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MEET OUR RESIDENCY WRITERS

TEEN WITCH CORNER

FULL MOON IN PISCES

WITCH PICKS



Crows Feet Press

ISSUE 9 / SEPTEMBER 2020



WITCH

Editors Letter

Welcome to the ninth issue of WITCH magazine.

We're excited introduce you to our WITCH Residency writers this month!

We're also delighted to bring you the new Witch Picks feature – our favourite products from small pagan and witch businesses.

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

As always, thank you for reading and sharing, and we wish you a blessed Autumn Equinox.

-Bekki, Editor of WITCH magazine



WITCH
Magazine

Featuring...

Circle Casting – Part 2

Teen Witch Corner

Black Moon Cove: September Tarotsopes

Meet our Residency Writers

Witch Picks

Auset Gypsy Tarot

Which Witch is Which

Five Minute Fiction

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WITCH Magazine

Residency Writers

We are pleased to introduce our Residency Writers – all embarking on a 3 or 6 month journey with WITCH magazine! We hope you enjoy their contributions over the coming months!

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/!

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



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. 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.



Whilst our residency is full for this season, look out for our next residency opening in January 2021.

Of course you can still submit your articles as usual – visit www.witchzine.co.uk for all the details!

FULL MOON IN PISCES - THE DREAMING MOON

BY MICHELLE ROSE BOXLEY FOR SISTERS OF THE MOON

DEAREST SISTERS OF THE MOON, IN THE EARLY HOURS OF THIS MORNING (6.21AM BST) WE WELCOME IN THE FULL MOON IN PISCES. IN DRUIDRY, THE SEPTEMBER FULL MOON IS REFERRED TO AS THE SINGING MOON, THIS IS BELIEVED TO BE BECAUSE OF ALL THE HARVEST SONGS THAT WOULD HAVE BEEN SUNG AT THIS TIME OF YEAR.

This Full Moon also sees us welcoming in a new month and for many people an uneasy transition back into 'normal' working life and children going back to school. In terms of the academic calendar, September signifies the start of a new year and this can be a nice thing to tune into as the wheel of the year is about to turn again, in just a few weeks we will be celebrating the Autumn Equinox! So, we are definitely in a state of transition in so many ways and this full moon in Pisces can help us to tune into it's element of water and go with the flow.

Pisces is a sensitive, feminine, water sign so expect to feel fairly emotional whilst the moon is in this sign. Full moons always heighten emotions so the Pisces influence will amplify this even more. It's definitely a time to go slow, be gentle with yourself and make sure you've got lots of self care lined up. Pisces is the last sign of the zodiac and therefore carries with it a depth and maturity and, if we want, an opportunity to swim down into the waters of our unconscious and retrieve soul treasures. Pisces is a deep and magical sign, ruled by the 12th House of Self-Knowing and the Unconscious and the planets Neptune and Jupiter. Jupiter is the planet of expansion and Neptune is the planet of Universal Love and elevated consciousness. These influences mean that Pisces is always asking the big questions...Who am I? Where do we come from? What's the real meaning of human life? How can we be a conduit for the divine here on earth? Pisces is sometimes referred to as the Mystic of the Zodiac and provides us with a wonderful opportunity to tend to our spiritual life. This is perfect preparation for the upcoming New Moon in Virgo where we will be connecting to the archetype of the Priestess.

"We are not human beings having a spiritual experience. We are spiritual beings having a human experience." - Pierre Teilhard de Chardin

"There is a voice that doesn't use words. Listen."- Rumi

THEMES

Emotions, dreams, spirituality, mermaids, selkies, sea witches, creativity, connection to the Divine, Soul Dreams, Sacred Contracts, The Divine Feminine, Intuition, Mysticism, Healing,

Pisces is also referred to as the dreamer of the zodiac and is often accused of being away with the fairies, vague and impractical and although that might be true there's a lot we can learn from Pisces when we understand them a little better, as they tend to be a fairly misunderstood sign. The symbol for Pisces is two fish swimming in opposite directions representing how this sign exists in two worlds - the physical world and the spiritual world.



They have a wonderful connection to the dream world, the divine, the imagination and the ability to see beyond the ordinary and are deeply in tune with their feelings - this can sometimes overwhelm them. Pisces are highly creative and tend to be artists, musicians, writers, and dancers but also spiritual teachers and mystics. This full moon would be a wonderful time to let yourself dream, create and give yourself permission to feel.

The sun is in Virgo and the moon is in Pisces - this offers us a chance to look at our own balance between these worlds. Virgo is a very practical, grounded, earth sign and Pisces is a floaty, water sign but what they both have in common is the desire to have a spiritual life, to be of service and to connect with something beyond the daily grind. Virgo rules our routines and habits, an interesting question for this full moon is are our habits/routines/daily activities in line with our dreams? Or do we spend time day dreaming about what our life might look like but make no practical steps to make this happen? How could we combine the practical and discerning qualities of Virgo with Pisces freedom to dream and create?

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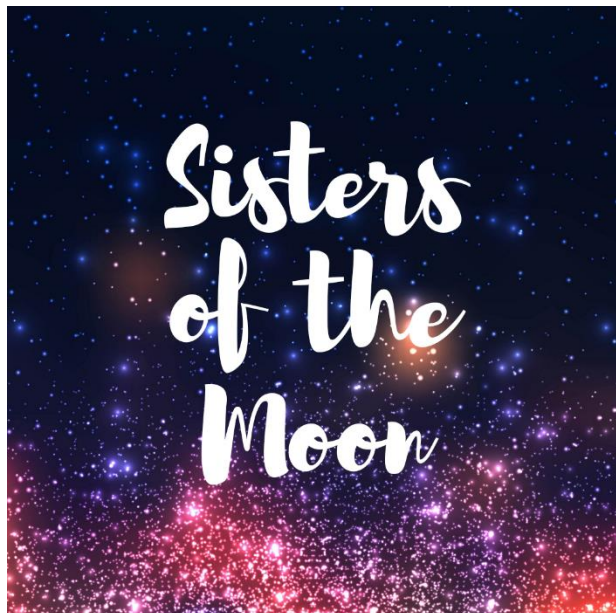


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Out Now

online zine | £3.90

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Full moon blessings to you all dear sisters! Don't forget you can join us for our live Moon Circles via Zoom when you sign up to either our \$10 or \$20 a month Patreon tier. Full details: www.patreon.com/sistersofthemoon



Sisters of the Moon is an online community, magazine, and so much more!

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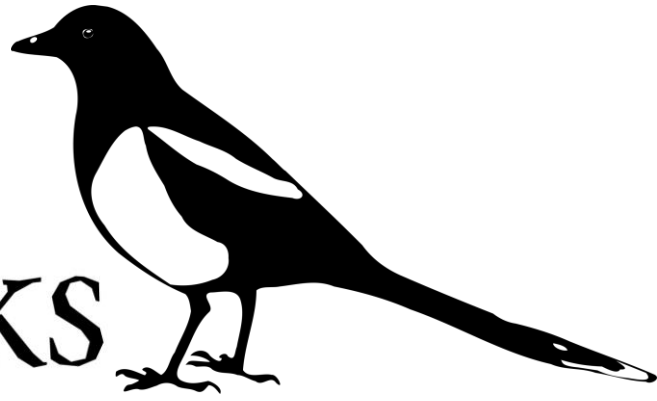
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WITCH PICKS

Each month we bring you our favourites from pagan and witch small businesses!



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by Runecast Copper

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by Wyn Abbot

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Got something you'd love to share?

Email witchzine.submissions@gmail.com

TEEN WITCH CORNER

BY ERINNA MOONCHILD

Welcome back to Teen witch corner! A place for teen witches and pagans to share and learn.

THE MEDIA AND ITS REPRESENTATION OF WITCHCRAFT -

The media has proved a good place for witches to socialise and share knowledge but sometimes what witches share online isn't the full picture. Sometimes the reality of being a witch is stirring your tea clockwise, to bring in positivity, instead of doing big spells and rituals all the time. It's easy to feel like a 'bad' witch when you see people's perfect altars, beautiful spellwork, millions of crystals, herbs and tools, making most starting witches discouraged. There is no need to feel this way. Everyone's practise is different and not everyone has the money to buy supplies or motivation to do spellwork and that's ok!

INFORMATION ABOUT WITCHCRAFT ONLINE-

Not all information about witchcraft is correct and it's easy to include misinformation into your research, take time to find reputable sources, check reviews and compare information sources. Some information can be dangerous so don't trust everything you hear online.

THIS MONTHS TEENAGE WITCH TIP -

If you don't have the money to buy a book of shadows, dislike writing pen to paper or If you are still in the broom closet keep an online book of shadows instead! It can be a word document or on your phone notes, it's compact and can be easily kept a secret. The only downside to an online book of shadows is losing the document and months worth of research so always remember to save!

HOW TO CONTACT/SUBMIT -

How do you contact or submit questions,tips and topic requests?

Teen witch corner has an email: teenwitchcorner@gmail.com

Alongside the email there is a group on facebook where Teen witch corner readers can socialise, submit questions and make friends with other teen witches:

https://www.facebook.com/groups/3083144621806903/?ref=group_header

Please remember the group is a safe place and we do not tolerate any hate or inappropriate behaviour.

Teen witch corner is for all teen witches whether you are a beginner, practised for a while, wiccan or non wiccan. I hope to see you in the next issue where I will be covering the media and witchcraft, and remember please send in questions, tips and topic requests to the email or group stated above.



Erinna M

ENLIGHTENMENT

BY SOPHIE FLETCHER – WITCH RESIDENCY WRITER

ENLIGHTENMENT AND HAPPINESS IS NOT A DESTINATION, IT SHOULDN'T BE A LIFE GOAL OR SOMETHING YOU SEARCH FOR. YOUR MIND WILL NEVER TRULY BE IN PEACE, IT'S SOMETHING WE HAVE TO LEARN TO ACCEPT. WHERE IT IS BAD, THERE IS ALWAYS GOOD, WHERE THERE IS DARKNESS, THERE IS LIGHT.

We are human, we are balanced. Enlightenment is about looking at yourself and life's moments, and truly being in those moments. It isn't finding happiness that lives forever, that isn't possible. It is being truly happy in those moments even when they last just small moments in time. Acknowledging the bad that happens and knowing there is good there too.

Optimism, rather than pessimistic, some would say, but I think it's more a balance between the two.

Our world is so distracted; distracted by our phones, technology, gossip and all sorts of bullshit, and now we never just stand still; take a deep breath and take it all in, and just think. Everything is heated, urgent, greedy.

It's why I think phones should be avoided during social situations, make the most of it, enjoy each other fully. For example, if you're talking about an actor in a certain television show, and can't remember his name, don't get out your phone and Google it, use your brain, discuss it. It will come to you eventually and it's much more fun, plus you're exercising your brain. Technology is amazing but it shouldn't be a barrier. Take those photos, answer that important call, but don't let it ruin a moment. Don't let it take your focus. Even if you feel uncomfortable in those situations, sit and listen to the conversation, force yourself to take it in, it's hard but you become "used" to it and it will build your confidence. (DISCLAIMER if you have anxiety or other medical conditions, work your way up, don't sit there till you have a panic attack- that's your body telling you it cannot cope, listen to it, but you can reprogram your brain with practise)

We focus so much on the destruction of the world, the negatives of our world and ourselves, that we try to find our happiness in things and not ourselves. It WILL NOT work. It's why that first sip of coffee, or that cold drink when you're boiling feels so damn good. It's all about finding our happiness in those moments of pure joy. The bigger moments are rare and far between in life, they cannot be your only source of happiness. "money can't happiness"... it can buy you things that would make you happy but for how long? Never long enough.

Go out today, go sit barefoot in the grass or earth, and just listen. Really listen. Let your mind wander, because it will; try and find the good, focus on the good, what makes you happy, what are you good at? And if your brain tells you "I'm shit, etc." - tell it to shut up, it is lying to you. You keep going till you find even one source of happiness, one good thing. Take at that moment, really breath it, write down your thoughts after if you want to, (it's a good help). Mostly... just be. Let your mind wander and your thoughts be sweet AND salty and take peace in it all.

.....that, to me, is finding "enlightenment".

MINDFUL SLEEP TECHNIQUES FOR AN ANXIOUS MIND

BY JESS O SHEA – WITCH RESIDENT WRITER

IT'S FUNNY ISN'T IT? YOU'VE HAD A DAY FULL OF DOWN TIME WITH NOTHING PARTICULARLY SPECIAL GOING ON, IT'S THE MIDDLE OF LOCKDOWN, SO THERE'S SELDOM A LOT TO DO. BUT YOU JUST CANNOT QUIET YOUR MIND.

It's racing! But why? Usually when we're in a state that has interrupted our routine, we tend to over-compensate in our brains. Our brain begins working overtime, thinking of things to keep you occupied, things to keep you going, or just a general rush of thoughts and anxiety as our 'safety' routine has gone out the window. Here, I'm going to give you some helpful tips on how to wind down and meditate during an anxious time.

ONE. AS YOU SETTLE DOWN TO SLEEP, PLAY YOUR DAY BACKWARDS IN YOUR MIND.

This is an affective way to remind yourself even on the downest of days, you've still had tons of productive parts! Even preparing to get into bed, cooking during the day, reading something or even responding to emails – these are all productive things!

TWO. ONLY THINK OF THE NEXT 10 MINUTES.

As you lay in bed with a racing mind, you're probably constantly thinking of tomorrow, what you're going to do, who you're going to speak to, what you're going to say etc. Try to think of only the next ten minutes. This is a small frame of time, but long enough to remind yourself that tomorrow waits for you and not you for it.

THREE. DO NOT KEEP FOCUSING ON SLEEPING.

I know this sounds strange, but when you're in bed, trying to force yourself to sleep will only lead to restless and maybe even a bout of insomnia. Instead, try to focus on resting.

AFFIRMATION: It is time to rest. I am only resting.



FOUR. READING.

We all know by now that scrolling on our phones in bed can only lead to further restlessness. A useful tool on your iPhone is the downtime app, found in your general settings. This will lock your apps until your chosen time is up. I suggest putting your down time from an hour before you plan to sleep, until the hour after you wake up. The best thing to do to distract an anxious mind is to get into a new book. Any book will do! Engross yourself into the pages and worlds you explore in the story, you will know when you're ready to close the book.

FIVE. MEDITATION & MINDFULNESS.

Of course it is hard to try and switch off a mind that is already spinning around and around. In these anxious times of pandemic and uncertainty with work and your social life, it is certainly time to give yourself a break.



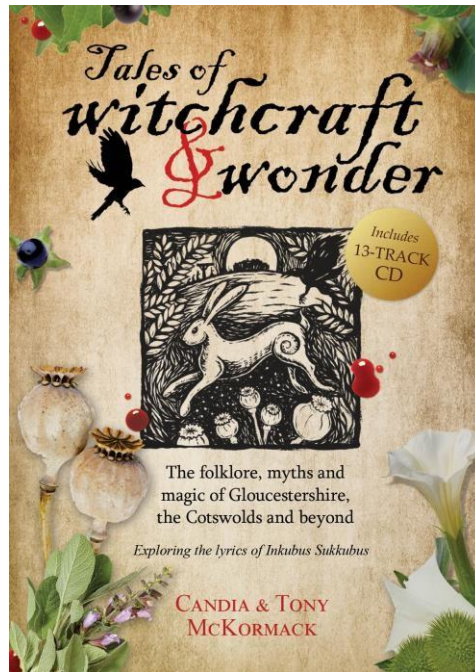
MEDITATION: After reading your book, or just putting down your phone/kindle, lay on your back with your palms turned upward to manifest peace. Imagine a coin on a string, at the back of your mind. Now, imagine that string dropping, the weight of the coin holding you securely in you bed. Breathe in for seven, breathe out for eight. Imagine total restfulness, your favourite place on earth, your favourite memory, your favourite people. Take yourself on a wondrous journey. If you find it hard to imagine these things, there are so many amazing guided meditations on Spotify and YouTube, I particularly enjoy **The Honest Guys**, their meditations take you on lovely adventures; to the universe and beyond. You're reminded of how bigger things are, and that now is the time for only you.



Try to practice this every night, perhaps this can become part of your new routine. Many blessings and I hope you enjoy your well-deserved restfulness!

Tales of Witchcraft & Wonder

Candia & Tony McKormack



'One of our land's most individual and interesting Gothic folk-rock bands now proves that it can deal as effectively with prose as music, in a mixture of stories old and new, of horror, beauty and romance, that capture perfectly the magical and mystical heritage of one of England's most remarkable counties.'

Professor Ronald Hutton

'What a wonderful book! Witchcraft weaves with music, folklore and history like the strands of the Norns. There are surprises and revelations all tied to Gloucestershire in a way that makes the stories more powerful and personal. A magical collection of stories...'

Dr Janina Ramirez

A woman falls under the spell of a poisonous plant.

A young man discovers a mermaid, washed up on the shore.

*A mysterious body is discovered hidden in the trunk of a
tree.*

An orphaned ape is raised as a child in a Cotswold village.

*An old man's body is discovered on a hill, mysteriously
pinned to the ground as though believed a witch.*

These are some of the folkloric tales told in the songs of Inkubus Sukkubus in their trilogy of albums, *Tales of Witchcraft & Wonder*.

In this book, founder members and songwriters Candia and Tony McKormack further research the stories, to explore the meaning behind the tales – the theories, the magic, the romance, and the horror.

Here are just a few of the strange stories explored within the pages of the book:



Where in Cheltenham have there been sightings of winged cats and a tragic 'woman in black'?

What was Dr Margaret Murray's connection with the Hagley Wood wych elm murder case?

What strange acts have people committed while under the influence of datura?

Why was the body of a Gloucestershire woman wrapped in deer skins and bound with iron chains?

CHAPTERS:

The Witch of Berkeley | This Bird Has Flown | Sabrina | She is Lost to the Sea | On Meon Hill | Datura Dreamer | The Wych Elm's Secret | Lest the Dead Return Again | To the River a Life

In the Dark House | The Uley Gorilla | The Rape of Maude Bowen | The Campden Wonder

Includes 13-track CD of featured songs

Tales of Witchcraft & Wonder

The folklore, myths and magic of Gloucestershire, the Cotswolds and beyond: Exploring the lyrics of Inkubus Sukkubus by Candia & Tony McKormack

A5 paperback, 120 pages, Pagan Fire Muzick

£15, to include 13-track CD

ISBN 978-1-5136-6580-1

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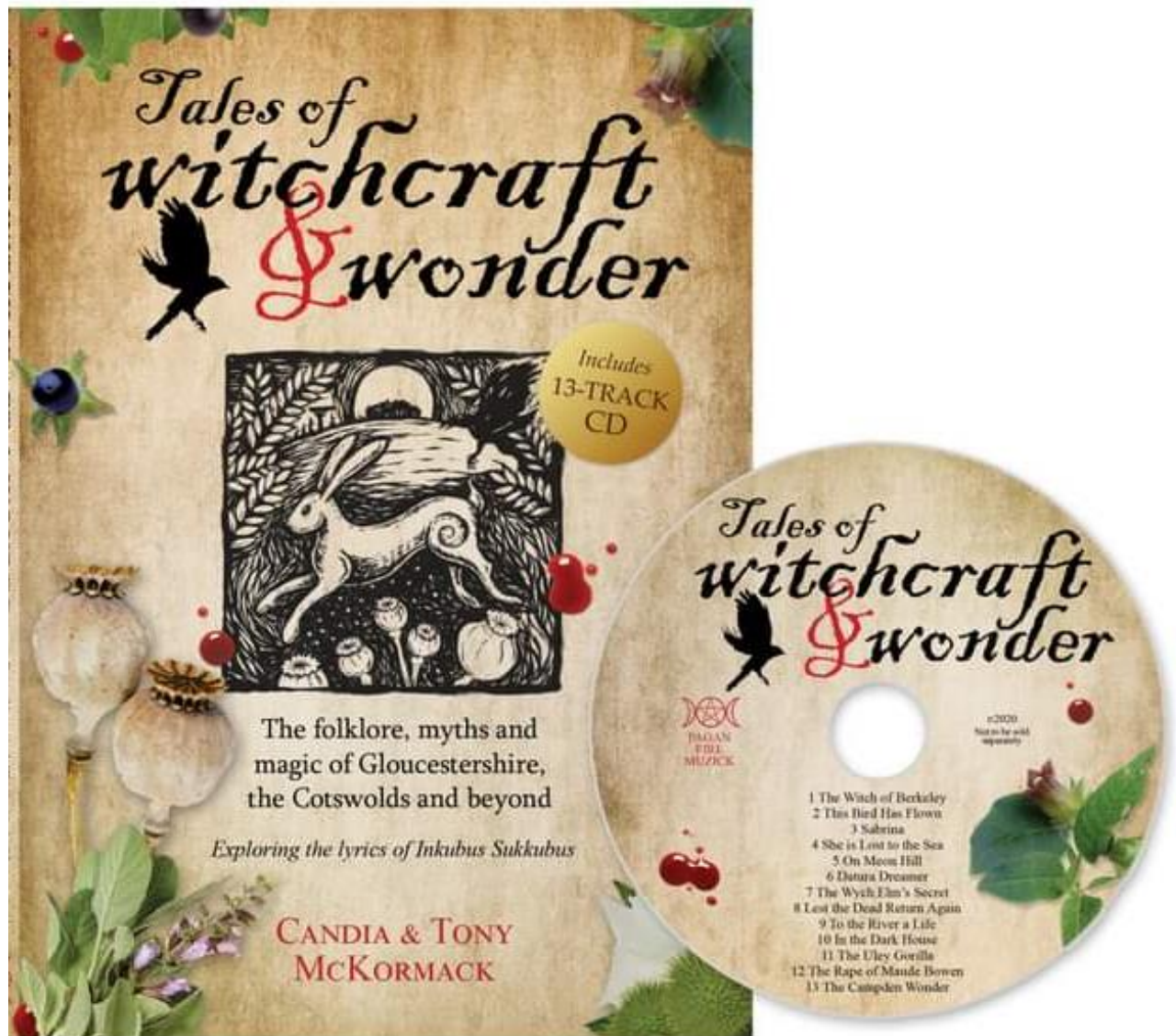
Inkubussukkubus.com



Candia & Tony McKormack met in 1989 while studying Graphic Design. They quickly discovered they had similar tastes in music and a shared interest in the history and practice of witchcraft and magic – as well as a fairly unhealthy mutual love of classic horror films – and shortly afterwards formed Inkubus Sukkubus (originally spelt

‘Incubus Succubus’). The band was to become a vehicle to write and perform songs on subjects covering paganism, folklore, witchcraft, vampire lore and death rites. They married in 1990, have two children and live in Gloucestershire.

Inkubus Sukkubus has to date brought out 25 studio albums, performed live in Mexico, USA, Australia, Russia, Turkey, Scandinavia, UK and most of Europe; and has also appeared on national terrestrial television in the UK, Greece, Germany and Finland. In 2019, the band celebrated its 30th Anniversary with a series of live concerts and their 25th studio release, an album called *Lilith Rising*.



CRAFT AND CRAFT

BY ABBIE MEARNS – WITCH RESIDENT WRITER

WHAT IS YOUR PERSONAL DEFINITION OF WITCHCRAFT? THIS IS SOMETHING I'VE THOUGHT ABOUT FOR YEARS, AND SOMETHING I EXPECT TO KEEP THINKING ABOUT FOR MANY YEARS TO COME, WITH THE ANSWER EVOLVING AS I EVOLVE AS A PERSON AND AS A WITCH. CURRENTLY, MY DEFINITION OF MY WITCHCRAFT IS USING MY LEARNED SKILLS IN COMBINATION WITH MY INTUITION TO EXERCISE CONTROL OVER MY OWN LIFE AND SHAPE MY IDEAL FUTURE. THE FUNDAMENTALS OF THIS DEFINITION APPLY NOT ONLY TO MY WITCHCRAFT, BUT TO MY ARTISTIC CRAFT AS WELL.

I was introduced to knitting in my second year of uni. A friend was going to another friend's dormitory (yes, this was in the USA, so there were dormitories, just like in the movies) to learn to knit and asked if I wanted to tag along. Knitting? Really? To my 20 year old mind it sounded, quite frankly, like the most pathetic thing I had ever heard. But I didn't have any other plans that night so, with a shadow of an eyeroll, I agreed.

I was an instant addict. Six hours later I found myself lying in bed unable to sleep for thinking about the wonderful magic that was knitting. My hands were restless under the blankets, itching for the feeling of blunted needles and smooth yarn gliding between them.

Eventually I gave in to the craving, got up, and knit through the night. That first night I fell in love with the act of making something from nothing, or at least from very little. I still describe knitting that way. It was not until I found my way back to witchcraft that I made the connection between craft and Craft.

The two are extremely similar. Both are lifelong skills that continue to build. There is never nothing left to learn. Both have ebbs and flows – for me an avoidance of either indicates a block of some sort. I feel better, more whole, when I am actively practicing my craft and working on a knitting project.

Both are essentially creating something that is greater than the sum of its parts. Just as a skein of yarn and two needles cannot protect your ears from frostbite, a handful of random herbs and a candle on their own cannot attract prosperity to your life. But when used together in certain ways both sets of materials can achieve their desired effect.

While in both cases certain requirements must be met, they also both lend themselves to personal interpretation and expression. For example, in order to make an effective ear covering a knitter must cast on an appropriate number of stitches and make a shape



vaguely tubular. However, a closed top is functional but not necessary, and any amount of artistic embellishment can be added depending on taste, the style of knitting being employed, etc. Likewise, a ritual to attract prosperity must begin with a solid intent and effort toward that goal, but can come from any of a vast array of witchcraft traditions. If you are confident and skilled enough, you can make up a prosperity ritual of your own creation just as an experienced knitter can improvise a hat pattern.

In this way, craft patterns and spellcraft are alike. The concept of patterns and spells/rituals apply to all of the following:

- Cases that employ complicated processes that require preliminary research, gathering of very specific materials, precise application of those materials in a specific order, and understanding of esoteric language and symbols.
- Cases that present themselves serendipitously. For example being drawn to a skein of yarn because of the colour, texture, or any other reason, having no idea what you might make with it. Years can go by. Then coming across a pattern and immediately that skein bought so long ago springs to mind, as if its soul mate has come home at last. The exact same phenomenon can occur with a rock or a pinecone and a spell.
- Cases that arise organically and spontaneously. You may not have any specific goal in mind, you just feel like handling your materials. While doing so, a goal forms in your mind and suddenly you have focus and aim and can hardly wait to get stuck in.

Conversely, you can start a ritual or project with all of the correct and necessary tools, and it just doesn't work. It's almost as if the yarn doesn't want to be whatever you're

trying to make, or that you and the pattern just don't work well together. In knitting as in witchcraft, if something isn't meant to be, no amount of skill or will can force it to be so.

In any scenario, craft and Craft both require a trust in your own instincts, and therefore both usually provide a sense of validation. As a beginner in either, it is often necessary to follow the instructions given to us by our predecessors in order to learn the basics.



However, as our skills evolve we also learn that deviation from canonical instruction is sometimes beneficial. Many of us have experienced choosing not to take a seemingly obvious course of action because it just felt wrong, and later being rewarded by an unforeseen boon as a result of that choice. In knitting, if a pattern instruction doesn't seem to make sense, so an experienced knitter chooses to amend or ignore it based on their own skill, it usually works out that the instruction was an overly complicated way of achieving the same result. The proof is in the pudding, as they say. While it is important to recognize one's own skill level and make prudent decisions based on that skill level, the willingness to trust yourself and the rewards the universe has to offer those of us who have faith in our own physical and metaphysical abilities are instrumental in both practices.

As knitting is my craft of choice, it is the primary example I have seen of magic within the mundane. However I believe the same is true of any craft or art form. Anything that is created with intent and by using materials (be that wool, herbs, paint, salt, or even our own voice) in such a way as to be greater than the sum of their parts is magical.

CIRCLE CASTING BASICS

BY NITA SIMPSON – THE OLD CRONE AT RUBEK.CO.UK

PART TWO...PLANNING

I LOVE HOLDING A CIRCLE CASTING WITH MY FELLOW PAGAN FOLLOWERS. FOR ME AS WELL AS THOSE WHO JOIN ME, THE RITUALS ARE ENERGISING, CALMING AND HEALING.

IF YOU ARE NEW TO CIRCLE CASTING I HOPE THIS GUIDE WILL HELP. I HAVE WRITTEN SOME OF THE QUESTIONS I AM ASKED WITH MY ANSWERS TO HELP YOU TO REALLY UNDERSTAND WHAT IS REQUIRED AND ALSO WHAT IS NOT REQUIRED; WHAT IS NEEDED AND WHAT IS NOT NEEDED BUT MOST OF ALL WHAT IT IS THAT YOU WANT TO GET OUT OF CIRCLE CASTING.

I am one of those annoying people who like to (actually have to) plan ahead for my own sanity. If I know my diary is in order and am sure where I am going I am very settled. I write down all my incantations or blessings just to make sure I don't miss anything out.

It is important for me to plan my circle and decide what I am going to do, who I am going to invite and how much space I have. All my suggestions are based upon my own experiences over many years. Yours can be what you wish. Once you are confident in your casting you can adapt and change to your own specifications. I always write down my words and affirmations, spells and perhaps a poem or story to tell after the circle is closed. I hate to forget anything. Whilst I write down the exact words I wish to use, they are not set in stone and if required I can adapt them as the ceremony progresses. Remember it is not the words you chant or the rhyme they make or even the order you say them in that is the essence of casting, it is your intent and the respect for what you are doing. One of my favourite circle castings I attended as a participant was at the top of Glastonbury Tor at sunset. A shaman cast a circle drumming the quarters and no words were spoken at all.

If you plan an outdoor event make sure you have a plan B as the English weather is a bit dicey to day the least. Several times I have planned an outdoor fire circle around my fire pit only to have it pelted down with rain all day and have to change my plans. If you want to dance, again make sure you have enough space. If you are going to invite a lot of participants make sure you have enough chairs. I know it all sounds common sense but it is surprising how these details can be missed. It's no good inviting twenty people and only have six chairs, or you plan a meditation and have six children wanting their tea at the same time. My own planning begins quite a few weeks and then again in the few days prior to the casting. Firstly, the invitations. Once I know how many are able to come along, I can begin to plan.

Firstly I decide what we are going to do at the circle, what the intent is, what season we are in and the phase of the moon. I usually hold the circle in my dining room where I know I can seat twelve people easily and I can shut the door and not be disturbed. Well no more than usual. I must say my dog loves to join in too. Not surprising as she was born at Samhain.



My altar normally in set on windowsill in a wide bay window but you don't need a big space for your altar of even a specific shelf. I know of people who have their altar on a narrow kitchen window sill, a small side table in the living room and even in a box to be taken out whenever required. If I am alone, I leave my altar in the window but if I am taking a circle casting with my fellow pagans, I set my altar out on the dining table with any items needed for that circle, as I obviously need more space. I clean my sacred space, put a clean cloth on the table and set my altar in the centre adding seasonal items.

A circle is a place in which to find and provide positive energy. Most people who attend will bring positive energy but will be likely to harbour some negative energy too, including yourself, because we are all HUMAN. Remember that. All of us have ups and downs in our lives and the negative energies can be powerful within us because we have been hurt. I sage smudge my space and spray a spell casting perfume or some Palo Santo.

My rituals within a group are straight forward especially if I have a newbie amongst us as I don't wish to put anyone off by over complicating the casting. On my own I do things differently as I usually wish to complete some spell work or bless items I have made.

Some circles can be a physical marking on the ground, usually in salt, however I always cast in the air, a virtual circle. Check the direction of your circle. I always place the quarters in the correct directions but it is not imperative. It is easy to work it out. Think where the sun rises and place the East in this direction then follow through with the others. You can use a compass if you want to be accurate.

Place a candle at each cardinal point, North for Earth , East for Air, South for Fire and West for Water. These are called the Quarters or the Watchtowers. Some pagans like to use coloured candles, green for North and Earth, yellow or white for East and Air, red or orange for South and Fire and blue for West and Water. I always place a candle in the centre for Spirit. This is a personal choice. I sometimes use seasonal colours but I love the colour purple and often use candles of this colour. At Samhain I always use orange candles and at Yule, red, again, it is a personal choice.



As I mentioned in my previous article I have collected candle holders over several years and have a large solid silver coloured one entwined with ivy and fig leaves for North and Earth. A tall slender silver one for East and Air, a phoenix with outspread wings for South and Fire and a blue and white ceramic holder which reminds me of a wave for West and Water. This for me is more important than the colour of my candles.

Whilst I advocate making a note of your itinerary it is also worth practicing it a couple of times which will give you confidence and make sure you have all you need to hand.

All set? You are ready to cast. See you next issue.

BLESSED BE.

COMING SOON...

PART THREE

CALLING THE CIRCLE AND GROUNDING

PART FOUR

RITUALS AFFIRMATIONS AND SPELLWORK

FORAGING FOR AUTUMN ALTARS AND ARRANGEMENTS

BY CHERRY DOYLE – WITCH RESIDENT WRITER

AS SUMMER DRAWS TO A CLOSE AND WE START THINKING ABOUT LONGER NIGHTS, COLDER DAYS, AND FALLING LEAVES, MANY OF US WILL BE LOOKING TO CELEBRATE THE CHANGING SEASONS, EITHER THROUGH OBSERVING THE AUTUMN SABBATS, OR BY DECORATING OUR HOMES IN THANKSGIVING. FROM ALTARS TO WREATHS TO TABLE CENTREPIECES, THE COLOURS OF AUTUMN CAN MAKE A HOME FEEL WARM AND COMFORTING AS TEMPERATURES START TO DROP.

Alongside your usual tools or materials, you may wish to adorn your altar or arrangement with items collected from the wild, to create a personalised and season-specific display. For those of us who feel connected to nature spiritually, foraging can be a welcome excuse to spend meditative time amongst the landscapes we cherish. Even in urban environments, canals, parks, and suburbs can provide treasures we can use to celebrate nature's bountiful weeks ahead.

There are a few things to remember when you're out and about:

- Stay on the right side of the law – don't trespass or pick things from private property, and ensure you are familiar with laws about what you can and can't collect - for example, in some areas it's illegal to remove stones from the beach.
- Don't handle anything you're not completely sure about, and don't eat anything unless you are familiar with it and know it to be safe - there are plenty of poisonous plants out there. Wash your hands after handling items such as bones, shells, and feathers to prevent the spread of disease.
- We must respect the ecosystems we're taking from. Take windfall where you can, and only pick fruit where it is plentiful. Many birds and animals use berries and fruit as food sources through the winter, so make sure you leave enough for them. Don't trample or cut wild plants to reach anything.

Set off at a time that you're going to be relaxed and uninterrupted. Even if you have company or you've taken the kids along to help, make sure you have fun! As you walk, take care to notice details around you. Pause every so often and look around, noting any sounds, smells, or strong feelings you have - this will help you to tune into your surroundings. Don't think too hard about what you pick up – just head for whatever catches your eye. I like to give thanks as I go, to recognise that nature is sacrificing something for me.



Here are some suggestions for items you may want to gather:

Fallen leaves

The beautiful colours of leaves which the trees have started to shed will provide an excellent seasonal touch to your altar or arrangement. Dry the leaves overnight between some kitchen towel – if you want them to be flat, place some books or other heavy objects on top of them.



Fruit and nuts

Crab apples, blackberries, elderberries, rowan, chestnuts, and rose hips are all ripening in the next few weeks. Wild foods such as these are traditional symbols of the harvest. Remember berries won't keep for very long so you may wish to incorporate them into a recipe to use on your altar instead.

Grasses

If you can't get your hands on commercial cereals - another item commonly used to give thanks for harvest - wild grasses have a multitude of textures and subtle colours and provide a flourish of foliage. Remember to keep them at a safe distance from your candles!



Pine cones and acorns

Pine cones and acorns are typical symbols of the changing seasons, and they can be re-used for decorations throughout autumn and winter.

Stones and shells

Stones provide a strong link to the earth – especially useful if you're looking to represent the four elements on your altar – while shells can represent water. Your conscious and subconscious preferences during collection means that these items will be personalised to your own tastes, bringing your character into your display.

Bones, antlers, and feathers

The spiritual symbolism of feathers makes them a natural addition to your arrangement. As well as representing the element of air, they can be used in rituals relating to journeys and transitions. Bones prove a perennial favourite for altars due to their symbolism of life, death, and rebirth, reflecting the circle of the year. If you're lucky enough to have found some bones or antlers, soak them overnight in warm water and washing powder, rinse thoroughly, and dry in a warm (not hot) place.

Once you've collected all the items you fancy, ensure they're clean and dry, then set to work arranging them to your heart's content! Add orange, red, and yellow candles to accentuate the autumnal feeling.

Here's an idea for using up those berries before they go bad...

Blackberry Gin

You'll need...

- Unflavoured gin (1ltr)
- Light brown sugar (50g)
- Blackberries
- Airtight bottle or jar
- Funnel
- Muslin
- Bottle/s

Sterilise the container you'll be steeping the gin in. You can do this in the dishwasher or by washing it and drying it on a low setting in the oven. Wash the blackberries and add them to the container. There should be enough to fill at least 1/3 of the volume of the alcohol. Add the sugar - you might need a funnel if you're using a bottle with a small neck. Finally, tip in the gin. Close the lid and give it a good shake. Place it somewhere out of the way (not too warm, not too cold) for two weeks. Shake it occasionally. Strain the mixture out through muslin into sterilised bottles, and enjoy as part of your autumn celebrations!





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WITCH REVIEW – WITH EVERY BEAT

THE NEW ALBUM FROM EMALINE DELAPAIX

BY BEKKI JO MILNER

Emaline Delapaix takes you on a journey sprinkled with the sounds of nature, soft harps, strings and her ethereal voice in her new album, *With Every Beat*.

From simple, story-telling lyrics, to soaring, sailing high notes, Emaline's voice shows her versatility and uniqueness from track to track.

Opening track, *Turmoil of Winter* evokes snow drifts and ice winds, *Pops Jig* brings forth spring and happy memories.

On the Wind brings primal beats and soaring cries of a soul set free. Title track *With Every Beat* is a symphony of hopefulness and harmonies.

The closing track, *Bend of the Trees*, reminds us to reconnect with nature and magic and remember ourselves – a message to carry home.

This is an album to enjoy on quiet Autumn evenings, or bright sunny mornings, whilst walking in the woods or resting in a favourite chair.

There is 30% off CD's if you use the code WITCH at

www.emalinedelapaix.com

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ANGELS FOR ATHEISTS

BY RAY WILD



WWW.RAYWILDFREELANCE.WORDPRESS.COM

There are many people I know who practice witchcraft but do not define themselves as being religious. I also know people whose religion is nature based or new-world and they wonder if they're allowed to worship and search for angels. The answer is yes, of course you can. Angels are for everyone, even atheists.

In my early practices of witchcraft, I spent a lot of time trying to define myself and decide what religious category I fell under. Whilst this can help a lot of people, it hindered my spirituality greatly, I was more focused on the label than actually helping and bettering myself and it pushed me away from my angels.

Angels mean different things to different people, to some they are figures of people they have lost or look up to. For some people they are simply pockets of energy that surround you and make you feel things and some people do not believe in them at all. Being an atheist does not mean that you aren't allowed to believe in them, angels are a belief for you, not a single divine being.

Whatever you believe, it doesn't make you more or less of a valid witch so please don't think it does. Despite the fact that when I was a child I was given glass angels to meditate with and it made me feel calmer than I ever had, I still let the thoughts of wanting to be a 'real witch' make me question my beliefs.



Angels are largely associated with more commonly known religions, such as Christianity and Judaism, but that does not mean angels are exclusive to those religions. Beliefs of angels have been around since more druidic religions were the most commonplace of beliefs.

Trying to search for your angels can be greatly rewarding, personally my belief of angels being a form of energy helps me to keep calm when I am meditating. Lots of people have said how they have spoken to their angels and received a sign of acknowledgement from them.


The point that I am trying to make is that the experience is different for everyone and the belief itself isn't for everyone. But you shouldn't discourage yourself from trying to expand your spirituality. It can be greatly rewarding and help in your practices of witchcraft.

No matter what religion you fall under, there are angels out there that might just be right for you.

ENERGY

PART 1 - TAKING CONTROL OF YOUR ENERGY

BY FAIRY BEC – WITCH RESIDENT WRITER



WE ARE COMING OUT OF SUCH AN ODD TIME (AND SOME MAY SAY INTO A NEW WORLD) AND MANY OF US FEEL 'KIND OF JANGLY' AS OUR ENERGIES HAVE BEEN USED IN SO MANY DIFFERENT WAYS IN RECENT TIMES. I BELIEVE THAT WHAT WE NEED TO FOCUS ON NOW IS BEING IN CONTROL OF OUR ENERGY.

Energy is an extremely powerful thing and often thought of as the main ingredient of all that is 'being'. We all put energies out there in everything we do. Therefore, we all have the potential to control our energy at the output point.

We do need to be aware that we have no control as to how our energy is received. How others react says much more about them than you. We are also all at risk of energy vampires who consciously or unconsciously leave us feeling drained and exhausted.

In this article I hope to offer tips and advice as to how to view and take control of your own energy based on my own experiences.

During the height of this pandemic I have been the victim of people 'energy shaming' and seen it happening to several other people too. It has really shocked me because I have heard it from people calling themselves 'Healers' and 'Light Workers'.

Let me explain what I mean by this. Like many people, I like to use social media. I discuss feelings and opinions on there freely as the people attached to my profile are 'friends'. I will talk about what I have experienced and often how that has made me feel. Most of the time, it is happy, light reflections on my day or positive opinions on a local or small business I wish to share with others. Occasionally I do have a rant and occasionally I do need to let off steam - to my 'friends'.

One of these posts was about respect for other humans and how, in my opinion, people need to develop more respect in society to support each other and get through this pandemic together. I was then privately messaged by someone who identifies as a 'healer' who had a huge rant at me saying things like "all your posts are negative" and "You are perpetuating the negative energy in the universe" along with "You think you are right and everyone else is wrong". This shook me as it is certainly not how I feel about my writings and expressions so I went back through my profile. I identified two posts that could be perceived as 'negative' posts in the previous month.

One was letting my friends know I was struggling as being clinically vulnerable, I felt scared and trapped by what was happening in the world around me. The other was the rant about respect and how I felt that people needed to be more sensitive to the needs of others as well as accept that we are all approaching this pandemic slightly differently. Understanding that others may see things differently to myself, I even rang a trusted friend and asked her to check what she could see on my profile and tell me what impression my posts were giving out. When my friend got back to me saying that my regular posts just looked like I had been making the most of 'lockdown' I then took screen shots of the messages this self identified 'healer' had sent. My friend was very shocked by the false accusations of this 'healer' and I received support and re-assurance that it was not me. This brought me to an acceptance which allowed me to move forwards. Sometimes, no matter what you do, there will always be someone who sees it through their own eyes and with their own issues guiding their behaviours and responses.



Taking control of my own energy, I recognised I had the power to unfriend and block this 'healer' so she was unable to affect me in such a way. Being back in control made me feel liberated and more positive than before. It also left me reflective enough to write this article.

I see that energy has power and ideas prophesied can materialise. I understand that people see things differently but I also understand that I choose who I surround myself with. The post where I let people know I was struggling had lots of positive effects. One piece of 'negative' actually created nearly one hundred positives in likes, comments and conversations. I had lots of people coming in to support me and I also had lots of people letting me know that my honesty also helped them. That they were able to accept within themselves it is ok to have moments of weakness, to give in to emotions and to reach out and ask for support. My point here is that we actually need to embrace both energies – positive and negative. It is about how we use that energy that matters. For reasons unknown to myself, the 'healer' decided to use her energy to try to hurt me with her words and control what I was posting on social media. My friends saw that I was feeling 'negative' and threw their spare light and love at me which in turn allowed me to find the energy to do the same for others. Be kind. Pay it forwards.

On a final note of social media discussion, I don't recommend that people 'predict' what else will happen in 2020 as if it is something out of a horror movie. Manifestations are actually quite easy and memes of The Terminator falling to Earth to destroy it might be funny in an ironic way but equally could perpetuate what feels to many like an ongoing struggle with things that are out of their control.



Myself, I have been visualising human beings having more eye contact and therefore developing more respect for each other as we begin to step out of this pandemic. In my meditations I imagine sending golden bubbles that burst into magical rainbows of healing over those that need it and my yoga group have been sending arcs of golden light around the world.

PART 2 - GATHERING YOUR ENERGY

BY FAIRY BEC – WITCH RESIDENT WRITER

SETTING AN INTENT BEFORE YOU GATHER IS ADVISABLE. IF WE GO WITH PURE HEART THEN WE CANNOT BE DOING ANYTHING WRONG. YOU JUST NEED TO TRUST YOUR INSTINCT. ASK YOURSELF “FOR WHAT PURPOSE DO I WANT TO GATHER MY ENERGY?”

There are many different ways to gather energy. My Reiki training taught me to literally flick an imaginary switch to tap into the chi that I use in my energy healing. When I do it, I get a tingling from my feet that rises and brings energy all through my body ready to use out of my hands. I can then gather that energy into a ball and send it off like a bubble into the sky.

You can also literally imagine energy growing from inside you. Take your hands either to your abdomen or hold them in front of your abdomen. When you feel a tingle, slowly draw your hands away from each other being careful not to lose the tingle. Do this until you feel that you can create a bubble of energy around you. You can leave it there for self protection or you can then imagine pulling it all into a ball and throwing that ball of energy to whatever you want e.g. a personal project you wish success for.

Another recent example is a friend who approached a group of us in a WhatsApp chat. Her Yoga Teacher is struggling to feed herself as the business has waned during the pandemic. Her intent was to help raise positive energies for the lady and she asked us to join her in doing so. This is an ongoing project and we are all ‘liking’ and commenting positively on the lady’s social media posts to help raise her business profile too. This is a great example of gathering energy as a group. Many people also set a date and time to all meditate together. I have taken part in a few of these to send out healing and peace to the world at key spiritual points during this pandemic.

Finally, Qigong is an excellent practice for drawing up and sending out energy. I highly recommend that you try it if you have not heard of it. Tai Chi also helps you physicalise your energy control and calm your mind at the

same time. It is best to find a Teacher but there are also plenty of aps and videos available to get you started.

Crystals and energy

My immediate go to crystal is Amethyst. It protects, enhances intuition and brings love. You can pair this up with Rose Quartz for self love and increase their vibrations with a clear quartz or some selenite.

Black Tormaline in quartz is a current favourite of mine to ward off unwanted negative energy from others.

I love paring up light and dark crystals for spells and general balancing and I always feel cheerful when I look at Citrine and Sunstone too.

You can also hold crystals to help you raise your energy or set intent when you are using your energy for magical purposes and select crystals to represent the chakra to help you find balance within yourself. Here is a suggestion of a set of chakra crystals you can use for helping to find balance within the key energy centres of your body:-



Red/Root – Jasper or Red Tigers Eye.

Orange/Solar Plexus – Sunstone or Carnelian.

Yellow/Lungs – Citrine or Yellow Calcite.

Green/Heart – Green Aventurine or Jade. (You may also want to hold rose quartz or morganite)

Blue/Throat – Blue Kyanite or Turquoise.

Indigo/Head – Lapis Lazuli or Iolite.

Violet/Crown – Amethyst or clear quartz.

Grounding

Here are some quick grounding tips:-

Water:- As a mother, I need to exercise patience where possible and being in control of my energy is key. Sometimes, the best thing to do to remain grounded is to walk away from a situation that jangles your energy more than you want it to be jangled. I escape to the kitchen and have a glass of cold water.

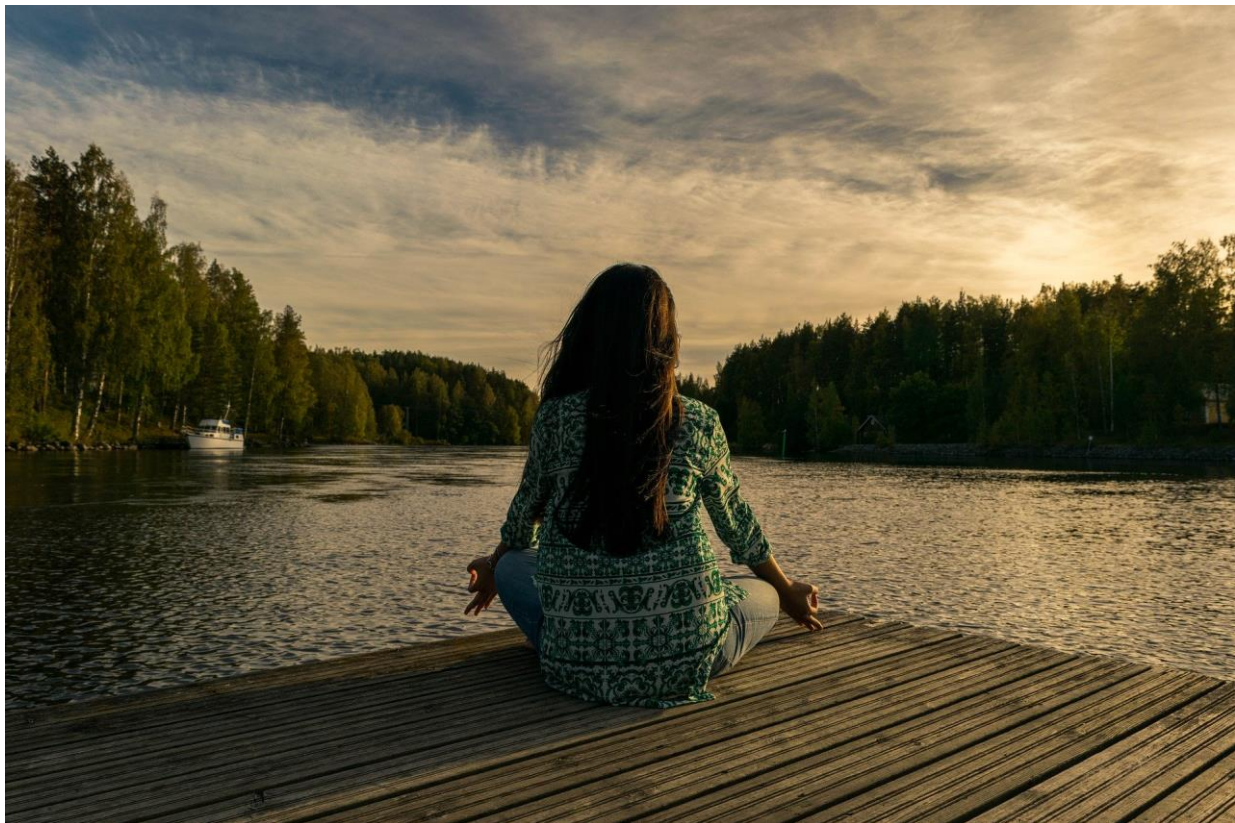
Food: - After meditation, I like to eat a piece of dark chocolate or some nuts. After a circle cast we celebrate with food and drink to ground us.

Roots:- Imagine that you have roots growing out of your feet. These roots reach all the way down to the core of the earth. Imagine these roots offering you sustenance as well as balance. You can draw up golden light and replenish your energy stocks.

Extremities:- Sometimes a simple wiggle of the fingers and toes helps to balance you.

Raku:-Raku is a reiki grounding tool. You make a lightning bolt sign through the air from your head to your toes and say “Raku”.

Sealing: - Once you have grounded yourself, it is a good idea to seal in all the balanced energy you have created. Taking a deep breath in then as you breathe out, you can raise your arms above your head and bring them down stretched as if drawing an imaginary bubble of light around you.



Accepting balance

Going back to my story of the energy shamer, I believe that we need to accept that there has to be balance. I am hopeful that what happened between us will make us both stronger and better humans. Sometimes we simply need to go through a challenge to take that additional step forwards. Energy is like a battery to me – we need the positive and the negative to make it work. There are enough people stuck in negative energies focussed on material gain and with no time to stand still. To be a part of bringing better energy balance to the world, my mission is to be a positive light for others and help people have hope even in difficult times.

THE AUSET GYPSY TAROT DECK

BY JAMES JACOB PIERRI

“WHEN ARE YOU GOING TO WRITE A TAROT BOOK JAMES?” EVERYONE FROM FRIENDS, FAMILY AND CONTEMPORARY TAROT AUTHORS REPEATEDLY ASKED FOR YEARS. MY ANSWER WAS ALWAYS THE SAME, “WHAT CAN I WRITE THAT HASN’T ALREADY BEEN WRITTEN?”. BESIDES I ALWAYS TEACH IN MY TAROT CLASSES THAT THE ONLY BOOK ONE EVER NEEDS TO LEARN TAROT IS THE TAROT ITSELF! THEN MY MUSE SMILED AND IT DAWNED ON ME NOT TO WRITE A TAROT BOOK BUT INSTEAD CREATE A TAROT DECK!

When you’ve been doing this as long as I have (20+ years) there’s a lot to share with the world. The Auset Gypsy Tarot is my biography! When someone follows it and uses it to read with for themselves or for others they are actually following and reliving my experience, life and story.

My story is a long one, I was fortunate to answer my metaphysical calling very young in life. Then presented with rare opportunities that allowed me to pursue Fortune Telling professionally! Not to say there wasn’t much sacrifice on this road, there certainly was.

Though my experience and origins start much earlier in life, my break through that catapulted me into public recognition was being one of a few handful Tarot readers to open a very special psychic venue at Universal Studios Orlando FL Islands Of Adventure. There on the Lost Continent (by now is home to The Wizarding World of Harry Potter) we did something remarkable - for the first time in 50 years since Walt Disney had outlawed Fortune Telling in major Theme Parks with the advent of opening Disney Land in California, we once again were Reading cards, palms and astrology charts in one of the world’s leading entertainment destinations.

This put me and my skills into the major leagues Reading for celebrities, famous professional athletes, international press and people from all around the world! Wearing elaborate colourful costumes and seeing guests for readings in an Arabians Nights setting, a lavish tent that rivals Jeannies bottle became the inspiration behind The Auset Gypsy Tarot.

That was many Moons ago now but since then it opened the doors to The World for this young Fool! Not only did I read the tarot but I lived it too!

Dedicating my life’s pursuits to the study, practice and devotion of metaphysics, astrology and a myriad of spiritual practices including Priesthood in the Fellowship of Isis, initiations into several Wiccan/Witchcraft covens and study of Neo pagan research at a credited seminary, it was easy to pour all of that knowledge into this colourful and modern looking deck.



Maintaining a fine balance of tradition meanwhile offering something new and contemporary to the long historical tapestry of the Tarot. Something that Tarot enthusiasts will enjoy today and years from now that will reflect our times. Readers in the future can then touch or look back on the past as we do with a Rider-Waite-Smith or Marseille Decks.

I created all the original designs and content paying particular attention to symbolic details concerning Astrology, traditional definition and adding new suggestions too. However I did choose two other artists (Rebecca Stoutzenburgh & Heather Scott) for their contemporary styles to complete both the Major and Minor Arcana Cards. Working tight knit and very closely with them so that nothing Symbolic or magical was lost in translation. Growing up we didn't use Tarot decks, instead we used old fashioned Italian playing cards, keeping with our tradition that influence is found in the Minor Arcana of this deck, a somewhat romantic and old fashioned feel exists there.



We feel something very magical has been created, the feedback has been quite positive from the quality of the metaphysical work, artistic conception and even for cosplaying the characters! Which has even lead to future comic book suggestions. In production now are accompanying podcast and videos to follow along with as a teaching guide for this deck as well. Stay tuned for that!

It's been exhilarating and truly a spiritual process to work on this very special Tarot deck and very much looking forward to sharing it with The World.

James Jacob Pierri is a professional published Astrologer, Tarot Reader & Palmist. Proprietor of Auset Gypsy Metaphysical Emporium, his shop is in Frenchtown New Jersey, America. He's been seen on TV, in published print, radio & podcast. Hosts Ask The Gypsy LIVE, an hour long Instagram show interviewing Metaphysical celebrities & authors. He sees clients for consultations in person and via teleconference.

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WHICH WITCH IS WHICH?

BY DR ALAN JONES (EMRYS Y DEWIN)

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ONE OF THE INTERESTING ASPECTS OF THE GROWTH IN MODERN WITCHCRAFT AND WICCA IN RECENT YEARS HAS BEEN THE QUESTION OF 'TRADITION'.

NOW, I AM NOT ONE TO GET TOO 'HUNG-UP' ON THIS PARTICULAR ISSUE, BUT IS IT SURPRISING HOW MANY FOLKS SEEM TO.

Modern Wicca, as we all know, owes its popularisation to one Gerald Gardner – perhaps the original naked civil servant. If we look a little deeper we also find ourselves having to honour and indeed celebrate the work Doreen Valiente. She was, many consider, the real poetic and creative force behind so much of what we call 'The Book of Shadows'.

Gardner was followed by Alex Sanders, the self-professed 'working class magician' whose work with Maxine subsequently described by Janet and Stewart Farrar really ignited the Neo-Wiccan movement in the 70's.

The 'traditions' they 'created', Gardnerian and Alexandrian seem to have become the template for subsequent variations. In 1972 Mary Nesnick was prompted to merge these traditions in America into what she called Algard Wicca. Nesnick's refusal to initiate Eddie Buczynski because of his sexuality and his own issues with other 'traditionalists' led to the creation of the Minoan Tradition (Brotherhood). Since then we have seen a blossoming of numerous 'traditions' including Seax Wicca, The Feri Tradition (Victor and Cora Anderson) the Faery Wicca of Kisma Stepanich and so many more...

Like so many other spiritual pathways Wicca and Modern Witchcraft has become divided in terms of mythology, practice and principles. In some cases the rivalry between these traditions has been as aggressive as the more orthodox religions many Wiccans set themselves apart from.

As Eddie Buczynski wrote in 1977...

"Finally, sick of all the shit flying back and forth from coven to coven (mainly concerning me), along with threats, death curses, slander etc., I decided that, in order to find fulfilment in my religious beliefs, I must find a pagan cult which would welcome me as I am – a proud gay man. I began to research ancient religions involving the worship of the Mother Goddess ... All I needed now was to find a place in which I could function openly and freely as myself. Most of the pagan Mother Goddess cults of antiquity were overtly tolerant of homosexuals; most had a homosexual priesthood. But none seemed quite right. I continued my search. In 1973 I discovered the answer on an island in the Mediterranean: Crete." i

Many of the traditions mentioned already are initiatory traditions and rely on an initiation into the set of practiced of the specific teachings of their 'leaders'. It is a shame that human nature is such that it finds 'outgroups' easy to identify. In fact, the very fact that

one defines themselves as a 'wiccan' or 'witch', means that there are others who are, and others who are not.

The problem with all dogmatic traditions is that they create some very inflexible attitudes and behaviours.

All of which is a shame.

Modern Wicca and Witchcraft is perhaps more about 'correct practice' (orthopraxy) rather than 'correct thinking' (orthodoxy).

Conversations with Maxine Sanders (Witchcraft Museum 2017) and Janet Farrar (Witchcraft Museum 2019) seemed to echo concerns about the prevalence of divisive and dogmatic thinking in the modern world in general and sadly in the neo-pagan world specifically.

Is it any wonder that there has been a growing number of folks who have opted for the solitary path?

When someone seeks to tell me, they are Wiccan or a Witch I am not as much interested in their lineage but their practice.

I believe a witch, a magician an occultist can be described as what they do.

No matter what the specifics of their particular tradition, surely it is their informed practices and actions upon the web which define them.

Consider this.



The Old Wise Woman or Cunning Man were defined by the community in which they lived.

Thus, surely one of the key principles of living wicca, witchcraft and magick is '**service above dogma**'.

An idea that could be taken on-board by the growing number of folks who promote themselves as 'Shaman' – a

title bestowed on them by their communities and not because they have attended a weekend workshop and watched Dances with Wolves.

Herein' lies the second principle of living magical practices.

The importance of **self-development through learning and experience**.

The word 'wisdom' is said to be the root of word 'wicca'. Yet do we see evidence of real learning, knowledge and wisdom from all of those choosing to identify as Wiccan, Witch or Heathen? We can recognise that knowledge learned and wisdom is earned and we can also recognise the importance of personal gnosis. However, these things come from ensuring that our personal philosophies are grounded in something other than fallacy or fantasy.

There is a difference between romanticism and ignorance.

Flights of fancy, romanticism and creative-mythology plays an important part in magick of all kinds. But those who use these techniques are aware that they are doing so and not trying to claim a genuine, traditional, historical authenticity to their ideas.

There are those who maintain that all elements of The Book of Shadows, the Eight-Fold Year and continuation of a single European Goddess Tradition are historical fact. Even the most rudimentary of research shows that this is not the case. That does not invalidate anything. In fact, as far as I am concerned, it enriches.

If we can accept that we are creating a modern approach which celebrates both the knowledge and creativity of those who went before then surely we engaged in something that is living and evolving.

The word 'tradition' need not imply 'ancient' or 'old'. A system of meaningful practices we start today can become the tradition of tomorrow. Which, of course, bring us back to where we started.



Which Witch is Which is a question that inspires us to look at the traditions, principles and practices that define us.

Witch, Wiccan, Occultist, Magickian are not labels we simply choose to wear because they are current, different or fashionable. They are words which summarise our approach to life.

If you are of a particular 'initiatory lineage' then embrace it, but that does not give you the right to subjugate others.

It was interesting that both Maxine Sanders and Janet Farrar in conversation spoke of 'Wiccan Wars' and 'Bitch-Craft' both lamenting that the 'heart' of what they had been part of creating was being lost.

We have a tag-line at the School of Mystery and Magick which is; we are dogmatic about not being dogmatic. This recognises that there are many ways to interpret, live with and explore spiritual paths.

So, Which Witch are You?

Are you interested in service above dogma?

Are you on a path of self-discovery and gnosis?

Are you open to reflect upon the truths of others?

Are you celebrating the CRAFT of Witchcraft in one of the many forms it can take?

Or, do you subscribe to an elitist, divisive tradition which teaches that theirs is the only path?

Blessed Be /|\

Alan

(Emrys y Dewin)

WHEN DID I REALISE I WAS A WITCH?

BY PORTLAND JONES – WITCH RESIDENT WRITER

'SAMHAIN, 7.30PM, IN THE WOODS.' THE WHITE CARD WAS STUCK CROOKEDLY IN THE BOTTOM OF THE SHOP WINDOW. I READ IT, AND THEN READ IT AGAIN. THERE WAS NO OTHER INFORMATION. THIS WAS NOT A FLYER INVITING THE PUBLIC TO AN ORGANISED EVENT. LIKE A SPY LEAVES AN ADVERT IN THE PERSONAL COLUMN OF THE NEWSPAPER, THIS WAS A MESSAGE FOR PEOPLE WHO KNEW.

I had early in life thought there was something more to life than that which many people seem to experience. I grew up listening to tales of my grandmother who died before I was born. She lived in the slums of Nechells in Birmingham in the early part of the 20th century. She was often called upon to layout the dead, of whom she had no fear. She knew things – she watched her brother's essence walk through the wall in her room, to find out the next day that he had died overnight. My mother, my sisters and I, and even my children, sometimes breathe in a faint scent of freesias, and know that Grandma is around. This usually results in a quick ring round to check if everyone is ok, and to offer support to the one that Grandma knew needed it. I knew things with no logical explanation of how or why.

I read about many religions, sampled a few. Paganism, especially witchcraft, interested me but I had never made a connection. Perhaps I was still influenced by the common culture of witches on TV and in movies. I had grown up watching Samantha of the twitchy nose in Bewitched.

I was with my daughter. We both knew what Samhain was, although from our individual research and discoveries. It was one of those classic moments. She looked at me. I looked at her. And without any further comment, we walked into the shop and approached the woman behind the counter.

'Erm, the sign in the window,' I started nervously. 'Can we come?' She stared at us for a while. Then without much of a smile, she said we could, and gave us directions.

Not many nights later, Bobbi and I set out as twilight was fading into darkness. I drove slowly down the unlit road that curved round the reservoir, a black snake between the water and the trees. A cluster of dark shapes moved in the dim light, huddled in a gravelled pull-in alongside a low fence. I parked close by and we emerged from the warmth of the car.

Lights glimmered, distant in houses the other side of the water. Trees rustled their leaves above us. We followed people wrapped in flowing cloaks deeper into the woodland. As we waited, nervous, in the dark, a fire sprang into life, flickering flames revealing a clearing among the trees. Lights darted like fairies as people lit the candles they were carrying.

One by one, our foreheads were anointed with oil, and the words 'Blessed Be' were uttered to each of us as we passed into the light.

The night was truly magical. Our nervousness soon turned into excitement, wondering what would happen next. The chanting, the raising of energy, the blessing, the sharing of cakes and ale. I remember clearly the warmth in that sacred space, not just from the welcoming people who surrounded us. Turned to face inwards, I was warm, safe; turning outwards I was cold, alone.

At that point, in that circle, in the middle of the woods, in the dark, I knew that this was where I belonged, for I am a witch.

Well, once I realised I was a witch, I did what most people do. I bought a book and started reading. I started with Buckland's Complete Book of Witchcraft, in which he set out the 'basic essentials'. Lesson three – tools, clothing, and names. It explained that different traditions had different requirements. That's alright if you know what tradition you are but as a total novice, I had no idea. I was alarmed at the first item – the knife, or athame, especially when it said that it would not do to simply buy a knife, you needed to make one, and then followed instructions on how to heat metal on the stove to get it soft enough to shape. I was also worried about the grinding wheel to sharpen it. I was relieved when I read the sentence 'if you are creating your own denomination, then you can decide for yourself what to have.' I decided that my practice would not involve a knife.

I realised some years later that this had become my guiding principle. My craft, my magic, my practice is based on what I feel to be right. I listen to advice from a range of sources, then decide how I will proceed.

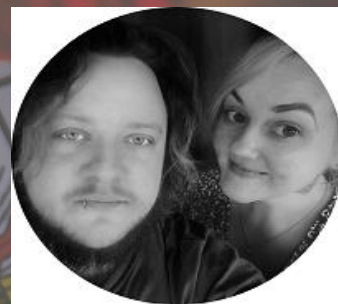
From Buckland's book, I decided to use a wand which I made myself. I also made a 'dress' following his pattern, although I was not convinced that witches wear nothing under their robes. He asserted that many covens and 'the vast majority' of solitary witches work skyclad. I was absolutely certain that this witch would not be working skyclad, not with the British weather.

Buckland went into great detail on how to choose your witch name, using numerology. I worked with this and found a name which I was happy with and used for many years. It is still the name the coven know me by in ritual. Yet I later felt that a name based on a system was not really me. I looked into the history of where I live and my own family roots, finding a name that would reflect both my home and my ancestors. This is a name that only I know.



Buckland's book was an eye-opener and gave me much to think about. I did not feel comfortable with many things that he said but it was clear that there was no single way of practising witchcraft. It was your responsibility to decide for yourself. And this is what I took from it, which allowed me the freedom to develop my own practice in a way that still gives me lasting joy.

RAVEN & LUNA'S SEPTEMBER TAROTSCOPES



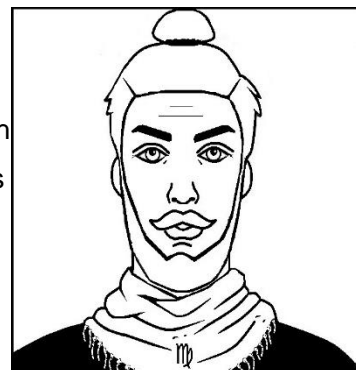
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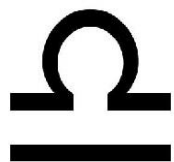
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VIRGO *The Sun, Knight of Swords, The Fool*

There's an opportunity coming up for you or you're being urged to address something that you've been putting off pursuing. It could have something to do with public speaking. Now is not the time for over-thinking. You're happy to push others into taking those first steps forward but do you practise what you preach? Instead of always investing your time in the pursuits of others, look at what you want to do with your life and give yourself that love and attention. Believe in yourself. Take that leap and embrace this new beginning; it will all work out for the best.



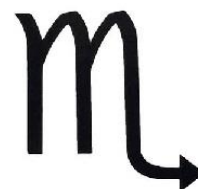
LIBRA *10 of Pentacles, Page of Cups*



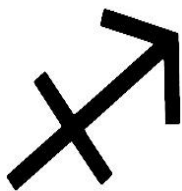
You're going to struggle with being around crowds or knowing what to do for the best in regards to others. You may want to see things from everyone's point of view but where do you stand? Wanting to accommodate everyone will fill you with anxiety because it's an impossible task.

SCORPIO *Judgement, 8 of Wands*

You're being urged not to make snap judgements in regards to people or situations. Take a moment to pause and reflect before pursuing. You may need to admit that you were incorrect about someone or made a decision that was based on what you wanted rather than what was right.



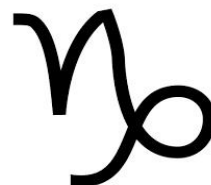
SAGITTARIUS *5 of Cups, 6 of Wands*



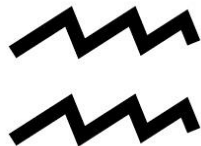
You could be setting yourself up for disappointment if you invest your whole self in one person or situation. Things might not quite work out how you wanted or a person may not be who you thought they were, which is difficult when you really look up to them.

CAPRICORN *King of Swords, 8 of Cups*

It may come naturally to detach yourself from a situation because you feel that it would be easier to not involve your emotions. You're being advised that the opposite is the case and the only way to deal with the situation is to think with your heart and not with your head.



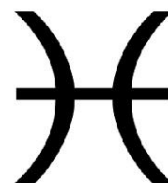
AQUARIUS *2 of Cups, 2 of Swords*



There is a potentially uncomfortable decision for you to make but the answers you seek are right in front of you. This suggests that you know what you need to do but you just don't want to admit it because it's too difficult to face. Trust your inner voice.

PISCES *10 of Cups, Queen of Swords*

Be warned, an over-bearing maternal figure may be visiting you soon! If you live with someone who likes to take over, boundaries may need to be put in place. But once you lay down what it is that you need, you also need to reinforce them when they cross the line.



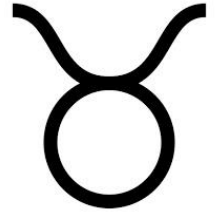
ARIES *6 of Swords, 5 of Pentacles*



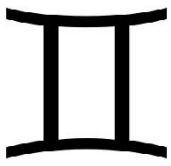
It's going to feel like a difficult month. You may feel like you want to run away and hide. There is nothing wrong with taking a step back but don't make the situation worse by ignoring it or even doing things impulsively that will only give you short-term satisfaction.

TAURUS *Wheel of Fortune, 7 of Wands*

Something is going to happen that you're happy about or proud of. It's likely a situation you've been waiting on for a while and have invested yourself in. Unfortunately that can come with others being jealous or even trying to sabotage you. Stick to it no matter what anyone else says. It is worth it.



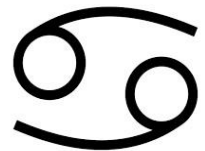
GEMINI *Ace of Swords, Ace of Cups*



Put more love and passion into what you're doing, your work or into a relationship. If things have become stagnant this will help things to feel renewed. If you're feeling stuck or lost, try some brand new ventures to revitalise your life. You hold the key to your own happiness.

CANCER *King of Cups, Strength*

It may be a trying time for you but remember how resilient you are. Don't be ashamed of showing your emotions, as a healthy outlet will be what gets you through. Deal with your feelings at the time when something doesn't go how you wanted. This is a period of transformation.



LEO *The Empress, Ace of Wands*



This is a fertile time for you- what ever you plant will grow and have long term success. Think about what new things you want to bring into your life. This is particularly true in regards to investing your energy in studying or working on your spiritual health.

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LIKE A CURSE – PART 1

A G WORTHINGTON – WITCH RESIDENT WRITER

Some raw, ancient, primal want ripples through me as I spy the doe. She trots carefully through the trees, unaware of my presence, but not totally ignorant of the dangers of the forest. The white fur of her neck has my mouth wet. I lower myself flat against the damp ground and inch forward, hyper-aware of each twig or fallen branch or autumn leaf that could ruin everything. The doe bows her head to graze as I close in.

‘DEMETER!’

My mistress’ bellow echoes through the quiet. The birds in the trees instantly take startled flight; my prey looks up so fast she almost snaps her own neck. Those big brown eyes fix onto my narrowed yellow ones and I know all is lost, but I still leap for her, claws extended. I swipe nothing but thin air and she gallops away deeper into the forest, lightning-fast.

I contemplate chasing after her but I sense Isolde close.

‘Blasted cat! Where’ve you got to?’

She crashes through the undergrowth, not a hunter's bone in her body.

You ruined my meal.

I turn away, giving up hope for a hot meal and slink back the way I came to meet her.

‘Oh it’s not as if you’re a real cat, Deme,’ she announces when she sees me, casually like this is something I should know. But it is not something I know; it is not something I have ever even questioned. ‘I can’t let you disrupt

the natural order of things. There would be hell to pay if we let a big cat loose in the countryside.'

I am as real as you are?

I hate that it sounds like a question. This should not be a question. Apprehension dawns on her face, mouth furling in an awkward grimace. Instead of answering me she just shrugs in a helpless manner and turns away from me, quickly starting back for the cottage. I trail behind her, full of questions.

'Of course, you're real. I didn't mean...'

She trails off and glances back at me. I stare at her openly and she sighs. 'You're special.'

I don't understand.

'You're magic, love, and magic doesn't want for anything. Not even the meat of that deer you were hunting.'

The rest of the walk back to the cottage is made in silence. We are approaching the back porch when the stone around Isolde's neck begins to glow. We both look at it nervously, all too aware of the warning. Something or someone has breached the wards.

'Stay hidden,' she tells me before rushing up the steps to the back door. She unlocks it with a quick flit of her fingers and goes inside. I know she wants me to fade back between the trees but something feels very wrong this time. I don't feel like this is just a stray dog or lost traveler that's wandered into our clearing.

I creep down around the perimeter of the cottage, peeking around the corner of the building so I can see the intruder. The man is pale and young, dark hair cropped short to his scalp, with eyes that almost seem black in the dimming light. He wears the clothes of a traveler and carries a worn leather bag over one shoulder. His shoes have holes in them. He raises a fist to the door only for it to swing open inwards before he can make contact.

Isolde, to her credit, is the picture of surprise upon seeing him standing before her. I hear her murmur a small exhale of *Oh* as she readjusts the basket of washing on her hip.

‘Pardon me, sir.’

‘Apologies madam. I didn’t mean to startle you there.’

‘No harm. Can I help you with something, stranger?’

‘Alder Thorne,’ he offers his name, hand on heart. ‘And I very much hope you can.’

Isolde nods her head for him to go on.

‘You see, I’ve been traveling for some time and yours is the first place in this forest I have come across. Would you be willing to let me stay the night?’

Isolde glances away from him and her eyes find mine, searching for an answer I don’t have. The man reads the hesitation in the air and before she can turn him away he goes on to add quickly, ‘I’ll sleep on the floor, I won’t be any trouble.’ Her gaze has been on me too long and he quirks his head in my direction when she doesn’t instantly respond. I dart out of sight before I’m caught and a moment later I hear Isolde say loudly,

‘Of course, sir, come in and warm yourself by the fire.’

To be continued...

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