

## Gypsy Revel

Clouds quietly drifted in the darkening Equinox skies. Fresh dew covered the grass meadow, for it had been raining all day until just before sunset. Croaking softly in the tall grass, frogs began to move about and fill the twilight air with their songs. Slowly the creatures of the night awoke from the daytime slumbers and added their soft calls.

Picking my way across the open meadow, I walked arm in arm with the man next to me. His dark hair was pulled back into a single braid which reached his waist, his coat was a deep green leather from out which poured lengths of white lace. At each wrist was a short tufted of lace that matched the lace on his chest. Dark brown velvet made up his pants, which ended in his black leather boots.

From a distance, I could hear gypsy reels, all of which I hadn't heard in many, many years. As one reel ran into the next, I could picture the dances that were being started or stopped. The flow of skirts and scarves as dancers whirled in patterns around the large bonfire. I could almost see the smiling faces as people laughingly spun out of the patterns to get a drink and sit or got to their feet, replacing those who had left.

Humming along with whatever bit reached my ears, it made my mind flash back to my younger years. Remembering my childhood, I began to wonder if it was truly that long ago and how had 300 years past by me so quickly. This left me pondering if I could ever return to the quieter side of life. I sighed heavily because I knew that duty would never let me rest.

Sighing quietly, I glanced to the man next to me and couldn't help but to grin. The sheer amount of disgust on his face was worth every minute it had taken to reach the revel that was awaiting us. Muttering to himself, he finally stopped and gave me a look of absolute misery.

"Do you realize that you have thoroughly ruined my boots?" He grumbled at me, I could only smile at him and make him keep moving. Brushing back a curl of my red hair that had gotten loose, I knew that he would enjoy the world he was about to step into.

"I'll buy you a new pair, lovely. 'Sides, it'll be well worth it Gerandt, promise." I replied as we finally reached to outskirts of the wagon circle. "Finally, now Gerandt, please try and remember this is my family. Granted not everyone is such as us, but they are good people. There are more than a few who are willing to let us feed, but try and wait until they offer." I said as gave him a quick smile then smoothed my velvet skirts, shaking off the bits of grass.

Then looking at him again, I asked "Shall we then?"

I never let him answer as I dragged him into the pool of light.

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In the fires light, several hundred people swirled and bobbed with the music. Filling the air with chants and songs, I found it hard to keep from stepping to the whirling sea of people and let myself get lost. After a few moments I raised my voice and called out above the din.

"Ravnos Revenity Shalen Dali Frine!" I shouted, barely having time to finish before a welcoming roar went up. Holding Greandt's hand, I felt him jump as all faces swung towards us. Giggling like a school girl, I moved forward into the see of faces, most of which I didn't know but greeted anyway. Shaking my head, I had to laugh.

"English, Anire, English. I fear my friend hasn't picked up our tongue just yet." I called out to the crowd that had surrounded us. Looking to the far side of the gathering, I finally saw what I was looking for which made my heart swell.

Set against an overly large wagon was a small raised platform was connected to one of the window sills. Covered in blankets and furs, several steps lead to the top where a figure lounged. Reclining on a small pile of pillows, a very tall man tried to look as unimposing as possible.

Standing 6'7" when on his feet, the Irish red hair was a sharp contrast to his pale face. Looking out from under the wealth of curls, his deep purple eyes watched the ocean of people swirl in front of him. He openly smiled and chatted with any and everyone who stopped to speak with him. Turning towards the area that had suddenly stopped, he sat upright to look over everyone's heads trying to find what had happened.

Bobbing my head slightly to him, he grinned and gave me a short wave as the crowd around us parted slowly. Making our way towards the platform, I only paused a moment here and there to greet old friends and family.

A pair of large hunting hounds lounged at the foot of the steps. They barely noticed us when we walked past them; one of them lifted his head and took a small whiff of us before laying his head back down. Stopping at the base of the steps, I bowed my head and curtsied before speaking.

"Sharnein vornaire loven torein, revenity shallein." I said quietly and waited.

"Revenity Ciera, be welcome and relax, your friend as well." He replied, merriment playing in his eyes. "It's been a while; I hope that all has been well."

"Everything has been, Sharein." I said as I lifted my head and smiled. Looking at Greandt, I found him giving me a look of disbelief. He had never seen me lower my eyes to anyone, let alone bow as I just had.

"Please just Cierian, I so hate titles." he said, waving his hand for us to take a seat on the steps.

Chuckling softly, I took a seat one step below him and fussed with my skirts for a moment before I patting the spot next to me for Greandt to join me. Taking a moment to look about, Greandt finally took a seat next to me as I reclined on the stairs. Lacing my fingers with his, I squeezed his hand slight and smiled as I read the tension in his eyes.

Watching the gather for a moment, I remembered why I loved this life so much. The carefree lifestyle and the enjoyment of life was truly what it was all about. Days long gone flashed thru my head, countless festivals and weddings slowly flittered thru my mind as the music worked its spell. Tapping my toes, I resisted the urge to jump up and join the dancing.

Glancing at Greandt, I noted that he was beginning to relax.

Before the urge to dance could capture me, a dark haired gypsy man brought a large carafe and a set of deep red glass. Setting it on the platform, he smiled bowed his slightly before speaking to Cierian.

"Good health to you Sharein and your family." the gypsy man said before rejoining the drummers.

Taking the carafe, Cierian poured the liquid into 3 of the glasses and then handed me 2 of them, at which I passed one to Greandt. Knowing what it was, I watched as Greandt sniffed the glass expecting it to be human wine, then laughing as he suddenly looked up shock when he realized just what it was. Leaning close, I decided explain how to him.

"Ever human here takes a few moments to donate a small amount as a offering of good will to the Sharein. It is easier to gather a large amount from this many than from one person. This is why some of those here have decided to offer what they can. Gypsies take care of their own and all whom they call friends." I spoke quietly. Raising my glass towards Cierian, I offered him a toast. "May our roads be forever sunny."

"And your wagon full of all that which we love." Cierian finished the old gypsy proverb. Taking a drink, I closed my eyes and losing myself for a moment in the flood of tastes that filled my mouth and pushing back the tug of the Hunger. Slowly draining the glass, I sighed happily as it coursed thru me.

Returning my attention to the gather before me, I looked towards Greandt. Still sipping from his glass, the tension was totally gone from his face. Leaning close I spoke quietly to him.

"Mind if I leave here for a bit? I see a couple of friends I haven't seen in a while." I whispered to him. "I swear I won't be gone long."

I watched as his mind assessed every threat that there could be. From the drunken revelers to the large dogs laying at the base of the steps. I began to wonder if he ever truly let his guard down outside of the house. Nodding slowly to me, I grinned and gave him a quick kiss before turning to Cierian.

"I trust you'll make sure he is here when I get back?" I said loudly enough to Ceirian, who could see the mischief in my eyes. "I would hate to see him lost in this sea of revelries, beings that this is his first time among us." I stopped there before I could laugh. At which point Ceirian smiles sweetly and poured it on thick.

"Anything for you my dearest Revenity, You shall find him just as you leave him." He replied, his eyes alight with amusement. Turning to Greandt, "Come here lad, we shall discuss the torments of our long lives ...women." This made Greandt look at me as I rolled my eyes and laughed.

"And just what, pray tell, would do without us? Starve to death no doubt." I retorted laughingly, at which point I bobbed and turned to the crowd and quickly lost myself in the swirl of dancers, muttering softly to myself. "Men..."

Before I was too far I heard them both laugh like old friends.

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