

BEWITCHED



JERI ELLEN

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By **JERI ELLEN**

PROLOGUE:

The three women were seated at a table in one corner of the restaurant. Each one was sipping wine from their respective glasses. Their conversation drifted from fashion to the weather. A fourth woman joined the group and sat down breathlessly.

“Eunice, I am so glad you could join us, any new prospects?”

Their conversation stopped as an effeminate waiter approached with a bottle of wine. The women watched him closely as he filled the glass of the woman who had just arrived. He was short, with wispy blonde hair. His features were small and he had a very pretty, feminine face. When he finished pouring the wine they all

watched as he minced away. Once he was out of ear-shot they broke into giggles.

“Alright, down girls. He’s all mine,” spoke a tall black haired woman. “I saw him first when he began working here and you will keep your hands off, clear?”

There was another smattering of giggles before the blonde of the group spoke up.

“Agreed,” she said and then sighed.

“He really should have been a girl you know,” she said in a matter of fact tone of voice.

“He certainly will require a lot less work in the transformation process that’s for sure,” commented the late arriving auburn haired woman as she took her first sip of wine.

The women examined their menus as they drank their wine. After they discussed their options the tall woman raised her arm and signaled the waiter. He floated over to their table with pad in hand.

“Would you ladies like to order?” he asked in a soft, girly voice.

The women placed their orders and the waiter left. As he walked away they all watched his mincing gait.

“I can’t wait to see him waxed, plucked, and made up wearing high heels and a dress,” said the blonde.

“Okay seriously girls,” began the tall woman with black hair. “What about new prospects, Eunice?”

“Well I do have one strong possibility. He is an only child. Like our waiter here he is short, with small features and a pretty face. He doesn’t know quite what to do with him self and is in his first year of college, mostly just to please his mother. Unfortunately he is

also a bit of a smart aleck and somewhat abrasive around girls. You know the type. He thinks women were put on this earth for only one thing."

"I see," replied the blonde haired woman. "Except for the attitude he does sound like a perfect candidate though. After hormones and our transformation program I am sure he could be an excellent addition to any one of our clients' household staff."

The other women nodded in agreement as they resumed drinking their wine.

The waiter approached again pushing a small cart ahead of him. He placed their orders in front of each woman and then refilled their wine glasses before leaving. The women ate in silence as more customers came in and the initial quiet when they had arrived was now replaced with the buzz of conversation.

When they were finished the tall woman signaled the waiter again. Once again all eyes were on him as he minced over to their table.

"Can I get you ladies anything else?" he asked.

"Girls?" inquired the tall one.

There was no response.

"Okay, then check please."

The waiter put the check on the table and left.

"See you next month girls and remember the coven meets on the 23rd this month," said the tall woman as they all got up to leave the restaurant.

The waiter returned with a cart. After scooping up his generous tip he cleared the table and pushed the cart back to the kitchen.

Outside the restaurant the doorman tipped his hat as the women walked towards their Mercedes Benz cars. As they drove off he wondered what they did for a living to afford such vehicles and their monthly visits to this very pricey, upscale restaurant. . It began to mist so he went back inside to retrieve the umbrella he would need for the other patrons.

The presentation was finally over. I had just about fallen asleep. Professor Leon Sheldon shut off the power point and brought the lights back up to full. He was a large man, almost entirely bald with a thick black glasses and a black goatee. He took his handkerchief from his back pocket and wiped the perspiration from his forehead. Unfortunately he could do nothing about the dark circles in his shirt around his arm pits.

“In conclusion I want to relate again my three examples of the unexplainable. Mind you these examples were the experiences of three people very much like yourselves who were in no way out of the ordinary. Remember too that there are many more examples like these three, most of them undocumented.”

“The first was the man who arrived home late from a meeting at work and as he was about halfway from his garage to the back door he saw a large orange disk appear over the house. Almost instantly he was bathed in an eerie green light. He stood very still not knowing what to do. The light went out and the orange disk darted off to the northwest where he saw three other

orange disks and shortly the four of them disappeared over the horizon."

"The second involves a young sailor standing night watch on the bridge of a U. S. Navy frigate. Something comes out of the water about the size of a nuclear sub and moves steadily alongside the ship. The sailor calls out for the officer of the deck. Just as he arrives it slips under the waves. The officer turns to the sailor and asks: "You didn't see anything did you?" The young sailor shakes his head. "No sir. I didn't see anything unusual. It must have been a freak wave or something."

"The third was a businessman who checked into a hotel late one night. After sliding his card thru the slot he opens the door to his room. He picks up his suitcase and is about to go inside when he notices a beautiful young woman in a bridal gown walking towards him. She smiles at him and then walks down another corridor. The next morning he takes a seat in the hotel restaurant and notices an oil painting on the wall of the young bride he had seen the night before. The waitress informs him that the woman in the picture was the founders' daughter who was murdered on her wedding night. Occasionally guests report seeing her walking the hallways at night. When the waitress asks him if he saw the ghost of the dead girl the businessman shakes his head no and then proceeds to order his breakfast."

"Please do not scoff at these reports. They are very real. When you read about others, please pay close attention to them. There are many unexplained things out there and we should try to understand them better rather than dismiss them as figments of someone's

imagination or the results of the use of drugs or too much alcohol.”

“Thank you again for coming this evening and for your interest in the paranormal, ghosts, UFOs and the unexplained. In the back of the hall you will find a number of free pamphlets as well as some copies of my own book for sale.”

The professor walked from the stage to the stairs. The sparse crowd began heading for the exits. Very few went over to the table to purchase a book or get a pamphlet. Like my self they were only here for the half credit we got for going to several of these lectures throughout our first year of college.

I followed a short brown haired woman out of the hall. In the parking lot we both got into our cars. A short time later when I entered a local college hangout before heading home I saw her sitting alone at the bar. There weren't many students there as it was a Tuesday night. I walked over and sat down next to her. I ordered a beer and then turned to face her.

“Penny for your thoughts?” I began.

She smiled and put down her drink.

“About what?” she asked.

“The presentation. I saw you sitting across the aisle from me. What do you think?”

She shrugged and took another sip of her drink.

“You can believe whatever you want I guess. There are some things out there that just have no logical explanation.”

“I see. Do you believe in any of that stuff?”

“Yes, I have to.”

I was a little taken aback by her answer.

“What do you mean by “you have to”?” I asked.

“Simple. I am a witch.”

To say I was a little stunned by her answer was an understatement. I wasn’t sure if she was kidding or not so I decided to play it a little cool.

“Aah, I see. I am tho thiscared,” I lisped as I shrank back in mock horror.

“No reason to be afraid,” she said with a smile.

“Shouldn’t you be in a castle basement with the other witches stirring a pot of frogs’ legs, bat’s wings, newt’s eyes and other things while chanting about boiling, toiling and trouble?” I asked with a smile. “Or perhaps casting spells on people?” I added.

“Not necessarily. That’s not all we do.”

“Would you care to enlighten me?” I said with a grin.

“Of course I could, but not here and not now. Perhaps we could get together at a mutually convenient time and place.”

“Sounds like a plan. My name is Jan Norton. Here is my number.”

I removed a notepad from my shirt pocket and wrote my name and phone number on the top sheet, then tore it off and handed it to her.

“Thank you, Jan. I am Eunice Sheffield. I will give you a call.”

She finished her drink, then got up and left leaving behind the scent of some very sweet perfume.

I ordered another beer. When the bartender sat it down in front of me I asked him.

“Ever seen that woman before?”

He shook his head.

I took a gulp of beer and started thinking about the write up I had to do about that night’s presentation. It would be very brief without mentioning that I thought it was a lot of nonsense and of course I would have to exclude how my evening had ended with meeting and then getting a date with, of all things a witch. No professor would find that to be interesting or credible that was for sure.

I finished my beer and went home. I heated the leftovers mom had in the fridge and after doing the dishes I watched the news. I went to bed and fell asleep right way. I dreamed I was sitting in a pot of boiling water with Eunice and several other witches laughing at me as I was being cooked.

I woke up to the sound of the phone ringing. My t shirt was wet from the dream had been having. I mean you’d been sweating too if you were dreaming about being boiled to death. I checked my watch to find it was six fifteen am. Mom was an RN and worked twelve hour shifts from 6pm to 6am. I thought maybe she had car trouble or something.

When I answered the phone it wasn’t my mother but the police. Mom had been in an accident on the way home from work. I had to get to the hospital right away as she was badly injured. I hung up the phone and got dressed.

I drove to the hospital ER and gave them my name. I was told to have a seat in the small waiting area adja-

cent to the admittance desk. I took a seat and prepared myself for the worst.

Mom divorced dad when I was still very young. I had never heard from him since. She had a tough go for a while but finished nursing school and landed a job with the local hospital right away. She made good money and was able to provide a good living for the two of us.

Shortly a doctor came towards me accompanied by the hospital chaplain. I took a deep breath and stood up to meet them. I could tell by the looks on their faces and the presence of the chaplain that the news was not going to be good.

“I am very sorry to tell you this young man but your mother succumbed to her injuries. We did the best we could but it just wasn’t enough.”

“I understand doctor, thank you for all you did,” I replied.

The doctor left and the chaplain extended his hand in sympathy. I took it as we sat down. He said a short prayer and then I left.

Back home the house was strangely empty. I didn’t feel like eating breakfast. I sat at mom’s desk and made a list of things to do. I had no idea where my father was, not that he would care to know she was dead. She had been an only child and her parents were both dead so there was no one to notify.

By noon I had notified the hospital of her death and the funeral home to pick up her body. I had a 4pm appointment with the funeral director to make arrangements. I called mom’s insurance company to notify them of the accident.

A police officer had come by and left a copy of the accident report and mom's purse. A teenager had been texting while driving to work at a fast food restaurant and had run a red light. She was dead too.

That afternoon I drove to see what was left of the car. It was not salvageable. I was able to get a few things out of the glove box and the trunk. Later I told the funeral director to plan a short visitation and then private interment later in the spring. He helped me write an obituary and then I went home.

I contacted an attorney to take care of the legal details and then ate supper. I went to bed early as there would be lots of things to do to settle the estate. It was a restless sleep to be sure. I still felt tired when I got up the next day.

It was still a week before classes started up again. By that time everything was taken care of. There were very few people at the visitation. I sent in a claim for mom's small life insurance policy and the human resources rep at the hospital helped me get her final check and life insurance proceeds she had earned at work. Everything was settled except the check for her car and the lawsuit I intended to file.

Just before school started I made several trips to the thrift store with her clothes and other things. When I finished her bedroom seemed as empty as the apartment. The place seemed so quiet. It was still hard to believe she was gone.

The Saturday before school started I got a sympathy card in the mail. It was from Eunice. She had beautiful handwriting. The card had that same sweet scent she had been wearing the night I met her.

It was a very feminine and captivating scent.

That night I re-read the note as I sipped a glass of my mom's favorite wine. I held the card to my nose and was momentarily taken back to the summer I turned twelve. It was the summer I spent with a woman mom called "Aunt Mada".

I had gotten into some trouble at school on several occasions. The cops had brought me home after I and a couple of classmates sprayed graffiti on the walls of a downtown building. Mom was upset of course.

Maybe the lack of a father figure was to blame. I guess I was still mad at him for leaving us, though to be honest I thought the counselor was right, our unfortunate circumstances were no excuse for my behavior.

The four of us had to repaint the businessman's wall. I was released to the custody of my mother and told to stay out of trouble. Mom grounded me and said unless I attended a special school that summer I would stay grounded so I agreed to go.

My grades had been average but I knew I could do better. I figured this summer school would bring my grades up so my college application would look better.

School ended on a Thursday and the woman mom called Aunt Mada showed up Friday night just as I was finishing my workout. I liked to run and along with regular bike rides I had kept myself in good shape.

"No need to change clothes or pack anything," said mom. "The school provides everything. Aunt Mada runs a disciplined class so do as you are told. No cutting up or smart remarks. Remember if you don't complete the course and pass your tests you will stay grounded for the coming school year."

I nodded and followed Aunt Mada out to the mini van parked in the driveway. I got in the front seat and

buckled my seat belt. Sitting behind me were three other boys about my age. They were all dressed like me in sweat togs and sneakers.

Shortly we arrived at a nearby mall. Aunt Mada parked behind a beauty salon. I wondered why she was stopping here as it was just after nine pm and I was sure the place would be closed.

Aunt Mada got out of the van and pushed the button next to the rear door. The door opened and she talked with someone briefly and then motioned for all of us to come inside.

Once inside we all were ordered to remove our clothing and stand spread eagle about four feet apart. I wasn't sure what was going on here but I remembered my mother's admonition to do as I was told and I was certain the other boys had been told the same judging by the speed with which we undressed.

In short order under the watchful eye of Aunt Mada the attendants used clippers and wax strips to remove our body hair. Next we were seated in the beauty shops chairs where we had our finger and toenails manicured and given two coats of hot pink nail polish. Our eyebrows were plucked and our eyelashes were curled. I had no idea why they were doing this but like the other boys I kept my mouth shut as the girls worked.

When they were finished we got dressed again and were given a small pink box. As we walked back to the van I was quite taken aback by what had been done to us. Why were we being treated like girls?

We got in the van and strapped ourselves in again. For the next two hours we sat quietly in our seats with the pink boxes on our laps. None of us said anything as

we had traveled north and then west on the interstate, then north again on a state highway.

Finally Aunt Mada turned off on a secondary road, then a gravel road and came to a stop at the back of a large farm house. I had no idea where we were except it was probably a hundred miles or so from where I lived.

“Alright girls get out and I will get you settled,” said Aunt Mada.

No one asked why she was addressing us as “girls” as we followed her inside the big house. We walked in the back door, thru the kitchen and then up the stairs.

There were four small bedrooms, two on each side of the hallway, each with its’ own tiny bathroom. She assigned each one of us to a room and then stood in front of us.

“I am a retired school teacher. My husband passed away many years ago and I leased the farm out to my hired hands. I began home schooling young people in this area and started a behavior modification summer school for boys like you. My classroom is in the basement. In addition to your studies you will be instructed on how to behave as well as helping out with the cooking and cleaning chores. I suggest you do exactly as you are told. Any questions before we begin?”

No one said a word. Aunt Mada smiled and continued.

“I want all of you to go to your respective rooms and undress. Fold your clothes neatly on the bed and place your shoes on the top. In the pink box you will find a small pink bottle and a cake of pink soap. Put one capful of the liquid in the tub and fill it with warm water. Put on the pink shower cap and then scrub

yourself with the pink soap. When you are finished, dry yourselves off. The round container in the pink box contains body powder. Apply it liberally to your body and underarms. When you are finished put on the nightgown you will find on the bed and one of the pairs of pink scuffs you will find on the floor. Pick up your clothes and stand outside your room. You have thirty minutes."

We all hurried to our rooms. The walls were pink with white trim and a white ceiling. I undressed and began running my bath water. The capful of pink liquid turned the tub water into a sweet smelling container of pink foam. I put on the pink shower cap, sat down in the tub and began scrubbing myself with the perfumed bar of pink soap. When I finished I rinsed the residual foam down the drain and dried myself off. I dusted myself with the sweetly scented body powder, put on the pink satin panties and pink chiffon top that was on the bed. After slipping on one of the pairs of pink scuffs I folded my clothes, placed the shoes on the top and walked out to the hallway.

Aunt Mada was standing at the end of the hallway waiting for the other boys to finish. It was hard to figure out what the object of this school was. Here I was standing outside my bedroom, wearing a pink girls' nightgown, smelling to high heaven of the girly sweet perfumed bubble bath, soap and powder with my pink finger and toenails. I was wondering if the purpose of the school was to curb our behavior and attitude or simply turn us into girls.

When the last boy was outside his room Aunt Mada came forward and looked each one of us over like a drill sergeant inspecting his troops. She said nothing as she walked down the hallway and back.

“Alright girls, bring you clothes over to the end closet here.”

We all followed her obediently to the end of the hallway. She unlocked and opened the door. The boxes were placed inside. She closed and locked the door again.

“Tomorrow will be a long day so go right to bed. No talking and no noise. I will wake you for breakfast and then we will begin.”

We all headed to our rooms as she turned and went downstairs. None of us had spoken since our arrival and now it seemed that conversation amongst us was also forbidden. I knew this school was going to be different than I or the other boys had ever attended.

I pulled the pink chiffon bed spread back and slid between the pink satin sheets. I was tired but did not fall asleep right away. I liked the way the satin panties and chiffon top felt on my skin. The satin sheets and pillow case made me feel good too. I felt calm, relaxed and comfortable in this very feminine environment. As I drifted off to sleep I wondered if the other boys felt the same way I did.

It seemed as if I had just gone to sleep when Aunt Mada’s voice came over the small speaker above the door.

“Good morning girls. It’s time for you to get up. Please be at the table for breakfast in five minutes. DO NOT KEEP ME WAITING!!!” she added in a louder voice.

I got up quickly, slipped on my scuffs and walked into the small bathroom. The seat was fastened down so I had to sit down to pee, just like a girl. I washed and

dried my hands. After I made up the bed I went down stairs.

“Take your seats gracefully girls, we’re not a bunch of farm animals here,” admonished Aunt Mada.

We all sat down. All of us had the same look on our faces. Somewhat scared and a bit embarrassed because of the way we were dressed not to mention the fact that we all smelled sissy sweet.

Aunt Mada poured each of us a glass of orange juice and then placed a spoonful of scrambled eggs on our plates. She added a single piece of toast and then sat down at the head of the table.

“Keep your elbows off the table and take small bites of food. Chew it well and then swallow.”

We began to eat. She watched us very carefully as she ate. When we finished she stood up.

“Bring your dishes into the kitchen girls,” she announced.

I could’ve eaten much more as I am sure the other boys could have as well but I wasn’t about to say anything. She picked up two frilly pink aprons and handed them to two of the boys named Vance and Wilbur.

“Valerie you will wash and Wilma you will dry.”

She had addressed the two boys with female names instead of their given male names. She gave Vance a pair of pink latex gloves and Wilbur a dish towel.

“Tomorrow Janet and Tonya will do breakfast dishes,” she said as she began filling the first of the two small sinks with soapy water. After filling the second with hot rinse water she stepped back to watch.