

Ambrosia Makes Fools of Us All

A Forgotten Relics short story

New Orleans in summer. The Quarter. Not Bourbon Street with its pudgy pale tourists clutching yards of frozen alcoholic SweeTarts, but nearby. Where the locals seek refuge in quieter, less sugary beverages, surrounded by shared darkness instead of neon light.

Outside, even the buildings are sweating. Nightfall did nothing to chill the streets or the few lost souls navigating them, barely covered in shiny clothes as they look for their cars. Leftover music from busier bars jiggles their inebriated brains into decisions they'll regret in their dehydrated, declodded, depressed state in the sticky sunlight of morning. A giggle or two, then they're gone, leaving behind bright burnholes in the air soon swallowed by the darkness.

Inside, in a manor house abandoned to creeping vines wrapping their fingers around the foundation and dewy breezes undulating through the cracks in the roof, there's air conditioning in the ballroom and cloudy ice in the drinks, but everyone's sweating just the same. Bodies churn together under a blanket of trance-twisted blues with a languorous bass line. The windows on the ground floor are blacked out with duct tape to keep unfortunate trespassers from discovering the party. Or, more accurately, from discovering the party-goers. They're all locals. But none of them belong here.

Jack knows all of this as he stands outside. Even if Wex hadn't told him what to expect, the vibrations of music and unchecked magic reach him at the sidewalk on the other side of the manor's rusted iron gate, his long fingers gripping the bars as he weighs his options. Go in and publicly reveal himself as a metahuman, or go home and forget about the whole thing?

While he's thinking, someone bursts out of the front door, nearly taking it off the hinges and releasing a nearly-tangible wall of sound and scent in their wake. Jack squints against the sudden light in the dark. Through the crease of his eyelids, he can see the silhouette of a girl, a flash of burnt-red skin, and the eye-sucking darkness of starry hair. She stumbles onto the rickety stoop, falls onto her hands and knees, and

vomits noisily into a rhododendron, louder even than the homebrewed stereo system inside.

Almost immediately, another person appears in the doorway, but rather than helping the girl back inside, he starts laughing — more a yip than giggle — and shouts back into the house, which evokes a tsunami of derisive laughter in response. Then the door slams, and it’s dark again.

Jack shakes his head and pushes through the unlocked gate, decision made for him.

The creak of metal in the corrosive air startles the girl. Even in her current state, she has the presence of mind to put her back to the house, out of the porch light, to hide from whatever mortal is spying on her. Golden eyes dart around the overgrown yard, but she doesn’t spot him until he’s standing on the broad steps leading up to the house. At this close range, the stench of regurgitated bottom-shelf gin coats her like a dowager’s perfume, and Jack holds his distance.

“You okay?” he asks.

“I’m fine. You know — party,” she says, swaying slightly.

She’s got thick accent Jack can’t identify. German or Russian, maybe. Combined with her slick crimson skin, sparkling black hair, and almost-hidden tail, he can pin down with relative certainty that she’s a succubus. Wex said he’d invited a couple. Maybe this is his blind date. Sounds like something Wex would do.

Jack climbs the short staircase to where the girl sits with her legs splayed in the most unladylike fashion imaginable, clearly not giving a shit if he sees up her skirt. He keeps his eyes trained stubbornly on her face despite a lustful twinge to the contrary. Echoes of his father’s lessons on gentlemanly behavior.

“I’m Jack,” he says. He holds out his hand to help her up, and for an awkward moment, she stares at it like she’s never seen a human hand before. He tries again. “You must be Magan. Wex said he wanted me to meet you.”

A tiny spark of actual flame lights up her eyes at the mention of the handsome sourceror’s name, then she smirks, erasing all trace of the “poor drunk girl” act. Her smile starts out friendly and slinks immediately into sauciness.

“Ooh, yeah,” she coos, giving him the once-over as she lets him hoist her to her feet. “I been waiting for you all night. Didn’t think you’d actually show.”

Neither did he, honestly. But now that he is here, a beautiful woman’s barely-covered body pressed against him, he’s glad he did. Maybe Wex was right. Maybe a little party with other magical folks is what he needs to get comfortable here.

Jack grins lopsidedly and mimes a dramatic bow. “Well, here I am, my lady. Shall we head inside?”

She grins, revealing tiny fangs, then links her arm through his. It’s an old-fashioned gesture made sensual as the borderline-scorching heat from her bare skin stirs his blood. Together, they push open the rotting wooden door and step into the choking air of the house.

When Wex stopped him in the parking lot after class last week and invited him to a “supernatural shindig,” he’d only given the barest details — an underground party for the metaset, no mundanes, no glamours, no rules. Just enough to whet his curiosity but not ruin the surprise. Wex promised a house party the likes of which Jack has never seen. At the time, Jack had laughed. Of course it would be; high school had been so crammed with honor roll academics and varsity sports that he’d never gone to *any* parties. But this. This is more than he’d ever dreamed.

At least fifty people of unimagined description press and spin across the cracked tiles of the ballroom. Snatches of features pass in and out of Jack’s vision — taloned claws, furry manes, towering trunks, shimmering auras. Everyone’s exactly what they are, impossible creatures safe in the company of other impossible creatures.

Magan shouts something to him as the door slams shut, but he can’t make it out, so he just nods and smiles. The vaulted gothic ceiling catches everything and bounces it back to the dancers on the ground, making speech useless. The succubus rolls her eyes, then points a black-nailed finger across the room. The DJ station hides behind a heavy dining table burdened with glittering bottles containing liquid turned neon under the industrial black lights. She doesn’t wait for him to respond before she starts dragging him over to get a drink.

The server has their back to them, chatting up a petite blond girl with deer antlers in the paradoxically quiet space nested between the enormous speakers. She glances up at Jack when there’s a break in the conversation, and Jack barely has time to smile before she’s vanished. Magan’s grip on his arm tightens. The barkeeper stares at the

empty spot where his quarry had stood, shrugs, then turns to see what the new arrivals want.

It’s Wex.

“Hey, Jackie!” he booms, managing to make himself heard over the reverb. Ultraviolet light electrifies his white teeth against his dark skin as he breaks into a grin, making him seem like a disembodied smile. He vaults feet-first over the makeshift bar and wrests Jack out of Magan’s grip into a bone-crushing hug, complete with thumps on the back. “Glad you made it! Thought you’d ghosted on me, brother!”

Keeping one arm wrapped around the taller man’s shoulders, Wex turns them to face the crowd. He waves in a grandiose gesture at the ballroom full of supernatural beings like P.T. Barnum revealing his latest sideshow attraction. “Welcome to the Metahuman Underground!”

Jack grins, letting the vibe of the place soak through his skin, down into his bones, his blood. Everyone knows who and what he is, what he can do — Wex can’t keep a secret for shit — but no one’s staring at him or avoiding him or asking him questions. They’re all minding their own business, dancing and drinking and enjoying not having to pretend to be human. He closes his eyes and draws in the musty scent of sweat and magic, relishing the moment. Magan’s hot fingers lace through his free hand, and, held for a moment between his best friend and this new girl, he feels like he belongs.

After a while, he can feel Wex’s expectant eyes on him, so he lets the moment pass, squeezing Magan’s hand and slipping out from under Wex’s arm.

“Now what?” he shouts over the music. “There’s not enough booze in this whole fucking house to get me to dance.”

Wex laughs and thrusts a mason jar full of something thick and bluish-green into Jack’s empty hand. “Start here, then we’ll see how you feel.”

Jack raises the glass suspiciously but clinks it with Wex and Magan’s when they’re raised and sips along. A welcome-to-the-gang toast. The first drink comes right back up, and he sputters as it burns his sinuses. It’s got to be pure alcohol — citrusy and light and could probably run an engine. Magan chortles as he gasps, showing too many sharp teeth and stretching her tight shirt invitingly, which only makes Jack cough more. Wex pounds him on the back to clear his lungs, and Jack has to huff stale air to stay upright.

“Aw, c’mon, Jackie, it ain’t that bad!” Wex gestures at Magan, who wiggles her empty jar teasingly. “Can’t let a girl beat you!”

Jack groans and wipes away tears, then gamely hefts his glass again. Forget letting a girl beat him; he’ll be damned if he lets Wex win this one. They may have only known each other a semester, but he’s already getting tired of Wex outshining him in every damn thing. Bastard’s got better grades, better girls, better magic. Jack takes his little victories where he can get them. Besides, it’s only *one* drink.

He sucks in a massive breath, lets it out, then hoists the mason jar. This swig goes down easier, if only marginally, and he manages to down the entire thing in one go, much to the entertainment of his friends. Even a few random onlookers cheer and clap when he pounds the empty glass down on the oaken bar.

“What the hell is in that, Wex? Tastes like lemon-fresh death!” he shouts over the music.

“Absinthe and ambrosia!”

“Damn, man! How’d you get your hands on that stuff?”

Wex gestures vaguely out into the crowd at a young man with small cream-colored wings sticking out of his plaid shirt. “Dean brought it. Good shit, yeah?” He finishes the rest of his own drink, then turns around to pour them another round. He grabs a bottle of bright green liquid, then runs a finger through the air over the unlabeled bottles.

Then, right as the music cuts out, he shouts, “Fuck!” startling the tranced-out dancers into stumbling to a stop. Even Jack knows that if the host of a party, magical or mundane, starts swearing at the liquor table, things are not okay.

The DJ pokes his head out from around the edge of his station, oversized headphones wrapped around a neck covered in purple-gold scales. “Ssshit, Wex. What’sss wrong?” he hisses.

Wex runs a hand over his round face and turns to address the crowd. “Ladies, gentlemen. Beings from other realms. My dear guests,” he says dramatically, “we are tragically, irrevocably out of ambrosia.” A thunderous *boo* rolls across the ballroom. Human voices punctuated with bleats and howls. He lets it go on just long enough, then puts up his hands for silence. “I know, I know. I’m utterly embarrassed as your host.” Then, he points at Jack. “But I understand that our newest brother, the inimitable

Jackie Alexander, will get us more!” Whoops and cheers. The music rockets back on. The dancing resumes.

Jack’s eyes are about to pop out of his skull as he turns to Wex in sheer mortified disbelief. “Wex...” he starts, but his wavering voice is drowned out by thumping bass.

“C’mon!” Wex says, nodding toward a door at the side of the room. “Better make good before the masses get restless. Don’t want to disappoint anybody on your first night, do you, cher?” He winks at Jack and heads off.

Magan glues herself into the empty space under Jack’s arm as he stares open-mouthed after his friend. “Let’s go, Jack,” she shouts. “I hear you got some serious skills under your shirt.” The combination of the lascivious look that follows and the touch of her hot skin sends an unfamiliar thrill through Jack’s chest and down his legs, making it difficult to walk the short distance to the exit.

The side door opens into a hallway several degrees cooler and a dozen decibels quieter than the dance hall. A sharp whistle off to the right snaps Jack’s attention to where Wex stands at the top of a stairway going to the second floor. Threadbare carpet, now gray with age, muffles the creaking wood as the three of them climb up to a long row of bedrooms.

“Pick a door, any door,” Wex says.

“That one,” Magan volunteers, pointing at the largest, most ornate door at the end of the hall. Clearly the master bedroom. She turns her fiery eyes to Jack and uses a single fang to bite her lower lip. “Seems like the best place for a little experiment, don’t you think?”

Jack’s breathing faster now, but he manages to keep a straight face. “Sure, why not?”

The room is moth eaten and moldy from disuse. Every piece of furniture is intact and probably expensive, every knickknack and bland landscape painting still in place. It seems like whoever lived here simply gave up and walked out with just the clothes on their back. There’s nothing besides the overabundance of dust to indicate it was ever abandoned.

“Whose house is this, anyway?” Jack asks.

Wex shrugs. “Who cares? Got a good vibe, plenty of space, nobody to care about it.” He plops down on the twin sized bed, sending up a cloud of dust that settles in his kinky black hair, aging him twenty years. “Plus it’s on a leyline.”

Dammit. That explains a lot. All thoughts of being caught by cops are shunted aside as he realizes exactly why Wex invited him. He glares at his friend.

“You planned this, didn’t you? Bringing me here, running out of ambrosia on purpose, calling me out in front of everybody.”

“Maybe...” the sourcerer chides with a grin.

Jack sighs defeatedly. It’s not that he minds using his powers or even showing off for girls. Just that he’d sort of hoped he wouldn’t have to jump through any magical hoops to feel welcome tonight.

“Seriously, Wex. I just wanted to hang out tonight. No way for me to get out of this?”

“Not unless you want to disappoint all those folks out there and your lovely lady friend. I’ve told her so much about how...” A meaningful smirk. “Impressive you are.”

“Fine. Let’s just make it quick, okay?”

Jack untangles himself from Magan with some difficulty to make a cursory safety check of the room. The succubus sniffs haughtily at being brushed off but doesn’t say anything, just goes to sit beside Wex on the bed as Jack turns the antique key in the door’s lock. When he covers the dressing table mirror — the last time he crossed and forgot to do that, he bounced around reflected dimensions for days — he sees Wex run a hand up Magan’s red-skinned thigh, dipping his fingers under the hem of her skirt. She presses her shoulder to his, looking up under coquettishly lowered lashes. An arrow of competitive jealousy pierces Jack’s gut. He’ll be damned if he lets Wex woo yet another one out from under him. Literally or figuratively.

Jack runs a hand through his shoulder-length black hair, pulling it back from his face with an elastic, then cracks his knuckles. Nervous habits, both of them, one learned from each parent. He turns back to the pair on the bed, now brimming with territorial confidence, but they don’t pull away from each other.

“Ready?” he says to Wex.

The sourcerer nods and stands, an aura of orange-red power already crackling along his skin. “Always ready for this.”

Now alone, Magan sprawls across the filthy bedspread to watch as the two men lock arms Roman-style, right hands to one another’s forearms. There’s a glimpse of white panties in the corner of Jack’s eye that almost distracts him enough to sever the bond. Wex grins and winks knowingly but says nothing, gripping Jack’s arm tighter to refocus his attention.

They’ve done this enough times now that it’s practically second nature. The minute Wex realized his skinny, shy chemistry lab partner could open doors across dimensions of reality, he’d insisted they try a jump together. Combining the practically unlimited power of a sourcerer with the traveling ability of a sidestepper turned out to be a groundbreaking experiment. Where Jack’s only ever been able to use existing portals, adding Wex’s raw magic makes it possible to create new doorways, going wherever and whenever they like.

The first time blew up in their faces. Literally. Wex poured too much energy into Jack’s untested psyche and knocked him out, collapsing the doorway to Atlantis. After that, they were more careful. The trip to Faerie two weeks ago barely caused a ripple in the crowd of mundanes filling the Edward Spenser exhibit at the NOMA.

Here in the musty, silent bedroom of the manor house, it’s even easier. Magan gives a satisfying gasp from her perch on the bed nearby as the two of them raise a circle of power that shoots up like a gout of flame. It fills the entire room as if propelled by gasoline and burns gold on the edges and sapphire in the center. There’s no heat, but white sparks dance across every surface, turning the sweat on their faces into sequins of light.

Jack consciously retracts his will from the exchange to allow the sourcerer free reign to choose their destination. He’s got no idea where to find ambrosia, but Wex does. The moment the power balance tips in Wex’s favor, the room begins to warp and stretch. Objects fight for space as they pass through each other, ambient light flickers in intensity, air pressure pops everyone’s ears. There’s a screech like an oncoming train scraping to a stop as the room takes on more of the other world. Magan slaps her hands to the side of the head and grimaces; the two men increase their grip on one another until their fingertips are white.

And then they’re there.

Jack exhales noisily and releases Wex’s arm once his feet are certain they’re standing on semi-solid ground again. He scans the room, trying to sort out their location, but it’s no place he’s been before. A bedroom similar to where they started out, only more so. Much more. Sumptuous bedding set in an olive wood frame, tapestries depicting ethereal figures, a floor-to-ceiling mirror framed with precious jewels and metals, a vanity table laden with lotions and potions of dizzying variety, bronze urns filled with unnamed flowers on every flat surface. The air is tinged with a hint of musk underneath the overpowering floral scent, and it goes straight to Jack’s head, making it spin in ways no jump ever has before.

Across from him, Wex shakes his head to clear it, then barks an excited laugh as he also takes in the new room.

“We did it!” he crows, slapping Jack hard on the back. “Knew you could get us here, Jackie.” To Magan, he says, “And you performed excellently, cher.” A wink in her direction.

“Wait, what did she do?” Jack says, frowning his brow. The idea that Wex hooked him up with a succubus as part of some stupid game he’s playing is already pissing him off. Friendly competition and teasing is one thing, but pulling a bait and switch on him twice in one night is too far. There’s got to be a line somewhere.

Magan peels herself off the pristine bed and sashays to Jack’s side. Her red-hot hand trails down the side of his face and neck in what would be a soothing gesture if it weren’t for how she licks her lips. “Got you in the mood, baby,” she croons, stopping her caress when she gets to his waistband. “Thought you might need a little encouragement to get us where we wanted to go.” She hooks a finger into his jeans, grinning salaciously and making his pulse quicken. “And you do want to get me there, don’t you?”

Wex laughs at his friend’s obvious discomfort. “I didn’t tell him where we were going, Mag.” She raises an eyebrow — Jack’s distantly relieved he’s not the only one out of the loop. “Figured it’d be more fun to surprise him.” To Jack, he says, “What do you think, Jackie? Any guesses about today’s field trip?”

He’s only half paying attention to what Wex is saying. Something about having a demon-girl’s hand practically down his pants is distracting. But he tries to focus, searching for some clue he’s missed. Ambrosia, succubus, sexy bedroom, Greek style tapestries, in the mood...

The mental light comes on. He takes a step back from Magan, eyes widening, panic rising.

“Oh, no, Wex, you didn’t,” he says hoarsely. “We can’t be here. If she catches us, we’ll be tied to a rock and have our dicks chewed off by rabbits every day for the rest of eternity.”

To his horror, the other two just laugh. Neither of them seems concerned about the fact that they’ve committed a supernatural B&E into Aphrodite’s private quarters.

“Seriously, you guys, this is not okay,” he says in a harsh whisper. “We have to get out of here before someone finds us.”

Magan responds by switching her affections from Jack to Wex, sliding over to the sourcerer and coiling herself around him. “Aw, c’mon,” she pouts in Jack’s direction. “It’s just a little fun. And besides,” she adds, shooting a look up at Wex, “we won’t be long.”

Wex wraps an arm around her tiny waist. “Or will we?” he grins, raising an eyebrow at Jack and nodding towards the goddess’ lush bed. Magan underscores the invitation by crooking a talon at him over Wex’s shoulder.

Jack groans softly, willpower crumpling after repeated hits to his ego and libido. One of these days, he’ll stand up to Wex’s schemes to get him in trouble — even if that trouble is often ridiculous amounts of fun. But this is not that day. Besides, how many people can brag that they’ve had a threeway in Aphrodite’s own bed?

With his last dregs of common sense draining away, he manages to wedge the low chair from the vanity under the brass doorhandle as a precautionary measure before joining Wex and Magan.

The two of them are already half undressed by the time Jack reaches the bedside. Seems like speed borne of experience. They’ve pulled back the brocaded covers to reveal starched white bedsheets underneath, and the contrast against their mahogany and crimson skin tones is almost painfully crisp. Like they’re superimposed on reality rather than a part of it. Magan’s on her back, arms splayed around her, luxuriating in the attention Wex is giving her in the form of hands over her bare torso and kisses along her collarbones. She gazes up at Jack through half-lidded eyes bright with sensual fire and smiles, reaching out to him with the hand not buried in the thick nest of Wex’s hair.

Jack makes quick work of most of his clothes, leaving everything but his jeans in the mixed pile on the floor. Magan lifts herself lithely into a reclining position, and he slides in behind her one long leg at a time, Wex grinning slyly from below. Leaning against pillows like stormclouds, he cradles the succubus between his legs as she presses her back to him, murmuring with satisfaction at what she feels there. He slides both his hands along her unnaturally hot skin, tracing the prominent bones of her delicate frame from spine to shoulders to wrists, ending by closing his large hands over hers, interlacing their fingers. Wex draws himself up to Magan’s midriff and dips under her skirt at the same moment Jack sweeps her hands behind her head. The demon-girl gives a deep laugh with strangely dissonant harmonics; she’s getting exactly what she wants, and these boys are happy to give it to her.

Wex peels away Magan’s white panties and tosses them carelessly onto the floor. She squirms in anticipation, but Jack brings his knees up to her sides, squeezing her gently and encircling her wrists with one hand, effectively pinning her in place. There’s a pause as Wex locks eyes with Jack, telegraphing a tremor up the sidestepper’s spine. There’s a faint twitch of a smile shared; Wex’s playful and encouraging, Jack’s nervous but excited. The two hold one another’s gaze until Wex nods almost imperceptibly.

Jack lowers his head to the thin flesh at Magan’s neck and presses his lips to it. Softly at first, then more insistently as Wex’s hands trace their way back into the darkness beneath her skirt. She bucks when she’s touched, and Jack bites down, eliciting a gasp and moan. She pushes back against him, putting pressure on places already strained, forcing a sigh out of him, as well.

The sudden rush of endorphins loosens his grip on her hands, and she twists away, flipping around to face Jack in a predatory crouch. His vision blurs at the edges in his effort to focus on her. Somewhere far away, Wex chuckles. With a wicked grin that reveals her tiny sharp teeth, the succubus brushes against Jack’s thighs and runs her hand along the inner seam of his jeans. Her nimble fingers are already undoing his belt buckle as Wex rises to his knees behind her. Jack’s not sure how he hasn’t blacked out by now.

A loud *crunch* from the doorway breaks the tension of the moment and startles the threesome into a panic like a flock of pigeons at a gunshot. Arms and legs flail awkwardly in a rush for mislaid clothing amid terrified giggles at being discovered.

Someone outside curses and tries the door again, scooting the chair propped under the handle and leaving a groove in the wooden floor.

“Just a second! Be right there!” Wex calls out.

The door opens a couple of inches to reveal not of the goddess of love, but the angry, scarred face of her lover, the god of war. Ares roars at Wex’s insubordination and throws his shoulder into the door again, this time hard enough to send the makeshift doorstop flying across the room where it shatters against a tapestry. Magan squeals, whether out of excitement or fear Jack can’t tell, and hides behind him, her few scraps of shed clothing clutched to her chest. Jack does his best to shield her, but he knows with sinking certainty that they’re screwed. And not in the way they’d hoped.

But Wex, ever the cocky smartass, taunts the war god looming in front of him rather than hiding.

“Oh, I’m sorry, my lord. Your lady isn’t here. Maybe she’s gone off to find better bedding. Perhaps with her horribly ugly husband?”

Ares roars and takes a swipe at Wex, who dodges the blow with a burst of supernatural speed. Then, to Jack’s chagrin, he goes in for another barb.

“Or perhaps she summoned the three of us here to make up for the sad performances she’s become accustomed to?”

Another growl, another swing, and another miss as Wex draws on his power to avoid the blows. Apoplectic rage colors Ares’ face as he advances towards the three intruders, drawing his sword.

Jack’s mind slams into overdrive with self-preservation. He tosses his gathered clothes and reaches out for Wex, priming himself for an instantaneous step back to the sleepy manor house in New Orleans where they began.

“Come on, you fucking moron! Let’s go before we get our asses handed to us!”

Wex laughs insanely as he speeds around Ares in a wide loop that encircles the room, taunting the whole way around. As he passes the vanity, his arm shoots out and grabs a box off the table. Three seconds later, he reaches Jack and Magan, and he slaps his free hand to Jack’s forearm.

“Now!” he shouts.

The room erupts into orange light with the sound of a jet intake as Ares’ sword slices through the air inches from where they’d just been standing, trailed by the echoes

of Wex’s laughter and the gray light of the dingy bedroom above the thumping ballroom. Three half-naked bodies fall into a pile on the disgusting carpet in a tangle of limbs and pounding heartbeats.

Jack rolls over on his back and lays there for a moment appreciating the fact that he’s in one piece. After he’s caught his breath and can think straight again, he says to Wex, “Why do I let you talk me into this shit, man?”

The sourcerer extracts his legs from Magan’s and pushes himself up to sitting. “Because your sad little mundane life sucks, and I’m ever so much fun,” he grins. “Plus, all adventures have rewards. Like this.” He holds up the box he snatched from Aphrodite’s vanity and offers it to Jack.

There’s only a small amount of trepidation as he slides the lid off and looks inside. It takes him a moment to recognize what he’s looking at. When he does, his mouth drops open and he goggles at Wex, who’s grinning like a proud idiot.

“Actual ambrosia?”

“Naturally. You think I’d put you through all this to not get the goods?” He scoffs as if offended. “Please. Give me some credit for my endearing machinations.”

Magan scoots up behind Jack, equally astonished. She dips her fingers into the wooden box and pulls them out again covered in dark green gel, a look of confused curiosity on her face.

“We put it in a blender with mundane liquor so it’ll work in the drinks,” Wex explains. “Shit’s too strong to take by itself.” Then he lowers his voice and raises an eyebrow suggestively. “We don’t actually know what it’ll do to a meta if they take it straight. But judging by what it does to you in the booze, I’d bet money it’s better than sex.”

The watery moonlight filtering through the threadbare curtains shines on the ambrosia, making it gleam enticingly. The succubus looks from one man to the other, then gives a slow, devious grin.

“Let’s find out,” she says, offering her ambrosia-coated fingers to Jack.

Between the magical cocktail already in his veins, the prematurely aborted entertainment, and the adrenaline of their escape, the common sense part of his brain hasn’t got the energy left to resist. He leans down and ever so gently licks the food of the gods from Magan’s hot crimson fingers.

“Ambrosia Makes Fools of Us All”: A Forgotten Relics short story by Ellie Di Julio

The last thing Jack remembers that night is Wex upending the entire contents of the box onto a dusty copy of *The Odyssey* for a plate. Everything else is washed away in a sea of sticky sweet velvet and New Orleans summer sweat.

Ellie Di Julio: April 15, 2014

Visit EllieDi.com or ForgottenRelicsBooks.com for more goodies!