

Excerpts of Provincetown chapters from *The Bedfordshire Warlock*

Chapter 23

Provincetown, Massachusetts

Bell, Book and Candle Bed and Breakfast 4th week of October 1992

It took us more than four hours to get to the end of the Cape to arrive in Provincetown at noon, hitting most of the weekend traffic crossing the Sagamore Bridge into Cape Cod. As we departed this morning, I thought about the car ferry that leaves from Boston, but I was shelling out a steep amount for one night at a bed and breakfast the weekend before Halloween in P-town, also known as the weekend, where every gay man that ever wanted to dress in drag has the license to do so without any judgement. Hell, there are plenty of straight men that like to do that in P-town as well!

I was able to get a single Saturday night reservation at my favorite bed and breakfast: The Bell, Book and Candle, a kitschy B/B named after the famous movie that starred Kim Novak as a witch belonging to a modern-day coven in Greenwich Village during the swinging 1960s. I met the hosts/owners in Boston during a particularly wild weekend when I turned twenty years old. They're a cute British couple who immigrated to the Cape after they fell in love with P-town on holiday. Our meeting prompted an invitation for a weekend at their B/B and we've kept in touch ever since. Miraculously, they had a cancellation immediately after I called to inquire about a room. I had nothing to do with the circumstances behind the cancellation. At least, I don't think so.

As we drove down Commercial Street in the Mercedes, it turned more than a couple of heads. It isn't your typical car that ventures down the rough pavement of this repurposed Portuguese fishing village. As we coast toward our destination, I can't help but look over to observe Toby's face as he gets his first impression of the denizens of P-town. His electric smile and accompanying laughter, reinforced by the squeezes of his hand lying on mine, relay the wonderment and joy he's experiencing. The drag queens were out in full force advertising their shows for the Saturday before Halloween, one of the biggest nights in P-town. Not known for shying away from anything political, there were plenty of Hillary Clintonsque and Barbara Bush look-a-likes (the election was only two weeks away) amongst the usual bevy of Chers, Judys, Lizas and Barbras pedaling their acts. Focusing on two men our age holding hands out in public as they walk along the street, Toby leans over and kisses me quickly on the lips.

We park in the lot designated for our accommodations, the envy of many who are desperately trying to find parking in a town not known for its vast parking spaces (most of the fishing villages in New England originally relied on the ports rather than the land for transportation). Checking in, I introduce Toby to our hosts, expats Nigel and Russell, who have been together for over twenty years, a rare sight in the gay male community. As rare as unicorns. Although they

have an “open” relationship, which seems to be the key to success for long-term gay male relationships, AIDS has made this a more dangerous lifestyle choice.

I can tell that Nigel and Russell are taken with Toby. Why wouldn't they be? He's the perfect example of the All-American boy that so many gay men lust over, including me of course. I'm not a unique gay man; I'm not a unicorn.

As we make our way to our room, paraphernalia from the film that the B/B is named is strewn throughout the converted sea captain's house: movie stills of Kim Novak, Jimmy Stewart, Jack Lemmon, Elsa Lanchester, and Hermione Gingold in various scenes of mod club life in Greenwich Village along with props from the movie that Nigel and Russell acquired from auctions at Sotheby's in New York. Their prized possession is a signed movie still of Gillian Holroyd (Novak) posing with Pyewacket, the Siamese cat that's her familiar in the movie. The movie is a favorite with gay men as the parallels aren't hard to discern: an artistic, creative subculture with a belief system that's not accepted by society. But instead of being discriminated against because of whom they love, they're discriminated against because of the false perception that they gain their powers from being in league with the devil and their highly misunderstood relationship with the supernatural realm. The world of magic in the film has no connotations to worshipping Satan. Their naturally acquired powers, inherited through familial lines, require no obedience to any deity, rather, an appreciation and the ability to manipulate the natural world.

Our accommodation is a tastefully decorated room and private bath with a decidedly nautical décor. I notice that we've been supplied with masks for the festivities tonight. I appreciate this gesture from our hosts as the costume requirement of the weekend had completely slipped my mind. I'm also surprised to be supplied with this essential item as it's expected that every queen in P-town plans for their Halloween costume months in advance. Then I notice a note next to the masks addressed to me:

“Dorian love, we know you will enjoy these. We remember that weekend in Boston and how much you like to...play. Enjoy! Love, N and R.”

I'm smiling and tittering as I read their note. Toby inquires as to what I'm giggling about. I hand him the note to read. After reading it, he looks at me and then asks, “Play?”

“Long story. I'll tell you sometime when I'm good and drunk, which probably means this weekend!” I respond coyly.

Toby smiles and bobs his head. “Cool.”

It's an unusually warm day for the end of October, so I suggest we go to one of the beautiful beaches of Provincetown. If not to go swimming, we can sunbathe. I avoid mentioning the gay nude beach because this is not the locale I want to see Toby naked for the first time, nor do I want anyone else ogling him. I'm not that secure in our relationship...yet.

Eating at restaurants is infamously pricey here. To coin a local phrase, “It is wicked expensive!” So, I suggest that we shop at one of the local markets to get food for a picnic and then ride out to

Race Point Beach on the mountain bikes that Bell, Book and Candle provide for their guests. Toby agrees to my plan, and we ride out on one of the many bike trails that honeycomb the state-protected seashore. The hilly topography creates challenges when climbing the upgrades, but the ride is a good workout and makes the reward of relaxing on the beach that much more enticing.

Race Point is gorgeous today. The late afternoon sun reflecting off the water and the brown coarse sand is picture perfect. The dunes creating interesting shadows in the mid-day sun would be the only source of natural shade on an intensely hot day. However, due to the autumnal breeze and the reduced strength of the sun at this time of the year, becoming overheated is not an issue, and we lie in the sun's rays without any protection (besides our sunblock). I glance at Toby while he lies there motionless on a towel under the warming rays of the sun. He looks sexy in his tan cargo shorts. His naturally brownish, year-round tan produces only a faint tan line at his waist. He lies with his arms folded behind the nape of his neck, displaying his massive upper arms, and highlighting the perfection of his muscular physique. I look at him and wonder what it is that he sees in me. I know that I'm attractive in that pale, dark-haired English schoolboy sort of way, but what's this blond sun-god doing with me?

As if he can read my mind, knowing that I'm thinking about our relationship, Toby moves his left hand toward me so that it lightly bumps my right hand. I take it graciously and enclose my fingers around his hand. It's hard for either of us to believe that we can hold hands together on a public beach without any threat of being harassed or abused for being a same-sex couple expressing their affection. This openness is what makes P-town such a unique place in the world for gay people, like the beach communities of Rehoboth Beach in Delaware or Key West in Florida.

We bought a freshly made seafood salad of shrimp, lobster and whitefish and sourdough bread from the market to make sandwiches, and with homemade coleslaw on the side, we had a picnic. It was a perfectly delicious late lunch to complement our perfect day at the beach. As the sun moves further toward the western sky, and the air starts to become chillier, we decide that it's time to ride back before it gets too late so that we can take a "disco nap" before we go to dinner and out to the bars. Pedaling back to town is infinitely easier as most of the hills are on a downgrade, allowing us to coast more on the way back to town than we did on the way to the shore.

After we check the bikes back in, we head up to the room. Peeling our semi-sweat-soaked shirts off, both of us collapse on the full-sized bed after our five-mile workout. It's not long before both of us pass out, on our backs, into an effortless slumber. Later in our napping, sensing that there's another being in the bed, I roll onto my side and wrap my arm around Toby's muscular waist, squeezing to gain a tighter grip. He acquiesces, rolling onto his side and leaning his back into me so there is no daylight between us. We slept for over an hour. Our first disco nap together.

After we shower (individually) we dress for the evening: black shirts, a button-down long sleeve for me and a polo-style short sleeve for Toby, designer blue jeans, black belts and casual shoes, brown Docksiders for Toby, and black Chelsea boots for me. Donning our masks, simple

but elegant satin black guises that tie with black ribbon, we're ready to face all that P-town can offer on the Saturday before Halloween. Tea Dance is first.

Tea Dance is the quintessential event that most gay men in P-town start with for any evening. The most popular Tea Dance venue has a good-sized pool and a large deck for mingling while drinking expensive cocktails. At any given time of the year, every type of gay man can be found here including porn stars, drag queens, regular queens, businessmen, young men looking for Daddies, Bears, Cubs and Otters (big, small, and tall/skinny hirsute men), leather/BDSM aficionados, Abercrombie and Fitch/surfer boys and academics. Typically, Tea Dance begins in the early evening and lasts until early dinner time. Then you have the choice of going to dinner, and most likely make it an early evening, or you go home for a disco nap or sex, especially if you meet "Mr. Right Now," shower, change, have a late dinner, and then visit the clubs. I purchase two famously pricey Rum Punches for Toby and me, without either of us being carded, which is a relief in Toby's case but annoys me that they assume I'm twenty-one years or older. Handing the drink to Toby, I explain to him the "Devil's Tongue:"

"The straw is filled with a shot of dark rum, so that first sip is extra special and potent. I affectionately refer to it as the Devil's Tongue, because after a few of these, you are ready to tongue anyone! Cheers!"

I watch Toby's face as he takes that first sip through the straw. "Whoaaa! That is strong!" he belts out in his usual dude-like voice. With a decidedly adorable grimace across his face, he continues, "I don't know if I'll be able to finish one of these!"

"Like I said, the first sip is the most powerful, the rest is just spiked Kool-Aid. You'll be surprised how easily they go down."

I was right. We each have three in two hours, a bar bill that is nearly half of one night's stay at our B/B. But we're having a great time, making small talk with the populace. The people-watching is especially amazing, as some of the clientele have already donned their costumes for the night, or at least the first costume for the night. Most of them had participated in the make-shift Halloween parade that had happened while we were napping, so who knows what they'll look like by the wee hours of the morning.

As per usual, drinking in mass quantity leads to urinating in mass quantity. The bathrooms at any of the bars in P-town are large enough to accommodate the needs on a regular night, but on special weekends they are obsolete, and you can find yourself waiting in line for twenty minutes to piss in a sink if need be. Luckily, Provincetown is surrounded by water, so if you aren't too drunk, you can slip out near the "dick dock," P-town's infamous cruising zone under a pool terrace and wade out into the surf and do your business. Of course, one must watch out for the police who are patrolling for men cruising the beach, but at night, it's much more difficult to see beneath the terrace.

Slightly tipsy, I inform Toby of my intentions. "Hey, the line at the bathroom is ungodly, I'm going to slip out to the beach and relieve myself in the ocean. Do you need to go?"

“Nah, I’m okay. Drinking alcohol doesn’t have that effect on me for some reason. The guys on the team think I have a bladder as big as a rugby ball,” Toby nonchalantly informs me.

“Good to know,” I say, slightly slurring my response.

I proceed to walk around the pool and out the side entrance. Walking down Commercial Street in the darker areas of the street, searching for a pathway to the water, I find a narrow space between buildings, partially obscured by a large bush. I stealthily maneuver my way to the water, kick my boots off quickly, and wade into the water up to my ankles. I unzip my fly and relieve myself into the waters of the Atlantic or Mass Bay, as it could be either.

Suddenly, the water about ten feet further into the surf from me begins to churn and bubble as if something is rising to the surface. I pull up my underwear and zip my fly. As the bubbling becomes denser, increasing in surface area, the water surrounding the bursting air bubbles begins to swirl. The swirling action is now a fully formed whirlpool; I know what to expect. Through the bubbling medium in the center of the whirlpool, I see the shiny exposed head of Beladon breaking the surface of the water, followed by the naked, gleaming scale-covered human-like body, upright on a column of water rising through the swirling water. The glowing aqua lights that beam from the irises of the entity find me in the darkness, directing my attention toward it.

Defying gravity, as this entity stands upon this waterspout, Beladon addresses me, “Dorian Leeves, the time of ascension is near. You have the three bloods. You will summon your powers when the moon is its most powerful.”

Slightly incoherent, but understanding the gist of what Beladon has told me, I clarify the statement, “Do you mean the full moon? The next full moon?”

“Yes, when the moon wields its greatest power on the earth.”

“So, let me get this straight. I’m to sacrifice a mammal of some sort using the bone of Elias Doever, doused in my blood, which contains your ‘essence’ on the next full moon. Any particular time?”

“No, Dorian Leeves must bring the three bloods, a beast, and a mortal witness,” Beladon informs me.

“A mortal witness? Why?” I drunkenly inquire as the rum is beginning to catch up with me.

“The mortal realm. The immortal realm. The sacrifice. Ascension,” Beladon instructs me.

“Well, who is this mortal witness?” I simply ask.

At this time, the waterspout begins to descend into the surf, carrying Beladon down into the depths. Soon, all that I can see is the glowing aqua lights of the eyes and then complete darkness as the last bubbles disappear. The water, losing its circular vortex, returns to a wave-like pattern breaking on the shoreline. Beladon did not answer my question, again, and it didn’t give me any time to ask the many questions that I’ve had since the night I found Elias Doevers’ remains.

This encounter adds more to the count of unanswered questions. Then there's the new task: Who will be my mortal witness? Immediately, Toby comes to mind. But this means that I'll have to tell him everything. And soon, as the next full moon just happens to be in three more nights, on Halloween. I know this because part of our research with the snails involves the tidal current, which is influenced by the lunar cycle. I'm now sobering up because of this revelation. I find my way back to Toby, armed with a new task. But we're in P-town, and we're here to have a good time. He greets me with a big kiss on my lips; open mouth and plenty of tongue. Finally coming up for air, I joke, "Someone is feeling their oats tonight!"

"What?"

"It means you are feeling uninhibited, free, carefree...good."

He responds, slurring his words, "What's not to feel good about? This is a perfect place, a perfect night, perfect drinks, and a perfect man!" The rum punch is catching up to Toby as well.

With that last statement, Toby wraps his bulbous arms around my neck, pressing most of his weight against me as well. Toby has a good forty pounds on me, and because I'm also feeling the power of the rum punch, it is all I can do to keep the both of us from crashing to the deck. But I manage, hoisting him up until I can get him back into a standing position. I also recognize what this posture and this loss of balance means: Toby has precious time before he's going to be incapacitated, sick, passed out or all of the above. I decide that we need to get back to the room for a breather, another disco nap maybe, before the rest of the night, if that's possible.

Supporting him with my shoulder most of the way to the B/B, we make it to the room where Toby passes out on the bed, as if on cue. Normally, if I had a gorgeous man in this condition, I would be in full seduction mode: removing clothes, foreplay, and then the main event, hopefully, if he was willing and able, with a shower before (the Virgo thing I mentioned before) if the dude wanted to and was capable. But this is my boyfriend and we have resisted sex because we want it to be special, and his being drunk and incapacitated are not the conditions for consensual sex, special or not. I decide to take off his docksiders and jeans so that he can sleep more peacefully. Taking my boots and jeans off, I slide next to him on the bed. Preventing him from aspirating on his vomit if he gets sick, I prop him up on his left side. It's also a good position for spooning. Wrapping my right arm gently around his waist, applying no pressure to a distended belly, I fall asleep quickly.

I awake to the sensation of lips pressing against mine. Opening my eyes, I see my golden boy peering at me with a Cheshire-like grin on his face. The lights are still on in the room as we passed out together. He moves his mouth back onto mine, and I close my eyes to enjoy the tactile pleasure. His lips and tongue exploring my mouth, I'm becoming aroused. I can feel Toby's hardness through his boxer briefs on my hip. He stops kissing me. I immediately open my eyes and stare into his. Toby then moves his head to the right side of my face and whispers, purring into my ear, "I'm ready...I'm ready to do... whatever you want to do."

I initiate a long, passionate kiss. Toby breaks away from me to pull his polo shirt over his head and then resumes to kiss me full on the lips. Placing my hands on his chest, massaging the

mounds of muscle, I lightly brush my fingers over his already taut nipples, eliciting a deep-throated moan of pleasure from Toby. This cues me to concentrate on the gum drop-sized masses of sensitive flesh with my thumbs. Circling the tips of his nipples with the tips of my thumbs, a more vocally responsive whine escapes from the back of his throat. Grasping them with the tips of my index fingers and thumbs, I roll the sensitive nubs of flesh in between my fingers. Toby is whining and moaning at the same time. My hands then move down to his flat stomach. Using my fingertips to explore the crevices in between the cubes of abdominal muscle, outlining them with my fingertips, my fingers move lower until I feel the crevice of his naval and the wisps of long curly hair that descend toward his pelvis. I slide my fingers inside the waist of his boxer briefs, pulling the elastic band back, and entangle my fingers in the thick patch of blond, coarse, and curly hair. Toby's breathing is accelerating, guttural sounds escaping from the back of his throat as I pet the mound of tight curly hair. Expectedly, a roundish mass of spongy flesh pushes against the side of my hand. As I unfurl my fingers to grasp it, I stop.

"Wait, Toby, before we go any further...I have to tell you something," I say as I remove my hand from the elastic of his briefs. Moving my body away from Toby, I sit up and lean against the headboard. With a perplexed expression on his face, Toby also sits up, cross-legged on the bed.

"Dorian, what is it? What's the matter?"

"Before we have sex...become intimate, I have to tell you something about me," I state nervously, barely able to speak, my mouth completely dry from the anxiety I'm feeling. Toby continues to look at me with those confused, big puppy dog eyes of his. Finally, I just blurt it out, "I'm a warlock!"

"What?" Toby says incredulously and quietly, still harboring that same confused look.

"I'm a male witch, a warlock, I have supernatural abilities. I can move things with my mind... I, I have visions...I know when things are going to happen before they do...I can read minds...I can manipulate water..."

Toby's expression changes from confusion to surprise, some might even say fright. The face of someone afraid of the crazy person next to them who told them essentially that they were delusional.

"Here, I can prove it!" I exclaim, quelling his doubt. With that statement, I look around the room. Seeing a candlestick holder with a snifter attached to the bedside table, I point to it. I concentrate on moving the snifter. The snifter moves slightly, unhooking itself from the base of the candlestick holder, levitating until it reaches the top of the taper and then lowers itself onto the candle. Turning to look at Toby to see his reaction to the feat of levitation I performed, his eyes are wide open.

"That was amazing. How did you do that? I can't see any wires. It must be a projector or something. You didn't tell me you were a magician!" Toby exclaims.

