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# WITCH Magazine

Welcome to the Imbolc edition of WITCH magazine, and our first issue of 2021!

Imbolc begins on the evening of 1<sup>st</sup> February, and ends on the evening of 2<sup>nd</sup> February. It is the feast of the Goddess Brigid, associated with healing, poetry, fertility and blacksmithing.

It also marks the beginning of the lambing season, and signals the start of spring. You might be able to feel it already, the stirring of the maiden beneath the earth, the buds on the trees, early spring plants pushing through the soil.

We wish you a blessed Imbolc, and celebrate the growing light, the rebirth of nature, and the song of Spring.

As always, if you have something you would like to share with us, visit us at [www.witchzine.co.uk](http://www.witchzine.co.uk) or email [submissions@witchzine.co.uk](mailto:submissions@witchzine.co.uk)

-Bekki, Editor of WITCH magazine



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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.

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/.](http://agworthing.tumblr.com/)



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 [offaspres.co.uk](http://offaspres.co.uk)



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

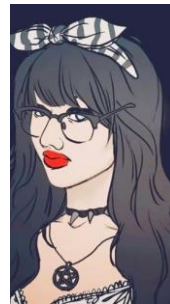
Fairy Bec AKA Rebecca Edwards is a healer, wellness guide and holistic health practitioner. Bec practices Reiki and brings Reiki energy into everything she does. Being Pagan and following the wheel of the year is very important to Bec as she travels her pathway through life. Bec often finds that people 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](https://www.instagram.com/fairybecadventures). Website: [www.rubek.co.uk](http://www.rubek.co.uk)

SOPHIE FLETCHER

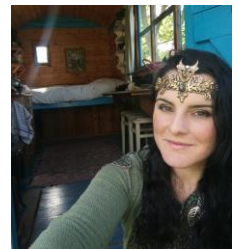
Most of my blog posts are drunken ramblings, my straight-talking opinions and theories on the world and my pagan life full of craziness. I never mean to offend anyone and my opinions are my own, and my own alone. Some are funny, some are sad, some will make your eyes roll.



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







# WITCH

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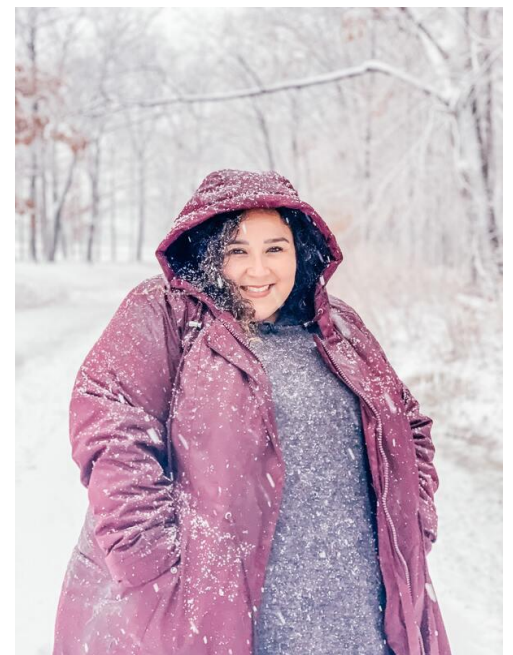


# AWAKENING THE WILD WOMAN – THE WOLF MOON

BY MICHELLE ROSE BOXLEY FOR SISTERS OF THE MOON

ON JANUARY 28TH WE WILL BE WELCOMING IN THE FIRST FULL MOON OF THE NEW YEAR IN THE SIGN OF LEO! THE JANUARY FULL MOON IS ALSO CALLED THE WOLF MOON DUE TO THE HOWLING PACKS OF WOLVES THAT COULD BE HEARD DURING THIS TIME IN WINTER IN NORTH AMERICA. IT ALSO GOES BY THE NAME THE STAY HOME MOON WHICH I JUST LOVE, AND THE ICE MOON. ALL THESE NAMES INDICATE TO US THAT WE ARE STILL VERY MUCH IN WINTER. WE CAN USE SOME OF THIS FIERY AND PLAYFUL LEO ENERGY TO WARM US UP AND STOKE OUR CREATIVE FIRES!

Leo is a playful and joyful sign which can help us open up to a feeling of lightness and new possibilities - combining this with the work we did at the Capricorn new moon will help us to get really clear on what we want from the year ahead. For this full moon we will have the Sun in the sign of Aquarius (the sun moved into Aquarius on Jan 19th) and the Moon in the opposite sign of Leo. We can shake off some of that grown up energy of Capricorn and lean into both the Airy and expansive nature of Aquarius and the light and playful energy of Leo. This moon is a great opportunity to ask yourself if you're taking yourself too seriously? When was the last time you belly laughed and were silly? How could you bring elements of fun and play into your life as we continue to navigate these challenging and uncertain times? Leo is often associated with our inner child, spend some time connecting to your inner child and inner maiden. What does she want to do? create? experience? What would you do if no one was looking?



Leo is a fire sign, ruled by the Sun and epitomises self confidence, self belief and joy. Aquarius season is all about taking the visions and goals we had during Capricorn season and manifesting them out into the world. It's about sharing our gifts with the people around us, being the light that we wish to see. When we start to think about birthing our ideas out into the world we can often be met with fears, limiting self beliefs and a million reasons why we shouldn't follow our dreams. The inner critic takes over and our beautiful ideas, dreams and wishes go into storage for another year. Sound familiar?

*"THERE IS FREEDOM WAITING FOR YOU, ON THE BREEZES OF THE SKY,  
AND YOU ASK "WHAT IF I FALL?" OH BUT MY DARLING, WHAT IF YOU FLY?" -  
ERIN HANSON*



Use this powerful Leo energy to give you the confidence to shine your beautiful light out into the world. Focus on Solar Plexus work during this full moon, it's in this chakra that we store our creative fire, our confidence and our self worth - it's often referred to as the seat of self. For the Capricorn New Moon, we asked you what your soul calling was, what you felt your soul purpose was. What's holding you back from achieving your vision? Remember to use the Full Moon to check back in with your new moon intentions and in particular look out for the shadowy parts of yourself getting in the way of your intentions.

The shadow side of Leo can be an imbalance of the ego, it can dominate and lead to an overinflated sense of self. Reflect on the societal pressures to feed the ego, to dominate, to seek out power, fame and glory and see if you can notice this at play in your own life. Do you often compare yourself to others? Are you competitive? Do you feel like the only way to feel good about yourself is to diminish others? This is all the shadow side of the ego. The best way to override this is to come back to LOVE. Leo rules the heart and is an incredibly loving and generous sign. Check in with your heart and notice if it feels closed or open? Be a cheerleader of others, be happy for their success and delight in their happiness.

*"I CHEER FOR PEOPLE. I WAS RAISED TO BELIEVE THERE'S ENOUGH SUN FOR EVERYONE."*

- TORY L ELETTO

## THE WOLF

Our guiding animal for this Full Moon is the Wolf. The Wolf represents our Wild Woman nature, the part of us that won't be tamed, civilised or controlled. I recently learned that during the Cromwelian government in the 1650s, Oliver Cromwell ordered all the wolves in Ireland to be killed to signify the taming of the country. Prior to this, there were so many wolves in Ireland it was





known as Wolf-land. The last Wolf is believed to have been killed in 1786. I found learning this absolutely devastating, particularly because of my Irish heritage and deep love for wolves.

It's interesting to reflect upon the patriarchy's need to tame the wild and to civilise and dominate both nature and the feminine. As we reflect upon these disturbing times in history and also look to the current world stage can we awaken our own inner wolf and howl at the moon in defiance? When we connect to our inner Wild Woman, we shake off the need to be pleasing, to be polite, to be tamed. We shake off the need to be the same from one day to the next and start to become as mysterious and changeable as the moon. We start to tend to our inner world as much as we tend to our outer world. We arrive in our bodies, fully and without shame!

## THE MORRIGAN

Our guiding Goddess for this Full Moon is the Irish Goddess The Morrigan. She is the perfect Goddess to continue our Wild Woman awakening, especially as one of her sacred animals is the Wolf who she also shapeshifts into. She is also associated with crows, ravens and cows. The Morrigan is an ancient Dark Goddess and one who is steeped in mystery and magic. She defies being typecast and remains to this day illusive and fairly misunderstood - even the meaning of her name is inconclusive. Some say her name means 'Great Queen', others say it means 'Phantom Queen' or even 'Queen of the Dead'. The Morrigan is a name, a noun and a title. She is best known as a battle Goddess and Warriress but there is also evidence of her being a sovereign Goddess of the land as well as a Goddess of fate and prophecy.

*"SHE IS BLOOD AND BATTLE  
AND DEATH,  
THE BLADE THAT CUTS  
FLESH FROM BONE,  
THAT CUTS THE OLD FROM  
THE NEW,  
THAT RESHAPES, REMAKES,  
REDEFINES US.  
BLOOD IS NOT TO BE  
FEARED; IT IS THE CURRENT  
OF LIFE,  
BATTLE IS NOT TO BE FEARED; IT IS THE PRICE OF SOVEREIGNTY,  
DEATH IS NOT TO BE FEARED; IT IS THE END OF THE OLD...  
AND A NEW BEGINNING, ENDLESSLY." - PAGAN PORTALS, THE MORRIGAN*







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On the next page you will find our Imbolc Worksheet for you to print and keep or use for journal prompts.

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

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

Visit [WWW.PATREON.COM/SISTERSOFTHEMOON](http://WWW.PATREON.COM/SISTERSOFTHEMOON) for more information

# Imbolc Worksheet



What ideas are stirring in you?

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Release it on the fire list

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What needs the waters of renewal?

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What wisdom have you gained this winter?

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How can you embrace your inner maiden?

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# HEARING THE EARTH'S CALL

OAK

As I lie in the darkness, next to my sleeping partner, my mind is wide awake. I can feel that sleep will not be arriving anytime soon and I wonder why. Outside I can hear the wildness of the wind in the forest, and as the curtains shift I can see clouds racing across the stars. The trees whisper and I muse that the sky and the land are calling me from my warm bed, into the Winter night.

Lying for a few minutes more, willing sleep to come I realise that no, the Earth is, in fact, actually calling me and I won't be drifting off while she wants me. It is almost as though I can feel the magic dancing around me, and I decide to honour the night, donning my blackest clothes over my pyjamas, complete with a black fir body warmer. I feel an un-fathomable need to match the night. She is the mistress here I realise. Downstairs, the wind is whispering to me, not words exactly, but a calling. However, each cell in my body also wants to be warm, so I choose an earthenware mug and make some St John's Wort tea. Part of me wonders if I am trying to look like something from a Witch Pinterest Board, but I know it is just my mind getting in the way and carry on.

Outside is a gust of welcoming, I quickly see the light spilling from my kitchen window, like an insult to the night and switch it off. Out in my garden the Earth invites me to slip off my slippers and I wiggle my toes into the grass. Surprisingly the Earth is warm, pleasing and easy to stand on. With my hands wrapped around my warm mug I look around. The pine trees at the end of my garden are silhouetted against the sky, waving violently, yet decidedly happily in wind, as if they were children being spun around by a trusted and loving parent. I smile at them, then a terrifying noise pierces the distance, a loud creaking almost as though the old Oak tree in the next field was screaming under the pressure of the wind.

The Earth beneath my feet feels warm and pulls me, out of my control, to the floor. I root my fingers and toes into the ground and my whole body is filled with an almost unbearable love for the Earth. I speak to her, out loud, letting my mind free-run without filter. I tell the Earth of my deepest love for her, how I am so grateful for her immense beauty, for the creatures and plants, for the food and for holding us humans up despite all we have done. I ask her to forgive us, to forgive me, for all the harm humans have done to this beautiful Earth.

Suddenly fear rises up in me, as the Oak tree creaks again and wind whips past my ears. Looking up at the almighty power of the night, mostly I am afraid as I realise it must be 1am. My mind wonders if the strange man who wanders the woods might break into my garden, what if a robber stumbled across me? Through my hands I feel as if the Earth is laughing, and she gently imparts an image to my mind, of a dishevelled woman, dressed in her pyjamas and black witchy clothes on all fours in

her garden next to her slippers, speaking a prayer to the earth at 1am and I laugh. The Earth is right. I am definitely the most disconcerting thing about the night as far as any human is concerned.

After my prayer to the Earth I breathe in a green light, seeing it lift from the Earth and surround me, enter my lungs, fading and growing with each creak of the trees. Feeling this warm green light, I can only describe it as a light of belonging. I am the Earth's. I come from her and I can return to her at any time. I thank her for hearing me and calling me into this night. Then, before I know it, I make a pledge out loud. I tell the Earth "I will do whatever I can, mother, to help the Earth with my choices". Thinking that this was a reasonable pledge, I was surprised, when a reply shot up my arms into my mind. I describe it as words here for ease, but they were not words spoken by the Earth, they were feelings. "That is not good enough child. It is too easy to do what you can. You must do whatever is possible to heal the Earth, even when that is uncomfortable or difficult". And with that, I felt my hands release from the Earth.



I stood and sipped my tea for a while, wondering what this could mean, filled with awe that the Earth had spoken to me. So many of us miss this deep call. We imagine it is our minds longing for contact with the great mother, that we have fabricated this call to connect, or we turn to our phones to join another Witch based Facebook group, all the while plugging our ears to the quiet call out into the Earth and her loving arms. I wonder at how each of us could hear this call if we trusted ourselves a little more, and knew that the Earth wanted each of us to listen to her if only we turned down the volume. Strange, how I have only heard this call in the depths of the night, in the silence of life and the loudness of the darkness. What a beautiful thing that each and every one of us might hear this call of the Earth if we trust and listen.

Gradually the cold returned and I knew the Earth had called me out, and now the night was releasing me. I sent love and thanks through my feet into the darkness and the ground and headed inside. From that day onwards I am trying to do whatever possible to heal the Earth, and I share her message with you.



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# SPRING MAGIC

FAIRY BEC – WITCH RESIDENCY WRITER

Well, what a start to this year!

This is not the article I was considering writing for this edition but I have felt so strongly drawn to write it.

Everybody I know is suffering on some level. The energies around us all right now are so odd and unbalanced. We are all on this stormy sea together but we are in different boats. Because people are struggling in their boat, they are often finding it difficult to see what is going on around them. I am witnessing limited levels of empathy and a growing sense of alienation from many as they are just focussed on keeping afloat.

I personally have felt so much better when I put my trust in the universe that it will look after me so I can focus on the needs of others. Us lightworkers need to rise up right now and help people see a way out.

We energy sensitives/empaths are probably particularly affected right now as we navigate what probably feels like stepping through a battle field of flying bullets of other people's emotions. I for one feel like I am still stuck on the 'Coronacoaster' of emotions trying not to absorb those of others at the same time. I usually can level myself well but I am like an emotional rubber ball right now!

I was in a really wobbly place in the first week of this year and I asked the angels to show me a message. Here is the message for everybody:-

*"January is looking sludgy but once we start to see the petals open then sun will shine on an abundance of opportunities and excitement."*

They showed me the image of a snowdrop. They said:-

*"You may see the leaves or the bud to remind you that there is hope coming when you are feeling down. When the petals open, the opportunities will arise so make sure you are open and aware."*



The angels told me that we all need to hold hope, which we all need to try to remain positive. They also said we need to remember that our thoughts are energy and energy can be very powerful. The angels promised me that exciting things have happened in seed form in 2020 and they are starting to germinate in 2021.

This led me on to think about the magical journey of seeds.

As a kitchen witch, I usually work a lot with herbs and ingredients you can consume. However, 2020 showed me more possibilities with seeds, plants and what I can do in my own home and garden to enhance the magic that is already there. As I had more time on my hands, I set about harvesting seeds from my own garden and drying them.

Below is a table of what I dried and their magical properties:-

<i>Plant</i>	<i>Magical Properties</i>
Hollyhocks	These seeds are useful for any wealth and abundance spells. Hollyhocks aid positive energy and 'death and rebirth' for major life changes. <b><i>FIRE MAGIC</i></b>
Poppy	Adding poppy seeds to your bath will help you overcome grief. Poppies are good for remembrance as well as decision making. <b><i>WATER MAGIC</i></b>
Marigold	Marigolds bring energy and vitality. They aid sleep and balance as well as bringing positivity and protection. Marigolds are great for happiness and uplifting energies. <b><i>EARTH MAGIC</i></b>
Nasturtium	Nasturtiums are great for clearing and setting the pathway for new starts. Planting them helps you stay on your spiritual pathway. Nasturtiums bring courage, strength and passion. <b><i>AIR MAGIC</i></b>
Wildflower	Wildflowers are not only essential for the insects around us but they bring blessings to our homes. <b><i>SPIRIT MAGIC</i></b>
Sunflower	Sunflowers are a very magical plant. They help with self-confidence, happiness, positivity, love and fertility. <b><i>SPIRIT MAGIC</i></b>

To work with this type of magic, you don't need to have the same plants as me, you don't need to have dried the seeds yourself. You don't even need a garden. You just need to think about why you want to use the seeds - what do you want to achieve in 2021?

You can work with the seeds in two ways:-

- 1) Simply plant them. These can be indoors on a windowsill, in a greenhouse or outdoors.
- 2) Create spell pouches or spell jars.

The key is the intent. Why did you choose those particular seeds? What do you hope to manifest for yourself or others?



If you choose to plant the seeds, do so with care. Set your intent (e.g. good health for my family) and visualise the seed germinating and growing into a healthy plant. You could also plant seeds to answer questions or show you when to act. I have done this with easy to grow seeds such as sunflowers. You can label the pots with dates, time frames or yes & no and you get your answer when you see the first plant appear above the soil.



If you choose to create a spell pouch or jar then start with a clean, empty jar or a pouch. I recommend silk as organza can leak if you put anything powdery in it such as salt or incense. You could write your intent on a piece of paper and add other ingredients to the pouch or jar. For example, if you are wanting to step away from negative energies, you could pop a piece of black tourmaline in quartz in too.

Place your spell jar or pouch somewhere that will enhance what you are trying to achieve or somewhere to remind you to focus on it when you pass near it.

If you do perform a spring magic ritual, please consider also holding someone else in your heart. We all need to lift each other up in 2021.

In my opinion, the only way forward is to be there for each other, be kind and be more tolerant. If we send our positive energy, our well-wishing thoughts, to each other this is a great start and raises the vibrations of others as well as ourselves.



# WORDS FROM THE WITCH'S JOURNAL

PORTLAND JONES – WITCH RESIDENCY WRITER

I HAVE A LARGE WOODEN CUPBOARD IN THE ALCOVE OFF MY LIVING ROOM. IT HAS CUPBOARDS WITH GLASS DOORS AT THE TOP, A SHELF BENEATH THEM, AND DEEP CUPBOARDS AT THE BOTTOM ENCLOSED WITH WOODEN DOORS. I FELL IN LOVE WITH IT MANY YEARS AGO THOUGH I COULDN'T AFFORD TO BUY IT. MY MOTHER – WHOM I SUSPECT KNEW WHAT I WANTED IT FOR – BOUGHT IT FOR ME AS A GIFT.

This is where I keep my 'witchy' stuff. Crystal ball, chalice, athame, wand, tarot cards and herbs are kept on view but protected by the glass. These cupboards also contain spell work in progress. The shelf below contains my collection of crystals, and interesting pieces I have collected over the years – beautifully shaped twigs, scrolls of bark from my Eucalyptus tree, rocks from the beach. The lower cupboards contain my writings, from leather bound journals to A4 refill pads, to single scraps of paper torn from whatever book I was using at the time. There are folders full of information from years of study with my coven, records of the rituals we have performed, and the planning we did before them. There are scribblings of my personal feelings, grieving and joys. In lockdown, with plenty of time on my hands, I thought I would take a look in this cupboard, remind myself of my journey. The memories it brought back! Then I thought I might share them with you.

## IMBOLC 2017

Given the time of year, it seemed appropriate to start with our ritual for Imbolc, as recorded in the written summary that we produced as a keepsake. The first part reminded us of the meaning of Imbolc.

'The wheel of the year begins its ascent toward the Spring Equinox. The sap is rising in the trees; life force tamed deep within the ground is pushing against its bonds, ready to surge upwards. And for us too, energy is rising through the earth and through our bodies. Energy, potency, drive, determination, anticipation of warmth, of light, of life to come.'

We read a poem by Jill Yarnell.<sup>1</sup>

So the skies rumbled and the snows came,  
Everywhere down through the centuries of this gray night  
Came women gathering to pray,  
And to sink their hands into the dark earth.

They gathered seeds and prepared them for planting,  
They meditated in the icy darkness,  
And they celebrated the lambing of the first ewe,



To hasten spring.

And when through the earth they felt the stirring,  
They sang songs encouraging the tiny seeds to grow.

In the dark, wet soil you can smell their work still;  
They are digging along beside us. Listen!

The north wind carries their song across the snow,  
This Imbolc night.

As the Earth prepares for Spring,  
Wise women gather in circles to await the promise of new life,  
And to sing praises for the green earth.

And so do we, here now,  
This year, and every year.  
Welcome Imbolc!

Next came the list of preparation that we needed to do for the ritual itself. The tasks:

- Make butter
- Prepare dough for Bride's Bannocks
- Write words of inspiration on Bride's Crosses
- Carve a candle with a personal target
- Gather items for the altar – a white cloth, a figure of the lady, ivy, oil burner with ylang ylang for depth, and may chang for lightness.

On the day itself, we cast the circle with salt, with lavender, with rosemary, with fire. We called the quarters. We read aloud a poem by Ted Hughes<sup>2</sup>, then added our own thoughts on Imbolc, what it meant for each of us.

The earth invalid, dropsied, bruised, wheeled  
Out in the sun,  
After frightful operation.  
She lies back, wounds undressed to the sun,  
To be healed,  
Sheltered from the sneapy chill creeping North wind,  
Leans back, eyes closed, exhausted, smiling  
Into the sun. Perhaps dozing a little.  
While we sit, and smile, and wait, and know

She is not going to die.

We raised energy through a fire meditation.

‘Let your eyes unfocus and gaze into the flames. Let your breathing slow. Let your mind roam free, unfettered by worldly worries. What can you see? When you are ready light your carved candle from the fire.’

We turned our attention to the Bride’s Crosses we had made, deciding whether we wished to burn these in the fire, or keep them as a visual reminder. I burned mine, setting my words of inspiration spiralling free into the night.

For cakes and ale we cooked our Bride’s Bannocks, then spread them still warm with the butter we had made. We thanked the quarters, opened the circle by walking around widdershins. And of course, we ended with ‘Merry meet, merry part, and merry meet again.’

Rituals for us often involve making things. The effort of physically making something helps us focus on the purpose. The Bride’s Cross<sup>3</sup> can be made from many materials including paper which is how we were able to write on them. You will find many tutorials on the web.



We made our butter from Gold Top milk, the one where you can see the cream at the top of the bottle. Carefully pour off the cream, avoiding the more watery milk underneath. Put the cream in a small jar, secure the lid, and then shake. And shake. And shake. Eventually the cream will split into solids and watery milk. The solid part is your butter.

Bride’s Bannocks<sup>4</sup> are a type of flatbread, which can be cooked in the oven or on the stove top in a frying pan. Or if you are adventurous – and can keep a decent fire going – you could try outside on the ritual fire, though I would have some spares made in reserve to avoid disappointment.

- 450g flour
- 360ml of water
- 2 tablespoons of baking powder
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 60g butter
- 150g raisins
- olive oil for cooking
- flour for dusting

Put flour, baking powder, salt and butter in a bowl. Mix, slowly adding water until you have a dough. Add the raisins, and mix them into the dough. Knead for approximately 10 minutes. Divide the dough and roll into balls. Press into circles about 1 cm thick. Lightly dust both sides with flour.



Add olive oil to the frying pan. When hot, add dough circles. When a crust has formed on the bottom, turn them over. Cook for 12 to 15 minutes. Enjoy.

Imbolc 2017 was a significant ritual for me, though I didn't know it at the time. At the end of February that year, I had a stroke which left me altered in many ways. The physical changes I have learned to deal with. It has left me sight impaired; I can no longer drive because of that. The part of my brain that recognises faces and remembers new places doesn't work anymore. More importantly, and more interestingly, is the changes in my perception of the world. Having had a first hand introduction to how fleeting life is, how fragile we are, has made me value endlessly the time I have left. At first there was fear for the future I might not have, now there is joy in what future I do have.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/ecumenicus/posts/10157970180639394>

<sup>2</sup> Ted Hughes from 'A March Moring Unlike Others' from Ted Hughes, Collected Poems, London:Faber & Faber, 2003

<sup>3</sup> [http://www.bbc.co.uk/ahistoryoftheworld/objects/f0pxDlGeTs2U1b5Z4\\_Y\\_8w](http://www.bbc.co.uk/ahistoryoftheworld/objects/f0pxDlGeTs2U1b5Z4_Y_8w)

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.bbc.co.uk/blogs/cbeebiesgrownups/entries/ff0f6a11-986b-37a4-938d-f6d22a36817a>



# SPOKEN WORDS OF WISDOM

## THE OLD CRONE

WORDS OF WISDOM SOUNDS RATHER PRESCRIPTIVE AS IF THESE WORDS ARE THE LAW BUT THEY ARE NEVER THAT. THEY ARE MORE LIKE A LITTLE RECOMMENDATION FROM A TRUSTED PERSON, LIKE A GUIDANCE, A SUGGESTION AND A SUPPORT. LIKE ADVICE FROM A FRIEND, WORDS OF WISDOM GIVES YOU AN OPPORTUNITY TO SEE THINGS THROUGH THE EYES OF ANOTHER PERSON, A MOMENT TO REFLECT AND THEN MAKE UP YOUR OWN MIND.

My favourite slice of wisdom is from Confucius. He said.....

*'Every problem has a solution. If it has no solution then it is no longer a problem, it becomes a fact and we must learn to live with that fact.'*

This has guided me through many difficult times in my life.

The spoken word has a great deal more power than you can ever imagine, to both support and also, sadly, to hurt. I have had things said to me in the past which really hurt and were meant to hurt. These words leave a mental scar. I have also had things said to me which are wonderful in their simplicity. These things stay in your heart but are often over-ridden by the harsh words. *Words of wisdom alert* Always remember, other people's words are simply that, just other people's words.

The power of the spoken word can be used to a great extent in your rituals. I was brought up as a Roman Catholic and went to church at least once a week. As a convent schoolgirl we had prayers every day and although as a pagan now, I no longer practice my Catholic heritage, I am aware that prayer in its many forms is a powerful tool to hold in your armoury. It is the repetition and the communal repetition which is the power. Chanting a **mantra** and any kind of *prayer* has a powerful and cathartic resonance.

In Yoga I loved to chant the OM and Shanti, shanti, shanti. It really helped me in meditation and calming and as a pagan I love to chant the AWEN which has the same effect on me. The science of this is that when chanting a prayer, a mantra, an affirmation, it can lower the heart rate and release tensions in the physical body.

In my rituals, I always feel that chanting an affirmation is very powerful, so much so that one can feel the energy in the atmosphere. Saying things even to yourself out loud is soul affirming and repetition of a positive affirmation can bring peace and calm as well as a power and an energy you did not even realise you had.



In my Circle castings I am often asked by others to request support from the spirit and the universe and to offer healing to someone in need. As a very visual person I write these down and repeat what is written out loud. For me the loveliest part of this is when the person who has requested assistance comes back to tell me that they have had a very positive response. It's like chocolate for the soul.

Apart from the OM and the AWEN I write a different mantra for each sabbat. I print them on card, find a suitable picture and laminate them to hand out to my fellow castees. We find a point within the circle ritual to chant these mantras then they can all take them home as a reminder.

Here are a few ideas to help you to have a go yourself and maybe make your own.

*The only person I need to impress is myself.*

*Inhale the positive, exhale the negative*

*I am a human being with flaws, and that is OK.*

Blessed Be

The Old Crone

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# MINDFUL PURIFICATION FOR IMBOLC

CHERRY DOYLE – WITCH RESIDENCY WRITER

With its themes of renewal and moving from darkness to light, Imbolc is the perfect time to grab fifteen minutes to yourself to run through some meditation to ensure your mind is ready for the coming activity of spring. So get yourself comfortable, make sure you won't be disturbed, and follow our guided thought path below to calm the mind and renew your vigour.

Once you're lying or sitting comfortably, close your eyes and breathe deeply and naturally. Concentrate on your breathing but don't force it. Follow your breath from your nose to your lungs and back to your nose. Feel your chest rising and falling. With every exhalation, feel your body relaxing.

Take your thoughts to your feet. Imagine a pure, warm white light gradually creeping up through your toes. Imagine the light spreading slowly up through your feet, ankles, and calves. The light is cleansing, and dissolves any feelings of coldness or tension. Feel the tension lifting out of your body and floating away. The white light moves up through your knees and thighs to your hips. Both of your legs are completely relaxed by the warmth of the light.

Imagine the light stretching into your abdomen and up through your chest. It fills your silhouette completely, lighting every dark corner of your body. At your heart, the epicentre of your body, the light pauses to calm any anxieties you're carrying in your chest. Its gentle strength purges the darkness like a lantern lighting a cave.

The light moves to your shoulders, and creeps down your arms to the elbows. Feel how the purity of the light makes you feel weightless. Your lower arms, wrists, and hands are filled with healing white. You can feel it flooding warmth and calmness down both arms to the fingertips.

The light spreads through your neck and upper back up into your head. It fills your head at the crown, completing its journey through your physical body. Your whole body is warm, relaxed, and filled with light.

Now look deep into your mind – the light fills the space where any thoughts linger. They're unimportant now – you can put them aside for later. If thoughts persist in your mind, tell yourself you'll have time to address them after the meditation, and return to the ever-strong whiteness of your mind, like a field covered in fresh, deep snowfall, under a wide, white sky.



Look closely at the pristine white snow, evenly covering the field. You notice a green shoot poking through the snow. Watch as it grows and unfurls into a beautiful snowdrop, its soft pearly-white petals drooping down towards the snow. Look into the centre of the snowdrop, and you can see a pale blue, smokeless flame, burning at the heart of the flower.

As you focus on the blue flame, feel any uncertainties, anxieties, or stresses you have flowing into the centre of the flame. Don't think about them in detail, or focus on the emotion they cause you. Just imagine a stream of negativity leaving your mind and entering the flame. See how it feeds on them and grows stronger. Feel your mind becoming free, shaking off its everyday pressures and finding peace in the pure white field.

Gradually, the snowdrop closes around the flame and recedes back under the snow, capturing all your stress and taking it back into the earth. The sun is shining on the snow-covered field, and as its clean, bright rays sweep across the snow, it fills your mind with peace.

Come back to focus on your breathing. For a few moments, follow your breath from your nose to your lungs and back again. Feel your chest rising and falling. Now, begin to return to your physical body. Picture the room around you. See yourself sitting or lying in the room. When you're ready, start to move your fingers and toes, open your eyes, and sit up. You have completed the meditation.

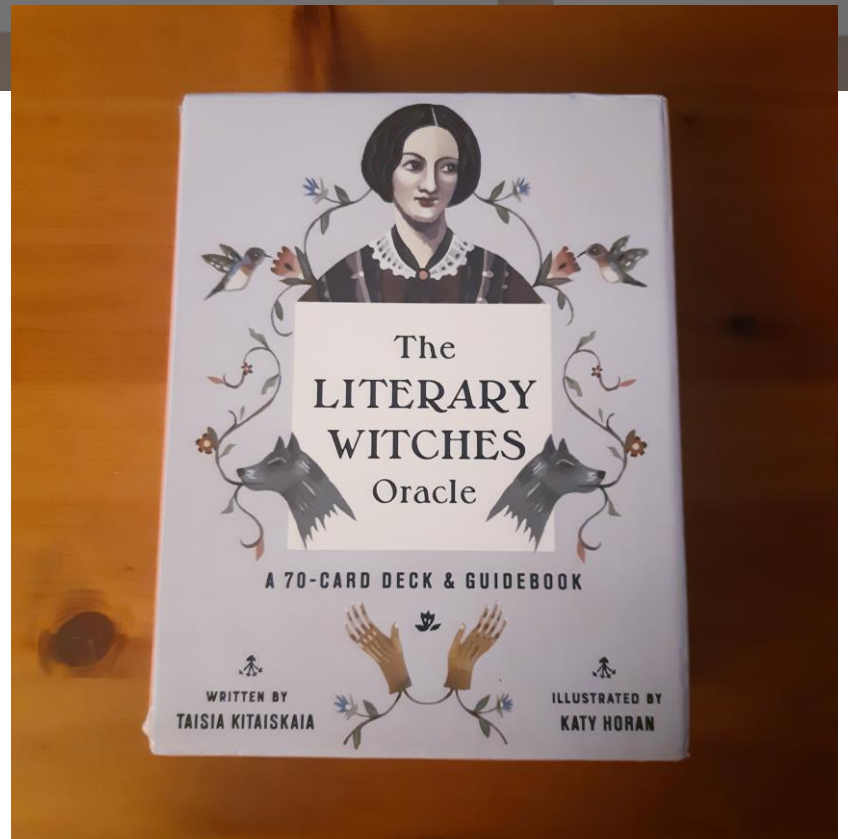


# USING THE LITERARY WITCHES ORACLE DECK

ALEX WORTHINGTON – WITCH RESIDENCY WRITER

'THE LITERARY WITCHES ORACLE' DECK, WRITTEN BY TAISIA KITAIKAIA AND ILLUSTRATED BY KATY HORAN IS A 70 CARD ORACLE DECK AND GUIDEBOOK BASED ON THEIR BOOK *LITERARY WITCHES: A CELEBRATION OF MAGICAL WOMEN WRITERS*. I HAD THE BOOK ON MY WISH LIST, BUT MY PARTNER SURPRISED ME AT CHRISTMAS THIS YEAR WITH THE ORACLE DECK.

One of my new year's goals was to study Tarot and delve more into the divination side of my practice. I've had a tarot deck for years that I use sporadically but found I've never carved out the time to really study it and the craft or incorporate it into my day to day routine the way I imagined I would. Part of that neglect was due to Life, but I admittedly was also a bit intimidated by how much studying I felt I would need to do to truly understand the cards and their countless possible meanings or readings. Getting this deck gifted to me opened my mind up to the possibilities of trying something, although similar to Tarot, completely new that I had never even considered investing in.



The deck is split between two types of card: The Witches, 'figures wandering and brooding over an enchanted landscape', and The Witches' Materials, 'creatures and objects haunting the landscape'. They can be used in reading singularly or as part of a spread. The deck comes in its own beautiful box for easy storage and a guidebook with spread ideas, card meanings and author biographies for the witch cards (which can also be used in enhancing your readings of both the cards and in general. This deck has introduced me to a lot of female authors I have never heard of before!). The illustrations on the cards are truly some of the most beautiful artwork I've seen, and fit the vibe of the deck so well. I actually already had a print of the artwork on the Mary Shelley card framed on my desk at home as she is my literary role model and inspiration. In the deck her card symbolises Loss which, if you know anything about Shelley and her works, is very fitting. I've yet to pick her card in a reading but I know I'll have lots to think about when I do. Which is something I think I can say for all the literary witch author cards. They're not just the meanings assigned to them in the guidebook but real historical



figures that have made an impact on the literary world; their life and work can and should come into any reading you do.



Throughout January I have been picking a single card at random to inform my day so I have had a mix of witch cards and material cards. I ask the deck to let me know what I should be reflecting on or what the day has in store for me. Sometimes the cards don't end up making much sense to me, though part of that may be because I'm trying to read them too literally. Oracle cards tend to generally have simpler, more obvious meanings behind them than tarot, but that doesn't mean you should limit your own interpretations of them, which is something I have learnt over the past month. Whilst writing this article for instance, I was talking to my mother about the cards, and she helped me dig deeper into reading a card I initially discarded as not being relevant to the day I was having since the three meanings of the card had never come to actually happen or be something I was actively reflecting on. However, we found through our discussion that the meanings in that case really just translated to my own anxieties and expectations for the day I'd had going into it.

I've found doing a personal reading for myself every day has not only let me explore a new aspect of divination but has also helped me to combat and keep at bay those January blues. Having this small but meaningful routine has helped me maintain a semblance of structure to my day. Which, during times like these and in the midst of another lockdown, has been incredibly beneficial for my well-being. As all oracle decks are different I do plan to start collecting and experimenting with others, but I am so thankful to my partner for thinking of me, and to the creative minds behind 'The Literary Witches Oracle' deck for creating such a beautiful divination tool that I can wholeheartedly recommend to anyone looking for their first deck or their tenth. You'll want this one for your collection for sure.

Oracle Deck Rating: 5 stars - easy to use and beautiful artwork.





# WITCHERY MADE SIMPLE

K.D. PHILLIPS

## **Intention:**

Let's take a fleeting moment to escape the trappings of how witchcraft is viewed by western society in these modern times. Let's flash back to a time of actual magic, rather than ritual enforcing intention towards self-help.

If you've landed in an ancient time amidst a Druidic monolith littered with the debris of human sacrifice... you may have traveled further than I intended. Centre your mind somewhere between there and an old woman boiling potions deep in the dark forest. I'm talking about a time of The Cunning Folk. The halfway-witches. Those that convene with the spirits. As for what "Spirits" actually are is debatable, but so is consciousness—so let's focus on how magic works, rather than why it works.

First off, disclaimer. I don't know much, but I know what has, and hasn't, worked for me.

'Test the spirits', is a common phrase, albeit Christian, and is exactly what I've been doing.

I do have a point, and I'm getting there.

Modern witchcraft and its intention based rituals were born of something older, as are the Psychic Medium channelings of modern times. Victorian Mediumship was nothing like what we see today.

Spirit-Boxes are the modern version of Table-tipping... a technological parlour trick. All the modern ghost hunting equipment has no shred of evidence that anything produced through them is spirit based. No spirit lingers in order to relay parts of nearly indecipherable words and half sentences. No more than someone's grandmother being able to only tell a psychic the first letter of her name.

"I have 'The Gift', I'm getting the letter 'J'." Some gift you have there.

So is it all a sham? A scam?

Most of it, yeah, it is.

So what's the real stuff. Where's the craft, rather than the art?

Short answer. It's in you. You just have to open up.

But here's the scary part... it's no easier than opening up in a relationship and being vulnerable.

Intention: the way I see it is... it's intuition. It needs to feel more natural than how we understand the word intention. Sounds forced.

If you intend on something, feel for it.

Do you see where I'm blending the witchy with the woo-woo psychic, ghostly stuff?

I'm getting in front of myself. Sorry. It's not easy to explain what most consider the unexplainable.

Let's go time traveling further back. Gilgamesh, the Mesopotamian text from the earliest recorded civilization... (Okay, new finds throw that statement in the air, but it's certainly the earliest text we have)

Gilgamesh is part fable, part epic poem, and it's as well known as Beowulf and Dante's Divine Comedy... and all have never been read by anyone you have ever met. (Go get you some education, kids)

Hang in there. I'm getting there...

Gilgamesh has spirits mentioned, so the idea of spirits were around way-back-when. Beowulf has 'Monsters', but not really monsters, they are more like magical creatures from the wilderness. Grendal's mother is called a merewif. A woman of the mere. A water-woman who has magical abilities. I consider these spirits of the wilderness. Like the Fae. The traditional fairies that you don't mess with, not the modern Tinkerbell idea. (More on these soon). And obviously the spirit of Virgil guides Dante through Hell and Purgatory. Virgil was not allowed in Paradise. Dante's lover Beatrice guides him therein. (Why was Virgil not allowed in Paradise? He was condemned to Hell, but allowed out to guide Dante, so it has at least the concept of a spirit that guides the living)

Okay, there's some Christianity mixed in with these stories... I hear you. But let's not forget that Wicca is a modern reinvention of rituals long forgotten. Most of it is completely made up, rather than made of something ancient. And yet most Pagans are happy to point out that most of Christianity's rites and rituals have been stolen and repurposed from our ancient Pagan ancestors. Most missing their own point... that Christianity has much to offer the Neopagan.

Let's look at King Solomon, and in particular, The Lesser Key of Solomon. This is an instruction manual as to the control of Spirits... later referred to as Demons. (Okay, we have references to Daemons before all that, but my point is that "The Church" used the term Demon to make The Lesser Key seem like a naughty book, and the spirits as naughty beings). Yet despite this, King Solomon is still seen as an all-round nice guy. Go figure.

I'm not saying Christianity has all the answers and that we should convert. Like with modern Witchery and Psychics, they all have elements of a much older truth.



So which bits of which work?

Short answer, I don't know. What works for you works for you. They call it practicing witchcraft for a reason. Same reason they call it practicing medicine. It's to be engaged in and to pursue truth.

Come back to intention. Those fairies mentioned before. Spirits of the woodland. Of the wilderness. They were tricky to deal with. Mostly invisible, from another realm. But when they appear to you, you had better not mince your words. To say 'Sorry' was a bad idea. It's an admission of fault. 'Pardon me' is asking forgiveness. To say 'Thank you' puts you in their debt... you don't want to owe these entities anything.

This manipulation is a common theme with 'Deals with the Devil'. He's tricky that way. Same for all demons. They will twist what you say. The Jinn, Genies, be careful what you wish for.

This is about focused intention. Be clear about what you are doing and what you want. See how similar this is to the modern day self-help type witchcraft?

In one of my YouTube videos, I ask the spirit of Lady Bateman-Scott to help me find her poetic epitaphs dedicated to her favourite pets, long thought to be stolen, damaged beyond recognition, or forgotten over time.

I did not find them. Not when I asked.

But I didn't say when I wanted to find them.

A week passed, and in the night, a dream of a very vivid nature came upon me. In the dream I found these epitaphs. So I kind of found them, didn't I?

Well, actually, I did ask to find them. I didn't ask to dream of finding them.

The next morning, the dream had filled me with an urge to return to the ruins of Great Barr Hall, and search once more for the epitaphs. It was on record that these stones were near the chapel, but that was all. They hadn't been physically seen in decades. As mentioned above, they were thought to be long gone.

Armed with only a dream, I cut and dug my way through brambles and crumbled debris. And right where they were in my dream... a stone emerged. It couldn't be, could it? Was this really an epitaph from the late 1800's?

Yes it was.

Was it magic?

Yes it was. Both real and metaphorical.

But be careful for what you ask of the spirits.

I had to save these artifacts.

They had to be moved from the ruins, and placed as a memorial at the foot of Lady Scott's final

resting place. I contacted the local council, the landowners, the church Lady Scott is buried at. I started a petition to get the community behind this touching tribute.

But I hadn't asked the spirit for this.

I hadn't asked if the spirit wants this. After all, in life these stones were where she wanted them.

As of writing this, I'm currently in battle with the local council, and landowners to make this happen. The land is for sale at £7000.000, and has developmental planning permission for residential properties... under the proviso that the ruined Hall be restored. My discovery is potentially impeding this progress.

I no longer know if I'm in the right. But I must try to do what feels right... to have these stones moved.

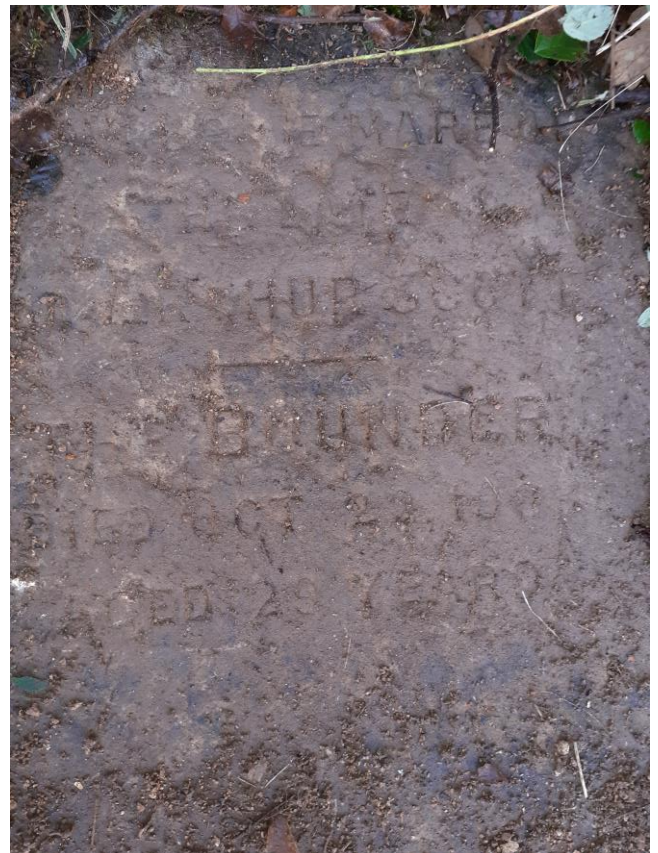
Maybe I should re-consult the spirits. Come what may.

My intention was, and is, good.

To watch the discovery of the epitaphs, click here  
<https://youtu.be/blxqoibok5w>

Sign the petition to save the stone, by moving it to Lady Scott's final resting place as a memorial.

<https://www.change.org/p/birmingham-city-council-save-lady-scott-s-poetic-epitaphs>







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# CORD MAGIC

SHORT TALK TO THE COVEN – 1987

PETER NASH

There are numerous ways of working practical magic in Wicca, some highly ritualised and complicated, others very simple. Probably one of the most popular in the craft today is cord magic, not least because it is a very powerful method of working in a coven environment, but also it is easily adapted for use by the lone spell worker.

The cord as a magical tool certainly has its own characteristics and symbolism, it is particularly suitable for spells that involve for example binding and/or grounding; and certainly they generate an energy of their own, and are particularly useful for spells where other forms of magic may be inappropriate such as banishing spells. In the binding of the initiate in the first-degree initiation, the cords represent the restriction of the womb before the candidate is symbolically reborn, furthermore the blindfold represents the darkness therein. Powerful symbolism indeed!

In my parent coven, the main method of working cord magic was that after the power had been raised and everyone had fallen to the ground to welcome it and show respect, the assembled coven would then sit around the perimeter of the circle man/woman alternately as far as possible. Each brother or sister present would then name the petition. This would continue, with the invocation being repeated over and over again, faster and faster until the High Priestess decided that enough power had been raised, and all would release their end of the cord so that the cords would then collapse in a bundle in the centre of the circle whilst the coven concentrated on the power being discharged into the astral sphere and the universe. The cords were then gathered up and placed on the altar with the knots still intact; these were not undone until just before the next circle. One advantage of this type of cord magic is that it is easily adapted for use by the solitary practitioner, with this mode the lone worker simply holds the cord at each end in each hand and ties the knots him/herself, but the method is essentially the same; the knots being tied not just as an aid to concentration, but to represent the accumulated power summoned and gathered together. The other main method of cord magic is by the use of the so-called Witches' Ladder, more of which later.

Another variation of cord working in a coven context was that sometimes the High Priestess may lie beneath the wheel of cords as the coven worked, with the hub of the cords wrapped round her athame which then acted as a sort of lightning conductor. The will of the High Priestess then



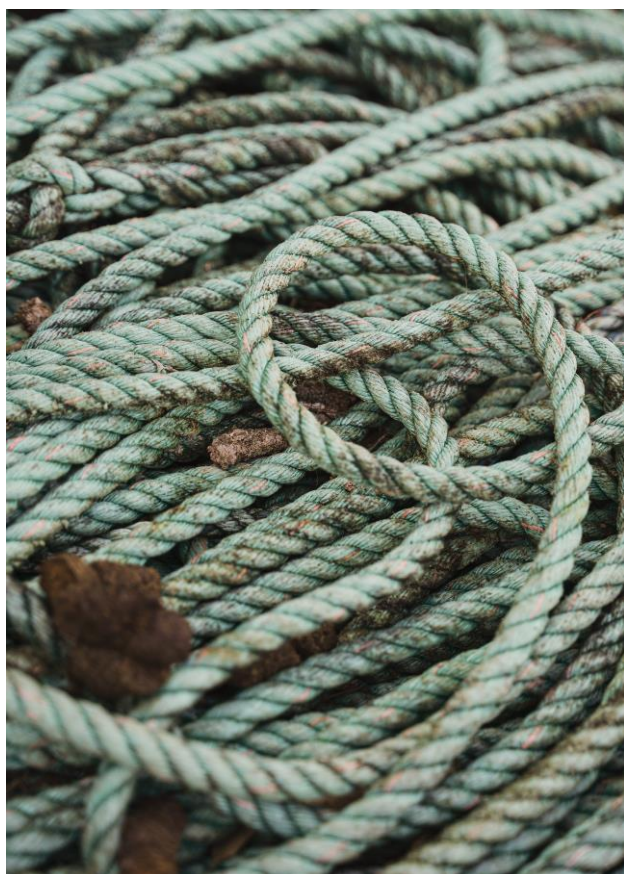
directed the power raised, amplified by the efforts of the rest of the group. This style of working however should only be attempted by an experienced coven as there can be side effects; indeed headaches, nausea, dizziness and extreme fatigue have all been reported, presumably the result of the energy not being directed properly or by a psychic overload of the mental, psychic and etheric bodies. Clearly a very experienced High Priestess is required as well as a skilled coven working completely in tune psychically with one another and in perfect harmony. Great care must be taken to ensure that the power is directed accurately and that no "residue" as it were remains.

Cords may also be used in the celebration of the Sabbats, where the coven may again gather around the perimeter of the circle; man-to-woman, with a witch of the opposite sex holding each end of the cord. Here the spokes created by the cords represent the wheel of the year. If the coven then performs a ritual or spiral dance, the symbolism of the working is further amplified. This form of sympathetic cord magic I feel is particularly potent at the solar festivals, i.e. the equinoxes and the solstices. I have even seen the cords released at the conclusion of the raising of the power so that the cords then fell into the burning cauldron on a bonfire. This was at Yule, and obviously the sacrificed cords represented the death of the Sun at this time of year. A new set off cords were then produced to represent his simultaneous rebirth during the remainder of the ceremony.

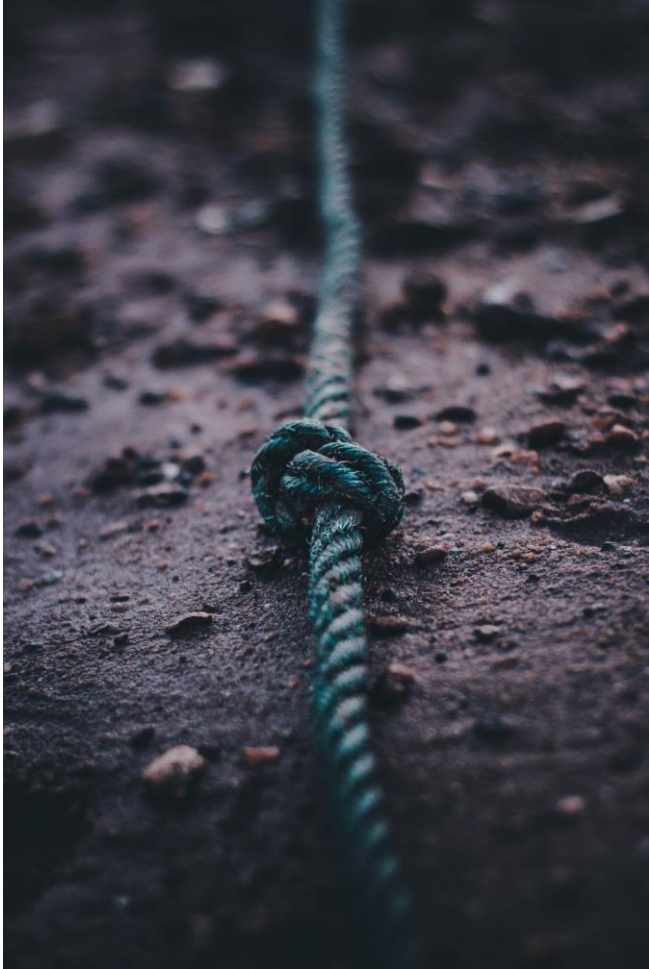
To return to the Solitary Practitioner; there is a very old method of cord working known as the "Witches' Ladder" (mentioned earlier). The traditional length of cord for this mode of working is 18 inches, however any multiple of 3 may be used. Similarly any colour of cord may be employed, although red, white, or blue is traditional. Gold, however is a good general purpose colour. To begin, sit quiet in a contemplative / meditative state of mind. You must then visualise very strongly the end result of what you are trying to achieve. (First class visualisation and concentration skills are an absolute must for any practitioner of the craft or any magical discipline at all for that matter.)

Next, take the cord in hand and recite a rune, preferably self-composed, as this will have more power and meaning to the spell worker. A typical example would be something like:

*"By the knot of one, the spell's begun...  
by the knot of two, it cometh true...  
by the knot of three, my will shall be...  
by the knot of four, the power is more...  
by the knot of five, my spell's alive...  
by the knot of six, the energies mix...  
by the knot of seven, the stars of heaven...  
by the spell of eight, the power of fate...  
by the power of nine, the (name object of spell) is mine!"*



The first knot is tied in the centre of the cord, the next two are tied in the left and right ends respectively with the remaining knots tied in between, on the left and right sides of the centre knot alternately. This method of working is therefore very similar to the mode of solo cord magic previously described, the chief difference being that more knots are used and in a specific pattern, and there is greater emphasis on a verbal spell recited in conjunction with it.



Having completed the knots, the operator then concentrates hard on the object to be accomplished before letting the cords go, again imagining the power dispersing in all directions into the universe, charged and ready to bring about the desired result.

Once the ladder spell is completed you may either put the cord safe if you intend to use it again or return it to the elements by burning it, burying it, throwing it into running water in the same direction that the water is flowing or abandoning it on a hilltop or other high place. This should be done after one full lunar phase.

If the spell is successful before the end of the lunar month, you may undo the knots within the circle, say a prayer of thanks to the gods and pass the cords through the elements once again to neutralise the cord so that it is ready to be used again.

If however the spell has not produced a result, undo one knot each day for nine days, again concentrating on your intent coming to pass. Sailors are believed to have used a spell similar to the Witches' Ladder many years ago to try and raise winds of sufficient force and correct direction to aid their journey. Cord magic may even be one of the oldest forms of magic to be practiced at all; it seems that prehistoric man may have used a form of sympathetic magic to bind clay models of animals, thus symbolising them being ensnared in traps. Legend has it that a form of Witches' Ladder was used by wives to inflict impotence on faithless husbands. But one of the first recorded historical accounts of cord magic is from Burchard, Bishop of Worms in the Rhineland of Germany who observed peasants placing knotted ropes in the branches of trees in order to divert harmful influences away from their cattle.

To return to the modern craft, however, many covens keep several sets of cords for practical magic purposes; some kabbalistically inclined groups keep cords corresponding to the ten sephiroth of the Tree of Life for use in appropriate invocations. Furthermore binding parts of the body with cords restricts blood flow and alters consciousness which can lead to the opening of the third eye for



clairvoyance and possibly even astral projection. Great care must be taken however for if the binding is too tight physical damage can occur.

Some witches wear a cord around the waist during coven meetings with the colour then denoting rank within the craft; e.g. white for first-degree; red for second-degree and blue for third-degree. Although there are reasons for each colour being assigned to a particular degree it would not be appropriate for me to reveal them here.

Cord magic can then be seen to be a simple and yet highly effective form of magic and indeed meditation on the cords in relation to colour can provide much food for thought and insight. The cord also links matter to spirit, the material world to the realm of the gods, and it binds not just the material base of the craft but the four elements and the four points of the compass.



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## AQUARIUS *10 of Pentacles, The Empress, Page of Swords*

Something new has been started and we can feel it growing. It could be a pregnancy or a resolution concerning a child. You could have trouble communicating with your extended family. They may want you to do something you're not comfortable with, such as join a family business or move closer to them, but you need to persist with your passions. Be more sociable and extend your circle so that you can share your passions with others. You may be resisting change if it seems out of your control or overwhelming but it could be a good thing.



## PISCES *6 of Cups, Ace of Pentacles*



You're living too much in the past and worrying about things that have already happened. Dwelling on regrets and not letting things go, such as your ex, will only block you from new things arriving. Invest your energy where it will bring something valuable instead of putting it toward things that you can't change. Don't self sabotage!

## ARIES *King of Pentacles, 9 of Cups*

This appears to be a great month. Don't hold back from spoiling yourself and others. You'll feel in control, confident and be met with little to no resistance, so you should get what you want. Enjoy feeling in your element and a possible money injection or promotion, you deserve it.

## TAURUS *3 of Wands, 5 of Wands*



You'll be very reflective, particularly with any conflicts you've had. You may be feeling in the middle of an argument, wanting what's best for everyone but what do you need? Try not to react instantly in a heated moment, you may regret what you say. Look how far you've come in regards to communication, there's real growth there.

## GEMINI *7 of Wands, Page of Cups*



Be careful who you're putting your trust in as they may coerce you into doing something that will get you into trouble. If you're not happy with how things are, speak out! You

may have lots of things coming at you which could leave you overwhelmed. Look deeper, don't just accept what looks good on the surface or what seems easy.

## CANCER *The Hanged Man, The Lovers*



Your close bonds will be tested, see things from their perspective rather than taking it personally. Look at something with a fresh set of eyes, it could strengthen a bond. Your love life feels stagnant or you may wonder where you stand with someone. Open up and allow yourself to be vulnerable so that you know where to go next.

## LEO *3 of Cups, Ace of Cups*

Prepare for a very emotional few weeks. You may make a new friend which could grow into



something more or reconnect with a close friend who you haven't seen in a while. Share all that love, you have so much to give. Reach out and find some new connections. Could there be more to this relationship?

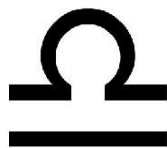
## VIRGO *Knight of Swords, Knight of Pentacles*



Before you rush into something, learn more about it. Try not to force yourself and your thoughts on other people as it may come off as offensive. Your advice is not always what people need or want, respect that. Wait for them to come to you for help so that there's no misunderstandings.

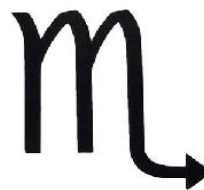
## LIBRA *Ace of Swords, 8 of Wands*

There's a great sense of new beginnings and you could be seeing changes come quite



quickly. After a difficult year you'll feel renewed. There could be a sexual connection with someone and/ or you'll find the inspiration needed to unblock your creativity. You're ready to take on the world and take your power back.

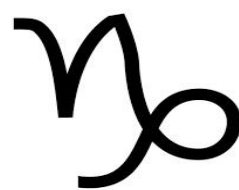
## SCORPIO *9 of Swords, The Star*



Something may not work out how you thought and it could impact your mental health. You could also be self-sabotaging and be convinced it isn't going to work before it's even really started. New responsibilities are overwhelming but they're helping you grow. Don't assume it's going to go wrong, you deserve happiness. You need to get out of your own way.

## SAGITTARIUS *Ace of Cups, 4 of Cups*

Watch out for an emotional month and have coping mechanisms in place. You're not content but does this come from a "the grass is always greener" mentality or because you're genuinely unhappy? Someone really likes you but you're not seeing it. You have so much to be thankful for, take off your blinkers.



## CAPRICORN *The World, Justice*

Things are working out as they should, hopefully in your favour. Something needs to be put right. Communicate your needs. It's time to end something, tie up loose ends. There's a sense of starting again, a clean slate. You could get news you've been waiting for. You may finally take, or book, that long awaited trip.





PAGAN  
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&

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PHOTOGRAPH BY  
KLAIRE DAWN ADER



# SONG OF THE SEALS

HELEN J.R. BRUCE – WITCH RESIDENCY WRITER

*The Sea* came in slowly, spreading over the sand like blood from a wound.

Above the waves, a couple of gulls screeched over some secret victory, laughing like drunks with scrap paper wings. The shore yielded, sighing with small bubbles from the tunnels of sandworms, and braced deep bones for the weight of the water. It was a daily assault. The tide never relented, and with each rise and fall it wore more beach away, carrying it off to other shores, where it was piled up and forgotten.

Mary watched from her beach hut. It was faded, and in need of repair, but the name she had painted still hung boldly above the door. Her neighbours had named their huts after past kings and queens, but Mary had named this one *Persephone*. It was a small defiance; easily overlooked, and she came here when she wanted to be alone.

On first opening the door, she was greeted by the thick musk of salt and wet wood. But, as she threw wide the windows, the sea breeze wound its way in, and she heard the shrill shrieks of children playing games in the dunes. She lit a candle, and felt extravagant. Her shoulders slowly dropped, tense muscles unravelling like twine. Her breathing turned deep and rhythmic as she spun slowly, bare feet pressed against the bare wood of the floor. Her limbs caught the wind, unfurling like sails. She seemed to grow larger. Standing on tiptoes, she stretched up to the heavens as if the felt clad roof of the hut was no barrier. Then she sang.

The song came from her soul, barely touching her lips. It tasted of deep salty pools, where the water lay still, and of sun drenched rocks with manes of green seaweed. It felt like a mother calling out to her child, after a long day of laughter that has at last turned tired. It sounded like the rush of the sea, trapped inside a shell, once the body of the inhabitant has been eaten by crabs. There was a clumsy knock on the door. The song ceased, and the sound of gruff laughter faded with running feet.

Mary fell to her knees. Her voice still hung on the air around her, swaying like kelp; holding her fondly. She caught the thin cloth of her skirt between her fingers, her hands drawing upwards, like the drag of a wave. Fine hairs grew from the pale skin of her thighs, spreading like marram grass on the curves of the dunes. Beneath these, were brown blotches, blooming fingerprint sized and spread slightly apart. They were chisel marks on a carved marble tomb, splinters in the wood of a bolted church door and the dappled markings on the slick skin of seals. A tear ran down her cheek and fell onto her leg. It tasted of salt.



There was also shame, bitter on her tongue and heavy like metal. These marks were a truth which she needed to hide. Away from the beach hut, they were bruises from tables or reminders of careless carrying of boxes. They were the livery of silence, painful in passing and yet somehow unbearable.

Under her soft fingers, the brown blotches spread. They covered her thighs and raced up to her stomach. Panic pulsed through her veins. She felt trapped in the wooden hut. Throwing open the door, she sprinted down the beach, tearing off her jewellery and pulling her dress over her head. The wind caught it, and whipped it away, caressing her skin with surprising tenderness. Her feet reached the water and she raised a shower of rainbows. Sand swirled round her toes and the waves whispered, over and over, something about sanctuary and a song she had forgotten. She dived in. Brown dapples blossomed over her face.

The sea was cool on the smooth lines of her body. She surfaced, dark eyes looking back at small figures on the beach. They felt distant now, and their intricate lives were stories she could not understand. But the waves; they made sense. How could she ever have doubted them? Humans were greedy, but the waves took only to give. A low beach in one place meant new land elsewhere. This was the cycle, onwards forever, watched by the heavens and the wide eyes of the seals.



# ADVICE FROM A GODDESS

YASMIN TUBRITT

Remember, the Goddess told me,  
That I want you to be free.  
You must prepare to fight a battle  
Between the brain and heart you see.  
One will want to linger in this world of earthly wealth  
And one will want to dance and sing  
And feel the spirits breath.

Logic, sense and reason are the human brain's domain,  
It will tell you to put order on the waking heart's refrain.  
But you must rise above this child  
And allow the soul to tell  
Of the beauty and enchantments  
That in the fairy realms do dwell.  
The magic of a cobweb as it glistens in the dew,  
The beauty of a rainbow when its colours dazzle through.  
The comfort of a gentle breeze that tickles 'bout your hair  
Or the majesty of bird flight  
Soaring freely in the air.  
The scent of smoky incense wafting slowly past your nose  
And the heady taste of summer wine  
Or the blood red garden rose.

Not all things are tangible, the Goddess said to me,  
This earth has many mysteries only an open mind can see.  
Don't stifle your intuition  
But embrace that energy  
For my child you are pure magic  
And so very loved by me.



# UNDER A GODDESS MOON

YVONNE BREWER

I felt the breath of a poem  
shiver on my skin.

It turned me in my sleep  
and I fell into a world of white silk,

spun by a Goddess of love  
riding on a swan carriage on  
the crest of high sea waves.

White flesh on a fireside white sheepskin  
rugged by the heat of burning fresh coals.

White snow- flakes pressing against  
the window- pane,

trying to spell your name.

Melting as they shimmer down out of sight,  
one with a world of white.

Dressed later in white velvet layers,  
white swan and owl feathers in my hair.

Snowdrops peeping flashes of light  
through green, whispering,

did you paint these words on my skin  
with your breath,  
did you trace them in the night sky  
as if I could forget?

# THE ENDING OF THINGS, THE BIRTHING OF OTHERS

JESSICA O SHEA – WITCH RESIDENCY WRITER

February clings to my hair  
with its rigor mortis grip  
unforgiving, with little intent  
that familiar ripple of nausea  
still & sickly

The days passed by and left their scents,  
our conversations consisted  
only of air  
the ending of things  
a slow strangeness, I see it coming  
pending at the window, I implore it  
but still I plead *one more day*  
I kept the door ajar,

You with open arms, and me no longer invited  
weeping over the sink again, only now  
without the eye roll of an audience  
how do I allow the sun to rise and set so often,  
when my thoughts cannot find  
an exit.



# TAR ABHÁILE

JESSICA O SHEA – WITCH RESIDENCY WRITER

When the earth begins its bloom  
make sure you answer the door;  
invite it to stay for tea  
let it drink from the same  
glass as you,  
uneasy at first, a given,  
peace may have its disguises  
decipher it gently—  
seek answers from its breath,  
make the bed  
with you both in it  
let it rest, no untimely mornings  
for when it is sleeping  
as the same, you must. You must.

*tar abháile* (in Irish Gaelic)

come *verb, noun*

home *verb, noun, adverb*

# CONNACH

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# GRIMOIRE

## SIMPLE FIRE RITUAL FOR IMBOLC

If you have an outdoor space and a fire pit, you may like to perform this simple Imbolc ritual. If you don't have a fire pit, you could light the papers in a fireproof bowl or cauldron, however please take care with fire indoors.



**SET UP YOUR FIRE READY TO BE LIT.** You might also like to add dried flowers if you have any, herbs, or create a loose incense mix with resins and herbs to toss upon the fire or burn indoors (I suggest a mixture of pine resin, dragons blood, cinnamon powder and rose petals).

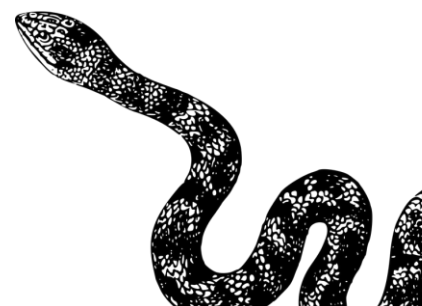
If you like to dress for the occasion, I suggest white or spring colours. You could also wear a cloak, and remove upon the lighting of the fire, symbolically removing winters mantle.

**LIGHT A BLUE OR A BLACK CANDLE,** to represent the winter and the Crone goddess (maybe you have a statue or image you can stand beside or under this candle). Spend some time thinking about what you will let melt away with the winter snows, and write them upon strips of paper.

**TAKE A GREEN, WHITE OR YELLOW candle,** to represent the Maiden and spring. Light it using the flame of the blue candle, envisioning the flame being passed from Crone to Maiden, winter to spring. **Think about the things you would like to grow** as we move through Spring towards Summer. You may like to write these in a journal or as intentions. Then take your spring candle to light your fire, discarding your winter papers in to the flames.

**WELCOME THE MAIDEN IN YOUR OWN WORDS OR WAYS** – you could sing, dance, beat a drum, write and/or read a poem. You might also like to make offerings, either to the earth or upon your altar, of milk, spring water or cider, bake a bannock (see recipe below) or biscuits, and decorate your altar and home with fresh spring flower

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







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