down from the carriage like a footman himself. Pev actually smiled at me as he opened the door and put out a hand to assist me to mount the steps to the carriage in the long, silvery dress I'd had to wear. He waved a white-faced, shak- ing Robady back aboard *Silvery Seas*.

“At last, we’re alone,” said Pev as I was crushed into the seat. My thin, upturned nose told me that this was where Panella must have been sitting before me. “But only for a half day or so. Then, all of Cunya will begin descending upon you. You’ll find it a relief to get back to sea, I think, but, as I’ve said to you, that isn’t going to happen soon for my lady, despite what Robady thinks he can do to capture you from me.”

“He wants to capture me?” I asked Pev disingenu- ously. “But he doesn’t even like me any more, in his control or not.”

“Oh, he’d love to control you, my darling,” said the man whom I hadn’t seen in tendays and who was wearing another woman’s, well another man’s, lip- stick, her perfume and glimmers of face powder. Well, at least Pev must have been in a hurry to leave her and come and find me.

“Any man would love a woman as sparkling as my wife, my landwife, Lady Arrathee,” Peveret said firmly to me. I heard the words before I saw where the cari- age was heading. It wasn’t along the dock where it had gone before. It had turned onto a long boulevard. We were joining a line of carriages heading to lighted streets. Men and women, of all ages, were seated in the carriages or walking arm-in-arm.

“What are you doing?” I almost shrieked at the undercaptain. “I can’t be here!” All the girls at one time or another had warned me that if I stepped on land dressed as a woman, and was found out, I could

be executed by the land bluebands, the provosts, or something like that, on the spot.

That law had only been changed in the last few years on the biggest islands to allow Quarters to be set up that let girls from the great ships find places to stay on land. It was supposed to be better even though the ships still held their contracts. They had to leave when they were called to sea by whoever now owned them. I'd heard Gennee telling Bessee that she was going to get a certain house on land to purchase her contract so that she wouldn't have to travel again.

The landers would love Gennee as soon as they saw her, Bessee had proclaimed. She'd seemed to know what it was that Gennee wanted to do once she was 'landed'. Gennee would be such a convincing actress in various plays and ballets, I think I heard it right, as Bessee said it. Bessee would get her boy friend, yes, she, a cabbie, used that word, to take her to see whatever Gennee was in.

"I'm going to be killed!" I gasped at Peveret.

"Kissed," he said to me. "What a good idea!" He moved over beside me, sitting on my dress to pull me to him and did kiss me so enthusiastically. Oh, how I felt my breasts respond then, my nipples hardening as I kissed Peveret, trying to make everyone around me see me as a woman. Thank goodness there were lingering effects from the lovebane on my skin, I thought.

"And I want you to wear this," said Peveret as we eased along past open air gardens and restaurants where women, real women, in long gowns just like mine, I realized with a lump in my throat, were being escorted by older, white-haired men. I saw flashes of red-lipped smiles and flirty dancing along the street and wondered if I'd really left the 'Deviants' Quarter' that we 'girls' from the ship were supposed to be restricted to.

This', in Peveret's hands, was a pearl necklace in a long box. It had seven different colors of pearls along the rope, ending with a black pearl that Peveret positioned between my breasts in most daring fashion.

"This is a carabet necklace," Peveret said, confirming my worst suspicions. "No, no-one, my darling wife," he emphasized the words, "will ever challenge a woman who wears such a necklace. The gift of it is the same as if we are married. You are now my landwife and my seawife, my darling woman. I have given you my world and my life, my beautiful wife. And all I ask for this, right now, since all of Cunya seems to be watching, is one passionate kiss."

"I can't!" I screamed, thinking that I couldn't kiss a man again, but it wasn't true, not with the potion flooding over me from him. When Peveret's lips met mine and I felt his fingers gently stroking the necklace against me, against my breasts, I squirmed as I became so agitated beside him in the carriage. Oh, I think we must have been the talk of the town, as my scheming 'husband' probably intended.

It had been tendays since Pev had been so nice to me, kissing me so intensely, squeezing me and hugging me to him. I couldn't stop kissing Peveret all the way up into the hills and the great mansions and clanhouses beyond. I really must bathe soon and get rid of all the residual lovebane that was clinging to me, and to him, I guessed.

*****end of part three*****