

Flaming Wench 2 - Beltane Fires

Just as the sun was topping the peaks at the western edge of the valley the fair skinned, red haired innkeeper stretched in her bed and sat up. Shoving her hair out of her green eyes she felt a smile curving her pink lips and let the laughter that was bubbling in her throat spill out in a sweet giggle.

Careful not to disturb her sleeping lover she crawled out of bed, squeaking in surprise at the touch of the cold wood floor on her peach feet. Moving quietly she chose her outfit for the day; first pulling out her standard work uniform, a light white cotton chemise, sturdy black bodice, and dark green skirt. Moving to the window she opened the shutters and found herself face to face with her tavern sign. A carved and painted wooden version of herself, Smiling Eleri Forsyth blew a kiss to her sign.

As she was about to close the shutters she let her gaze wander about the city, D'Shan on the banks of the Tellarin River. Breathing deeply of the fresh valley air she sighed, feeling safe and happy in her home. Leaning out to grasp the shutters her gaze landed on the hilltop just outside of town, where the townsfolk held their rituals and ceremonies inside the great stone ring. There, in the center of the ring. Men were already at work setting out the ingredients for the great bonfires that were to be lit this evening. For tonight was Beltane.

Gasping in delight she momentarily let herself remember the happenings around last year's Beltane fires, the laughter, the drinking, the dancing, and later, the lovemaking under the stars.

Suddenly she heard someone pounding on her front door. Leaning as far out the window as she dared she saw Mathan looking up at her. Behind the tall salt and pepper haired man was his cart, creaking under the weight of the extra food and drink Eleri had ordered for the festival. Calling out a merry "Hallo" she waved and closed the window. Dancing to the edge of her bed she gently kissed and called her lover to consciousness. Whispering "Wake up my love, its Beltane, and we both have things to do."

Groaning he sat up and looked at her through his mussed brown curls. Giggling she kissed him quickly and walked out the door. As she walked along the hall to the stairs she knocked on certain doorways, throwing the doors open behind her, calling out "its Beltane, wake up and greet it."

Running down the stairs she made her way through the field of tables and chairs to her front door. Throwing it open she wrapped her arms around Mathan in a hug she kissed his cheek and asked him in for breakfast.

Into the kitchen she went, pounding on the door leading to Jayden and Traveric's door, the young couple she hired to help her around the inn. Before she finished knocking Traveric was opening the door and smiling at her, his short blond hair tousled. Behind him, his wife Jayden was just finishing tying her bodice as she walked out.

"Good morning young lovers. Happy Beltane to you." Eleri bustled about the kitchen, pulling out some hardened loaves of bread and slicing them into trenchers.

"And you, Mistress Eleri." Jayden stoked the fire in the hearth, putting a cauldron of spiced wine over the flame. At another hearth Traveric was doing the same with a cauldron of spiced cider.

"Traveric, if you would, Mathan is out front with the supplies for tonight. Please help him bring them inside. By the time you are finished Breakfast should be done." Eleri smiled at Traveric and then began to season one of the several pots of stew she had been simmering all night.

And so the morning progressed, Traveric and Mathan brought in the supplies, Jayden and Eleri made breakfast, and the guest began to awaken. The first ones downstairs were Jorell and Breylynn McCready, the couple who had sold Eleri the Inn and were now leading their gypsy band across the countryside, staying over at the Flaming Wench for a few weeks at a time.

Next came Drakan Forsyth, Eleri's distant cousin and good friend. His blue eyes twinkling with eternal mirth, and his brown hair in tousled curls.

After serving them all breakfast, Eleri sent them all out to help with the festival. Throughout the day the Inn did brisk business, so much so that Eleri scarcely got her decorations up before sunset.

At sunset the town went to the hill most with picnic lunches, Eleri with a cart full; of soups, stews, breads, meat, ale, mead, and the like. As the townsfolk settle down for the festivities the Priest and Priestess cast the circle and lit the Bonfire.

Several couples were hand fasted that night, several children were presented to the gods that night, and several children were conceived as well.

The next morning Eleri awoke laying in her lovers strong arms upon his cloak spread out on the ground with her cloak over them. Sighing happily she pressed a kiss to the clan badge about his neck and settled deeper into his arms. Knowing that all was right in her world... For now.