

7-15-2000

Persephone / The Personals / Narcissus

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Recommended Citation

Webster, Louise and St. Clare, Regent (2000) "*Persephone / The Personals / Narcissus*," *The Mythic Circle*: Vol. 2000 : Iss. 23 , Article 6.

Available at: <https://dc.swosu.edu/mcircle/vol2000/iss23/6>

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Mythcon 51: The Mythic, the Fantastic, and the Alien

Albuquerque, New Mexico • Postponed to: July 30 – August 2, 2021



the situation before attacking. It sees Helma, inclines its head to the side, and for a brief moment, it responds with just a flicker of a gentler underlying nature. However, the hunger for the flesh of the child soon becomes overwhelming. The beast cannot resist the curse of the sisters. Baring its fangs and screeching a wild and ancient howl, it streaks for the hearth, ignoring the danger of the axe..

Gaffner braces himself for the attack. When the beast is almost at Helma's throat, Gaffner brings his axe down on the beast's neck. It severs the its head from the shoulder. The head flies forward, tumbles across Helma's sleeping figure, and comes to rest in the fire. Its great jaws open once in a silent scream of death and then the flames end the agony. Its body lies on the floor, the still beating heart spurting a meaningless crimson flood over the sleeping child.

Helma awakens early the next morning. She does not

realize that she is wearing a different nightgown and is on a new pallet. Nor does she notice any of the few faint red stains that remain on the floor. Her father is just finishing the repair to the window. The door is already back in place. Helma asks, "Father, was there much damage to our house?"

Gaffner reassures his little daughter, "No, my precious, there was only a little damage. It's already fixed. Go wake your mother and let's be on our way."

Helma goes to her mother's bed and tells her it is time to go. Soon, they are all dressed and anxious to get outside. In the town square, the giant fire is already ablaze, consuming the carcasses of the beasts placed among the timbers before dawn. As they walk to the door, Helma asks her parents, "Did Father Yule take any bad children last night?" Her father answers, "I believe only one . . . from our street. Now, Happy Yuletide, my family. Let's go celebrate.

Jon Camp on "Storm": "...is the opening short story of The Tales of Gundrin. I have finished others, have some in development, and planning still others. All have to do with the town of Gundrin, the people (some strange) who live there, and the ever-present Mount Gundrin. It is on the mountain that the Yookers(near-humans), Greenbacks(very large spiders), and other things live. I do not wish to put it all into one story. My plan is to finish the series and then publish them as a book. Then, each story will reveal more of the town and people as the book progresses."

PERSEPHONE

Sweet Persephone!

Daughter of sorrow and abundance.
Innocent blossom plucked too soon.
Bright spring petal,
In winter's dark garden.

by Louise Webster

THE PERSONALS

Category: Men seeking something

Professional bridge burner/broken angel,
seeks bookish spinster/librarian for
cinematic romance of biblical proportion.
Me: Thirty-whatever, slender, 5'10, grey
eyes, shoulder-length blonde curly hair,
bone-white skin (seraph noir), wear
shadows if they fit. Ex-poet, ex-musician,
ex-artist, ex-assassin, looking for hardcore
redemption. You: Legal, subtle, invasive
beauty, judicious kindness,
eloquent/predatory wit, classic femme fatale
ethos/pathos. Kiss kiss, bang bang. Must
possess strong desire to be adored and
protected. In this graceless city, I have
doubtless seen you many times, both awake
and asleep, and wondered how lovely it
might be to read you stories by the light of
the midnight sun.

by Regent St. Clare

NARCISSUS

The mirror, gold flecked halo,
Reflects the light of objects in the room.
Expanding the horizon
I pass by the glass and look
Hoping to see myself more clearly
But am pulled in.

by Louise Webster