



*The  
Pleasure  
of Your  
Company*

John Fuller

**G**liss the Creator and Tryça the Undoer began as lovers. Tryça watched Gliss create the continent of Utrus and Gliss saw Tryça hollow out Tærouant, and of course they fell in love. Gliss invited Tryça to her bed.

Then they made the world together. Gliss constructed mountains and valleys, which were her specialty, while Tryça opened vast tunnels and underground byways for magma and water. The oceans they fashioned together when they made love.

One day, Tryça found an enormous red beryl emerald in the riverbed. It was aboveground, so she should have given it to her lover straightaway, but it gave her the most joyful feeling to touch it. The sensation obsessed her — and surely the Gem had formed underground, she rationalised, and kept it secret.

She named it *Onnellinen Kivi* — ‘happy stone’.

She fashioned a reticule for the Gem of roseate platinum, which made it look like mined ore — and therefore Tryça’s by rights. She put it in her pocket, to touch whenever she wished. The platinum covering attenuated the joy a little, but she soon became expert at inconspicuously withdrawing the covering to touch it directly.

Of course Gliss found out. Whenever they had sex, Gliss noticed the rough chunk of ore strung on a thong about Tryça’s waist, and though Tryça was a very attentive lover, Gliss felt jealous. One morning, Tryça arose from the lavender meadow where the two slept, leaving the Jewel by mistake.

Gliss touched it, and felt its secret.

Tryça returned to find Gliss basking in the Jewel's power. She demanded it back : Gliss, distracted, didn't hear. Tryça snatched at it : Gliss held fast. Tryça wheedled : Gliss moaned.

“We could take turns,” Tryça reasoned.

“No.” Gliss stretched her toes, cradling the stone in her hands.

“Let's crack it in two,” Tryça suggested, “Heaven knows it's big enough.”

“Sorry.” Gliss curled up on her side. She always got what she wanted. “Technically it's mine,” she crowed. “It's from the surface.”

“Come on,” pleaded Tryça, “It formed underground.”

Gliss yawned, pressed the stone to her abdomen, and slept.

Tryça bided her time, and the two continued to make the world, and make love, and Tryça was very nearly completely satisfied.

After a time Tryça stole back the Onnellinen Kivi. She ran from Gliss, molded the extraordinary grottoes at Neçt, then lay down inside to bask a while in the Stone's power. But she carelessly left her feet sticking out of the cave and Gliss, seeing, dropped from the sky with a shriek.

Tryça fled into the caves with the Jewel. But she had neglected to make any way out, and when she exited the same way she had entered, Gliss ambushed her.

Gliss bound her lover. Tryça writhed but, unable to get underground, soon weakened. With a triumphant snatch, Gliss grabbed the Gem and vanished.

Gliss hid the Jewel in a cave — the last place Tryça would suspect! But since caves are Tryça's domain, Gliss knew she would never remember the spot. She planted six Dragon Blood Trees to remind herself, but only she knew how the trees pointed the way.

Meanwhile, Tryça summoned a burrowing beast to gnaw through her

bonds. Following Gliss's trail, she saw the newly-planted trees, and knew Gliss was up to something. Tryça alit near the fourth tree, destroying it with lava just a second before Gliss cast the protection spell over her handiwork.

They never recovered the Onnellinen Kivi, and have been rivals ever since.

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