

Courting the Wild Twin

Martin Shaw

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If, by chance, your mother lets slip that you were born with a twin that was promptly tossed out the window, thank her—then set off to find that sibling. Rumor has it that they alone know the secret of your life's purpose. And be comforted that good ol' mom is working the magic of fairy tales. She senses that you feel your life is stagnant, so she's teasing you with the notion that you have another half, one that made off with much of your vital energy and devil-may-care self-confidence. Oh, and let's not forget that she also wants you to get beyond behaving like a good little girl or boy and go live a little.

We can thank Martin Shaw for this delightful twin premise. In *Courting the Wild Twin*, Shaw analyzes two European myths in the pursuit of ancient wisdom. He knows that there's a reason some fairy tales stick around: they wake up something primal in us; they suggest possibilities beyond right and wrong, good and evil; and they hint that there's far more mischief going on in the world than meets the critical eye. Myths speak more to the soul than the brain, and it's all the more delightful that they do it with old crones, talking snakes, dark forests, and princesses who get their heads chopped off and hung on a nail in the kitchen of a coven of witches, as showcased in one of Shaw's chosen myths, Tatterhood.

A wilderness rite of passage guide for many years and the author of the *Myhteller* trilogy, Shaw assures us that our wild twin is waiting expectantly to meet us. In the meantime, out there on the run, that twin is enjoying the hell out of a life without regrets.

MATT SUTHERLAND (March / April 2020)

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