

## IMBOLC TALE

### The Return of Warmth

By Nora Ford

Characters are story teller, Brigit, village elder, the dragon, villager, and child

***Storyteller says:***

So now, Children of the Earth, let me tell you a tale of Memory. A tale in which Brigit the Lady of Illumination returns a great dragon to the edge of our cosmos allowing the wheel of the year to turn once more.

***Brigit:*** Let me take you to Erin; the great sacred isle. One of many places I am worshipped and exalted.

***ST:*** Rolling hills and meadows, great trees and flowers, fertile soil, fragrant and moist. This is a place where the crops are bountiful.

***Villager:*** Here did dwell our ancestors, brave and heroic they created villages and inhabited the isle.

***Village Elder:*** We claim this land in the name of Danu and her children the Tuatha De Danaan. Dagda, Ollathair of the storms, and your daughter Brigit, the exalted one, we welcome you into our lives and onto this land.

***Brigit:*** And with my blessings mighty herds of cattle, swine, and sheep dotted the country side grazing on the moist grasses.

***ST:*** At harvest times the villagers made breads, had festivals that showed their skills, and honored their dead with giant feasts that reflected the end of the year. They trusted in the eternal return. On the longest winter night an elder of the village would gather children around to tell the story of the dragon a feared creator of chaos and destruction.

***Village Elder:*** Children every November trapped deep within the depths of a mountain, where the heads of three rivers meet, a great dragon comes to hibernate. The dragon knows that in this land wherever three rivers meet the water is most sacred, a well of wisdom. ***(Children nod knowingly)***

***Child:*** Is this why our world is covered in a gray cloudy mist?

***VE:*** Yes for the dragon damns these sacred waters. The river banks become dry. What little water flows becomes cold, frozen, crystallized.

***ST:*** The powerful dragon mightily holds the water deep within her womb, forbidding the turning of the season. From high in the mountains cold radiates outward. Her breath freezing all it touches.

**Villager:** Children she is guided by instinct to keep things as they are. Primal and chaotic she rules this time of year! (Scream and scare children, they run off).

**ST:** The dragon's breath enters the village slowly moving, extinguishing the warmth of the villager's hearth fires. **(Candles of varying sizes form a hearth near the main alter. The people under the dragon sheet occasionally blow out a candle.)**

**ST:** and the darkness envelops. Moving across the landscape, the cool dragon's breath freezes all that was once teeming with life; all is suspended in time **(pause)**. Then words of wisdom are asked from a child. They are shouted out to the wind.

**Child:** I am tired of the cold. How do we make things warm again?

**Brigit:** Do not fear; just when times seem their darkest, when you began to doubt the spring, I will come. I will slay the dragon and awaken the Earth.

**ST:** Brigit hears the call of the young. She understands their yearning to splash in streams and roll down green hills. She follows the sound of their cries.

**Brigit:** Children I hear you. I will once again fight my annual battle with the immortal dragon.

**ST:** She understands that once again she must return to the head of three rivers. To slay the dragon who will be reborn at Samhain. The village elders notice change is in the wind. They prepare for the festival of the hearth.

**Village elder:** It is time children to carry out our oldest traditions. To ask for the might of Brigit to return once more.

**ST:** The priests of the village prepare prayers for Lady Brigit. On the eve of her return they make offerings to her.

**Village Elder:** Great Lady of Inspiration, the forge, and healing, We call on you now. The sleeping Earth awaits the return of warmth.

**Villager:** Mighty are you Lady,  
Whose hand melts the ice?  
Implore your father Ollathair to turn the mighty wheel of the year.

**Villager offers oil to the fire**

**Village Elder:** Swing your hammer at the forge,  
Creating weapons for right,  
That your sweet son for whom you wept, will rejoin with you this night!

**Village Elder offers silver medallion to the tree**

**Child:** Warm wool of gray and purple,  
Used in our healing rites,  
Left over night for you to bless in our hearth fire's light!

**Child offers a crystal to the well**

**All Three:** Three gifts that we have given you in hospitality,  
That you return to the land with reciprocity!

**ST:** The path Brigit walks is warmed. Milk flows in the ewes as she passes barnyards in the country side. Brigit enters the village to bless her people.

**Brigit:** I hear your cries in the night and return to you my healing light. (*Touches the healing cloth*). In your land the milk will once again begin to flow and waters shall be released so your crops will soon begin to grow. Do not fear young ones my journey is not yet at an end for I must go to mountain tops and slay the dark dragon.

**ST:** Brigit turns to leave to village. Blessing all she passes with a touch of her hand. She knows it is time to honor the old bargain between the Gods and men. She is kept alive by the memory of generations of people. As long as she is honored she can walk the Earth, turning seasons and protecting the folk. It is a long journey over hill and through mountain, the sun's first light crests on the horizon.

**Brigit:** Great Dragon I meet you at the place where three rivers converge. Your time has come to an end. Do not resist my primal one, spring must be born again.

**ST:** The dragon lifts its head and it let's go a primal scream (***people under the cloth scream***).

The two forces chaos and order dance, ebbing and moving like the tides. However, the dragon weary from hibernation soon tires. At this moment Brigit puts her hands in the place where the three rivers meet. The water is released bursting open with chunks of ice.

**ST:** Brigit pulls water into banks of the stream, preventing the land from flooding. She allows some to collect in a pool. This happens with all three rivers.

**Brigit:** Behold the waters of the collective unconscious, the unlimited potential of the universe. Children all this I give to you. (***From underneath the cloth the person playing Brigit is handed a chunk of ice with a blue ribbon attached. She walks this across the nemeton to create water in a bank and places the chunk of ice in an awaiting bowl.***)

**Brigit:** Behold the waters blended from rivers three. They are from my well of Wisdom. I give them freely to thee. (***From underneath the cloth the person playing Brigit is handed a chunk of ice with a blue ribbon attached. She walks this across the***

***nemeton to create water in a bank and places the chunk of ice in an awaiting bowl.)***

***Brigit:*** Behold the waters of the collective unconscious, the unlimited potential of the universe. Children all this I give to you. ***(From underneath the cloth the person playing Brigit is handed a chunk of ice with a blue ribbon attached. She walks this across the nemeton to create water in a bank and places the chunk of ice in an awaiting bowl.)***

***ST:*** Just as Brigit returns the last of the waters into the banks, she can hear the stirrings of people waking in the village down below. The villager, village elder, and child return to their hearth fires to see if Brigit has blessed them. All three happen upon a clear bowl of magically flowing waters that have been left for them. They rejoice at the turning of the cosmic wheel.

Children of the Earth this is the story of Brigit and the releasing of the waters.