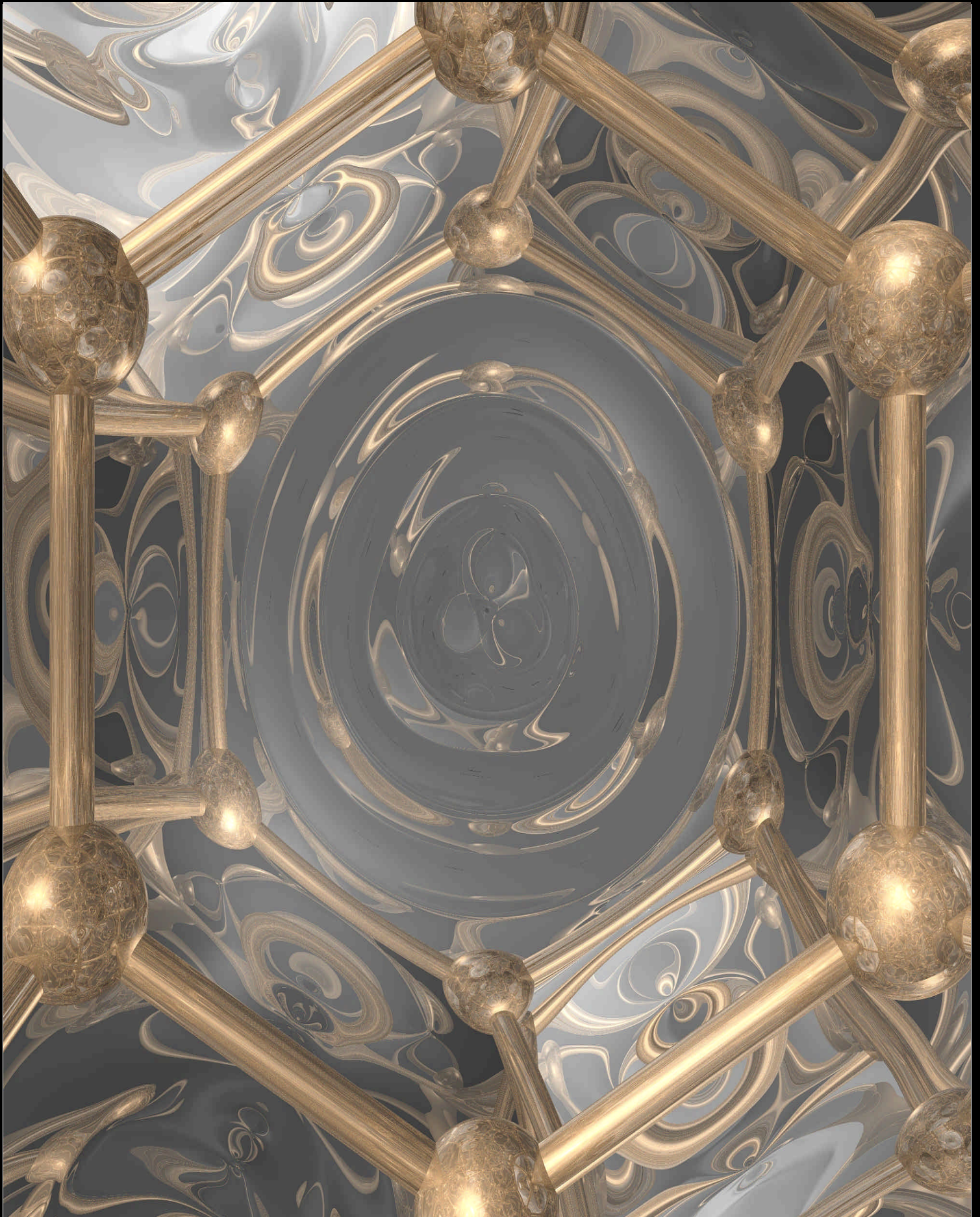


The Witchtower

Pagan Network Magazine

Autumn Equinox/Samhain 2009



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Autumn Equinox/Samhain 09

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Editorial

Welcome to the Autumn Equinox/Samhain 2009 edition!

Once again we have a wide variety of articles to entertain you as the winter nights draw closer.

This issue we have two new writers, so check out the Pagan Postcards section for the article on the Golden Eagle. I personally love this article and this is the first time Rick Carr has submitted an article to us, so I hope you enjoy it as much as I did. Another new writer this issue is Blacksaber, in this informative article Blacksaber explains all about the Magic Circle, what it is, why we conjure one and the different types of magic circles. I hope to see more articles from both these writers in the future.

Don't forget that if you'd like to contribute an article to the magazine just drop us an email at the witchtower@gmail.com

Enjoy your reading!

Twilightgirl and the Editorial Team

Exorcism. It is an emotive word perhaps more often associated with 30 year old horror films and jets of green vomit. In fact it is one of the oldest known rituals to humankind, and even today in some parts of the world shamans still communicate with spirits where negative energy or energies have gathered.

In the mediaeval grimoires the operator is sometimes referred to as the "exorcist", the reason for this being that the location of buried treasure was often the purpose of the ritual; the treasure was often left "guarded" as it were by spirits who had to be appeased or negated somehow, hence the name. The ancient Egyptians for example would create elementals or conjure spirits to watch over tombs, temples etc. The story of what supposedly happened when Howard Carter and Lord Caernarfon when they disturbed the tomb of Tutankamen is well known.

So what of the truth about exorcism and the present day? What are the risks to the exorcist? How does infestation occur? These are the questions I am going to attempt to answer in the course of this talk.

The commonest type of disturbance is caused by the so-called "Poltergeist" which is an amalgam of two German words Polter and Geist - literally "noise ghost". However I do not believe there is only one type of poltergeist - I believe a number of different phenomenon may cause them. Over the years I have come to believe that there are six main causes; ie

1. Natural psychic energies the nature of which we don't understand, after all we don't know everything about nature e.g. the quack of a duck does not echo; nobody knows why. We don't really know what static electricity is.
2. Adolescence - I believe that young people are huge powerhouses of energy, in their teenage years their hormones are shot to pieces; their emotions are upset so it's no wonder that an awful lot of untapped psychic energy is flying around!
3. A very small number may be the traditional idea that they are disembodied spirits trapped for some reason on the material plane.
4. Emotionally charged atmosphere. How many of us have ever walked into a room and we know the people instantly have been rowing or fighting? but how do we know? We cannot detect an atmosphere with any of the five senses; even though body language and facial expressions may give a clue. If something as trivial as a tiff may cause an atmosphere to be charged then how much stronger will that effect

be amplified by something really unpleasant such as a murder, execution, suicide or rape.

5. Natural causes, e.g. minor earth tremors, static electricity, subsistence, underground rivers, etc.
6. Psychic attack. A charged vortex of energy sent by a skilled occultist can pro-

ceed - two assistants are needed (never attempt an exorcism on your own!) some people employ a third to act as a sort of "psychic backstop" as it were to keep an eye out for anything untoward. This person should obviously be a competent clairvoyant. The ritual I use is not really complicated and I (somehow) know when I've made contact with the trapped energy rather like a radar locking onto an aircraft. I can always remember a case in a shop in Hereford where as soon as I walked through the door an

WICCA AND EXORCISM

assembled clothes rail suddenly collapsed sending parts everywhere obviously

duce phenomenon resembling poltergeist activity. I believe however that this is comparatively rare although I did come across a case some years ago where a signet ring had been ritually cursed and was now causing nightmares and minor disturbances to the wearer. After much psychic cleansing and leaving the ring submerged in running water for 24 hours; the situation was thankfully resolved.

we had got a bite as it were! Incidentally the shop was in what had been a prison many years ago and the room where most of the trouble was concentrated was in what had been the condemned cell. If we see point 4 above we can only imagine how much despair, fear, anger and hatred must have been felt in that room in the past.

So we turn now to the question of what to do about it? I conduct a small investigation at the premises but I do not consult parish records, sprinkle sand round chairs, call in mediums or any of the other things that you read about in psychic investigations books. Why? Because I don't see any point. It makes no difference to me who or what is causing the problem - I am only there to do a job. Besides which the situation could be deteriorating whilst I am faffing about with title deeds of houses or parish records or whatever.

It can sometimes pay to take a good look at the occupants of the house too - I can remember on one occasion being called to the home of somebody I knew to be a bit of a practical joker; I was not really convinced the case was genuine but nevertheless certain things happened there whilst I was staying that I didn't feel could have been faked.

The task of the exorcist is that of a healer. The only difference is that instead of healing flesh and blood as in regular healing I am there to heal bricks and mortar - or more properly the psychic energy fields around bricks and mortar.

Some exorcists when carrying out their work will employ a bit of psychology and invoke the god(s) of the householders in the ritual; e.g. perhaps saints if the hosts are Roman Catholics or Allah if they are Muslim. I personally feel that this is a mistake; I am after all a High Priest of wicca not Judaism; using the godforms of somebody else's religion would I feel put me at a disadvantage and reduce the effectiveness of the ritual.

Diagnosis is not an easy task - some people in this line of work bring in mediums, I prefer not to do this however; onion halves placed strategically around the house will dry up very quickly and go black and mouldy very quickly if left overnight. Onion will begin to dry anyway on contact with air but the process will be much faster in a psychically disturbed atmosphere. Similarly placed glasses of water will also evaporate much more quickly in this kind of environment. Exorcism should never be undertaken lightly however and I usually either do a small blessing on the house myself or will give the occupants simple instructions to take- this is totally each case on merit and very often the matter can be brought to a conclusion at this time.

So what are the risks to the exorcist? One of the questions that I'm most often asked is why do we not cast the circle? The answer is that I wish to contact the entity (I hate the word entity but I will use it here for argument's sake) and draw it to me; not repel it; I would only cast the circle if I felt that I was close to defeat or if I or my assistants were in danger or that things were getting out of control. Reliable assistants are of crucial importance; I like them to be of at least 2nd degree but in the past I have worked with 1st degrees and even non-initiates; in an emergency situation you cannot worry about who is what degree!

So does that mean I go into the situation undefended? no far from it. I carry out purification rituals beforehand in which I

symbolically seal up all the bodily orifices. I fast for 12 hours before the job and abstain from any sexual activity for 24 hours before hand. I don't eat meat anyway but would abstain for 24 hours beforehand. I also go to bed very early the night before so I am at maximum physical strength and alertness.

The period after the exorcism is crucial - disturbances can still take place in the first 24 hours - paradoxically this can be a good sign - in this time if the exorcism has succeeded the house will be a psychic vacuum - there can be sporadic disturbances whilst the natural energies of the place settle down again.

The will of the exorcist has to be strong; the disciplined mind is all important - a well trained mind is then all important.

I will mention the exorcism of people

only briefly- I do not think personally that this is a good idea and I would never think of attempting it unless I knew for sure that the medical professionals, the psychiatrists, etc had dealt with the case to no avail. We know for a fact that many of the so-called cases of possession in the past were in fact mental illness. In the occult I believe that there is no such word as impossible and although I accept the classical concept of possession by so-called "evil spirits" as possible in practice I believe that it is very, very rare indeed. The spiritualists have a concept of "overshadowing" which is a kind of temporary partial possession - again I accept this as a possibility.

I am sometimes challenged along the lines of "what right have you to remove a spirit from its home?" but ask yourself this - from the "spirit's" point of view - how would you like to be trapped on the

material plane where you no longer belonged ad infinitum? Once again we can see that exorcism - in reality- is a healing process not an act of aggressive eviction.

Finally - and people may disagree with me on this one - NEVER live in a haunted house - some people do not mind the phenomenon, some may even find it amusing - however it is possible if not probable that the entity concerned is feeding off your own psychic energy to survive.

Exorcism is a very ancient concept indeed - it looks certain that this type of work will continue to be part of the occultists sphere of activity for a long time to come.

by Peter Nash

Reviews

By Julia Oakmoon

A Witch's Treasury for Hearth & Garden by Gabrielle Sidonie Published by Ignotus Press - ISBN 1-903768-06-3

This is not the first and probably won't be the last of myriad publications on gardens planted by and for witches. The synopsis on the back of this book states that the author is sharing family recipes and household hints that have been passed to her from previous generations. There's no author biography so I can't tell you anything else about the lady in question. She subscribes to the idea that there have always been witches in the form of local women who made their own remedies and helped their local communities and she's not alone there, although I know some will disagree

In this book we are given suggestions on how to lay out our garden and what to plant and we are given the magical properties of various flowers and herbs as well as some of their uses as remedies and charms. We are given some correspondences and a certain amount of folklore

There are chapters devoted to flowers, herbs and vegetables. We are given advice on what to do with a patio or small space - particularly useful in this day and age when our gardens are becoming smaller. The use of window boxes and hanging baskets is discussed as well as front doorsteps (as long as no-one is likely to wander off with your pots), side alleys and the tops of bin sheds. It just goes to show that you can always find a place to grow things if you really want to

In the chapter devoted to the larder and kitchen we are given advice on economy cooking and treated to more folklore and old recipes, all of which are worth trying. The stillroom chapter gives recipes for various fruit drinks as well as wine and beer which seem fairly simple - even to me, your resident kitchen-phobe

We then have a chapter on household hints which contains... well... household hints and tips and a little more folklore. The linen closet chapter is much the same with ideas for scented pillows and how to get stains out of your laundry

We then come to the medicine chest chapter. I don't know whether the author is a trained herbalist but was glad to see that there are no suggestions for anything that is likely to cause harm. Just some uses for salt, honey, vinegar, cobwebs etc, so no danger of being accused of telling readers to ingest things which are likely to kill them

The seasonal traditions chapter gives us a brief outline of the wheel of the year and some simple recipes and things to do for each sabbat and the final chapter discusses wildlife and how to encourage it into your garden. Always a good thing in my opinion

As I said, it's not the first book like this and won't be the last and I don't think there's anything groundbreakingly new here. So the best advice I can give is check them all out and if this one looks like it's the one for you, no harm will come from adding it to your bookshelf

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Déjà vu is a French phrase that means "already seen". Now I'm sure that just about all of you have experienced déjà vu at some point or another, that feeling of "I've been here before doing this" or "I've said that before", when you know for a fact you haven't. It can be kind of unnerving. No one knows exactly what causes déjà vu, but there are a number of theories floating about.

I've

Been

been there before, but you never have.

Interesting there is jamais vu, which is the opposite of déjà vu. You could be in a familiar situation, such as sitting in your lounge and suddenly everything will seem unfamiliar, like you are sitting in the room for the first time and viewing your surroundings with new eyes.

Here

Before

And now for the science bit.... It has been discovered

that the medial temporal lobe is involved in our conscious memory. Within the medial temporal lobe is the parahippocampal gyrus, the rhinal cortex and the amygdala. In 1997 John Gabrieli based at Stanford University discovered that the hippocampus enables us to consciously recall experiences and that the parahippocampal gyrus enables us to decide what is familiar and what isn't.

A number of theories as to why déjà vu happens have been put forward over the years. Dr Alan Brown proposed a theory called "The Cell Phone Theory". This theory works along the lines of that we see everything going on around us, but we don't register it consciously because we are concentrating on something else. For example, you enter a restaurant for the first time, your mind is taking everything in around you unconsciously (by using your senses) while you are focused on talking to the waiter. Suddenly you experience déjà vu because your mind has already processed your surrounds and it all feels familiar, like you have been there before.

It has also been proposed that déjà vu can also happen because we have so many stored memories, many of which we are not consciously aware we have. These include films, TV, books, pictures that we have watched or read throughout of lives. For example, you may have seen a program on TV when you were a child, and a part of that program may have contained a farm house in the middle of the Dales. Then one day when you are all grown up and driving through the Dales on holiday, you will see the farm house and experience déjà vu, even though you have never been to the farm house before.

Another theory called "The Hologram Theory" proposed by Herman Sno, suggests that our memories are stored like holograms. Each section of a hologram contains all the information it needs in

order to produce a picture. But if only a small section is able to be recalled, the memory will be less precise. Say for example, you are being interviewed, the person interviewing you suddenly seems familiar, like you have met them before, but you never have. The reason why they seem familiar is because they are wearing a tie with a certain pattern on it. Somewhere in your memories you have seen this tie before, and your mind is remembering the picture from then, but as the tie has only triggered a small fragment of the memory, your mind makes you think that it was this person who you saw wearing the tie before. Your brain is making the mistake of thinking the person is from your past and you experience déjà vu.

There is also the theory of Delayed Vision. This theory was proposed by Robert Efron. Efron discovered

that the temporal lobe of the brain sorts out incoming information. It does this twice, but with a very slight delay between each transmission (only a millisecond), as the information coming through the second time comes via the right hemisphere of the brain first. If for some reason the information coming through the second time is delayed longer than a millisecond, the memory might think that this is a memory that has already been experienced, so the person could experience déjà vu.

There are also those who believe déjà vu can show us a past life experience. One example of a past life déjà vu experience was when a young lady was visiting Egypt. She arrived late at the hotel where she was staying. Before retiring to bed she looked out the window and saw a scene below her of a market. When she woke the next day and looked out the window, the scene was completely different, consisting of a swimming pool where the evening before had been a market. She believed that she had had a déjà vu experience of a past life, especially as she had always been drawn to the Egyptian culture.

So there we have it, a number of theories to choose from the next time you experience déjà vu. Mmmm.. I'm sure I've written this article before, OMG, I've just experienced déjà vu! LOL.

By Twilightgirl

Déjà vu when experienced normally lasts approximately 10 seconds and is experienced the most by those between the ages of 15 and 25 years old. Research tends to show that the experiences of déjà vu decrease as we get older. Déjà vu is experienced through the senses, such as seeing, hearing, taste and touch.

Emile Boirac, a French psychic researcher gave this phenomenon the name déjà vu back in 1876 when he started studying it. Since then many have studied déjà vu in an attempt to explain exactly what it is. Sigmund Freud concluded that déjà vu was the result of repressed memories or desires. He thought that the mind had repressed the memories so deeply that the normal conscious brain was unable to recall them. This theory has been used by many scientists throughout the 20th century. They call it paramnesia.

Déjà vu can be broken down into two main categories - associate déjà vu and biological déjà vu.

Associate déjà vu is the most common type experienced. Many researchers think that this type of déjà vu is based on memory experiences. It is where you see, hear, smell or experience something that triggers a feeling that you associate with something you have seen, heard, smelled or experienced before.

Biological déjà vu is common among people with temporal lobe epilepsy. When people are about to have an epileptic seizure they will often experience déjà vu. When biological déjà vu happens, researchers are able to study the brain more easily to find out where in the brain déjà vu happens.

Arthur Funkhouser went on to define a further three types of déjà vu experiences. Déjà vecu (already experienced), déjà senti (already felt), and déjà visite (already visited). The most common of these is déjà vecu, where you have the sensation of having done something before or being in the exact same situation. Often people who experience this are able to predict what will happen next. Déjà senti is the experience of remembering something that is triggered by a voice or thought and déjà visite is when an actual place feels familiar, like you have

Ancient Circle

A Shakespearian look at the planets - in four parts

*And then the justice,
In fair round belly with good capon lined,
With eyes severe and beard of formal cut,
Full of wise saws and modern instances;
And so he plays his part.
The sixth age shifts
Into the lean and slipper'd pantaloon,
With spectacles on nose and pouch on side,
His youthful hose, well saved, a world too wide
For his shrunk shank; and his big manly voice,*

*Turning again toward childish treble, pipes
And whistles in his sound.*

And so dear reader, we come to the third in our series of articles.

Jupiter and Saturn are also two planets which are the two sides of the same coin. They are known as the trans-personal planets because their orbits lie outside the asteroid belt. The time it takes them to circumnavigate the Zodiac is 12 years and 28 years respectively so you can see that they actually link us into our peer group. Everyone born in the same 12 months will have Jupiter in the same sign and everyone born in the same 2½ years will have Saturn in the same sign.

*And then the justice,
In fair round belly with good capon lined,
With eyes severe and beard of formal cut,
Full of wise saws and modern instances;
And so he plays his part.*

Jupiter - the Great Benefic, it's about expansion, good judgement and good luck, therefore works into the age of the justice very well. We have our first Jupiter return at the age of 12 (ish) as we are stepping through the doorway from childhood to adolescence. Physically, a lot of girls get their first menses around this age and other hormones start to increase in the boys. There are growing spurts and moods and the first stages of growing up. Bar Mitzvas, confirmation into the Christian Church and other ceremonies which herald the welcome into adult society.

In the latter 'Jupiter' age, it is a time when we are around middle age, our family is growing and we are established in our work, home and community. It is time to enjoy the fruits of our labour, maybe making plans for retirement. We are still healthy enough to enjoy things, the struggles during the Mars phase of making a place for ourselves, finding our way in the

world are all but over and the routines we have got ourselves into can be relaxed, we can take some time out to indulge ourselves. The grey pound rules!!! It is also a time when many women go into the menopause, their 'crone' phase, and the responsibility of home making and family rearing lessens. For the men, the need to earn money just to survive diminishes and there is probably more to spare at this stage of their lives. We are looking at a traditional family set up here, but you only have to look at tribal societies and translate this to see that it works in all cultures. The wisdom of age and experience is here.

*The sixth age shifts
Into the lean and slipper'd pantaloon,
With spectacles on nose and pouch on side,
His youthful hose, well saved, a world too wide
For his shrunk shank; and his big manly voice,
Turning again toward childish treble, pipes
And whistles in his sound.*

Where Jupiter is about pushing the boundaries, Saturn is about those boundaries. Jupiter is the Law to Saturn's Order. Jupiter makes the judgement, Saturn hands out the punishment or rewards. Saturn is sometimes called the Great Malefic because he hits you with reality all the time. He is the wagging finger, the nagging voice in the ear which says 'Now, you didn't want to do that did you?'

Our first Saturn return is rather famous in Astrological circles. It happens when we are about 28 and it is the harvest of those first years of adulthood. If what we have been doing up to then is right for us, then at our Saturn return everything falls into place and we are able to sort out where we go from here. Those things that are not right for us, fall away and are taken from us, even if it's something we have been working hard at keeping going. However, it still leaves the way clear to go on with what is working. In practice, it is a bit of both which actually happens, we are rewarded with what we should be doing and the way is cleared of the dross in order that we can do more of it. The Saturn cycle is seen as the major part of our maturing process, which started with Jupiter.

At the other end of the scale, Shakespeare's sixth age, we are looking at the 'Father Time' version of Saturn, the reward for a long life is a good rest. It is the time when we discover the limitations of age and infirmity, the need to wear glasses to read, (which is actually a good thing, because when you look in the mirror you can't see the wrinkles so

well). Your knees and hips start to ache and your body generally starts to slow down. If you're lucky you keep most of your marbles but the short term and working memories start to decrease in strength as well. We have come to the boundary of our life.

In the next article I will discuss Shakespeare's seventh age and the role of the outer planets at this stage.

By
Beith-ann

Out Of The Shadows

ELEMENTARY PAGANISM

Most Pagans use the concept of elements in their rituals, though of course we argue about which one relates to which direction, colour, etc., but where do we get this fundamental idea from? Originally it seems we have to go back to ancient Greece.

Empedocles was born in Sicily and was the first classical philosopher to establish a theory that there were four elements, earth, air, fire and water, in about 450BCE. Empedocles was an eclectic - he didn't belong to any one school of philosophy. He associated divinities with the elements, but it seems he didn't associate the elements with cardinal directions which in ancient Greece were associated with other deities and these were known collectively as the Anemoi.

Empedocles' elements

Element	Earth	Air	Fire	Water
Deity	Hades	Hera	Zeus	Persephone

Classical Greek winds and deities

Wind	North	East	South	West
Deity	Boreus	Eurus	Notus	Zephyrus
Season	Winter	-	Late Summer/ Autumn	Spring/Early Summer

Aristotle added a fifth element, aether, probably between 335 and 323 BCE. Ancient Greek philosophy was an important part of Western mediaeval thought and Aristotle's model of the universe was supported by the Roman Catholic Church in the Middle Ages because aether fitted their idea of an eternal heaven separate from an impermanent world.

In ancient Greek medicine the theory of elements was extended to the human body which it was said was filled with four humours which are in balance when a person is healthy.

Element	Earth	Air	Fire	Water
Humour	Black bile	Blood	Yellow bile	Phlegm
Season	Autumn	Spring	Summer	Winter

Where then do we get the idea of colours associated with directions and elements? Perhaps this could have come from the Greek humours but then they would be

Element	Earth	Air	Fire	Water
Colour	Black	Red	Yellow	Green

In other countries and traditions the colours associated with directions vary widely

	North	East	South	Centre	
China	Black	Green	Red	White	Yellow
Thibet	Blue	Yellow	Red	Green	-
Aztec	Black	Red	Blue	White	-
Apache	White	Yellow	Blue	Black	-
Cherokee	Blue	Red	White	Black	Green
Navajo	Black	White	Blue	Yellow	-
Sioux	White	Red	Yellow	Black	-

Paracelsus writing in the 15th century seems to have been the first to associate mythological beings with the elements. He is also claimed by Rosicrucians to be the original Christian Rosencreutz.

Element	Earth	Air	Fire	Water
Being	Gnome	Sylph	Salamander	Undine

Mediaeval and later grimoires included working with angelic forces, in some cases associated with cardinal directions. However, as with so many other aspects of contemporary Paganism it seems we had to wait for the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, founded in the late 19th century to come up with a coherent system of correspondences between elements, cardinal directions and other factors. The first four grades of initiation corresponded with the elements earth, air, water and fire respectively.

The introduction to the use of the Lesser Banishing Ritual of the Pentagram says that the attribution of elements to directions relates to the nature of winds in the northern hemisphere and here we get the more familiar correspondences.

Element	Earth	Air	Fire	Water
Direction	North	East	South	West
Colour	Black/Green	Yellow	Red	Blue

The Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn changed the purpose for which magic was carried out from material gain and control of others to spiritual gain and control of self and most importantly union with the divine. Where grimoires could, and did, include spells to make a woman dance nude for the amusement of magicians, (yes, probably sad little men who needed to get a life) the Golden Dawn manuscripts were about developing the magical abilities of the individual to merge with divinities with the aim of personal transformation. The Golden Dawn was about uniting microcosm with macrocosm and the elemental forces were a key part of this. The legacy of the Golden Dawn permeates contemporary Western Paganism - even those parts of it that may think they are immune

So next time you call upon elements in your rituals think about what you are doing. You are magically inviting the macrocosm into your microcosmic circle, and self, bringing powerful and fundamental forces to bear - and it may not matter whether the colour you associate with any of the is same as the colour I use so long as you mean what you do!

By Andy Norfolk

Walk Between Worlds

On August 5th and 16th 2009 at Maker Heights owned by the Rame Conservation Trust in Cornwall close to Plymouth the mediaeval Buzzard Fayre was held. On its web site it promised an "exciting range of medieval entertainment, from cheeky wandering jesters and jugglers to minstrels and rat catchers, as well as witch dunking as a sport!" You won't be surprised to hear that this caused a furore with many Pagans writing and phoning to object.

STUPID

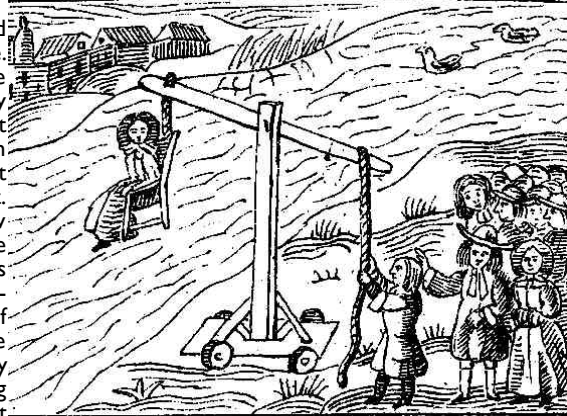
You have to wonder just how stupid the organisers of this event can be. Clearly they did not think about the possible consequences of what they were proposing. They also didn't bother to do any historical research because in the UK witches weren't dunked in the way they thought. Doubly stupid then! As you know the whole point of chucking people accused of witchcraft into water was to see if they sank and drowned - and were therefore innocent - or if they floated and were therefore guilty and could be executed - a very early Catch 22. People in ducking stools didn't generally float - that was the point of them and that is why they would have been useless for this trial by drowning.

Rather than calling off what they admitted was a small part of their event the organisers decided to proceed. Triply stupid? Instead they wrote that they had "attempted to allay the fears of these concerned people by offering them space to educate the public about the persecution of so-called witches of the time. This opportunity has not been taken up and we are saddened by the lack of participation in a co-operative manner and the bad-feeling that has been roused within the druid and witching communities and the campaign that has ensued." Quadruply?

Some suggestions were made that the Museum of Witchcraft in Boscastle could help sort out the matter, but they have a policy of "not entering into any political or religious discussions - this is not the role of a museum". It is quite unreasonable of the Fayre promoters to expect Pagans to do all the work to explain to visitors why this "witch dunking as a sport" event is offensive - or indeed to explain the visitors why this is about as authentic as jousting on motorbikes.

Why should Pagans have to make excuses for this piece of idiocy on the part of fools who don't know their history and don't seem the least bit concerned about the offence they have caused people? One of them wrote "People are just not allowed to be amused about anything are they?" Quintuply and insensitive as well?

But are Pagans right to get upset? You see it seems to me that it might have been better to laugh at this pathetic misunderstanding of history. It's now generally accepted that the people who ended up being accused of witchcraft weren't witches. Where these unfortunates were tried by immersion it seems to have been by being chucked into a body of water often with their toes and thumbs tied together. However ducking stools were mostly used



BUZZARDS

to punish nagging women, but occasionally dishonest tradesmen and sometimes vagrant women. There seems to be no good evidence to link ducking stools and witches in the UK. The last recorded cases of the use of a ducking stool are those of a Mrs. Ganble at Plymouth (1808); Jenny Pipes, a notorious scold (1809), and Sarah Leeke (1817), both of Leominster. In the last case the water in the pond was so low that the victim was merely wheeled round the town in the chair.

Maybe they'll stop and think before they include this event in the next Buzzard Fayre. However just because the event has happened this year does not mean it should take place again under the same name.

If you don't like this sort of thing you could email t.joe.scott@hotmail.co.uk or bentimberframer@yahoo.co.uk of Buzzard Fayre or the Rame Conservation Trust at info@makerheights.com who own the site where the fair took place and suggest that they simply fall back on the sexist "scold ducking as a sport" next year.

Meanwhile others have been protesting about things which you might think are more important. Sadly, despite huge efforts by activists the M3 motorway continues to plough its way through the sacred landscape near Tara in Eire. See <http://www.tarawatch.org/>

In Greece Pagans are protesting about the removal of hundreds of sculptures from the Acropolis to new museum. As the blogger Zenobia put it "This is the second public prayer meeting of the Greek pagans (who call themselves Ellenais) in a little more than a year. I've been following the movement since last January when they first appeared among the giant Corinthian columns of the Sanctuary of Olympian Zeus in Athens to pray for world peace (and for rain as well!). Since then, Greek Orthodox priests have redirected the venom they usually reserve for homosexuals, Catholics, Jews, Jehovah's Witnesses, masons and the barbaric Turks at these "satanic" New Ageists and culminated against their idols." <http://judithweingarten.blogspot.com/2008/09/zeus-rains-on-pagan-protest.html>

They have rather more of a fight on their hands than our spat with Buzzard Fayre.

There are also those who are getting very excited again about Codex Alimentarius saying that this World Health Organisation / Food & Agriculture Organisation of the UN is setting out to ban all herbs. Hmm - not quite true! This has been suggested a couple of times before with other supposed deadlines by which pernicious legislation was supposed to come into force. This appears to be a case of people going after the wrong target - it would be more use to worry about the EU Food

Supplements Directive which will come into force on December 31st 2009.

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:32002L0046:EN:HTML>

Codex is not the problem, this directive could be. It is intended to make sure that food supplements are safe and labelled in such a way as to avoid over-doses of e.g. vitamins and minerals. It may have harmful side-effects. We should campaign to prevent our government implementing this directive in a way which would reduce the choices available to people who want to buy and use natural herbs, and the EU Directive could make it impossible for such herbs to be sold without a lot of analysis and labelling of all the ingredients. Perhaps not a bad thing in theory but surely completely impractical.

For a good rant about Codex see for example <http://www.healthfreedomusa.org/> BUT Please also visit <http://www.healthfreedomusa.org/> for another take on the issues.

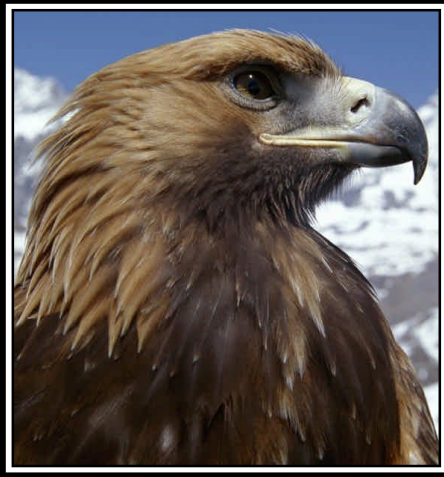
By Andy Norfolk

The Golden Eagle

Pagan Postcards

The Spirit of the Golden Eagle and Me

Ever since I can remember I have admired golden eagles. Not only are they the largest of the British raptors, with a wingspan of 2 metres, but their spiritual presence has been dominant in my life for many years. On occasions, in my dreams and meditative visions, I have 'become' a golden eagle and experienced flight and sensations as I have soared over mountains and valleys. In essence the golden eagle has always been one of my power animals - in fact my main one. However, my physical contact with a real golden eagle had, until recently, been limited to those found only in captivity. In Britain there are approximately 440 breeding pairs of golden eagles; mostly found on the remote Scottish mountains of the Mainland and in the Western Isles. I have always wanted to see a golden eagle and with an imminent holiday to the Isle of Arran, in Scotland, with my partner Mary about to take place I was hoping to see my first wild golden eagle. Also, as a collector of feathers, would there also be the impossible event that I would find a golden eagle feather, too?



The Rowan Staff

Two days before leaving for Arran I was working on a staff of rowan, which had been standing idle for a number of weeks. The staff still needed some final sanding and oiling to complete it. As I was working on the length of rowan my mind was drifting to the holiday to Arran and whether I would see a golden eagle or even find a feather. Suddenly I had a thought that I would take the completed staff to Arran with me; should I actually find a feather I would leave the staff as an offering in an appropriate place. The completed rowan staff was indeed beautiful and it had a fine natural honeysuckle twist partway along its length. It was one of my finest staffs and I believed it worthy to be left as an offering.

Gleann Easan Biorach

On Arran, just behind the village of Lochranza, is the mountain range and glen in which the Easan Biorach River flows. I had travelled along it before, seven years earlier, and had managed to travel as far as Loch Na Davie. This time I decided that should I be fortunate enough to find a golden eagle feather I would make the arduous journey 3 miles up the Gleann and offer up my rowan staff to the waters of Loch Na Davie. On the first morning of my holiday on Arran I made an early morning reconnaissance along the Gleann, only to find that after 1 mile the ground became too boggy and infirm to travel upon. However, just prior to the track ceasing there was a small tree-lined waterfall, the crystal-clear water which tumbled into a small pool before continuing its journey down more rocks and down the length of the Gleann. I thought that this would be a perfect place to make an offering. I made the same journey the next morning, too, and confirmed my intention, however unlikely that event felt at that time. As I walked away from the cascading clear waters that second time I never expected to visit a third time during my holiday. That was the Wednesday morning of a day which became very hot and humid. (It must be mentioned here that on the first evening of the stay in Lochranza I did see a distant golden eagle flying over the loch and above the surrounding mountainsides. Also we had caught a glimpse of one from the car, near North Glen Sannox, as we drove back to Lochranza early one evening.)

North Glen Sannox

Friday 3rd was a very rainy day so we remained in Lochranza all morning. However, by mid-afternoon the rain began to cease somewhat. At the hotel I was looking at my map of Arran, trying to learn why North Glen Sannox was so interesting to hikers (we had noticed a number of people walking towards the Glen as we drove past on a few occasions). Certainly it looked very scenic from the car. The map confirmed it would be a lovely place to visit. I suddenly made up my mind - I had the sudden urge to go there that very day and explore it. Mary declined the chance to go there but was quite happy to drop me off at the stone bridge at the bottom of the Glen. She would go into Brodick and do some shopping and collect me later. I spent almost 2 hours enjoying the fast-flowing River Sannox, and the mountain terrain that I found 2 miles up the river. By the time I returned to the bridge Mary was just returning in the car. We spent a few moments together enjoying the scenery before deciding to make our way back to Lochranza.

The Black Feather

After enjoying the view Mary got back into the car and made ready to leave while I felt a sudden urge to cross over the road and look around. I looked over the stone bridge on the other side and walked up the grass verge a few paces. Something black amongst the grass caught my eye. I looked down and I saw a black feather tucked between some thick blades of grass. I reached down and gently picked it up. Sure enough it was a large black feather of a size I had never seen before. It was 15cms long and approx. 4cms broad. Surely it was a raven's feather? It was clearly not a primary or secondary wing or tail feather. I returned to the car and showed the feather to Mary, who looked very thoughtful when I showed her my find. She then said to me "you know, I think that may actually be from an eagle." I looked closer at the feather. Certainly it was very black but along the edge I could just make out a deep brown colouration. Was Mary right? Had I found what I had been hoping to find all holiday. We got back to our hotel and I checked my book of British Birds, and every other scrap of information I had stored on my computer regarding golden eagles. I finally came to the wonderful realisation that yes, my erstwhile nondescript black feather was, indeed, a dark covert wing feather from a golden eagle. My wish had been granted. In all of the square miles of moors and mountains on the Isle of Arran, with just a few pairs of golden eagles on the island itself, I had almost by chance stumbled upon a rarely-found feather. Now, not only had we seen golden eagles on Arran but I now had a gift from my spiritual power animal.

The Offering

The next morning I was awake very early and up before 5 a.m. I left my hotel room and made what became my third and final journey to the waterfall along Gleann Easan Biorach. I went armed with my rowan staff. The weather was dry and clear with clouds hugging the higher tops of the surrounding mountains. As I reached the waterfall I looked up and noted a female red deer standing at the very top of the low mountain adjacent to where I stood. She was looking down at me as I gazed up at her. With a wild deer as my witness I thanked the spirits of the Land, and the Golden Eagles, for gracing me with their presence over the past few days. In particular I thanked whichever eagle had left me its gift of a feather. I wondered if it was the same one I had seen a few days earlier into the pool of water at the foot of the small waterfall. I tarried a while longer as I felt the peace of the place; there was just the music of the flowing waters, of bird-song and the light breeze. The deer disappeared from view as I made my way, slowly and reluctantly, back to the hotel.

What had seemed like an impossible dream; a romantic hope just a week earlier had become a reality. Although I had made my pact with the spirit of the golden eagle, while I worked on my rowan staff hundreds of miles away, I never expected to fulfil such a journey. It was an experience that I will never forget.

By Rick M Carr
7th July 2009

Inner Sanctum

The Magic Circle

What is a Magical Circle?

The first thing that we must remember when we talk of circle casting is that the phrase itself and the descriptions for the activity written in many of the craft books are inaccurate.

"As she casts the circle, the priestess projects power from her solar plexus through the blade. Meanwhile she and her coven visualise a violet or golden light flowing down the blade and forming the edge of the circle."

V. Crowley, 'Wicca'

The main problem with this sort of description is that people without practical experience may not realise that when we talk about casting the circle, we do not create a 360 degree 'circle' around us but rather a 720 degree SPHERE. We should not just visualise the outer edge of the circle being cast but rather we should visualise a sphere being created both around us horizontally and above and below us.

Our circle acts as a barrier between the space inside and the space outside it. There is an oft-quoted phrase that is very appropriate in that casting a circle creates "A place that is not a place, in a time that is not a time."

This essay is on Circle casting in general; it is not specific to any one tradition of the Craft and in fact contains material taken from a number of different traditions, the author would remind the reader that whilst the information may differ from their own personal practice, the material includes information that is in current use, and is taught to neophytes from traditions that may practice in ways quite different from the readers own. Likewise information is included from sources outside of mainstream Wicca, including Ceremonial Magic.

Why do we conjure a Magical Circle?

I would like to begin with discussing the reasons for why we would cast a magical circle; there are many reasons for doing this and different individuals put varying degrees of importance on each. Bearing this in mind I have listed a number of reasons with a detailed explanation in each case. The following list is in no particular order of importance.

1. Firstly when performing a Wiccan ritual, we will cast the circle to create a sacred space, one that is cleansed and purified to show the honour deserved to our Lord and Lady when we invoke them within the circle.

2. Secondly, the act of casting our circle aids us in shifting the focus of our minds from the realms of the physical up into the spiritual realms; this helps us to prepare for the ritual ahead by focusing our minds on where we are and on what we are doing.

3. Thirdly in a Wiccan ritual, our circle helps us to "Preserve and contain all the power that we shall raise within thee." The circle acts to keep the energy we raise within its confines. It actually increases the amount of energy we raise by more effectively focusing that energy into the task at hand. This could be for empowering a candle or a poppet; or it may be directed by the HPS to then be sent to a specific target - such as when working a healing ritual. In the first coven in which I was a member we either focused the raised energy into a specific object - candle, cords, etc or if the energy was to be sent to someone that was not present the HPS would at the end of the ritual direct the energy to that person.

4. Finally the circle acts as an excellent form of protection for those within "A rampart and protection between the world of men and the realms of the Mighty Ones." This seems to be a subject for much debate dependant upon the reader's personal opinion. I believe that for many of the Wiccan rituals - such as celebrating the Sabbat's - the protective properties of the circle are not the most important as we are not engaged in any activity which would require magical protection. Certainly the circle will not protect us from any entities that we have specifically evoked into the circle with us; such as Elementals at each of the cardinal directions, though it will certainly keep any that are outside from entering the circle.

There are however certain instances, such as when we believe that we are under psychic attack, the protection that a properly cast magical circle provides is invaluable. As the words of a commonly used circle conjuration states, it is "A shield against all wickedness and evil." In Ceremonial Magic, it is often the case that the operator would stand within a ritual Triangle and then evoke an entity into the circle and in this case the circle would act to keep the entity within the circle whilst standing in a triangle would provide protection to the operator.

What types of Magical Circle are there?

There are many different types of magical circles; not all are used by every Wiccan tradition. Though most traditions will use most if not all, and will use many variations of them. For simplicities sake only the basic types are listed here with some discussion, otherwise the list could be practically endless.

Personal Protection

These circles tend to be small and mobile, centred around the person(s) who they are

intended to protect. There are many methods for conjuring such a circle, one of which is the 'Blue Egg'. This method was given to me by the High Priestess of my first coven; I do not know conclusively where she obtained it from, however something very similar is mentioned in The Order of the Golden Dawn's lesser banishing of the pentacle ritual, the text of which is included beneath the description given to me.

This method requires you to visualise a root growing up out of the ground beneath you and into the base of your spine passing all the way up to the top of your head. Breathe in through your nose and as you do so visualise yourself drawing energy up from the Earth along the root passing through your body.

With each breath out, visualise that energy coming out of your mouth as a blue mist, form that mist into a layer surrounding the whole of your body around your sides, your front and back, above your head, and beneath your feet. Visualise it as a thick layer, at least a foot thick, then see the edges harden and form a crust. Visualising a golden mist forming at the outermost crust of the Egg can further strengthen the Egg. One drawback of this form of protection is that people will instinctively keep their distance from you and be less inclined to interact with you socially while you are within the Egg.

The Golden Dawn version is as follows "After the final Qabalistic Cross you should give the sign of Silence. In this way you assimilate in your Aura or Sphere of sensation the invoked energy of the ritual; you fortify your Aura with the light and cultivate your own Magical Circle, as in the image of the Babe in the Egg of Blue. The Babe is Harpocrates, God of Silence, called Hoor-Pa-Kraat in the Egyptian tongue. He represents our Silent self; He is a universal symbol of the Holy Guardian Angel. When giving His Sign you are to assume His God form, seeing yourself in the Egg of Blue light".

The Golden Dawn version is not specifically a protective circle, and I cannot be sure whether the version taught to me is an adaptation from the Golden Dawn's ritual, or comes from some other source, however what I can attest from personal experience is that it does work. Other methods include quickly casting a Wiccan circle mentally around yourself; or even performing the Middle Pillar exercise as detailed by Isreal Regardie in his book 'The Art of True Healing'.

A protective circle can also be cast around a vehicle before we begin travelling on a potentially hazardous journey. It can be placed around our bed at night - the time when we can be at our most vulnerable

Inner Sanctum

due to being asleep. Some authors have suggested a few different protective circles, one written by Jan and Stewart Farrar, where the intention is to reverse the attack on the sender, the chant is 'circle of protection, circle of reflection may the sender of all harm feel the power of this charm' other authors suggest that we should not intend to reverse the attack, rather simply concentrate on creating the strongest protective circle we can and relying on Karma to punish the attacker.

Meditative Circle

These circles tend to be static, based around the area in which the meditation is to take place. This can be cast either mentally or physically, and with as much detail as desired up to and including a full ritual circle casting. It is very important to cast a circle around us prior to any magical operation such as Skrying, Astral Projection or meditation as during the operation we make ourselves very vulnerable to being attacked psychically. Some authors suggest that when we are travelling out of our body we run the risk of having our bodies possessed by an external entity and our circle would obviously be very effective at preventing this from happening.

Home Protection

There are many ways of performing a home protection ritual and these would depend upon the circumstances involved, ranging from creating a Witches bottle to a full ritual of cleansing and blessing of each room, and every doorway or window into the house.

A Ritual Circle

There are a wide variety of methods for conjuring a Magical Circle for the purposes of Wiccan ritual, (and by this I mean for performing magical workings such as healing, candle magic or celebrating the Sabbat's) ranging from the highly formal, ritual style of the Alexandrian and Gardnerian Traditions, to the highly spontaneous 'make it up as you go along' style of the Faerie Traditions.

Conjuring the Ritual Circle

There is huge variety in the methods used for conjuring the magic circle, depending upon personal taste and on the tradition you belong to. You may reel out several verses of very pretty poetry or you could state a short, non-rhyming sentence or you may even find that silence works better for you. Whatever way we use it is important to remember that the wording we use aids in focusing our minds on our magical intent; however it is our magical will, our intent, and the manipulation of energy that creates the actual circle.

The High Priestess moves to the East quarter, she activates her solar plexus chakra, visualises the energy being through this chakra, through her body, down her arm and out through the

blade. Usually the energy is visualised as an electric blue light. The High Priestess then proceeds around the perimeter of the circle area, whilst focusing on the intent of conjuring the magic circle and speaking an appropriate chant. There are many such chants, a small number are included here:

This is a chant commonly used within the Alexandrian Tradition, and is published in many books, including 'A Witches Bible' written by Jan and Stewart Farrar.

*"I conjure thee, O Circle of Power,
that thou beist a meeting place of love and joy
and truth;
a shield against all wickedness and evil;
a boundary between the world of men and the
realms of the Mighty Ones;
a rampart and protection that shall preserve and
contain the power that we shall raise within thee.
Wherefore do I bless thee and consecrate thee,
in the names of our Lord and Lady".*

This is a chant by Victor Anderson, founder member of the Faerie Tradition.

*"By the earth that is Her body,
And by the air that is Her breath,
And by the fire of Her bright spirit,
And by the waters of Her living womb,
The circle is cast."*

This final suggestion shows that creating the ritual circle can be very simple indeed.

"A circle is cast, A circle is cast, A circle is cast"
Gail Wood 'Sisters of the Dark Moon'

There are other ways of conjuring the magical circle; it can be built up in layers. Each time the witch walks around the circle he would visualise it as a specific elemental energy, focusing on the element and its corresponding coloured light and other associated items; such as Bell ringing for Air, flame for Fire etc. This would result in the witch completing four separate journeys around the area within the circle. There is also much debate as to how many times the witch must walk around the circle's perimeter for it to be successfully cast. Many witches believe that only a single journey is needed, others suggest more, the numbers 1, 3 and 9 have been suggested in a number of different books.

Interestingly though, not all covens will create a ritual circle, some like the Cult of Demeter or Wiccans in the Egyptian Magic Tradition do not create a ritual circle. It is quite possible that witches predating modern Wicca did not cast the circle for the majority of their magical work. The majority of such would have been performed within the home, which would have been heavily protected and dedicated to the Old Gods.

There are 3 specific types of Magical circle that can be conjured, not all of these are recognised by all Wiccan traditions, however they have all been taken from traditions in which they are actively taught and used:

Salt Circle

This a quickly cast circle that may be used for anything from meditation to full-blown ritual. It is a simple circle quickly drawn on the floor with Rock or sea salt. You may walk in and out of a salt Circle without cutting a gate. This particular type of circle is not very substantive, and personally I would not use it, however it is used by some traditions.

Broom or Wand Circle

This is cast with either one of these two tools; it is used by some traditions when doing a Handfasting or a Wiccaning (baby blessing). It is more substantial than a salt circle, but is simpler than a full circle. You may walk in and out of a broom or Wand circle with no ill effects. It is also sometimes used when working with certain spirits or fae creatures, when it would not be appropriate to use or have metal objects (other than copper) within the circle.

Formal Circle (sometimes called a High Circle)

This circle is cast with the Athame, Sword or the hand. This casting consists of the blessing / consecration of the salt and water, consecration of the circle area, the actual circle consecration, calling the Elemental Guardians / Watchtower's at each of the Quarters, and invoking the Goddess and God. It is the usual method for casting the magical circle in the Alexandrian and Gardnerian traditions and most other traditions use this method (with greater or lesser degrees of formality). Although animals and young children may often travel in and out of a Formal Circle without cutting a doorway, adults should always cut a doorway on entering or leaving the circle once it has been cast.

By Blacksaber

Stir the Cauldron

Bach Flower Remedies

Continuing from last issue...

Heather

Imbalance - For those who are caught up in themselves and their own interests, who believe themselves to be the centre of the universe..

Outcome - Helps us to look after ourselves without being obsessed with our own personal needs.

Holly

Imbalance - For those who are attacked by feelings of hatred, envy, jealousy. They may also have other intense emotions but they are too frightened to express them fully.

Outcome - Helps to give us the strength to open our hearts and feel the flow of love and compassion.

Honeysuckle

Imbalance - For those who dwell too much on memories of the past and who do not expect to experience such times again.

Outcome - The ability to retain the lessons taught by past experiences, but not to cling to the memories at the expense of the present. Emotional clarity and a sense of freedom.

Hornbeam

Imbalance - For tiredness, boredom, laziness, weariness, that "Monday morning" feeling.

Outcome - Provides a renewed interest in life, energy and involvement in daily tasks.

Impatiens

Imbalance - For those who are impatient and irritable, they desire to work alone, have high ideals and finds faults in others. They suffer from nervous tension or indigestion due to overworking at such a swift pace.

Outcome - Restores acceptance of the natural pace of life, rather than fighting against it. Provides patience and tolerance, especially towards the shortcomings of others.

Larch

Imbalance - For those who lack confidence in themselves and fear failure. Feelings of total uselessness can lead to unhappiness, despair and isolation.

Outcome - Strengthens confidence and helps us appreciate our real worth and value our personal contribution to the planet.

Mimulus

Imbalance - For those who's fears can be identified such as flying, thunderstorms and phobias. Also for shy, timid people who tend to avoid social occasions and large crowds of people.

Outcome - Liberation from fear and help in understanding how to balance everyday life and grow beyond the limits set by fear. Quiet courage and confidence to respond in appropriate ways.

Mustard

Imbalance - For those who suffer fluctuating cycles of depression, usually without apparent cause. This remedy is also useful for PMS and SAD.

Outcome - Helps gain inner serenity, the abil-

ity to transmute melancholia into joy and peace.

Oak

Imbalance - For those who struggle on, never giving up, driving themselves relentlessly. They can be obstinate and unless they rest will exhaust themselves and break down.

Outcome - Provides balanced strength and the ability to accept personal limits and therefore knowing when to surrender.

Olive

Imbalance - For those suffering from exhaustion, physical and mental tiredness after some effort or struggle, such as childbirth or physical illness or prolonged stress.

Outcome - Helps restore vitality by aiding relaxation, and provides a more balanced outlook on life.

Pine

Imbalance - For those who blame themselves for the wrongdoing of others, who carry undue guilt and self-reproach.

Outcome - Helps us to understand that "responsibly" is the ability to respond. If we respond honestly and freely there is no need for blame and we can move on.

Red Chestnut

Imbalance - For those with fear and excessive concern for the welfare of others, always imagining the worst.

Outcome - Encourages calm and rationality.

Rock Rose

Imbalance - For those who experience feelings of helplessness, terror and blind panic.

Outcome - Provides courage and inner stability when facing great challenges.

Rock Water

Imbalance - For those who are narrow-minded and very strict with themselves to the point of self-denial. They are perfectionists with exaggerated ideals.

Outcome - Encourages flexibility in reaching goals, helps stay in touch with the emotional aspects of the self. Being able to relax and have fun.

Scleranthus

Imbalance - For those who are unable to decide, who are confused or hesitant. May suffer mood swings, lacks concentration,

Outcome - Brings harmony, stability and balance, allowing us to act decisively.

Star of Bethlehem

Imbalance - For those suffering from shock and its physical and emotional effects.

Outcome - Neutralizes the effects of shock, so that the body and mind can again find equilibrium and comfort.

Sweet Chestnut

Imbalance - For those suffering anguish so great that it seems unbearable.

Outcome - Helps bring out hidden reserves, opens boundaries and expands limits. Provides hope and strength to grow

Vervain

Imbalance - For those who are strong willed and rarely change their views. They will be self-driven and overworked resulting in strain and stress related illnesses.

Outcome - Brings calm and space for reflection. It relieves stress and helps bring the personal will into harmony with the world.

Vine

Imbalance - For those with a domineering and inflexible personality. A striving for power, ruthlessly ambitious and lacking sympathy for others.

Outcome - Brings tolerance for the individuality of others. Provides the ability to guide rather than dominate.

Walnut

Imbalance - For those who have great difficulty in adjusting to changes of any nature, including the milestones of life.

Outcome - Provides the courage to follow their own path and destiny, the ability to move with the tides of change.

Water Violet

Imbalance - For those who are reserved and self-contained. They become isolated but they feel special in their isolation, which can distort their sense of belonging and self-worth.

Outcome - Gives the confidence to share the strengths and weaknesses, the ups and downs. Allows acknowledgement of the inner self.

White Chestnut

Imbalance - For those who suffer from constant mental chatter, persistent thoughts and worries.

Outcome - Helps to switch off unwanted thoughts so that it is possible to find peace and mental clarity.

Wild Oat

Imbalance - For those who are uncertain and frustrated in their current activities and who want to do something meaningful with their lives but are unable to find the right direction.

Outcome - Helps us listen to our calling, find our true vocation and gives strength of character to act on this.

Wild Rose

Imbalance - For those who have become resigned to all that happens, for the fatalist. Passively gliding through life without motivation or expectation.

Outcome - Provides a feeling of revitalisation, a renewed interest in life.

Willow

Imbalance - For those who are bitter and resentful, constantly dwelling on the unfairness of life. They will be grumpy and irritable.

Outcome - Helps us to see that we create our own reality. It encourages a more positive and mature attitude

By Twilightgirl



By Candlelight

Stories gathered from all corners of the land

FALLING FOR GRACE

Angels and Demons. Mankind has proper names for us, rankings in Heaven and Hell, as if he could understand such an alien hierarchy. He thinks of us as distinct and separate, as constant in his universe as the pillars of the earth beneath his feet.

Yet the earth shifts, and men die in its throes. The greater truth is the more heartbreaking – Heaven and Hell shift as well, boundaries stray, Angels and Demons transgress. Nothing is certain, not even the most perfect of creatures.

The truth is, the difference between Angels and Demons is so small, sometimes even we are deceived.

Once a month, at an Irish bar called the Tipperary Inn, Raphael and I met to play a game of chess and hoist a pint. I drank Black and Tans, he drank Guinness, and we sat in the darkest corner while Irish bands wailed wild and beautiful music in the next room.

I always lost at chess, but then I didn't try very hard. It was the struggle I enjoyed.

Gordian Knot was playing the night he took my queen with a rook, sipped brown velvet Guinness, and said, "I will be leaving soon."

"Oh?" I studied the board carefully. He was going to trap me, skin me, and wear my pelt. I knew that gentle glint in his eye. "Going where?"

"Home."

That arrested my attention, and our eyes met. His were wide and blue as an untarnished summer sky, and I had to look away to keep from tumbling up into them. "Fortunate for you. Your work is done, then?"

Raphael punished my next ill-considered move with pawn-takes-knight. His silver-blond hair netted stars as he turned to signal the bartender for another pint.

"You would know better than anyone," he said. "Is it? Is yours?"

My work was, in fact, going as poorly as my chess game. Of the three thousand souls I had been assigned, fewer than twenty-five hundred had fallen; it was a terrible percentage, and I knew it. Worse yet, on the more than five hundred failures, two thirds of them were guarded by the Angel Raphael.

I look down at the board, sighed, and said, "I will miss you." It was truth, but I would have a better chance against a lesser player, and I knew it. I was no match for Raphael and never had been. "When do you go?"

"Soon." As always, vague. It was always soon and patience and someday. It had taken us more than four hundred years to agree on the chess game, and another hundred and fifty to choose a place and time. I shuddered to think how long it might take him to choose another

ale if ever the Tipperary ran out of Guinness. "Your game is getting better, Ariel."

He spoke the truth, but it was no compliment; my game had been abysmally bad, and was only a little better. I made another foolish move, and said it for him: "Checkmate. I concede."

I tipped my black king over and sat back to drain the last sips from my glass. Raphael picked up my fallen royal and toyed with it idly in his long fingers, his blue eyes half-closed as he watched me. Something of gentleness in him tonight, a hint of sorrow that made me wary.

"What is it you know that I don't?" I asked. A young laughing couple took a table near us and ordered Pete's Wicked Ale, fish and chips. Their American accent felt jarringly out of place for a moment until I remembered that I was, indeed, in America. One place was very like another, for my purposes. Temptations were universal. So easy, in fact, to tempt that young man into drinking too heavily, veering on the busy highway as his girlfriend screamed in alarm. I closed my eyes on the thought of the tearing metal and flesh, that Raphael might not see it.

Or perhaps, more appropriately, the young man might simply be tempted to pleasures of the flesh, and those twisted into my own purposes. Easy enough, especially now.

And yet, paradoxically, not so easy as it had been.

"I know very little," Raphael said at last, and I opened my eyes to look at him again, the hunger fading out of me. He sounded sad and defeated, and would not meet my eyes, hiding his thoughts as I'd hidden mine. "We'll meet again, brother. I feel certain of that."

He paid for his Guinness and went out into the cool clear night, a tall young man in faded blue jeans and a flannel shirt, nothing exceptional about him except a pure and burning spirit, radiant as a star. I hungered for him.

And I feared him, too.

I went to the bar for another Black and Tan, and when I returned I found a young woman sitting at my table in Raphael's abandoned chair, methodically resetting the chess pieces. It didn't happen often, but from time to time a woman would take an interest in me; it wasn't something I was at all averse to. I sat down in my accustomed place, cocking my head to get a better look at the pale sharp planes of her face. She looked up at me and I felt a stab of terror such as I had not felt since last I stepped through the Gates of Hell more than a thousand years ago, man-time.

I straightened slowly, setting my ale aside, and bowed my head to her.

"Your slave," I said. Her eyes were black holes to Hell, filled with things that even I

dared not look on closely. I felt her pull like gravity on my flesh. "How may I serve you?"

My obsequiousness pleased her. "I am not as tolerant as your last overseer, Ariel. You do well to show me obedience."

This, then, was what Raphael had known in his sad eyes. My old overseer, Valariel, had been lax and more happily corrupt than most; he had allowed me liberties, such as these small pleasures of conversation with the enemy. My sense was that Valariel had been bitterly punished for his transgression. I turned away from the possibilities in her face.

"Always and ever obedient," I said. "May I buy you a drink, Belial?"

She ignored the offer. My glass of Black and Tan began to bubble and steam unpleasantly. I took the hint and waited while she considered the board.

She opened with a sally of pawns, a demonic frenzy of suicidal charges, no surgery to it, no skill. I took her pawns, and they reappeared on the board, no worse for the experience.

When she took one of mine, her pawns turned to red-eyed lurching fiends and devoured mine as they screamed.

I played on, because she wished it, until my pieces were slaughtered and the board awash with their blood. When my king was dead, his severed head lifted by a victorious white queen, I whispered, "Concedo," and the illusion snapped and faded, and the board was only a board, the pieces neatly ranked. A drop of blood shivered dark down the side of my king.

"You have one chance to save yourself, Ariel," Belial said conversationally. "Bring me the soul of a child that Raphael guards. Bring me Raphael. Then I shall spare you."

Whatever my terror of moments before, it was nothing to the black-ice pain that went through me then. Belial was setting me a task beyond possibility - worse, beyond my desire. I did not wish to corrupt Raphael. Perhaps, on some shameful level, I even respected him.

But I could not refuse.

"The next time we play," she said, and smiled so that her bloodied pointed teeth showed, "we'll play a different game. Perhaps you shall win."

My flesh crawled. I knew better.

Her name was Grace Langer, and she was all of five years old. I had looked her over before but left her alone, because though sin certainly can begin early in life I sensed no predilection in Grace, and therefore more work. I had inspected her, marked her down, and gone on to easier prey.

But now Grace was perhaps my saving grace, if all worked correctly.

She had little to interest me in her, on the

surface; a good child, loving, not rebellious (at least not yet). No siblings to fight with, but not much tendency to bratty selfishness, either. She had a precociously bright mind which with training might become brilliant. She had faith in God.

Faith, especially the faith of a child, is the weakest of all links. Strike at it from the corners, where it is weakest, and it frequently falls to pieces on the first blow. I studied Grace's family carefully before I sensed weakness in the mother, a pretty young woman named Iris with a deeply buried hunger for sex.

I met her in the grocery store, helped her with her bags, exerted my not inconsiderable charm and took her to a bar - not Tipperary's - where we sipped wine like civilized people and talked. I did not attempt to bed her that day.

By the fourth meeting, I had corrupted her so thoroughly that she felt no shame at all for what she did, only a vast and frenzied hunger. I buried my own fear and frustration in her with my thrusts. It could not be called making love, not even in Iris' mind. Whoever her guardian angel was, he stood no chance at all; there was no sin I liked better than lust.

Iris and I satisfied each other many times, in many places, in many ways, before I arranged for her husband to discover us. I had Grace's mother, but it was not her soul I'd come for. I left her to her own damnation or redemption, left her to a screaming, weeping fight with her husband Douglas, and went outside into the bright August sunshine.

Grace was sitting on the steps, crying. Not the most beautiful child, but her soft brown hair and big brown eyes gave her a certain appeal. I considered several approaches, but settled for the simplest. I tucked my shirt in and sat down next to her, both our feet dangling over the edge of the porch. As we swung our legs, the soles of our shoes brushed the fluffy grass. The day smelled of rich hyacinth and roses and approaching rain.

Grace said, in the way of five-year-olds, "I'm not supposed to talk to strangers."

"I'm not a stranger," I said, which was nothing but the truth. I had known her since she was born. I had seduced her mother. How much of a stranger could I be? "My name's Ariel. You shouldn't be crying, Grace."

She cried harder, her thin shoulders shaking as if someone beat her. I put my arm around her and rocked her close. The heat of her body against mine was utterly unlike her mother's - a gentler heat, stirring an emotion in me I didn't recognize or like.

"He hit her. My daddy hit my mommy."

I smoothed her soft brown hair. "You should pray for God to make everything all right."

This was the crucial point, because God would not answer such a prayer. Free will being what it is, God will not solder together the broken pieces of a marriage; he relies on humans to make those kinds of repairs, and is often disappointed.

Unanswered prayers were death to faith, and once faith was gone -

"Ariel."

The voice was Raphael's, but the tone was not the one I'd become accustomed to over our chess and ales. This was the stern, steel-bright tone of an Angel.

I looked up to see him on the sidewalk, and a surge of another unfamiliar emotion shot

through me - love? Sorrow? Loss? There was no forgiveness in his eyes today, no gentle good humor.

He said, "Let her go, Ariel. She is not yours." "She may be," I said, and comforted Grace with a small rub of my hand on her still-trembling shoulder. "Her parents are fighting. Grace is upset."

Bright as the heart of a sun, the light at the core of him. He stepped closer, and Grace, sensing his anger, shrank closer to me.

In that instant he faltered, and I knew that I would win. She was not perfect, his little Grace, any more than her mother had been, or her father. She was between Heaven and Hell, and would fall.

I said, quite honestly, "I'm sorry, Raphael," and looked away from the blank suffering in his eyes.

"There is no need," he said. "Don't destroy the child. She is not guilty here. You don't understand what you will do to her."

"I have no choice." I pressed my lips to Grace's fine soft hair. She smelled of clean sunshine. "Consider it a game. If you lose this one, there are other boards to be played."

He shook his head and walked away to lean against the white-painted fence, head bowed. Grace looked up at me and said, "Is my friend okay?"

"Yes," I lied. "He's fine. Come on, Grace, pray for your mom and dad. God will help you."

She put her small hands together and prayed. I watched Raphael's back as he wept.

By the time Grace turned 16, I had done my job so thoroughly it failed to thrill me. My overseer Belial had been indulgent of my slow process, perhaps relishing Raphael's suffering. The Angel could have turned his back and let the child go, but he tarried, his eyes full of love and suffering as I steered her down ever darker paths. She could always turn to him, but she had, instead, turned on him.

One thing I had never done, though Grace had offered often enough.

I had never laid down with her.

"Oh, come on, what're you afraid of?" On this winter morning, the whole world was cold except for Grace, sweet fallen Grace in her needle-stitched arms and her heroin smile. She collapsed in my arms, giggling. I held her there a moment, wishing, hoping, and then let her fall to the dirty floor. She stopped giggling and began to cry. "Don't leave me, please don't leave me, I need you, I need -"

She was far fallen, my Grace, but at her heart she was still that frightened, lost child I had so thoroughly corrupted. She wanted my compassion, and I had none to give her.

I no longer needed to visit Grace, but I did, just as my brother did. I told myself it was purely to be certain she did not turn back toward his light, but there was more to it than that. Partly, I knew that to see Grace was to see Raphael, a haunted shadow who even now stood on the street looking up at her squalid apartment. Partly it -

Partly it was, simply, Grace. I had never been able to forget that one unguarded moment of trust, of the warmth of a child's body pressed to mine, the feel of her silken hair against my hand.

She writhed on the floor and climbed my legs, pausing to undo my belt. She would have opened my pants and I remembered her

mother Iris' face made vacant with lust, forgetting her child, her husband, her love, everything but the need for flesh.

I had taken a lot of pleasure in that, and yet the thought of doing the same to Grace made me weak and ill. Belial watches, I remembered. Do this, and save yourself.

I reached down and put my hand on hers to still them. She looked up, and our eyes met, hers blank and dreaming, mine far too clear.

"No," I told her.

"Why?" A slow smile on her face, a knowing lift of her eyebrows. "Don't you like it?"

I burn for it. I ache for it in every fiber of my corrupt soul.

"No," I said again. "I don't." I shoved her, hard, and she fell back to the floor and the tears started again. I walked past her to the door, jerked it open and started to walk out.

Raphael was in the hallway, and in the blue mirror of his eyes I saw myself clearly - oh, no less attractive to human eyes than he, but my eyes burned like Belial's, and my heart was as gray as dead ash. In that second of clear sight I was ashamed.

"Ariel." His voice was still soft and loving, forgiving of everything. I, corrupt Raphael? How could I? Let Belial try it herself, if she was so confident.

I didn't trust myself to speak. I nodded and turned toward the stairs, and I might have escaped all that was to come if only he had not reached out and touched my hand.

For that moment there was war in Heaven and Hell. It was forbidden for us to touch, and now we knew why; we remembered our bonds, or pain, our love, our hate.

My fingers went around his, holding him tight when he might have pulled away. We were trapped, the two of us, in a purgatory made of our own despair.

"Let her go, Ariel," he whispered hoarsely. His light was dimming in contact with the terrible gray of my soul. "I beg you, let her go."

"I can't," I said, as I had for years. The words tore open wounds in both of us. "You must do it. Save her."

There is one gift Angels have that Demons do not share - foreknowledge. I saw it darken his eyes as he said, "It's too late now."

This was how I might destroy him, this simple clasp of hands. The essence of a Demon is suffering and pride, and mine invaded him where he had no defenses - through his love. Only a little longer -

I staggered back, letting go of him, and it was like falling again into the maw of Hell to leave him behind. He collapsed against the wall, gasping the fetid air, his hands pressed over his face as if to block out the sight of me.

I ran like Belial herself were at my heels.

Grace died of an overdose the next day. I wasn't there. I watched her buried in a pauper's plain grave, her life marked with a cheap plastic tag. On the other side of the endless hole in the earth stood Raphael, his eyes no longer radiant, his light no longer bright. He had lost the game. Grace would never see Heaven.

I think he hated me then, as much as an Angel could hate. We did not speak. I went to the Tipperary Inn, that haven of our lost friendship, and ordered myself a Black and Tan, and set the chessboard in place. I would play myself. I could pretend to be an Angel - after all, I had been one before.

In Hell, Grace would be screaming for mercy.

I moved a white pawn into danger and took it ruthlessly with a black knight.

She had leaned against me, so trusting, and the warmth of her body and the sunshine-clean smell of her reminded me of - of -

I picked up the fallen white pawn and turned it in my fingers. Snapped it cleanly in half.

A shadow fell over the board, and for an instant I feared it would be Belial, her smoking eyes and hungry mouth demanding what I could not give.

But, instead, Raphael's voice merely said, "I see you're expecting me."

There was nothing to say. He sank slowly into the chair opposite me, his long thin fingers absently picking up the shattered white pawn's two halves. We did not meet each other's eyes. After a moment I signaled the bartender to bring him a Guinness, and from the other room the music began, tonight by a band named Roving Rogues. They were singing defiantly of dead Englishmen.

Raphael said, after his ale was set before him, "I knew how this would end when last we played chess, do you remember?"

"I remember."

He flashed me a gentle smile and sipped velvet foam from the top of his glass. "I knew it would not end with her death. Perhaps you know it, too."

"Raphael - "

He set the pawn back on the board in its proper place. Mended, wholly and completely, without even a discoloration to mark the break.

"Let's play," he suggested. "Winner takes all."

He did not, could not know what he was saying - and yet, it was no great risk for him. I was no strategist, as well he knew. Like Belial, I was brutal and crass, and I fought with brute force. It would take very little for my elegant brother to step aside.

I took a white pawn on the third move, another on the fifth. A rook on the sixth. It was not, I realized, that Raphael was playing any worse than he had - I was playing better. He showed no signs of distress as I hounded his queen to her death, butchered his bishops, felled his knights.

An hour and one Guinness later, Raphael tipped his white king and said, softly, "I concede."

I sat, frozen, staring at the board. I had won. I had harried him into checkmate, and I had won.

Raphael reached out a hand across the wasted battlefield and said, "Congratulations, my brother."

I knew what it meant to take his hand. I'd done it before, in the hallway. I'd almost dragged him to Hell then.

"No," I said. Almost a plea. "Leave, Raphael. I give you the chance. Leave."

"I can't." His hand remained outstretched. "Please, Ariel. Do this for me."

The shock of our opposites meeting was extreme this time, perhaps because we knew it was coming. I felt breathless, exalted, orgasmic. His peace and love flowed over me, into me, and out again, and my darkness -

My darkness consumed his light. I tried to release him but he held me too tightly, his eyes gone wide and very still. His light faded,

faded . . .

. . . vanished, as if it had never been.

I screamed in horror and let go of him but it was too late, too late, what had I done? No light in him, no sense of Raphael at all. I had destroyed what I most loved in the world.

A hot presence at my back. The razor edge of Belial's fingertips sliced skin on my neck in a demonic caress.

"My lovely," she purred. "I never doubted you, my Ariel. The child and the Angel. He falls of his own free will. Will you rule in Hell, Raphael, or only serve?"

Raphael's blue eyes had gone ash-gray. He sat as if frozen, but tears glittered like stars in his eyes. I knew what he felt, the emptiness, the anguish, the soul-eating horror. Not right. It was not right.

Grace. I loved Grace, loved her with all my heart. And I had betrayed her, murdered her spirit, raped her will -

"We will do great things, you and I." Belial came around the table in her comely woman's form, sat on Raphael's lap and showered little crimson kisses on his neck. Where her lips touched, blisters bloomed like roses. She slid her hands into his shirt, her talons drawing bloody inverted crosses that soaked the thin cotton. "Great things. Destroy. Torture. Murder. These things have always been forbidden to you but you're free now, Raphael my elder brother, free as you've never been before. No more God to fear. There's only yourself."

Within my breast, a bloom of heat. It caught me totally by surprise, so that I went still and turned inward, marveling. I had been cold and empty so long.

In the warmth, a light. A whisper. A word.

Raphael said, softly, "There is never anything to fear, Belial. If you had learned anything in your Fall, you would have learned that. Don't fear forgiveness."

He was speaking to me, not only to my ears but to the light blooming within.

"You are worthy of it. Stop fearing, Ariel."

"Grace," I whispered. Tears in my eyes, tears of joy and pain and anguish.

"You can release her, if you wish." It seemed as if Belial wasn't even there, sitting on his lap, her face contorting with fury. There were only the two of us, and my light blooming and heating like a new-born furnace. In Raphael, too, a trembling tinder-spark, shining golden. "I don't promise you it will be easy, or painless. But it can be done."

Around us the Tipperary Inn turned ghostly-pale, the music whisper-thin. Around us, flames and screams hardened.

"Welcome to Hell," Belial said. She had grown wings, razor-edged and black as the soul staring from her eyes. "Your love has no power here."

Raphael's eyes held mine. On the table, our chess game lay finished. I had won.

In winning, I had lost, and in losing - Won.

I plunged my hand down into the simmering hot coals beneath my feet, reaching, reaching, calling her to me. Grace's hand touched mine and I drew her up into my embrace, her damaged spirit shivering and crying out in agony.

I poured light into her.

"Ariel." Belial's voice was dangerously soft. "You will never leave this place."

"The Devil is the father of lies."

I held Grace out to Raphael, who folded her in his arms. I took his hand.

My light leaped out to him, igniting the spark in him, and together we burned brighter than Belial, brighter than the flames of Hell, and the wings that formed out of the smoke and screams for him were pale as sunrise, soft as morning. In his eyes, the face of love.

"We will meet again, brother," he said, and his wings soared him high, higher than Belial's shout of rage, higher than the flames.

I saw him attain freedom before Belial's rage struck me down.

We are the same, Angels and Demons, with only the thinnest of lines between us. An Angel may feel rage and pride, and fall; a Demon may feel compassion, and rise to live as human, to earn another place in Heaven, though it is not an easy task, nor a small one.

Ariel remembers nothing of Grace, or Hell. He lives a simple life, resisting most temptations Hell sends his way. He still has a weakness for the flesh, but that is, perhaps, as it should be.

He does not know what he does when he goes to the Tipperary Inn and plays chess with his friend Raphael. He only knows there is a sense of peace to the ritual, and happiness.

As always, I am his Guardian. I think he never knew it, all this time.

I think, today, he will win the game.

by Rachel Caine

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Ancient Wisdoms

THE ARMADILLO

Armadillo carries on its back armour that acts like a shield. The armour is constructed from supple bony plates that overlap each other. If you often find yourself saying yes to things that you don't really want to, or find that you allow people to take advantage of you or take you for granted, it could very well be that armadillo is coming to your rescue. If you never get to have any "personal space" to yourself due to all the demands being made of you, armadillo is here to help teach you about creating flexible boundaries, so that you choose what to experience and what to say no to. Although, if you are feeling paranoid,

THE DEER

Deer teaches you how to live in balance through gentleness, peace and love.

Sensitive hearing and the ability to see well in low light, along with watchfulness, allows deer to be aware of what is going on around them, even if nothing is said. You too may embody these characteristics. You may intuitively know what is going on and may have clairvoyant or clairaudient abilities. Learn to trust your instincts. You may

may over analyse things and end up stressing yourself out or being labelled a nit picker who finds fault with everything.

Mouse may also be reminding you that you have overlooked something important. You may need to go back and relook at a situation again or mouse may be telling you that you have got too caught up in the details and need to unravel yourself to see the bigger picture.



by Twilightgirl

Animal Totems

doubting yourself, lacking confidence, acting selfishly, or allowing your fears to consume you, it could be that armadillo is here to show you that you are holding on too tightly to your armour and blocking everyone and everything out of your life. You therefore need to learn how to relax your boundaries a bit to let the good things in life happen.

The armadillo's armour only covers his/her back, leaving the underbelly exposed and vulnerable to attack. However because of this, those with armadillo as a totem may find they are very empathic and will feel this mainly in the stomach area. Through armadillo you will learn how to understand and act on the empathic feelings. Knowing when to allow yourself to be vulnerable and exposed to others in order to help them and knowing when to put your boundaries up and protect yourself and those you love.

With a strong sense of smell armadillo may share with you the ability to smell when something isn't quite right or "fishy" with a situation. Armadillo is also a keeper of secrets and is able to dig deep and uncover truths that would rather be left alone.

Armadillo enjoys basking in the sun, and you may find your health suffering in colder weathers, so learn to wrap up warm during cold spells or jump in the hot tub. Armadillo is a good swimmer and will swallow air and inflate its intestines so that it can float. They can also hold their breath for up to 6 minutes. Because armadillo can transition easily from earth to water, you may find it easy to travel between spiritual dimensions with the aid of meditation.

also find yourself being the person who people come to when they need someone to listen to them or who won't judge them.

Deer also teaches of unconditional love through being mindful of what we do and how we behave with others and ourselves. You may be extremely protective of loved ones or deer may be showing you that you are neglecting loved ones and that you need to remember they need your unconditional love and nurturing.

Deer brings with him/her a sense of innocence. Sometimes we all need to be reminded to look at the world around us with a sense of innocence and see our lives and the lives of others with a new set eye.

THE MOUSE

Mouse plays close attention to the details in life, without losing view of the bigger picture. If mouse has become your totem you may find yourself enjoying being organised, having a place for everything in life and scrutinising every detail. This makes you great at dealing with difficult, complicated situations such as dealing with contracts or the law. You enjoy getting on with things without too much fuss. The downside to scrutinising detail is that you