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WITCH Magazine

Welcome to the Samhain Special edition of WITCH magazine.

This month we have two full moons, and to celebrate we released a limited print edition of the magazine! We hope you enjoy it!



We also hope you enjoy the free gift – did you get the sticker set by artist and Witch contributor Michelle Rose Boxley, or the Limited Edition Lunarwick mini melt?

You will also find two pull out prints – Michelle kindly shared her illustration of Morgan, and Fae artist Julie Demiah Meacham shared Light in Darkness.

Thank you to everyone who has contributed to this issue, and pre ordered a copy. We are chuffed to bits to see Witch in print, and hope you are too!

As always, if you have something you would like to share with us, visit us at www.witchzine.co.uk or email witchzine.submissions@gmail.com

-Bekki, Editor of WITCH magazine

FEATURING

FULL MOON IN TAURUS

TARN & MOON

SAMHAIN FEATURES

NOVEMBER

TAROTSCOPES

WITCH PICKS

TAROT TALK

FIVE MINUTE FICTION

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WITCH

RESIDENCY WRITERS

ABBIE MEARNS

Abbie is an American witch living in the UK and following her own magical path influenced by her personal Germanic, Celtic, and Native American heritage. When she can, she enjoys bouncing around the the USA visiting family in various states and enjoying the vastly different magical flavours of each location. However she is usually found knitting or walking her dog in her home in Worcestershire.



CHERRY DOYLE

Cherry Doyle lives in Staffordshire and spends most of her spare time on



Cannock Chase. She has a BA in Creative Writing and is currently studying for an MFA in Poetry. She has a pamphlet, 'September', available from offaspress.co.uk

A G WORTHINGTON

A G Worthington is an eclectic writer of the weird and the whimsical. She is a Liverpool based short story writer, novelist and witch. Find her online @agworthing on Instagram and on her blog agworthing.tumblr.com/.



PORTLAND JONES

Portland Jones is long time pagan, writer, optimist and thrower of fancy dress parties. She used to think there would be time to sleep when she was dead. Six kids, Morris dancing, playing drums with a band, rituals, camping trips galore and working full time confirmed that sleep was a luxury she was denied. A stroke changed all that, but she still lives life to the full, with university, writing, and learning a new way of living, but now she does it with a lot more sleep.



<https://www.facebook.com/Portlandjonesauthor>

JESSICA O'SHEA

Hi! I'm Jessica, I am a poet from Liverpool U.K. I have been a practising eclectic Wiccan for around two years now. I write about anything and everything, from poetry to feminist



essays. I have an unruly obsession with words. Reading them, absorbing them and writing them is one of our sincerest forms of magic.

FAIRY BEC

Fairy Bec AKA Rebecca Edwards is a healer, wellness guide holistic health practitioner.



and
Bec

practices Reiki and brings Reiki energy into everything she does. Being Pagan and following the wheel of the year is very important to Bec as she travels her pathway through life. Bec often finds that people radiate towards her for help and advice, which she give with light and love . . . and a handful of crystals! Bec was given her first tarot set aged 14 and uses stones, cards and pendulums for her readings. Bec is always happy to swap a reading for a bottle of mead!

Facebook: Fairy Bec. Instagram: fairybecadventures. Website: www.rubek.co.uk

SOPHIE FLETCHER

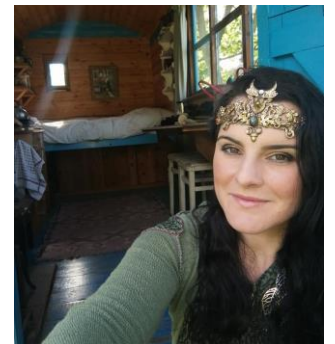
Most of my blog posts are drunken ramblings, my straight-talking opinions and theories on the world and my pagan life full of craziness. I never mean to offend anyone and my opinions are my own, and my own alone. Some are funny, some are sad, some will make your eyes roll. I am studying holistic medicine, and training to become a therapist, so I can work with others like myself to feel more 'Happy' and environmental.



I offer one to one anonymous talking sessions, I am far from a professional, but I'm a listening private ear. Enjoy.

HELEN J R BRUCE

Helen JR Bruce is an author and illustrator based in Somerset. She draws inspiration from a deep calling to bring the myths of the land back into everyday experience. Alongside writing for a number of magazines, including Indie Shaman, Touchstone and Gramarye, she is currently working on the second book in her folkloric fantasy trilogy. Blending myth and reality, she collides she apparent world and the realm of story in order to breath fresh life into folktales and provide ancient perspectives on our lives.



www.facebook.com/heatofthehunt Facebook Group: Dark Fae, Black Dogs & Wild Hunters

ENTER THE SEASON OF THE CRONE

BEKKI JO MILNER – WITCH EDITOR

September has come and gone, and October is upon us. Autumn has made itself known – colours are swiftly changing on the trees, the skies are grey, and a damp chill hangs in mists as well as on the ground. The shroud of Autumn has wrapped it's arms around us like a cool blanket.

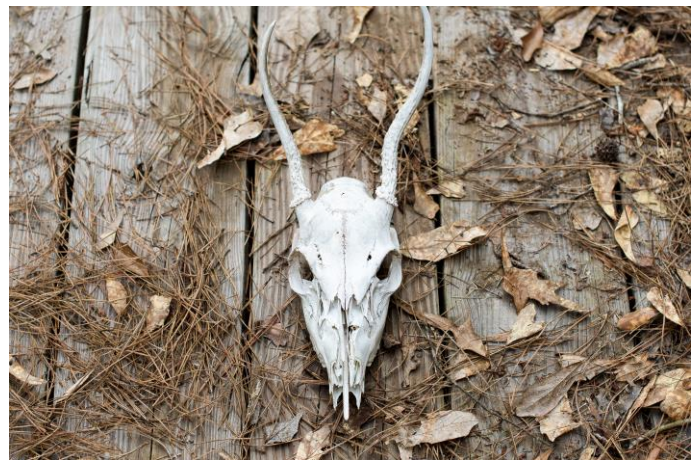
Moving towards Samhain, the magick grows stronger as the veil grows thinner. It is time to start preparing for the darker months, prepare for winter work when we can bunker down and bring our magick inwards. It is a time to plan, a time to learn. Whilst the wind rattles the windows and the ground is wet with rain, bring in the ritual teas, the books we neglected to read over summer, the practicing of divination and trying new spells – all good reasons to stay home and stay warm.

Make lists of what you want to achieve before winter sheds her dark mantle and makes way for Spring – reading lists, annual spells and rituals, preparation and replenishing of supplies. Make plans for the New Year at Samhain, cleanse and ready your sacred spaces, both inside and out.

Daily meditation and journaling will help guide you. Take the time in the days between now and October 31st to really dig deep in to your roots, in your darkness. Discover yourself, your passions, your purpose, and take note of what you need to dance forward in to the next turn of the wheel.

Nature has a lot to offer during this magickal time of year. The elements are waiting for us outside. The rush of the wind in your hair, the rain upon your face, cleansing and purifying as we step towards the shadow times. And those shorter, succinct moments when the sun does shine, warm on our face, holding autumn leaves in their golden glory. To walk in the woods is magick in its own right.

The miasma of leaf mould, the glorious rot we wish we could bottle. Carpets of pine needles and leaf matter whisper secrets underfoot. The death and decay of the wild wood as it returns to the earth, to be born again. We too can return to the earth to be born again in the spring.



The harvest is drawing to an end. Squirrels forage, busy about their hoard, fungi bloom from dark, damp spaces -there's still plenty out there to work in to your wild magick. Nuts and berries, mushrooms and toadstools, leaves and feathers all make worthy additions to an Autumn altar, spell or ritual. Seek out the gifts on the forest floor, amongst the trees, and thank nature for Her beauty.

Spirits wait within the shadows. Take time to speak with your ancestors as the veil grows thinner. Meditation, journeying, séance, scrying by mirror, water or flame. Tap in to your ancestral DNA and see what awaits you. As life burrows beneath the ground, burrow deep and discover what lies there, what nourishes you, and like the trees, decide which leaves you need to drop.

Reflect on the year, the highs and lows, happiness and sorrows, light and shadow. The darkness is not all pain and suffering, it hides lessons you can take forward to the light.

Like a seed, you can grow in the dark.



THE WITCH'S MOON

HONOURING THE SAMHAIN BLUE MOON

BY MICHELLE ROSE BOXLEY FOR SISTERS OF THE MOON

Dearest moonbeams, on Samhain itself - the 31st of October we welcome in the Full Moon in Taurus - the Hunter's Moon. Mama Moon will enter fullness at 2:49pm (gmt) and as this is our second full moon this month it is known as a blue moon. Samhain is a magical time of year where the veil between worlds thins and we can connect more deeply to our ancestors and honour our beloved dead. Samhain represents the death of the year and the full moon is the peak of the cycle so we can use these energies to think about all that we are grateful for since Samhain last year but also, all that we wish to release.

Make time to journal about all that has taken place since this time last year. What have you learnt? What has served you? What do you want to take with you into next year? And most importantly what do you want to let go of? Ask the dark goddesses to help you let go of things holding you back.

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. 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?

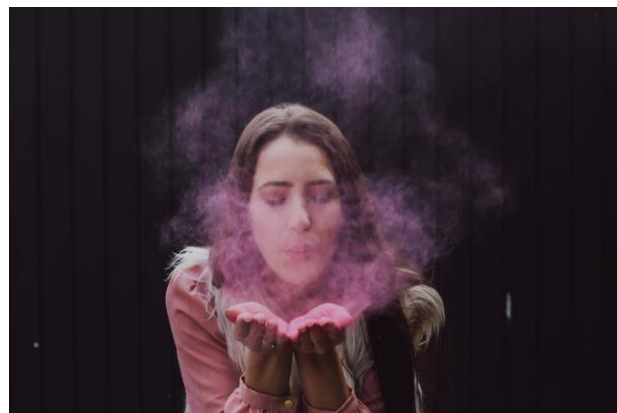
Balance between the Scorpio and Taurean energy would be this idea of being in the world but not of this world, the ability to stay connected to the truth of life - the cycles of life, death and rebirth whilst being grounded and present with our self and the people around us. There would be this peaceful, contented energy of enjoying the things of this life whilst having the ability to let them go when the time is right.

Moon in Taurus invites us to look at our attachment (the shadow side of Taurus) not an easy thing to look at as for humans, attachment is as natural as breathing. We can be attached to people, places, objects, experiences, other people's views of us and according to most spiritual teachings, attachment is the cause of most of our mental suffering. It's important to not misunderstand attachment for love, when we are striving for non-attachment it doesn't mean that we don't care about people, places and things, in fact it actually means we are able to love people more purely and enjoy things in a more pure way.

Attachment is a self-centred mind whereas love is a selfless mind. Attachment causes us pain because we are unable to enjoy things as they are, attachment wants things to last forever, it wants to bend things to it's will, and when things don't work out the way we wanted them to or people 'let us down' we get angry, disappointed or hurt. We can ask for the help of the powerful Scorpio energy and it's ability to comfortably sit with topics such as death and change to help us tune into the flow of life, understanding the impermanence of all things helps us to erode away our attachment.

*"He who binds to himself a joy,
Does the winged life destroy,
But he who kisses the joy as it flies
Lives in eternity's sun rise."*

- William Blake



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 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.



SAMHAIN FULL MOON BATH

Using salts to cleanse is always a good idea on and around full moons but especially important on Samhain when the veil is at its thinnest. Here is a cleansing full moon ritual bath recipe with Autumnal scents:

- Epsom salts
- Dead Sea Salts
- Dried Rosemary
- Dried rose petals
- 1 drop Juniper Essential oil
- 1 drop Rosemary essential oil
- 2 drops Orange essential oil

EXPRESS YOURSELF

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?



We really hope you have enjoyed this article and wish you a blessed full moon and blessed Samhain.

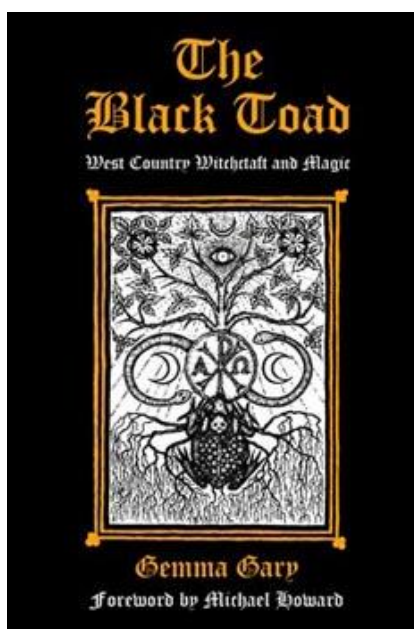
In two weeks' time, on Sunday 15th November we will have the New Moon in Scorpio. Join us online where we will be delving deeper into the themes associated with Scorpio.

Don't forget, you can join our Patreon membership site to join in with our New Moon and Full Moon sister circles.

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WITCH Picks

This month we're bringing you a selection of our recent favourite books...



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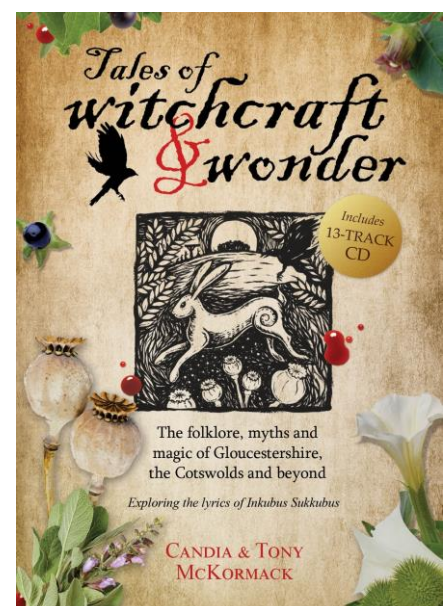
TALES OF WITCHCRAFT AND WONDER BY CANDIA AND TONY MCKORMACK

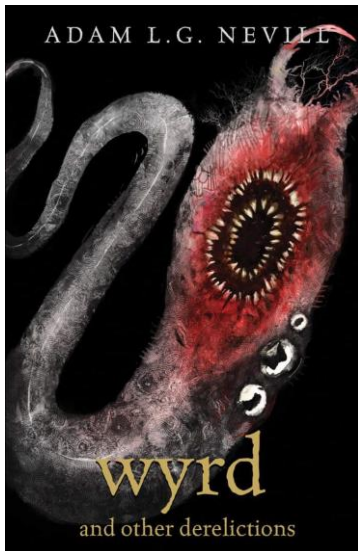
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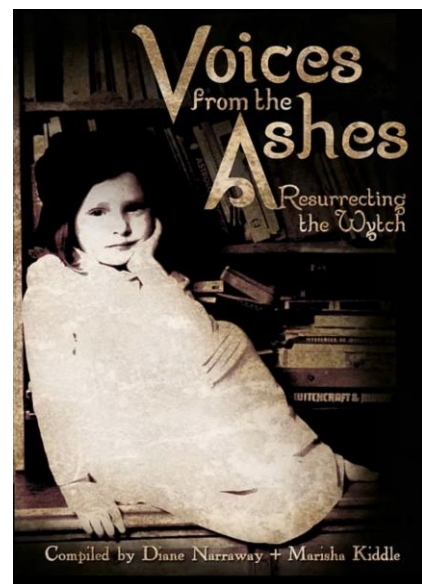
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MRS MULLIGAN'S MISCHIEF OF MAGPIES

BY RICHARD MCCLOSKEY-WALL

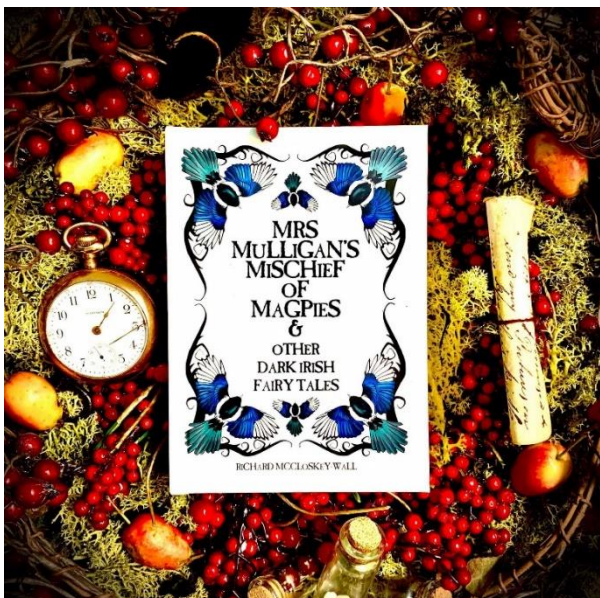
For almost as long as men have lived in Ireland, tales have been told of the Fae. They are passed from one generation to the next and tell of devilishly wicked creatures, far more likely to steal your children than grant them a wish.

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HONOURING THE WILD HUNT

HELEN JR BRUCE – WITCH RESIDENCY WRITER

ILLUSTRATOR AND AUTHOR OF THE 'HEAT OF THE HUNT' TRILOGY

FACEBOOK/HEATOFTHEHUNT

While I was celebrating the Autumn Equinox in Glastonbury, I began to reflect on my own practice and how much it has enriched my life. This is my favourite time of year; I love that golden autumnal light and the rich crops of fruit that fill hedgerows and forests. It is also a time to begin turning inwards and celebrate our bonds with the ancestors and the rich gift of life. For a long time, I've been meaning to share my experience of working with the Wild Hunt, especially as so many modern takes on this motif show it in a bad light. But this information does come with a warning; my journey with the Huntsman has been strange and frightening at times, and the Hunt is not a force to be taken lightly or casually. I'm not suggesting that anyone else need feel compelled to follow in my footsteps, but I have become aware that there are folk out there who may benefit from some personal insight. My take on this is just one experience in many, but within that may lie the missing piece that allows for the continuation of a journey of discovery. Here follows three ways in which I feel you can respectfully honour the Wild Hunt.



RECALL THE ANCESTORS

The Wild Hunt is tasked with gathering up any souls trapped on this plane, in the season around Samhain. Though their aspect may be frightening, they are performing a sacred duty and acting as psychopomp, or soul guide, to those lost on their way to the Otherworld. It is likely, given the prevalence of their appearance in both British and European folklore, that many of us have ancestors who believed the Wild Hunt would escort their transition. It is a deeply nourishing act to honour your bloodline and acknowledge ancestors who walked this world before you.

This is a practice which can be done in your own way, through whichever methods feel comfortable. You may be drawn to trace back your family tree, or even invest in a DNA test if you are called to engage with your heritage through this fascinating blueprint. It may be as simple as connecting with a family member in the spirit realm whom you knew well and loved. I regularly call in all of my positive ancestors and ask them to guide me through the many challenges of life, and there is a specific dish on my altar where I make offerings to them.

My offering of choice is mead, but during harvest season I may offer home baked bread or cakes I have made. One time, when I really needed some support, I left an offering of my favourite gin. This seemed to be accepted with pleasure, and I would suggest that you too are guided by gut instinct on what your ancestors may like to receive. In my understanding, this respect of the ancestors also extends to all spirits who have either passed over or linger, and I take care to show respect at all burial sites regardless of religion.

WASTE NOTHING OF LIFE

For some time now I have associated the Wild Hunt with the rune Raido, which is the rune symbolising the journey. Translating as either 'Ride ho!' or, literally, 'ride' or 'wagon' it reminds us that we are in constant movement. It's interesting that some modern, and Christian influenced, accounts of the Wild Hunt describe ghoulish riders who physically freeze their mortal victims to the spot with terror. Given the very nature of movement inherent to the hunt, or ride, this jars with me. The Huntsman occupies a liminal space; appearing around Samhain, at the turn of the year, with the ability to cross between the Otherworld and the apparent world in order to guide souls who have become lost on their journey. He is the complete opposite of being still, or 'frozen', and is tasked with maintaining balance by allowing spirit energy to flow onwards and have rest or rebirth within the cauldron of Annwn.

Raido is also the rune of 'right action', and this simple idea is of vital importance. It invites us to turn inwards, consult our own moral compass, and make decisions which carry us forward with integrity and a sense of adventure. For me, it is about finding the wonders on the roadside of our life journey. We are often so busy completing the many tasks that make up our day that we find ourselves impatient for time to pass, or we narrow our vision so much that we miss much of the beauty around us. I try to remind myself that this ride of life is fast

enough, without me turning off my senses and trying to make it go any quicker. The Wild Hunt is frightening because it is an intrusion of death onto life; but this is in fact one of its most vital acts. Each year, it parades death before us, rattling like leafless twigs on tightly locked windows, and we are reminded that it has not come for us yet. We still have time to visit that old friend, read the long admired book on our shelf or learn some skill we have envied in others.

So how do we waste nothing of life? This will, inevitably, be extremely personal and vary hugely between different folk. For myself, I try to feel the fear and do it anyway, and I apply this ethos to almost everything in life. If I am given an opportunity to learn anything new, I always take it with gratitude. When I am waiting in traffic, I look out the window and focus on the utter beauty of the sky, or the curve of a branch, or even the way the light catches the surface of the tarmac. Each of these are precious moments which will never be repeated again. Every day, I make the effort to do something memorable, whether it's baking, or writing, or even just looking at my daughters... really looking

at them. Equally, I acknowledge that life is a ride, and I try to understand that sometimes I must simply hold on tight and let go of the reins. The Wild Hunt reminds us that death awaits us, but also that life is as wild as we make it. Ride ho!



MAKE A CLEAN KILL

The ritual of the hunt was of core importance to our ancestors, and it remains as a folkloric motif which portrays the bravery and hardship we overcome for survival. The cycle of the hunt, as a symbol, brings learning through challenge, respect through meeting a noble adversary, and continued life through death. In no way am I likening this to killing for sport or trophies, as the Wild Hunt gather souls at Samhain, or sometimes in Welsh mythology also prize game for eating, such as the rare white stag. Some later Christian influenced myths portray the Wild Hunt as being led by the Devil and dragging mortals to their death, but I believe this is a corruption of



far earlier mythic systems. No, the Hunt is not kind or gentle, but it is renewal incarnate and as much needed as the seasons that cycle from life through decay and back into life.

In our distant tribal past, making a kill was the difference between living and eating or starving and dying. Many native cultures still retain the special ceremonies that accompany the killing of an animal, and thank the creature for its life and energy. Making a clean kill means that the animal, or source of sustenance, does not suffer. In this modern world, where many of us choose

not to eat meat, I still find this idea extremely relevant. For me, making a clean kill is about engaging directly with nature and taking no more than you need. Picking wild fruit, while leaving some for the birds and others, rather than buying it in a plastic container from a shop, is making a clean kill. Eating food mindfully and giving thanks for the sun, rain and soil that allowed it to grow is giving honour to the life that you have taken.

Considering meat specifically, I have felt powerfully called to engage with it in a certain way. For many years I was vegetarian, but over time it became clear that it was not aligning well with the needs of my body. When I began to eat meat again, I wanted to rethink my whole relationship with consuming an animal. Our ancestors would have eaten deer and wild boar in ceremony, in order to take on the strength and bravery of these animals, and once you begin thinking like this the life of the animal become very important. I don't want to eat animals that have suffered or lived short, unfulfilled lives.

When I began my journey working with the Wild Hunt, I was given pretty much an ultimatum: I was going to eat meat. I needed to show respect by learning and carrying out the whole process. So, very slowly, I learnt to gut and skin. I learnt recipes to make with wild meat, and I experimented with collecting fresh road kill. Finally, I began practising with a gun, until I could aim well and make a clean kill from a long way away. All of these stages I did with thanks, and I took care not to waste the animals that I took. With feathers I made brooches, dream catchers and hair pieces. I learnt to clean bones and made them into jewellery. I studied basic taxidermy and preserved feet and wings. I practised tanning hide and stretched and dried the skins. Each of these things brought me into a deeper respect for the life that we share this earth with, and the knowledge that we all dance round the same spiral.

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THE DOLMEN



**“Wytches are the Evolution of
a Sacred Breed persecuted
in pure ignorance by the
un-evolved”
Taloch**

MEET THE MAKER

TARN AND MOON

I grew up in a dark wood, with the moors surrounding me. I spent every spare moment in nature, building dens and playing with creatures. I was taken mushrooming with one Grandad and walked the Yorkshire dales with the other. Always outside, dirty with leafs in my hair and rosy cheeks, I only came in when I was starving or it was dark - the wildness of my childhood still runs through my veins. It was magic.

As an adult I studied animals, went on to live and work in the Irish countryside and then made a home back in North Yorkshire, working as a human health advisor.



Settling down with my lovely husband, we had two children. I bought hens, cats and a dog....but felt a little something was missing, so went back to college to study herbalism - grew a big garden full of veg and herbs and started making teas, tinctures, salves and elixirs. Always trying to feed my family herbal concoctions and natural remedies, spending hours hunting out new natural products, I realised that others might be interested in the same things as me. So I created Tarn & Moon as a home for these lovely things to live and be shared from.

TARN & MOON was born through a deep rooted love for the Earth, it's creatures and all the powerful, healing plant life on offer to us. We always keep these things in mind and stick to our ethos when choosing all of our products and producers. We also only work with people we feel a connection with and that share our ethos too.

We aim to capture the wildness of the Yorkshire Dales in all our natural offerings, with a sprinkle of folk lore and moorland hauntings woven in between. All our teas and tisanes are created with intention and love, we are always so very grateful to be able to share our wares with you all. We use recycled packaging, adorn with seasonal wild gifts and oracle cards, to tie all this magic together.

I hope you love all our offerings as much as I do - please get in touch anytime with any questions or thoughts. Until then, stay sacred, honour your beliefs and always follow your intuition, you are amazing!



Gem

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As if that isn't magickal enough, add a small squeeze of lemon and watch as



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APPROACHING SAMHAIN

A PATH WORKING MEDITATION

FAIRY BEC – WITCH RESIDENCY WRITER

You will need approximately forty-five minutes for this path working mediation.

I recommend that you find uninterrupted time, get yourself comfortable and have a snack, a drink and a notepad and pen handy for afterwards.

The following is written so that you pause between each bullet point. If you have music playing in the background, you may want to use it to punctuate your flow.

You can do this alone, as a couple or in a group. If you choose to do it as a group, you may not charge as the rights to the following are exclusively Fairy Bec's.

If you are on your own then you need to perform a 'conscious meditation' where you take yourself on the journey as you read.

OPENING SEQUENCE

Sitting or lying comfortably.

- Breathing normally and continue to relax.
- Start to notice how the breath enters and exits your body. Feel it around your teeth, across your tongue, across the roof of your mouth and into the back of your neck.
- Start to breathe deeper, visualising the breath filling your lungs right to the bottom and as you breathe out, empty your lungs fully but slowly.
- If you are not already, try to breathe in through your nose and out through your mouth.
- Now focus back on the journey of the breath from the external to the internal and back again.
- At this point, if your feet are on the floor, make sure they are fully connected. If you are lying down, become aware of where your body touches the floor.

- Imagine drawing energy up from the centre of the earth from where your body connects with the floor, filling you with a warm golden light.

- It fills your body like a warm comforting liquid from your toes, up your legs, into your pelvis, entering your torso, filling out your chest, down your arms to your fingertips and up your neck into your head space.
- This liquid fills every crevice inside your body.
- Then, it suddenly comes together in a ball in your chest, floats up above you and bursts into a beautiful rainbow.

NOW START THE JOURNEY

Keeping your eyes closed where possible.

- ❖ You are walking along a pathway. It is cold but you are wrapped up warmly and comfortably.
- ❖ You see the autumn leaves on the trees and on the ground, you marvel in their glorious colours.
- ❖ The smell of a bonfire fills your nose.
- ❖ A bird is singing the day out and you notice the sky darkening.
- ❖ In the distance, you see a flickering light. It is warm and welcoming. You walk towards it.
- ❖ The sun has now fully set, it is dark. You look into the sky and see a moon that is waning. It has just been full.
- ❖ As you approach the flickering light you realise that it is a lit pumpkin. You take a moment to admire the carving.
- ❖ You notice more pumpkins in a line leading you forwards and follow them.
- ❖ A little way along you notice an entrance to a cave. There are several pumpkins lit welcoming you in.
- ❖ You enter the cave and it is warm and inviting.

- ❖ You walk further into the cave and see a pool.
You go to the pool and take a drink.
- ❖ You also wash your hands and face in the pool.
It gives you a lovely refreshed feeling.
- ❖ You notice an apple next to the pool and you sit down to eat it.
- ❖ As you finish the apple, you look for somewhere to put the core. In the cave is a bin. You put the apple core in the bin and notice a broom.
- ❖ You pick up the broom and start to sweep the cave. You brush all the dust out the door. As you do so, you have a growing sense of release and calm.
- ❖ You start to feel tired and you notice that your own bed is somehow in the cave.
- ❖ You snuggle under the warm covers and settle down.
- ❖ As you are lying there, imagine that you have strings attached to your body. Each string is being pulled up by a helium balloon. You take out a cutting implement from under your pillow. Slowly you cut each string and watch the balloons float away one by one.
- ❖ You feel light and relaxed and you start to fall asleep in your bed.
- ❖ You start to wake up from your sleep and you can feel the warm sun of the new day on your face.
- ❖ Keep your eyes closed.

CLOSING SEQUENCE

- Breathing in through your nose and out through your mouth, start to notice how the breath enters and exits your body. Feel it around your teeth, across your tongue, across the roof of your mouth and into the back of your neck.
- Start to breathe deeper, visualising the breath filling your lungs right to the bottom and as you breathe out, empty your lungs fully but slowly.
- Your golden orb appears above you again. It comes back to your chest area, spins and bursts again. This time when it bursts, the rainbow fills inside you.
- The violet goes to your crown, the indigo goes to your head, the blue to your throat, the green to your heart, the yellow to your lungs, the orange to your belly and the red to your pelvic region.
- Wiggle your fingers and toes.
- Rub your hands together and place them over your eyes.
- Slowly separate the fingers and blink your eyes open.
- Slowly open your eyes and look around you.
- Take a yawn so you get a good amount of oxygen into your body and stretch where you feel you need to stretch.
- Now is your time to write and draw to keep hold of what you want to from your experience.

After closing down, highlight the following questions:

- 1) **What kind of bird was singing?**
- 2) **What shapes did you see in the pumpkins?**
- 3) **What colour was the apple?**
- 4) **What did you use to cut the strings?**
- 5) **How big were the balloons? What size were they?**

You/your group may want to write or draw so give time to answer the questions in notebooks. This reflection time can help them come to terms with any personal discoveries they have made whilst on the pathway.

These are personal answers that you/they might want to research the symbolic meanings of by themselves. You/they may also want to discuss – open a group discussion where the group volunteers answers if they wish.

I will be leading a 'Leaving Samhain' version of this online via Facebook. Have a look on my Fairy Bec page or search 'Samhain Pathworking Meditation' to join.

Blessed Be
Bec



THIS SAMHAIN NIGHT

BY PORTLAND JONES – WITCH RESIDENCY WRITER

Samhain used to cause me great inner conflict. It's the time of year I love most, and look forward to in a way that returns me to childhood, so excited for Christmas morning. I love the growing darkness, the cold that drives us indoors or into layers of winter woollies. I love the crispness as autumn first arrives, then the descent into dampness as rain and mist coat the trees in gem stones that sparkle in the faint morning sun, and slither to the ground with the slightest breath of wind.

Yet Samhain is a time when we honour the dead, remember those who have gone before. It should be a sobering time, a time for memories that cause pain or sadness. Which is why I was confused, feeling guilty about my inexcusable excitement. Over time, I have unpacked my mixed feelings; I understand how they can sit side by side.

The changes in the world are at their most dramatic at this time of year. In spring we see new growth, in summer we see the fullness that we harvest in autumn. These are all positive signs. Yet Samhain is the last of the harvests, the dark times are upon us. In our modern world with fridges and freezers, shops around every corner, and even outlets that deliver food to your door, we are unlikely to go hungry – at least not because there is simply no food to be had through a failed harvest. In times gone by, the winter held a real fear, the possibility that you wouldn't make it through to see spring. I don't think we will ever know that fear, not truly, but think back to the start of Covid, when panic buying led to shortages, when toilet rolls became everybody's daily worry. That was just a shallow echo of our ancestors' lives.

For me, Samhain is time for quest, a journey to explore and learn more about the changing world, to understand what we need to survive till spring, albeit that relates more to personal energy survival rather than physical. My excitement lies in the challenge of the quest, in the theatre and drama. The words that I quote here are those I wrote for last year's Samhain ritual, which I celebrated with many lovely people. It held special significance for me. My husband was in hospital seriously ill; we were losing hope for a happy ending. I saw him in the afternoon, swapping my usual visiting slot with the children, so

that I was able to lead on the ritual on the evening. I knew that this ritual would give me strength for what was to come. To prepare ourselves, we started with an attunement, a shared activity, a cup of hot mulled apple juice, delicious in the cold.

*Apple's immortality,
for a life that's long and blessed.
Cinnamon for power,
mental focus and success.
Ginger releases anger
bringing you contentment.
Nutmeg frees your mind to see
and aids in meditation
so raise your cup and drink it down.
Feel warmth spread through your body.
Leave your troubled world behind
so we are good and ready
to be present here
this Samhain night
when the veils are thin,
and in the darkness there is light.*

We start our quest with the charge to the ancestors, not 'just' the ancient ancestors – how could we ever say 'just' - but also those recently passed. The altar becomes a place for objects that bring memories to mind. Over the years, I have added a large silver brooch with an amber stone for my father – for many years, a jewellery polisher - a locket for my mother, and this year I will be adding a silver coin from his collection, for my husband, Brian, who passed last year, four days after Samhain. Much as I cherish the sweet memories, I know I will cry.

*The ancestors have trod the paths
our feet are treading now.
They've known the same
ecstatic joys,
wept with self-same sighs.
Heed their softly whispered words,
knowledge from the wise.
Hear it in the sighing of the trees,
blowing in the breeze.
In the patter of raindrops falling.
Hear it calling.*

Although it may seem solemn, sad, remembering the ancestors brings great comfort, joy, hope. These are our roots. This is where we came from. We exist because of them. They still exist because we remember them. They are part of us, carry on their journey with us. We build on their experience, their wisdom. My entity as people know me now may fade, but I will not end. The atoms, the stardust, from which I am made will go on to be part of something new, and my love will still burn, carried by the people that I care for. The fact that we are honouring our ancestors is a promise – that we will get through the dark times, as so many have before.

What else can we discover in the darkness, as we travel on our quest? All too often in the busy lives we lead, we use our eyes to read the world around us. Images everywhere tell us how to live, what to wear, if we are beautiful, if we can be loved. We don't have time to sit and listen, nor time for the hug of human touch. Yet in the absence of light, we can bring other senses into play.

*In the dark our eyes can't be our guide
even if they are open wide.*

I think this year I might see my once stilled conflicted feelings raise their head again. There will be no group ritual, not in person, courtesy of Covid 19. Our moot, Phoenix, will mark the occasion on line. It is wonderful to see how people can adapt to the most difficult situations and not just survive but flourish. I am excited. Yet this will be the first Samhain when I count my partner of over 40 years as one who has gone before. My quest this year is to listen to the earth, to listen to the ancestors, to forge a new life, by building on the old one. My promise to us both.

In the darkness, there is light.

*Use the senses that often sleep,
those that we usually keep
under lock and key,
held at bay
while our eyes reign king
in the light of day.*

What can you hear? What is hiding in the night? What can you feel? Can you feel the breeze of ancient words? Does your skin prickle as beings pass by? What is the scent of the night?

*Learn more of this earth
than what you can see.
Retake your place in nature
and simply be.
We light our world with myriad lights.
We fear the dark,
what it holds,
what it hides.
Yet light drives away
half of our world,
the darkness of renewal,
of rest and repose.
Let's embrace the darkness.
Learn to trust.
Trust each other and ourselves.
Know who we are without the glare of light
that forces us to hide our true nature.*

Walking in the darkness, towards the light of the fire in the ritual space, no matter where this quest takes place, how big the space is, how long the walk, how many people are with me, I feel layers of city life peel away from me. I am in touch with the wild side that lingers underneath the strata of society. I am ready for ritual, knowing that it will be intense and exhilarating, the energy will vibrate within me, liberate my essence.

CEMETERY GATES

A BRIEF INTRODUCTION TO CEMETERY MAGICK

BY STEPH ULPH

Cemeteries are some of the most mis-understood places on earth. Less so among craft and magick folk, although when it comes to practicing magick within a graveyard there is still very much a worry of negative connotations and possibly fear of the unknown. This mis-conception, though understandable in our society, in reality is very far from true. Cemeteries are hallowed ground, sacred spaces free from dogmatic intrusion, which offer in most cases distinct restful and respectful energies rarely found anywhere else on the earth plane. As well as totally accepting and non-judgmental energies that I personally have never experienced on any plane. Here is not the place one is assessed on their actions or how they handled their karma. This is a place of pure rest, for all. That said, as with any place or culture, each graveyard does have its own 'vibe', its own culmination of the energies of those who reside there, so naturally you will find some more welcoming than others!

Every cemetery has a 'Gatekeeper' or 'Guardian'. It is the Gatekeeper's responsibility to uphold and protect the integrity of the graveyard and its residents. Creepy or unnerving feelings picked up in a graveyard can sometimes be 'warding off' energies! Tuning in and showing that you are no threat will often alleviate this. Unfortunately, some do go the graveyard with dark intent and some simply do not realise how their workings could cause harm.

In ancient folklore it is said that the first human buried within the cemetery will be bound to the role of the Gatekeeper. However most who practice within cemeteries would agree that this is most often not the case, but rather the most appropriate soul from within the grounds or often a spiritual being, in some way called to duty. Whomever they may be, they work directly for the head caretaker – caretaker of all deceased human souls – death himself.



Before practicing any form of magick work within the cemetery it is customary and strongly advised to

introduce yourself. Be open with your intentions and show respect and honour to the Gatekeeper, who will be found towards the front of the cemetery occupying some form of physical structure – this may be a statue, gravestone, tree or very often the cemetery gates or entrance building.

Upon tuning in and sensing the Gatekeepers presence you can move toward allowing them an understanding of your intentions and hopefully gaining their permission and even assistance. Offerings are almost always welcomed (of course being conscious of any 'litter' you may be leaving behind, such as tealight casings). I have found that your own energies, if comprised of genuineness and openness to listening and learning are the most fundamental and among the most gratefully received of any offerings.

The Gatekeepers presence largely sets the tone of the graveyard, and as such they know well their occupants, therefore once communication is established you will know whether the work you hope to do is appropriate and welcomed at that particular cemetery. If it is not you may be able to gain insight as to why or at least as to where you could go. If it is you will likely be given some direction and aide to your work. Follow the Gatekeepers lead and use your intuition. Show respect and do not rush things.

As far as the actual magick work that can be done within the cemetery - there are various kinds of practice, from all manner of spellcasting, to requests of specific spirits assistance to the charging of tools and talismans. Mediumship can of course be carried out within the graveyard. What better place to connect to our ancestors? – at their physical home! Some people simply wish to connect with and/or gain deeper understanding of death and the underworld, which can be an extremely valuable step on any spiritual path. And some, most commonly known as ‘deathwalkers’ seek to assist souls in the process of crossing over. These are very brief descriptions to give a little insight that you may wish to explore further.

Most importantly for anyone considering commencing such works, whatever your practice, purpose or curiosity, showing your respects and really listening are absolutely essential in any cemetery work. It truly is a great honour to connect and communicate with the ancestors and to be shown trust and guidance from such noble spirits as the Gatekeepers.



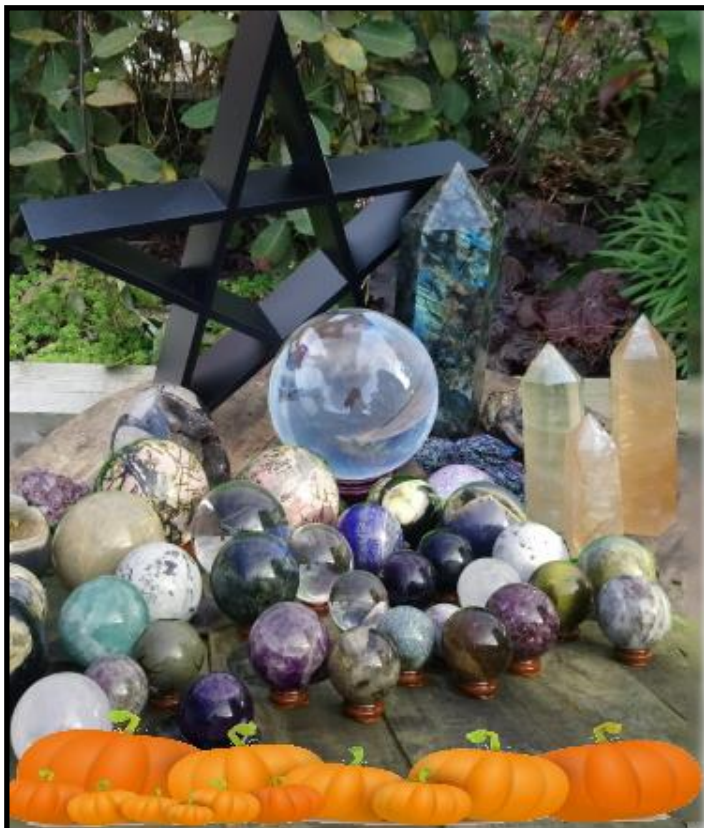
		
		
		

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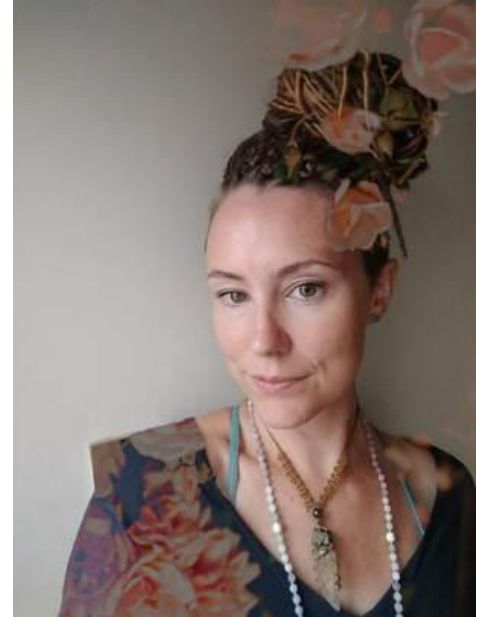
BY MICHELLE ROSE BOXLEY

Sisters of the Moon Online was founder and artist, Michelle is also a Yoga Teacher & Teacher Trainer, Holistic Therapist, Women's Circle Facilitator, Moon Mother® and Celtic Priestess.

Michelle has been working as a holistic practitioner for over 10 years and is passionate about connecting people to the rhythms and cycles of the seasons and the moon.

She combines her background in Tibetan Buddhism with her Celtic roots to create classes, workshops and events that help people connect to the magic that's within them and around them.

SEE MORE OF MICHELLE'S ART ON INSTAGRAM
@ILLUSTRATIONS.BY.CHELLE



LIGHT IN DARKNESS

BY JULIE DHEMIAH MEACHAM

My name is Julie Dhemiah Meacham, I am an Energy Artist based in the West Midlands. I provide a wide range of art prints in watercolour and acrylic's as well as specialising in channelled art. I have been painting and drawing since childhood, always wanting to capture the other worldly magick I could see, sense and feel around me.

As an artist I have tried to convey to my audience to look deep into the world the way i see it, if my audience can see, feel and touch the unfolding realities and realise that there are many other energies and other worlds around us, then my mission will be partially completed, if they can journey into my art then my mission is complete.

SEE MORE OF JULIE'S ART AND ACCESSORIES AT
WWW.ETSY.COM/UK/SHOP/RAGGLETAGGLEFAERIES AND WWW.DHEMIAH.COM





COOKING WITH MY ANCESTORS: A SCOUSE RECIPE

BY CHARLIE LORD

As the days are getting shorter and that chilly autumn weather is starting to settle in, I think we're all in the mood for some hearty, warming comfort food. This is my go-to at any time of year, but especially as we're celebrating the last harvest festival, what better way to mark the occasion than with a big bowl of scouse?

Wherever you're from, you'll probably have your own version of this recipe – but scouse, or “lob scouse”, is a type of stew that originated in Liverpool. There's no one exact recipe, no collectively-agreed method; traditionally it was made with whatever ingredients were to hand, most often mutton and potatoes, and now it seems like every family puts their own spin on it. This is my family's recipe, and I love to make it on Samhain as a way to connect with my ancestors and give thanks for the harvest all at once.



@sarahhilton95

There are any number of ways you can make this. My recipe is truly a labour of love, and takes four-five hours altogether, but if you want to save time then use diced meat instead of a whole joint. Add turnip; remove the leek; serve with some corn on the cob or pickled beetroot or just with fresh bread. I prefer to use beef over lamb, as it isn't as fatty, and even members of my own family disagree with that! I also like my scouse to be as mushy as possible, but if you prefer a bit more texture then don't cook it as long. The most important thing about scouse is that you make it your own.

Depending on how generous we're feeling, we get between 8 and 12 portions out of this recipe. It's just as good fresh as it is out of the freezer, so I love to make as much as possible.



INGREDIENTS

- 1 roasting joint of beef or lamb
- 2 bags of new potatoes
- 1 bag of carrots
- 3 onions
- 3-4 leeks
- As many vegetable stock cubes as you want
- Salt & pepper
- Dried thyme (optional)
- Gravy granules (optional)

METHOD

1. Wrap the joint in foil and place it into a pre-heated oven at 180°C/Gas Mark 4 for 1.5–2 hours
2. Meanwhile, roughly chop the vegetables and add to a pan. I normally end up with two deep saucepans on the go, to combine into the one later
3. Cover the veg with cold water, season generously, add stock cubes (I usually use at least 4 per pan) and bring to the boil, stirring occasionally
4. At this point if I'm feeling very productive I might make a fresh loaf of bread, but otherwise I like to

wander off and do some housework/cleansing while the most beautiful smells fill my home!

Photo by @sarahhilton95

5. Once the meat is ready to come out, cut it in half if you're using two pans, but otherwise dunk it whole into the pan
6. With the meat added, I tend to simmer everything for at least another two hours, ideally three – but do whatever works for you!
7. If you want a nice thick stew, you can crush the potatoes with a wooden spoon against the side of the pan for extra stodge. Either way, if you're using two pans you should be able to empty one into the other once it's all cooked down
8. With about half an hour to go, remove the meat from the pan and either shred it or cut it into chunks, whatever you prefer, before returning it to the broth
9. Once it's ready, remove from the heat and stir in gravy granules a spoonful at a time until you reach the desired thickness and colouring
10. For a traditional Scouse experience, serve with pickled beetroot and fresh bread. Enjoy!

Don't forget to infuse the scouse with your intent as you cook, and for an extra Samhain twist, why not set a place for your ancestors and offer them some of your meal?

PUMPKIN SOUP PERFECT FOR SAMHAIN

BY THE OLD CRONE

INGREDIENTS

- 750g of pumpkin flesh, cut into cubes
- 1 large onion, chopped
- 1 large potato, peeled and cubed
- 1-2 cloves of garlic, crushed
- 1 flat teaspoon of curry powder, mild or medium strength
- 1 bay leaf fresh or dried
- salt and pepper to taste
- 3-4 cups chicken or vegetable stock
- 1 tablespoon sunflower oil or similar
- Optional: pumpkin seeds, toasted

METHOD

- Place the pumpkin cubes and the bay leaf in some water and bring to the boil. Cook until nearly tender. Remove the bay leaf.
- Fry the chopped onion in the oil until transparent then add the crushed garlic, curry spice and stir well.
- Add the cooked pumpkin into the mixture and stir well. Add potato cubes, stock and salt and pepper, simmer gently until cooked.
- Place in a blender and whizz to a creamy consistency.
- Return to the pan and reheat gently to make sure it is hot. Sprinkle with some lightly toasted pumpkin seeds for extra crunch
- Serve immediately with crusty bread or rolls.

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QUESTIONABLE BACKGROUNDS

AN ANCESTRY DILEMMA AT SAMHAIN

BY ABBIE MEARNS – WITCH RESIDENCY WRITER

Families are tough. Even the concept is a hard one to pin down. Mainstream society's evolution past the phase of biological or marital family being a person's main source of human interaction on a day to day basis has allowed for the very definition of family to likewise evolve. Individual survival no longer largely depends on the relationships one has with immediate family. References to 'chosen families' and 'work families' have become commonplace in Europe and America. The reasons for this form an intricate web of modernity which is impossible to deconstruct and examine within the confines of one article. In any case, it is the result of this societal shift that is interesting to consider in relation to Samhain.

At this time of year many witches engage in ancestral work. In the Northern Hemisphere, the lush bounty of summer has been harvested, plant life is dying, and Earth's resources are retreating for the dark winter. Many witches (myself included) believe that during this portion of the annual cycle it is not only sunlight that is ebbing away, but also the Earth's very life force. This includes the natural veil between the living and the dead. It is therefore no mystery why humans have come to associate this time of death in the natural world with the idea of death in their personal lives. For witches, this can take many forms. Honouring specific family members who have died in the past year, past life regression, and/or seeking fellowship with family members who died long ago are just a few of the more common and obvious examples of practices undertaken in the days and weeks leading up to Samhain. But, taking the evolving concept of family into consideration, what does that look like to the modern witch?

While modernity has allowed the definition of family to expand beyond those to whom a person is biologically or legally related, the popularisation of personal genealogy has also enabled us to discover more traditional relations we may have been unaware of. However, the other side of that proverbial coin is the tendency for indigenous and foreign heritage to have already been whitewashed. While new biological and therefore potential magickal connections may be discovered, they may also be obscured by systematic ethnic erasure. Even more complex are the ancestral ties of those of us who have no biological relatives. No small

number of witches find themselves bereft of biological and/or legal family for countless reasons. So what do we do when genealogy projects yield more questions than answers, or when the only loved ones we have are those who from any other standpoint are merely friends? Is incorporating a cultural tradition other than the one that has been



biologically assigned, or making informed guesses at engaging biological ancestors of different ethnicities, cultural appropriation? Or is it a sincere and acceptable way to engage ancestors we never had the chance to meet in life? Examples of each of these scenarios could be a Korean child developing a connection to Celtic witchcraft traditions due to having been adopted by white British parents, or a Black American using an authentic sugar skull in an altar arrangement to acknowledge a previously unknown Mexican great-grandparent.

I have felt since childhood that my inclination toward the magickal is, at least in part, genetic. This implies nothing about my abilities or the validity of my claim on the title of witch, it simply is my individual background. That being the case, I am fortunate in that I have a reasonable knowledge of my German and Irish American cultural heritage and the corresponding traditions I incorporate into my practice. However, I also have non-white ancestors who were of neither German nor Irish descent with whom I long to connect magickally. A tragedy of modernity has been the erasure of the cultural evidence of this part of my lineage. In this I am by no means exceptional. Fellow practitioners in my circle alone have familial ties to Russia, Pakistan, and First Nations, the specifics of which have unfortunately been lost to time and historical lack of documentation. Are they then wrong to make educated and informed guesses – but guesses nonetheless – at the cultural traditions these ancestors may recognize and appreciate? If not, can that be extrapolated to imply that any craft tradition that speaks to any witch is acceptable for them to use?

This dilemma is one I have personally struggled with for years and, after many hours of meditation, reading and reflection, I have come to the conclusion that, like everything else in witchcraft, it all comes down to intent. Beyond that, I get the distinct impression that a practitioner's genetic makeup is of no consequence to the Earth, the Universe, or any deities you may choose to work with. What matters is sincerity. I find it hard to believe that the



heron and river waters I so deeply identify with judge my DNA to see how far removed I am from my Native American ancestors. What they *do* judge is if I am doing my very best to acknowledge my great-great-grandmother in an appropriate and respectful way. Having done as much information gathering as possible I trust that, when I

honour her memory at Samhain, she knows I am not using her in order to justify using a deerskin drum or wearing groovy feathers. Likewise, I am confident that the spirit of my partner's much-loved grandmother is aware that my one hennaed hand is not decorative, but a way for me to communicate in a manner specific to her.

As witchcraft tends to be a free-form practice that does not strictly follow one specific doctrine, cultural appropriation is a hazard against which all witches must be vigilant and routinely self-assessing. That being said, the judgement of fellow witches for sincere incorporation of found or chosen ancestral tradition into practice can be equally damaging. Because we are no longer bound and restricted to the geography to which we were born, every witch's ancestry is a nuanced tapestry that can be made up of any arrangement of biological and/or acquired familial ties. It is the ancestors themselves who ultimately decide whether or not we are worthy of their engagement and fellowship as we call them forth this Samhain.

The background image shows a hand holding a tarot card, likely the Wheel of Fortune, over a spread of other tarot cards on a wooden table. The scene is dimly lit, with a warm, orange glow from a candle or light source on the left, creating a mystical atmosphere. The cards are scattered across the table, and the hand is positioned as if about to draw or reveal a card.

SAMHAIN AND THE TAROT

TAROT TALK BY ESME KNIGHT

Samhain is the time to practice that arts of divination. As the year draws to a close and veil is thin, we can simply reach through and pluck the wisdom we seek, as you would the apples in the orchard. It is a time of reflection, honouring our ancestors and letting go of the unnecessary in readiness for the coming darkness, and consulting the cards can be comforting among the unpredictability of Winter.

Whether you are a beginner or experienced reader, here's a few thoughts about exploring the Tarot this Halloween.

READING THE TAROT

Reading the Tarot should be just that. Reading. The cards themselves have strong individual meanings and tell a story of their own like single words creating a coherent sentence so trust them. The skill of the Tarot reader lies on linking them together and interpreting that story.

This is a process that should make your querent question their values, actions and feelings about the events in their life, ultimately allowing them to make informed choices and take control. When we are in control of our life we are more balanced and we can find peace.

The popular misconception is that the Tarot tells the Future. It doesn't. If anything it tells the truth, but the truth as we perceive it based upon what we know and how we feel. The reading of some spreads do not even do that – they reveal the truth of our feelings; and remember; how we feel about something is not always the reality of the situation.

At this point, it's worth mentioning that being a Tarot Reader, or reading the Tarot does not require a "sixth sense" but rather, empathy. While there are readers who also possess other qualities that they apply in their readings, such as Mediumship where the reader connects with spirit guides and relay messages concerning the querent, or psychic and precognitive abilities – they are not necessary to become a good Tarot reader and you should not allow the lack of these extra-sensory gifts to deter you from your own personal journey with the Tarot.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE TAROT

Playing cards can be traced back to 12th century China. As the stakes of dice games grew beyond the number of coins the winners could carry or risk being robbed, painted cards were substituted as an "IOU" and eventually became part of the game itself.

Originally hand painted and reserved for the very wealthy, when trade along the Silk Road brought travellers from the west through the Middle East, they returned with the cards. They spread throughout Europe during the 13th and 14th century, adopted at court in both France and Italy where a 'suit of trumps' were added and depicted popular characters from the Commedia De'l'arte. By the 1600's the cards were used by entertainers to tell stories and even relay coded messages about delicate political situations but it wasn't for another hundred years before "Cartomancy" became associated with the occult, astrology and alchemy and used for divination.

THE TAROT AND OUR PSYCHE

My belief is that the Tarot connects more with our psyche; our mind; our consciousness, than any other part of our being. It is the mind that is the conduit between our body and our spirit and binds the two together.

Its use allows us to connect with our sub-conscious, with our inner and true selves. The act of "Laying your cards on the table" is a conscious choice to take action to discover our true motives, when we sit at the table for a reading we are saying we are no longer in denial, we are ready to accept. We are ready to know.

The Tarot is a 'divination tool'; the verb 'divine' means to reveal, to discover, or to find. Knowing this I find it interesting that this is the word we have chosen to use as an adjective to describe our relationship with Gods

So it would follow that a 'divine being' is a 'revealed being' a being who has discovered their true purpose and 'found themselves' implying that we all have potential to be divine; we all have "god" within us. By extension, a tool of divination should be a means

of discovering the truth within ourselves and getting in touch with our honest thoughts and feelings.

A good Tarot reading shouldn't tell you anything you don't already know, it should reveal to you what the most important aspects of your current situation are, and help you focus your mind on the choices that lie ahead.

CHOOSING A DECK

There is an old custom that says you should not buy a deck of Tarot card for yourself or you will never be able to read with them.

As superstitious as it sounds; I'd have to agree. From my own experience, I tend to read better with cards that have been gifted to me than with decks I have bought for myself. You have to decide for yourself whether you hold any truth in this. My recommendation is that you handle as many different decks as you feel drawn to and make a judgement from there. Eventually, you will find one that suits you and just feels right.

The most important thing is that you need to be able to identify with your cards in order to bond and unlock your ability to see the many layers to the cards. Whether that is through the art & imagery or through the mythology of the Tarot you choose; if they are going to be your working deck they should in some way represent a spiritual part of you. The Tarot is a tool that will enable you to connect with others as you read for them, and through that 'divinatory' connection – help guide them.

Because of this, it is important that you treat your cards with reverence, show them respect for the service they perform, and look after them well. Keep them in a dedicated box or wrap them in a fine and luxurious fabric. Meditate with them, show your affection for them by handling them often; and thank them.

DEVELOPING YOUR INTUITION

Confidence to read the cards comes from the ability to remember their meanings and a bit of practice. However the difference between being a good reader and a *great* reader is being able to follow the story through the spread and intuitively recognise the significant factors.

Intuition in Tarot Reading is more than just connecting with your deck – it's about connecting with the querent. They have come to you for

guidance, even though through the deck they are guiding themselves – they will still see *you* as the oracle.

There is a lot of responsibility in this role and some issues must be dealt with sensitively or discreetly.



The cards that appear in the reading are there to help you guide your querent out of their denial and motivate them into action. This is a skill that does not develop overnight and you'll need several willing 'guinea-pigs' to practise on – but practise makes perfect and the more you use the cards, the more you'll begin to see the underlying patterns and develop your intuition.

In reality it is something that cannot be taught... you must practise often, and learn the feel of it.

STORY TELLING: Shuffle the cards and lay out the whole deck in a large rectangle (6x13 cards) face down. Turn them over one by one and using the events and characters tell the story as the cards are revealed in order. After a bit of practice you'll be able to not only see the linear stories but the way the events and characters affect each other by their relative position in the spread.

HANDLING THE CARDS

It depends on the individual reader on who and how the cards are handled; usually the querent handles the cards at some point during the reading so that they can connect with them and if you believe it; imprint their energy upon them.

Once the shuffling and energy exchange has happened, the reading begins with the reader laying out the cards, face down, in the pattern of the chosen spread and then revealing them one by one in the order they were laid.

My personal method is to first of all shuffle the cards myself while I ask my querent to relax and meditate of sorts: I tell them to be mindful of their life – to think of all of the events that are happening right now, everything and everyone that has an influence on them, and also the influence they have on others. I ask them to bring all of these things to the surface and then I place the deck on the table and ask them to handle the cards, respectfully, however they feel compelled to do so and when ready place them back on the table.

Be mindful, that for some people having a Tarot reading can be a powerful experience. Acknowledging and addressing suppressed issues can trigger an emotional release where they will cry, purging themselves of their denial and freeing them to go on and take control of their life. Be empathetic and hold space for them.



SPREADS

Once the cards have been shuffled, cut or handled by you and your querent, they are laid out in various patterns, these are known as 'Spreads'. There are many different Spreads and they each have a different function, some show current situations, some answer direct questions, some work like calendars or even horoscopes.

What appears in the reading becomes a kind of map of the querents life. Not necessarily a map of future, or even past events but an emotional map of how they are responding, to the effects of those life events.

The future is not set – it can be changed by our decisions and actions. Any section of a spread that relates to 'future events', are merely a projection of the querent's perception of how following a course of action will result. It is in their questioning of their own course of action (or inaction/denial), which is the real answer they seek from a Tarot reading – why else would they come for advice?

It is important to find out from your querent what they are trying to discover, though not directly, just enough so that you can choose an appropriate Spread.

DIVINATION;

Think of the Tarot not so much as a 'fortune-telling' device but more of a 'route-finder' offering an objective insight to the journey ahead. The objectivity you gain from a reading can help make you aware of, or accept a situation you find yourself in. Knowledge allows us to take control of events, which in turn helps us to face fears and deal more effectively with choices.

When we talk of divination in witchcraft we are talking about self-realisation, not information, the revelation from an external source as displayed in Spiritualism or Mediumship. Personal belief becomes significant because everyone of us has a different belief about the substance and nature of the existence of spirit and how we interact with it. I don't find psychic/medium ability relevant to reading the cards – remember; Divine is to Know Thyself.

However, being spiritually intuitive as a reader is important, just as having a good understanding of human nature is. You may need to trust your instincts to express the meaning of a run of cards to be able to see patterns in the spreads. This is something that takes practise and patience.

RITUAL AND MAGICAL PRACTISES;

There are many ways in which to harness the power of Tarot in your magic. The major arcana are perfect for 'outcome'/'result' cards as they are already archetypes of life's endeavours and we have a deep understanding of what they mean, what their implications are and how those cosmic forces affect us on many levels.

There are people all over the world who understand the archetypes displayed in the Tarot and they all agree they mean the same thing... that is an extremely powerful thing. And it can be tapped into. When you draw on the archetype of a Tarot card is it the same as drawing on the archetype of a deity, think of it in the same way.

Using a Tarot card in a spell – even if you copy one out specially – is another way of adding an extra layer to your spell work lending potency to the energy harnessed during the casting of it. The Tarot is great for our focus during magic as the

combination of art and archetype gives us an instant and recognisable concept that sometimes cannot be expressed with words or objects.

MAGICAL USES FOR TAROT; EXAMPLES

- Choose a Court Card that represents yourself, either by zodiac vs element (if you are an Air sign choose Swords etc) or by how you are affected by the event; how you feel, or to represent the outcome.
- This method can be applied if you are performing magic on behalf of someone else and they are not present, or to represent a person involved for example a banishing spell to create distance between yourself and an ex-lover.
- Take this one step further and use the Tarot to plot your desire, a designer spread if you like. If the cards laid out in a spread denotes the events to come then use the Tarot to shape events to your will.
- Use the numerology of the cards by fixing dates. This can be done simply by 'spelling out' the date 2,3, 0,7, 9, for example, or get as complex as you wish using the suits for days and month and the major arcana correspondences to the zodiac for the yearly date.
- This method can be also applied to creating a cipher, or coded numerical spell.
- Pendulum; choose signifiers from the cards to represent choices/people/events ask questions of your pendulum. Lay the cards in a 'clock' and swing the pendulum over it and ask questions.
- Burn a candle in front of a card that represents your desire, or a court card that represents a deity as a vigil to your wish.

USING THE CARDS IN A MAGIC CIRCLE;

- Use cards at the quarter points of your circle; either male/female court cards representing the elements or symbolic virtues from the Major Arcana... The Tower or The Chariot for Air (change and movement); The Sun or Strength for Fire (power and courage); The Moon, The Priestess or Temperance for Water (intuition

and flow); The Emperor/Empress or The Hermit for Earth (nurturing and healing);

- Another option is to use major arcana cards 0-4 in your circle as above to take on a god/goddess aspects; 1 Magician in the East (ideas), 3 The Empress in the South (empowerment), 2 The High Priestess in the



West (intuition), and 4 The Emperor in the North (stability).

- Choose the four court cards of the same suit that corresponds with your working energy; Page in the East, Knight in the South, Queen in the West and King in the North, for example.
- Choose all four Queens to represent goddesses, (or Kings/Knights for gods), and place them around the circle at the compass point corresponding to their suit.
- For a ritual altar, mix and match your kings/queens, two of each; kings in the East & South, queens in the West & North.



MAGICAL MORNING RITUAL

CORALIE KATE HUDSON

In my younger years, getting up early would not have been on my radar. Late nights out with friends and fear of missing out, would see me snooze the following days for as long as possible.

However, in more recent years, I have found I naturally wake up earlier, and quite organically, I have developed a little routine to ease myself into my day. With evenings filling up with activities when other people are awake, I have found this sacred morning quiet time really sets me up for my day, grounds me and sets the tone for the hours ahead.

It is a time for quiet contemplation, true solitude and absolute gratitude. It is time for me and me only – and to be truly me. Being someone who finds it hard to put my own self-care first, it has been an absolute blessing to have this dedicated time each and every day. With no-one else around, no-one to influence me, have an opinion or set me off on a pattern of thoughts which haven't come from me. It has led to early nights and I have even begun to look forward to beginning the next day as I drift off to sleep, instead of panicking while flicking through a lengthy to do list or mindlessly scrolling through online social feeds.

In this world, heavenly influenced by masculine do, do, do energy, it is a time to lean into feminine energy and slow the fuck down. It should be noted, that having a one-year old cat helps with this process who also likes an early start!

My routine has developed into a ritual. I love this word. It is so sacred, so magical and so heartfelt.

This small thing has made such a huge difference to my life and wellbeing, how much more positive and able to cope with what life throws at me I feel, and so much so, that I wanted to share it with you.

MY RITUAL

At the moment, I set my phone to wake me up but rarely need it these days as I have started waking up early and at the same time – 5am. I know it sounds crackers however it works for me. We are all different and just an extra half or hour might work for you.

WAKE UP GENTLY

With the seasons changing and mornings now so

dark, I am going to purchase a separate alarm clock – a natural waking light one, to mimic the rising sun in the lighter months. I have used awful, bone shaking ones in the past, and being jolted awake like that couldn't be worse! I am then going to relegate my phone to a completely different room to put a barrier between it and me – like many, there is that strong tendency to look at it when it is in my hand already from switching off my alarm.

STRETCH AND THINK NICE THOUGHTS

I begin by gently stretching and thinking nice thoughts. Nice thoughts about my life, my family, my friends and what I am grateful for. If something negative creeps in, I acknowledge it and say thank you, however I will think about you later. A great book about unwelcome visitors or thoughts, is *Belonging* by Toko-Pa.

MINDFUL TEA

Tea is next. Sometimes traditional 'builders', sometimes chamomile or sometimes a seasonal blend. And I mindfully enjoy the process of making it - boiling the kettle, steeping the leaves and making something lovely for me. Some people swear by adding lemon or apple cider vinegar to water, but what is important is that you choose what works for you. I avoid coffee at this time, as I find it jolts me too much and what is important to me is slowly waking.

FLAME AND AROMA

I then light incense or diffuse some essential oils. I love Mothers India Prem incense or Neals Yard Remedies Women's Balance or Relax. Then I light a candle. I have a gorgeous orange coloured altar candle from Star Child and first lit it at Mabon.

Their candles are amazing and I plan on buying a different colour one for each Sabbat. I save this candle and only light it at this time of the day to keep it sacred to my morning ritual. I actually have various candles which are sacred to a few different practices I do: my women's circle, a training course I recently did and one for when I am reading in bed.

FIRE GAZING

I then sit. I just sit and look at the flame. Staring at a flame has so many beneficial properties. It's so grounding and it's also so kind to the eyes. With many hours of working on a computer ahead of me, I really sense my eyes thanking me.



GENTLE MOVEMENT

Then I incorporate some movement. I love yoga, and I enjoy a gentle practice at this time of day, something not too rapid that shocks my body. Some people might like a more intense practice really get their blood pumping – if this is your bag, then go for it. I like yin yoga at this time and often practice heart and hip openers with a bolster.

MOVEMENT TO RELEASE

I then like to add a bit more movement and fun. I

like dancing or shaking. If you haven't tried shaking it is amazing for releasing. It feels strange at first, but no one is watching, so go for it.

MINDFUL BREATHS

Then I sit back down with my candle and take three deep mindful breaths and sigh out.

PUT PEN TO PAPER

I pick up my journal and pen and begin free writing. Sometimes during my yoga practice stuff has come up and I begin free writing. Sometimes it's quiet and thoughtful, sometimes I have things to get off my chest – so I get it out and down on paper. I am also currently working with Witch Magazine's journal prompts (available on social media) which are so lovely as Samhain draws closer and we have winter ahead.

MEDITATE

Sometimes I benefit from a guided mediation and sometimes I just sit quietly with my eyes closed and set a timer. There are so many available online - I like the Calm app, or you might like to find a local teacher who has pre-recorded meditations. Michelle Rose Boxley, whose Moon Circle's I attend (Sisters of the Moon), is amazing with a wonderful calming voice, and I often dip back in as I am a member on her Patreon.

READ

I pick up a book that is going to nourish and inspire me or something I just find magical of my choosing. I am currently reading Magic Lessons by Alice Hoffman with other ladies in our Sisters of the Moon Book Club and it's really filling me up with Autumnal joy.

Afterwards, I might come back to my journal, sometimes I am done and step in the shower to get ready to start my day and embrace the rest of the world.

I read something recently – 'start your day from the inside out'. I have popped this quote on my fridge, and I love it. It has really struck a chord with me. Why would we want to be influenced by any outside sources we haven't chosen that don't know our own hearts, minds, bodies, or souls?

I hope this helps you, even in some small way, to be more grounded in your mornings and helps set you up for a wonderful and magical day ahead.

Thank you



TOP TEN WITCHY WATCHES FOR A SOCIALLY-DISTANCED SAMHAIN

BY CHERRY DOYLE – WITCH RESIDENCY WRITER

Forget costumes, apple bobbing, and scaring the neighbours silly – this year, grab the popcorn, light some candles, and snuggle up on the sofa for a family film-fest.

10. THE PALE HORSE (2020)

If you missed out on this brooding Agatha Christie adaptation on BBC1 at the start of the year, now's your chance to indulge in both episodes for under a fiver. It's got style in spades, as re-married widower Mark Easterbrook descends into paranoia as he suspects three witches who kill for money are responsible for the death of his first wife and his lover. Are they coming for him next?

Watch on: Amazon Prime Video, £4.99 for the season

Family Friendly: Not for young children.

9. THE PENDLE WITCH CHILD (2011)

For anyone needing a break from fairytales and happy endings, this documentary about the infamous Pendle witch trials in 17th Century Britain ought to do the trick. Simon Armitage (current Poet Laureate of the UK) tells the story of 9-year-old Jennet Device, who gave testimony against her own family and neighbours which led to many convictions of witchcraft and subsequent hangings.

Watch on: Amazon Prime Video

Family Friendly? For older teens and over only.

8. SABRINA THE TEENAGE WITCH (1996)

Catch up with the OG TV Sabrina every morning to put you in a magical mood for the day ahead. Melissa Joan Hart's iconic role is complemented by the wonderful performances of Caroline Rhea and Beth Broderick and Aunts Hilda and Zelda – not to mention the famous animatronic Salem!

Watch on: E4/4Music

Family Friendly? Yes, although it contains teenage themes.

7. THE ADDAMS FAMILY (1991)

While not strictly 'witchy', you can't deny the unmistakably spooky vibes of this famous family. In this 90s adaptation of the original cartoon strip, a lawyer poses her son as Gomez's long-lost brother Fester in an attempt to inherit the family fortune. This is the film which introduced us to a slew of iconic performances, including Angelica Huston as the glamorous Morticia and Christina Ricci as sardonic daughter Wednesday.

Watch on: Netflix

Family Friendly? Yes, but there is some naughtiness.

6. THE BLAIR WITCH PROJECT (1999)

Over twenty years on from its release, the film which kick-started the 'found footage' fad still manages to terrify. Even though you never catch a glimpse of the titular Blair Witch, her presence is certainly felt as three documentary makers get the feeling they're not welcome while they hike through the woods near her supposed home.

Watch on: Amazon Prime Video

Family Friendly? For older teenagers and over only.

5. BEDKNOBS AND BROOMSTICKS (1971)

Angela Lansbury stars as a witch-in-training who takes in three young evacuees during WWII in this Poppins-esque mix of live action and animation. On a quest to gain a magical pendant, the group - accompanied by an eccentric professor - travel to an island populated with talking animals, then use their new-found powers to stop the Nazis in their tracks. You'll be humming the catchy soundtrack all day!

Watch on: Disney+

Family Friendly? Yes!

4. PRACTICAL MAGIC (1998)

An all-star cast leads this tale of two very different sisters, born into a magical family under a curse which dooms their true loves, reunited after the death of one of their husbands. Nicole Kidman and Sandra Bullock bring despair, grief, and joy to the screen as they try to break the curse – and get on with one another.

Watch on: Amazon Prime Video

Family Friendly? Not for young children.

3. HOCUS POCUS (1993)

An unsuspecting young boy accidentally resurrects three witches 300 years after their deaths in this perennial Halloween favourite. Bette Midler, Kathy Najimy, and Sarah Jessica Parker play a fantastic turn as the gruesome Sanderson sisters, intent on gaining the power of youth from the souls of children. Can they be stopped?

Watch on: Disney+

Family Friendly? Yes, but some upsetting scenes.

2. KIKI'S DELIVERY SERVICE (1988)

Get carried away with the fairytale with Studio Ghibli's charming tale of trainee witch Kiki learning independence during a year away from home. With her cat Jiji, Kiki opens a delivery business, but not everything goes to plan, and when she loses her powers, Kiki must find her true purpose to regain them and complete her training.

Watch on: Netflix

Family Friendly? Definitely!

1. AMERICAN HORROR STORY – COVEN (2013)

With all seasons of AHS still available on Netflix, now is the perfect time to catch up with the girls of Miss Robichaux's Academy. The students learn to use their differing powers under the tutelage of mother-daughter duo Fiona and Cordelia Goode, who are fighting their own battles – against each other, and Voodoo Queen Marie Laveau.

Watch on: Netflix

Family Friendly? Not for young children.



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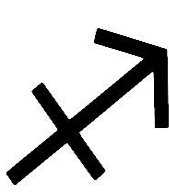
RAVEN & LUNA'S OCTOBER TAROTSCOPES


SCORPIO

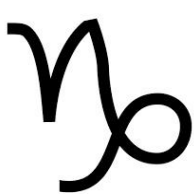
Ace of Wands, 7 of Swords, 4 of Swords

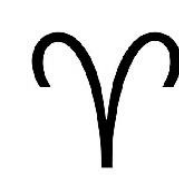
Someone's likely to let you down or annoy you this month but you're being urged against holding a grudge. Look into something more before reacting and burning your bridges. There could be more to the story. Stop thinking that the world is against you and assuming the worst of someone. If things keep going wrong for you, what have you got to learn from those experiences? Is there any accountability that you need to take? Your work/ study plans may not go how you hoped and you'll have to take time out for recuperation.




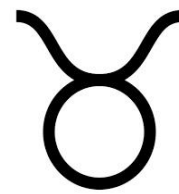
 **SAGITTARIUS**
The Chariot, 3 of Cups
It's going to be a generally fun month. Do it safely, but you're likely going to be getting together with others and/ or forging new, lasting friendships. You could receive a new car or your existing car should pass its MOT. Your home life should improve and will feel more stable.

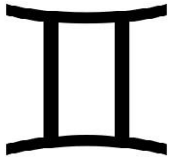
 **PISCES**
4 of Cups, 9 of Wands
You'll feel like the world's against you but you need to try to see the good things that you have going for you. The answer or solution is right there, don't over think it. You can't get along with or be liked by everyone, it's not a reflection of who you are.

 **CAPRICORN**
Queen of Cups, The High Priestess
Utilise a side of yourself that you normally don't, especially when it comes to your emotions. This will help you better understand where someone is coming from and allow you to give them the comfort they need. Instead of just going with the facts, follow your heart and intuition.

 **ARIES**
7 of Pentacles, King of Swords
It's going to be a frustrating month for you. You can't force things to happen when or how you want to, you need to exercise patience. Think before you speak or act, you can't take it back. Hold off on reacting before you have all the information you need.

 **AQUARIUS**
Justice, 7 of Pentacles
Something you've been hoping for, or have been trying to manifest, will either happen this month or soon after. Have patience, it's coming. You may have to wait a bit longer for an outcome or the answers you seek, especially when it comes to compensation or a court date.

 **TAURUS**
The Devil, The Star
You can't reach your full potential or dreams until you rid yourself of anyone/ thing that isn't serving you. By stubbornly persisting with something that doesn't work, you're going to keep getting the same disappointing results. Face your shadow side and fears or you're going to keep self-sabotaging yourself.

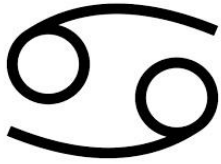


GEMINI

King of Cups, 6 of Swords

You may feel like you want to run away from a situation but it needs to be dealt with and other people's feelings should be considered. Draw

upon the balance of your head and heart. You may be avoiding a long trip. You can't detach from your emotions to stop yourself getting hurt, embrace them.



CANCER

5 of Cups, Ace of Swords

It's going to be emotional, with potential loss and feelings of depletion. You'll not feel up to

doing much and will have to push yourself. It could be a difficult time of the year for you so find support and coping mechanisms, such as doing something creative, to give yourself that uplifting spark.



LEO

King of Pentacles, 4 of Pentacles

You'll be tempted to be very generous with your money, time and energy or being very indulgent,

but you're being warned against doing that. Hold

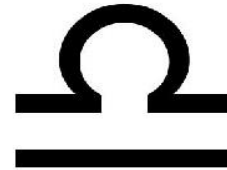
back and save it because you're going to need it later in the year. A bountiful inheritance could be on its way.



VIRGO

5 of Cups, The Lovers

It's likely to be a difficult time in regards to those closest to you, most likely a partner. There could be a break up or perhaps this is your first Winter alone and so you may struggle. You'll be generally low in mood and it will be difficult for you to connect with loved ones.



LIBRA

Page of Cups, 2 of Swords

There's only so much weighing up you can do, eventually you're going to have to make a decision. This has to be based on logical thinking, not just on your emotions. Be careful about other people's influence on you, you can only really trust in your own intuition at this time.

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

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FIVE MINUTE FICTION

IN A STRANGE GARDEN

BY JESS O'SHEA – WITCH RESIDENCY WRITER

Amidst murky shadows;
a hand in time
touches mine...

I imagined myself nearby, in the most wonderful allotment.

The kind that keeps blooming through all changes, the one from my dreams. But as I began to flourish, I knew I only belonged here.

When I first saw them, I was rather excited to see the children play for the first time out here. I thought of them two often during the nights.

Sweet, a sort of nostalgic innocence that now I have to come see, was fleeting. I wondered where they should put the swing set. I did not wonder, or even consider at the time, what they would bury here.

Though I have begun to wither, I sometimes felt they were admiring me. I am amongst so many others, some taller, some fuller, some perkier. Perhaps maybe they could see that I am here too.

These romantic ideas I had quickly became few and far between. Soon enough the only water I would drink would be from the rain. When I saw what I presumed to be their father carrying them to the car, something in me knew this was the last time.

If only I could speak, or even make a sound, I would've warned them.

But something else in me also knew,

That I most likely wouldn't have.

Before I knew it, I was floating away...

I thought I had had learned from all the years and all of the people, that I could tell who was breathing and who was not.

Watching for the breath, the wide eyes pulsating, but I had never seen it quite like this.

They left rather quickly, some could say prematurely.

I pondered for a long time about how strange they are, it seemed as if those two little ones had been the same age for many years.

But what do I know about breathing?

Nobody wanted to say

and nothing

wanted to stay.

And nobody knows, where I may end up.

I am always cold, but I suppose it is in my nature.

The little ones, if only I could remember their laughter, but I only remember their whimpers.

I had hoped with my words they would've realised that I was only trying to warn them. They had warmed to me rather steadily, but when they did, I only noticed much later how little and white their hands really were.

The last weeks, they were coming down

down

down

with something so peculiar. I used to hear them talk in their sleep. If I only could've responded, perhaps their warmth for me would've softened what was about to come.

The littlest one, the girl, she had whispered to me about it,

but I could not hear,

and before long

they were lying down

on the floor with me

I thought it was a game, I enjoyed their company.

But then of course;

friendships and amities, brief as it is ingenuine—

they disappeared, with cruel urgency.

They had left me open, on this same wooden floor—

And in the nick of time,

locked the door behind them.

THE WHEELBARROW

BY A.G. WORTHINGTON – WITCH RESIDENCY WRITER

The wheelbarrow first appeared on a brisk autumn morning. I noticed it on my way to work and whilst it was slightly odd, it wasn't the strangest thing I had seen discarded on the streets of Bootle. Walking back that evening, it was still there, the yellow of the streetlamps casting it in a murky light. I didn't stop to look closer as I had that morning, but instead quickened my step.

Over the next few days it became a staple of my morning walk; half-way to the bus stop once you hit the wheelbarrow. I was starting to not even notice it beyond its vague new status as a landmark - until one night it moved. I walked straight past the spot it usually rested without even noticing, only to find myself stopping abruptly a few yards ahead. It was in the middle of the path, blocking my way home. Must be kids, I thought. Or drunks messing around with the thing.

I pictured two old men, bumping into it on their way back from an afternoon of drinking in The Merton. *Have a go in this!* one says to the other, and they laugh and push each other around in it like children until their interest moves onto something else. I stepped around it and would have carried on walking but something caused me to stop and look back. I'd mentioned the wheelbarrow to my wife and she said she'd never noticed it. I slipped my phone out and quickly took a Snap looking down into it. There was nothing in there but dirt stains. I didn't look at the photo before I hit send.

When I got home I asked her if she'd checked her messages, which predictably she had not. So I perched on the arm of her chair and we opened the Snap. We looked at it for the ten seconds it was available. It looked much the same as in person, except the picture brought up two faint white dots amongst the dirt and rust. *Spooky*, she said with a teasing smile, and we both laughed though I didn't find anything funny.

Later, whilst she was asleep, I scrolled through my phone, bored and untired. I found myself in my

photo gallery. There was a picture of our cat sitting in a funny position that I took after tea. I swiped to the next image, expecting more cat photos but instead it was the photo of the wheelbarrow. I didn't remember saving it from Snapchat but there it was, embedded in my phone's storage. Like before I noticed the white dots and before I even thought to do it, I'd zoomed in on one. At first it looked just as before, blurred into pixels from the zoom, but I blinked and suddenly it was as if it blinked back at me. Before my eyes the picture took on a new focus, and the white dot grew a pupil. Smaller than a pinprick at first, it grew larger the longer I stared until my whole screen was black.

When I woke my phone was dead. I stuck it on charge while I got ready and resigned myself to having 20% battery all day.

It had rained through the night and when I passed the wheelbarrow it was half filled with muddy water. I couldn't see through the water but I could feel the eyes watching me as I passed. All day my hands itched with the urge to check to see if the photo was still there, and if I wasn't hyper aware of the steadily-decreasing battery, I'm not sure I could have resisted. Every time I closed my eyes, even to blink, I saw *theirs*.

It was raining again by the time I got off the bus, and each step I took towards my street and the... thing waiting there for me, the colder I felt. I went past the spot I first saw it, past the spot it had moved to; I kept walking and walking and it was nowhere to be seen. By this point I was shivering, sodden with rain. My fingers felt like they would snap off and my heart was beating so loudly I wondered if passers by could hear it. I walked up the drive-way to the house and there, innocently waiting at the bottom of the front steps, was the wheelbarrow.

My feet kept moving without my permission until I stood right over it, looking down into the murky depths. It was now almost overflowing with water and so dark I couldn't see the bottom. It seemed as if there was no bottom,

just a deep, dark, endless pit I could fall into and disappear forever. I leaned in until my face was a breath away from the inky liquid, my hands gripping the rusted sides of the wheelbarrow. This close I still couldn't see the bottom, but I could see something. Something pale and flickering deep below the surface. It seemed to beckon me down for a closer look. I wrenched myself away and ran to the steps leading to the front door, fumbling with my keys, slippery-wet in the rain. I could feel it watching me as I struggled with the door until I finally flung myself inside, dead-locking it behind me. I pressed my forehead to the wood of the door, breathing raggedly.. The copper-covered peephole was cool against my skin, and as my breathing slowed, I knew I had to look. With shaking fingers I flipped the cover out of the way and peered outside. The drive was dark but cast in that horrible yellow glow of the streetlights. I could see my neighbour's car and the tree at the end of the drive, but I couldn't see *it*. I let out a long sigh of relief that I didn't really feel, because I knew. It may have been out of sight, but that didn't mean it was truly gone.

I walked down the stairs and unlocked my flat's door on auto-pilot. I hung up my coat and peeled my boots off. The clock on the wall told me my wife would be due back in thirty minutes. I went cold all over. What if it was still there, and instead of me, it got her? But then, she had never seen it. She walked the same route as me every day, and I asked her if she had noticed it yet and every day she laughed as she said no. I walked further into the flat, to the living room. We live in a basement flat but still have a small garden, with wide patio doors opening up into it. They had been locked since summer, but as I walked into the living room I saw they were flung wide open - and there, in the middle of the garden, stood the wheelbarrow.

Overcome with sudden anger, I stormed out through the doors and right up to the thing in my

socks. I didn't feel the cold or the wet now. Just over-boiling rage and fear. I screamed at it wordlessly, and made to kick it over. My foot landed inside it, sinking down into the water. I could feel the bottom and it shocked me still. I still don't know why, but I pulled myself inside it until I stood, water lapping against my calves. It was not impossibly deep as I had thought. I looked down at myself and again in the water, flickering beneath the depths, I saw the pale shapes again.

Eyes.

I found myself crouching down, so I was squatting, half submerged, trying to see more clearly what was in the wheelbarrow with me. The flickering paleness slowly seemed to solidify the longer I looked into a pair of dark-pupiled eyes. I watched as a nose formed, and then a mouth, cheeks, forehead, ears, dark spirals of hair. Then there were deathly pale arms that thrust out of the water and grabbed my face in a crushing grip. That foul water filled my lungs, as my vision shot to black.

Then there was nothing.

I can't have been out there for more than half an hour, but when my wife found me I was already suffering with hypothermia. There was no sign of the wheelbarrow. They kept me in the hospital overnight, and that was the last time I left the flat. Now all the blinds are closed, the curtains drawn, and the only time I feel safe is when I am in the spare room. It doesn't have any windows, you see. Many times my wife has tried to get me to explain what happened, but I can't bring myself to tell her. Not all of it. Because when I was being pulled down into the depths, I got a good look at the thing that was drowning me. Beneath the water, her features solidified into something all too familiar. She had my face, and she was crying; it was not the rain, but her tears, flooding the wheelbarrow.

WITCHGASM

MY TOP FIVE ESSENTIAL OILS:

1) LAVENDER

Lavender, perfect for sleeping and relaxing, this is my must have oil and the one I use the most.

2) PEPPERMINT

I use peppermint to clean, it's great mixed with tea tree for cleansing and illness, curing headaches, and helping you to focus.

3) ROSEMARY

Rosemary is good for bruises and pain, when I suffered from back pain, a few drops of rosemary in a warm bath did me wonders. Also good as a bug repellent when traveling.

4) CLARY SAGE

Clearly sage is brilliant for labour inducing (I swear by it) but it's also great for blood pressure and relaxation. Its also great for period cramps.

5) EUCALYPTUS

Last on my list but certainly not the least, eucalyptus is a great antiseptic and also good for killing bacteria. I use it a lot for cleaning.

www.witchgasm.co.uk

Instagram: @witchgasm



THAT'S NOT MY WITCH...

That witch buys candles and is sad.

That's not my witch, it doesn't study wicca.

That's not my witch, it doesn't believe that nature is both dark and light – there is no balance.

That's not my witch, it doesn't wear all black.

That's not my witch, it's not wiccan.

That's not my witch, it hasn't got a familia.

That's not my witch, it isn't pagan or satanic.

That's not my witch, it's cutting corners and not casting circles.

That's not witch... Because seriously why is it not Wiccan.

That's not my witch, It doesn't have a coven?

That's not my witch, it's dating someone religious?

That's not my witch, It doesn't know it's moon phases?

That's not my witch? How is it not Wiccan?!

I promise you, that that's your witch, your way to which is your witch

None of this stuff matters, it's your path, your labels, your life.

You're your own witch, what matters is how you learn and grow.

You don't have to do anything to be a witch.

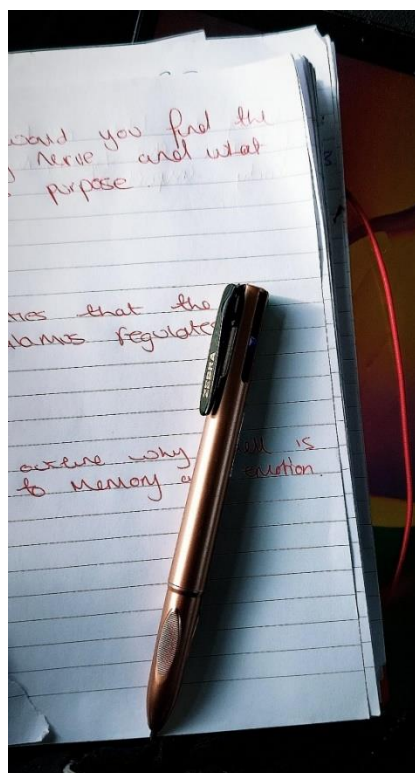
You were born magic.

You are magic.

Never judge, never doubt, and keep your nose out of everyone else's cauldron.

I NOW HAVE A NEW JEWELLERY RANGE LAUNCHING ON THE 31ST OF OCTOBER!

CHECK IT OUT ON MY WEBSITE



CONNACH

A NEW GOTH BAND STEEPED IN
THE MAGICAL ATMOSPHERE OF WYCHDOM.

OUT OF THE DARKNESS OF THE PANDEMIC, CONNACH FORMED WITH A NEW ENERGY
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THROUGH MYSTERIOUS REALMS TO ESCAPE OUR EVERYDAY LIVES
AND SEE BEYOND

VISIT [FACEBOOK.COM/CONNACHOFFICIAL](https://www.facebook.com/connachofficial)

GRIMOIRE

SAMHAIN 2020

SIMPLE SAMHAIN RELEASE RITUAL

By Bekki Jo Milner

Get ready to release things that no longer serve for Samhain, and move forward to a new cycle.

Collect fallen leaves. Write upon them the things you want to let go of.

Take time before Samhain to sit before a lit candle – choose a colour that aligns with your goal – and thank whatever you are releasing for its lessons before lighting it in the candles flame.

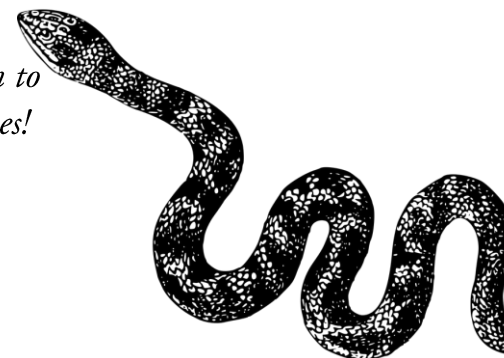
Place in a fire safe dish until it completely burns out. Use as many leaves as you need.



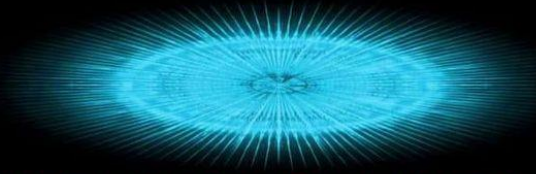
On a windy Autumn day, take the ashes outside and release them to the powers of air to carry them away. If you have a broom or besom, sweep the area to reinforce your intentions.

You can follow this up with a cleansing of your space using incense smoke, herb-infused water sprays or sound (loud music, clapping, singing). Cleanse yourself with a ritual bath or dance to your favourite music. Stamp your feet, sing along, and shake off everything you don't need.

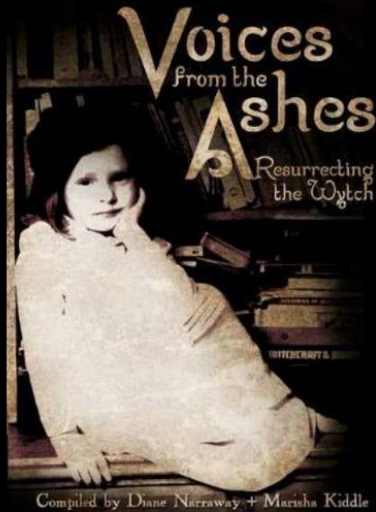
Do you have a favourite spell or ritual you would like to share? Email them to witchzine.submissions@gmail.com and we will feature them in future issues!



VENEFICIA PUBLICATIONS



THE POWER BEHIND THE WRITTEN WORD



Voices from the Ashes : Resurrecting the Wytch has been a true labour of love for all involved. It is an anthology of short stories that focuses on those tried as witches. The intention being to dramatize the individual stories, bringing to life the individuals involved. In many cases precious little is known of the men and women behind the accusations and trials, and this

anthology breathes fresh life into what has, for far too long been little more than a list of names.

All the stories blend known historical facts (where applicable) with fiction, to bring you a heartfelt look at the lives of just some of the many tried for their beliefs or unorthodox behaviours. This book spans centuries, various countries and cultures and includes men, women, and children. It is in many ways an acknowledgement of their sacrifice and has been a journey for all involved. Sadly, even today people are still persecuted in many countries, with accusations of witchcraft being commonplace.

The stories in this book are emotive, and we have no doubt that you will scowl, smile, laugh and shed the odd tear. However, one thing we are very sure of, is that you will always remember them.

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