

You Are a Great and Powerful Wizard: Self-Care Magic for Modern Mortals

Sage Liskey

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Microcosm Publishing (Jul 14, 2020)

Hardcover \$19.95 (192pp)

978-1-62106-483-1

Hermione Granger meets Emily Post in *You Are a Great and Powerful Wizard*, Sage Liskey's appealing grimoire-cum-self-help guide for the magically inclined.

Forego expectations of elemental incantations and bubbling potions—at least, in the stereotypical sense. Here, to be a wizard means that one has harnessed the power within all beings, cultivating self-awareness, self-control, and concern for relationships and communities beyond oneself. The spells that Liskey forwards rest in the realm of mantras, healthy habits consciously adopted, and activism: “spells to empower yourself, uplift your community, and transform unhealthy and destructive cultures.”

Reigning magical metaphors become lenses through which to discuss intentionality (or, a wizard's highest form); meaningful undertakings, from artistic endeavors to community participation (or, quests); and gift-giving and meaning-making (or, magical objects). In place of fog-emitting cauldrons, the book's discussions of potions include ingestibles with health properties, like marijuana and anti-inflammatory foods, while also warning against substance abuse.

What arises are common sense recommendations that draw upon a number of established sources, including *The Five Love Languages* and medical journals. Because being a wizard is all-encompassing, this guide covers dating, raising children, exercise, and depression and loneliness. Its coverage of such topics is sometimes swift, but always encouraging and conscientious: for those looking for love, the text emphasizes consent as foundational; for depression, it includes encouragements to confront sadness with positive activities, therapy, and, when necessary, medication.

There are a few outliers in these prompts—propaganda and violent direct action both appear in the book's otherwise positive examples of activist alchemy; and peacocking, a term most associated with pick-up artists, is featured in its notes on dating—but the advice is most often nurturing and warm, designed for people at all levels of wizardry.

Magical potential is everywhere and in everything, suggests *You Are a Great and Powerful Wizard*, making its advice not only practical, but enchanting.

MICHELLE ANNE SCHINGLER (July / August 2020)

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