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Mystic Moon: “Mystic Moon Esbat”
by Lauren Chambers

In light of the halloween holiday, I decided to try something Pagan and went to a full moon ceremony, or Esbat, at Mystic Moon in Norfolk. This was my first experience with anything like this and it was very interesting. I learned a lot about Pagan tradition in my short visit and it opened my eyes to this new religion.

I went to Mystic Moon on Saturday October 24th, 2015. It is located at 3365 N Military Highway, and it’s proprietor’s name is Debbie Foley. Debbie and her husband, Brian, started Mystic Moon in 1998 and it is the oldest Pagan store in the area. They call themselves a “Pagan Hub”, or community for Pagans. They are a store which provides things for magical work, as well as classes. They hold weekly and monthly events and celebrations in accordance to the Pagan calendar.

The Esbat started at dusk, 6:00 so I got there around 5:45, and brought cookies due to their pot-luck recommendations on the website. Part of the Esbat ceremony was having a potluck after, and since I am an “air sign”, the recommended dish to bring was dessert. The building itself seemed rather old on the outside and was located off of the highway with a large yellow sign out front that just said “mystic moon”. Once inside, the store is the first part I walked into. It had lots of magical type things, such as incense, wiccan spell books, dragon and fairy figurines, candles, art, whimsical type clothing, jewelery, a place to get a psychic or tarot reading if you wanted, and other such things. People were standing around talking or shopping, and I was greeted by the store clerk. Most people seemed to be of caucasian descent and between ages 30 and 50 with some small children as well. A lot of people seemed to like wearing the color black, and others wore capes as well. The inside of the shop was decorated so it looked like you were perhaps inside a stone wall castle. And there were lots of Halloween decorations everywhere. Towards the back there was a little sitting area with a bookshelf they labeled as “the library”. Adjacent to this was a room with a class schedule posted on the outside. I asked what it was for and someone told me it was where classes were held. Some of the classes included Wicca 101, Practical Magic, and Herb classes. I then asked where the Esbat ritual was and was directed towards the back of the building. I walked outside under a covered porch and saw other dishes for the pot-luck on the table, so this is where I left the cookies. By this time it was almost 6:00 and people were gathering outside for the ritual.

Outback was a large open grassy area with a small garden. In the center was a large sandy circle and in the middle of it there was a cauldron and an altar with candles, salt, and a small bowl of water. I was told later that these represented the elements, fire, earth, and water. There were around thirty-five to forty people in attendance, and the ritual was led by Debbie and Brian. About fifteen or so people gathered to form a circle around the
sand pit, while others stood off and looked on. I chose to stand in the circle. Along with Debbie and Brian, there were three other “Priestesses” to help with the ritual. Debbie stood in the center of the circle, holding a wand, Brian stood at the “north” part of the circle, and the three others made up the “east, west, and south” part. Debbie proclaimed that the circle had been cast, and walked around with sage, to cleanse the circle. Then, starting with Brian who represented the North, each direction was called on to be part of the circle. After that, Debbie stood in the center, facing the altar, and with arms raised said a rather lengthy prayer to the moon. There were two candles, one to represent the God and the other the Goddess, which were lit in succession to their calling into the circle. After doing this, she held up the water bowl to the moon, seeming to gather the moon’s energy into the water, then walked around the circle and with her fingers, dipped them into the water and sprinkled it on the people in the circle. She then walked back to the altar, and poured apple cider into a goblet and put some ginger snaps on a plate and offered them to the gods. Then, along with the help of Brian and the other priestesses, they walked around and gave a cookie and a small sample of cider to everyone in the circle. Thanks was given to the moon and the God and Goddess. Then starting again with Brian, the four directions were thanked and released. The candles were then put out, and the God and Goddess released. Everyone then walked around the circle three times, one last prayer was given, and it was done. The whole ritual lasted about fifteen minutes.

I stayed until around 7:00 then made my way out. I thought it was a nice ritual, and enjoyed the people who came. It was very eclectic and suitable for this time of year. The people were very open and friendly, although I’d say perhaps also a little bit shy. It seemed like most people knew everyone there, and probably realized I was a newbie. But I had an easy time talking to people and had a good time. I would consider doing it again.

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