

Welcome to Beltane!



Here in Florida we are in the middle of summer weather with temperatures in the 80s and 90s. Sometimes I forget it is still spring in other areas of the country. The passionflower is also blooming and I saw a Gulf Fritillary.

I was happy to see the first caterpillar of the season happily eating away. There was a lone Monarch flying around laying eggs so I know there will be more caterpillars soon. We planted new milkweed plants this

year.

We are adapting to the time change but it is always difficult for me. We always change the batteries in our smoke detectors and do a spring clean. At this time of year, ancient people would clean the temples and statues. It is a time of renewal but also a time of sensuality. We also need to clean our personal temples, our bodies.



We need to pamper our bodies from our daily abuse. I have been trying out different products for Belladonna's Garden and I must say I really feel pampered and spoiled. Not only does my skin feel good, my heart is soaring. When I make soap or other products, I am in my element. This side of me

has been missing for a long time. I am coming back into myself and love it. I feel fulfilled!



In the Dianic tradition, we honor the first blood. The young Goddess is the Virgin but that does not mean she is a virgin in the physical sense. It means she is whole in herself and no man possesses her. At this time of year, we honor Diana and Artemis. Both of these Goddesses are also moon and the hunt. They are often depicted with a bow and either a dog or a stag. They are strong independent women!



In honor of those Goddesses, another love had returned in my life. I purchased a beautiful Samick Sage 2 Recurve Bow. I have not shot a bow in 37 years but it was like riding a bike.

I was nervous when I nocked the first arrow and lifted the bow. I took a deep breath and released the arrow. It felt as if all of my stress left my body in the

arrow and when I heard the thump of the arrow hitting the target, it was pure bliss. I can see how this could be a type of meditation. I was extremely pleased with myself when I hit the target and even got a bull's eye. In this photo, you can see the arrows are at an angle. The reason is that the first arrow hit the upper left corner of the target so hard it moved the target. I was over the moon!



Even though I am crossing the threshold from Mother to Crone, in my own way, I am honoring the Maiden Goddess this Beltane. My wish for you is that you can connect and honor the Maiden within you.

Blessings of the Beltane Season,

Dawn

Contents

Ask Your Mama by Mama Donna Henes	4
Beltaine: The Red Ritual by De-Anna Alba	7
Book Review: Before We Visit The Goddess by Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni	11
Book Review: The Witches of Cambridge by Menna van Praag	12
Claim Your Magic: The Witch's Hat by Molly	13
Connection by Deanne Quarrie	16
From Belladonna's Garden: Marigold by Dawn Thomas	18
Hearth Priestess: Tips for Rituals with Kids by Molly	22
Meeting the Morrigan by Raine Shakti	25
Moon Schedule Beltane to Summer Solstice	26
Pagan Every Day Frigg by Barbara Ardinger, PhD	28
Pagan Every Day Inghean Bhuidhe by Barbara Ardinger, PhD	29
Solitary Ritual for Beltane by Dawn "Belladonna" Thomas	30
Tarot & Charms for the Season By the Herbal Taroist	33
Credits	35

Ask Your Mama by Mama Donna Henes

Are you cyclically confused? In a ceremonial quandary? Completely clueless? Wonder no more.

Ask Your Mama™

The What, When, Where, Why, How, and Who of Ceremony & Spirituality

by

©Mama Donna Henes, Urban Shaman

A Question of Spell Casting

Dear Mama Donna,

This has been a nightmare year for me. One terrible thing after another has been happening. My whacko neighbor keeps hinting that she has put a spell on me. Things have been so incredibly horrendous that I am beginning to believe her. I am totally spooked. Can you put the spell back onto her?

-Helpless in Brooklyn

Dear (Not-So) Helpless,

No, no, a thousand times no!

Your question is one that I receive fairly often, and the answer is always, "Absolutely Not." Ritual magic is not meant to manipulate others, but to tranceform one's self. We all need to assume personal response-ability for our own thoughts and actions, our points of view and our paths.

There is plenty that you can do for yourself to alleviate, mitigate, make sense of, and maybe even completely alter your current situation — from the inside out. And I would be glad to work with you to that end.

We could purify you from all the pain and disappointments you have been suffering. We could cleanse you of your paranoia and sense of persecution and defeat. We could begin to repair and enrich your sense of center, of confidence, esteem, and autonomy. We could ceremonially reclaim the sovereign power over yourself that you have given away to this person.

We could work to exercise your will — the will to will your will — to maintain a positive and self-nurturing mode of living. We could create affirmations, blessings, amulets, altars, prayers, protections, and ceremonies for you so that you feel completely safe and free from negative influences — especially your own. We could find creative ways to identify, focus, dedicate, manifest, and project your desire and hopeful intentions for meaningful change.

But we cannot work on your neighbor, or anyone else, without her awareness and permission. We cannot, without consequence, interfere with someone else's fate. If it gives you any comfort, remember that all things that go around, have a tendency to ultimately come around — all in the course of the cycles and without any interfering help from us!

If she is indeed sending you hateful energy, that is on her, as they say. What you need to deal with is: What is on you?? If, after consideration, you truly want to cast a spell on someone, there are individual (not necessarily representative) unscrupulous practitioners* of every stripe and persuasion who will perform any spell you want for as much money as they can squeeze from your desperation. But then, *that* is on you.

You mentioned feeling helpless. We are all helpless to a certain degree in this life. Things happen. *Shit* happens. Bad things happen to good people every second of every day. Our mission, should we choose to accept it, is to rise to whatever the occasion in the finest way that we can. To adapt. To expand. To evolve. To grow. To know. To thrive. Cause and effect, guilt and blame are completely beside the spiritual point.

We can choose to accept adversity as a life lesson — not a punishment, mind you — but as an instructor. A very scary, mean one whom we will never forget. A strict disciplinarian with a sick sense of humor and a wooden ruler. The hardest of times teach us the most about our essential selves; and if all those old wives are right, what doesn't kill us, makes us stronger. Who ever said it was going to be easy, anyway?

The ability of making the best of things is probably our most noble and powerfully human attribute. When life serves us lemons, we can, like Dolly Parton, make lemonade. Or lemon meringue pie. Or lemon furniture polish. Or we can paint lemons, or compose lemon odes, raps, sonatas, arias. Sing the sad songs of lemons. Meditate on lemons, keep a lemon journal, or take a lemon bath.

We can work on developing the trust that everything that happens, happens for the ultimate good. Karma, Fate, Tao, Dharma, synchronicity, serendipity, don't march in a straight line. The patterns of connection aren't necessarily clear, obvious or immediate. But in this complex web of a universe of ours, one thing ultimately *does* lead to another, and it is at our discretion what to do when it does.

Yours for every positive possibility,
Mama Donna

* Certainly most practitioners are well intentioned and completely ethical, but there are always exceptions. As always, use your judgment and trust your instincts.

**Send your questions about seasons, cycles, celebrations, ceremonies and spirit to Mama Donna at: CityShaman@aol.com

*Are you cyclically confused? In a ceremonial quandary? Completely clueless? Wonder no more. Send your questions about seasons, cycles, and celebrations to Mama Donna at **cityshaman@aol.com**.

Donna Henes is an internationally renowned urban shaman, ritual expert, award-winning author, popular speaker and workshop leader whose joyful celebrations of celestial events have introduced ancient traditional rituals and contemporary ceremonies to millions of people in more than 100 cities since 1972. She has published four books, a CD, an acclaimed Ezine and writes for The Huffington Post and UPI Religion and Spirituality Forum. Mama Donna, as she is affectionately called, maintains a ceremonial center, spirit shop, ritual practice and consultancy in Exotic Brooklyn, NY where she offers intuitive tarot readings and spiritual counseling and works with individuals, groups, institutions, municipalities and corporations to create meaningful ceremonies for every imaginable occasion.

www.DonnaHenes.net

www.TheQueenOfMySelf.com

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Donna_Henes

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Queen_of_My_Self

Watch her videos:

<http://www.youtube.com/user/MamaDonnaHenes>

Follow her on Twitter:

<http://twitter.com/queenmamadonna>

Connect with her on Facebook:

<http://www.facebook.com/MamaDonnaHenes>

Read her on the Huffington Post:

<http://www.huffingtonpost.com/donna-henes/>

Read her on Beliefnet:

<http://blog.beliefnet.com/thequeenofmyself/>



Beltaine: The Red Ritual by De-Anna Alba

In the Mythic cycle/seasonal cycle of life, Aradia, Beltaine celebrates Her rite of passage into womanhood. She passes from girl-child to fertile woman and enters into the heart of Women's Mysteries, the unique power that belongs to the female alone. With it comes rights and responsibilities. She enters the house of the Moon, and feels its influence within the ebb and flow of Her own body. She sees for the first time how the monthly cycle of Her body reflects the larger cycle of the seasons of the year, and of all life which passes into existence through the feminine. Her blood also celebrates that connection, and the connection to the Great Goddess as First Ancestress.

This ritual requires the red cords and red clothing, or white clothing with red "stains" (or no clothes at-all!). The altar cloth and candles are red. A bouquet of red carnations or roses sits upon the altar. The bouquet includes one flower for each woman present. There is a garland of flowers for Aradia as well. Wine, pomegranate juice, cherry juice, cranberry juice, or menstrual blood is in the chalice. The cauldron contains glowing coals upon which water may be sprinkled to create steam. If this cannot be managed, burn a smokey incense (like frankincense tears) on the coals. Incense, a candle, water and salt are placed around the cauldron. The youngest woman present will enact the part of Aradia. The eldest will be the First Ancestress and will wear the lunar crescent.

The ritual bath area should be lit with red candles; red carnations and white gardenias (or carnations) should float in the bath water. Add a few drops of musk oil to the water. An earthy incense should burn in the censer – patchouli, or another of your preference. Each takes the ritual bath, beginning with the woman enacting the roll of Aradia. During the bath, thought should be given to the special significance of menarche and how nice it would have been if we each had been honored in this way. Take time to honor yourself. As each woman emerges from the bath, the Facilitating Priestess gives her an herbal tea made for the bleeding woman. This could be a PMS teas, a tea for cramps, or one to encourage the flow. The choice is yours.

When all is ready and the altar candles are lit, the Facilitating Priestess casts the Circle, consecrates it and consecrates all present, and then invokes the Quarters. She then calls the woman acting the part of the First Ancestress to join her behind the altar. The Facilitating Priestess picks up the crescent crown and turns to face the women. She invokes Her saying:

"Oh Ancient of Days, Prime Progenitress, She who lived first so that we might live and our foremothers before us, be with us now to welcome your daughter, Aradia, into the community of all women and into the Circle of Life. Grant us Your presence and wisdom, and share your joy."

The Facilitating Priestess crowns the First Ancestress and pauses a moment to allow Her to speak if She will. The Facilitating Priestess then calls the woman enacting Aradia to the front of the altar. She places the garland of flowers on Her head and says:

"Aradia, daughter of All Mother, today You enter the community of all women and assume the responses and responsibilities of a woman grown. The ebb and flow of Your body connects You to the cycles of the Lady Moon and the tides of Yemaya; to the Great Mother, Gaia, and the divine female in all Her manifestations. This is the time of Your greatest power and the elements will bless you to it."

The Facilitating Priestess takes the chalice from the altar, stands beside Aradia, puts her arm around Her and gently guides Her to the Eastern Quarter. There she raises the chalice and invokes the element and Goddesses of Air, saying:

"Hear me O Mighty Ones, Great Queens of the regions of the East, we ask that you attend us here and consecrate this woman born with the power and wisdom of the spirits of the Air."

The woman standing at the East takes the chalice from the Priestess and, dipping her finger (s) in it, anoints Aradia on the forehead (third eye) with the red fluid, saying:

"I give You the gift of focused attention. Of it is born intuition and action as well as awareness of Yourself and Your needs. With it You'll know Yourself and others – their truths and their falsehoods; their intentions toward you for good or for ill. You'll see to the heart of every matter and act with wisdom, integrity and honor. Each month when You bleed, remember me and my gift with an offering of incense and smoke."

Aradia throws incense on the coals in the cauldron. The Priestess regains the chalice and guides Aradia to the South. Holding the chalice aloft, she invokes:

"Hear me oh Mighty Ones, Great Queens of the regions of the South, we ask that you attend us here and consecrate this woman born with the powers and the wisdom of the spirits of the South."

The Priestess hands the chalice to the woman at the South, who anoints Aradia's womb with the fluid therein, saying:

"I give to You the gift of passion and the responsibilities thereof: to give of Your body to those You feel are worthy; to take delight in the pleasures of the flesh along with the emotional honesty and clarity it demands; to know and to respect Your need – and the needs of others – for separation as well as for union; for privacy as well as for intimacy; for gentle love as well as for driving lust. Know, too, that Your body can now create, nourish and birth a child – a sacred task not undertaken lightly, if at all. Be mindful of the choice. Each month when You bleed remember me with an offering of fire."

Aradia takes a new candle from beside the cauldron, lights it from the cauldron's coals and sets it up to the South of the cauldron. The Facilitating Priestess takes back the chalice and escorts Aradia to the West, where she invokes, with raised chalice:

"Hear me oh Mighty Ones, Great Queens of the region of the West; we ask that you attend us here and consecrate this woman born with the wisdom and powers of the spirits of the West."

The woman in the West takes the chalice and anoints Aradia's breasts, saying:

"Mine is the gift of intuition – to know Your body and the cycles of its seasons. Such knowledge of your body will increase Your psychic abilities and will ease the transition into and out of Your greatest time of personal power, which is centered within Your bleeding time. Go into Your Moon Temple at that time and divine the future, integrate the past, decide Your course of action for the present, and remember me with an offering of fluid."

Aradia takes the chalice and pours a small libation from it into the cauldron. She then returns the chalice to the Priestess, who takes it and guides Her to the North. The Priestess invokes with raised chalice, saying:

"Hear me oh Mighty Ones, Great Queens of the region of the North, attend us here and consecrate this woman born with the wisdom and the powers of the spirits of the North."

The woman standing in the North takes the chalice and anoints Aradia's feet, saying:

"May Your feet rest firmly on the understanding I bring – the knowledge of the sacred ground upon which You walk. The Earth, Herself complete with cycles and seasons of life and of death as reflected in Your body and Hers. Your own divinity is a diminutive reflection of Her Holiness. Each month, when You bleed, remember me with an offering of salt."

Aradia throws a pinch of salt into the cauldron. The Facilitating Priestess returns the chalice to the altar picks up the bouquet and gives one flower to each woman in the Circle except for Aradia. Aradia, escorted by the Priestess, is then presented to each woman in the Circle, beginning with the woman to the left of the First Ancestress. Each woman hands Aradia her flower with a wish for Her. Each woman then connects her red cord to the waist portion of the cord of the woman to her right, saying something about the monthly blood connecting us to the women who have gone before us, or about it being a red thread woven into the tapestry of all women's lives.

When Aradia comes to the First Ancestress, She receives a flower and wish from Her. Aradia is then placed in the Circle to the right of the First Ancestress. The Facilitating Priestess ties Aradia's cord to the waist cord of the woman on Her right. The Priestess then ties the cord of the First Ancestress to Aradia's waist, saying:

"Thus is the last connected to the first and the first to the last within the Circle of women. Your blood connects You to all who have gone before and to all who are yet to come, and binds You directly to She Who Bled First. And the red thread spins on in the hands of the Ancient of Days."

She touches the hands of the First Ancestress. The Facilitating Priestess steps to the center of the Circle near the cauldron, replenishes the smoke, removes her own cord, lays it in a circle around the cauldron and the four elements on the floor, and says:

"And when we come to the time when our bleeding stops and it returns to the elements from which it came, we will gladly stand on the rim of the cauldron of transformation (she straddles it) and embrace and honor the changes it brings."

All women untie themselves from each other and remove the cord from their waist, dropping it at their feet in a ritual foreshadowing (or remembering) their own menopause. The Facilitating Priestess says:

"And our connection to each other will turn from red to gray." (She indicates her hair.)

The First Ancestress is thanked, and the crown is returned to the altar. The ritual of Milk, Honey and Grain is celebrated. All sit to feast and to share stories of their own menarche – how they felt, and how their mothers reacted. Any information relative to the May Moon is passed on. The Quarters are dismissed and the Circle is declared open.

The Rite is ended.

Beltaine The Red Ritual by De-Anna Alba. This ritual is from The Cauldron of Change: Myth, Mysteries, Magick of the Goddess. Delphi Press, August 2993, ISBN: 978-1878980083. Used with permission from the author. De-Anna Alba has a ritual consulting service and provide spiritual direction for Wiccans, Pagans and Goddess Worshipers of all stripes. Interested parties may contact her at deanna@leapierce.com

Book Review: Before We Visit The Goddess by Chitra Banerjee

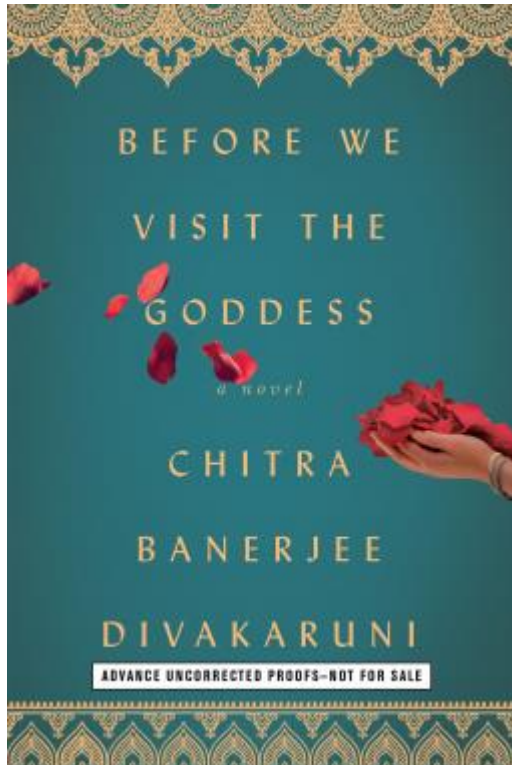
Divakaruni

Review by Dawn Thomas

224 Pages

Publisher: Simon & Schuster

Fiction, Families, Mothers & Daughters



The story opens with a telephone call from Bela to her mother, Sabitri. Tara, Bela's daughter, wants to drop out of college. Bela begs Sabitri to talk Tara out of it. Sabitri is in India and begins to write Tara a letter. What begins with a simple request for Tara to stay in school, turns into the story of her life.

From her letter, we see Sabitri as a girl and her desire to get an education. Sabitri has the opportunity to live with a wealthy family in order to go to school. She meets the son, Raj, and a relationship begins. When Raj's mother finds out about them, she throws Sabitri out of the house. Shamed, she returns to the school and cries. Bijan, her math professor sees Sabitri and comforts her.

The story changes from Sabitri to Bela and we hear about her childhood. Bela seems to always cause controversy and I wonder if that is her desire. One of her actions causes a rift in the family from which it cannot recover. Bela writes a note for Sabitri and leaves India. Poor Sabitri is devastated, but she picks herself up and goes on. Bela's life in America is not what she thought it would be. She wants money and

position. Since her husband did not finish college, he cannot get a well-paying job. Bella takes a job working at a nursery/daycare which is a far cry from what she wanted from life.

The story then changes from Bela to her daughter Tara, who has never had happy home life. Her mother and father seem to fight a lot. As a young woman, she breaks off her relationship with her father. Tara believes he betrayed her mother but, in a way, they betrayed each other. She does not seem to have a stable life and moves from one relationship to another. Tara works in a second hand store and has taken to stealing things for the simple pleasure of doing it. She takes a second job as a caretaker for an old Indian woman. Although their time together was brief, it makes an impact on her life.

At another job, Tara must drive an older Indian man, Dr. Venkatachalapathi, to the airport to catch a flight back to India, but first he first wants to go to temple. Tara is not religious and does not know the temple's location. They are late because she gets lost but Dr. V tells Tara it does not matter to the Goddess how many minutes you spend in front of her, only how much you want to be there. Tara follows him into the temple and asks if her clothes are appropriate. Dr. V tells her what you wear is not

important, but what is in your heart. He explains that they must cleanse themselves before visiting the Goddess, and then uses the hose to wash her feet.

The book shows the different dynamics in a generational story. Each woman is unique and her story touches the soul. It was a pleasure to read about this family and I will miss not knowing what life will bring them. This is one of the few books I would read again.

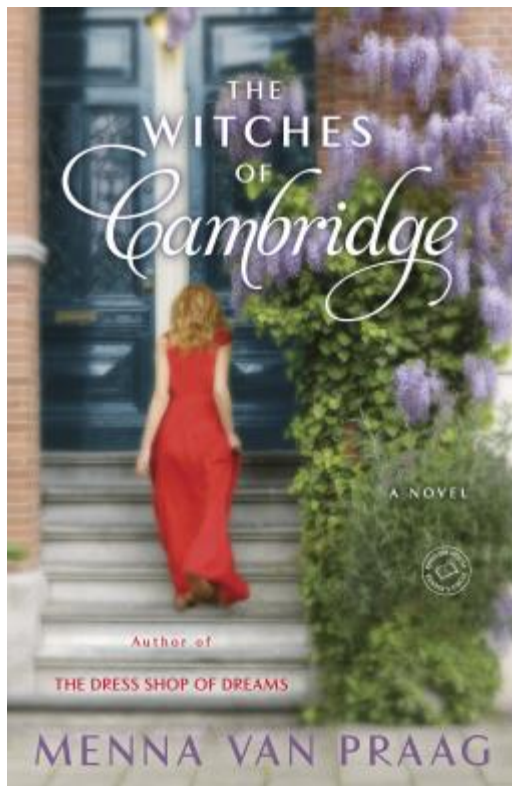
Book Review: *The Witches of Cambridge* by Menna van Praag

Review by Dawn Thomas

322 Pages

Publisher: Random House Publishing Group – Ballantine Books

Women's Fiction, Witches, Magic, Fantasy



The book follows the lives of several women and a man who are witches. Amandine feels her husband has become distant and fears he is having an affair. Her mother, Heloise, is still grieving for her husband who passed away two years ago. Cosima is a baker whose husband just told her he was having an affair and that his girlfriend is pregnant. Cosima is devastated because she wants to have a child but her blood condition makes that next to impossible. Her own mother died giving birth to her. Kat, Cosima's older sister, has feelings for George but he does not seem to feel the same way.

Noa is a student with a strange power – she can see a person's secret. Unfortunately, she does not have the ability to keep the information to herself. She does not have any friends and tries to keep to herself so she cannot expose other's secrets. One night, she stumbles upon the witches' book club and blurts out each of their secrets.

Amandine asks Noa to come to her house so she can meet her husband. This way Amandine will know if he is having an affair. Before she can do that, Noa meets a man who

says he can remove the curse from her. She listens to him and what happens next alters her life.

These women are so believable and real. They have faults just as we do and must learn to deal with what life throws at them. When I finished the book, I was sad I would not know what happens next in their lives.

Claim Your Magic: The Witch's Hat by Molly

"What do you know of the negative associations with the word Witch? How do you feel about the fact that so many witches were persecuted and burned in medieval times? Would you like to see witches and Goddess-religion made acceptable in today's society?"

—Shekhinah Mountainwater, *Ariadne's Thread*

This year we began a small study group using the book *Ariadne's Thread*. I've wanted to work through this book with a group of women for years and it finally is working out to do so. One of the topics of our first meeting is the fear many women have of the word "witch." This comes up in the [Red Tent](#) and [Practical Priestessing](#) classes I teach also. Indeed, when I plan Red Tent events, though I do use goddess imagery and I am



extremely goddess-oriented in my personal spirituality, I am careful not to include the word "goddess" in the chants or rituals, because I want to make sure to speak to the womanspirit within all of us, rather than being associated with any one framework of belief. Red Tent spaces have the ability to transcend any particular belief system and welcome women of many backgrounds, inclinations, and beliefs. They aren't specifically "Goddess circles," though they honor the divine feminine through their very being.

Once at a meeting for breastfeeding women, I mentioned wanting to start a group called "mothercraft" or "womancraft." Another woman there said it sounded interesting, but if that is what it was called she would *never come* because it sounded too much like "witchcraft." I think many women retain a deep-seated, historically rooted fear of being labeled witches. Maybe that sounds silly, but this fear is a real one. It is important for women to gather in sacred circles together without fear of labeling (or of needing to identify as anything other than women enjoying a women's circle!), but it is also important to look at the word "witch" and explore why it might feel so scary to be thought so.

I appreciate this no-nonsense quote from Starhawk about the power of the word "witch" in her essay *Earth, Spirit, and Action: Letting the Wildness In*: **"The word 'Witch' has power. If we don't examine it and counter its negative associations, if we don't go through that process with it, then it's like a stick to beat you with."**

This connects to a recent article about young women and women's spirituality in which we find this wonderful gem:

“the task of reclaiming the witch is a fundamentally poetic one.” –Sady Doyle

In her article, Doyle also quotes Starhawk:

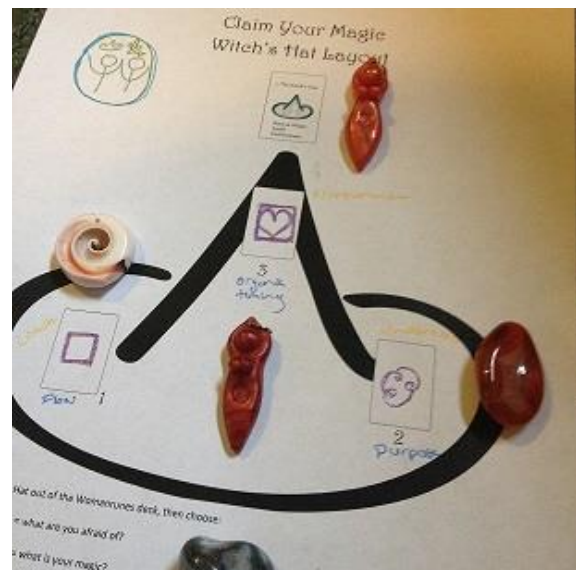
“I think that part of the power of the word is that it refers to a kind of power that is not legitimized by the authorities,” Starhawk says.

“Even though not all witches are women, and a lot of men are witches, it seems to connote women’s power in particular. And that’s very scary in a patriarchal world – the kind of power that’s not just coming from the hierarchical structure, but some kind of inner power. And to use it to serve the ends that women have always stood for, like nurturing and caring for the next generation – that, I think, is a wonderfully dangerous prospect.”

via [Season of the witch: why young women are flocking to the ancient craft | World news | The Guardian](#).

One of the classes I took for my M.Div degree at Ocean Seminary College was called “Stigmatization of the Witch.” It was a very intense, sad, and challenging class. One of the lasting lessons from it for me was this: *...when political and religious tides were turning in the ancient world, those who wanted to dominate and control didn’t go for the leaders of countries, for political heads of states, or for those in powerful jobs, they went for the **priestesses**. They went for women who held the cultural stories and ritual language of the people. They went for the healers and nurturers and those who took care of others. They destroyed temples and sacred images and books. They almost succeeded in total eradication of the role of priestess from the world and worked really hard to take midwives and wisewomen out completely as well...*

In the [Womanrunes system](#), the Witch’s Hat rune is the Rune of Magic. It is a strong rune, one that asks you to stand up, to name and claim, to be unapologetic and unafraid and...*to claim your magic*. When we reached it in my most recent [Womanrunes Immersion](#) course, I was thinking about women and fear and witches, and I found myself creating a [Claim Your Magic layout](#) for use with Womanrunes or any other oracle card system.



Feel free to give it a try alone or with a group and claim your magic!

Molly has been “gathering the women” to circle, sing, celebrate, and share since 2008. She plans and facilitates women’s circles, seasonal retreats and rituals, mother-daughter circles, family ceremonies, and red tent circles in rural Missouri and teaches online courses in [Red Tent facilitation](#) and [Practical Priestessing](#). She is a priestess who holds MSW and M.Div degrees and recently finished her dissertation about contemporary priestessing in the U.S. Molly and her husband Mark co-create original goddess sculptures, ceremony kits, and jewelry at [Brigid’s Grove](#). Molly is the author of [Womanrunes](#), [Earthprayer](#), and [The Red Tent Resource Kit](#). She writes about thealogy, nature, practical priestessing, and the goddess at her [Woodspriestess](#) blog.

If you would like to have your own card layout, you can access the file here:
<http://www.brigidsgrove.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/witchshatlayout.pdf>

Connection by Deanne Quarrie

As an introvert, I do a lot of listening. However, I have noticed that when I am in a group and think I am listening, quite often I have tuned out and am lost in my own thoughts. That doesn't happen near as often when I am with one person, sharing in conversation.

Clearly there are times when I am with someone who is a "talker" and our conversation is mostly a monologue. I find this need to talk comes either from being alone most of the time or from not being listened to by anyone. So when I care about someone, I simply listen as the rattle on. Pretty soon however, the pace slows down and the content of the conversation takes on substance and if we are lucky a true conversation can begin. If it doesn't, then at least the other person who needed to be heard got a chance.

There are other conversations that we can have that we might call discussions. In these two or more people tackle a subject, tear it apart, analyze it, chew it up and finally spit it out. The whole idea is to analyze the subject, look for answers, agreements or results. These discussions can be extremely stimulating.

Then, there is what we call a dialogue. You might think that discussion and dialogue are the same thing but in truth, dialogue happens in a uniquely different way. The meaning of the word dialogue is "words flowing through." This is really very different from discussion. Here we have a completely open-ended exploration where all parties enter with the spirit of inquiry. A discussion is something that arises out of the intellect and a dialogue comes straight from the heart.

We can see the difference quite easily if we look at how we might approach a conversation about a truly "difficult" subject, one that has many emotional triggers for the people involved. If this is the case, discussion would build walls between them, when dialogue offers the hope of true understanding.

Listening to another is for most, a learned skill. Listening and truly hearing can be the most valuable gift we can give another. Listening involves letting go of the need to speak, the need to counter, the need to give advice and to simply open and receive what another needs to say to us. It requires that we become still and open to receive. We suspend our judgments and assumptions, and listen to understand rather than agree.

Certainly, in this process of listening, we can offer acknowledgement of what is being said along the way but we don't take away the conversation from them. We give of ourselves in this way to allow the other to unfold. For me this is "heart listening."

I have found, for myself, that this kind of listening becomes a gift for me as well. When I can open myself in this way to another, my soul is able to touch their soul in a sacred communion of being.

*When I deeply listen to you
it is as though
all the walls I have built around myself
disappear.
That space between us
no longer exists
as a boundary between strangers.
The oneness of who we are
and the whole of who we are
create new patterns of being.
When I deeply listen to you
understanding and a deep knowing
of our shared experience
connects me to you in a way that is holy.*

Deanne Quarrie, D. Min. is a Priestess of the Goddess. She is the author of five books. She is the founder of the Apple Branch where she teaches courses in Feminist Dianic Wicca and European Witchcraft. She mentors those who wish to serve others in their communities. She is also an Adjunct Professor at Ocean Seminary College and is the founder of Global Goddess, a worldwide organization open to all women who honor some form of the divine feminine.

From Belladonna's Garden: Marigold by Dawn Thomas

Calendula Officinalis

Folk Names: Bride of the Sun, Calendula, Drunkard, Goldes, Holigolde, Husbandman's Dial, Mary Gowles, Ruddes, Ruddles, Spousa Solis, Summer's Bridge



Parts Used: Flowers and leaves

Gender: Masculine

Planet: Sun

Element: Fire

Powers: Protection, Prophetic Dreams, Legal Matters, Psychic Powers

Botanical

The marigold is familiar to most people with its green leaves and golden orange or yellow flowers. Some varieties can have red stripes. The flowers may have only five petals surrounding a yellow or orange center, or they can look like pom-poms. The leaves are dark green and deeply divided. The plants grow about six inches in height. They like full sun but will grow in shade. Once the flowers fade, they should be pinched off to encourage more blooms. The dried flowers can also be added to potpourris. Dried flowers can last six to twelve months. Seeds can be stored for up to two years, but if stored in a cool dark place in a tightly covered container they can last longer.

Culinary Uses

Fresh marigold petals can be added to salads and soups for added flavor. The petals are full of flavonoids, which are found naturally in vegetables and fruits. The petals can be used as a coloring agent in cheese, butters and other dishes. It has been called "the poor man's saffron."

Cosmetic Uses

Marigold petals can be added to your bathwater. Due to its skin healing properties, calendula can be found in many cosmetic products. There are two ways to make your own calendula oil. The first is cold infusion by placing flower petals in a jar with a carrier oil for four weeks. The oil is then drained before it is stored. The second is hot infusion which is quicker than the cold method but will not be as strong. The flower petals and carrier oil are put in a double boiler or a slow cooker (crockpot) and heated for four hours. As in the cold method, the flowers are drained before the oil is stored. The oil produced by either method can be stored for up to one year.

Soothing Lavender Breast Balm

Since it is known to be good at healing wounds, I made a balm to use on my thyroid incision scar. A friend of mine is also going through radiation for breast cancer so I gave her a tin too. I found this recipe online at the Soap Queen Blog.

Ingredients

- 2.1 oz. Olive Oil
- 1.4 oz. Avocado Oil
- 1.2 oz. Cocoa Butter
- 1 oz. Castor Oil
- .7 oz. Cera Bellina Wax
- .7 ounces Shea Butter
- .3 oz. Lavender Essential Oil
- .5 oz. Vitamin E Oil
- .3 oz. Calendula Extract
- 2 Candle Tins



Directions

At a low temperature, heat the olive oil, avocado oil, castor oil and cera bellina wax until the wax melts. Add the shea and cocoa butters to the hot mixture and stir until they are completely melted. Add the calendula extract, vitamin E oil and lavender essential oil and stir until thoroughly combined. Pour the mixture into a metal tin and allow it to cool and harden. Apply the balm several times a day to affected area.

Homeopathic Uses

Calendula officinalis has been used to stop bleeding after dental work and internally for cancer. It has antiseptic, anti-inflammatory and anti-bacterial properties when used on the skin. Because of these properties, it has been used to treat acne, athlete's foot, burns, rashes and many more skin conditions. Calendula can be applied in either a poultice or as an oil. A tincture of marigold and apple cider vinegar has been used to treat menstrual cramps and irregular periods. The petals can also be added to bathwater to help heal hemorrhoids, and other conditions. Some of the side effects of marigold may include allergic reactions, medication interactions and even adverse hormonal effects.

Marigold Ointment

This ointment is good for skin infections, eczema, athlete's feet and varicose veins.



Ingredients

Fresh flowers, chopped (2 Tablespoons) or Calendula oil (1/2 Tablespoon)
Coconut oil (4 oz.)

Directions

Over low heat, melt the coconut oil. Add fresh flowers to the oil and stir. Pour the mixture into a tin and let it cool. Apply lightly to the affected areas.

Magical Uses

Marigolds will strengthen and comfort the heart if picked at noon. Garlands can be strung over doorways to keep evil away. You can also put them under your bed as protection while you sleep or under your pillow for prophetic dreams. If you carry the petals in your pocket, justice will look upon you favorably. It is an excellent flower or plant for altars. Dried petals can be added to incense to honor a departed loved one.

History and Folklore

The name "calendula" comes from the Latin word *Kalendae*, the first day of the Roman calendar. Since marigolds bloom all year long, they are known as calendar flowers. It is also called a "flower of rain" because it will not open if rain is in the forecast.

In 1550, Albertus Magnus considered marigolds to be marvelous. Mrs. Grieve said a person with eye or head diseases could be healed simply by looking at a marigold.

Marigolds are sometimes associated with the Virgin Mary but this did not happen until the seventeenth century with Queen Mary. They are also linked with some nature Goddesses. They are also connected with death and dying, and are prevalent with Dias del los muertos (Day of the Dead) celebrations.

Dawn "Belladonna" Thomas is a High Priestess and Elder of The Apple Branch, a Dianic Tradition. She is the editor and book reviewer for the Oracle and was the Treasurer for The Global Goddess, a non-profit organization. She recently graduated from the University of Florida fulfilling a lifelong goal of completing her college education. She has been published in several magazines for her paper crafting designs. She is the owner of Belladonna's Garden (www.belladonnasgarden.com) and makes homemade soaps. She is an avid gardener and lives in Florida with her husband. Other book reviews can be found on her Blog: <http://becomingbelladonna.blogspot.com/>

Hearth Priestess: Tips for Rituals with Kids by Molly

My specialty is small group rituals and retreats for women. However, a primary reason behind having women-only rituals at this point in my life is purely logistical. I find it nearly impossible to have a complete "retreat" experience with kids also present! *Someone* has to take care of the kids during said retreats...hence, single-sex rituals/ceremonies often make the most sense for my local community. However, shorter and simpler rituals are possible with kids, though they have a completely different feel and even function, and so that energetic output needs to be balanced with the renewal and restoration we often need as mothers and women.

Here are some tips for multi-age, mixed gender rituals:

- Keep it simple
- Keep expectations low and flexible
- Distribute jobs
- Involve noise
- Don't pass around too many things or have too many parts
- Do some pre-ritual briefing (i.e. explain what is going to happen, teach words to any songs)
- Do something physical together first (such as creating a nature mandala, building a fire, making a project, creating a collaborative piece of art, making a blessing bundle, etc.)
- Encourage participation from everyone – this is not a "ritual theater" production with a handful of people performing and everyone else in the "audience" watching. This is a co-creative endeavor!
- Be outside
- Laugh when needed



Ritual is a living experience. It is a shared, evolving, and co-created process and putting the puzzle pieces together to create a unique, enriching, and meaningful ceremony is a complex and rewarding one.

When I first began taking classes at Ocean Seminary College in 2011, I realized that it was high time for me to try to offer spiritual nourishment and experiences to my immediate family members throughout the year. When I became ordained as a priestess with Global Goddess, part of the vows I spoke was be the *priestess of my own hearth first*. And it was at this time that my idea for *Family Full Moon Fun* was born and we've kept it up, with varying degrees of success, ever since.

I usually envision a delightful family ritual with loving connection, meaningful symbolism, spiritual experiences, and perhaps a drum circle. When asked what they



want to do for Family Full Moon Fun, my kids usually want to eat treats and watch movies. Though we've had some profoundly magical experiences together, often the full moon sneaks up on me, leaving me feeling snappy and unprepared for having fabulous full moon fun and instead having more like rushed, mediocre full moon fun. I got to the point in which I lamented that perhaps I was going to stop trying, because it just didn't seem to *work*. Then, I had several realizations:

1. in doing something like this for kids, I need to *keep it simple*.
2. less talking from me = more fun for family. Kids need to have active, verbal, responsive parts of the ritual.
3. my kids were already telling me what they think is fun, so how I can pull that in to my vision of a regular spiritual date with my family, rather than reject what they're telling me as not suitably ritualish enough?

With these thoughts in mind, I jotted down a [very simple ritual](#) which we have continued to use (with many small variations) ever since. One of the first times we did this ritual together, my then seven-year-old son, who is known for his semi-wild, very physical, and not-particularly-mindful mode of engaging with the others or the world, asked us all to hold our candles up to our hearts and say that we were thankful for love and the light in our hearts. Then, he said, "*thanks for doing this kind of stuff for us mom, I really like it.*"

Additional Resources:

- [Simple Family Full Moon Ritual - Brigid's Grove](#)
- [All We Need to Make Magic by Molly](#)

- More resources for Creative Ceremony can be found [here](#).

Molly has been “gathering the women” to circle, sing, celebrate, and share since 2008. She plans and facilitates women’s circles, seasonal retreats and rituals, mother-daughter circles, family ceremonies, and red tent circles in rural Missouri and teaches online courses in [Red Tent facilitation](#) and [Practical Priestessing](#). She is a priestess who holds MSW and M.Div degrees and recently finished her dissertation about contemporary priestessing in the U.S. Molly and her husband Mark co-create original goddess sculptures, ceremony kits, and jewelry at [Brigid’s Grove](#). Molly is the author of [Womanrunes](#), [Earthprayer](#), and [The Red Tent Resource Kit](#). She writes about theology, nature, practical priestessing, and the goddess at her [Woodspriestess](#) blog.

Meeting the Morrigan by Raine Shakti

The Morrigan whispered in my ear
Walk through the fear, she said
Wear your sovereignty
Own your strength

I can't, I can't, I can't, I cried
Who will love my core of steel?
One who's worthy
One who sees the tenderness of your heart

Release the fear that grips your soul
Release the fear of loneliness
Release the fear of power
It is an illusion, none of it real

Claim your crown
Claim your power
Claim your worth
Claim yourself

The Morrigan whispered in my ear
Walk through the fear, she said
Wear your sovereignty
Own your strength

I release my fear
I wear my sovereignty
I own my strength
I can, I can, I can, I said

Moon Schedule Beltane to Summer Solstice

By Dawn "Belladonna" Thomas

(Times are Eastern Time)

New Moon – May 6th 3:30 p.m.

2nd Quarter – May 13th 1:02 p.m.

Full "Flower" Moon – May 21st 5:14 p.m.

4th Quarter – May 29th 8:12 a.m.

New Moon – June 4th 11:00 p.m.

2nd Quarter – June 12th 4:10 a.m.

Full "Strong Sun" Moon – June 20th 7:02 a.m.

Moon Void of Course Schedule

May 1 st	10:33 a.m.	May 3 rd 1:04 p.m.
May 5 th	12:17 a.m.	1:10 p.m.
May 6 th	10:10 p.m.	May 7 th 12:35 p.m.
May 9 th	12:15 a.m.	1:24 p.m.
May 11 th	3:34 a.m.	5:32 p.m.
May 13 th	1:02 p.m.	May 14 th 1:52 a.m.
May 16 th	5:20 a.m.	1:33 p.m.
May 18 th	11:23 p.m.	2:29 a.m.
May 21 st	7:40 a.m.	2:48 p.m.
May 23 rd	11:37 a.m.	May 24 th 1:34 a.m.
May 25 th	9:11 p.m.	May 26 th 10:37 a.m.
May 28 th	4:19 p.m.	5:06 p.m.
May 30 th	7:10 p.m.	9:09 p.m.
June 1 st	11:42 a.m.	10:46 p.m.
June 3 rd	7:02 p.m.	11:01 p.m.
June 5 th	12:47 p.m.	11:41 p.m.

June 7 th	8:18 p.m.	June 8 th 2:47 a.m.
June 10 th	3:14 a.m.	9:46 a.m.
June 12 th	10:47 a.m.	8:33 p.m.
June 15 th	3:00 a.m.	9:18 a.m.
June 17 th	9:52 a.m.	9:34 p.m.
June 20 th	7:02 a.m.	7:55 a.m.

Planting Days

May: 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 7th, 10th, 11th, 19th, 20th, 21st, 24th, 25th, 29th, 30th

June: 2nd, 3rd, 6th, 7th, 15th, 16th, 17th, 20th

Harvesting Days

May: 4th, 5th, 22nd, 23rd, 26th, 27th, 28th, 31st

June: 1st

Pagan Every Day Frigg by Barbara Ardinger, PhD

May 30

Frigg, whose name means "beloved" or "lady," is the wife of Odin. Keys and the spindle are sacred to her, and the Norse knew the constellation Orion as Frigg's spinning wheel. Frigg is also a prophetess, Saga ("seeress") may be one of her names. She and Odin sit together in a magical chair, *Hlidskialf*, from which they can see all beings and activities throughout the nine worlds of the Norse universe.

As I was doing research on Frigg, I came upon an interpretation of Ragnarok that is new to me. Lynda C. Welch points out that only two goddesses are mentioned in the accounts of Ragnarok. One is Sol, a sun goddess who is killed by a wolf, but not before she gives birth to a daughter who is brighter than she is. The other is Hel, the goddess of death and the underworld.

Because of their prophetic powers and their impressive battle skills, Welch suggests we would expect Frigg, Freya, and the Valkyries to be present at Ragnarok. But where are they? The great Norse goddesses are conspicuous by their absence.

The skies "fall to utter darkness," Welch writes, "devoid of all signs of life." Like Tiamat and the Chaos that give birth to Gaia, Nyx, and other eldest goddesses, the dark Norse night is the womb waiting for the spark of life. It is the void (*Ginnungagap*) that precedes creation. Cleansed with fire and water, Midgard "remains not only intact, but refreshed and renewed." The giantesses and earth goddesses are about to arrive. Finally, near the end of the story, golden chess pieces appear by lying in the grass. Gold is always associated with Frigg and Freya. The goddesses, Welch says, are "resting in the wings of this powerful myth."

Barbara Ardinger, Ph.D. (www.barbaraardinger.com), is the author of Pagan Every Day: Finding the Extraordinary in Our Ordinary Lives (RedWheel/Weiser, 2006), a unique daybook of daily meditations, stories, and activities. Her earlier books are Finding New Goddesses, Quicksilver Moon, Goddess Meditations, and Practicing the Presence of the Goddess. Her day job is freelance editing for people who don't want to embarrass themselves in print. Barbara lives in southern California. To purchase a signed copy of Finding New Goddesses, just send Barbara an email at bawriting@earthlink.net

Pagan Every Day Inghean Bhuidhe by Barbara Ardinger, PhD

May 6

Inghean Bhuidhe (pronounced een-AWN-boo-EE) is the “yellow haired girl” associated in Pagan Ireland with sacred wells. She is the middle sister of a triad of goddesses responsible for the growing cycle of crops, a mother goddess who represents the coming of summer and ripening of the crops. Even though she became a Christian saint, her wells were still sacred, and her day is the first day of summer.

The youngest sister of the triad, Latiaran (“breast of light”), is the crone goddess who recycles the harvest season into the planting season. Latiaran went to the smithy every morning to fetch a “seed of fire.” One morning, the smith told her she had pretty feet and when she looked down, her apron caught fire, but she was not burnt. The eldest sister, Lasair (“flame”), is the maiden goddess of budding flowers in the spring. Before she became a Christian saint, she lived in a fiery red castle.

It’s interesting that in this triad of goddesses, the first is the harvest crone and the last is the one who buds. We’re accustomed to thinking of the cycle as moving from maiden (budding) to mother (ripening) to crone (harvesting), but here we begin with the recycling of the harvest. In Greece, when Hera was bathed in the sacred rivers in the springtime, her crone aspect was washed away and her virginity restored.

Thus are we told that when we plant we need to consider what we will harvest, and when we harvest we must consider what will next be planted. This wisdom is useful not only for farmers, but also for anyone who does magic. Reader, when we do a spell, do we have our outcome clearly in mind? Have we given any thought to what will be planted next in that same field?

Barbara Ardinger, Ph.D. (www.barbaraardinger.com), is the author of Pagan Every Day: Finding the Extraordinary in Our Ordinary Lives (RedWheel/Weiser, 2006), a unique daybook of daily meditations, stories, and activities. Her earlier books are Finding New Goddesses, Quicksilver Moon, Goddess Meditations, and Practicing the Presence of the Goddess. Her day job is freelance editing for people who don't want to embarrass themselves in print. Barbara lives in southern California. To purchase a signed copy of Finding New Goddesses, just send Barbara an email at bawriting@earthlink.net

Solitary Ritual for Beltane by Dawn “Belladonna” Thomas

Theme for this ritual

This ritual honors your blood and the blood of your ancestors.

To prepare, have a ritual bath with some bath salts, essential oils, herbs, etc. Play some relaxing music.

Preparation - Items needed for this ritual include the following:

Dress and adorn yourself in a way that celebrates your beauty

Red altar cloth

One red candle for the Mother

Matches to light candles

Background music

Cast your Circle

Walk the Circle three times with an athame or another tool representing fire and say:
"Bless this Circle as I walk with love and trust. I honor my blood and the blood of my ancestors."

Calling the Elements

Hail to the Spirit of the East, Element of Air. Your clear blue skies carry the scent of life.
Please join me today.

Hail to the Spirit of the South, Element of Fire. The warmth of life flows through my
body. Please join me today.

Hail to the Spirit of the West, Element of Water. The gentle rains pour forth new life.
Please join me today.

Hail to the Spirit of the North, Element of Earth. Your fertile body nurtures the seeds of
life.

Call forth the power of the Goddess

Hail to the Goddess, I look around and You are everywhere. You bless me every day with love and joy. Please join me today.

The Meditation and the Work

This is the time to honor your blood. It is the sacred force that brings forth new life. When a maiden has her first blood, it should be celebrated. It is a rite of passage. She now has the knowledge of the wise women and can draw from that knowledge as she needs. For women still menstruating, it is important to see this time as a reminder that we carry the blood of life. In many cultures, the women that cease to bleed are considered the wise ones. They are revered since they withhold their wise blood.

Light the red candle and perform a self-blessing:

Goddess, bless my eyes so that I may see the truth

Bless my ears that I may hear clearly

Bless my nose that I may smell the scent of new life

Bless my mouth that I may speak the truth

Bless my hands so that I may feel what I cannot see

Bless my heart that I may know love

Bless my breasts that hold power and nourishment

Bless my lungs that I may breathe deep and center

Bless my womb the center of my being and new life

Bless my feet as I walk your path

While listened to the background music, ask yourself these questions.

- How do I honor my own sacred blood or the blood of other women? Decide how you are going to do this whether it will be a physical act or mental note. Find ways to celebrate having a woman's body. Honor this commitment to yourself.

- What holds me back from opening to my desires, from participating in and celebrating life? Look at the internal restrictions you have placed on your body, heart, and mind which keep you from fully partaking in the sacred and simple joys of living. Meditate on this to find the answers.

Once you are finished meditating, dance in front of a mirror. See the beauty in yourself. When you are finished dancing, extinguish the red candle.

Release the Goddess and the Elements

I ask that Your blessings remain in my heart and that I live in harmony with all who dwell on the earth. Thank you for joining me today. Hail and Farewell.

Spirit of the North, the seeds you have nourished begin to bloom. Thank you for joining me today. Hail and Farewell.

Spirit of the West, the rain provides life giving water. Thank you for joining me today. Hail and Farewell.

Spirit of the South, my body is warmed by you. Thank you for joining me today. Hail and Farewell.

Spirit of the East, the scent of life is still on the breeze. Thank you for joining me today. Hail and Farewell.

The Circle is open but remains unbroken.

Blessed Be!

Tarot & Charms for the Season By the Herbal Taroist

Ring around the rosy....a pocketful of posies....

Beltane is the Earth celebration of the flowers. It is half way between spring equinox and summer solstice – a time when the Sun is warm and bright, and the green world is a fertile delight to the senses. Leaves and petals gently blowing in the wind – we are swept away in love with life. To celebrate this full blossom of the May we think of the five-petaled rose, fragrant, rich, and intoxicating. Rose is the essence of goddess, of woman, as she emerges in a most lush garden sanctuary.

We contemplate the holy rose amid a secret garden.

the Secret Garden Reading

1. Where is our secret garden?
2. What mysteries are revealed there?
3. What do we cultivate there?
4. What do we cull there?
5. What is the rose spirit whispering to us?



The Reading

1. Where is our secret garden?

XII Le Pendu, the hanged one – We are initiated into the mysteries of the season, the mysterious rose, focusing our minds and hearts on our connection to the natural world and the spirits of the green world

2. What mysteries are revealed there?

XI La Force, strength – We find our inner strength, our passion for life roars within, we experience beginnings and creative becoming. We are gentle and powerful

3. What do we cultivate there?

VIII L'Hermite, the hermit – We cultivate solitude, our inner light shines brightly. We are in love with love and receive sweet healing. We embrace our emotions and turn to rose medicines to uplift our spirits

4. What do we cull there?

III Swords – We let go and move beyond past pain and heartache

5. What is the rose spirit whispering to us?

VIII Rosettes – Come to my secret garden....have a cup of rose tea, elixir or essence.
Make time to smell the roses.....

☞ I also cast a few charms and ogham (a tree divination) for insight



Sowilo – the sun, brilliance, where we shine, return to youth
Gort – the ivy, places of learning, the garden, solitude
Eadha – the poplar, the Balsam poplar, a tree whose oil is made into an anointing salve, a mystical tree whose quaking leaf chimes beckon spirit messages.....



The Tarot Speaks.....

A meditation to the mystical rose is best done by a walk in nature where we can receive spirit messages and intoxicate ourselves with blossoms. Giving thanks and making offerings, we humbly bow to the wonder of nature, calling Erce, Erce, Erce, Eorthan Modar (Earth Mother.) We turn to the light like the flowers, innocent and playful. Blessings to all in this season of blossoming!

~ *The Herbal Taroist* www.herbaltaroist.com

Reading done with the CBD Tarot de Marseille by Dr. Yoav Ben-dov
<http://www.cbdtarot.com/>

Credits

Thank you for reading the Oracle.

The Oracle Staff,

- ❖ Dawn Thomas
- ❖ Deanne Quarrie
- ❖ Cynthia Cebuhar