



SPELLS FOR CHANGE

A GUIDE FOR MODERN WITCHES



FRANKIE
CASTANEA

"Chaotic Witch Aunt"





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Andrews McMeel
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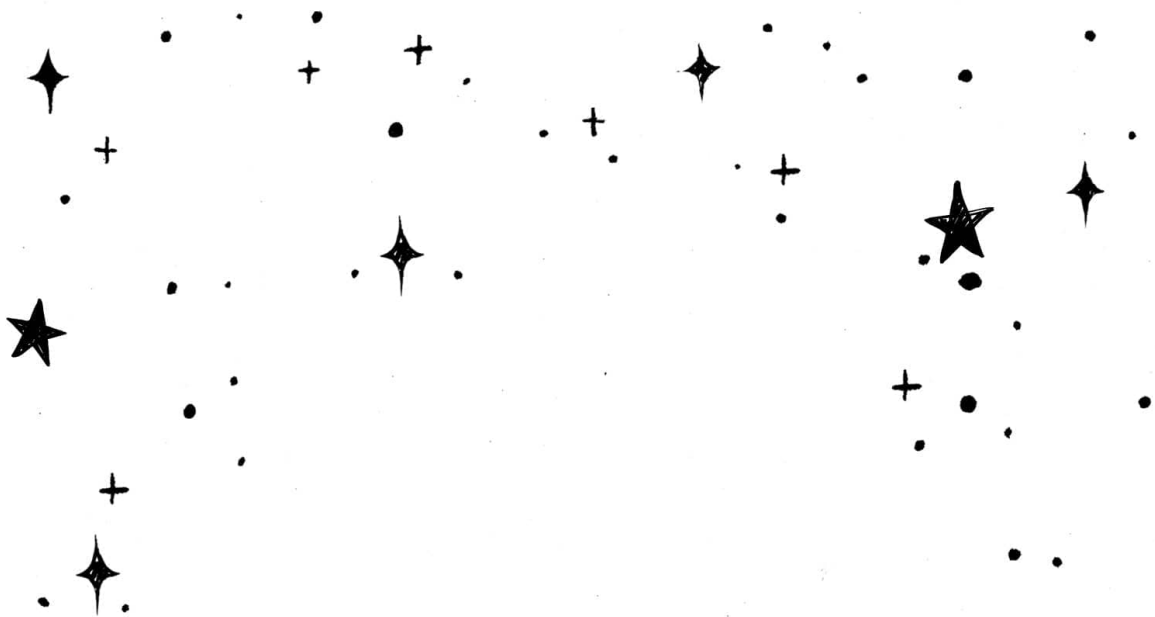
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To my parents, whose belief in me never faltered.



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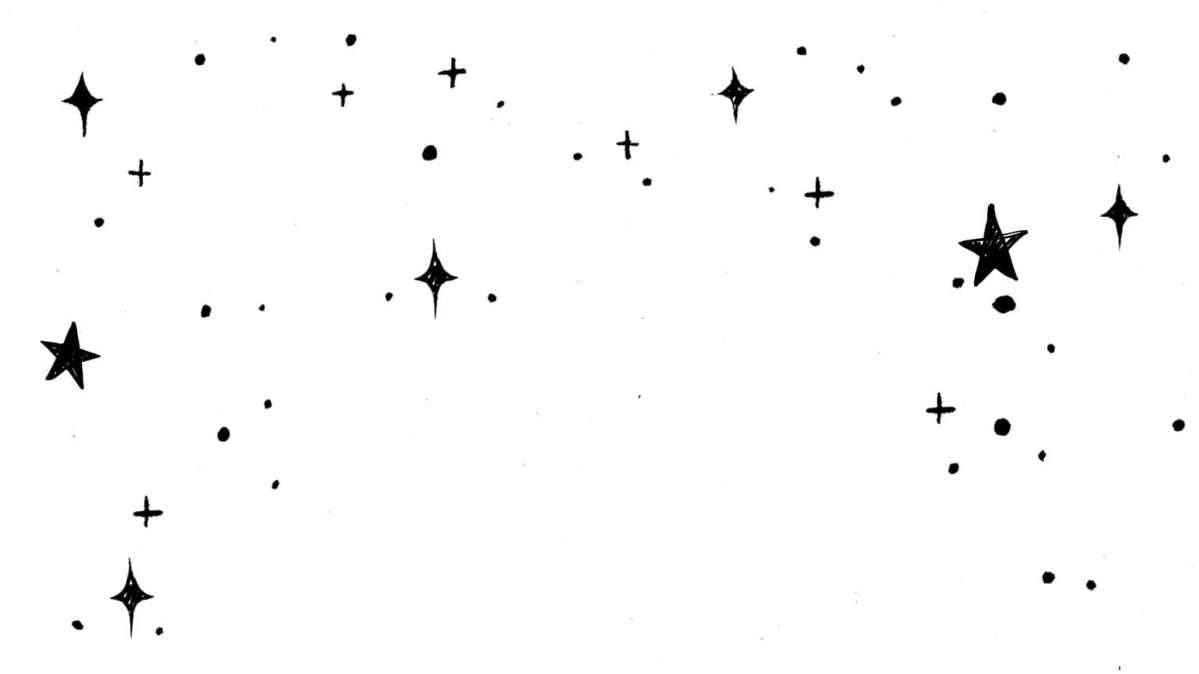
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INTRODUCTION

Within the modern witch's world, there is virtually no aspect or topic unavailable to the inquisitive reader. From Wicca to green witchcraft and information on folk and herbal magick, the amount of literature and resources available to new witches is endless. However, most of the beginner books that I could get my hands on when I first started my craft around six or seven years ago were based around the Wiccan religion, or particularly whitewashed, covering up the history and culture of voices of color. I found that there were specific books on certain paths, like green witchcraft or hedge witchcraft, but no book that gave a starting point without the influence of another source or religion. I felt like the information available to those who wanted to pursue their own path was limited, and there was a basic foundation for learning about witchcraft that wasn't being shared.

This was around 2015 or 2016. Since that point, more books have emerged that approach witchcraft as a practice formulated to the individual which are less ritualistic and ceremonial. Although ritual, ceremony, and traditional witchcraft have their places

in the modern witch's world, more and more witches are finding their way to the Craft and looking for noncommittal places to start. Some argue that the path of the witch is sacred, and should be kept under close lock and key, and only those who can commit to years of training and initiation deserve the title. I take a different approach in this book.

Spells for Change: A Guide for Modern Witches covers what I, a practicing eclectic/folk witch, consider the basic foundations of spellcraft and formulating your practice. Eclecticism describes a practice that picks and chooses from many open traditions of witchcraft to create a customized version, while folk witchcraft describes, very simply, a magick of the people emphasized by use of the items of the land and the materials around them. This is the book I wish I'd had at sixteen, when I started researching my craft—it is devoid of a particular path or religion and fully adaptable to what works best for you and your craft. All of the spells are lifted from my own practice, and each section is devoted to looking at these foundations of manifesting change through spell work, intent, and mindfulness with a decolonized point of view ([see here](#)). These are methods that are tried and true to me, and have been backed by my experience in my practice, by other books, and by my mentors and friends who are witches. This book strives to take into consideration accessibility and different learning abilities, and to bring awareness to the origin of the Craft—its history of appropriation and colonization, and how we, as witches, can use witchcraft as a form of activism as well as a vessel for change.

We, as modern witches, are not only living through a rebirth of the Craft but a rapidly changing world. When a many-thousand-year-old practice focused on rebalancing the power of the universe, connecting with yourself, and connecting with the divine is brought into the modern day, how does it change? How does it morph and adapt to fit the tech-savvy, capitalist world of today? How do materialism, classism, racism, and power dynamics affect our practice? How do we carve time not just for ourselves to reconnect with the universe but time for empathy and the will to create a better world?

This book is created to add nuance to a practicing witch's craft and create a

starting place for those looking to begin, but also to allow those who have never heard of the Craft to explore it in theory. What is it? How do we use it? It discusses the tools that are used, the history of witchcraft, the love and prioritization of self, and so much more. As more individuals find witchcraft, more questions will arise, but my goal is to assess and answer all the questions that I have so far received while building an online social media platform and being a mentor as a modern-day practicing witch.



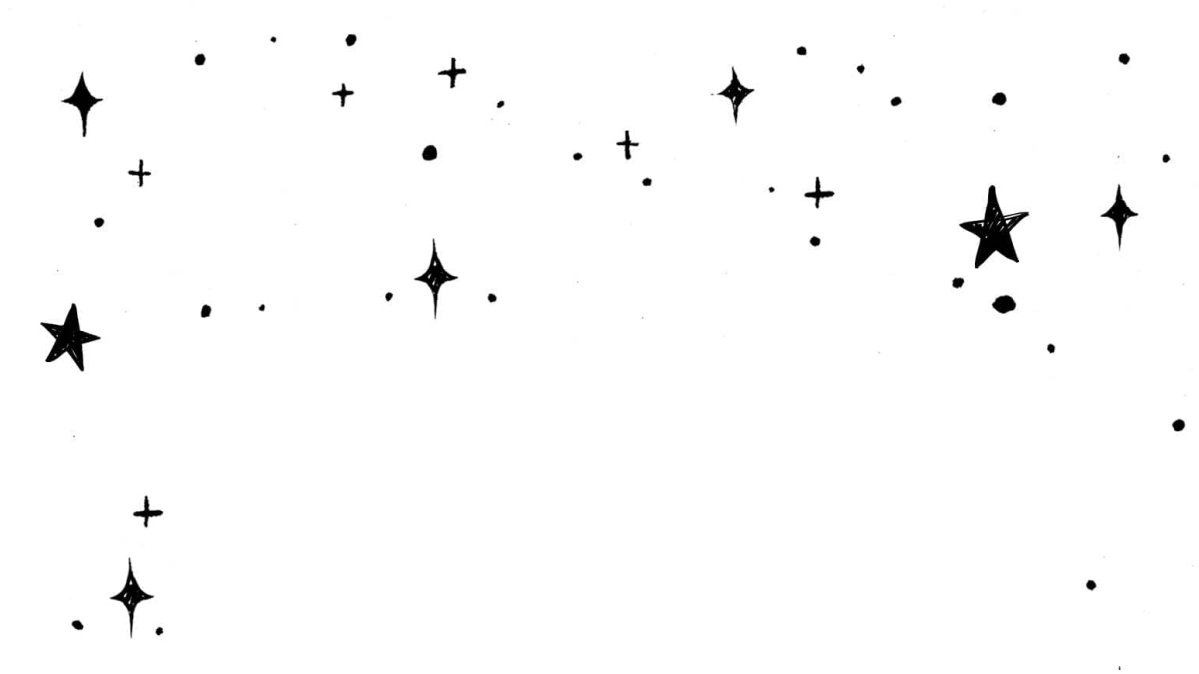




PART 1

WHAT DOES IT MEAN ..
TO BE A
MODERN WITCH?





WHO ARE THE MODERN DAY WITCHES?

Far away from the long, hooked noses of *Hocus Pocus* and the power-hungry Nancy in *The Craft* lives a very different type of witchcraft. Often, media interpretations of witchcraft, and what a witch is, have helped to demonize the term. Where *Harry Potter* and *Chilling Adventures of Sabrina* paint scenes of levitation, contracts with the devil, and wand waving, real witchcraft is very different. Many trace the origins of witchcraft and their first discussions on it to the Salem witch trials of the seventeenth century; however, its roots are actually much older. Witchcraft is based in many ancient pagan traditions where shamans, priests/priestesses, Druids, and oracles were seen as holy. It can be found in the Celtic lands in closed Irish practices ([see here](#)), handed down from generation to generation; among the Romani peoples; in different parts of Italy; and so much more. Some may define witchcraft in more traditional, ritualistic terms but others may find that witchcraft is as simple as giving intent and meaning to a daily activity, honoring a deity through action, or being aware of the energy of the universe

and how it influences what we bring forth into our lives. The idea of manipulating energy, calling on a spirit, using herbs, candles, and good-luck charms to sway life one way or another is ancient, and has infiltrated the modern day in more ways than one. Knocking on wood and other superstitions descended from folk magic, much like blowing out birthday candles comes from the idea that our movement and breath hold life, energy, and power.

A common misconception about witchcraft is that it includes worship of the devil, when in reality, without the intertwining with another religion, it's about reclaiming your power and refining your identity. Most witches don't believe in or subscribe to the Abrahamic beliefs of monotheism, hell, or the devil, and those among us who do believe don't typically seek those entities out. Those who do work with the "devil" don't tend to work with the Christian devil but rather a different form of that entity from the perspective of Satanism or Luciferian magick. Some witches are Wiccan, a modern pagan tradition surrounding a god and goddess, or they look to the ancient pantheons—Greek, Norse, Egyptian, Celtic—for guidance. All of these religions and paths have different traditions and ideas surrounding divinity, none of which are inherently tied to witchcraft. There are also Christian, Muslim, and Jewish witches, who devote their craft and workings to their God. Some witches are atheist or agnostic, commonly referred to as secular, where the gods are seen less as divine and more as aspects of nature. Almost all witches have close ties to nature and communicate with the universe in some aspects, whether that's a specific deity, the higher self, or just all the energy that is and that will be.

Witchcraft, in itself, is a broad term. It encapsulates, at its core, one who practices the Craft. Although its foundations are highly debated, the Craft is casting spells to create an outcome. However, beyond this, witchcraft is so much more—it is not a miracle worker but rather a tool to use alongside our day-to-day lives. It's not a solution but rather an aid.

Witchcraft is rooted in the idea that all human beings contain energy—neither bad nor good—that can be harnessed and sent out to the universe with intent to create a specific outcome. Sounds simple, but the process of finding, balancing, and

connecting not only to your energy but to the energy of the universe (sometimes referred to as “spirit” or the “higher self”) is a process that encourages the individual to challenge what they believe, push their limits, and prod at their darkest aspects of self. Through the many veins of witchcraft, spells are approached in different ways—through meditation, use of candles, ointments, and herbs, or secured in jars and buried to let the spirit do with it what it will.

If you’re looking to find a traditional and historical account of how the esoteric, occult, and the Craft have been used throughout the ages, I suggest *Traditional Witchcraft: A Cornish Book of Ways* by Gemma Gary, as well as *The Secret Teachings of All Ages* by Manly P. Hall. *Traditional Witchcraft* discusses witchcraft of British origin and brings forward wonderful points about what traditional witchcraft looked like, and how it can be changed to fit the modern day. *The Secret Teachings of All Ages* works as an encyclopedia for the esoteric, collecting philosophies, different mysticisms, and practices from all over the historical world in a compendium of information.



The foundation of witchcraft is laid in many ways, including studies of meditation, grounding, mani-festation, cleansing, protection, banishing, and binding—all terms you will become familiar with as this book progresses. Each type of study has both personal and worldwide applications, whether it’s protecting the home or self from negative energies through boundaries and charms, or binding a harmful

person to help a friend. Each brings you closer to creating change within yourself, the environment around you, and the society we live in, and closer to a greater awareness of the universe and the different energies that exist within it.

As the practice of modern witchcraft becomes more socially acceptable and widespread, we don't just have to look at its exceedingly metaphysical and spiritual sides. The more mundane and basic aspects of the Craft are just as important as the more complex practices such as astral projection and intense spell work. Witchcraft is the care and prioritization of self, the upkeep of mental health, and the appreciation of the world around you.

Witchcraft is also personal. Every practice is different, and not every witch has a coven—another common trope among the media. Many witches prefer solitary practice, which is where they conduct rituals and spells by themselves. A plethora of different lanes of witchcraft exist with different focuses. Green witchery and hedge witchery are focused on herbalism and nature, while kitchen witchery focuses on incorporating magick and spell work into cooking. There are folk witches, often described as the “magick of the people,” who are categorized by their use of the elements and materials around them or their adherence to long-standing traditions. Solitary witches are those who practice alone, and secular witches work like atheist witches, within a less spiritual framework and using things that are not overtly religious. Eclectic witches pull from varying open paths to create an effective practice, and all witches use different tools like crystals, tarot cards, and herbs to construct a practice.

Just as a witch doesn't need to rush into advanced magicks to be powerful, they don't need to define their practice right away. I consider myself an eclectic neopagan witch, which took years to pin down and is still considered a broad set of terms within the pagan and witch community. I've tried to study and learn about everything under the sun, and I often encourage new witches to do the same. Even if you're worried that kitchen witchery or a coven may not be for you, spend some time looking into it and learning about it to make sure. After six or so years in practice, I am still learning about new things every day—and will be for the rest of my life. Witches need a curiosity and