

For some others, it would perhaps be difficult to divide one's attention amongst three women at the same time. For Ricard, it was idle amusement.

"Now, I don't deign to say that I'll be the richest man in the *country*," he continued reasonably, ever magnanimous in the face of those willing to exaggerate on his behalf. He rolled his eyes and shook his head. "I wouldn't make a claim so bold without performing my due diligence. No, it's more liable to say I'll be *one of* the richest men in the country."

There was a certain skill in dominating a conversation, especially when one was as comparatively slight as Ricard. Flanked by two girls and hosting one in his lap, Ricard was barely taller than his drinking companions. Hell, the one at his left was taller than he was thanks to her heels.

But that hardly mattered. No, his wiry frame didn't detract from his piercing blue eyes, and the smooth tenor of his voice was enough to hold a girl or three's attention.

"But you'll be the richest man in the *county*, yeah?" The blonde to his right beamed up at him, tracing idle spirals on his inner thigh. "'s not like we got anyone what's got heaps of gold around here."

"Oh, the *county*, certainly." He gave her a pat on the rear, sending her squealing with delight. "That's practically guaranteed. If the map's to be believed -- and it's my impartial estimation that it *is* -- then I'll have enough coin to buy all the silk my woman wants to wear."

He leaned closer to the brunette at his left, growling into the crook of her neck. "*And all the mink I'll take to replace the silk once I tear it off of her.*"

"Ooh, he's *cheeky!*" She gave Ricard a smack on the chest, giggling. "Just like a man, thinking about *ruining* clothes instead of wearing 'em! Why." She straightened up primly, tossing her hair over her shoulder. "If a man doesn't have a woman to dress up for, he's liable to traipse about lookin' like a pauper, whether or *not* he's a prince."

"Suits me just fine," purred the redhead in Ricard's lap. "After all, there's only so much fun that a man and a woman can have with their clothes on." She winked at Ricard...only for her eyes to go wide a moment later and her lips to curl up at their corners. She gave her hips a wiggle into his crotch, tittering. "Ooh, I think he *likes* the idea, girls!"

The three leaned in, giggling, cooing, groping, and poor Ricard did his level best to try and defuse the situation. "Ladies, *please!* I am but a man, subject to a man's appetites!" He leaned to his left. "His *urges.*" Then, to his right. "His *desires!*" Finally, he pressed his lips to the nape of the redhead's neck and snarled. "His maddening *lusts!*"

"And it is thanks to these admittedly *base* compulsions that I find my motivation for pursuing such *perilous* rumors." He wrapped his arms around the blonde and the brunette's shoulders, sighing heavily as he pulled them into some facsimile of a group hug.

"For mine is a heart that aches to love. But it is a poet's heart! A heart that snubs the selfish 'love' of the body, discarded so cruelly after but one night's stand. It is a heart that yearns not only to appreciate a woman as she deserves to be appreciated...but to ensure she's afforded every luxury she could ever desire. For what is love if there is not security as its aegis? Where is the rose if not for its thorns, guarding its perfumed bud from the caprices of life?"

"It would be foolish of me to take a woman as my bride before I could ensure her comfort for the whole of her lifetime, whether or not mine is fated to match it. I do not charge into dragon's lair for *myself*," he said solemnly. "I charge into it for *her*."

His trio of admirers were, for a moment, silent in almost reverent awe. The blonde's lower lip was quivering. Then the brunette blinked.

"Hold on, 's he fighting a dragon? I thought it was Fae."

The redhead blinked in turn and cocked her head to the side. "Yeah, you said it was *Fae*. I dunno- *Aha!*"

"It's an *expression!*" His once-tender hug turned to lecherous groping, cupping the blonde and brunette's busts as he peppered the redhead's neck with kisses. "Calm *down*, you *naughty* girls! Your champion's not going to be returned to you on a platter! I *assure* you that there will still be plenty of *meat* on these bones when I return."

"*If* you return," the blonde said with a wink and a smile. "The Fae aren't liable to play games with you. They're not *sweet* like us."

"specially if they're *Unseelie*."

"Ooh, yeah. Unseelie aren't liable to letcha go if they get you in their clutches."

Ricard merely laughed in the face of such pusillanimous prudence. "Now, your point may've been worth consideration if I were some bumbling oaf. Fortunately for you -- and for *myself* -- I am *not*." He tugged the collar of his shirt aside to show a mark just below his left collarbone: a four-leafed clover. Or perhaps it was a butterfly? "I'm possessed of a *boon* from the Seelie queen Titania. Unseelie or no, they won't lay a *finger* on me if they know what's good for them."

His trio of admirers were, of course, appropriately awed at the revelation. "Titania! Ooh, you're like a prince outta the story books!"

"Or something very much like it. Pardon-" It always ended up like this. Give him curves to hold and a pair of eyes to stare longingly into, and you'd have Ricard lost for hours. Today, he had to focus, and it was a testament to the importance of his task that he was able to wrench himself away from three buxom beauties.

"I'm afraid," he continued, wriggling out from under the now-pouting redhead, "that the story of how I earned such a reward will have to wait for another day. I'm a fool, but only for love." He tapped the side of his nose with a grin and a wink. "You won't find me spending a fortune if I don't have one, and I don't have mine yet. And so!"

He rose from the table, leaving his three dismayed admirers in the lurch...though he wasn't so cold as to leave them be without one final promise. "Parting, as they say, is such sweet sorrow. But let not this honeyed departure leave the tongue longing for more! I promise..."

He tried to remember their names. Three pairs of wide, spellbound eyes stared up at him. Fuck. It wasn't happening.

"...my *darlings*." They swooned. "I shall return to your respective embraces as soon as I find this Fae-touched manor's fortune, and it shall be with a ring for *each* of your pretty little hands. Now!" He grabbed their wrists, pulling the backs of their hands up to his lips and pressing a kiss to each of them. "I bid thee, fare well!"

And it was with a flourish and a bow that Ricard stepped away from his table and to the tavern's exit. He maintained his poise up until its threshold...

...but no further. As soon as he stepped outside, his shoulders slumped, his eyes rolled, and a hand ran through his short, black hair. "Saints and sinners, if only it were all that easy." He stretched his arms wide and popped his back, grimacing in painful relief, and made his way to the festival grounds.

Well, first he had to make sure he still had the map. A pat to his pocket confirmed that it was still there, but...never hurt to make doubly sure. Funny that such a tiny little slip would be his key to such wealth, but the poor sap that had offered it up swore up and down by it. He was certainly dejected enough by his circumstances to lend credence to his claims.

After all, Ricard thought with a grin, who *wouldn't* be upset by the notion of riches just out of reach?

He'd met the source of his latest scheme -- Aaron, as he seemed to recall -- whiling away the hours with a mug in his hand and a blush on his cheeks. Normally Ricard wouldn't have paid him much mind, but as inebriation loosened Aaron's tongue, the poor sod had struck up a conversation of his own accord.

He'd spoken of a manor, Fae-touched and ensorcelled against the mortal eye. A place of fell enchantments and pixie mischief, where no man dared tread should he wish to see the sun's light ever again. A manor filled to the brim with gold...and Unseelie Fae.

He'd found a map, one that would take anyone foolish enough to seek such blighted fortune to the manor's gates. But even if he had the map, what good was it? There was no hope that he'd be able to resist the call of the Fae! No, it was a fortune just out of reach, Aaron had told his drinking companion bitterly.

Ricard, to his credit, had managed to give the poor man a chance to vent his frustration before oh-so-casually opining that, yeah, there wasn't much point in carrying around a map to a place one couldn't really go. It would be best for Aaron to just put the whole thing from his mind and let Ricard dispose of the map himself.

It had been *markedly* difficult to take the map with his hands shaking as much as they were, but Ricard had managed it somehow.

Of course, that had been just about the only step that had proven difficult in any regard! Ricard, sly devil that he was, practically had his fortune assured. His boasting earlier had been boasting, certainly, but it was no exaggeration: he had indeed been granted a boon by Titania. If ever there were a ward against the Unseelie, it was the knowledge that the full might of the Seelie would come crashing down upon their sorry little heads if they tried to mess with him.

That being said, he couldn't do it alone. He'd need someone else to help him carry the treasure at the very least, and that's where Felix came into play. Where he was, Ricard couldn't be sure, but-

His nostrils flared, his tongue clicked, and his eyes narrowed. What was that scent on the air? Overwhelmingly sweet. Maple? Maple. Ricard rolled his eyes and sighed. There he was, the sweet-toothed giant himself.

"Felix! Felix, over here, you *boob!*" Ricard waved an arm in the air, doing his best to push

past the passers-by. "I've come across something so *fascinating* that I simply couldn't wait to share it with you!"

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Aaron was ecstatic. He'd been dipped in euphoria ever since he'd splurged his third load at Mistress Mab's command a few nights ago, drowning in empty-headed pleasure. It had made her mission for him a bit more difficult than it would've normally been, but he had some fairies to keep an eye on him, and sometimes they even rubbed up against his cock when he was a good boy.

Aaron wasn't really capable of *not* being a good boy, but the lazy grind of their bodies against his twitching manhood was an excellent incentive to keep mindlessly obeying Mistress Mab's commands. Or the proxy fairies that she'd sent along to guide him. He hadn't actually *seen* Mistress Mab in a few days, but that was fine. He knew that with every step he took, he was obeying her.

Obedience was pleasure. His eyelids fluttered as he pushed the iron gate open. The manor that Mistress Mab lived in wasn't the fanciest, but she only needed it to trap poor, silly boys like him. Something about a fairy circle. Something about dreaming. He didn't understand it, but she seemed to like it when he started masturbating to try and clear his head, so he kept doing it.

Oh, he was masturbating again. Or was he? It was so hard to tell these days. Aaron looked over to his arm to see if it was moving. That was usually a good clue.

Nope. Wasn't moving. He looked down at his tented trousers, blinking at the bulge...and the wriggling just beneath the fabric. And the giggling that seemed to accompany it. With a flash of insight -- more like a glimmer, really -- he realized that he wasn't masturbating at all! He was just being used as a toy by some of the fairies. That made sense. That's how something was stroking his cock when it wasn't him. Aaron smiled, the mystery solved.

...What was he doing again?

"What am I doing again?" He turned his head to the side, blinking at the fairies sitting on either of his shoulders.

In a flash of pixie dust, they reappeared, their glamour of invisibility cast aside. He almost missed the constant coo of both of their voices in his ear. Want to edge. Felt so nice. Want to edge. Felt so nice.

"You're going back to Queen Mab's manor to tell her that you passed off the map!" One of them hissed, aiming a kick at his ear. "Guh!" She leaned forward, grumbling at the fairy on his other shoulder. "She really did a number on this one, eh?"

The other fairy didn't seem to be listening. Honestly, neither was Aaron. No, the second hadn't stopped her masturbation for a moment, nor her insistent reminder that Aaron wanted to edge. That it felt so nice.

The first just rolled her eyes and murmured her instructions into his other ear, and though they weren't as pleasant to listen to, Aaron's body shuffled forward of its own accord.

For now, Aaron would settle for one promiscuous pixie purring pernicious persuasion in his ear. After all, even if he had to complete his mistress' tasks, he also needed to be reminded constantly that he wanted to edge. That it felt so nice. He hadn't actually cum in nearly a week, and it felt *incredible*. He never knew how much better it was to teeter on the edge of

orgasm for hours, *days* on end, letting his atrophying brain fizzle further and further as he drowned in pleasure.

It had the added benefit of giving his guardian fairies something to grind up against all the time, and he was a good toy. Always a good toy. Always edging.

Aaron found himself walking down a hallway. He'd probably just ended up obeying one of the fairies on instinct as he let another deepen his addiction to self-denial. That was fine. That was good. The less he had to think, the better. The less he could think, the better.

That's why it had been a particularly unpleasant experience to have to pretend like he could think a few days ago. Back in the inn with the loud man with the black hair and the thing. Aaron could barely stifle a groan at the mere thought of it! Nearly a whole hour where he hadn't been allowed to touch himself! He had to talk, too. Carrying a conversation was maddening when there was one fairy feeding him his lines...and another giggling as she finger-fucked herself right in his ear.

They'd both been invisible and silent to all but him, of course, but it had taken the last few vestiges of willpower he still possessed to not jerk himself stupid in the middle of the conversation. Thank the goddess that the fairies had been so understanding when he'd returned to his room!

As soon as he'd handed off the map and told the loud man everything Mistress Mab had instructed him to, Aaron had nearly bolted to his room for an evening of mind-melting edging at the diminutive hands of his fairy guardians. They'd rubbed themselves up against his twitching rod until the crown of it was purple and drooling precum like a fountain.

Aaron smiled dreamily. And he hadn't orgasmed once. Heavenly.

"Ooh, what do we have *here*?"

Aaron blinked. This was a new voice. Someone he hadn't met before. He turned to the source and found himself face to face with...someone his own height. Honestly, that was surprising enough in a place such as this. That initial shock, though, was quickly subsumed in the mind-numbing pleasure that came from having a nice, stiff cock and looking at a beautiful woman.

And this woman was *definitely* beautiful. Richly dark skin, the color of fertile earth, silky black hair pulled up into a loose bun, beautiful, bottomless, emerald-green eyes, beestung lips painted vividly red. She smiled at him as his gaze fell to the sizable swell of her bust, her seemingly bottomless cleavage beckoning.

Aaron drank in the sight of her, too aroused to manage much in the way of social decorum. The mere fact that he didn't reach down and start stroking himself could be considered some attempt at politeness, but it was more likely that he was just stunned by the sight.

Then she pulled her already-straining bodice down, and Aaron gurgled with something between need and wide-eyed shock. She giggled, swaying her chest from side to side and watching Aaron sway on his feet as he followed their gentle arc. Though his attentions were otherwise occupied -- and further compromised when Aaron reached down and started masturbating of his own simple-minded accord -- he did catch a glimpse of the more prudent fairy flitting from his shoulder towards the mysterious woman.

"I like him," she said with an amused lilt to her voice, and if he didn't have a sinfully sweet

voice whispering in his ear that he needed to edge, that it felt so nice...Aaron would've cum in his pants. "What's his story? He the poor sap that Mab claimed?"

"A-yup," the fairy sighed. "Handed off the map, just like milady asked of him. Against all odds, I might add. The thrice-damned fool was a moment away from tugging at himself at least four times during the conversation."

"Ooh, only because you naughty little girls have kept him all pent up, I bet!" She leaned forward with a sympathetic click of her tongue, shaking her head. "Look at you, you've been on the edge for days, haven't you?" She straightened up suddenly, her chest giving a disorienting bounce in the process. "For shame! You know as well as I do that a boy like this one's gonna go loony if he doesn't empty that load sooner or later! Why, it's a wonder he hasn't snapped outright! Here."

She stepped forward, spreading her arms and pulling Aaron into a gentle hug. His face went to her cleavage, and his eyes rolled back as warm, pillowy pleasure pressed tight against his skin. His hand pumped harder and faster as she stroked a hand down the back of his head, cooing in his ear. "Poor thing. You said he handed off the map?"

"A-yup."

"Then you run along and tell Mab the same. I'll take care of our good little boy in the meantime." There was silence for a moment, a silence Aaron punctuated with grunts and shuddering moans as he fucked his hand. "Unless she needs him for something?"

The fairy scoffed. "Lookit him. Even if she *did*, he'd be about as useful as a near-sighted cyclops. Nah, have your fun." She flitted off. And paused for a moment. "But don't tell milady *I* was the one who said as such if she needs him for something else."

"My lips are sealed," the woman giggled, squeezing Aaron tighter. "Now, all of you pesky pixies! Shoo, shoo!" She waved one hand, sending the few fairies that remained fluttering away. "No time for you naughty little gadflies in *my* kitchen." She resumed her petting. "I need *good* boys who've got nice, stiff cocks to help *me*. Now." She pulled Aaron away from her cleavage and beamed down at him.

"My name is Gretel," she purred. "What's your name, sweetness?"

Aaron goggled up at her for a moment, too busy stroking himself to answer immediately.

"Aaron," he mumbled, thoughts rising in his mind, unbidden. Without the fairies telling him as such, it was much more difficult to remember that he wanted to edge. He felt good, certainly, but he felt even better just mindlessly staring up into those mesmerizing green eyes and jerking himself stupid.

So much better that he didn't stop, even as he felt himself teeter on the edge of orgasm. No, Aaron just pumped away at his overeager prick, staring up at the entrancing enchantress and the smile upon her lips.

At least, he stared up at her until she guided his face once more to her cleavage, stroking his hair and murmuring sweet nothings in his ear. "There, there. There's a good boy. You just take as long as you need to wring out that sweet, sticky cream, mm?" Gretel pressed a kiss to his forehead. "Do you need me to help you along? Tell you what to do?"

Even half-mad with pleasure and shaking, Aaron nodded. His eyes rolled back, and he groaned, inarticulate. He was so stiff, so hard, so pent-up...!

But Gretel knew exactly what to do. Exactly what to say. With a soft, insistent purr, she made everything better:

"Cum."

Aaron bucked his hips wildly forward, his grip going uselessly limp as he resorted to grinding up against her thighs instead. He reached around Gretel's hips, grabbing two handfuls of her rear and fucking her thighs through her dress and his pants, staining his trousers dark. He grunted and groaned like an animal, stupidly rutting against her body and-

And sagging into her arms as Gretel answered his raw passion with almost maternal tenderness. "There's my good boy, *there's* my good boy. Gretel's got you, darling. Shhh."

She stroked his hair, and even as his cock twitched and splurged hot, thick wads of seed into his pants, Aaron felt his eyelids drooping. "So sleepy. So tired. So heavy." He felt so sleepy. So tired. So heavy. So good. So warm.

Aaron's eyelids sank shut with a satisfied hum, and the last thing he remembered was something stiff and warm pressing to his lips...before he took it into his mouth. Something sweet touched to his tongue, and he drifted off to sleep.

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When he came to, it was at a long dinner table, completely bare. Aaron blinked groggily awake, head lolling back before he straightened up in his seat. The scent of sugar hung cloyingly in the air, almost overwhelming. And yet, it wasn't overpowering or unpleasant. There was a certain familiarity to it. A sort of...nostalgia.

More immediately pleasant, though, was the sight of his buxom hostess bouncing into view. She leaned in front of him from the side, smiling warmly and pressing a kiss to his forehead. "*There's* my little helper! How did you sleep, sweetness?" Gretel tantalized in a skimpy, sheer apron, the pristine white of it only making her gorgeously dark skin look that much darker. It did almost nothing to cover her body, and even her areolae peeked from the edges as her tits strained against it.

Aaron started to masturbate again.

Gretel giggled, covering her mouth with her hand. "Ooh, that well, mm? Listen, sweetness. I'm sorry those *nasty* little fairies got you all dammed up." She kissed him again, this time on the lips. "Gretel's going to do the best she can to make sure we empty those big, bloated balls of yours, so you just sit tight, OK?"

Aaron nodded.

"*Good* boy! Now." Gretel stepped back, rocking on her heels. "You must be *hungry*!" His stomach rumbled, as if on cue, and she giggled once more. She cocked her head to the table, and Aaron's eyes followed. "See anything you like?"

As if by magic, the empty table was suddenly covered with food. No, not quite *food*, because that implied a meal. More accurately, the table was suddenly covered with *sweets*.

Cakes, cookies, shortbread, pastries, fruit of every color of the rainbow...! Chocolate, vanilla, caramel, maple, every taste imaginable suddenly conjured before his very eyes! Aaron drooled, this time over food instead of Gretel's luscious curves, and he even managed to pull a hand away from his cock to reach for a icing-topped cupcake.

Gretel cooed with delight, standing beside him and bending at the waist to watch him eat. Aaron shoved the cupcake into his mouth and nearly moaned as its saccharine sweetness touched to his tongue. The most he could manage out in the forest was maple bark or perhaps some wild berries. Compared to that, this was absurd! The first taste wasn't nearly enough, especially with the promise of so many different flavors! He stuffed a cookie...no, *two* cookies into his mouth, crumbs falling into his lap as he indulged his appetites.

"Ooh, my good boy's got a *sweet* tooth, doesn't he?" Gretel giggled, patting Aaron's belly. He nodded, though he didn't really hear her. He found his attention exceptionally lacking when she wrapped one of her hands around his cock and started to pump. The purr of her voice in his ear was more sound than instruction, but he found it blessedly easy to just slump back in his seat and let her words wash over him.

"Those naughty little fairies have you pickled. Stewing in your own arousal, all pent-up and loopy." She ran her thumb over the pre-drooling crown of his cock. "But I don't need a scarecrow without a brain, and I don't need a boy who's more keen to edge than he is to orgasm." She kissed his cheek and brought her other hand down to pat his belly again, rubbing slow circles.

"I need a boy who's willing to *indulge*," she whispered, her breath hot against his skin. "I need a boy who wants to cum *early* and *often*. I need a boy who's so utterly *hooked* on my treats that he'll gorge himself until he rides that sugar high right into my arms...and the *crash* right into a nice, soft bed."

By that point, Aaron's eager consumption had slowed, but not stopped. Gretel oh-so-helpfully placed treat after treat into his emptying hands, and as he clumsily smeared icing and sugar on his face, Aaron found himself happy to just glut himself on pastries. When he mashed a slice of cake against his cheek, though, Gretel saw fit to intervene more directly.

"Here, silly little boy." She laughed, rich and luxurious, and instead of placing some sugary morsel in his hand, she offered a glass of milk. "You must be thirsty. Why not gulp this down and take a moment to compose yourself?"

That sounded good. That sounded *real* good, actually. And that's why Aaron didn't think twice -- or at all -- before he tipped the glass to his lips and drank it down. Rivulets of white spilled from the corners of his mouth, and soon the fullness in his stomach turned to pleasant satiation. If the sweetness of his so-called "meal" had sent his nerves buzzing, the cool glass of milk that followed soothed them.

In fact, he was so drowsily satisfied that he simply had to let his eyes fall shut. And his body slump back, taken by a sudden and profound relaxation. He didn't even notice as he was lifted up and dropped onto something soft and bouncy. And warm. Real warm. Like a big, comfortable pillow. Or two. Aaron practically purred as he flopped onto his side, arms stretching wide to hug as much as he could manage. He heard Gretel giggle...

...about the same time he felt the cushion he was resting upon jiggle. It wasn't enough to jostle him awake, but it was enough to coax his eyelids open.

He was resting on warm, dark brown, the occasional puff of warm air blowing his hair back. Almost looked like he was...grinding up against Gretel's tit. With a massive Gretel looking down at him. How did she get so big? He blinked again. How did he get so small?

Did it really matter?



Aaron flopped back down, grinding his hips forward against the pliant warmth of Gretel's breast. He murmured with pleasure as he rutted himself to orgasm against her tit, smearing his wasted seed against her skin. She seemed to share his delight, cooing as if she'd just seen a pet she liked to pamper.

When she spoke, it was more like vibrations to be felt than sounds to hear. Either way, her breasts seemed to vibrate along with her words, so all Aaron really focused on was the intoxicating buzz of her tit-flesh against his cock. "Ooh, there's a good boy!" She giggled again, pressing her hands up against her breasts and wobbling them from side to side. "See? Isn't this better than getting all backed-up and loony? Such a silly little boy, letting the fairies tease you like that! Gretel's always happy to see her good boy enjoy himself. And on top of *that...*"

She plucked him from the surface of her breast once more, lifting him up and moving him to a jar of rich, golden syrup...before dropping him into it. "...I got you a *playmate!*" She clapped a lid down over the top and screwed it shut, but Aaron didn't worry. No, as he sank into peaceful gold, he realized he could breathe. Somehow. Magic. Didn't matter.

What mattered was that there was the outline of a mouth around his cock and the sudden application of suction. The outline spread from those plump, pursed lips. A mouth became a face. A face became a head. A head became a torso became a full, shapely body. There was a girl in front of him, kneeling and smiling nice and wide as she bobbed her head in his lap.

She was hourglass perfection, so femininely curvaceous that even the sight of her was enough to send Aaron's balls clenching down as he emptied another load into the honey-girl. His seed spread through the golden syrup of her head, clouding it and sending her giggling around his cock. His seed stayed in her head as she pulled away, and soon the honey-girl was mashed up tight against him, breasts pillowing against his chest, lap pinning his cock to his belly and hers.

He wrapped his arms around her and kissed her, hard. Aaron shivered as he tasted the overwhelming sweetness of her body, tinged just slightly with the saltiness of his seed. And as she took his still-stiff cock in her hand and guided it between her thighs, as she took him into her body and began the slow, steady clench of her devilishly tight cunt...Aaron knew he'd never escape. That he'd never want to escape. That he'd found heaven.

Gretel just giggled. She watched Aaron wrap his miniscule arms around his miniscule lover, and that was that. The jar went up on her shelf, the first of many. Her smile turned wide. Almost sinister.

She licked her lips. She and Mab were expecting more visitors, weren't they? A glance at the table confirmed her suspicions. She didn't have *nearly* enough sweets to ply her guests with. No, as Gretel turned from Aaron and his mellifluous lover, she prepared to set to work.

There was *baking* to be done.