david aes \avon mai \note drafts

take one, to be combined

avon mnao ···

*avon and av had arrived with a few days lead on annae, who had DEPARTED for ao’ajea in the wake of the dissolution of her husband’s school, the jentempas. annae and amaeo, had proceeded to teal explicitly so that amaeo could oversee av’s imminent metamorphosis. a significant factor in the life of av—ironically unknown to her—she was the rarest of sexes, the aeo.* *a fact which, it properly explored could cause her destruction simply in its revelation.*

av was awakened by a terrifying nightmare—and the accompanying and unnoticed fit. she slipped through the sleeping house out into the night. prowling about, av witnessed as annae stole in during the night to appeal to her mother for a favor. *events had unfolded in her life, forcing annae to send her daughter-self to her mother when she was still unnamed. annae had committed herself to a dangerous path and annae could not in conscience expose her other-self to it as well.* *in spite of having forsaken her duty to her house, in the hope that her daughter, annea, would fulfill the requirements of an heir, annae would continue to represent avon in interests in the aegis.* av was about to retreat, to leave her mother and annea in privacy, when she realized that they had been discussing matters about her, she could not pry herself away. what she heard disturbed her and cast a shadow on her coming mnao ... a discussion on the expected metamorphosis of her sex ... aeo ... There were things had to learn about her body, or rather the whole concept of the body that was hers ... av was born, andgyn omni, but having spent her childhood largely among humans, adopted a female identity. *she had always been something of a tomboy, by human standards, while she was growing up. when adolescence began to interfere with her friendships, she had found it easier to establish a female personality—given her general form—than assert her exotic sex and invite undue attention to herself*. however, The more she overheard about herself, and the time of choosing, the more apprehensive she became about her sexual identity. the thought of being sex split like An was intriguing ... disconcerting ... hard to imagine, let alone believe.

avon coming into majority ... Av faced more than one peripheral challenge. *She was born heir to an empty title (ava), a damning art (xai), and a broken house (je’ara). these three burdens were her mother’s legacy to her.* she only had a couple or years in which meet and match those challenges. she could just manage the formalities, with little attention to spare—too little to grasp the political ramifications.

some of av's new classmates take exception to her enigmatic character and background and so begin to push and test her. she was going to have to take her shirt off and trade licks with several of them to earn their respect.

amaeo comes down out teal to find av. amaeo sees no more than anyone else, and yet she could not mistake av for being anything but what amaeo herself is. av and amaeo draw close, a small commotion ensues as the maestro leaves with av.

av returned home late and caught up with the news. aeph, with his son anket, and aeth, with his son ankemet, and daughter ankimet, had arrived in teal. arranging for the three youths to stay in residence there while they attended to the needs of their father’s house during her advancing illness. av also discovered that annae, shin and shen were staying in residence, along with amaeo.

*mna’ai dealt with the issues of intimacy and boundaries intensively ... confronting them directly during their apprentice ship to mnao ... and again in their role as mentor to other mnao ...* the more she explored the fire within her, the more it changed her, striving to dominate and redefine her. The passion, her sexuality, had always been there, but—as if it were a stranger within herself, some prisoner—it sensed the approaching day of its release. The more she learned of the possabilities and uses of herself, the more defined its sense purpose became.

av’yn ... it took her by surprise. under the influence of av’yn, she was shift split into female and male bodies *... anvea and anveo ...* her sexual education, she was stunned to learn, would involve exploring her sexuality through auto sexuality. *to be very blunt, they were telling her to fuck herself.*

in the morning av received a visit from her mother, her first-teacher. her preparation was tested and she was given leave to fulfill her mna. it was both exciting and disappointing. av was poised on the threshold of the most sensative initiation in her life, and it would come among strangers.

coming of age was bitter sweet. opening herself to and mastering her sexuality was the last phase of her second devotion.

mna

av confronts her self over her sexuality. technically, it was harmless. *one of the oddities of split twins, they cannot sexually conceive together. their gammates annihilate each other upon fertilization.* on a moral level, it was as acceptible as masturbation. also, if she could believe what she had been told, it was the only perfectly safe sex—that was truly sex—one could have. *ironically, sexual activity between split twins could provoke an asexual self conception in the female, and prevent asexual self conception in the male of the pair. at times when there is more than one embodiment of an individual, self conception only results in seeding—the production of a pearl, or dormant embryo.* once she got over the shock, she took it in stride, and indulged herself. In her own embrace there was release—only her hunger returned both sharper and deeper. trying to be philosophical about it, she did worry about dangers inherent in what she had become.

mna’ai

on her return to school following the four days of wend, av was confronted at the gates by her new acquaintances. av’s explanations were curtailed by the added interest in her which came into focus there at the gates. among the suitors were muses and adepts who had an apprehension of something more than politics afoot in her affairs. of course all of this political maneuvering was but an annoying distraction to av and her peers; who honestly care very little about all this grown up nonsense.

av and the others soon found themselves in the midst of arla liymb. like ot or not, it was the time of choosing for her mnao. thoughts of her mnao still made her uneasy, and she resorted to the challenge to deal with the attentions her popularity engendered. she had no reason to think that this decision would damn her in months to come.

the issue among the teen peer group becomes; who would av love? who's love would win her? compared to all those raging hormones, what else could possibly be important? while it may seem that all the adolescent sense/sex, affection/love insanity of av and her friends was ridiculous or even irrelevant, the fact was that these powerful drives greatly shape the course of even the most sober and serious events. in a sense this was all a conflict between av's generation and the older generation over who's view of reality would prevail.

mnao

av’s promotion in court as the heir to tegal was what drew the attention of the va’av to her. they had not know that she had survived the last action they had taken to protect their interests. they had a private claim to tegal which they were desperate to protect, and which they dared not allow come to anyone’s attention.

av was initially the object of va’avon investigation. the loss on their side had been very high, almost as high as the death toll of je’ara. thus, while they had an idea of what had been intended in that long ago raid, they had to investigate the possability that av had been converted. if she too was va’av, then their highest objective had been unwittingly attained. unfortunately, when they confronted her, their analysis was enigmatic. they could sense something of themselves about her, but she seemed not to consciously reconize any of them.

further investigation bythe va’av was inconclusive. av was, and was not, va’av. they attached someone to her, a suitor in pursuit of her hand. while in the person of anvea, he found little encouragement, he was startled to find anveo as natural a companion as other va’av. it would take little effort to nudge anveo into betraying av as a whole to them. somewhat confident that anveo was a child of possession, they only needed to penetrate anvea to test her. once they understood the resistance of that aspect of her personality, they could perhaps trigger her conversion. or possibly just kill her right there and resolve the problem that way.

av confronted herself .. confronting something within her ... something alien striving to dominate or displace her ... she was somewhat relieved to find that perhaps her problem was not some form of self-hatred or deep seated self-destructive impulse ... whatever it is, it is damnably ellusive ...unable to prove what she herself did not know, *that a demon from her past was awakening from its exile deep in her mind and trying to over throw her from within,* av is unable to act on her suspicion.

*anveo, or that which had seized that part of av’s identity, was conceived in av—not merely with av—and so was designed to perceive that he was supposed to be av. though they shared the same definitions of self, they were not one self, not one soul. arguably, they both had a valid claim on the same identity, but the struggle they faced was to be two separate people. recognizing the need to distinguish themselved apart from each other was only the first battle they would face.*

*anveo had always conceived of himself as av. however av was always too strong to subplant, and only in the weaker area of her masculinity, could anveo keep a foothold. however, upon finally wresting himself away from anvea, and with anvea stripped of her identity, he was finally able to assert his own identity ... the manifestation of which was the reflection of anvea.*

av breaks stride in the middle of a fight, her attention drawn to a commotion among the observers. av turns and finds herself confronting her own image, a shock of recognition passes through her—different from the shockwave that passes through the crowd.

the nightmares, the prowling, her disturbed and agitated thoughts and emotions had driven her out of the warmth of her bed often in the past. never more so than what she was experiencing of late. questioning the wisdom of making a habit of night stalking, even as her roaming brought her under the eaves of another private conversation. this time the people meeting had almost walked in on her. slipping out the only exit, av was trapped in an airshaft during the ara’dai’s meeting with her daughter and a man named teyn, who had come in the cover of darkness. this time she could not flee without giving herself away. *the purpose of annae's visit was to ask her mother to provide a place for her husband and her younger children, so that amaeo could be present to help av through her mna. jannae agreed to make a place in her home for the idai, his children by annae, and her other children by contract to morene, in the hope that she would be regain a* *place in her daughter's heart. annae's rejection of her claim to teal’s title significantly changed jannae's plans for answering teyn's challenge. what was at first a notion of an alliance and future reunion of ava and ara through av and annea, had been strengthened by annae’s refusal. her intention to sue for betrothal now had to involve preparations necessary for av to bear the mantle of her house ... unknown to her, however, ... before she even received the message,*

as before, what she heard gave her things to think about in the days following. av was largely confused by what little of the conversation she overheard. she reflected on part of the lie she had lived. thinking provoked questions about what she had been willing to take for granted, but could not bear to hear spoken.

av was in for a rude awakening. with no hesitation, as if sensing that there was no time to waste, av was thrust into the thick of the local school community. av was already being pressed to acquire the qualifications to bear a house title. her status as an artist of the anjenimai REQUIRED only one discipline to complete for mai ideal. word leaked at once that she would not specialize in body, mind or spirit, she was to enter dao upon completing mnai.

that she was to be introduced ... av had never thought she would be introduced into her claim ... since, as a courtesan, mother had no legal rights to her children, she assumed she had no claim on her mother’s house. when she pressed for a reason, she learned that, with the health of the avon’dai failing rapidly, aeph and aeth had to dissolve their schools and dismiss their students—even their own children—to go to their father’s side. since mother had no house to take the children of her mates into during this time of passing, they were to be housed with their maternal grandmother.

due to some important family business, annea and annaeo had departed without her. they had assumed av would not begin at jutaicho that day. without escort and introduction from her friend, for whom she was to carry a message excusing them from their classes.

when she first laid eyes on av, ojen fell for her. *to a dragon, the light of a phoenix was like a candle to a moth. such an attraction accounted for ket’s obsession with annea. av had a unique quality—as alluring as that of a phoenix, and as compatible as a dragon—was totally irresistible. naturally, av remained almost blind to this deep affection.* in spite of herself, av acquired an escort to school. entering the local school was actually the more difficult process of entering a new, closed community. a bit shy and oversensitive, she nearly got herself barred from the school before she could join. though uncertain about this newcomer, most of the students of av's age found it natural to assume her a boy with delicate features rather than a tom boy, as she had intended. it was her first lesson in what avon had always struggled with, presumption.

av does not enter classes her first day due to placement and orientation procedures. in her absence, some of her new acquaintances get into a heated stir over her introduction. this friction would continue to build and hamper what might have been a smooth entry into her peers' social circles.

the latter third of annea's siblings await them at taelnihyar, sent by annae from the dissolved jentempas. jannae, av, annae, her siblings and their cousins all sit down to a second reception feast. the gathering turns into something of a house meeting, where they were all brought up to date on the situation facing jannae and thus the house. for many of these youngsters, it was the first time they had had to deal with the full weight of the masquerade of their species. some rules were established to ease the integration of the four children of annae with the complications of society.

av, sensing that letting on what she overheard the night before might not be wise, pretends to total surprise and ignorance of anything unusual going on. the somber lecture she sits through with her “siblings” brings back to mind the TERRIBLE lesson of her confirmation in the ritual of promise. she was RIVETED to the discovery of the reasons for the cruel and painful leash that held her during childhood.

av all but immediately sorts herself out in the local school community. jannae had outlined to her the priorities for her anin paths. most particularly, she attached to a mentor to save her from the disgrace of her illiteracy. by her third day in attendance, she had some idea of how things would proceed for a pace. jannae takes her measure and decides that av had all the qualifications necessary for a first sword, but as an heir she lacks the preparation for authority and leadership.

among her new peers a growing crowd of friends, allies, competitors and such had begun to gather. attention comes gradually but steadily around av—from muses and mentors, other heirs and nobles, suitors and seducers, artists of name, and even her own “siblings” as they catch up to her and events move on.

annae and jannae still barely spoke to one another and jannae would not abide the presence of aeph—who she felt was responsible for the wedge that had been driven between her and her daughter. aeph would not remind the ara’dai of the fact that his alliance with annae had brought more stability to ara than anything else annae could have done for her house.

at the end of av’s first week.

however. her childhood and youth prepared her to meet far greater damands than attaining the status of her noble heritage. avon had provided her with some of her own formidable martial skills and had encouraged her to develop far more of her native ability than her devotions could account for.

av's introduction into the court—for recognition of her right to title—started a second shock wave, expanding the sphere of disturbances and provoking a wider circle of interest and intrigue centered around the avara’dsai.

jannae finally staged a full formal reception for the new residents ... to jannae’s dismay, av turns up outfitted for her devotion, an unsheathed sword, which so strongly projects the illusion of boyishness. av, unnerved by the prospect of house formality could only fall back on the manners she knew from her disciplines—again not deliberately being misleading. the impressions on which she would soon be judged were formed this long evening among the official guests.

AEPH inherited his father's house and estates. kev was thus near, under his father's tutelage. aeph intended to name kev his heir at the assembly the first day of the wend. jannae was appraised of these shifts by teyn. teyn reluctantly nodded to her plan to name av before ennjeara was claimed by his illness.

av was informed by jannae to be on her best behavior just as her grandmother’s peers and the members of her court were introduced to her and her “siblings”. she was shocked to overhear the news of her uncle’s rapid collapse of health. she had never even met the man who was the current champion of her house. she was so distracted by the thoughts this spurs that she fails to notice the degree of interest and appraisal that was focused on her throughout the evening.

the day after her reception av was taken by the ear and dressed for a court appearance with her grandmother. she was dragged along in ignorance, at the considered design of her house head. av watches the proceedings with rabid interest until suddenly jannae steps out to bid a suit. jannae announces that due to the confirmation of her son’s mortal illness she had chosen a new heir. av sits mute with shock as jannae asks the court for its ruling on her grandchild whom they were introduced to at the reception. the court confirms her candidate and summons av to the floor. av steels her self to advance to the center of the hall and the assembly erupts into an uproar.

in the absence of her mother, av was a natural choice for heir. av had to be formally recognized by the exotic and imperial courts to bear the rights to the title and inheritance of her house. the board's initial assumption on seeing her during the reception was the same as everyone else's; certainly a boy, by dress and manner. however, the truth comes out rather embarrassingly which throws the hearing into confusion and results in a change of venue. it also causes a stir among av's new friends.

"i don't know what you expected, i am just me, neh?"

the revelation that the heir presented was not male, as the court presumed, forces a recess to silence the commotion. the high court under qumase had no intention of allowing this influential house remain directly under the female line of ara. what the state could—and ultimately chose to—do was force av to ADVERTISE her self for suit and take bids for her marriage or defend her claim under the female inheritance laws from all comers through combat. in the face of the necessary compromise a daughter had to make to inherit, av furiously rebels. standing in court, only just named heir to the house she rejects the issue of a suitor, forcing jannae to take a risk on her ability to fight her own fights.

the death of the avon’dai hit everyone hard. she had almost made it through the winter. arla liymb was only a month away. av, still in the north with her brother and her friend, finally met her twin after eleven years of seperation. they spent much of their time exploring the ruins they had heard tell of on the ancestral lands of their mother’s house. really, they were just staying out of the way of those who must decide the succession. while exploring the catacombs, they became trapped underground and a piece of av’s past rose up to confront her, and awaken old demons.

av's uncle, aeph's twin, appears, contesting av's claim to the title of house ARA, promoting his twin daughters by annae: kim and kym. because of the contract made between the houses of ARA and avon, kim and kym were considered to be legitimate daughters in the eyes of court law, giving them potential claim equal to a legitimate daughter by house law. through aeth’s action, conflict between house and court politics enters the question of who had claim to the title of house ARA.

naturally the state opposes all three daughters in favor of the legal [by anii law], firstborn and male heir, kev. ironically, kev's claim to his father's titles overrides any claims to his mother's. because the marriage of annae to aeph was not formally the union of house ARA to house AVON, the creation of a powerful and influential house was averted. but promoting kev as heir to both houses would unavoidably unite them in his lifetime. recognition of this fact causes much hesitation among the heads of state to continue in their initial position.

as a result, av, as the chosen heir was at once the principal opponent and nuptial prize for any man who could win the title from her.

unless kev chose to enter the contest and take his own sister as a prize to get it, a union of ARA and AVON was forestalled.

aeph creates an upset in the circles of house and court as he formally recognizes the legitimacy of his children. in essence, he tries to curtail further maneuvering around his son and daughter by granting full title to one of the AVON houses to kev, and apportioning part of his dominion to house ara’s domain.