

Journey to find a Goddess

Where to start, that's the difficult bit. Some would say to start at the beginning but I think that's a bit too far back, some start at the end and then go back to the beginning but that isn't right either. So I will start on an early winter's day a few years ago. Like many who come searching for a Pagan path I had tried a few things and read a lot more. One of the books I read inspired me to try a few meditations and that is where this particular story begins. The mediation I wanted to try out was one to meet your guide or guides.

I prepared an area, put on some quiet music and cast a simple circle. I then sat down to meditate. The first thing I had been taught in meditation or journeying is to enter and leave by a set way and for me this was through an oaken doorway in an area of grey mist within my mind. I opened the door and stepped through into a landscape dusted with snow. This surprised me at the time as on the few previous journeys I had taken the landscape had been in Spring. I realised that this place too had its seasons, one of my earlier lessons.

I looked around me and saw three women whom I had talked with before so I walked to them and asked them where I should go to meet with my guides. They directed me to a castle to the North. I had been to this castle once before too in a guided meditation so I knew where to go. Once at the Castle I was directed to a room, I didn't notice much about the room other than it was fairly comfortable and had a large fireplace with several people sitting around it, seven altogether, four women and three men. One of the men was the 'master' of the Castle and I had met him before. He introduced me to the rest.

I was first taken to meet one of the women and told she was the leader of the group. At the time I thought she looked a bit like a warrior woman and I was surprised to see her in the Castle as she didn't seem to belong there. She told me she didn't live at the Castle but that is was a good place to meet. I asked her what I should call her and after mulling over a few names she laughed at me and told me to call her Firehair. Firehair has rich wavy auburn hair that flows down her back stopping just above her waist. At that meeting her hair was tied back from her face with a leather thong and she wore breeches and a shirt with a leather jerkin of some kind. She also had a sword and a bow with her.

Firehair introduced me to the others I had not yet met and told me what skills each of them would help me with if I wished for their aid. The other two men were familiar to me as I had seen and remembered them from a dream. One was fairly short and almost chubby looking with a round face marked with swirling designs, he wore a rough fur cape over a simple brown robe and had strange things hanging from a leather belt at his waist. He was introduced to me as Roddy and is a shaman who would help me with journeys and in learning more of the animals that would teach me along my path. The other was tall, slim and pale looking and wore a long robe embroidered with astrological symbols. He was introduced to me as Casper, a magician who would aid me in studies of ritual and astrology if I wished to learn more of that.

One of the other three women I recognised from the same dream I recognised Casper and Roddy from. She was not really a guide as such, more of a guardian ancestral spirit from my maternal line. One of the other women was slim with long honey blond hair wearing a simple flowing gown. I was told her name is Beth and that she would guide me in anything artistic and creative and help me to appreciate the beauty in the world around me. The last was a little shorter than me and rounded with grey hair put up in some sort of a bun at the back of her neck. She wore a soft grey dress with a big practical looking apron. I was told her name is Gaian and she would aid me in learning herbal lore and learning to serve others as healer and carer.

Firehair explained that while each of them had these specialities they would also combine to teach some things and would only guide me if and when I came to them for advice. They were there if I needed them but they all had other duties too.

This was the beginning and for a few years this is how I met them although in time Firehair took me to her home in the forest and from then on I went there to visit her. She lived in a rectangular log house with one room split into areas for eating and sleeping. There was a hearth at one end with a rectangular table a little way in front of it and a rocking chair beside the hearth with a couple of other chairs that could be pulled up beside the fire or put at the table. At the other end of the room was a sleeping area behind a curtain of some kind. The roof was thatched, windows were shuttered and outside was a well for water and space for livestock and a kitchen garden. All of this was in a clearing in the forest. It took me several visits to learn all of this information.

While I was getting to know and work with my guides especially Firehair I was also learning of the Gods and journeying to try and meet them. On one occasion I met two figures walking together in a field near the edge of the forest. Both shifted their forms in front of me. One shifted between a stag, a man with antlers and a man with the head of a stag. This was my first direct experience of Cernunnos and this was how he chose to appear to me. With him was a white mare who shifted to a woman with long white coarse hair, and a woman with the head of a horse. This was my first meeting with a form of Epona. Both of them blessed me and we talked briefly although I could never really remember what was said.

I occasionally met Epona in one of these forms in the following couple of years. When I met with her she was often accompanied by a wolfhound and a crow. The meetings were nearly always very brief and did not happen very often. I yearned to meet with her more often, to be able to talk with her and remember what was said but at that stage it was not to be. I gradually learned to listen to the quiet inner promptings in my life that I have come to feel are Epona's way of guiding me if I am listening hard enough. I came to think of her as a constant presence in my life but one I would rarely see face to face or hear clearly.

Then one day not so long ago now Epona appeared to me with long wavy red hair instead of white. In the white She had seemed to me to be a maiden style of figure but with red hair and wearing breeches and a tunic she seemed more mature, maybe motherly, maybe more warrior like. Suddenly I had a revelation. It was as if a blindfold had slipped from my eyes as I realised that the woman I had come to know as Firehair was in fact another face of the goddess Epona. In showing herself to me on this

occasion she was testing me, seeing if I was ready to make that connection. I think my jaw dropped when I had this realisation because Epona just laughed. I asked her if I was right and she confirmed my new understanding.

This new understanding changed everything. It made me re-evaluate all the meetings I had ever had with Firehair, all the interactions, advice and gifts she had given me over the last few years.

Since then if I wish to see Epona I simply go to that house in the forest and see if she's in. When she is there the crow usually sits in the eaves of the roof and the wolfhound usually sits at her feet sprawled out in front of the fire.

After all the years of searching in meditation, or wishing to see more of Epona I realised that not only had she been a quiet voice in my heart but she was also there as my guide all long.

The other thing all this emphasised to me is that the gods have no physical form, they take on what form they wish to use. You may see them in one particular form but you may not. In journeying it means it is even more important to treat anyone or anything you come across with respect as you never know when you are being visited by a god in disguise.

My search hasn't ended, in many ways it has only just begun. At this stage I was asked to write this journey down and so I have fulfilled the request made of me.