

A photograph of a red mushroom with white spots, likely an Amanita muscaria, growing in a forest floor covered with pine needles. The mushroom is the central focus, with its white stem and gills visible. The background is a dense layer of brown pine needles, with some green leaves scattered throughout. The overall lighting is soft and natural, creating a moody atmosphere.

WITCH

A white silhouette of a crow in flight, with its wings spread, positioned above the text.

Crows' Feet Press

November/Issue 24



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WITCH



Welcome to issue 24
of Witch!

We hope this issue finds you well, as you curl up against the quickening Winter winds!

We head towards the Winter Solstice, and whilst it will be a while until the warmer weather returns, there is hope that comes with the slowly lightening evenings as we pass through the dark months and towards Spring, swinging around the wheel once more.

Be blessed,

Bekki
Editor

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WITCH

FEATURED ARTICLES

FULL MOON LUNAR ECLIPSE IN TAURUS - MICHELLE ROSE BOXLEY

ARTWORK BY AYSHE-MIRA YASHIN

THE RISE OF THE MALE WITCH - ELISA M GREY

NON-MAGICKAL PRACTICE - CHERRY DOYLE

WISE WORDS FROM THE OLD CRONE - NITA SIMPSON

HOW TO HARNESS THE POWER OF AMULETS - JAZZ MEYER

VERA'S VESSELS

MONTHLY CRYSTAL GUIDE - CHERYL BECKWORTH/GROUNDED GODDESS

BUILD YOURSELF A CONFIDENCE ALTAR - FAIRY BEC

YES/NO PISTACHIO! - FAITH BARNES

TAROTSCOPES BY RAVEN & LUNA

LIE OF THE LAND - AN EXCERPT BY HELEN J.R. BRUCE

POETRY BY CAROL FLYNN

ADDITIONAL PHOTOGRAPHY BY MAGIAZIEMI



HELEN J.R. BRUCE



STEPHANIE ULPH



KELLY BUCHAN



THE OLD CRONE



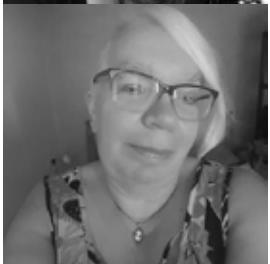
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FULL MOON LUNAR ECLIPSE IN TAURUS

Michelle Rose Boxley
Sisters of the Moon

The full moon lunar eclipse is taking place on Friday 19th November at 08:57(gmt).

On this full moon, the sun will be in Scorpio and the moon will be in Taurus and as with each full moon, we use these seemingly opposing forces to help us shine the light of the full moon on our inner darkness and move forward with clarity and balance. This is even more powerful when we have an eclipse as eclipses tend to bring things up to the surface to be witnessed and dealt with. Eclipses can also be powerful times to We have Scorpio, a water sign associated with the underworld and Taurus an earth sign associated with the earthly and material world. These signs appear to contradict each other but they actually invite us to establish balance between these two aspects of ourselves.

We can check in with where we dwell most often. Are we always off exploring the dark mysteries of the world, brooding, deep in thought but perhaps a little aloof? Or are we distracted by the trappings of the material world and do we shy away from thinking about the darker concepts of life and struggle with change? Balance between the Scorpio and Taurean energy would be this idea of being in the world but not of this world, the ability to stay connected to the truth of life - the cycles of life, death and rebirth whilst being grounded and present with our self and the people around us - the ability to enjoy the things of this life whilst been able to let them go when it's time.




We can also use the grounded Taurean energy to help us balance out the intense energy of Scorpio season. Taurus is a very loving sign, ruled by the planet Venus and has a deep connection to Mother Earth. If we have been having a difficult time emotionally with the recent chaos of Mercury retrograde and the intense emotions that come to the surface with both Scorpio and Samhain Season then it's time for some Taurean self care. Use this full moon to come back into your body - dance, move, get a massage, run an aromatherapy bath, go for a walk, place your bare feet on the ground and get present. Taurus is a very embodied sign and Scorpio is deeply sensual so use these powerful feminine energies to celebrate your feminine magic.

Taurus rules the throat and neck so when the moon is in Taurus it's particularly important to look after these parts of the body. With the weather getting colder and sharper be sure to keep your neck extra warm during Taurus moon days.

It's also an opportunity to check-in with your throat chakra, Scorpio season often brings secrets and truths to the surface to be dealt with, cleansed and released. Ask yourself if you're being honest with yourself and those around you? Are there words you long to say but are holding back for some reason? Mantra can be a wonderful tool to help open up the throat chakra.

With Scorpio ruling the Sacral Chakra and Taurus ruling the throat, it's also time to have a look at our creativity which is associated with both of these chakras. Again, ask yourself if you are holding yourself back in anyway? What are your creative dreams and wishes?

Journal about them, create vision boards and fill yourself up with inspiration and encouragement. If you want to dance, dance if you want to paint, paint, whatever it is that your soul is calling you to do, can you get out of your own way and express yourself fully.



Who would you be
if you let yourself
shine?



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Sisters of the Moon Online

The
Lunar Temple

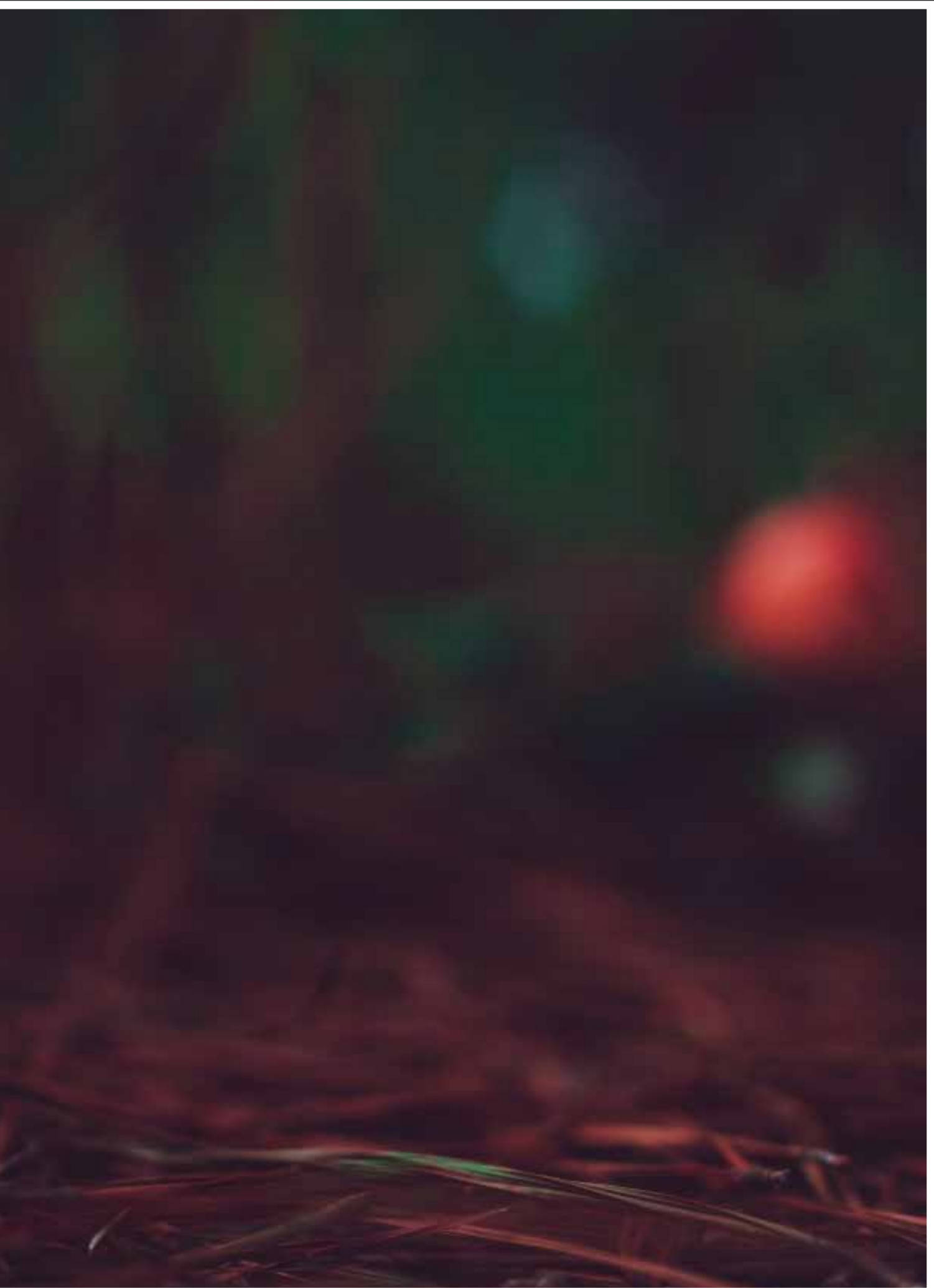
A glowing blue moon is held in two hands, one on the left and one on the right. The hands are dark blue and appear to be cupping the moon. The background is a dark blue sky with several white stars of varying sizes and some faint white lines.

MONTHLY MOON MEMBERSHIP

Lunar & Seasonal Living | Monthly New Moon Circles

— Goddess Wisdom | Myths & Magick —





THE ART OF AYSHE-MIRA YASHIN

Previously featured in issue 15, we are pleased to share more of Ayshe-Mira's divine artworks in this issue!

Ayshe-Mira Yashin (she/her) is an 18-year-old lesbian artist from Istanbul and Nicosia, studying art at Camberwell College of Art in London. She makes political and spiritual art, exploring themes such as witchcraft, feminism, and sapphic love and intimacy. She runs a small business where she sells her tarot deck, as well as handmade notebooks, art prints, stickers and more.

1. Sacred Goat

Illustration - Ink and fine liners on paper, October 2021

2. Divine Feminine

Illustration - Ink and fine liners on paper, October 2021

3. Cypriot Incense - "Tütsü"

Illustration - Ink on paper, November 2021

4. Moonblood

Painting - Period Blood on paper, October 2021

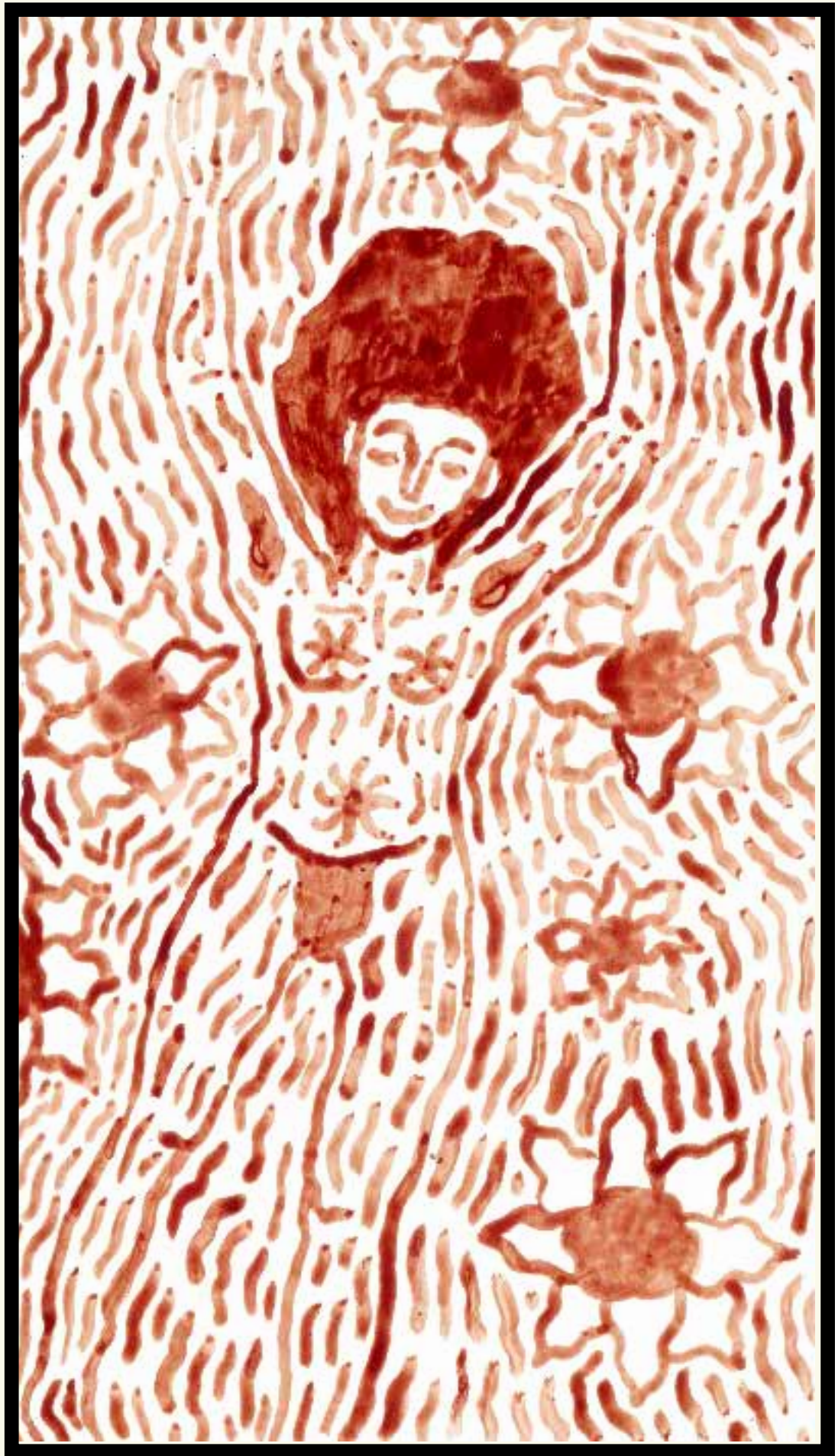
5. Spiral Goddess

Painting - Period Blood on paper, November 2021











IS HE A WARLOCK OR IS HE A WIZARD?

THE RISE OF THE MALE WITCH

It is a universal truth that witches are women. Mention the word witch and many people envision a woman clad in black, sat astride a broomstick, her pointed shoes and hat in place, as well as her mandatory black cat, back arched, clutching at the twigs of the broom. Several scholars have put forward theories that the witch trials were actually a form of gendercide as scholars believe that 80% of those killed in the European witch trials were women. But of course, there were also men who fell into the pit of accusations, some of whom were married to suspected witches, seen as witches in their own right and even members of the clergy.

Heinrich Kramer's infamous *Malleus Maleficarum*, or *Hammer of Witches*, probably the most misogynistic book ever to be penned, still contains a section regarding male witches. Their crimes were not quite on par with women's, shooting arrows at the holy cross for example, while women were believed to kill and maim, but nonetheless, men are included.

If we look back at the ancient world it was men who used magic. The mages of Persia, those men in Greece who carried curse tablets to protect their businesses, but the distinction made between black and white magic enabled women magic users, or as we know them, witches, to be classified as working on the dark side.

In ancient Assyria, experts called *ashipu*, were responsible for performing funerary rites for the dead, additionally, physicians, or *asu*, could treat people suffering from ailments using salves and other remedies, while diviners, or *baru*, looked for omens from the Gods and interpreted the resulting signs.

These male specialists were the product of years of training, 'Many of the incantations and their attendant rituals, which were a collection of anti-witchcraft rituals dating back to the Old Babylonian period (ca. 1894-1595 B.C.), were passed down in secret over the course of several centuries.' If one notes that these were anti-witchcraft rituals, the distinction between witchcraft and divine magic was already in existence, and of course men used divine magic, while women used witchcraft.

Looking at the statistics from the witch trials, we can see a trend. On the whole it was mainly women killed for crimes of witchery, it seems, for a multitude of reasons, such as the belief that women were weaker than men and threw curses rather than punches, the belief that women cavorted with the Devil, and ultimately women

who rivalled men in the form of midwives and landowners. Women were also accused by women who were jealous, brainwashed or simply afraid, but notice Iceland, Normandy and Estonia, here it was predominantly men by quite a high percentage.

Place	Dates	Female	Male	% Male
Bishopric of Basel	1571–1670	181	9	5
Hungary	1520–1777	1,482	160	10
Essex Co., England	1560–1602	158	24	13
SW Germany (executions)	pre-1627	580	88	13
New England	1620–1725	89	14	14
Scotland	1560–1792	208	413	16
Norway	1551–1760c.	690c.	173	2
SW Germany (executions)	post-1627	470	150	24
Venice	1550–1650	714	224	24
S. Sweden	1635–1754	77	25	25
Fribourg	1607–1683	103	59	36
Zeeland	1450–1729	19	11	37
Pays de Vaud	1539–1670	62	45	42
Finland	1520–1699	325	316	49
Burgundy	1580–1642	76	83	52
Estonia	1520–1729	77	116	60
Normandy	1564–1660	103	278	73
Iceland	1625–1685	10	110	92

In Normandy the Shepard was targeted, the equivalent it seems to the female crone. Outsiders, foreigners and travellers were all easy targets within the male population. Iceland, with Viking connections, viewed men as still heavily connected with paganism and witchery as in the case of father and son, both named Jón Jónsson. Their trial took place in 1655, and was known as the Kirkjuból witch trial. ‘When the Reverend Jón Magnússon began waking in the night to the sensation of cats and mice crawling over his feet, of a dog with red hot claws pinning his body to the bed, he had no doubt that he had been bewitched. What was more, Magnússon was certain he knew who was behind his torment. When his night terrors began, the older Jón Jónsson, while drunk, had admitted he had sent a spirit to taunt the reverend...../....The father and son were ordered to publicly swear an oath to God that they had never colluded with the Devil and that they would renounce any further acts of witchcraft.’ Despite their promise, the Reverend continued to experience his night terrors and both father and son were burned at the stake on April 10, 1656.

Urban Grandier, a French Catholic priest, was burned at the stake after being convicted of witchcraft, following the events of the ‘Loudun Possessions’ in which nuns began to swear, bark like dogs, cavort naked and act in sexually provocative ways - but rather than sending out his spirit and fornicating with nuns from the Ursuline convent as accused, Grandier seems to have been the victim of a politically motivated persecution which was led by the powerful Cardinal Richelieu.

Grandier had become an enemy of the Cardinal, who was the chief minister of France. The Crown, wishing to centralise power, had ordered the walls around Loudun to be demolished, which Richelieu supported, Grandier however, supported those who wished to retain the walls and had also written a satirical attack on the Cardinal, as well



as a book attacking the rule of celibacy within the clergy.

Grandier was subjected to a form of the 'Spanish boot', an iron sleeve filled with spikes, that was heated and then applied to Grandier's calf and ankle to shatter the bones. The torture was so effective that bone marrow was said to trickle from Grandier's legs when the boot was removed.

Despite the hideous torture he underwent, Grandier never confessed to witchcraft and maintained his innocence. He was burned alive at the stake. Soon after his death, the walls of Loudon came down.

Similarly with Baron Gilles de Rais, a knight and Lord from Brittany, leader in the French army, and companion in arms of Joan of Arc, who is remembered as a notorious child murderer and as one in league with the Devil.

On 15 May 1440, Rais kidnapped a cleric during a dispute at the Church of Saint-Étienne-de-Mer-Morte. This act prompted the Bishop of Nantes to investigate de Rais, uncovering evidence of barbaric crimes against children. Following a secular investigation that corroborated the Bishop's, Rais was prosecuted by both secular and ecclesiastical courts, on charges that included murder, sodomy and heresy.

According to a testimony at his trial by the priest Eustache Blanchet in 1438, and the cleric François Prelati, de Rais had 'sent out Blanchet to seek individuals who knew alchemy and demon summoning...../ Rais chose to initiate experiments, the first in the lower hall of his castle at Tiffauges, attempting to summon a demon named Barron. Rais provided a contract with the demon for riches that Prelati was to give to the demon later.'

But there are those who believe that de Rais was innocent of what he was accused. The idea has persisted that Rais was the victim of a plot or act of revenge by the Catholic Church or the French State, as the Duke of Brittany was given authority to prosecute de Rais, and receive all the titles to his former lands, after his conviction. De Rais was executed by hanging, in October 1440.

These were cases on the continent, but what of England's green and pleasant lands? King Charles 1st had almost ended the witch craze of King James' time, as he demanded more stringent proof of witchery. Nonetheless, by 1642 England was in the grip of civil war and people were afraid. Poverty and disease were rife, misery was everywhere and a scapegoat was chosen for the blame in the form of the witch.



MATTHEW HOPKINS,
OF HANNINGTREE, ESSEX.
THE CELEBRATED WITCH-FINDER.

FROM A VERY RARE PRINT IN THE PEPSYAN LIBRARY, AT
HARVARD COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE.

Matthew Hopkins, son of a Puritan clergyman, was in the right place at the right time to restart the witch hunt and get paid for his trouble. Torture was illegal in Britain at this time but many of Hopkins' methods of inquisition were not far removed from torture at all. Hopkins, who had given himself the title 'Witchfinder General', would search for what he called the Devil's mark, pricking any skin deformity on the accused. Hopkins insisted that these marks were left by the Devil to prove that the accused had made a di-

abolical pact. Hopkins also used sleep deprivation to gain a confession, forcing the accused to walk about all night with no respite. A further test was to throw the accused, who was already tied up, into water because a witch, having denied his or her baptism, would naturally be repelled by the water so that he or she would float and not sink into it. Of course if the accused did sink, and drown, they were innocent of witchery.

The 'swimming' test was done to 80 year old Reverend John Lowe, who, after being deprived of sleep for many nights, was stripped, bound and thrown into water until he was a gibbering wreck and confessed to witchcraft; Lowe, although broken by this horrible torture, would still not admit to making a diabolical pact. Lowe, who had been accused of witchcraft by his own parishioners, simply because they did not like him, was executed in 1642.

Examining the words attached to male witches is also interesting. The most common word used to express that a witch is male, is the word warlock, which up until around the year 1000 had meant oath breaker or deceiver and became associated with witchcraft when a man accused of witchery was seen to have broken his oath to God.

The word wizard appeared in the English language in about 1550, originating from the Middle English word 'wys' meaning 'wise'. Wizard is a word that is loaded

with stereotypes. A white haired, bearded old man who wears a pointed hat and commands high magic and certainly doesn't seem to fit the image of many modern male witches.

In the early 18th century thaumaturg (via medieval Latin from Greek thaumatourgos, from thauma 'marvel' + -ergos '-working') appeared. The thaumaturge was a worker of wonders and a performer of miracles; a magician; and is a word associated with men. The notion being that a man can control such miraculous magic such as the conjuring of spirits, necromancy of the dead, in essence a mage if you will, maintaining his associations with ancient mages and keepers of magic such as those in ancient Persia; but do any of these words truly sum up the male magic user?

The word 'witch' was born in 890, when king Alfred the Great wrote it in the book of doom, (book of law) and was spelled wicce in its feminine form and wicca in the masculine. It is therefore, technically, a gender neutral word, which some men are reclaiming in the modern world.

So what is a male witch, is he just the same as a female witch and is he accepted by groups of female witches?

Male witches have become far more commonplace since the 20th century revival of witchcraft, which of course had much to do with the father of Wicca, Gerald Gardner.

'Gardner, a writer and anthropologist who moved into the quaint surroundings of southern English suburbia in 1939 and, with a select group of peers, started to unpack Wiccan practises and form a coven in the hidden depths of the New Forest. His first book about the subject, High Magic's Aid, was released in 1949. It was disguised as a fictional fantasy but secretly exposed its knowing readers into the semantics of practising Wicca.'

Gardener brought witchcraft into the public eye, making it, to some degree, more accessible, unlike previously male dominated magical groups, such as the order of the Golden Dawn, who's esoteric practices remained a mystery to the general public.

Witches today are generally accepted as both male and female, but just like some esoteric orders kept their doors closed to women for many years, some covens discourage the inclusion of men, as in, for example, Dianic covens.

Dianic witches worship the Goddess through all three of her aspects: Maiden, Mother, and Crone. Rituals and worship can vary, but they all have feminist aspects and come from a feminist standpoint.

Nevertheless, the male witch is on the rise and can be seen being 'loud and proud' about their witchy status on many face book coven pages.

Men can indeed practice the craft, worship deities if they choose to and set up an altar, but can men actually do magic? That is certainly an area for debate. In the 1600's women were thought to be better at using magic than men because of their ability to gestate life in the womb and thence, their connection to nature and the Goddess. Yet as well as the ancient mages, men were in positions of power in the world of alchemy and the clergy.

The alchemist not only attempted to turn lead into gold but also attempted to make a homunculus, or tiny humanoid creature. In essence, to create organic life without the use of a womb, thereby creating a man made abomination grown in a gourd. As well as this, there were several members of the clergy who were known to summon demons.

Pope Sylvester II was believed to have made a pact with a female Demon called Meridiana, who aided him in his endeavours.



Pope Sylvester the II and the Devil.

Cardinal Benno, who was a supporter of the anti-popes, and therefore was biased against the pope, wrote that Sylvester was regularly waited on by Demons, and that by their help he had obtained the papal crown. He also wrote that the Devil, to whom Sylvester had sold his soul, had faithfully promised that he should live until he had celebrated high mass at Jerusalem.

So yes, it seems that men have been linked with magic just as much as women throughout history - but what is implied through these historical examples is that men used magic to further their career, to gain power and knowledge where as women used magic solely for doing harm, much like in Christopher Marlowe's Faust, where the male scholar Faust sells his soul for knowledge, while the female witches in Shakespeare's Macbeth plot to kill and cause havoc in the kingdom.

Also, men were often burned for political reasons or monetary gain where as women were killed because they were believed to be evil.

The Oxford dictionary definition of a witch is as follows: 'a woman who is believed to have magic powers, especially to do evil things. In stories, she usually wears a black, pointed hat and flies on a broomstick.' Maybe this is why the female witch takes precedence in our imagination over the male, because she was once so much more feared than him.

It is fair to assume that however many male witches, warlocks or wizards come out of the broom closet, the stereotype of the female witch will remain in tact; and her black dress and pointed hat, the garb of an evil woman, will no doubt remain a favourite Halloween costume for many more years to come. Try as we may, some stereotypes simply refuse to break.





NON-MAGICKAL PRACTICE

A person with long hair, wearing a light-colored sweater and dark pants, is walking away from the camera on a dirt path in a forest. The ground is covered in fallen autumn leaves, and the trees are bare, suggesting a late autumn or winter setting. The lighting is soft and natural, creating a serene atmosphere.

As someone who no longer turns to magick to support my religious practice, I sometimes feel like I'm not a 'real' pagan. But the truth is, the dictionary definition of paganism is extremely broad - the Collins English Dictionary describes it as 'beliefs and activities [which] do not belong to any of the main religions of the world, and take nature and belief in many gods as a basis'.

Alongside known pathways such as Wicca, Druidry, Occultism, and extant indigenous pre-Christian religions, there is an emergence of so-called 'Eclectic' or 'Non-Denominational' paganism - that is, not tying oneself to a particular pathway - choosing elements from the spectrum of paganism which fit the practitioner personally.

Some pathways rely on rituals, magick, and spiritualism as central to their practice. Their use can vary from honouring deities, to self-care, to marking the passing of the seasons. But not all of us feel comfortable (or are able) to openly practice magick-based worship and craft. Some pagans don't have the time, money, or space to set up their tools. Others may not be 'out of the broom closet' to friends and family. Some simply don't hold magick in their belief system.

So whether you're brushed-up on besoms or confused by crystals, skilled at spells or doubtful about divination, you can partake in activities which draw you closer to your own personal paganism. Here are my favourite non-magick ways of honouring life and the earth.

MINDFUL TIME WITH NATURE

A wonderful way to show reverence to the natural cycles of the earth is to be amongst them, noticing detail and quietly observing beauty on a large and small scale. Walking, running, cycling, or swimming in your favourite countryside spots, holding your hand to trees, spotting fungi, and listening to birdsong are visceral connections to your natural surroundings. With repeated visits, you will start to become attuned to the seasonal changes, coming to predict the familiar patterns of plants, animals, and weather. You could even forage sustainably for some of nature's edible gifts (as long as you are confident in what you are collecting), and make them into a

Cherry Doyle
Witch Writer

delicious recipe when you get home.

You can do this anywhere, even if you're not close to the countryside. A local park or graveyard, a tree, window-box, or even a houseplant can provide an opportunity for contemplation and admiration. Or maybe you'd rather be wrist-deep in soil, nurturing new life in your garden, or growing a herb planter for your kitchen! Whichever way you choose to quietly celebrate the life-giving forces of nature is an honour to the planet which sustains us.

CONNECT TO THE ELEMENTS

You don't have to be out and about to connect to the forces which give us life. Light a candle, run your hands under the tap, turn a pebble over in your fingers, poke your head out the window and take a deep breath! These simple actions will ground you in the four elements which underpin our existence. For a more immersive experience, bring some natural decorations into the house, such as seasonal foliage, pine cones, rocks, and shells (observing local laws, especially on beaches), to arrange on a mantelpiece, window-sill, table, or altar. Light a variety of candles to accentuate your new décor and provide a visual focus for any quiet time you spend with your natural materials.

DONATE TO CHARITY

We all like to think our actions can make a difference by adding a little kindness into the world. Choose environmental, conservation, or animal charities to support if that aligns to your pagan pathway, or local organisations to support your community. It doesn't matter whether you've got a lot to give or a little - whether it's volunteering your time, dropping your change into a charity tin, adding an extra item to your shopping list for the food bank, or even taking unwanted items to a charity shop instead of the tip - every bit of kindness helps the world become a better place.

BE CREATIVE

Spending some time taking part in a creative activity not only honours yourself and the possibilities of the human imagination, but can also be used to create representations of nature or your craft which you can keep with you (or eat!). Poetry, art, music, cooking, or crafting, are all common ways people get creative, but don't feel put off if you don't think you've got artistic talent. How about arranging an autumn leaf mandala on the woodland floor, doodling in a notebook, colouring in, or even having a good old sing in the car? There are lots of ways creativity can manifest itself, and if you're putting something out into the world which didn't exist before, it counts! If you practice immersing yourself in an activity, you could achieve the infamous 'flow state' - perfect for breaking down barriers between yourself and your mind.

MEDITATION

Meditation is a practice used in many religions to calm and focus the mind. You can use this time to explore ideas around your faith, or consider any questions which you think might help you in day-to-day life. If you're not used to getting into a meditative state on your own, listen to some guided meditations on your music streaming service, or meditation app.

Taking some time to collect yourself and focus your thoughts can also do wonders for mental health. Meditation doesn't have to have an end goal or be used as part of spiritual practice - it can be used as a mindfulness tool to support us through difficult emotions and stressful times. You can run thorough a relaxation exercise such as Yoga Nidra in as little as 10 minutes, to leave you relaxed, refreshed, and revitalised for the rest of your day. Taking a small amount of time for yourself to do an activity such as this could form part of an ongoing commitment to yourself - the greatest gift the universe has given to you.



Wise Words from the Old Crone

Magick is Not a Quick Fix!

This sounds like one of my fiction stories but it is all totally true and exactly how it happened.

Magic, spells, card readings and any spiritual; interventions and traditions are not a quick fix as some seem to think. As my lovely friend was about to find out.

I could tell from her text already that she was a friend in great need. We all have them at some time or another and sometimes I have been that friend who needed something to help calm me.

I received her text message one Saturday morning, rather out of the blue as I had not heard from her for a few months. She wanted me to perform a card reading for her as I have done many times before. She said she was desperate and had needed it for a while but was in a pickle of a mess and had not even been able to leave the house or pick up the phone. We arranged for me to go over to her on the Tuesday as this was the first day I was free.

Not knowing what I was going to find I gathered together my tool box with a few items I felt might help. I had no idea what she might have needed so I began to pack as much as I felt was required.

She rang me early Sunday morning in a right old tizzy and could barely speak through the sobs. I cancelled what I was doing that day.

"I'll be with you in an hour." I told her.

This is what happened...

When I arrived she had clearly been crying all morning, she was shaking and the smile she attempted was scary. She was in danger of flooding the house with her tears. I could taste the negative vibes in the house.

She managed to slow down enough to make us both a drink of orange squash and I gently ferried her out into the sunshine of the garden. She wanted a reading to tell her what to do. I have read for her many times before, even predicting a tragedy, although I had no idea at the time whether it would be large and life changing, or small and easily overcome. It was large and life changing. Her wonderful husband was killed in a freak motorbike accident and after almost ten years she has still not recovered.

I could tell that I needed her calm down first so she could tell me what was troubling her, so I began by telling her of all the things I had brought.

"Let's start with a smudging." I suggested.

She followed me around the garden and then the house with tears rolling down her cheeks unchecked. I let the smoke filter to every corner.

"Be gone." I whispered as I smudged.

"This smell is lovely." she croaked. "What is it?"

"Clary sage. One of my favourite smells." I grinned, and the shadow of a smile lit up her face.

"The whole house smells so lovely."

"I'll leave it with you so you can light it up whenever you want."

"Do we do the reading now?" I could sense the urgency in her voice.

"Not just yet." I told her. "I want to make you a calming potion." I explained about my dried herbs and placed a teaspoon each of nettles, rosemary, sage, mint, thyme, lemon balm and honey in a tisane mug I had brought.

"Oh, another lovely smell." she said, already calming down. I poured us both a small drink and added more hot water.

"There's enough in here now for you to have some again tonight and tomorrow morning."

"Do we do the reading now?" she asked again as she sipped.

"Not yet. Tell me why you can't leave the house."

"I'm scared. I can't face people out there and I might have an accident. I don't want that. I don't want people in either. You are the first person to come in for almost four months." she rambled on for a while, and I sat and listened.

"I can't get out of bed sometimes. I can't breathe and..."

"Sounds like panic attacks. I know how you feel. Look, I've brought you a piece of Rose Quartz. This a powerful crystal for love and calm and peace. Put it by your bed. When you wake up hold it for a few moments and feel the calming vibrations."



"You mean a piece of rock will stop me panicking?"

"No, it won't stop it happening but it will help you to overcome your panic attacks. For the daytime put this amethyst bracelet on. This will help focus your mind more during the day."

She slipped it on her wrist.

"It's beautiful, look at all the different shades of purple."

Already she was beginning to focus more on reality.

"So can we do the reading now?"

"Well, I'm not going to do a reading for you today. Your spirit is fractured and your brain is clogged and all over the place, so a reading today is not likely to help. What I want you to do," I delved into my tool box again, "is to light this tealight and focus on the flame. It has cloves and lavender in it for calming and some self-love. This is what you need right now. Let me show you some breathing exercises."



We breathed in the heady scent of the herbal tisane and the sage smudger which was still infusing house with its positive energy. After a few moments, she was able to tell me all her troubles. It was a complex mix of recent events dragging up past hurt. Her panic about leaving the house was based on a past event and recent negative events had taken over her psyche.

"I feel better already, well just a bit." She admitted. "What else can you do? I feel like I just can't go on."

"Nothing I am doing today will bring you a quick fix. This situation has been coming on for a long time and nobody can change that in a few hours. Take it slowly and surely."

She looked quite crestfallen.

"Little steps each day are better and more secure so you don't slip back into the black moods. A little more light day by day. Let's do it slowly and carefully."

Once more I delved into my tool box.

"I have brought you an elder wand which I cut last year and dried under the full moon and also the sun as the weather was fabulous for weeks. I have rubbed herbal oils in and it has been blessed in my Circle." I reached up and placed it above her front porch door.

"This will protect you whenever you pass underneath and also protect anyone who enters."

"I worry about a demon in my bedroom too. I get these awful nightmares. I know it's silly... I think I must be going mad..."

"It most certainly is not silly, and you are not going mad." I remonstrated with her. "These thoughts are your psyche trying to sort things out and not quite getting there. The nightmares are because you are not able to think straight. It really is not silly at all. What might help as well is if you take the elder wand

up and put it over your bedroom door at night. Your Rose Quartz will help and lighting this candle and doing some deep breathing will bring you a little bit more calm each day. Little by little and inch by inch. I tell you in a couple of weeks you will feel so much stronger and then I will do you a reading. That's a promise."

For the final time my tool box come into play. I drew out a hip flask.

"Oh goody some alcohol." she clapped her hands.

"No, indeed it is not, and I suggest that is the last thing you need right now." I grinned remembering the great parties we had had in the past.

"This is sacred well water. You can sip it or you can put a splash of it on your pillow at night or even a drop on your forehead before you sleep. It up to you want you do with it. It is the purest of waters, and I collected it two days ago so it is very fresh. Keep it in the fridge, it is great stone cold."

I texted her on Monday evening. I told her I could come on Tuesday as originally planned to go over some of these rituals with her again.

"Do you know I am so much better, not totally but I can feel it working. I've held the rose quartz so much and worn my bracelet, I've done your breathing with the candle and I am happy for us to meet up in a fortnight."

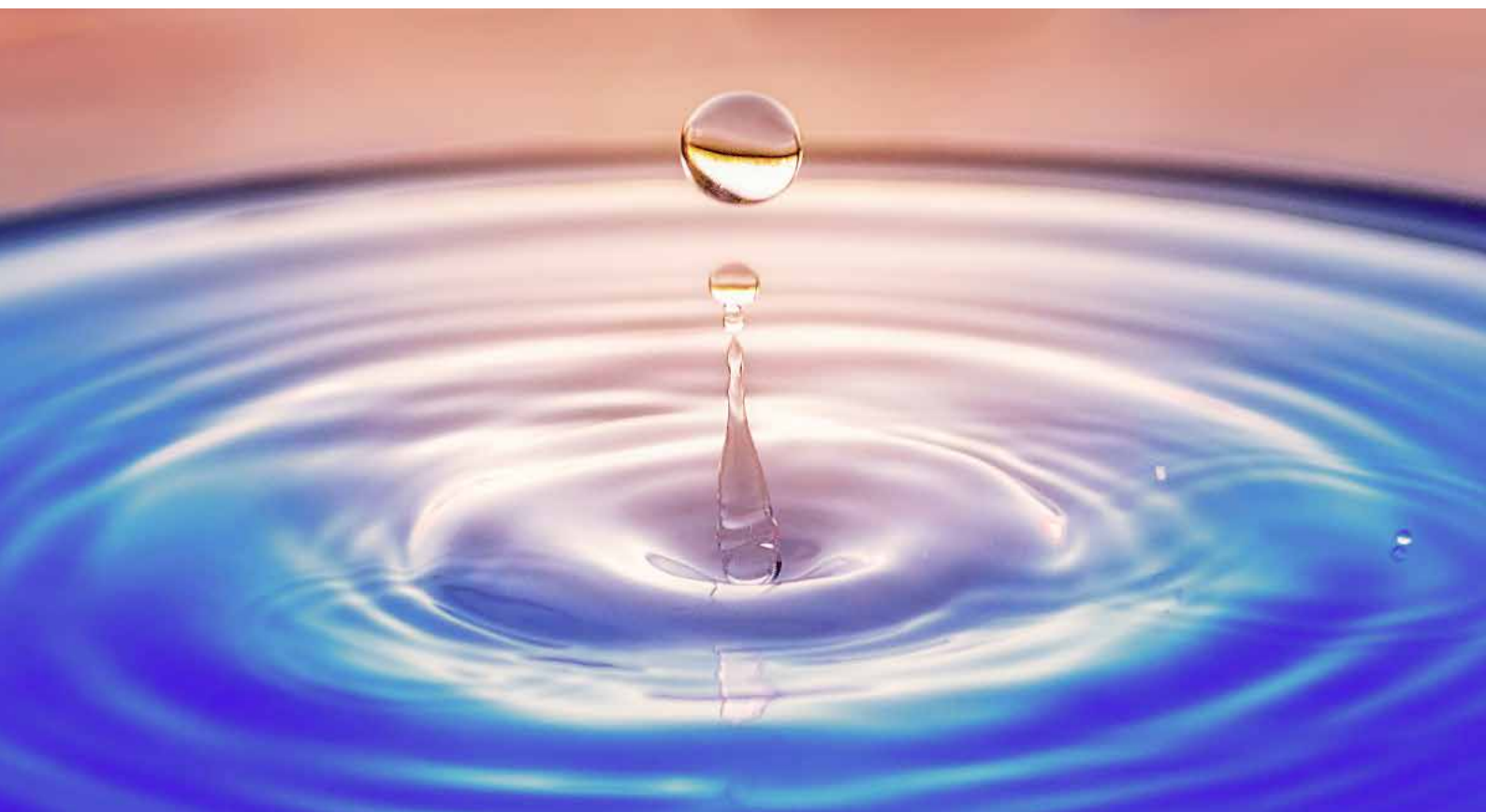
A few days later, she responded to a photo of me on my daughters Facebook, she commented how much she respected what I do and how much better she felt.

Magic is not a quick fix. My 'potion' was not a fixer, my 'rituals' were not the full answer, any 'spells' would not mend her, my wand was not one to be waved about and the make the problem disappear and I am no magician, but all the little things together with the love and guidance of a good mate, were what was required, and she continues to improve day by day. Hallelujah.

Blessed Be.

The Old Crone

theoldcrone5@gmail.com



How To Harness the Power of Amulets

As every witch knows, the power of symbolism is an undeniable tenet of witchcraft and magick. We use it in almost every element of our craft - every time we cast a circle or scribe a pentagram, in every coloured candle or magickal herb, in the crafting of sigils and use of the elements.

I love to harness the power of symbols, because they are useful in literally every facet of this path. They can be used to set intentions and keep them close at hand, to cast and seal spells, and to bring us into communion with deities and elements. I can almost guarantee that, like me, you use the power of symbols and signs to enhance the power of your magick.

In my own craft I rely heavily on symbols and signs to give weight to my spellcasting. But beyond spellwork, I have found that there is immense power in the use of amulets - the practice of crafting signs and symbols into jewellery (usually a pendant or ring) with a specific intention for the wearer. This is a practice that has been used in countless cultures and traditions across time. Understanding the power of amulet work can enhance your practice beyond the confines of your altar.

From the ancient Egyptians to modern-day Thai Buddhists, and, of course, within paganism, amulets have long been used to bless the wearer with the intentions they're imbued with. The most common use is protection and the symbology used to cast a protection spell differs depending on the tradition. Within witchcraft and wicca, there are several common symbols that you can wear to call in certain intentions - intentions that will stay with you as you adorn yourself with your amulet.

In my work as an esoteric jeweller, I work heavily with these symbols, always with the intention of blessing the wearer with protection and power, alongside any other specific intentions that each symbol speaks to. I've experienced first-hand the potency of amulet work and I want others to experience that same magick when they wear my amulets.

Whether you're a hereditary witch, or are just entering the craft, you'll be familiar with the pentacle (either upright or inverted) as a symbol of protection. Wearing a pentacle or pentagram is not only an identifier of your craft, but can be a powerful amulet to protect you as you move about your day. Wearing this symbol as a pentagram will offer you protection and wholeness, as symbolised by each point of the five-pointed star representing one of the five elements - Earth, Air, Fire, Water, and Spirit.

Personally, I feel very drawn to using the Elements individually, and currently I wear an amulet depicting the alchemical symbol for Earth. This amulet both keeps me grounded and supports growth. It is connected to financial prosperity, security, loyalty, business, responsibility, and physical health and since wearing this amulet I have seen growth in all of those areas, especially loyalty,





responsibility and business.

Other elemental amulets are powerful in calling in their respective characteristics. Wearing a fire amulet will enhance the realms of passion, intensity, desire, imagination, possibilities, and intuition. Air, as an element, governs the realm of the mind and all mental activity. It is associated with imagination, thought, ideas, intellect, and discovery. Water is the element of love and emotions and is associated with dreams and the subconscious. If you need support or blessings in those realms, wear a water amulet.

I also wear a several lunulae - amulets in the shape of a crescent moon. Traditionally these were worn by Roman girls as a means of protection against evil spirits. Alongside their protective nature, I personally find them to bring me into stronger communion with the Moon and her cycles, bringing me time and time again into connection with the cyclical rhythm of all things. These amulets are imbued with intentions of protection, patience, and peace.

Another ancient pagan symbol is the triquetra, and this is a symbol I use heavily in my amulet work. It has long been used as a symbol of the three aspects of the human experience - Body, Mind, and Spirit, as well as representing the Maiden, Mother and Crone. As each point of the triquetra stands both alone and in unity, it will remind you that each aspect of your Self is inextricably connected with the other two. If one is neglected, all falter. Wearing the triquetra as an amulet is powerful in maintaining balance and peace.

After creating these amulets, I cast a blessing spell, ritually blessing each piece, and calling in the help of the elements if appropriate, in order to seal the spell. To fully activate the power of these amulets, you should also set them in tune with your personal intentions. You can use herbs, elements, directions, candlework, astrology, or any other magical practice that you use in your personal craft.

Traditionally, amulets should be crafted according to astrologically auspicious days, and if astrology is a strong part of your practice, you can recreate the crafting of the amulet by tracing over its symbol with your wand or athame on a day and hour that aligns with your intention.

Once you have your amulet and have consecrated it with your intentions, you can wear it to call in exactly what you need. From time to time, place your hand on the amulet and connect deeply and intentionally with its purpose. You'll find that the things you desire are drawn easily and abundantly towards you.

Amulet work is a powerful way to constantly be walking in your craft, one that has been used by practitioners of magick across the vastness of time, throughout so many different traditions. Wearing an amulet is an excellent way to continue performing magick, even when you're not at your altar.

Jazz Meyer is a curious witch, an explorer of what lies over the hedge, and an esoteric jeweller. Through her brand, Halfmoon Craft, she crafts amulets and jewellery pieces for magical folk from recycled sterling silver. Each piece is lovingly created by hand in her studio in Portugal, and is imbued with intention and magick. Her witchcraft practice is ever developing and draws on elemental magick, green magick, and hedge magick, as well as Celtic pagan tradition.

You can find her work through <http://instagram.com/halfmooncraft> or through her Etsy shop at <http://halfmooncraft.etsy.com>







Vera's Vessels

You may not have heard of me yet, but you soon will!

Meet Kate, creator of Vera's Vessels!

Vera's Vessels is a small business that is run from my home in the little, quaint small Welsh town of Pontypool.

During my education, I was told that I wasn't going to be successful in life and that I struggle with the English language too much. Turns out, I'm Dyslexic with a every high 'Prove you wrong' attitude. Fast forward 15 years and I've put myself though college and University just out of spite. While I have had long standing careers with a few mainstream companies. I've never felt true to myself. I always felt like I was in the wrong job no matter how much I was helping people.

Now, I'm a mother to a beautiful little girl. I want nothing more than for her to grow up knowing she can be her true self and not to be put down by others. And what better way than to be that role model for her.

The idea came to me after seeing similar items which are being done and sold in America and other countries. For several reasons, it would be difficult and, in some cases, not allowed within the UK due to our strict regulations. But I was keen to find a way. After over 6 months of planning, testing and signing off with every mundane enforcement, I launched on the on the perfect date; Summer Solstice 2021. The feedback and

success I have received has been overwhelming. I'm not just acquiring and retaining customers but I'm making new friends! Please don't be put off by some of the professional aspects. I have an open book policy, where anyone can reach out to me for anything. And my little girl truly does boss me about and picks out only the best of crystals that go in my freebie thank you bags.

Vera's Vessels is here to help those on their spiritual path or accommodate them with their needs.

The name came from my Welsh dresser, she is where I keep my tools and main altar. Although she is very much my go-to, like most spiritual homes, things have spread across the entire homestead. Therefore, Vera is my vessel to my own spiritual path.

I hand make and sell a lot of different products. From starter kits, altar products, tools and accessories to guide your path. I make handcrafted, tall glass soy wax Deity altar candles, each unique and personal for invocations from different deities. No one should be limited to the bog-standard, plain, small manufactured candles. Each of my Deity candles are 100% handmade per deity. No two are the same. For



example: The Morrigan is a rich Jasmine scented candle with a blend of Red and Black marble colour which is idiomatic to her. Due to her marbled colours, there is no duplication of colour patten. People have the option of just buying just the candle or with a complete offering set.

I've catered to everyone no matter if they are experienced or not. My offering sets come with a selection of offerings for that particular deity, as well as an information card and workings card (Invocations and additional information on other physical offerings). Perfect for a witch just starting her Deity journey, for I am not here to judge people's beliefs but to help them in any way I can.

There are many other items that I make and sell; including crystal tiaras with Kyanite crystals, glass offering bowls that's never seem to stay in stock - and soon will be able to allow my customers to buy herbs separately, with even more in the pipeline. As I have previously stated, Vera is only a few months old, and the stock list is still growing. Juggling life of raising a toddler, maintaining the house, and making sure it doesn't go up in flames when my partner cooks. I've some how managed to bring in success. My candles have already visited more countries than me, with returning customers from America and Australia as well.

So please, join me on my journey as I grow Vera's Vessels into a place where all paths are accepted and welcomed.



www.verasvessels.com
Fb – Vera's Vessels
Insta – Verasvessels
Tiktok – verasvessels





DOTS & BLOCKS



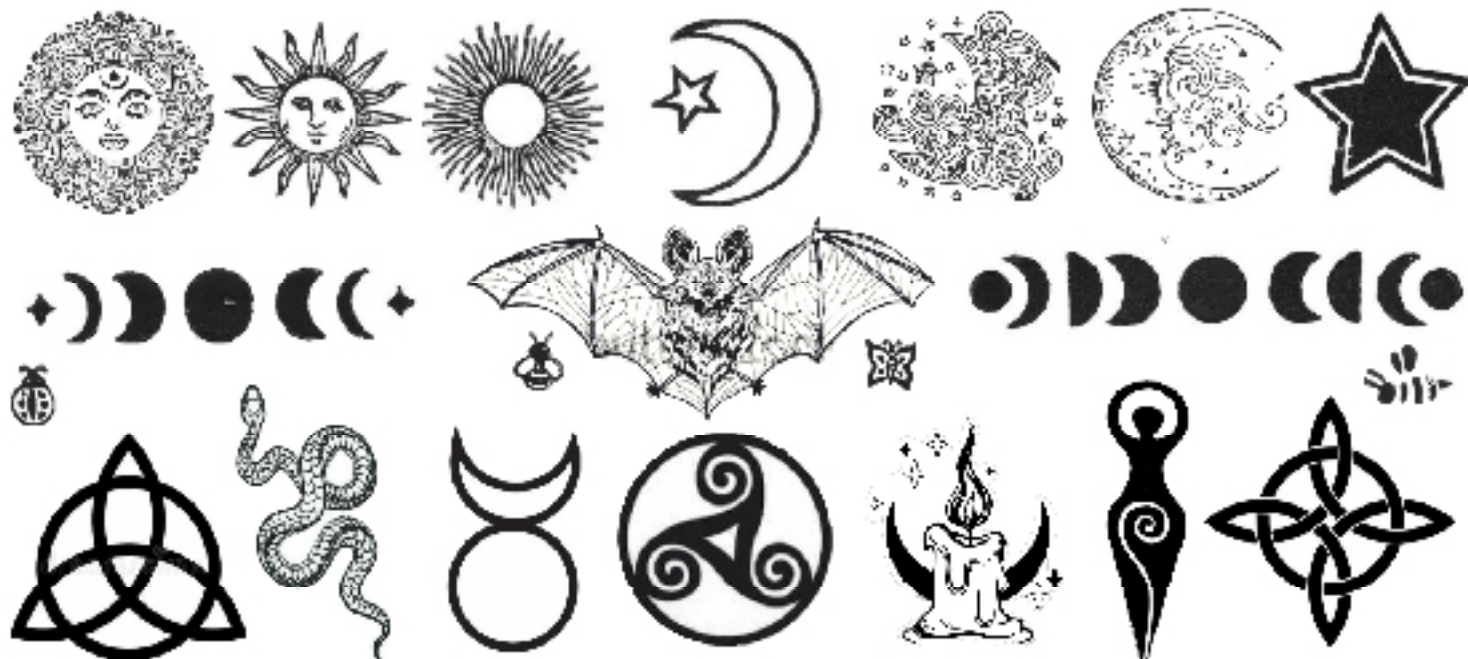
We specialise in hand printing fabrics using wooden printing blocks with fabric paints - everything we print on is natural fibre, washable & comes with a care tag. Created in our rural home, located within Durrington Walls Superhenge - part of the Stonehenge World Heritage Site.

We have hundreds of designs - just a few are shown here for reference. From sacred geometry to pagan & wiccan, from spirit animals to mythical creatures, plus Buddha's and Chakras - you're bound to find something perfect for you ior a loved one.

Our range of artisan fabrics includes shawls, crystal grid cloths, aprons, tea towels, cushion covers, tablecloths, tote bags and throws.

You can view our catalogue online via https://linktr.ee/Dots_Blocks

Contact Karen to discuss the possibilities, call 07856 257623 or email hello@dotsandblocks.co.uk





MONTHLY CRYSTAL GUIDE
CHERYL BECKWORTH
GROUNDED GODDESS

Calcite is such a gorgeous crystal to work with and comes in so many different varieties and shades - the options are incredible ranging from Clear, Green, Blue, Honey, Chocolate, Manganese honestly it feels like the list is endless!

Calcite is a carbonate compound and has a glassy type appearance. All types of Calcites are perfect for cleansing negative energy and aid personal and spiritual growth. A positive crystal to have in your collection!

It is also an amplifier of energy which makes this a fabulous stone to use if you carry out distance healing methods, but each colour also has its own unique addition properties.

So let's look at some of these in more detail.

Enjoy growing and working with your calcite collection, there are so many more than I haven't covered too!

Would love to know which is your favourite to work with,

Much love as always,

Cheryl xxx

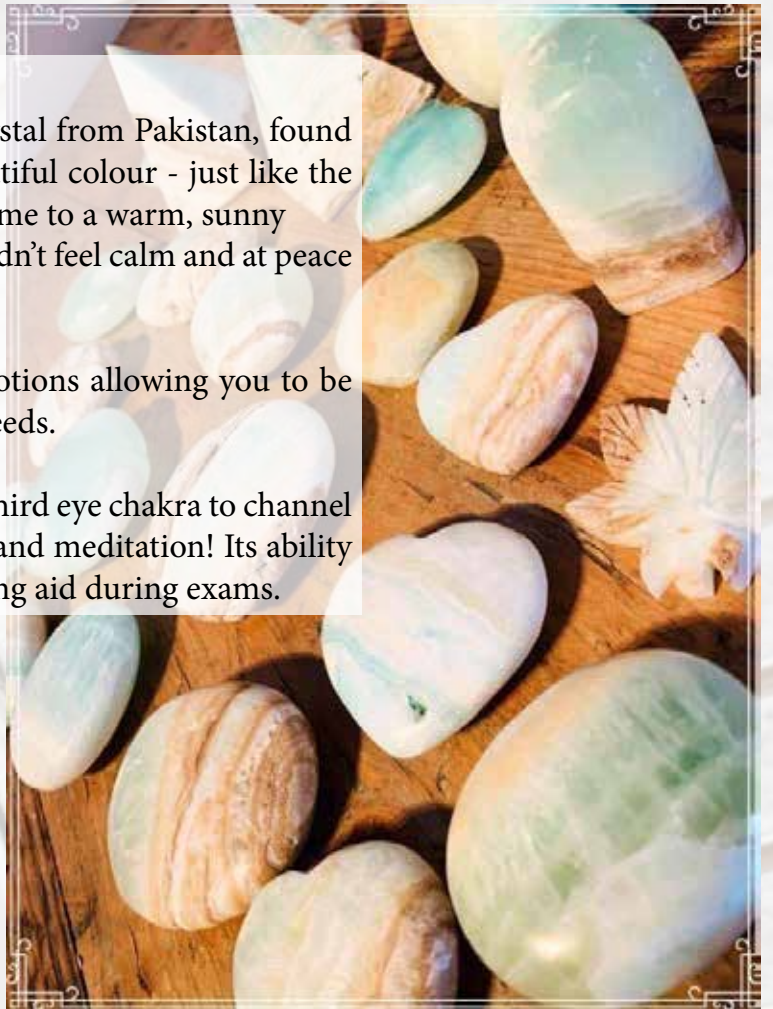
CALCITE

CARIBBEAN CALCITE

Caribbean Calcite is a recently discovered Crystal from Pakistan, found in 2019 and much sought after due to its beautiful colour - just like the Caribbean sea. When I hold this stone it takes me to a warm, sunny happy space in my mind. Honestly wouldn't feel calm and at peace lay on a hot beach in the Caribbean!

It has a wonderful calming effect on your emotions allowing you to be more focused and sensitive to other people's needs.

Caribbean calcite works with your crown and third eye chakra to channel your psychic abilities. Perfect for dream work and meditation! Its ability to help you focus also makes it a perfect learning aid during exams.



BLUE CALCITE

It will help to ease nervous energies and anxieties, so it is ideal to take with you into a situation you know may be stressful such as an interview or test. Or just to carry or have near you if you are suffering with anxiety.

This stone works with your third eye chakra, which means it works by helping enhance intuition, clairvoyance and deepen your psychic development. Place a piece in the middle of your forehead or hold when you are meditating and asking for answers.



MANGANO CALCITE

Mangano calcite is a pale, soft pink colour. It is a gentle crystal that helps to heal the heart chakra. It helps you move forward from past hurt, difficult relationships and trauma. Helps to promote an overall feeling of inner peace and encourages self love.

This beautiful version of calcite will help bring joy into your life by instilling compassion and forgiveness within you, forgiveness for yourself, those around you and those from your past. It's sweet energy helps you to move on from trauma and grief, helping you to let go of the fear and trust yourself again.



ROSE CALCITE

Rose calcite is another wonderful crystal to work with the heart chakra. It has a gentle energy vibration that helps to heal heartache, promote self-love and opens your heart to receive loving energy.

Rose calcite brings peace and serenity to emotions by blocking out negative influences. It encourages the communication between your heart and your mind to make better decisions and increase positive thinking.



PEACH CALCITE

It's sunny composition will help bring joy into your life! It also works closely with the sacral chakra point, which is associated with our relationships, our expression of sexuality and sensual pleasure. If your need a pick me up in that area this is a great stone to keep in the bedroom. It will increase that fire in your belly, passion and creativity so I like to have with me when working on new projects in my business or when painting or crafting.



CHOCOLATE CALCITE

Chocolate calcite encourages you to follow your heart's desires and manifest your wishes in life. Working with this crystal will push you to follow opportunities that arise and promote prosperity.

A useful crystal to use in personal growth it increases hope to move forward with projects confidently and bring peace to past memories.

LEMON CALCITE

Lemon calcite has the most joyful effect and is full of positive energy! It works well with the solar plexus to bring confidence to confront issues, increasing your focus and determination to reach those goals!

Lemon calcite makes a perfect learning aid during studies or to hold during meditation to take a look deeper within. A crystal that helps you to recognise your true needs and gives you the confidence to move forward positively.

It's like bottled up sunshine, always lifts my energy, mood and makes me smile- the perfect crystal to lift you up!



BUILD YOURSELF A CONFIDENCE ALTAR

WHAT IS AN ALTAR?

Altars are usually thought of as a surface or area upon which offerings are made to someone in the spirit/immortal world. Think about the church with the holy communion bread and wine, think about the Dia de los Muertos altars with photos of loved ones who have passed on, flowers and other offerings.

Why do these focus areas have to be solely for those within the ether?

In this article, I am going to talk you through building an altar for yourself to help you build self-confidence. Honoring ourselves does not need to be driven by arrogance but can boost the ego. Our ego is important when we are nurturing self-confidence.

Ingredients

PAPER AND A PEN

To write positive affirmations about yourself on.

AN EMPTY JAR/ A POUCH OR SMALL BAG

To put your small ingredients in.

ROSE QUARTZ

The stone of unconditional love and acceptance.

(This can be small for your jar/pouch, large to put on your altar space or both.)

BLACK TOURMALINE/OBSIDIAN OR SIMILAR

This stone has strong protective qualities and helps draw negativity away from you.

This can be small for your jar/pouch, large to put on your altar space or both

SUGAR

To remind you to be sweet tongued to both yourself and others.

SALT (IDEALLY PINK HIMALAYAN)

For gentle protection of your thoughts.

CINNAMON

To bring you more warming feelings about yourself.

A CANDLE (IDEALLY PINK, YELLOW OR ORANGE)

To burn on your altar and assist with focus.

Pink for the inner part of the heart chakra, yellow or orange for the solar plexus and self-identity.

SOMETHING HEART SHAPED

To bring more love for yourself into your life.

ROSE PETALS, LAVENDER OR HIBISCUS

To remind you to be soft and gentle with yourself. (They also smell nice.)

PEPPERMINT OR ROSEMARY OIL

To anoint your ingredients with.

SUNFLOWER SEEDS

To bring sunshine and happiness into your life.

(Little Leo variety if you want to plant indoors)

Fairy Bec
Witch Writer

Method:

- 1) Find a quiet space to yourself or bring a group of friends together to create the pouches/jars together.
- 2) Make yourself a warm drink to have during the process.
- 3) Start by thinking about all the things you are good at - if you are in a group, it is helpful to tell each other what you think each person is good at. Write them down on the pieces of paper. As you write them, look at them, think about them then fold them up and put them in your pouch or jar.
- 4) Pop the rest of the small ingredients methodically into your bag while thinking about/talking about what you know you are good at, what your best qualities are and the level of confidence you would like to build. Visualise yourself doing the things you don't have the confidence to do right now whilst you are building your jar/pouch. (If you are doing this in a group, take your jar/pouch home to create your altar).
- 5) Place your jar or pouch on a surface with the larger ingredients and candle next to it/around it creating your altar space. Ideally it will be in a place that you see every day.
- 6) You can even keep adding to the jar/pouch after the ritual until you are satisfied/it is full of positive things about yourself.

If you are struggling to source the actual ingredients, you can have pictures of them or close alternatives. It is the intent that is the most important thing. You could even create a vision board with the ingredients and add a photo/s of yourself in moments that made you proud of yourself.

If you want to go bold with your personal altar, get a photo or collection of photos you like of yourself and display them with the ingredients above. You can also buy yourself some flowers or a plant to put on the altar.

For at least seven days, I would like you to pick up your jar or pouch. If it rattles, shake it. If it smells good, sniff it. If it looks good, meditate on the shapes and colours. If you want to read the affirmations, read them. If you want to add more of any of the ingredients, do it! Light the candle and take a couple of minutes remembering all the lovely thoughts and feelings you poured into the jar. Please remember not to leave a lit candle unattended.

When you have finished with your affirmations, you can plant the entire contents and wait for your sunflowers to emerge. Planting is best done between February and May. If you have used a jar, this can be washed out and re-used after scooping the ingredients out. Many pouches can be planted directly. For example, if you have a hessian pouch, it is biodegradable. You might want to source this before you start.

Good luck and may your heart swell for yourself,
Fairy Bec x x x

Altars and Sacred Spaces

Sunday 7th November
Introduction: Different types of altar

Sunday 21st November
Pathworking Meditation

Zoom 3pm
£7 (Recording = £5)

Personal Energy & Breathing

Sunday 5th December
Energy Out
Yang

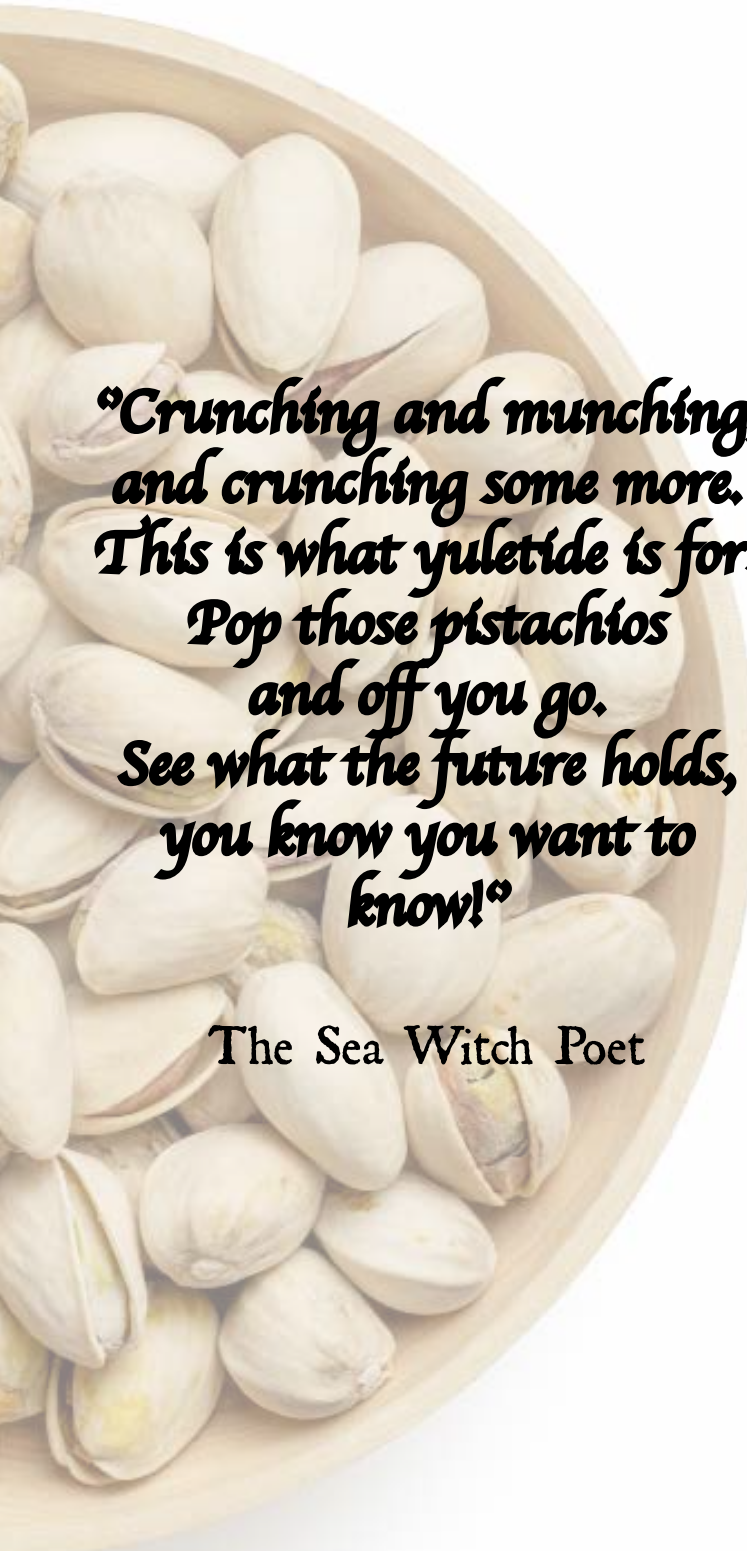
Sunday 19th December
Energy In
Yin

zoom 3pm
£7 (Recording = £5)

YES/NO PISTACHIO!

A YULE DIVINATION TECHNIQUE

Faith Barnes



*“Crunching and munching,
and crunching some more.
This is what yuletide is for!
Pop those pistachios
and off you go.
See what the future holds,
you know you want to
know!”*

The Sea Witch Poet

Eating pistachio nuts around Yuletide is not just for a festive treat. But did you know that the discarded pistachio nut shells hold a lot more magick than you think!

This hidden gem packs a powerful punch, in breaking curses, breaking spells, generosity, balancing, grounding and divination. Pistachio nuts are associated with the element of air and earth. And the planet Mercury and masculinity. As the pistachio shell protects and nurtures the nut inside, these make for powerful protection ingredients!

Pistachio nut shells do not break down quickly so you can keep a set for a while for whenever you need to do a reading. They are small and light, so you can do a reading on the move, just pop them in your bag or pocket and off you go! They are also easy to decorate and paint, if you would like a more unique set!

These dainty shells make a cheap, simple and easily accessible divination tool. And it just so happens you get to enjoy eating the pistachios beforehand, what a tasty bonus!

HOW TO DIVINE

Just like other divination tools, you throw the pistachio nuts to perform the divination reading I will explain two techniques. The first is the Yes / No Divination. And the second is the Number Circle technique. First let's take a look at the Yes / No Divination Technique:

Collect at least 3 pistachio nutshells. I personally like to use 5 pistachio shells to give me a more accurate reading but I'll use 3 shells as an example. Shake the pistachio shells in your hand, think or say out loud your question. Then release them onto a flat surface. Which way up they land, reveals your answer.

YES - When the curved shell lands upwards, like a dome. This indicates a yes.

NO - When the indented side of the pistachio shell lands up, like a bowl. This indicates a no.

Three pistachio nutshell combinations:

Face Up, Face Up, Face Down = YES

Face Up, Face Down, Face Down = NO

Face Down, Face Down, Face Down = HARD NO

Face Up, Face Up, Face Up = HARD YES

THE NUMBER CIRCLE TECHNIQUE

Mark out a chalk a circle on the ground (alternatively draw a circle on an A3 piece of paper). Next 'throw' the shells above the circle. If the shells land inside the circle, that means yes. If outside the circle then that's a no. Count how many land where. If more land inside the circle then the answer is yes, if more outside the answer is no. The number inside or outside the circle relates to the number of days, weeks and months.

For example: I ask will see my friend again, then throw the pistachio nutshells.

Three land inside the circle and two outside means: Yes, and three.

= Yes, I will see my friend again, in three days, weeks or months.

This technique can be helpful in getting some more information, but a more specific reading is usually still wanted.

COMBINED DIVINATION

The interesting thing about pistachio nutshells is that you can use a combination of divination techniques to help answer your question in more detail. You do this by combining both the Yes/ No Pistachio Divination Technique and the Number Circle Technique.

Here is an example of how to mix the two pistachio nutshell techniques:

Using Yes / No Pistachio Divination Technique ask:

Q: Will I get my dream job?

A: Yes

Using the Number Circle Technique:

Q: How long until I get my dream job?

A: Three for yes (within the circle)

This could be Three days, weeks or months.

Using the Yes No Pistachio Technique again:

Q: Will I get my dream job within three days?

A: No

Q: Will I get my dream job within three weeks?

A: Yes

As simple as that! Once you start getting used to reading pistachio nutshells and learning the techniques. You will be able to read the pistachio nutshells quickly and with more accuracy through combining these two techniques!

What will you ask the pistachio shells today?

Sparkles and Light, Faithy xx

Raven & Luna's Tarotscopes

Forecasts For Your Sun Sign

SAGITTARIUS

5 of Pentacles, Page of Pentacles, King of Pentacles

You could be feeling out of whack so you need to honour yourself. You may want to be generous but don't have the capacity so be choosy about who you spend your time, energy and money on. Pick the things or people who are most important to you instead of doing everything for everyone or you may end up skint, drained and overwhelmed. Spending time together is more important than "stuff" but even so you deserve your own time - you don't have to say yes to everything or go without for someone else.



CAPRICORN

Ace of Cups, 10 of Cups

There's a lot of love for you - a time for family and celebrations! You'll be feeling or forming close emotional connections. This may be a special "first" year for you - new home, relationship, engagement, marriage or baby OR a new romance is coming in that could grow to be long term. A wonderful time spent with people you don't see often.



PISCES

4 of Swords, 6 of Cups

You could have a lot going on so be more gentle with yourself. Find time to rest and recharge. You may spend a lot of your time with children or siblings - try to enjoy the month with a sense of child-like wonder. Work with your inner child through nostalgic activities or healing. Don't be pressured to do anything you don't feel up to - make your own traditions.

AQUARIUS

The Chariot, The Emperor

Where there's been stagnancy or instability there will be movement and order. You, or someone around you, may struggle with their health but will find the strength to pull through. Avoid taking on too much, finding the assertiveness to say no when people dump things on you or insist on depending on you for everything when you can't take on anything else.



ARIES

3 of Pentacles, The Fool

There may be a project, business or idea that you're trying to get off the ground. If you're stuck in the planning phase it could be that you're actually procrastinating - what are you waiting for?! You may need to seek the help of another to realise your goals or for support but choose that person wisely, you don't want anyone negative putting you off.

TAURUS

Queen of Wands, 4 of Cups

Dig into your inner wisdom to see beyond what's not in front of you, what you're unable or refusing to see and accept. This is something you probably know deep down but aren't admitting to yourself. What's bothering you? Don't make excuses, find the core of why you're dissatisfied, bored or unhappy to see if there's anything you can do about it.



GEMINI

Knight of Cups, 10 of Cups

There could be new love, someone to sweep you off your feet - it could grow into something more or an existing connection is getting an upgrade. An uplifting person or piece of news is likely to come your way, possibly someone you don't see much but who makes you feel better or correspondence about family, marriage or an engagement.



CANCER

8 of Swords, Justice

You may feel conflicted about a court case, contract or compensation. You feel there's nothing you can do but it's your own mindset that's getting in the way. Figure out what to do to assert your needs or tell your side so that it can work out in your favour. Things are working out better than you thought or hoped - believe and the evidence will appear.



LEO

6 of Cups, The Hanged Man

You could go back to a childhood home, visit family or be reminiscing which can bring both good and difficult memories - work with your inner child and heal. Something may not be happening as quickly as you want - look at it from a different angle or perspective (especially regarding a child or sibling) to remove stagnancy. New information may come about that makes you think differently about your past or someone in your life.



VIRGO

Queen of Cups, The Moon

This is likely going to be a difficult (mental) health month for you with illness, disrupted sleep and nightmares. You'll be feeling sensitive so guard yourself and your energy, using extra energetic protection and taking a step back when need be - especially around the Full Moon. Not all energy is yours, try not to absorb other people's problems or anxieties.

LIBRA

6 of Wands, 6 of Swords

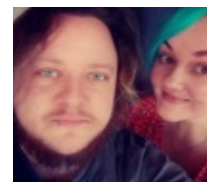
You may feel a bit too seen - everyone wants a piece of you! You may feel like there aren't enough hours in the day because you're just so busy. With everything that's going on you may just want to run away. That's not such a bad idea - if you can get away for a while it could give you the step back you've needed to recharge.



SCORPIO

10 of Swords, 5 of Cups

You may feel exhausted and fed up but it's you coming from a place of lack, loss and disappointment that's clouding your judgment or making you ill. It may also be a difficult anniversary of an event. Find a healthy emotional outlet and a way to express yourself so that it doesn't physically manifest. It may help you see to things in a more positive light.



Raven and Luna are High Priest and Priestess for Black Moon Cove.

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Pagan Poetry
& Fiction

Photo by Klaire Dawn Ader

An Excerpt from
Lie of the Land
Helen J.R. Bruce

Mike coaxed the old horse into a slow, rhythmic canter. The wind caught his brown curls, revealing faint streaks of grey, and the pale mane of the horse stirred with each stride. Smearred across the horizon, the sun marked the end of the day with all the colours it could muster. The sky briefly blazed fierce red and amber, before being obscured by the rising grey mist.

“There once was a farmer, riding home from Widecombe Fair,” Mike said to the horse, “it had been a good day, and he stopped at the pub for a drink.” His cheeks coloured, and he felt glad that he was, for now, alone. Drink had eased him through a life made of sharp fragments, but now his memories had returned, and he finally felt almost whole. He carefully pushed the memory of Elaine being carried into the ambulance to the back of his mind. “By the time the farmer was riding home, night had already fallen on the moor.” As if on cue, an owl hooted somewhere out in the shadows. “But he was not the only traveller that night-” Mike’s voice faltered, and his horse shied beneath him, tossing her head as she felt his limbs tense. Tell the story. Never let it tell you.

“The cries of hounds rang through the darkness, a chorus of hunger that gave teeth to the wind. The farmer heard them, and he kicked his horse to go faster.” As if she understood, Mike’s horse picked up speed. The night was cold and wild, but she felt suddenly young, and something compelled her to race over the moor. “But the hounds were soon upon him,” said Mike. Then he listened. A few moments seemed to stretch out impossibly long, filled only with the sound of thudding hooves, and the quiet trickle of ever shifting water. But it came. A single howl; rising up from the gorse. It was joined by others; yips and hollers of excitement rolling out from panting jaws.

“That’s it,” murmured Mike, “come for me, the story demands it.” He let go of the reins, freeing the mare to choose her own path. He raised his arms, palms upwards, and closed his eyes. All of his imagination, he poured into picturing the hounds, racing alongside him like ravenous shadows. Soon he could smell them; old death and damp bone. They were here.

Then his horse stumbled. She let out a squeal of terror as the ground fell away beneath her, the grass turning to a treacherous bog. Mike was thrown clear. He rolled, cursing, and began to crawl back towards the animal, testing the ground ahead with his hands. But there were snapping teeth everywhere, and the horse was screaming as black shapes leaped for its throat. This wasn’t the story. This wasn’t how it was meant to go at all!

Mike’s hand sank in front of him, and he quickly snatched it back. He couldn’t get any closer without being sucked down himself, although the mire was even stopping the lithe hounds. For now. The horse thrashed helplessly, now shoulder deep in muddy water. “Shh,” he tried to reassure her, but his voice was drowned out by barking.

He felt Owain arrive before he saw him. The darkness grew thicker, and the hounds backed away with muzzles low to the ground. Against all his instincts, Mike closed his eyes again. Hold onto the story. It’s the only control you have. “There once was a farmer, riding home from Widecombe Fair,” he murmured quickly, “It had been a good day, and he stopped at the pub for a drink. By the time the farmer was riding home, night had already fallen on the moor. But he was not the only traveller that night. The cries of hounds rang through the darkness, a chorus of hunger that gave teeth to the wind. The farmer heard them, and he kicked his horse to go faster. But the hounds were soon upon him-” Mike drew a breath, the freezing air making his lungs ache,”-and so was their Master.”

A horse snorted behind him, sharp hooves tearing restlessly at the turf. Mike turned around very slowly. Owain was dressed all in black. A cloak billowed around him, and the first weak moonlight glinted off the spurs on his boots. His pale features were twisted into a sneer of disgust.

“Huntsman,” Mike hailed him, “give me some of your game.”

Owain reeled back, confusion widening his eyes. The air buzzed with the faint chatter of starlings, and the grip of the story grew tighter. There was something he should have done. Something terrible. His huge black horse snorted and snatched at the reins. Owain blinked, and for a moment Mike saw the Apprentice again; young, and very frightened.

“Gabriel needs you. He’s lost in the Divide,” Mike said quickly. Owain’s eyes rolled and his face tilted skyward. He looked like a grotesque puppet. “Have you seen Gemma?” Mike pressed.

Owain stared upwards, his mouth slightly open. Around him, the hounds slunk slowly back to his side, gathering like a pack of black storm clouds.

“Gemma,” Mike repeated, almost yelling now, “is she alive?” He pressed his hands to his ears as the air prickled with hundreds of high-pitched voices. A thousand years of folklore writhed in the air around them, waiting for a way in. Owain reached down into his saddlebag, expecting to feel cold flesh wrapped in cloth. He felt the blood on him; tiny, damp flecks cooled by the night air. There was the dark of a sparse room and a single, small cry that was easily silenced. Tears welled up and began to spill down his face, tracing trails of faint silver which glistened like spider silk. His fingers closed on nothing. The saddlebag was empty.

The chattering stopped abruptly. Owain turned to Mike with a speed that should have broken his neck. The Huntsman reached out and dropped nothing into the farmer’s outstretched hands.

“The story,” murmured Owain incredulously, “it can be changed.” He turned the horse with one hand, a triumphant smile curling up the corners of his lips. The hounds surged forward, Grim in the lead, their eager eyes leaving comet trails of blazing blue light. The night seethed with shapes and then, like frost after sunrise, they were gone.



Love Porter
Caroline Flynn

A dark porter
swirls around her mouth,
I can taste it on her lips,
And tongue.
She revels in an even darker coffee to awaken her light.
A slight insecure wariness,
shouldn't be mistaken for weakness.
Her powerful magic will,
crush you with only a glance.

There's a witchy persuasion about her.
She will tell you what to do,
what she wants,
without saying a word.

She has something to say,
and I ask her to tell me,
but she's not ready to reply.
In her time, I'll wait.
Wait for her to tell me,
her pain,
so I can take it as my own,
in hopes to relieve,
some of what I see,
within the depths of her soul,
through her eyes.

As a goddess of the sun,
she holds a secret sexiness within her,
that fuels the fire inside me.
You must be invited to the show,
and I'd pay top dollar,
just to hear her voice,
call my name,
and send shivers down my spine.

Let the fools,
think we're fools,
to fall so fast, and,
let us fall so hard,
together,
and at the same time,
That when we crash,
The world feels our wrath.

Concluding Congregation

Caroline Flynn

There's a new stain on an old carpet,
It had been in seemingly good condition,
Still, it was a specious spill,
which had been there long before it was detected.

The act of innocence; like the world and everyone in it
should have an obligation to bestow upon thee.
A not-so-sudden outburst of evident cruelty,
is only weakness disguised as strength.
Pathetic opinions.
Lack of truths.
Misleading lines left open...hanging;
proving to the priestesses that jealousy
boils Leviathan's blood
when the good fortune of others
casts a shadow on his very own ego.

How dare thee!
Debate, be denied.
Engage in one's own opinion; be disapproved of.
Extend a branch, be ignored.
Not conform, be cast out.

Written words on the wall;
petroglyphs showing how misery loves company.
A pessimist's dream in which he has drawn in
and acquired around him, building an army of insecurity
to feel powerful.

Backstabbing at its very best; betrayals, slander, and smears.
Each one of them, assumingly unbeknown to them;
victims, participants, visitors, players.
The beast complains and preaches his credo,
until the blind, no-mind-of-their-own followers
achieve disciple status in the beasts' eyes.

Sitting around a fare filled table juxtaposed the emptiness in the
room.

Cohabitation doesn't exclude.
Ringing of ears when you vacate the room
demonstrates unmistakable obviousness to keep company of
the oddballs, the outcasts, the loners
than share a piece of meat with a shrew;
Imprisoning their prey until winters' chill beckons a feeding.

Jerking and distorting your every move,
like a puppeteer, or cult leader.
Not enough care is given from outside the infernal circle to deter-
mine which.

Accusers of others playing a victim,
exert their own narcissistic power
to manipulate and guilt into doing their bidding.
Patterns of bad behaviors hide amongst the pack, allowing it, for
fear.

But for fear of what?



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