



Ask Rose Ariadne
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Wicca Book Reviews

Buckland's Complete Book of Witchcraft
Author: Raymond Buckland
Trade Paperback, 368 pages
Publisher: Llewellyn
Publication date: May 2002
ISBN: 0875420508
Rating: 8 out of 10

Buckland's Complete Book of Witchcraft was first released in the mid 1980 and became the definitive work on Traditional Wicca. In 2002, after 31 reprints, a revised second edition was released in slightly larger type and with more consistent formatting. From the outset, it is important to understand that Raymond Buckland does not play the politically correct game like other Neo-Wiccan Authors, and that reference to nudity (sky clad) and sex appear within the pages. Those preferring a fluffy rendition of Wicca will in all probability be offended. Buckland's writing style too is definitely superior to many of the Neo-Wiccan authors who often come across as somewhat patronizing. If a well written book in good English appeals to you, this is a worthy read.

The book is really complete. It boils down to a complete course comprising of fifteen progressive lessons. Everything, from the history of Witchcraft to gems, herbs, color and even meditation and body posture are addressed by the author. Naturally Magick can be found absolutely everywhere in the book. Perhaps the only critique here is that the author tried to cram too much into the 368 odd pages. Some of the topics covered are deserving of more space.

What I personally enjoyed of this book is that Raymond Buckland does not play the audience! Buckland sticks to his belief that modern Wicca is a direct survival a pre-Christian "Old Religion" instead of being mostly the invention of Gerald Gardner. Fact or Fallacy? Who knows – perhaps a better





understanding of the traditional Craft will be needed before that decision can be made!

This is a really good, comprehensive book for beginners and for the curious. Definitely a recommended read and a must-have on your bookshelf.

The Complete Idiot's Guide to Wicca and Witchcraft

Author: Denise Zimmerman and Katherine A. Gleason

Publisher: Alpha Books

Pages: 339 pages

ISBN: 0-02-863945-6

Rating: 4 out of 10

I have always enjoyed the Idiot's Guide to Whatever, mostly because previous knowledge on any given subject is never assumed. This one turned out to be no different in that respect. The Complete Idiot's Guide to Wicca and Witchcraft provides a fairly good, high level overview of all the basics, such as Esbats, Sabbats, basic spell and ritual work, energy raising, tool consecration, creation of sacred space and meditation, amongst others. The authors also touch on subjects such as working with spirits, elementals, and angels, using astrology and performing specialized types of Magick like knot-, weather, candle and color Magick.

Having said this, there were also a few things that really bugged me. For one, the authors were just a tad too dogmatic. There were frequent statements, implying "the one, right way" to do something. As all experienced practitioners of the Craft know, there are many, many right ways.

Anomalies were also prevalent. Things like "...the Watchtowers need corners to sit on." on pg 132 left me a little taken aback. Circles don't have corners, they have quarters ... they also do not only get summoned for ?special? occasions. It is standard circle casting practice. Then there is the statement just a few pages later where the word 'excommunication' is used. I shuddered – it sounded awfully mainstream Christian to me and implied being banned from communicating with Divinity. This mainstream slant is perpetuated on pg 291 with: "You can...speak to deity with awe and respect." Respect is Universal, but awe ... it implies prostrating and inferiority and all those things that are NOT quite in keeping with the Craft. There are many more discrepancies and dubious nuances – too many to individually address.

Personally, I cannot recommend the book with a clear conscience to any Seeker for the simple reason that there are many beginners' books out there that certainly rate a great deal better.

To Light a Sacred Flame: Practical Witchcraft for the Millennium





Author: Silver Ravenwolf
Paperback, 300 pages
Publisher: Llewellyn
ISBN: 1567187218
Rating: 7 out of 10

Elder, Writer, Director, Healer, Mother. Silver Ravenwolf is either loved or despised ... depending who you speak to. Fortunately for Silver, the latter is a small minority and their dislike purely stems from the notion that her work is 'fluffy', a little bit repetitive and has a self-marketing feel from time to time.

In *To Light a Sacred Flame: Practical Witchcraft for the Millennium*, the author offers an overview of Craft Laws of the Craft, a guide to personal empowerment and the creation of a harmonious environment, how to make spells work for you; and explains ritual format and design. She also offers information on the pantheons, correspondences and recipes.

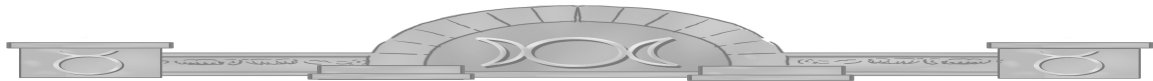
This book is aimed at intermediate practitioners, and from a personal development perspective there is some really great information, exercises and meditations. Personally this is the part I liked best. The rituals, devotionals and spells deserve mention, because these make a handy addition to any Witch's repertoire. The only critique is perhaps some regurgitation of information already contained in *To Stir a Magick Cauldron* and *To Ride a Silver Broomstick*. The correspondences and pantheon sections are a little superfluous too considering that the book is aimed at those who have been practicing the craft for a while.

As usual, her writing is an easy read, her information accurate, her approach open and her teaching style, 'you need to think for yourself'. This certainly is a book, not only well worth the read, but also well worth the purchase!
#answer# -- End Article -- -- Begin Article -- Non-Wicca Witchcraft Book Reviews

Isis Magic
Author: M. Isidora Forrest
Paperback: 625 pages
Publisher: Llewellyn
ISBN: 1567182860
Egyptian Witchcraft
Rating: 9.5 out of 10

So, who is Isidora Forrest? She has been a devotee of Isis for 21 years now, and priestess of the 15,000 member strong international Fellowship of Isis. She is also an Adept in the 100-year old Hermetic magical tradition. This author knows her stuff





Isis Magic is a hefty work – both in quantity, and - importantly - in quality. It is a two part initiatory journey that systematically takes the reader through the fascinating 'House of Isis'. In Part One of the book, the author provides information on the various aspects of the Goddess Isis, the Creation Myth, magic, history and worship. In the second part, she the reader through explores the various developmental stages until finally becoming adept: Votary, Handmaiden, Magician and Prophetess.

The first part is out of necessity, theoretical. The author really spends time to recount the tales of Ancient Egypt, to point out similarities to other Pantheons' Goddesses, assists with pronunciation, offers excerpts from various ancient texts, quotes Formulae and explains what it will take of the Seeker to become a follower of Isis.

In the second part of Isis Magic, Isidora Forrest provides full details on each of the progressive roles, including the ritual robes, basic ritual, invocations, purification and consecration, initiation etc. Meditations, posture and energy work is added during the Hand Maiden stage. Advanced ritual, natural magic and healing is added during the Magician phase. Advanced Magic, Oracular work, incubation and Alchemy are added during the Prophetess Stage.

Isis Magic is not Wiccan. It is hard-core, requires absolute dedication and strict self-discipline. Like all Egyptian Heka (magic), the magic of Isis is neutral and can be used for both light and dark practices. The choice is that of the individual. Isis Magic is, in my opinion, the definitive work on Isis worship and feminine Heka! Not only is it really well written, but it is also well thought through and well sequenced. If the Isis aspect of Egyptian Witchcraft appeals to you, this is not just recommended reading. It is an absolute necessity.

Be a Goddess

Author: Francesca de Grandis

Paperback: 312 pages

Publisher: Harper

ISBN: 0062515055

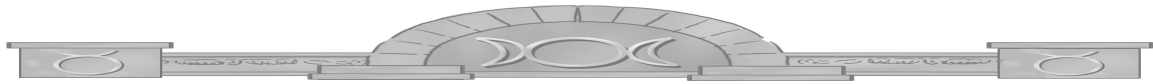
Celtic Witchcraft

Rating: 9 out of 10

Francesca de Grandis' claim to fame is not only being the founder of The Third Road ® where anyone, from delivery people to doctors comes to learn and participate in the mysticism of Goddess Spirituality. She is also the daughter of a Traditional Sicilian Witch and has completed an extraordinary seven year apprenticeship to become a Celtic Shaman in the Faery Tradition.

Be A Goddess is neither a reference work nor a 'What Is" book, but rather a 15 Lesson introductory course to authentic Celtic Shamanism, complete with a certificate of completion at the end. These lessons struck me as more than





purely shamanistic lessons, but also as valuable lessons in mundane life. Each Lesson contains information, rituals and prayers. Like many of the non-Wiccan books, this one too is not intent on being politically correct in any way and avoids all the normal fluff and padding. It is truthful, to the point and – if carefully followed – highly effective.

If Celtic Shamanism and the Faery Faith appeals to you, then this is the real thing. A highly recommended book, written – for a change – by a real expert.

Of Water and the Spirit

Author: Malidoma Patrice Soma

Paperback: 311 pages

Publisher: Penguin Compass

ISBN: 0140194967

African Witchcraft

Rating: 4 out of 10

Malidoma Patrice Soma is a West African, an initiate in the ancestral tradition of his tribe, a medicine man and a diviner in the Dagara culture. His book draws directly on his own experiences as he was growing up – and runs from just before he was abducted by the Jesuits. From Chapter 10 onwards, his return home after a fifteen year absence is described and from Chapter 14 onwards his training and initiation into the mysteries of his tribe. This is the journey that he covers in Of Water and the Spirit.

The book was more insightful than it is instructive, much to my regret. The cover promises "Ritual, Magic and Initiation in the Life of an African Shaman" and is adorned with a large golden seal stating: "Body, Mind and Spirit Award of Excellence". Unless I am wrong then, the front cover creates a fair assumption that spiritualism, ritual, magic and initiation will be the core focus of the book. Instead, these topics are only covered – albeit superficially - in the final 100 pages of the 311 page book. Of Water and the Spirit is in truth an Autobiography. This is where the maxim "Never judge a book by its cover", really applies.

Don't get me wrong, the book is very interesting from an Anthropology and Sociology perspective. For this reason, it is advisable to steer clear if mystical insights into African Shamanism, is your goal.

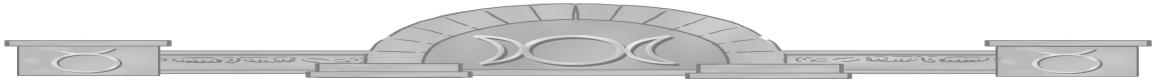
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Mastering The Magick Of Witchcraft

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