

If You Want to Be a Witch: A Practical Introduction to the Craft

Edain McCoy

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The author, who has written several previous books on witchcraft, such as *A Witch's Guide to the Faery Folk and Advanced Witchcraft*, takes the neophyte witch firmly by the hand and offers solid advice in this guide to the true life of a witch. "A Witch becomes a Witch only through his personal efforts of study and practice. Period," states McCoy. She provides all the basics a seeker would need to start on the path of the "craft of the wise," from creating a sacred space, divination, and rituals to the physics of magick, which she describes as "the art of using energies not yet fully understood by science." The book also covers the sabbats that mark off the wheel of the year, the solstices and equinoxes as well as the celebration that most people associate with witchcraft—Halloween, a major sacred day that witches call "Samhain."

Witchcraft is a religion, and its adherents seek direct experience of the creator or creators of life. Within the sacred circles that witches draw to create the space between the worlds, a powerful connection with the Goddess and the God can be found. The author states: "The circle in which Witches work and worship is a symbol of eternity. " The gods are invoked and energy is raised within a sacred circle—energy for healing, or to simply celebrate the gifts of the deities, the coming of spring or the quiet of winter.

Witches also create spells, and the author gives some practical spells for the novice to try, including candle magick, as well as a list of colors that will enhance particular spells. For example, the color blue is good in spells for sleep, dreaming, and fidelity. The author reminds the seeker that spells can fail, and offers advice on what to do when a spell fails. The witch can use divination to find out where a spell was weak, or can find that the spell actually succeeded, only in ways that are not apparent at first.

Though the allure of casting spells may draw some to seek to become a witch, the author cautions that the path of the witch is not for the faint of heart. It requires dedication and a clear sense of personal responsibility. New witches are taught the rede, "As it harms none, do what you will." This is not an "anything goes" but is a warning to consider the consequences of any action.

Witches are also given the threefold law—that whatever energy a witch sends out comes back threefold, so if negative energy is sent, the witch can be sure that somewhere down the line it will come back. Yet the author assures the reader that the pure magic of the mystical path of the witch is well worth the effort.

ROBIN FARRELL EDMUNDS (September / October 2004)

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