

*Faerie Magazine is now*

# ENCHANTED LIVING



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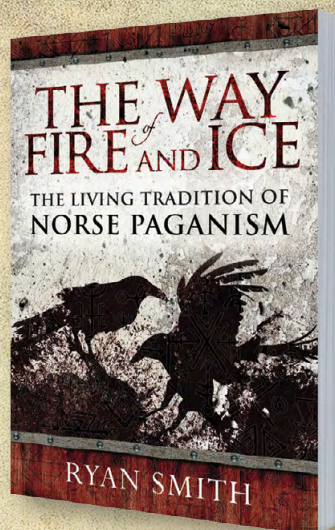
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*The HYGGE Issue*

# Enchanting Holiday Reads

FROM LLEWELLYN



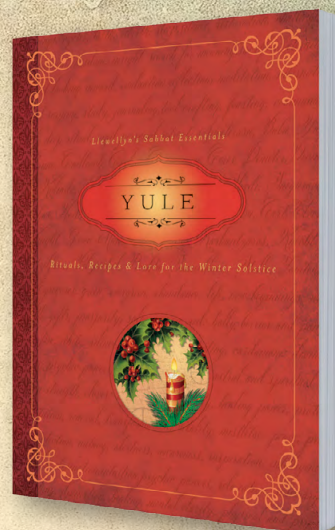
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Incorporate the wisdom and virtues of old Norse sagas into a contemporary lifestyle.



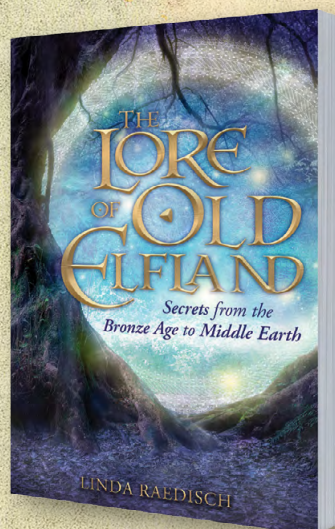
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Yuletide traditions for the darkest days of the year.



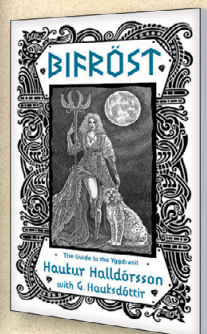
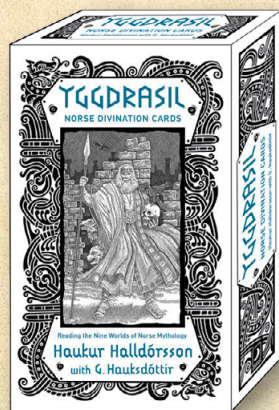
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Perform rituals and magic to celebrate and work with the energy of the winter solstice.



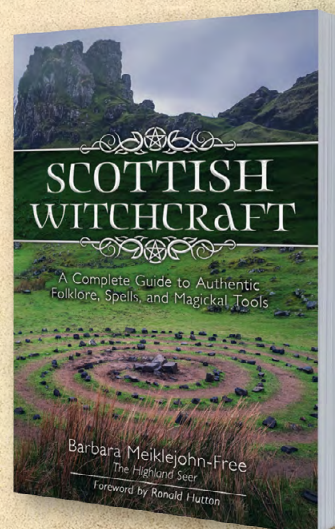
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An exploration of the ancient elf lore that inspired Tolkien and generations of artists, authors, and spiritualists.



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An 81-card divination deck based on fascinating Norse mythology.



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An introduction and guide to the magickal folk traditions of the Highlands of Scotland.



In past winter issues, we've celebrated frosty, wintry, magical things like ice hotels and snow queens and winter gardens and mermaids sleeping on ice floes, as they do. One of my favorite cover headlines was "Old-Time Frost Fairs" from our winter 2015 issue, where we also printed an excerpt from Virginia Woolf's *Orlando* that describes that glittering winter in 1608 when the Thames froze over and:

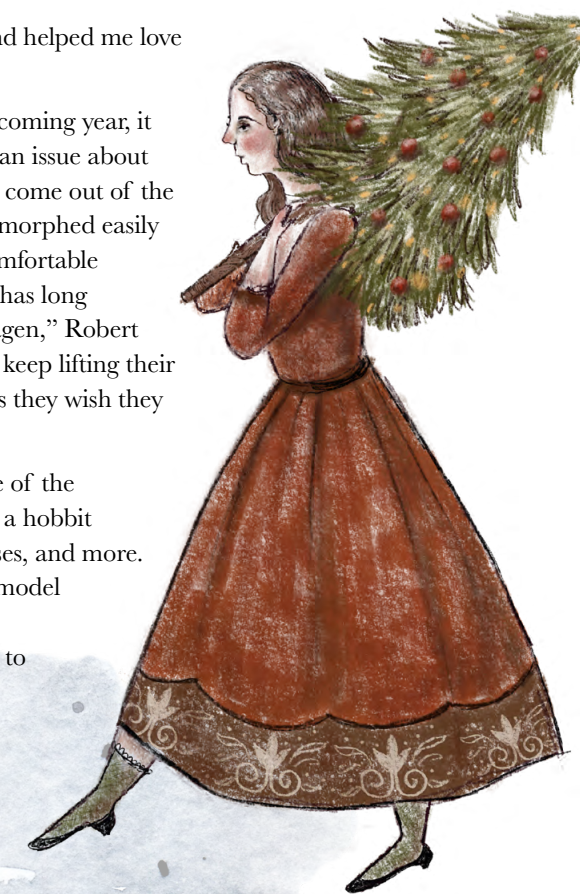
*Frozen roses fell in showers when the Queen and her ladies walked abroad. Coloured balloons hovered motionless in the air. Here and there burnt vast bonfires of cedar and oak wood, lavishly salted, so that the flames were of green, orange, and purple fire. But however fiercely they burnt, the heat was not enough to melt the ice which, though of singular transparency, was yet of the hardness of steel. So clear indeed was it that there could be seen, congealed at a depth of several feet, here a porpoise, there a flounder.*

Isn't that beautiful? It's one of my favorite scenes in literature (and film!), and helped me love winter and all its sparkling, world-transforming magic.

When dreaming up this issue, though, as we planned our themes for the upcoming year, it occurred to me that maybe instead of celebrating snow and ice we should do an issue about hearths and coziness and warm, crackling fires—something to read when you come out of the cold. An issue so cozy you'd want to crawl inside it and take a nap. That idea morphed easily into hygge, defined by the Oxford Dictionary as "a quality of coziness and comfortable conviviality that engenders a feeling of contentment or well-being." The idea has long been a part of the Danish culture; in a 1957 *New Yorker* "Letter from Copenhagen," Robert Shaplen reported, "The sidewalks are filled with smiling, *hyggelige* people, who keep lifting their hats to each other and who look at a stranger with an expression that indicates they wish they knew him well enough to lift their hats to him, too."

So we explore hygge in all its forms over the following pages, and visit some of the coziest spaces we could find, including two hobbit houses (what is cozier than a hobbit house?), Holly Black's stately lair, spangled New England cabins and treehouses, and more. When the otherworldly, dazzling Damaris Lewis came onboard as our cover model and feature, it seemed only right to photograph her next to a fire, wrapped in blankets and sweaters, a cup of tea steaming in her hand. There is a lot more to see. We hope you'll make yourself a cup of something warm and step inside.

Love,  
Carolyn Turgeon





# ENCHANTED LIVING

VOLUME 49 | Winter 2019

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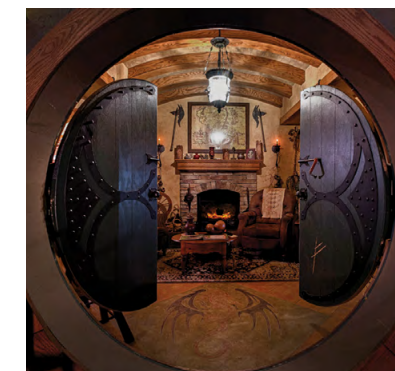
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## CONTRIBUTORS

*Enchanted Living's Hygge Issue*



**Holly Black**

Holly Black is the *New York Times* best-selling author of over thirty fantasy novels for kids and teens. She has been a finalist for an Eisner and a Lodestar Award, and the recipient of the Mythopoeic Award, a Nebula, and a Newbery Honor. Her books have been translated into thirty-two languages worldwide and adapted for film. She currently lives in New England with her husband Theo and their son in a house with a secret library. “As longtime readers of *Enchanted Living*, we were excited to see our house grace these pages,” she says. “We cleaned for a week, lit lots of candles, and hoped no one opened any closets.”



**Terri Foss**

Terri Foss has lived her entire life nestled in New York’s Hudson Valley, where on most days you can find her in her gardens or tucked away in her private art studio. At a young age she taught herself to draw, which led to her attending the Fashion Institute of Technology in New York City. Now you can find her charming, witchy paintings in her Etsy shop, in our autumn 2019 witch issue, and on page 46 of this wintry hygge issue. “For me, winter is the time to fill my heart with warm desire while retreating to the earth’s core of hibernation,” she says. “I love to gather a furry blanket, a cup of herbal tea, and my favorite book while I sit a spell!!!”



**Ian Hencher**

Ian Hencher is an actor and concept artist from Cornwall, home to the Cornish pixies. Growing up there inspired his imagination and deep-rooted appreciation for nature. Upon graduating from an acting course in New York City in 2009, he returned to the U.K. with the goal of merging his love for fantasy with his love for storytelling in front of the camera. Today Hencher collaborates with like-minded photographers, authors, costume designers, and actor-models to produce original fantasy concepts for still photography and film—including several shoots for *Enchanted Living*, like our spring 2018 Tolkien cover shot and the *Cruel Prince*-inspired shoot featured in this issue.



**Steve Parke**

As *Enchanting Living's* photo editor, Steve Parke has shot nine covers for the magazine—including this month’s cover featuring Damaris Lewis—as well as everything from the Magic Castle in Los Angeles to a lady knight lying in belladonna. He also spent fourteen years working as Prince’s art director at Paisley Park and is the author of *Picturing Prince*, full of photos and stories from that time. For this winter issue, he visited—and photographed—Holly Black’s house in New England, Casa Apicii (where the cover shoot took place) and the legendary Chelsea Hotel in New York, and the ultra-charming Hobbit’s Dream in Virginia.



**Susan Tuttle**

Susan Tuttle is a folk herbalist, a photo artist, an author of four photography and mixed-media art instructional books, and a natural witch who lives in the woods of Maine. In the Wood Botanicals is her online small-batch herbalism shop, where she offers plant-based body-care products that are wild-crafted with the plant allies she reverently and responsibly forages. One of the things Tuttle loves most about living in Maine is the vibrancy and strength of each season. “As a Mainer, one must befriend the long and frigid winter in order to thrive,” she says. “So the concept of hygge is something near and dear to my heart.”



**Jessica P. Wick**

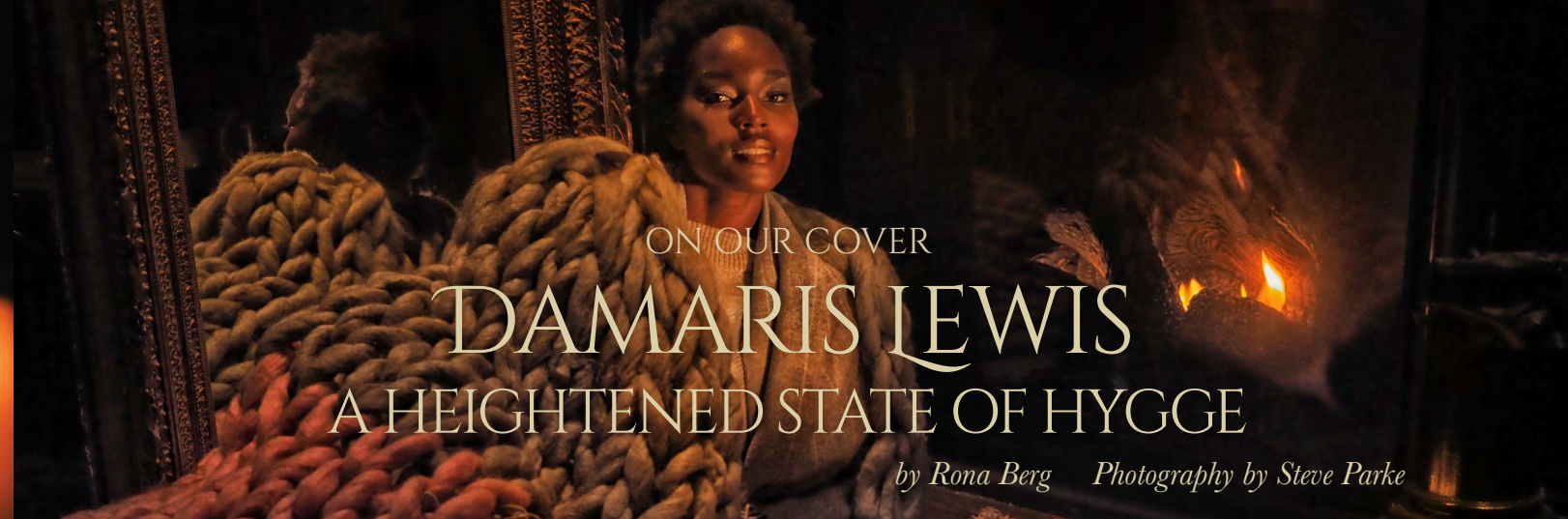
Jessica P. Wick is a poet, writer, bookseller, and editor who lives near the sea. She was also one of the founding editors of the fantastical poetry webzine *Goblin Fruit*. When she isn’t at her computer or reading, she’s probably exploring a graveyard or rambling through a new adventure. “The root court was initially born of my desire for the autumns and winters of story,” she says of her two poems in this issue. “It’s been many years since my first root court poem and I’ve moved—recentlyish—from Southern California to Rhode Island, where I actually get to experience winter woods, snow days, the sky turning Elfland blue from cold.”

# YOUR HYGGE CHECKLIST

BY GRACE NUTH

ILLUSTRATION BY GUINEVERE VON SNEEDEN

- Start with pillows. Lots of fluffy, soft pillows. These can be used to take drowsy naps or to start giggle-inducing pillow fights, if you’re getting cozy with a friend.
- Add a blanket, or ten. Winter is cold, and we human animals love to burrow down in a nest of downy layers. Also, they work wonderfully for blanket forts.
- Light a few candles. Look around. Now light a few more. Make sure the candles are sufficiently far away from your blanket and pillow nest.
- Light some incense or engage your sense of smell in some other way: If you love cooking, bake some bread. If you hate cooking, make sure one of those candles you lit smells like a beloved aroma that makes you feel comforted.
- Prepare the hot beverage of your choice. This could be tea, coffee, mulled cider, or even something stronger.
- Play some soothing music. My go-tos are Faun, Enya, and Loreena McKennitt.
- Now bundle up in your mittens, coat, and hat. Go outside. Stand in your yard for a moment and breathe in the sharp cold air. Look up at the clouds if it’s day, or the stars if it’s night. Be a part of the frigid beauty of winter.
- Go back inside. Feel the warm air as it hits your face, the needle prick on your skin as it starts to warm and flush red.
- Grab the drink you prepared.
  - Sit in the blanket nest.
  - Nap, if you so desire.
- Recognize the magic of being fully present for each detail of daily life.



ON OUR COVER

# DAMARIS LEWIS

## A HEIGHTENED STATE OF HYGGE

by Rona Berg Photography by Steve Parke

Long, lanky, and wise well beyond her years, twenty-nine-year-old Damaris Lewis walks through life illuminating the world with her radiant spirit, beautiful smile, and positive energy. Lewis is an actor, model, philanthropist, and entrepreneur who appeared in Spike Lee's Academy Award-winning *BlacKkKlansman* and starred alongside Hilary Swank in the upcoming thriller *Fatale*. Lewis has modeled for countless brands and fashion magazines, including the *Sports Illustrated* swimsuit edition, Garnier, Benetton, French *Vogue*, and Yves Saint Laurent. And she was Prince's principal dancer on worldwide tours from 2011 to 2016.

In spite of her high-profile career choices—or perhaps because of them—she is a living, breathing, walking, talking embodiment of the Danish concept of hygge.

Hygge can be best described as enjoying life's simple pleasures, “a quality of coziness and comfortable conviviality that engenders a feeling of contentment or well-being (regarded as a defining characteristic of Danish culture),” according to a classic dictionary definition. The main idea of hygge, in terms of decor, is to create a peaceful, serene space that is free of clutter.

When Lewis travels, which is much of the time—we caught up with her after she finished filming a new project in Canada—she takes time to carve out a cozy space wherever she goes. “Everywhere is home,” she says. “I make everywhere home. Whenever I get into a hotel, I put an essential oil everywhere,” she says. “I create the scent I want for my stay. Hotel cleaning products are strong chemicals,” she continues. “I bring candles or tea-size LED lights with me. And I also create a spa-like atmosphere at home.”

For Lewis, embracing simplicity, serenity and self-acceptance is the key to a successful life, even though those values are quite unusual for someone in the entertainment industry. But even when she talks about her work, the conversation is tied to personal growth, a journey of self-care and a strong connection

to nature. “Most of my acting preparation is learning about myself,” Lewis says. “For example, taking in the fire of summer and using it to ignite something in myself.”

No matter how busy she is, Lewis makes sure to factor in some time for relaxation every day. She takes time out to savor a cup of tea—Brooklyn Tea's ginger and moringa are favorites—and loves taking baths, inspired by the Japanese art of the *onsen*. Lewis is a devotee of body treatments like Reiki, Ayurvedic self-massage, and acupuncture. She adheres to a simplified beauty regimen and doesn't like to “cover up” with products. Her food choices are healthy and organic where possible, and she loves to be out in nature, “moving with the seasons,” she says. “I'm really focused on being outdoors instead of staring at the blue light from my computer.”

But hygge also refers to creating a calm, uncluttered inner space. Reflective, self-aware and wellness-focused, at our cover shoot in Manhattan's West Village, Lewis went around dispensing wellness tips like some people dispense candy. “I really enjoy helping people,” she says, “especially helping them to slow down.”

That's why she started Siram Wellness ([siramwellness.com](http://siramwellness.com)), a blog geared toward shifting the prevailing focus of wellness—now a \$4.2 trillion global market—from a means to looking good to one that focuses on feeling good. For example, enjoy that green juice because it makes you feel strong and healthy, not because it looks good on an Instagram post!

“Siram is an experience that began out of the realization that wellness was beginning to look like something instead of feeling like something,” she says. The word *siram* itself means “to pour or flush out water” in the Malay language, and Lewis chose it because it also literally feels good to pronounce.

The Siram blog is the place where Lewis chronicles her travels and shares lessons learned on the road. She shares wellness wisdom in posts like “The Fall: Find Your Balance,” and “Five Minute Siram Meditation.” She does much of the

---

Location: Casa Apicii, New York Hair: Marque Washington MUA: Karim Orange  
Styling & clothing: Bridgett Artise of Born Again Vintage Cashmere: Kinross Cashmere



*Hygge can be best described as enjoying life's simple pleasures, "a quality of coziness and comfortable conviviality that engenders a feeling of contentment or well-being (regarded as a defining characteristic of Danish culture)," according to a classic dictionary definition.*



writing and photography herself. After reading the book *Slow Beauty* by Shel Pink at the beginning of 2019, it struck her that so many people spend time healing other people but they don't take time to heal themselves. She encourages those she meets to streamline and simplify their lives, to embrace mindfulness practices and be present in the moment. The idea is that we all need to learn to slow down, appreciate ourselves, and savor life, which can be fleeting, as she well knows from personal experience.

Lewis had a deep and abiding friendship with Prince. She was his muse and his friend. They went to hear music together and hung out together at Paisley Park, his home. And when he died, it was a great loss that sent her searching for ways to cope with the grief of losing a mentor and friend.

"I've been on the self-journey since 2013," she says. "When he passed away, the biggest thing was allowing myself to cry and release and let go. First you have to accept, and then you have to work on you. And you need to take time to heal." Her prevailing

self-wisdom is to always get to the source of an issue, listen to yourself and your body. Then, "learn to let it go," she says.

Born and raised in Coney Island, Brooklyn, Lewis studied dance at the Fiorello H. LaGuardia High School for Music, Art, and the Performing Arts in Manhattan. When she was in her teens, while performing at Chelsea Piers, she was scouted by a modeling agent. Lewis hesitated at first, but then the agent began to book her—on school holidays, for example, Thanksgiving or winter break—for campaigns like Yves Saint Laurent Beauty. That led to work with *Sports Illustrated* and dancing for Prince. One day, she got a random phone call and thought it was fake. The caller said that Prince wanted her to be in a music video. She didn't pay attention, but when Prince himself called, that got her attention. Lewis ended up touring with him in Australia, and that was the beginning. "It's a beautiful thing to be connected to someone who was connected to millions of people," she says. "You'll always hear his voice, and his stories."

Still based in Brooklyn, Lewis works out regularly and, a basketball fan, goes to a lot of Knicks games when she's in town. Also a philanthropist and entrepreneur, she is the CEO of Gorudo Candles, a company that designs custom soy wax candles for homes, businesses, and events. She is co-creator of Flo, a candle made specifically to honor and balance the menstrual cycle and inspire self-care rituals. Aware of her strong appeal and influence as a role model, she sits on the advisory board of the Garden of Dreams Foundation, where she has played an important role as chairwoman of their annual prom, creating unforgettable experiences for teens in and around New York City. And she is a member of the Boys and Girls Club Hall of Fame in recognition of her longtime support for the organization, of which she is a proud alumna. Mentoring young people, building their confidence, and helping them rise like she has is a deep motivator and helps keep her centered, grounded, and inspired. "We all need to take the journey toward understanding why we do the things we do, figure out what works, and mold your own formula. Sometimes it takes an uncomfortable feeling for us to question things, but that's when we get to our best life," she says. "Nobody looks at the trees or flowers in the gardens and nitpicks them. And learning to do that with ourselves more often is key.

"Everything is energy," she says, "and none of our bodies like negative energy. It won't add anything to our lives or make us healthier. Wellness shouldn't be a trend—it's a way of life. And when you make it your lifestyle, then you start vibrating in a different way."



Follow Damaris Lewis on Instagram @damarislewis.

Follow Rona Berg on Instagram @ronaberg.

See more of Steve Parke's work at [stevepark.com](http://stevepark.com).





## COZY AS CASHMERE

When we were deciding where to photograph Damaris Lewis for our special Hygge issue, we chose a private upstairs room at Casa Apicii, a restaurant in New York City's West Village, because it was so cozy, quaint, and charming, complete with a fireplace, candles everywhere, and lighting that was gorgeously atmospheric.

And when it came time to choose what she would wear, well, that was a no-brainer, too: cashmere! And not just any cashmere—we went for the most gossamer-soft, feather-light, divinely warm, and elegantly beautiful version that we could find. Cashmere is one of the most luxurious fibers in the world. It is three times as warm as wool, and if you take care of it, it will last forever. We worked with Kinross Cashmere ([kinrosscashmere.com](http://kinrosscashmere.com)), the premier brand of Dawson Forte Cashmere, because the quality level is very high and their designs are modern, hand-crafted, and thoughtfully

made, from “goat to garment.”

Super-soft and cozy, the end piece—sweaters, wraps, blankets, and more—follow strict European cashmere production standards, from the unforgiving plains of Inner Mongolia to consumers all over the world!

Cashmere comes from goats throughout parts of Asia, especially Mongolia, southwest China, Iran, Tibet, northern India and Afghanistan. The soft fleece on their underbellies is shed naturally when the weather warms, and cashmere producers come in to sort it, comb it, and clean it.

It was originally used in the 13th century, and until the 19th century, cashmere shawls were used for ceremonial events by royalty in India and Iran (known as Persia back then). When Europeans discovered it, the demand grew, especially in Scotland, where it became extremely popular.



In his tiny tome *The Little Book of Hygge*, Meik Wiking, CEO of the Happiness Research Institute in Copenhagen, offers guidance on everything that is needed to achieve a happy state of hygge at home.

“Hygge is about an atmosphere and experience,” says Wiking, “rather than about things. It is about being with the people we love. A feeling of home. A feeling that we are safe, that we are shielded from the world and allow ourselves to let our guard down ... You may be having an endless conversation about the small or big things in life, or just be comfortable in each other’s silent company, or simply just be by yourself enjoying a cup of tea.”

That said, he continues, “no recipe for hygge is complete without candles. When Danes are asked what they most associate with hygge, an overwhelming 85 percent will mention candles.” He goes on to talk about the importance of lighting and blankets for creating a warm and cozy atmosphere that surrounds the senses with soft, lovely textures and smells. Here are some that we love.



### RACHAEL PLATT CAT CAULDRON

Who doesn't love cats and cauldrons? This fanciful handmade mug honors both, and it's food-, microwave-, and dishwasher-safe. Artist Rachael Platt hand-crafts classic black cat cauldrons, pieces adorned with crystal quartz whiskers, and specialty cat cauldrons available in a rose-quartz-inspired glaze this holiday season and into the new year. [oneelevenpottery.com](http://oneelevenpottery.com)

### ROUGH LINEN TABLE RUNNER

Sometimes true beauty lies in imperfection, and the rough edges—and rugged texture—of this table runner are beautifully imperfect. Made from two layers of densely woven, 100 percent linen sheeting and available in a choice of neutral shades—we love the pale gray—it adds a softness and coziness to any dinner table. [roughlinen.com](http://roughlinen.com)

### SKANDINAVISK BAER REED DIFFUSER

Skandinavisk is a line of home fragrances and body care products from Denmark inspired by the concept of hygge. *Baer* is Danish for berry, and the scent of this beautiful room diffuser evokes the essence of foraging trips in the Danish forest for cloudberries, blueberries, and lingonberries, brought back home and cooked down into jam. [cieluxe.com](http://cieluxe.com)

### REBEL WALLS' SCANDINAVIA

You can literally immerse yourself in nature at home with Rebel Walls' Scandinavia collection. This gorgeous wallpaper, shot by top nature photographers, features giant Norwegian mountains, dramatic Danish coastline, and lush Swedish forests and meadows, all embodying the textures of nature: the rough bark of a pine tree, a slippery mountain slope, the soft green moss of a tranquil forest. [rebelwalls.com](http://rebelwalls.com)

### CERNO NAUTA FLOOR LAMP

A simple, streamlined, modern floor lamp that stands tall as a tree in your home! Made in Southern California with a whitewashed oak base, a burlap shade, and a dimmable LED bulb to transmit a soft, warm light. [cernogroup.com](http://cernogroup.com)

### RED FLOWER FRENCH LAVENDER LITTLE FLOWER CANDLE

Nothing is more grounding than lavender. These lovely lavender-scented candles may be small, but they fill the room with an herbal, floral scent that creates a cozy, comfortable feeling. Made of natural vegetable wax with cotton wicks, they burn slowly and cleanly. [redflower.com](http://redflower.com)

Follow Rona Berg on Instagram @ronaberg



# HYGGE

The Art of Living Well  
by Whisper in the Wood

Hygge, the Danish word used to describe an approach to living that has a quality of cozy contentment, evolved as a way to embrace and celebrate the cold, dark Scandinavian winter months. I live in Maine, where one must also befriend long and frigid winter to thrive, so the concept of hygge is something near and dear to my heart.

What kinds of images and thoughts pop into your mind when you think of hygge? Often people envision candles, crackling fires, fuzzy sweaters and socks, hot drinks and soups, mulling spices, comfort foods, blankets and throws, and fairy lights. All these snugly and homey things are associated with hygge,

no doubt, but when you boil it down, living the hygge life is ultimately not about things. It requires nothing more than a shift in mind-set.

The art of hygge is really about living sensually through intention. It's about lifting the spirit and enjoying life through slowing down, by being present in the now, and by experiencing each moment to the fullest. This is where ritual can come into play, to encourage and enhance this type of mindful lifestyle. There are many ways we can weave simple rituals into our daily living. They needn't be pricey, and they don't have to take too much time or effort—unless, of course, you want them to.

## HERE'S A LIST OF SOME OF MY FAVORITE SIMPLE HYGGE RITUALS:

**Light a candle.** Enjoy the act of lighting it and take time to stare into the flickering flame. Bathe in the cheery light and give in to the meditative and relaxing feeling it evokes.

**Sip a hot drink.** Pumpkin-spice coffee, cinnamon tea, nourishing homemade bone broth or vegetable broth, hot cider with a cinnamon stick, or maybe a mulled red wine, hot toddy or buttered rum cocktail in the evening. Warm lavender milk is good at bedtime—add a pinch of dried lavender blossoms and a dollop of honey to your favorite milk and warm it over the stove.

**Decorate with a hygge flair.** Twinkling lights in windows, on branches, and in jars. Clusters of candles, layers of blankets, rich fabrics, pillows, and sheepskin throws on the couch.

**Take a stroll through a wintry landscape.** Lengthy cold winters mean lots of indoor time, so be sure to get outdoors now and then to get the blood flowing and to appreciate the beauty of new-fallen snow and the quiet of the landscape gone to sleep.

**Create a hygge meal.** Think winter soups, roasted root vegetables, homemade breads and pies, hot mulled cider. Light a candle at the table and enjoy a simple, hearty meal by its warm and radiant glow.

**Relax with family and friends.** Keep it simple and low-key. Invite a friend over for a morning cup of coffee or an evening glass of wine, and enjoy each other's company. Organize a game night, do puzzles together, watch a movie, or binge-watch a Netflix series.

**Get cozy with a book.** Light a fire and curl into your favorite armchair with a soft fleecy blanket, a good book, your pet, and a large mug of something hot. One of my all-time favorite winter reads is the novel *The Snow Child* by Eowyn Ivey.

**Indulge in bedtime pleasures.** Relax in an herbal bath. Wear fleece pajamas. Sip moon milk (coconut milk or your favorite nut milk warmed with nutmeg, cinnamon, turmeric, cardamom, ginger, and a bit of honey). Hunker down under layers of soft, warm blankets.

**Fill your home with the fragrant smells of the season.** Every winter I craft a stovetop potpourri that smells like the holidays. Oftentimes, I'll enjoy the ritual of making it in one of my cauldrons (the cast iron one), simmering the brew over a tealight. (See recipe on page 19.)





## SIMMERING WINTER POTPOURRI

### Ingredients:

*Small saucepan (or cast iron cauldron with tealight for warming)*

*Navel orange and/or lemon slices (I keep a stash of dried orange slices for making potpourris)*

*1 cup of fresh cranberries*

*1 or 2 cinnamon sticks*

*A few pinches of each of the following: ground cloves (a few whole cloves can be substituted), nutmeg, and cardamom*

*Other possibilities: fresh pine sprigs, apple slices, blood orange, dried orange peel, pomegranate, grapefruit, a dash of vanilla extract, star anise, bay leaves*

### Directions:

Place ingredients in the pot or cauldron and cover them with water, filling the vessel about three-quarters of the way.

Simmer on low on the stove, or place a tealight underneath your cauldron, adding more water as necessary as it evaporates.



*Susan Tuttle is a green witch living in the woods of Maine. You can visit her natural botanicals shop at [inthewoodbotanicals.com](http://inthewoodbotanicals.com) and follow her on Instagram @whisper\_in\_the\_wood.*

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# A HYGGE HOLIDAY IN MIDDLE EARTH

by JILL GLEESON

There is nothing left undone here, no detail overlooked. Hobbit's Dream—as Randy and Linda Holland, the proprietors of this most unique property, have christened it—is as ideal a hobbit hole as might be found anywhere. And that includes Middle Earth. Tucked away beneath the rich, loamy soil of the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia, this underground dwelling is accessed through a perfectly round, porthole-like double doorway. Immediately inside, an intricate, red-tailed dragon is carved into the floor; beyond sit two old-fashioned, overstuffed armchairs alongside a stone fireplace. To the left is another circular entryway, leading to the kitchen, which is mirrored on the right by an entrance into a cozy bedroom. Everywhere you look—*everywhere*—are bits and bobs inspired by J.R.R. Tolkien's masterworks.

Here hangs a map of Middle Earth, battle axes, a Warg skin. There sits a spinning wheel, a feathered quill, herbs spilling from glass jars. Serpentine vines twist over wall sconces, a heavy ceramic jug bursts with sunflowers. Dried corn cobs and bunches of berries drape downward from the eaves above the front doors, alongside gourds, a Warg skull, and antlers. Cheery fairy lights twinkle among everything. Even the toilet-paper holder in the bathroom has been carved with the face of a wizard. It's not surprising that for those who love Bilbo, Frodo, and friends, entering this enchanted space can be an overwhelming experience.

"Probably at least once a week we have guests that cry when they come in," Randy Holland says. "We have *The Hobbit* theme playing when they arrive, and they're so emotional that when they step over the threshold they can't help themselves. They break down."

The Hollands got the idea for Hobbit's Dream, which may be reserved through Airbnb, from their son, Jeremiah. He owns a tepee not far from his parents that he rents out through the platform. When Jeremiah would periodically ask his guests what other unusual type of dwelling they'd most like to stay in, the answer was often a hobbit house. While few people might want to build a Tolkien-themed guest house, much less have the skills to do so, the project was a perfect fit for the couple. Randy, who was a building contractor before retirement, already had plenty of experience with underground structures. In 2008, he built a 2,600-square-foot subterranean home he and Linda lived in for nearly a decade.

Randy has also been a fan of Tolkien since reading *The Hobbit* in fourth grade, though he admits that the book initially "really scared" him. "In my opinion *The Hobbit* was a bit frightening for a young mind," he says. "However, with perseverance and patience I was able to better understand the plot. After that it was hard to stop ... I love the writing for the simple fact that such a place could have really existed somewhere, or maybe still does. I can't see radio or TV signals or electricity; however, I know for a fact they're there. In my mind, and the mind of every Tolkien fan, Hobbiton, the Shire, and Middle Earth do exist. Our humble hole in the ground is truly a sanctuary for the soul, fulfilling that deep down, burning desire to visit and witness the magic first hand."



Photography by STEVE PARKE







Randy broke ground on Hobbit's Dream on the last weekend of June 2017, wrapping up construction that November. Finishing the largely handcrafted cottage in less than six months might seem a staggering task better suited to a Maiar than a mere mortal, but according to Randy it involved more love than labor. "The hobbit house was just a really cool project for me," he says. "I had absolutely no problem building it. I made the windows, ironwork, doors, light fixtures, and props in my shop. I also harvested all the wood for the hobbit hole off our farm here. We selectively cut the trees down, sawed it all out, and then turned it into all the beautiful trim, cabinetry, and doors you see."

There are plenty of smaller but no less delightful touches to behold at Hobbit's Dream, like the metal dragon crafted by Randy that greets visitors at the property's entrance, and a formal invitation, issued on parchment paper and sealed in wax, waiting in the mailbox for guests when they arrive. Other gifts include a special handmade passport and a rune stone inscribed with Gandalf's mark. Inside the cottage, a hobbit seedcake baked by Linda and a bottle of local wine provide an additional welcome.

Hobbit's Dream was a smashing success from the arrival of the very first guests in April 2018. The pair became engaged during their stay, setting what would quickly become a trend. Since it opened, a half-dozen couples have promised to wed at Hobbit's Dream and two—including that first duo—have exchanged vows there. Randy doesn't sound terribly surprised when he speaks of the way romances have deepened into lifelong commitments at his guest house, but then he and Linda were childhood sweethearts. They've been together fifty years, have been married forty-six, and Randy still calls his wife "the love of my life."

So magical is Hobbit's Dream that guests keep returning, two or even three times. By Randy's count he's had fifty or sixty repeat guests. Part of the allure may be that the property is constantly evolving as the Hollands make or occasionally find new goodies in antique stores and the like to add to it. "I'm always watching the movies again," Randy says. "There are so many things you can catch that you didn't see originally. I recently noticed in *The Desolation of Smaug* that an elf blows a horn in the scene where the dwarves escape from the dungeon.

So I'm working on a cow's horn in the shop now that will be another treasure for someone to enjoy."

The shop isn't only for Randy's pleasure. He offers pipe, woodcarving, and broom making workshops to guests of Hobbit's Dream in the space. The latter cost \$45 for an hour or two of instruction in the making of cobweb, decorative hearth, or what Randy calls "dragon wing" (better known as turkey wing) brooms. Less crafty guests can purchase Randy's brooms, carvings, and more as mementos of their stay. There is plenty else to do on the 200-acre farm, enough so that many visitors never feel the need to explore the surrounding Rockbridge County.

The Hollands have stocked the cottage with hobbit garments and items—from Gandalf's robes, to Bilbo's backpack, hiking stick, and sword—that encourage cosplay. Guests can stroll the property becloaked, with a "dragon's egg" in hand, or relax out on the "Buckleberry Ferry" ("no Black Riders here," the Hobbit's Dream Airbnb page promises), which floats in the farm's small lake. There are trails to hike, and a little fire pit in front of the cottage beckons as the



sun sets, the night made ever more lovely by the hundreds of lights festooning the property's mill and waterwheel, as well as the ferry. Lucky visitors who happen to be staying at Hobbit's Dream when the Hollands are making sorghum molasses or apple butter are welcome to watch the process or even lend a hand if they choose.

"Linda and I are very social people," Randy says, "and we love spending time with our guests, if they would like us to. We've had people come and stay three or four nights and never leave the hobbit hole. They bring all the ingredients to prepare the seven hobbit meals while they're here. A lot of them have invited us over for meals. And when they leave, they feel like family, like they've known us for all their lives. It's a wonderful place, it really is, and I don't say that just because it's mine. If it was your place and I came and visited, I'd feel the same way. We want people to feel the magic of Hobbit's Dream, to have an amazing adventure."



For more information visit [airbnb.com/rooms/22525406](https://airbnb.com/rooms/22525406).

Follow Jill Gleeson at [gleesonreboots.com](https://gleesonreboots.com).









© Michael Kerbow

# The Root King's Winter

by JESSICA P. WICK

Photography by MICHAEL KERBOW

The root king's winter is sleet and snow.  
O moon as stark as an old cracked bone.  
The root king's winds are an iron plow,  
heavy they drive me over and down.  
The root king's winter is cold and pale.  
O moon as bright as a silver apple.  
The winds so sharp and the days so gray,  
the ground so hard — all warmth away.  
The root king's winter is quiet and still,  
The moon as clear as an icicle.  
Until he wakes, all flurry and squall —  
quail my heart and hush my soul.

In the middle of winter there is a door  
the root king's fury falls before.

The door is guarded by shoe and salt,  
evergreen bough and a shining bolt.  
The door stands guard for the hearth,  
O beeswax and candle, berry and spark.  
The stove is red and the hearth a-glow.  
Berry and branch, silver and gold.  
The kettle is singing, black tea steeps,  
Smoke and honey, bitter and sweet.  
A good book waits by the chair, half-read,  
O orange and clove, fresh-baked bread!  
The cat is purring, watching the cream,  
Strike the matches and copper gleams.

In the deep of winter there is a door  
the root king's hope falls before.  
The root king's winter is beauty and woe;  
at the window we can watch him go —  
Wearing his crown of stars and frost,  
his eyes are hoary, his heart is lost.  
The root king's way is heavy, alone.  
The moon as worn as an old dry bone.  
At the window we can watch him pass —  
With his cup of ghosts and his harp of glass.  
The root king's dreaming is cold and ice,  
The river freezes and the wind's his knife.  
His rings are echoes, his coat is sleet —  
At the window we can watch him leave.

Bundle in blankets, golden and warm,  
in the dark of winter there is a door.

Beyond the door is a shining hearth,  
O crackle and hiss, snap and spark!



Visit Jessica P. Wick on Instagram @foamlyre.

Michael Kerbow is a San Francisco-based artist who works in a variety of media including painting, drawing, assemblage, and digitally manipulated photography. See more at michaelkerbow.com.

# The Root Queen's Winter

by JESSICA P. WICK

Photography by MICHAELA DURISOVA

The root queen knows your secret hopes.  
The root queen knows your heart  
The root queen's crown is thorn and branch;  
her garden, silver bones,  
where acorn-seeds dream of oak-leaves,  
and shadows speak of bright.

Have you seen the root queen there,  
combing winter from her hair?  
O winter! Full of starry airs, and ice-dark nights,  
and bright-gray days.  
Winter, full of riddling ways, circles of stones,  
and frost-limned leaves; through winter  
love is evergreen —

And if you spy the root queen there,  
winter dripping from her hair?

The root queen's heart is secrets kept.  
The root queen's heart is warmth.  
The root queen's crown is horn and bough;  
her garden, blood and snow,  
where foxes burrow down and deep,  
and mice speak of the owl.

Have you dared the root queen's eyes,  
and found the hearth inside the ice?  
O hearth! Rest there your tired feet, your wind-raw hands,  
your hungry heart.  
Hearthside watch the embers spark, bright candles carved  
to look like men; through winter,  
tales begin again —

And if you dare the root queen's eyes,  
and find the fire inside the ice?

The root queen knows your story's end;  
The root queen knows its start.  
The root queen's crown is branch and bone;  
she'll charm away your hope —  
where beech seeds dream of tall beech trees  
and shadows, touching light.

Will you go to the root queen's court,  
leaf and branch, bone and dark?  
Then will you stay for love of her,  
O seed and sleep, frost and fir;  
The root queen knows your secret name;  
she's told this story again, again —

Again this winter, you will stray.  
O, you will stray for love of her.  
Perhaps she'll carve you into wax;  
perhaps you'll melt into her hands.  
When you see her standing there  
combing winter from her hair —

The root queen knows all stories end  
through winter and begin again.

See more of Michaela Durisova's photography work on Instagram @michaela.durisova (many featuring her mother @gerhardova) and peruse her handmade accessories @magaela\_accessories.

Model: Vlasta Gerhardova  
Crown: Magaela Accessories

# WARM-BAKED ARTISTRY

## *The Pies of Jessica Clark-Bojin*

by Grace Nuth

There is a moment in the charmingly cozy and whimsical television show *Pushing Daisies* when the handsome young pie maker says, “Candy is sweet, but it’s a traveling carnival blowing through town. Pie is home, and people always come home.” Perhaps no other dessert conjures up quite the same comfortable feel as fresh-from-the-oven pie. But if pie is indeed home, then pie artist Jessica Clark-Bojin, better known online by her business name ThePieous, would be the baking Gloria Vanderbilt. Just as Vanderbilt brought elegance to home décor, Clark-Bojin brings astonishing feats of artistry and sophistication to the humble pie.

Some people set out intentionally toward their creative goals. Clark-Bojin stumbled into pie making. A filmmaker with an art degree, she never planned to use her artistic skills in the kitchen. In fact, before 2015 or so, her kitchen oven had rarely if ever seen use for anything beyond setting polymer clay. “I certainly had no designs on any sort of pie career,” she explains. “The whole pie thing was just something I started doing so I could eat them.” But her creativity soon led to further exploration: “I was very surprised that I couldn’t find any decorative pies outside of medieval literature, when there were so many awesome nerdy cakes and cookies and breads and pancakes and cupcakes and rice crispy treats and so on.” She asked a few restaurateur friends why pies were neglected when it came to fancification, and they explained that it was because pie dough requires fast work and minimal handling. The dough has to be kept too cold, and it would shrink and puff too much in the oven. Basically, it was just too hard to create elaborate decorations on pie. Clark-Bojin embraced the challenge and has spent three years now creating increasingly intricate designs to prove how incredibly pies can be decorated while remaining just as delicious.

Each pie Clark-Bojin creates begins with a wide array of inspiration. Sometimes she might be inspired by the general subject matter, or a very specific composition that comes to her clearly. On occasion, a new baking technique that may not have ever been tried before might pop in her head, and the creation develops from there. “I’m always trying to push the envelope with my pie baking,” she says, “taking inspiration from various sources, like architecture, paper craft, toys, chemistry, nature, fashion, sculpture, and more.” She also does not limit herself to pie dough exclusively, experimenting with chocolate, isomalt, and the chemistry behind the fancy multilayer mousse cakes known as *entremets*. Some of these techniques have been used in

her pies, such as the isomalt “glass” dome on her snow globe pie, and others are still in an experimental phase for planned future pies.

The next step after inspiration is design. Clark-Bojin sketches out the overall pie design in her notebook and plans all the details. Creating templates for each part of the pie helps her work quickly enough for the finicky pie dough. She prints out her computer-created templates onto cardstock or acetate (when fine detail is needed) and uses sharp fondant cutters with each template, rolling her dough onto a baking sheet or thin cutting board so that she can put it back into the freezer if the dough starts warming up and sticking. “There aren’t a lot of happy accidents once I get to the dough stage because the clock is ticking!” she says. “That said, even when it blows up in my face, I’m usually able to take some lesson from it to make the next pie design that much better.”

Living with her seven-year-old son ensures that Clark-Bojin has to keep all her pies just as delicious as they are artistically stunning. No pie she creates, no matter how beautiful, is left uneaten, and often she shares video at the end of her tutorials of that first bite of a delicious warm pastry and filling. Her son also appreciates the imaginative aspect of her pies as well. “He pretty much lives permanently in the land of make-believe, so that helps me from slipping into an overly pragmatic worldview. When you walk down the street with a seven-year-old, every flagstone is a portal to another dimension, every leaf is a fairy wing, and the floor is always hot lava.”

Although we might not all have the artistic abilities of Jessica Clark-Bojin, her creations are so very appealing, one cannot help but want to try more creativity in pie making. She reassures the intrepid baker that much of the process is about strategy—how to set up the work station efficiently, keep the dough cold, cut tiny details, keep the filling from exploding—and she tries to answer every inquiry sent her way on social media. Another tip she suggests is to remember that different parts of a pie may need different baking times. There is no reason all the top decorations have to be baked directly on top of the base pie. Clark-Bojin uses this strategy often: Her pie tops are very rarely baked with the actual body of the pie. This prevents fruit filling from ruining all her hard work. “There are tricks for putting it all back together at the end to make it fuse back into one pie,” she says. And there’s no harm in experimentation. “Even if the final result doesn’t live up to the picture in your head, it’ll





probably be a zillion times better than anything you've tried before, and you'll have learned so much that your next pie will be even better."

We asked Clark-Bojin just what is it about pie that makes it so darn cozy. She didn't hesitate to reply. "The smell of pie is the epitome of cozy family times to me. It smells like Christmas. It smells like happy. Especially a spicy apple pie: short days, crunchy leaves, apple cinnamon filling bubbling in the oven. Perfect."

We couldn't agree more.



More of Jessica Clark-Bojin's work can be found on her website, [piesareawesome.com](http://piesareawesome.com), and her Instagram, [@thepieious](https://www.instagram.com/thepieious).

Grace Nuth is a writer, artist, and model living in central Ohio with her husband, black cats, and a garden full of fairies. She is also co-author of *The Faerie Handbook*. To follow her projects, please visit [gracenuth.com](http://gracenuth.com).



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As days grow darker, shapeshifting all too quickly into endless expanse of night, we are urged to turn our energies inward. With the infinite wisdom of nature, we're guided to rest, recharge, and quietly begin to weave the threads that will become a most exquisite creation in spring. But do we always take her lead? Too often, we push through with an arrogance that suggests we're immune to the cycles of change. But if we're very still and listen to her whispers laced within the icy wind, awareness will come. By taking a tip from our northern friends and conjuring *hygge* and *lagom* (balance), you will find yourself in cahoots with the sensual spell that winter is willing to cast.

## SPELLBOUND SPA

By Alise Marie, *The Beauty Witch*

# Spellbound Spa

Alise Marie

But how to stop spinning and actually begin to align with the season's purpose? By indulging in a deliciously cozy ritual: a spa retreat in your own beautiful home. But this one is different—a witch's retreat, a charmed respite that casts a rejuvenating spell upon none other than *yourself*. Thoughtfully planned and passionately executed as any spell should be, it transforms the ragged spirit to its rightful state as that of a powerful witch. It needn't be elaborate, but it absolutely must be gorgeous. Take a nod from the Norse and make your space an inviting cave of creature comforts. Think lots of warm glow from candles and fairy lights, a soft throw, fuzzy indoor booties, a fragrant pot of magical tea, and a fabulous read. Get the picture? Good. Now let's elevate it to goddess level. Call upon Freya, deity of love and beauty, to oversee your Spellbound Spa with her blessings—and her warrior's protection. She wants you to be strong and powerful in your own light to represent her divinity out in the world. And she knows you need a magical recharge to get there.

You can honor her with a simple altar bedecked in evergreen, roses, and amber. If you don't have amber stone, why not try amber glass candle holders? Beads or fabric will do nicely also. Runes make a superb addition if you have a set. It is said that the sacred runes originally belonged to Freya, who is also the goddess of prophecy, long before Odin obtained them.

Begin by preparing your potions. These blends have been

conjured with healing herbs, bright berries, and forest know-how to relax you into a state of pure, beautifying bliss. You will emerge renewed, but one thing must be noted: It is essential, my darlings, to put yourself directly to bed after your ritual. Beauty sleep is *required* for this magic to work.

First, conjure the face and hair masques, and set them aside. Then heat the water for your brew. While it is steeping, you can tend to any final preparations that make your spa space heavenly. (Don't forget a fluffy towel to pat your feet dry with, and a fabulous pair of slippers.) When everything is ready, concoct your foot soak and lay it gently on the floor in front of where you will be lounging. All that's left to do is to wrap yourself in a sumptuous robe, apply your potions, pour your brew, then sit back and relax! As your hair and face masques work their magic, your tootsies will enjoy their soothing soak. Allow this time for yourself to simply *be*. Breathe. Admire the beautiful altar you have made, the restful and enchanted atmosphere you've conjured. Sip your brew as you relax into the comfort of your potions. The creation comes in the spaces *between* the thoughts—the pauses. Allow ideas to come in as they wish. See which ones take on color and begin to grow. And before you even realize it, your next adventure will appear right in front of you. Ask Freya to show you how to make it real. And thank her.

Your enchanted cohorts in conjuring a winter wonderland include a few iconic beautifiers; several, perhaps, that you have never considered; and one queen. The lights woven throughout these potions are led by a five-pointed star:

★**ROSE**★ Freya's sacred flower is the ancient symbol of beauty and love, with a strength and potency that belies its delicate appearance. With the additional magic of luck, divination, healing, protection, and enhancing psychic abilities, rose leaves your skin rejuvenated with ageless beauty.

★**CLOUDBERRY**★ This great Nordic beauty berry is rich in Omega fats that make skin fresh and dewy, with healing properties to keep moisture intact and wrinkles at bay. Norse berries have the strength to withstand fierce winters as well as intense solar power, making them ideal beauty ingredients, particularly for dry and maturing skin. And if you're over the age of twenty-five, your skin is *already* in the process of maturing, dear maidens, so it's never too soon to get started.

★**ORANGE**★ Fiery orange is a gift of the sun, so welcome during the long, cold spells of the season. It brings forth the energy of love and purification, uplifting in its scent and highly cleansing both internally and as a topical treatment. Orange keeps the blues away, eases aches and stiffness, improves digestion, and sends allergies packing!

★**CRANBERRY**★ Ruled by water and bearing protection energy, cranberries are loaded with hydration, high levels of antioxidants, and a perfect Omega fats ratio that allows for amazing absorption into the skin. Internally, these tart little treats provide lots of vitamin C and fiber, are excellent at detoxifying, and can keep infection at bay.

★**VANILLA**★ Lusty, Venusian vanilla boasts superior aphrodisiac powers and an intoxicating scent, but did you know that its tiny black seeds are also rich in copper? And copper, my loves, helps promote collagen and elastin production for youthful, gorgeous skin.

**Beauty Witch Secret:** Freya is also known for her sexual prowess, so when you invite her in, watch out: Your little at-home recharge will leave you not only rested but *ready!*



## BREW OF THE VALKYRIES Witches' Brew

*Per serving*

*1 cup pure spring water*

*Peel of ½ orange*

*¼ cup fresh cranberries, crushed slightly*

*¼ cup rose petals*

*Seeds of ½ vanilla bean, scraped*

Imagine what Freya and her shield maidens might consume after a long night's work riding across the sky? Most likely a horn of ale, yes, but perhaps not always. I'd like to think she has a warming brew ready on the fire upon her return to her great hall, one filled with love and beauty magic. (She can spike it if she likes—she's Freya, she can do as she pleases. And so can you. I won't tell a soul.)

Pour spring water into a cauldron and light a flame. Heat the water until it is very hot but not boiling, then turn the burner off. Drop in the orange peel, rose petals, cranberries, and vanilla, one at a time. Allow the brew to steep at least 10 minutes. Sweeten with coconut nectar or stevia if you like. Strain into a comely, heat-safe vessel and sip slowly. You are drinking in pure magic! Allow this brew to warm your body and comfort your spirit, drawing love ever near.

Northern Lights  
Face Masque



## NORTHERN LIGHTS Face Masque

Conjures two treatments

¼ cup barley flour                      ½ teaspoon cranberry seed oil  
½ cup rose water                        ½ vanilla bean, split lengthwise and seeds scraped  
½ teaspoon cloudberry seed oil

In a small bowl, blend the rose water with the barley flour until the mixture is smooth and creamy. Add more rose water if needed. Add in the cloudberry and cranberry, vanilla bean, and mix well in a clockwise direction. Apply a thin layer to a clean face, massaging in a circular motion to gently exfoliate. Then add another layer of masque, and allow it to sit. Remove gently with a warm, wet face cloth, followed by a thorough rinse. Pat dry, apply toning mist, serum, and moisturizer as desired.

This masque is a pleasure! Creamy and sensually scented, it sloughs dead skin cells and then infuses skin with nutrients and moisture, leaving behind fresh, brightly glowing skin. Though rarely embraced as a beauty potion component, **barley** applied to the skin heals, firms, brightens, and promotes elasticity. It is also one of the oldest Nordic grains. Dense in nutrients and healing properties, barley is ruled by Venus and possesses her magic.

*\*Note: Barley contains gluten. If you are sensitive topically, brown rice flour can be substituted—the magic becomes masculine and solar and quite fertile!*

## WINTER'S WOOD Foot Soak

Per treatment

12 cups pure spring water                      10 drops cedarwood essential oil  
1 teaspoon St. John's wort                      8 drops fir essential oil  
1 cup magnesium flakes                        8 drops wild orange essential oil  
10 drops pine essential oil

Begin by heating spring water in a large cauldron (also known as a pot) on the stove. When it is very warm (but not piping hot) add the magnesium flakes, St. John's Wort, and then the essential oils, one at a time. Give the potion a stir clockwise to mingle the ingredients, pour into a large bowl, and decorate as you wish with petals and greens. You can strain the liquid if you prefer not to have the St. John's Wort floating in your foot soak, but I love how it feels and communicates!

In addition to the delights of **orange, magnesium** soothes and heals both body and spirit. **St. John's Wort** reduces swelling and inflammation, offering its potent magic of healing, protection, and strength, with a dash of happiness to make your day of rest even more joyous. Rounding out the cauldron is a trio of forest friends to cloak you in their warmth, as their deliciously woody scent wafts the air: **Pine, cedar, and fir** bear gifts of healing, protection, longevity, youthfulness, and vitality, along with a sumptuous splash of creative and money magic that will prove useful in manifesting the plans you conjure during this ritual. (And by design, this combination of fire and air promises action tempered by intellect.) As you soak your tired tootsies, your entire being will be soothed and refreshed, ready to move *forward*. This is one of the great benefits of tending the feet.

## SILKEN FUR Hair Masque

Per treatment

½ cup cashew, almond, or coconut yogurt, plain and unsweetened  
1 tablespoon rose water  
1 teaspoon cloudberry seed oil

Draw forth the regal beauty of Freya's great cats and their sumptuously soft fur as you infuse your mane with moisture, shine, and body. **Cashew, almond, or coconut** yogurt makes a fabulously creamy plant-powered masque base that delivers the benefits of beauty fats. Apply to dry hair from roots to ends, coating well. Massage the potion into your scalp with gentle but firm fingers—it feels incredible! You are effectively releasing old energy and tension while increasing circulation to the scalp, which aids healthy hair growth. You are also activating your crown chakra, allowing access to higher states of consciousness. Use this technique to clear away any blockages and stimulate new ideas as you conjure future creations during this Spellbound Spa ritual.

When you are finished, wash lightly with a gentle shampoo, rinsing well. Apply a dab of leave-in conditioner to seal the hair cuticles and style as usual.

*Alise Marie is an actress, writer, and certified holistic nutritionist. Potions and rituals like these will be brewing in her upcoming book, The Beauty Witch Grimoire. She can be found at thebeautywitch.com and on Instagram @thebeautywitchofficial.*

*"Love me when I least deserve it, because that is when I truly need it."*—Swedish proverb

During those long, dark, cold winter nights in the North, Nordic folk have perfected the fine art of hygge, a feeling of cozy contentment and well-being attained by enjoying the simple things in life: a snowy day, a nip of pine, a cozy blanket by the fire, and a cloudberry or sea buckthorn elixir or tonic—along with the natural beauty they bring.

**Viking Beauty Secrets Reviving Day Cream** A new organic skin care brand from northern Europe, Viking Beauty Secrets features pristine and hardy plants—like sea buckthorn, cloudberry, and rowanberry—from an unforgiving climate. [vikingbeauty.com](http://vikingbeauty.com)

**Lumene Glow Boost Essence** From the wild-crafted, Nordic beauty brand, this super-concentrated serum is intended for brighter-looking, hydrated skin. With berry extract from antioxidant-rich wild Arctic cloudberry with vitamin C, Arctic spring water, and hyaluronic acid to plump and firm the skin. [lumene.com](http://lumene.com)

**Arctic Cloudberry Balm by Scandic Botanica** A super-concentrated balm rich in antioxidants and nourishing vitamins A, C, D, E, and F, from the Arctic cloudberry, a wild Scandinavian berry (also known as Norwegian Gold) that detoxes skin and restores suppleness, strength and radiance, with a load of essential fatty acids. Also great for chapped, extremely dry skin. [wolfandbadger.com](http://wolfandbadger.com)

**Weleda Hydrating Body & Beauty Oil** With sea buckthorn oil, a rich source of omega-7s and essential fatty acids, this nourishing oil leaves skin dewy, healthy, and super-soft. [weleda.com](http://weleda.com)

**Kora Organics Noni Oil** This beautiful skin-nourishing oil combines Australian noni fruit with rose hip, pomegranate, Nordic sea buckthorn, and rose quartz to moisturize the skin. The golden oil is intoxicating and will give skin a dewy glow. [shop.goop.com](http://shop.goop.com)

**MyHavtorn Facial Oil** Made with three luxurious and nourishing oils found in sea buckthorn, argan, and avocado, but the sea buckthorn oil is deeply hydrating and leaves skin looking radiant and health. [myhavtorn.com](http://myhavtorn.com)

—Rosie Shannon

Winter's Wood  
Foot Soak



Silken Fur  
Hair Masque



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## GREETINGS FROM THE NORTHERN HEMISPHERE

*from artist Terri Foss*

Mother Nature's magical wheel turns ever so slowly. Listen closely and pay mind to the slight shifts and changes happening every day or they may pass you by. I personally make a conscious effort to take notice and appreciate the seasonal earthly offerings that present themselves every moment. For me, as winter sets in, I give myself permission to unplug and retreat into a quieter hibernation mode intended for the season. Allow yourself to move over for a bit from the fast-paced lane. You deserve it. Daydream of what brings you to that cozy, content, lighter feeling in your soul. Dig out that recipe you have been wanting to try, and yes, cook it or bake it. Rewatch your favorite movie while wrapped in a comfy blanket as you sip your favorite beverage. Begin writing on the blank pages of your journal or continue some of the passages you have already begun. Start turning the pages of that book patiently waiting on your nightstand. Open up an old photo album or organize the little keepsake piles you have been meaning to get to. Bundle up and take a walk to explore the precious miracles right outside your door. Search for that fulfillment as you embrace each day as a gift and use it to discover or rediscover your joy. Make a pact with yourself to nourish your mind, body, and soul. It's okay to harness the time to recharge your sacred light inside your very special being. May the season bless you with bountiful gifts filled with joy. —Terri Foss



## VERONICA VARLOW

*Life of a Love Witch*

The very first spell that you cast was most likely the annual wish that you conjured upon your birthday candles. Candle magic has been woven into the tapestry of society for centuries. My grandma Helen, who is of Romani Czech descent, revered candles as one of her favorite methods of magic at home. Her sky blue magical cupboard was filled with candles in a variety of colors and sizes, next to books of matches emblazoned with nightclubs and casinos in Atlantic City. Now as we feel the nights become longer, it is the season to pour a hot cup of tea, light a magic candle, and curl up as I share some secrets of Grandma's magic with you.

My grandma believed that as you burn down a magical candle here on the earthly plane, it will start to "appear" little by little on the other side. When your magic candle is fully done here on earth, it will be burning for you in the spirit realm to make your wishes known. I have never seen this explanation in any book on candle magic, and that's why it's so important for me to share with you here, to keep the magic of my ancestors alive.

Are you ready to create some powerful candle magic? Let's begin!

**Step One:** Words are wands. What is your intention? Take a moment to clear your mind and breathe deeply. Why would you need to create a magical candle at this moment? What do you wish to manifest in your life? Imagine that your spoken intention is like planting a seed of language into the universe itself!

It's important to note that magic is not about manipulation. You cannot "put a spell on someone" or force someone to do something against their will. Instead of asking for Billy at the coffee shop to finally notice you, ask for your own natural gorgeous mojo to be magnified

to bring the very best partner to you. Formulate your intention in the positive and try to condense your intention into one clear and powerful sentence. I often use the phrase "this or something better" at the end, because this makes your magic become limitless!

**Step Two:** Type of candle. Do you need a quick boost? Then those small white emergency candles that you can get from the local grocery store are perfect and burn down in about two hours. Have a big wish and really want to focus your energy on it for a week or two depending on burning time? A glass seven-day candle is your friend! All in all, the size of a candle doesn't make a difference; it's about the amount of energy and intention you put into it. My two favorites to carve on are coach candles (pictured below), and seven-day glass pullout candles that I can pop out of the glass and carve and put back into the glass.

**Step Three:** Color magic. Colors can embody many different emotions for people. Think about the intention you created: What color do you feel would best suit it? If you would like a guideline to work with, I would suggest red for love and passion, pink for self-love or friendship, orange for communication or magnetizing, yellow for a happiness blast, purple for standing in your power, blue for calming and healing, and green for abundance and growth.

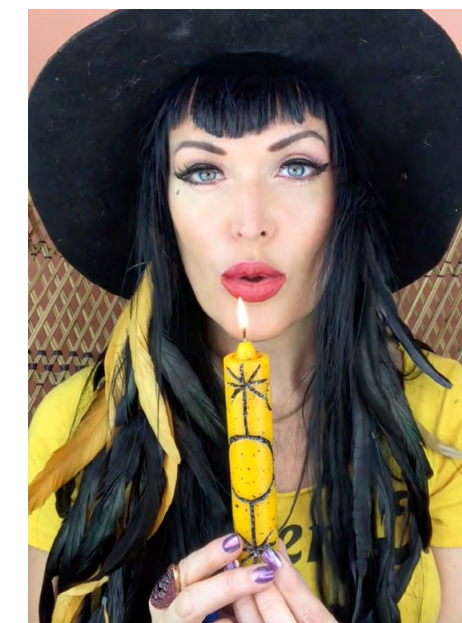
**Step Four:** Carving your candle. With any type of carving tool, write your name on the candle from top to bottom. Then decide what would represent your intention best ... a word, a symbol, a sigil? Use your imagination. Lightly carve a drawing of your intention, and then go back and carve it again with deep lines. You can use stencils or you can freehand your art.

**Step Five:** Oil the candle. Put five drops of essential oil into your palms and rub all over your name and design on the candle.

**Step Six:** Glitter! Choose your color of nontoxic glitter and shake it all over your candle. Then put on latex gloves and rub the excess glitter into a bowl. The result will be your intention and name sparkling in glitter.

**Step Seven:** Moon phase. For intentions where you want to build, grow, magnetize, and bring in, burn anytime between the new moon and the full moon (waxing moon). For intentions that you want to let go of or move away from, or that involve clearing away negativity and obstacles, burn anytime between the after the full moon to the dark moon (waning moon).

When you blow out your candle, may your words of intention become script in smoke so that your guardians, ancestors, and spirits can read it to make it manifest in your world!



Read more about Veronica Varlow's Witch Camp and Love Witch Tarot School on [lovetwitch.com](http://lovetwitch.com). Instagram: [@veronicavarlow](https://www.instagram.com/veronicavarlow).

A woman with vibrant blue hair is seated in a dark, ornate gothic-style chair. She is wearing a black top and a black necklace with a silver pendant. The background features a brick fireplace with several lit candles in holders, creating a warm, cozy atmosphere. The ceiling has a decorative, vaulted design.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY STEVE PARKE

# A WRITER'S COZY LAIR

BY HOLLY BLACK

When I set up my very first office, I bought a modern glass-and-steel desk. It seemed clean and orderly. The problem was that I'm not clean and orderly; the desk quickly became heaped with papers, pads, pens, books I planned to read, and books I had already read and marked my place in with leaves, sticky notes, ribbons and other bits of detritus. My office looked messy—and not a comfortable kind of messy. When I moved to the house I live in today, I bought a new wooden desk. It quickly became heaped with the same stuff. But weirdly, on the new desk, it all looked like it belonged there. That same mess now looked *good*.

That's when I realized that I needed to get in touch with the way I work and the way I live and find the beauty in that, rather than make my house conform to some external idea of how things ought to look. That wasn't easy, because the house I grew up in was extremely messy. The dining-room table was always piled high with bags and baskets, books and clutter. There was an antique couch in the living room so completely covered in coats that I think I saw it twice in my life. And above it was a large and mysterious hole in the ceiling. The upstairs bedrooms were characterized by piles of clothes—ones that no longer fit and ones that needed repair, ones that had been inherited and ones that simply needed to be put away, except that there were not enough drawers in the world for all of them. One section of a porch was buried under garden supplies, another under art supplies, and my sister and I filled the rest with our toys. As a kid, when running through the house, I knew which piles to jump over. And while I have lots of good memories of growing up in that house, it wasn't a decorating style I wanted to embrace.

But I am not exactly the tidiest person either. Luckily, certain aesthetics reward a bit of clutter. Although I don't want to be drowning in it, I am a person who likes stuff and likes to have that stuff on display. I want the rooms of my house to be comfortable spaces where my six-year-old and his friends can chase one another around, bouncing on the couches as they go, and the cats can curl up wheresoever they like. But I don't want things to be so comfortable that I have to sacrifice my love for

velvet and leather, artwork and easily damaged and lovely objects. The challenge is threefold—creating a beautiful space that can still look pleasing with a little mess while remaining a space that can be lived in—sometimes even aggressively lived in.

Which is why, when I first read about *hygge*, the Danish term for a particular texture of wholesome coziness, I was immediately attracted to it. Here in New England, our winters are long, and even our springtime veers toward the chilly. Candles, natural materials, textures, music, and hot drinks? Sign me up! And it made me think about how I wanted my own house to feel—welcoming and warm and only slightly sinister—and what I've done in an effort to achieve that.

In the past few years, I realized I wanted to have a stocked larder, like a hobbit. In fact, I made a list of things that I supposed hobbits had on hand and then expanded it to include my modern tastes. I bought a separate freezer for the purpose of keeping glass containers of soup and sauce at the ready. Other things I wanted to be sure I had plenty of: tea, coffee, milk, seltzer, crackers, cheese, apples, bread, spices, and preserves. That way, even if guests drop in unexpectedly, I can still give them a pot of tea or coffee, and some snacks for elevelenses.

I also have collected a horde of blankets and pillows. Not only are they helpful when there's a chill, but pillows are such a good way to add personality and opulence to any space. Velvet and tapestry pillows evoke the folkloric. Modern pillows can add some pleasurable juxtaposition. And I can change things up when I feel restless.

And I have a lot of quirky stuff. Weird pottery acquired from art students, full of faces and eyes and wings. Spiky chandeliers. Bat chandeliers. Chandeliers in the shape of astroglobes. Not necessarily *hygge* and not necessarily comfortable to everyone, but things that make me happy.

I've tried to acquire things I loved, even for unlovely tasks. The first time I saw a beautiful old apothecary bottle used to house dishwashing soap, I was pretty amazed. Getting to reuse old things—and sometimes free things—in unexpected ways makes everything feel more special. When I was in France, I brought home the little clay pots that







## A Writer's Cozy Lair

Holly Black



supermarket yogurt came in and used them as cups for my kiddo. When I needed a towel rack, I found a vintage brass one with swinging arms that was easily cheaper than buying a brand new one. In my younger days, when I was moving into a first apartment, I haunted flea markets to find old red pressed-glass goblets, worn wooden chairs, old bookends with knights on them—things that made the space feel personal to me. And I had the added pleasure of knowing that I was saving the stuff from being tossed out.

What has let me live comfortably is remembering that nothing is too precious. My couches are covered in a sturdy and easy-to-clean velvet. My dining table is coated to resist water damage. The coffee table in the living room is inset with stone. The rugs on the floor washable. But just as I've come to be accepting of a certain amount of mess, I've also become accepting of a certain amount of damage. That stone inset in my coffee table wound up cracked down the middle, but it's still beautiful. Old wood acquires scratches. Paper yellows and tears. Marble becomes stained. Fabric thins. And sometimes it's all the more lovely for it. Perfection isn't nearly as interesting nor as comfortable.



Find Holly Black on Instagram @blackholly.



Photography by Carri Angel



## An Ode To THE CRUEL PRINCE by Ian Hencher

While browsing the Waterstones in Waterloo train station in London, I read this on the cover of *The Cruel Prince*: “I can see why humans succumb to the beautiful nightmare of the court, why they willingly drown in it.” I was *sold*. This deliciously twisted modern-day fairy tale by Holly Black introduces us to the world of Elfhame, where the inhabitants are malicious, cruel, and spiteful creatures of the mystical and magical. Humans are merely toys for their pleasures, having succumbed to their immortal charms. Be sure to not forget your rowanberries if you get a chance to visit their world: They can protect humans from prankster enchantments!

At the beginning of *The Cruel Prince* we are introduced to Jude Duarte who has been adopted by Madoc, a Faerie lord who had been in love with her mother. The story evolves around Jude’s perspective and how she survives growing up as an outcast, so very far away from the world she remembers from childhood: “What they don’t realize is this: Yes, they frighten me, but I have always been scared, since the day I got here. I was raised by a man who murdered my parents, reared in a land of monsters. I live with that fear, let it settle into my bones, and ignore it. If I didn’t pretend not to be scared, I would hide under my owl-down coverlets in Madoc’s estate forever. I would lie there and scream until there was nothing left of me. I refuse to do that. I will not do that.”

As the story progresses, we’re introduced to the Faerie Royals through her adoptive father’s connection to the court. Cardan Greenbriar, the youngest prince of his siblings and the most reckless, encounters Jude through their schooling. Along with his companions Locke and Nicassia, they often seek out Jude to torment her. Unlike her twin sister Taryn, who manages to fit in much sooner, Jude struggles to control her anger toward the injustice of these entitled fae folk: “I am going to keep on defying you. I am going to shame you with my defiance. You remind me that I am a mere mortal and you are a prince of Faerie. Well, let me remind you that means you have much to lose and I have nothing. You may win in the end, you may ensorcell me and hurt me and humiliate me, but I will make sure you lose everything I can take from you on the way down. I promise you this is the least of what I can do.”

What I absolutely love about Black’s Folk of the Air Series is how relatable the characters are. Unlike many modern fairy tales, the world of Elfhame offers all the beautiful ornate and refined elements that make a fantasy world a place we want to melt into, despite all the challenges we face alongside Jude on her quest for love and self-discovery, fighting for her rightful place at court!

For the past ten years, I’ve been lucky enough to be featured in, produce, and direct fantasy concepts with some extremely talented photographers and filmmakers. Upon discovering *The Cruel Prince*, I was deeply drawn to Cardan’s eccentrically dark personality that stemmed from a twisted childhood.



As his relationship with Jude evolves, I just knew I had to explore their story and bring it to life for the camera. “‘Have I told you how hideous you look tonight?’ Cardan asks, leaning back in the elaborately carved chair, the warmth of his words turning the question into something like a compliment.”

I was certain that photographer and seamstress Carri Angel would be the perfect artist to collaborate with. Her talented eye for detail, sculpting light, and producing narrative costumes brought more to the project than I could have hoped for. My creative companion, actress Sorcha Verey, naturally oozed so much of Jude’s essence. Working with artists who have the ability to act makes the process that much more *real* and exciting to work with in front of the camera, bringing raw emotion to the surface.

Featured jewelry designers Under the Ivy and Miriel Design each custom-made a crown worn by Cardan. The details were so wonderfully accurate to how Black described them in the books, giving us the opportunity to make their aesthetic that much more real for readers. We also were able to incorporate pieces from jewelry designer Sabrina Ulbrich at Ausgefuchst Art, who creates beautifully ornate elven ear cuffs that cleverly add the pointed illusion of an ear tip without the need for prosthetics. This was an item of jewelry we could absolutely imagine Jude adorned in at court parties. This visual detail wonderfully contrasts with Cardan’s “real” ears, crafted by Madhouse FX Studio.



Photography by Alexandria Corne  
of Acorne Photography

# IF WISHES WERE MITTENS

## Handcrafting Your Own Magical Mittens

BY MONICA CROSSON

As twilight touched the snowy, wooded landscape, the little girl saw her worried mother standing on the front porch of the tiny cottage and knew she was probably in trouble. The girl hid her frozen hands deep in her pockets and shivered as she spoke. “I’m sorry, Mama.”

“Where have you been, child?” Her mother pulled her close. “I was so worried about you. And what were you doing in the forest when I told you to stay in the yard?”

“I was helping the fairy bird that was caught up in the snow.”

“Oh, such nonsense, child,” her mother said as she pulled her daughter’s hands free from her jacket pockets. “And where are your gloves?” She rubbed the small girl’s hands that had turned blue from the cold.

“I used the gloves to warm the bird,” the girl said, as her mother led her to the hearth fire where her grandmother was quietly knitting.

“And did the bird use them to fly away?” the grandmother asked.

“Yes,” said the little girl, who knew, of all the people in the world, her grandmother would believe her.

The fire danced in the weakening light of day, and the child held her hands as close to the flames as she dared to warm them.

The grandmother smiled as she watched the little girl. “Cold hands, warm heart,” she said.

“Grandmother, you would have saved the bird, right? Even if it meant giving up your only gloves and getting just a little bit cold?”

Before the grandmother could answer, the girl’s mother wrapped a warm blanket around her daughter and said, “Don’t you dare encourage her.” She kissed the top of her daughter’s head and added, “Dinner will be ready shortly.”

The grandmother waited for her daughter to leave the room before saying in whispery tones, “I would have done exactly what you did.” She winked.

The girl giggled despite the tingle that had crept into her warming hands. “Do you think the fairies are happy that I saved the bird?”

The grandmother put down her knitting. “I think they are very pleased,” she said. The grandmother then took the key that she kept on a velvet ribbon fastened to her belt and used it to unlock an ornately carved box that sat atop the hearth. She pulled from it a small pouch of herbs and placed them in the child’s hands.

The little girl took in the heady scent of the herbs that were so precious that they must be kept under lock and key.

“You did a great service for the fae and now maybe, if you



wish hard enough, they will give you something in return.”

“Really?”

“All you have to do is wish very hard and toss the herbs into the flames.”

The girl, who was now warm and comfortable in front of the fire of her very own house with the scent of stew that mingled with the drying herbs and spicy candles, could think of nothing she wanted more than what she was experiencing at that very moment—warmth, nourishment, and love. “I have everything I need, Grandmother,” the girl said.

The grandmother, who was wise beyond the girl’s comprehension, looked to the child’s hands. “Are you sure there is nothing that you need?”

The girl smiled. “Maybe I could wish for new mittens.”

The grandmother nodded.

The girl took the herbs and held them tight. Then, while whispering to the flames her heart’s desire, she tossed the herbs in. The flames bellowed in response. Her wish carried with the smoke that rose up the chimney and weaved between the trees and rose again higher to the very stars that twinkled in the cold night sky.

The next morning, resting on the hearth, the girl found a pair of beautiful red wool mittens embroidered with the symbol of Auseklis, the midnight star, and a sign of protection.

And as she looked to her smiling mother and grandmother, who stood beside the fireplace where the embers still glowed, she knew that as long as there was love, magic was real.

# If Wishes Were Mittens

Monica Crosson

## MITTENS AS BLESSINGS

Mittens have been around for thousands of years. Warmer than gloves because fingers grouped together produce and hold heat better, they were a must-have for sailors, sleigh drivers, and anyone else who had to work outdoors in harsh winter climates. The oldest existing mittens are over a thousand years old and come from Latvia.

In Latvia, every pair of mittens tells its own story and brings with it its own wish. The women are the tellers of tales and bringers of wishes through the patterns created when knitting the hand-warming works of art. Tradition stated that before an unmarried woman entered into marriage, she had to fill her

dowry chest to the top with mittens. Every pair of mittens was unique. They were given as gifts to bless the bride's new husband and family members and used as blessings for her new home and their natural world.

The beautiful patterns associated with Latvia mittens are deeply rooted in mythology, with many symbols representing blessings such as family bliss, protection, strength, success, and wisdom. So the next time you go shopping for winter apparel, look closely at the mittens you find in the store. Many bear patterns that are the descendants of these ancient symbols, which will carry wishes with you as lights in the darkness.



## EASY WOOL SWEATER MITTENS

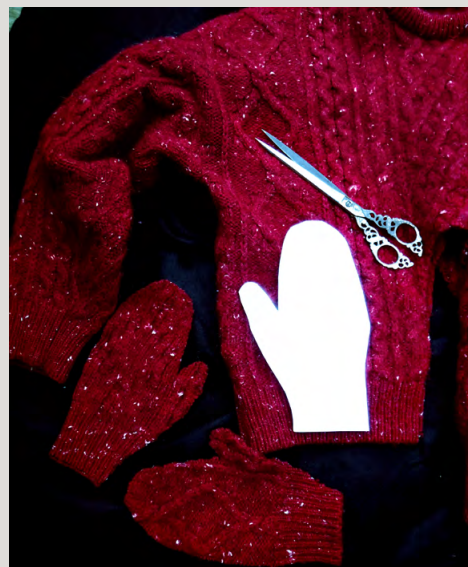
- You will need:
- An old sweater
  - Paper
  - Sewing machine
  - Scissors
  - Marking pen
  - Embroidery floss (your choice of color)
  - Embroidery needle

Make a pattern by tracing your hands (leaving a 1/2-inch seam allowance) on paper. Remember to leave room at the wrist. Cut out patterns.

Turn sweater inside out and lay flat, lining up bottom hems. Lay patterns on the bottom of the sweater, lining up wrist with the bottom hem. Cut out patterns, making sure to cut through both the front and back of sweater. Once cut out, pin the fronts and backs together.

Sew around the mittens, leaving a 1/4-inch seam allowance. Remove pins and trim loose threads and any extra fabric from seams. Turn mittens right-side out.

Using embroidery floss and needle, stitch decorative symbols of your choice to accent your new mittens. I have stitched a traditional Latvian Midnight Star, or Auseklis. This beautiful starry snowflake pattern is associated with the winter solstice and protection from evil and the shadows of the underworld.



Follow Monica Crosson on Instagram @monicacrosson or visit her website at [monicacrosson.com](http://monicacrosson.com).



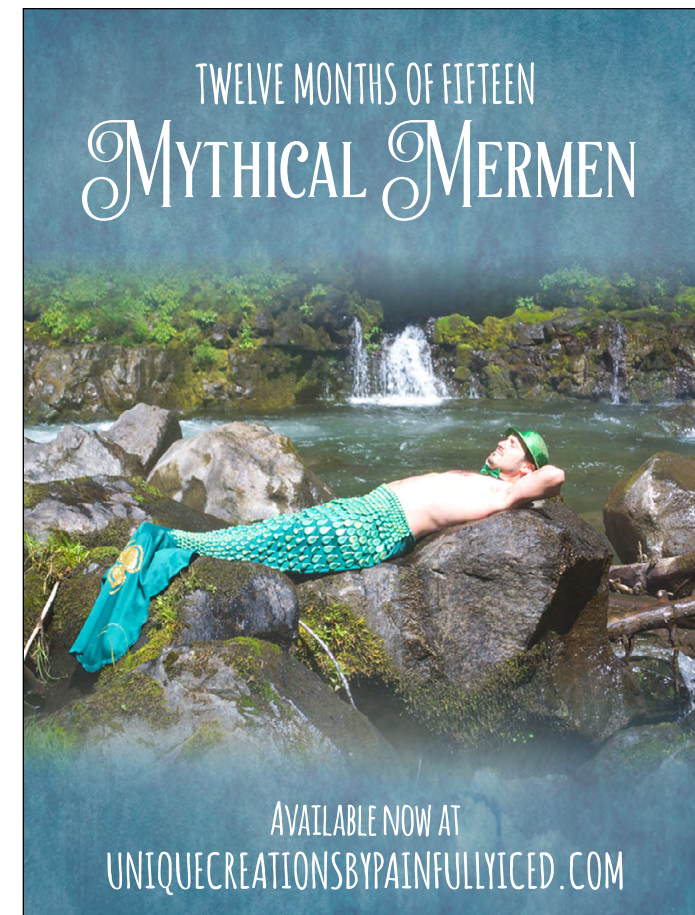
## THE LODGE

*A Secret Hideaway*

On the rooftop of the McKittrick Hotel in New York's Chelsea neighborhood, there's a secret garden hideaway called Gallow Green where theatergoers and others can gather preshow for food and drink as the city bustles below. The hotel itself is home to the long-running *Sleep No More*, an experiential retelling of *Macbeth*, as well as a variety of cabaret shows and live concerts. But once a year the rooftop undergoes a magical transformation: Every December, the gathering space reopens as a Scottish Highland mountainside *bothy*, or cabin, surrounded by a forest of live pine trees. Inside are rustic wooden walls, a cozy fireplace, shelves of books, bunk beds to curl up on, and dried herbs hanging from the ceiling. You can order comfort food, pizza, spiced hot cider, mulled wine—and then step outside to breathe in the cool air and the pine and perhaps even spy a crumbling Scottish castle in the distance.



Make reservations and/or find additional information at [mckittrickhotel.com/gallow-green](http://mckittrickhotel.com/gallow-green) or by calling 212-564-1662.



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PHOTOGRAPHY BY DAN PAULY

## AT HOME IN THE FOREST

# The Fairy-Tale Dwellings of Witches and Wanderers

BY SARA CLETO AND BRITTANY WARMAN

The concept of hygge is all about creating cozy, safe, and happy spaces. Embracing hygge means cultivating a refuge away from the grind of the busy world, the dark forests of our experience. Though fairy-tale forests are home to many dangerous people and places, they can also host the most enchanted of secret shelters. In these special havens, journeying protagonists are allowed a moment of pause by the fire, a warm cup of tea or a bowl of soup, and a chance to rest before renewing their commitment to adventure. Here we explore a few of our very favorite fairy-tale forest sanctuaries.

**Snow White** Perhaps the most famous fairy-tale refuge to be found in the dark woods is the home of the seven dwarves in the Grimms' tale "Little Snow-White." After the seven-year-old Snow-White escapes from her stepmother's murderous machinations, she runs through the forest until she finds the dwarves' little house. Soothed by the neatness and comfort of their home, she nibbles the bread and vegetables set out on their seven little plates and tries each of their seven beds until she finds the coziest one. When the dwarves arrive home, they offer Snow-White sanctuary for as long as she likes, in exchange for her help in running the household. The care and hospitality of the dwarves allow Snow-White to survive this chapter of her tale, offering warmth and kindness to bolster her against the chaos of her family.

**"The Old Woman in the Wood"** In this more obscure Grimm tale, we find a very different kind of forest home. Here, hidden inside tree trunks, there are secret comfortable bedrooms and closets filled with beautiful dresses, with doors that can be opened only with little golden keys brought by enchanted doves. Though there is a witch's cottage later in the tale, it is these small but comfortable tree houses that leave readers enchanted.

**"The Hut in the Forest"** In the Grimms' "The Hut in the Forest," coziness and comfort are to be achieved only alongside kindness to animals. Those who ignore or neglect the hen, cock, and cow inside the house are given just a taste of hospitality before facing confinement in the cellar. However, the young heroine who feeds and waters the animals before enjoying the abundance and warmth of the house is rewarded with a castle and a handsome prince. For comfort to be true and lasting, this tale tells us, all creatures must be respected.

**"Thumbelina"** In Hans Christian Andersen's tale, the tiny protagonist, lost and alone, eventually comes upon the den of a kind field mouse. There she lives in hygge style, with warm rooms and plenty of food stored against the cold of the coming winter. In exchange for sheltering poor Thumbelina, all the mouse asks is that she help her keep the home clean and tell her stories. They spend a lovely winter together, at least until the mouse, thinking she is doing the best thing for her, tries to marry Thumbelina off to a mole!

**Baba Yaga Tales** The Slavic witch Baba Yaga has a most remarkable home. While many who approach it feel terror rather than the conviviality of hygge, we suspect that Baba Yaga herself feels that her little house is quite comfortable and cozy! Her cottage is perched atop chicken legs, making the entire forest a potential front yard. The kitchen is well-stocked with everything she needs to wield her craft, both culinary and magical. Sometimes this little cottage is a solitary respite for Baba Yaga and sometimes it provides shelter to neglected peasant girls, but it is always a place of enchantment and a warm hearth against the cold.

Though there are homes to fear in fairy-tale forests—the house of sweets in "Hansel and Gretel," the robbers' hideout in "The Robber Bridegroom," and the witch's home full of kidnapped girls and birdcages in "Jorinde and Joringel" all come to mind—there are also places of peace, kindness, and safety. So come curl up with your own book of fairy tales, a cup of tea, and your softest blanket, and explore them from your favorite chair while the snow falls gently outside your window.



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*Sara Cleto and Brittany Warman are folklorists, authors, and teachers. They both completed their PhDs in English and folklore at the Ohio State University in 2018. They are the co-founders of The Carterhaugh School of Folklore and the Fantastic, where they teach courses on fairy tales, creative writing, mythic adaptation, and more. Their award-winning poetry and fiction can be found in Uncanny Magazine, Apex Magazine, Enchanted Living, Liminality, Mythic Delirium, Goblin Fruit, and others.*

*See more about Dan Pauly and The Rustic Way at [rusticway.com](http://rusticway.com).*

# OLGA VALESKA

## An Authentically Folkloric Life

BY GRACE NUTH

Authenticity is such an important quality in a truly cozy, hygge life. And in this digital age of constant communication and social media influencers making us feel inadequate, it's increasingly difficult to prove who is and who isn't authentic in the world they portray through their work. But occasionally someone comes along whose work is so comforting, so folkloric and heartfelt, you cannot help but know that the person is telling us their true story. Olga Valeska, a beautiful young blonde from the middle of the Chartreuse Mountains in the French Alps, is one such creator. Through her art, photography, crafts, and sewing projects, she creates her



own world that seems straight out of a winter fairy tale. And we learned that she comes by this seamless cozy world authentically.

As a child, Valeska learned the true value of hygge, finding comfort and the warmth of hope even through the most difficult of times. "I grew up in the mountains, without any modern things: no television, no internet, no phone, and no car," she says. "I spent my summer climbing in the trees or cutting wood to prepare for winter. My mother sewed all my clothes, so I looked like a *Little House on the Prairie* character and thus was not very popular in our village. But this taught me to be strong and proud of my differences." Her family was also full of artists, and they were always creating together: painting, creating clothes, and making theater plays. Life was not always easy for the family, but that just meant Valeska "learned to make magic with almost nothing," she says. "I learned too how to try to feel coziness, even when it was really cold in the house, or I was feeling a bit hungry."

This desire to find beauty and comfort no matter her circumstances is a lesson she continues to apply to her art today, and she feels it adds a truth to what she creates. "To truly embody an aesthetic, you really have to live it entirely," she says. "It shouldn't be a whim or a passing fancy. The best thing you can do is to reconnect with yourself, with your inner child, with what you really dreamed of when you were young."

Valeska must have had many dreams and interests as a child, because her work as an adult spans multiple mediums. She sews and embroiders clothing and hats with classic European folkloric designs. She also makes ornaments from embroidered fabric, clay, and painted images of doll-like girls and boys, and creates staged atelier events for lucky locals. Her beautiful Instagram page is filled with images straight from a storybook.

Her photography is an art form of which she is especially proud. If her photos seem almost like illustrations, part of that is the care she puts into the preparation of sets and props (made, of course, by her), but it is also because she actually

hand-retouches her photographs using acrylic paints instead of digital editing. "This allows me to gather my two greatest passions, painting and photography, and to spend the least amount of time in front of a screen. And mostly it allows me to best depict my inner world, to create the most personal pictures I can create." What does Valeska dream of voicing within this inner world? "I see the world with lots of colors, with nature, simplicity, and magic all at once, with European folk tales and traditional values. If I really had to summarize, I think that through my art I work for re-enchantment and re-rooting."

Not all of us can say that we grew up in the French mountains with an artist family, making our own clothes and developing our creativity. But that doesn't mean that we cannot learn to craft and sew and express our own enchantments this way. Valeska advises anyone who wants to learn to authentically and cozily craft to spend an afternoon with an elderly person from your family or elsewhere. "It may sound strange, but you know, elderly people have so many skills and so much knowledge!" she says. "They knew a time when they had to handle things by themselves. They knew how to sew, how to cook, how to garden, how to heal themselves. Almost no one knows how to do this now, because modern society teaches us to be consumers and not creators. These people have so many more things to teach, but they are often forgotten by our society. In my eyes, it's better



All photos © Olga Valeska

## Olga Valeska

Grace Nuth

to learn cross-stitching or knitting with a grandma than by watching tutorials.”

We asked Valeska about the cozy feeling that all her work seems to embody. Even in the middle of summer, her work evokes the feeling of knitting a pair of socks or embroidering a pinafore in front of a warm fire. And this is entirely intentional on her part. “I realized that what really makes me passionate is the notion of hearth,” she says. “I love the three meanings of this word: a home, a family, and a fireplace. I think these notions are deeply related and sacred to me. Home is a refuge: When you enter a home, you leave all your troubles at the doorstep and the modern world behind. Home is the world of family, your roots, with its own rules and universe. And finally, there is the space the family gathers around, the fireplace. A fire is fascinating, with a divine energy, the memory of ancient times. Fire always unites people. I especially love its colors, the colors of joy, of warmth, of the blood that unites a family. This is why I like and use the color red in my art so often.”

So what is it about winter that makes us want so badly to congregate together and be hygge? Valeska says, “Winter is for me the absolute season of cozy. In difficult times, the need for coziness is the strongest. And this is what interests me: how can we create coziness when everything looks so desolate? Winter can be so hard, especially for the ones who are poor or homeless. So for me, winter is the perfect season to light the candle of hope and love.”



Valeska learned this as a child. “Every time we had a hard time, my mother would encourage us to make a snug atmosphere. By this she meant, for example, light a candle, make a wood fire, sing carols together, always make the house welcoming, always set a beautiful table, even if you had almost nothing to eat,” she says. Such preparation will sometimes pay off in surprising ways. “One day, a guest came to our house, but there was nothing in the food safe. The guest announced himself in the afternoon for dinner the same day, so we only had a few hours to prepare. My mother searched for a solution, since there always is one. ‘Nothing is impossible’ is our motto. She went to our vegetable patch, told us to pick shovels and to dig. And we found the last potatoes! She told us to set the most lovely table ever. The dinner was very frugal but filled with laughs and love. And you know what? Our guest said it was the most magical dinner he had ever had. We laughed so hard during this experience and felt so happy. I learned two things from this that I will never forget: always laugh, even in hard times but mostly, always try to enchant others. I think it is the best way to feel this coziness yourself. Cozy is all about giving love and magic to others.”



*Olga Valeska's fairy and folk art can be found on Instagram @olga\_valeska.*

*Follow Grace Nuth on Instagram @gracesidhe.*







Create a  
Christmas Ornament  
by Olga Valeska

**Level:** simple  
**Time:** Around 20 minutes  
**Materials:** fabric of your choice, cotton stuffing, needle, scissors, pen, jute thread, cotton thread, ribbon, button  
(Optional: heart cookie cutter, if you need it to help you draw the heart)



**Step 1:** Gather the material required.



**Step 2:** Take your fabric, draw two hearts on it of equal size (of your choice), and cut them.



**Step 5:** Sew a jute thread at the top of the heart, then tie a knot.



**Step 6:** Cut a piece of ribbon of your choice and make a lovely bow to decorate your heart.



**Step 3:** Sew the two hearts together with the cotton thread by following the borders. Leave a hole at the top of the heart.



**Step 4:** Fill the heart entirely with cotton stuffing; it must be well padded. Close the hole by sewing the two hearts' borders.



**Step 7:** Sew the ribbon in the middle of the heart (three points are sufficient).



**Step 8:** Finally you can sew a button, to decorate more your little fabric heart. And here it is: Your ornament is ready!



# COZY COMFORTS

*Inside photographer Kyle Dempsey's perfect world*

BY JILL GLEESON

The little A-frame cabin looks so snug and safe, with its fairy lighting and ladder to the loft, snowshoes leaning easefully against the small, single bed and toboggans stacked along the far wall. You want to enter the image, maybe lie down and take a long, dreamless nap, as if you were Goldilocks discovering that just-right roost. But the picture bears no enchantment save for the joy it elicits, and the space itself existed for not much longer than the moment in time it took to photograph. The room was created nearly wholesale from the imagination of photographer Kyle “Finn” Dempsey, a 27-year-old Instagram influencer who—despite his young age and very 21st century job—seems to boast a very old soul.

“It’s a never-ending quest,” he says of his work, “to create these types of classic, timeless little scenes. I like the idea of the lone traveler, the lone creative, this guy who’s on a quest. He’s searching for something, so along the way he stops in these cabins. The thing that I always try to incorporate in my photographs is a feeling of peace. I want the viewer to be able to picture themselves there and just take a deep breath. Because that’s another thing I think those scenes are about—that sigh of relief that the day’s journey has ended.”

Dempsey found the abandoned cabin that would change his life in the late spring of 2016, not far from his Dalton, Massachusetts, home. It had mostly fallen into disrepair, but there was one little nook that, as if by alchemy, remained untouched by the elements. Struck with inspiration Dempsey dashed home, returning laden with the props that would help create the rustic, deeply romantic interior. Here went an old blue enamel percolator, the kind you might see sitting over a campfire, there hung a couple cozy flannel shirts. Dempsey dressed the bed in blankets, added a wicker fishing pack basket to the scene, shot the result, and posted it to his Instagram account with the note, “My escape from the world” (see photo at left).

With an assist from *Country Living* magazine, which shared the photo, Dempsey’s follower count soared from about 10,000 to the more than half-million he has today. His work runs the gamut from the cabin interiors and exteriors that brought him social media fame to sweeping overhead views of bucolic mountain wildernesses he takes with his drone and outdoorsy scenes of camping, kayaking, and hiking. Dogs populate many of Dempsey’s photographs. Beautiful old throwback trucks

sometimes make appearances, as do a couple of charming vintage VW vans. Dempsey also loves color. His photographs are rich with hues like crimson red, baby blue, and deep forest green, but while he says he used to dress about 40 percent of his images, these days “100 percent are real moments.”

Back when photography was simply a creative outlet, Dempsey shot his images all over New England, from Maine on down to Connecticut. They have an undeniably idyllic, Norman Rockwell-like feel. But for the past three or four years he’s been “very focused” on capturing the Berkshires, the mountain range in western Massachusetts where he was raised and still lives. “As time has gone on,” he says, “I’ve found that what is going to be the most timeless and make me the happiest to look back on are images that I create closer to home.” He pauses, adding, “Anyone can go to the spots that everyone knows about and create images. What I like to do is find the spots that nobody knows exist and make something out of nothing. I think that’s where the magic lies.”

Dempsey, who is nicknamed “Finn” after the free-spirited Mark Twain character for a reason, came of age in a place that sounds much like a setting from one of his photographs. “I grew up in this little red house on the Westfield River in the shadow of a mountain called Deer Hill,” he says. “I was barefoot every day in summer. I can run up a river, rock to rock, faster than any other human on earth, I swear. I fished and made forts with my friends in the woods out of sticks. I wasn’t a hunter, I liked animals too much, but I spent all my time outside.”

When the weather blew in and the air turned cold, Dempsey would turn to decorating his room, intent on making it a homey place of serenity and contentment. Eventually he graduated from Johnson and Wales University in Providence, Rhode Island, with a degree in advertising and the ability to operate a camera. He was working at Ooma Tesoro’s, a marinara sauce company, when his A-frame photo hit it big. As he amassed more Instagram followers, companies came calling, eager to hitch their wagon to the rising social media star. Dempsey quit the sauce gig, turned photography from a hobby into a profession, and has since promoted products through photographs and videos on his account for brands including Nature Valley, Land Rover, and Samuel Adams.

The not insignificant amount of money Dempsey has earned has enabled him to purchase a cabin last year. “It’s right on

If you're inspired by Dempsey's version of hygge, he has shared some suggestions to help you create your own dreamy space.

★LIGHTING★

Lighting is key to setting the correct ambiance, according to Dempsey. Candles help make for a soft, cozy glow, and so do lanterns. "Anything that looks like an Edison bulb is probably a good call," he says, "whether it's used in a ceiling fixture or you install fairy lights that have Edison bulbs. Just make sure you get amber and not white bulbs, because you want your light to be warm." Hardly anything beats a fire for setting an inviting, relaxed mood, but even if you don't have a wood stove, Dempsey suggests that "one of the greatest things, especially in a winter space, is stacked wood. It looks so good."

★SOFT GOODS★

Don't forget to drape your space in softness, like adding a rug to match the color palette you've chosen. "I love vintage blankets with nice stripes," Dempsey says. "Specifically Hudson Bay blankets. You can get them on Ebay for fifty bucks—they're these huge wool blankets that are just one of the all-time great products."

★HARD GOODS★

Dempsey helps create a sweetly nostalgic mood in his images with props like vintage typewriters, old record players, and vinyl records. "I get a lot of my products from antique stores," he says. "You might go there and find one item that really makes the difference. If you really want the rustic, vintage feel of timeless, cozy products that were made to last, you can't just buy them at Target. It's going to take some searching."

Follow Kyle Dempsey on Instagram at [@kylefinndempsey](#).



a river in the middle of the woods," he says. "It's the place for deep breaths, to see little critters and hear noises and appreciate things. It's a release for me, and the culmination of two years of inspiration and searching. I've stayed at hundreds of cabins and picked my favorite things from each one. I'm going to combine them all into my dream cabin. It's a small, simple structure with a loft and a screened-in porch, but I'm installing thirteen windows, skylights, huge bay windows, and we're doing a big dormer on the roof that lifts and makes more space in the loft. And it's all off the grid. There's no electricity, no running water, nothing. So we're going to do a big solar thing. It's going to be one of the most unique places on Earth when it's done."

It sounds like sweet relief from a too-loud, too-demanding world—a return to a simpler time. Which is much the same feeling created by Dempsey's photographs, and perhaps the reason for their immense popularity. "The theme I strive for is simplicity and finding happiness in the simple things and the simple moments," Dempsey says. "I actually painted a mural in my office that says, 'All in good time.' We're so frantic these days. We want everything done now. There's no patience. And when you slow down and breathe deep and come back to simpler times and not needing everything right away, it makes life more enjoyable, especially in the moment. So that is a thing that I will forever be chasing: simplicity."

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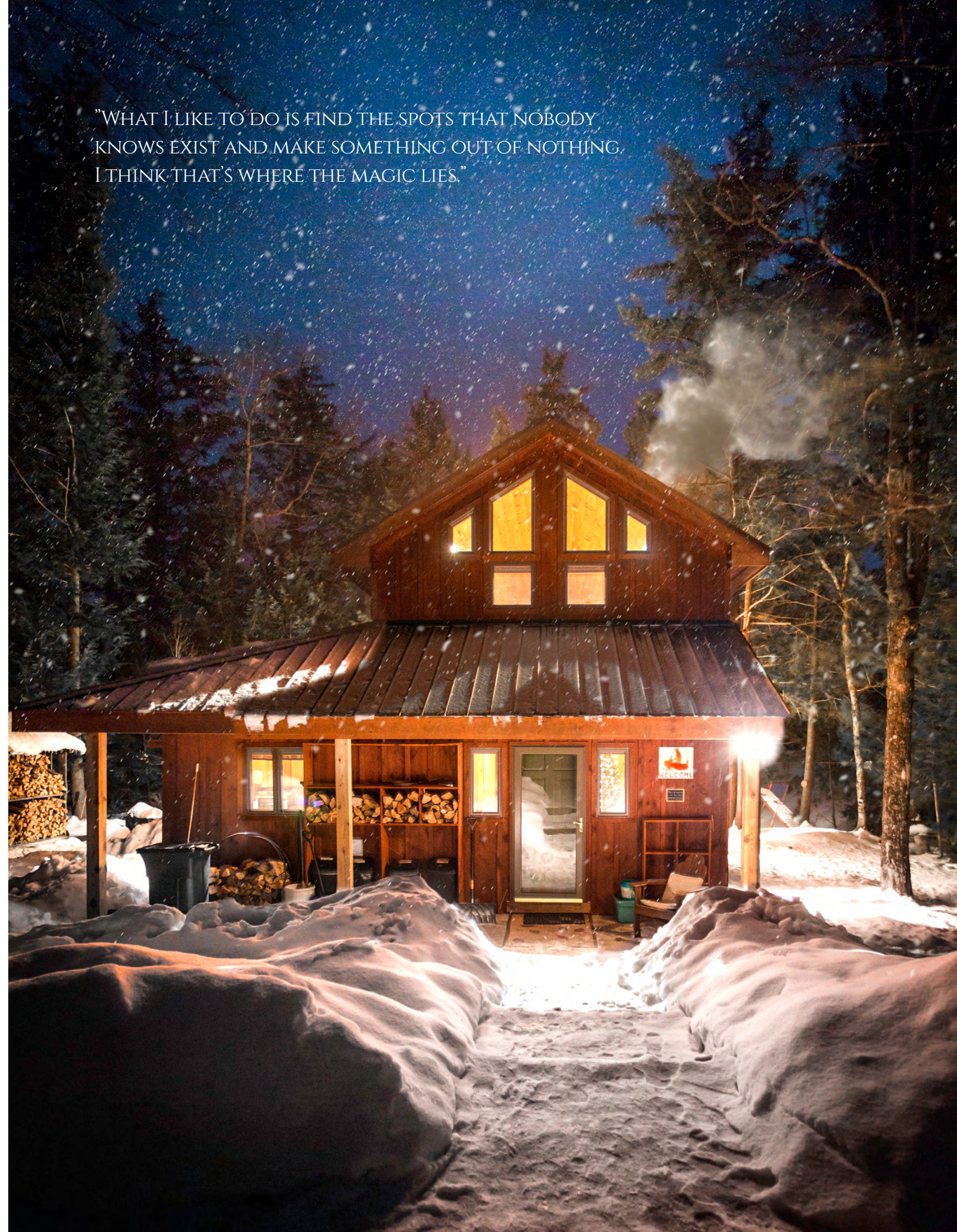
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"WHAT I LIKE TO DO IS FIND THE SPOTS THAT NOBODY KNOWS EXIST AND MAKE SOMETHING OUT OF NOTHING. I THINK THAT'S WHERE THE MAGIC LIES."



# ONCE UPON A TIME IN LAPLAND

BY ANGI SULLINS



*Photography by Angi Sullins and Silas Toball*

I admit it. I'm a wonder junkie. An inspiration addict. My fairy-tale fanaticism led me to create immersive Muse Juice Tours around the world so seekers can discover their own personal once-upon-a-time enchantment both "out there" and "in here." My goal is to leave folks so completely filled up with their own creative juju, they have to run home and create something, anything. And yet I have a guilty secret: I get busy, distracted, and so completely filled up with must-dos and have-tos that magic gets put on the back burner. A lot.

A window can be my greatest guide and most powerful nemesis, encouraging me to while away hours daydreaming, making friends with cloud shapes. I delight in the dreamscaping and then feel guilty for squandering my productivity. My wonder

ideas fight with my practical plans, and my coulds often battle with my shoulds.

So in the winter of early 2019, when my dream self encouraged my practical self to go on a month-long journey into the rugged winter wilds of Lapland to explore the land of fairy tales and the concept of hygge—the fine art of intimate, cozy contentedness—a full blown war broke out.

*All those hours without internet or cell coverage, Practical Self said. No emails. No business planning. No social media. No binge watching.*

*Ahhhhh. Dream Self said. Windows for dreaming. Books for reading. No emails. No social media. No binge watching. Yeesssss.*

Dream Self eventually won. And it changed my life.



It's four p.m. and completely dark, except for the golden fairy lights swinging from the trees that light our path to the reindeer cabin. Awaiting our arrival is a toasty fire; a pile of thick, fleecy blankets; two cups of lingonberry tea; and a stack of fairy tales—the perfect ingredients for an evening of hygge. My husband Silas and I have rented a tiny, one-room cabin on a reindeer reservation out in the middle of Mother Nature nowhere, north of the Arctic Circle, where days can be a short four hours and deep evening dark up to twenty.

But it's not just the long night that encourages the cozy conviviality of hygge. Winter wraps its snow-soft blanket around the earth and stills the trees and rivers with a lullaby of hush. One can imagine the Snow Queen living quite lavishly here,

feasting on silver apples, while around the corner any minute we'll discover a clearing in the woods where Tchaikovsky's Clara and the Nutcracker King sit enthroned in the Land of Sweets surrounded by dancing sugar plum fairies.

Everywhere, everywhere it is quiet. Out in the forests reindeer outnumber humans, and along the paths there are more sled dogs than cars. The hush seems to slow everything down. When in town, people smile at each other and stop to chat on street corners. Eating a meal can be a two-hour process, and the server will never bring your check without your expressed wish. At the market, the cashier calls you by name (if you're a local) and asks your name and where you're from if you're a visitor. Everywhere you look, it's obvious there's no hurry to get anywhere.



## Once Upon a Time in Lapland

Angi Sullins

By day we shoot footage for an episode of my show, *The Wonder Hunters*, so that awe seekers everywhere can discover the magic of the north. By night we practice the fine art of being cozy. Many a fairy tale has been born in this place, and the research I gathered before landing here indicates there is an ancient tribe of people who still live close to the land—its stories, animals, and spirits. I want to learn more about their way of life, out here under the midnight sky made of swirling lights.

I encounter the Sami people while attending their winter market in Jokkmokk, a tiny town in northern Sweden, just a few hours drive from our cabin. The annual event is a 400-year-old tradition, filled with the sights, sounds, flavors, and traditional Joik music of Europe's only indigenous people.

One afternoon we sit cross-legged in the *lávvu*—the traditional Sami tent—with our guide Nils, a Sami tribal leader we met at the reindeer reservation. He pours coffee from a fire-heated black iron kettle, the biggest I have ever seen and something you'd expect to find in Baba Yaga's chicken-footed hut. We're each given a *kåsa*—a handmade cup carved from birch burl that almost every traditional Sami carries on their belt—from which to drink the hearty magic-bean elixir. While the coffee warms our bones, Nils explains to us that we are not the only beings in the tent: Sáráhká, goddess of women and childbirth, lives in the hearth. Juoksáhká, the goddess of boys and wilderness, dwells in the kitchen area, while Uksáhkka, who protects babies and children until they're old enough to go out on their own, lives in the doorway.

Nils also tells us of his life, growing up Sami in a fast-changing culture deeply affected by global warming, technology, land resource mongering. Generation after generation his family followed the reindeer, living in traditional *lávvu* tents, dependent completely on the land and its provisions. But now the herbivores of the woodlands, like the reindeer and elk and rabbit, cannot feed themselves. Increasing temperatures force early snow melts, causing ice to form over the forest growth that hooves and paws cannot penetrate. Year after year, the animals face starvation, many of the young dying before they grow to adulthood. Sami families have been forced to stop their migration, build houses, and seek new ways of supporting themselves. Nils is the youngest of three brothers and the first to be born in a physical house after his parents decided to settle and build in 1963. He now runs an eco-tourism business that educates tourists on the peaceful ways of the Sami.

"We have no word for war," he says, sipping his coffee, turning his eyes skyward to follow the smoke as it escapes through the hole in the tent's roof. One hundred and eighty words for snow, but no word for war. I put my coffee down and wonder if this might be the underlying magic of this land. Not the whipped-cream trees. Not the lavender twilight ice cream rivers. Not the liquid chocolate eyes of the reindeer. Not the fairy-tale forests full of gingerbread secrets and mossy troll stories.

But peace. Peace held like a legacy in the hearts of a thousand-year-old tribe.

Something about the slow pace of contentment must have seeped into our soul bones, and our month is filled with the intimate conversations and easy joy these northern people seem to embody. Even when we're thrill seeking and adventuring, the peace seems to punctuate our every move. And through it all, Nils's words haunt and inspire me. Racing through glistening forests on a sled of barking Huskies. *One hundred and eighty words for snow.* Dancing around the fire under the aurora borealis. *No word for war.* We hike the storybook woods and frozen rivers, make daily pilgrimages to feed the reindeer, and shiver our way through several cocktails in a bar made entirely of ice surrounded by the most exquisite ice sculptures. But all I can think about is what it would be like to belong to a tribe of people whose very language sings of peace.

I remember a quote from Meik Wiking, CEO of the Happiness Research Institute in Copenhagen, about hygge: "It is a defining feature of our cultural identity and an integral part of the national DNA. In other words, what freedom is to Americans ... hygge is to the Danes." And I realize, perhaps in my valuing of freedom and the American dream of having it all, I sometimes look past all the simple joys I do have. In my rush to accomplish and produce, I might be bypassing the peace and charm of a quiet gratitude. Maybe my business sometimes turns to busy-ness, creating an internal war, when this culture seems to be telling me there is another way.

I'm just sitting there with my feet propped up in front of the fire, doing not much of anything, when I realize that hygge has hijacked my heart, and I feel Dream Self and Practical Self shake hands.

I look out the cabin's window. The window, my familiar friend and guide, shows me a wave of green sky curtains billowing across the silent stars. I put on my extra pair of thermal socks, my boots, my coat and both sets of mittens and walk out into the snow. I lift my hands in surrender, marveling what the ancestors knew that we might remember, and I send it out to wonder hunters everywhere, those whose hearts might be heavy with warring thoughts and worried fears: May we remember that wonder and enchantment are as natural to our hearts as the rivers and trees are to the earth. And may we one day know the simple pleasures of these northern people. One hundred and eighty words for snow. Dozens of words for love. No word for war.

And hygge, always, for an internal peace ... the contentment and joy of knowing that once upon a time is really here and now.



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*Angi Sullins is a writer, performer, and professional shenanigator who travels the world in search of wonder. Visit her at [angisullins.com](http://angisullins.com) and [musejuicetours.com](http://musejuicetours.com). Follow her on Instagram @musejuicetours.*





*“May we remember that wonder and enchantment are as natural to our hearts as the rivers and trees are to the earth. And may we one day know the simple pleasures of these northern people. One hundred and eighty words for snow. Dozens of words for love. No word for war.”*

*life at the*  
**CHELSEA  
HOTEL**

*by* CAROLYN TURGEON

*Photography by* STEVE PARKE





ur resident love witch Veronica Varlow calls the legendary Chelsea Hotel the most magical place in New York, a portal that for over a century has drawn the artists, the troubadours, the poets—and plenty of witches too. In fact when Varlow started a secret coven last spring, she knew just where it had to meet. “I think there is no other space that ever had as many amazing artists gathered in one place,” she says. And it doesn’t hurt that there’s an actual pyramid on top. “When you evoke sacred geometry in structures ... you invite the magic.”

The hotel has been closed for renovations since 2011, and only a few tenants remain—including Varlow’s dear friend Tony Notarberardino, an Australian photographer who’s lived there for over a quarter century in a dreamy, decadent, candlelit space filled with art and color. In other words, the perfect place for a coven. And it’s not filled with just any art but full murals on the walls and ceiling painted by the apartment’s previous resident—and Notarberardino’s friend—the late artist Vali Myers.

Imagine walking into this space for the first time, flowers and patterns bursting from the walls. Notarberardino first visited the hotel in 1994 when he moved to New York; he was meant to stay with a friend, but when he arrived, the friend was living in a tiny room with three other people. After a night out on the town, Notarberardino went the front desk to get his own room for the night and was surprised when the manager offered him a long-term room on the sixth floor. Walking into the painted space

brought on a deep sense of déjà vu. Notarberardino realized where he was. He’d seen Myers’s work before, in a “brilliant documentary” called *The Tightrope Dancer*. She was no longer there—she, also Australian, returned to her home country in 1993—but her presence filled the space.

She was a “supreme witch,” he says now. “She was such a powerful human being, her art so powerful, anyone in her orbit would be sucked into it and attracted to it.”

At the time, Dee Dee Ramone was staying in Myers’s room and Notarberardino in the one next to it. When Ramone moved out, Notarberardino moved into Myers’s room and stayed on—and has been there ever since. Varlow sees him as a mystical figure, an ultra-stylish artist in his own right, always in a fedora—“I don’t think I’ve ever seen him *not* in a fedora,” she says—who is “the guardian of this space and history and keeps it alive.”

Later, Notarberardino would track down Myers in Australia and they’d become friends, meeting regularly during his frequent Melbourne visits until her death in 2003. Notarberardino took the last photo of her a week before she died. This is what she told a local paper at the time: “I’ve had 72 absolutely flaming years. [The illness] doesn’t bother me at all, because, you know, love, when you’ve lived like I have, you’ve done it all. I put all my effort into living; any dope can drop dead. I’m in the hospital now, and I guess I’ll kick the bucket here. Every beetle does it, every bird, everybody. You come into the world and then you go.”

Of course Myers wasn’t the only to infuse her presence and magic into the Chelsea Hotel, which has hosted a steady stream of artists and geniuses and eccentrics since its doors opened in 1884. In 1997, Notarberardino was returning home at four a.m., standing inside the elevator waiting for the door to close, when “suddenly a female hand with long painted fingernails reached in, blocking the door from closing. In walked an aging drag queen carrying more shopping bags than she could manage and holding the hand of a six-year-old boy.” He decided then and there to start documenting all the strange, beautiful moments he witnessed regularly in this magic portal, and introduced himself. Twenty minutes later he had a finished image—and the *Chelsea Hotel Portraits* were born.

By now Notarberardino has photographed more than 500 people for the project, everyone from Debbie Harry to Sam Shepard, Grace Jones, Amanda Lepore, Arthur C. Clarke (who wrote *2001: A Space Odyssey*), Ron Jeremy, and many more, as well as all manner of transient guests and hotel workers and burlesque stars. “Each portrait stands alone as a true representation of what the Chelsea Hotel really is and means to me,” he says. A book is in the works; you can see some of the portraits on Instagram at @chelseahotelportraits. Each one is stark black and white. It creates an interesting dynamic, Notarberardino says: this “stock harsh reality portraiture emerging from such a magical place.”

Varlow tells the story of how, the day that Leonard Cohen died in 2016, a crowd of mourners gathered outside the hotel wanting to pay homage to the legendary singer. Management would not let them inside, so Notarberardino asked Varlow to go down and invite them all into the hotel—as his guests. And then suddenly his magical space was full of strangers with guitars and memories, and people played his songs one by one, everyone sang, and Varlow even remembers one woman playing a wine

glass with a spoon, another raking her fingernails along the blinds to add to the symphony. “It was one of the most beautiful nights I can remember,” she says, “One of those rare New York City moments when everyone comes together. That’s how Tony is, and that’s the spirit of the Chelsea Hotel.”

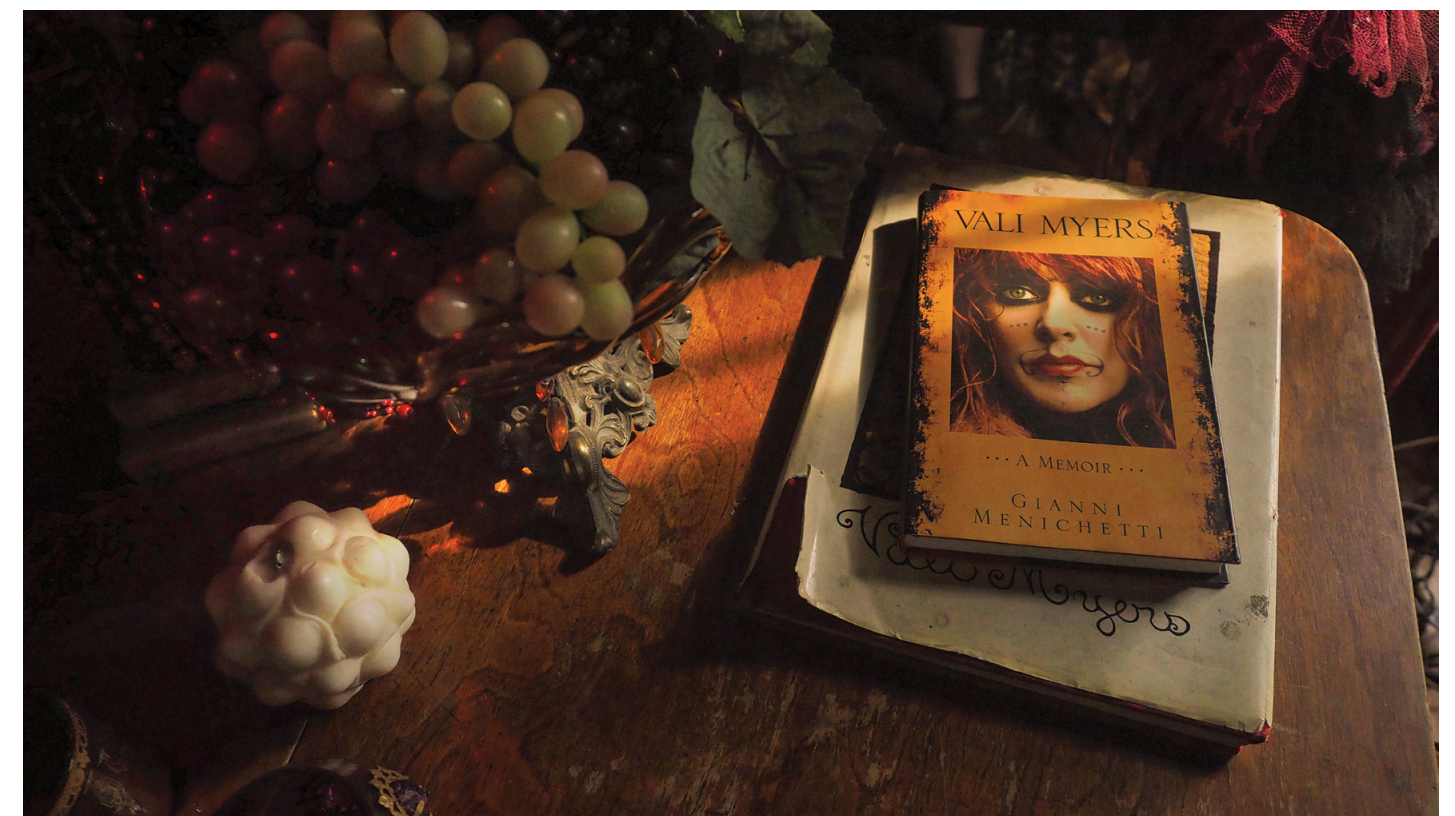
On page 94 you can see another bit of captured magic: Notarberardino’s photo of that pyramid sitting on top of the building. The pyramid was “one of New York’s great apartments,” Notarberardino says. The Gothic, three-story structure rose from a private, tree-filled garden in one of the city’s first rooftop gardens, built the same year as the rest of the hotel, in 1884. Over the years it housed Sarah Bernhardt, Arthur Miller, Marilyn Monroe, Jean-Paul Sartre, and Janis Joplin, among others. You can imagine life atop this enchanted building, swirling with all that shared energy, the tangled garden outside your door, all the life blazing up in floor after floor below you.

That was in the hotel’s heyday, of course. Now the outside of the Chelsea Hotel is cloaked in scaffolding. When you enter, it feels half-built; you walk past tape and workmen and peeling walls, tarp covers the floors, and it’s hard to imagine the vibrancy that was once here. Eventually it will reopen, the plan is, as a luxury hotel, and the hotel of old will be gone for good. But right now, at the end of one of those broken halls, is this: a bohemian dream of an apartment, its walls still covered with the visions of a wild, supreme witch who lived 72 flaming years, plus the work of its current inhabitant, who’s made an art of capturing moments in time and who opens his home every full moon to a circle of witches. Which seems only right.

“There is a magic about all of it,” Varlow says, “that is unparalleled in the story of New York City itself.”



See more of Tony Notarberardino’s work at @chelseahotelportraits.

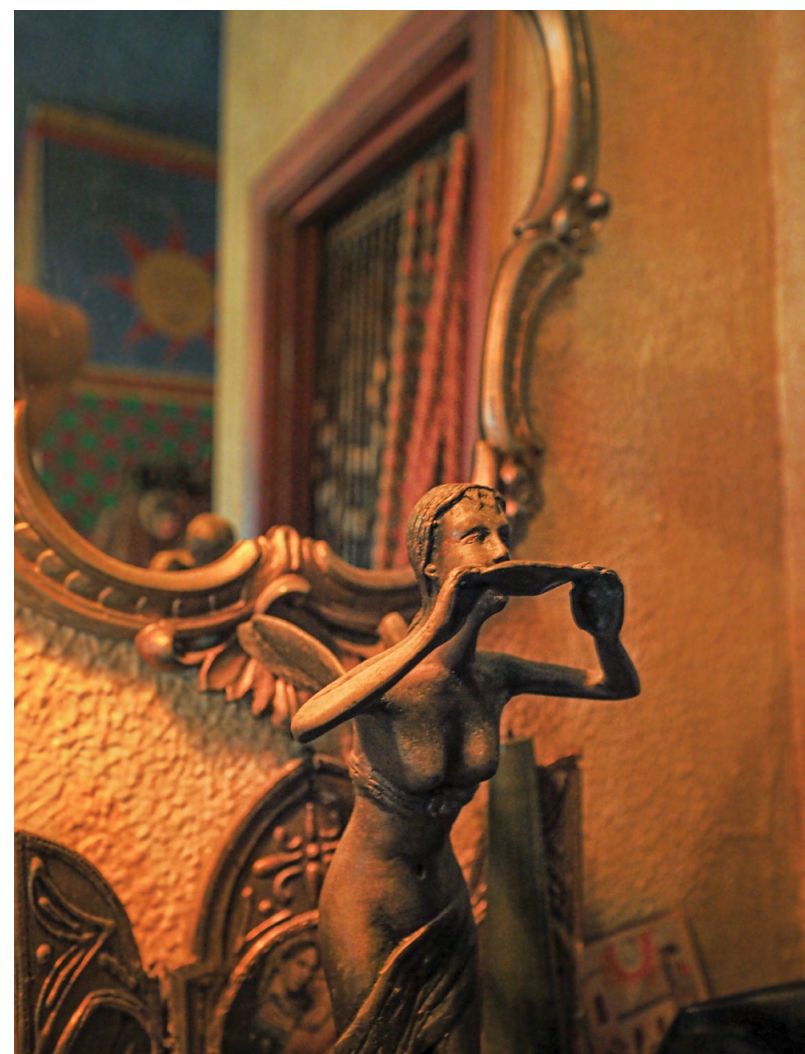


# The Chelsea Hotel

Carolyn Turgeon



The Pyramid Penthouse on the rooftop of the Chelsea Hotel, photographed by Tony Notarberardino in 1998.





# Cats AND Candles

What is cozier than a luxuriously played cat—like Marita Tathariel’s glamorous feline Ekota, pictured here—and a flickering array of candles, like these captured by artist and light lover Lena Fox? See more from both these magical ladies on Instagram at @tathariel and @lena\_fox\_art, and send your own cozy shots to us at info@faeriemag.com!

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## STITCH MAGIC

*Intentional sewing adds a dose of enchantment to craft*

BY STEPHANIE STEWART-HOWARD

PHOTOGRAPHY BY GRACE NUTH

I encountered intentional sewing as a concept when my Gothic-literature-loving mother gave me Barbara Michaels's *Georgetown* trilogy, which explores the possibility of human emotion and, indeed, magic actively embedded into objects—a place, a piece of art, a textile. The final book, *Stitches in Time*, finds the heroine searching for the history of an antique wedding quilt that carries a curse. I won't give away the plot. You can read the books. They're perfect cozy reading in the winter season and also relevant in the current climate in unexpected ways. But the concept of intentional sewing, or creating an object with intent as you work with it—that I'm delighted to discuss.

One of the things the modern era, with fast fashion, fast food, and fast gratification, has gotten wrong (in my opinion) is replacing the value of craft and craftsmanship with just a thing that can be acquired easily, mass-produced and identical to a million other

things. They're valued only for function, and even then just barely. That might be fine for some things. I don't want to build my own flat-screen TV or smartphone. But I do want the TV housed in a lovely wooden cabinet and my phone wrapped in a distinctive cover—dare I suggest a hand-fashioned one. And that's where craftsmanship comes in.

Sewing and textile production are traditionally feminine crafts (although anyone can do them). Today, most of us make things for very different reasons than our grandmothers and ancestors did. They crafted clothing, quilts, knitted hats and socks, embroidered garments, and leather shoes by hand because that was the best and easiest way to get fine, useful things in those economies. Now we do it to relieve stress because we can't find the things we need (especially if *fae-fashion* is our thing), or because we aim to recall past time periods. I mean, who doesn't want an *Outlander*-style outfit?

But even though it's outside mainstream trends, sewing and textile weaving remains a wonderful and magical endeavor. What Barbara Michaels did was remind me of the magical implications of those acts of creation. Creating a thing makes it part of your life, whether that's knitting a cozy scarf, making a quilt to wrap up and read under, or making a dress for your sister's new baby. Whether you recognize it or not, it's all done with intent. Intent is another word for magic, for changing the world by will.

First, there's the very act of doing something deliberately by hand when you could easily buy an equivalent. Our ancestors understood *handcrafting* made a thing special: It imbued an item with the energy of the artist as much as its functionality. My friend Carol has worked protective energies into sweaters she makes, for example, intensifying their coziness.

Second, there's the mind-set, the personal energy you put into the project. If you make something with love, with hope, with joy, those emotions weave themselves into your work with every stitch. So many of my favorite things are handmade gifts—the wine rack built by my woodworking father, the huge Ren Fair cloak my mother made me in high school that I still own, a white wool medieval hood my friend Jennifer made me, the kitchen knives my husband the bladesmith made. Every one of these things was crafted with care, intended for me, out of love and friendship. That's powerful sorcery.

As in Michaels's story, the intent isn't always positive when we craft with intent. But personally, I try not to put anything cruel or nasty into my work. If that's what I'm feeling as I work, I try to use the work itself to repel those feelings—to find equilibrium and balance. I don't want to make something intended for longtime use to be full of anger, resentment, or frustration. And personally, I have moved past working for people who bring out negative feelings in me or who do not value the work I do.

As I'm working on costume pieces for different friends at once—elegant garments for two friends about to be king and

queen in our SCA kingdom, a linen maternity dress for a close friend, a Viking caftan for my husband—I get the chance to return the same love, energy delivered whether by hand or by machine stitching. I'm putting in not only my time but my hopes for them, my love, my care, my happiness—and willing those energies to carry over.

It's the whole act of creation that's magic: the planning, the color choices, the final details. And in the end, skill results in something that truly meets the definition of *unique*.

In this, I understand the whys behind all the clothes and gifts my grandparents, children of the Depression, made for their grandchildren.

For those of us whose spirituality values intent and believes in magic, the act of creation can be planned more richly. For example, you can leave threads, fabrics, and pieces on a personal altar or in a sacred space in your home. You can fold things with herbs and flowers from the garden to absorb scent and the magic of the plants themselves. You can set them beneath the full moon, whispering a susurrant of words—succor and kindness, healing and strength. Or you can work the pieces at specific times, actively blessing the process and the work in many different ways, according to tradition and need.

As many of us seek to reclaim the notion of witchcraft in an era of increasing backlash against women, there is nothing more witchy-wise than creating something intended to last, intended to bring joy, intended to protect and soothe; it's something to matter in life. Craft is fundamentally part of the word: *witchcraft*. The act of making, whether it's a spell or a garment or a garment as spell (or any other object as spell), is a powerful thing in a time of cheap mass production.

There were always things made and mentioned in the witchcraft trials, in Salem and in Europe—poppets, knots of thread, even woven tapestries, writings and offerings left in building walls or tossed into sacred springs. So, too, in the traditions of Africa and the Caribbean faiths it spawned. Modern practitioners of neo-pagan and mystic faiths adapt these ideas, and faiths from Christianity to Buddhism have long used a *made* thing to represent a larger mystic concept. To make is to will into existence; when you will something into existence with additional intent, magic results.

My lovely friend Simone tells me a story: “My sister was in Kyrgyzstan on a natural-dyeing project years ago, and she brought me a gift: It's a special rope, made of horse and goat hair, intended to go around a door and charmed to ward against biting and stinging creatures. It is so much more than a rope. It is a tangible piece of our sisterly bond, her wishes for my safety, our shared love of learning, our shared respect for other cultures and faith traditions, our recognition that making an object by hand is a sacred act. It connects us to all other human hands, passing knowledge and strength to each other across space and time.”

This winter, for the first time, at the urging of my friend Lanea who has started an online quilting bee, I'm making a quilt. I've collected vintage and antique quilts for years and done repairs (some are more than a hundred years old), but I've never made a whole one on my own. I'm making the quilt of linen scraps, from costumes and clothing I've made for my husband, myself, and our friends for years. It's a great way not to waste. But the notion

of sleeping deeply under something I made consciously, remnants of other pieces of our lives, once or still worn by those beloved to us—there is delight there. It is cozy and protective and the very heart of the concept of hygge to me.



Visit Stephanie Stewart-Howard on Instagram @stephaniegwen13.

ADDITIONAL READING:

**Sewing:**

- *The Vogue Sewing Book*. Find an old copy on Amazon or eBay for less than \$20. The best source for learning fine sewing techniques.
- *Alabama Chanin School of Making* book series. Find them at [alabamachanin.com/t/collections/the-school-of-making/studio-books](http://alabamachanin.com/t/collections/the-school-of-making/studio-books). I've interviewed Natalie Chanin many times, and her philosophy on making and restoring local crafts is gorgeous. Her books are filled with patterns you can make at home, and embellishment inspirations.
- *Better Homes and Gardens Complete Guild to Quilting*. A fantastic book if you're new to the craft. Aside from my friend Amy's online quilting bee, this is my guidebook. You don't need to be a super-experienced seamstress for this to be helpful.

**Crafting, Textiles, and History**

- *Fashionopolis: The Price of Fast Fashion and the Future of Clothes*. Not about magic, but about how the world needs a transformation from instant gratification to appreciation.

- Dana Thomas does a brilliant job of underlining the damage done by the rise of fast fashion and what we can do about it.
- *Women's Work: The First 20,000 Years* by Elizabeth Wayland Barber. A history of textile production and patterning, all the way back to the beginnings of human work with fiber. It's well-written, intriguing, and thoughtful, and Barber throws in a good dose of detail on the relationship between clothing and ritual from the dawn of civilization.
- *Craft: An Inquiry Into the Origins and True Meaning of Traditional Crafts*. Alexander Langlands explores the implications of doing things by hand as our ancestors did and how that changes our approach to work and the goods we own.
- *Crazy Lanea*, at [crazylanea.com/fiberarts](http://crazylanea.com/fiberarts). My quilting inspiration's blog about crafting, singing, and historical research.
- *Words, Web, Woad*, at [simoneparrish.com](http://simoneparrish.com). My friend Simone's blog about art, cooking, and language.



© Grace Nuth



"Hygge" by Guinevere von Sneeden

*A*  
**HOME**  
*With*  
**HEART**



TEXT AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY JANNE EIKEBLAD



In a cold and frosty day, I was making my way through Scotland's winding countryside roads, this time north to the Highlands and through vast woodlands. I was looking for a truly special little house but only knew the name of the nearest village, Tomich.

It took me quite some time to discover this house, hidden in the woods and far away from most modern amenities. But it was just as magical as I had imagined it.

Walking through a gate that looked like a thick ivy portal, I realized I had strolled straight into a storybook scene. Surrounded by woodland was a truly beautiful and enchanting garden and a thatched cottage with incredible details and marvelous craftsmanship. Never before had I felt more as if I had stumbled straight into a fairy tale. Among the barren trees and the bleak colors of the season, the cottage gave off a friendly ambiance—it seemed to be looking out for all birds and beasts, always on the watch for fresh herbs and mushrooms. I knocked on the rounded door and invited myself over for tea.

The man who lived there and had built the place—the eighty-six-year-old, five-foot-three Stuart Grant—was actually like a hobbit to behold, with the nicest Scottish accent. Luckily for me, he was happy to meet unexpected visitors and show them around, share old photo albums, and talk about favorite trees.

“It’s so much more beautiful in the spring and summer time,” he told me. “In two months’ time there will be leaves on the trees and flowers all around it.” But the garden was enchanting even in winter. I can only imagine how perfect it would be in summer, when, Grant told me, he prefers to be barefoot.

The thatched roof was covered in green moss, and the walls of the house were clad in ivy, with the front door framed by twisted tree trunks. The gorgeous wrought iron details were my favorite, as well as the wooden owls. He showed me ponds with a tiny bridge, his water mill, and his greenhouse. A true sanctuary full of interesting little details.

Inside, the house was cozy, a perfect combination of fine and rustic craftsmanship. Tall people like me had to duck because of the low ceilings. But for Grant, it was all made to measure, and everything was meant to be practical and at arm’s reach.

Grant set about creating his dream home in 1984, when he moved back to Scotland from Australia. But he was broke and suffering physically, so he was living rough with basically no money. Slowly but surely his new home took shape. The house was originally a cowshed at the bottom of his garden. The plan was to move in temporarily while he renovated another house, but he got “carried away,” he said. “And so I ended up like this—it was all a happy mistake really!”





He foraged most of his building materials from the forest and cut it all by chainsaw. Being a retired woodcutter surely has its advantages for being able to build one's own heaven on earth! "It is made out of other peoples' rubbish," he said, "as well as stones from the beach and fallen trees." He was surprised that anyone else would take an interest in it.

I told him that I had heard it described as a hobbit house, made by a *Lord of the Rings* superfan. Indeed, the place felt like a scene from one of J.R.R. Tolkien's books. But Grant claimed he had never read any of them or seen the films, so any resemblance was coincidental. "This isn't a hobbit house at all," he told me. "It's my house!"

But when I asked what he thought about the comparison to Middle Earth, he told me he liked it and appreciated when fans came for a visit. "I'm happy to have visitors. Sometimes people burst into tears on seeing my house because they think it's so beautiful. It is a nice compliment to have."

The house is full of secrets: It has been said to be like a cryptic puzzle, as anything high-tech is hidden away inside gorgeous wooden hand-carved artifacts. And I was amazed by all the clever and cool little solutions. You wouldn't even know Grant had a shower unless he pointed it out to you, and the toilet was encased in a wooden stump. Cute little figurines or sea shells doubled as light switches.

There were woodcarvings, gnarly tree-trunk tables, crocheted quilts, a cozy fireplace, nostalgic pieces of porcelain, a winding wooden staircase, and anything else you would expect to find in a real fairy-tale home, made of love. Grant told me that he considered himself one of the luckiest people alive. "I have the house I always dreamed about and live in one of the most beautiful places in the world," he said. "My life is so rich!"



Follow Janne Eikeblad on Instagram @voiceofnature.

# GRANDMOTHER PONDEROSA EXTRACT

by The Wandersmith

Many plants seem to represent an archetype or personality to me, which is often a reflection of their usage in folk medicine or even stories or legends about them. Elderflower is playful and ethereal like a maiden beckoning you deeper into the woods with her youthful joy. Roses are the sweet mothers who envelop you with softness and remind you how good it feels to be in your own body. But if there's one plant that has brought me the most comfort, it is the ponderosa pine.

Growing up, there was a tree I'd walk to whenever I was feeling upset or overwhelmed—an ancient towering ponderosa out away from the forest's edge, looking for miles over her sagebrush kingdom. I would pass through the arch of two smaller trees (in my head I thought of them simply as “the guardians”) and walk out through the fragrant sagebrush to that towering tree. I'd nuzzle my nose into the crevices of her jigsaw puzzle bark and inhale the sweet vanilla perfume and know that all was right with the world. I could sit there for hours listening to the cacophony of birdsong from the branches above as I rested in the sunlight under her protective branches. I took comfort in the knowledge that she'd stood there, tall and graceful, for centuries. She'd seen towns come and go, mountains grow, and many generations of people leave their mark on the land. Her presence felt stable, consistent,

unconditionally loving. A fallen log below her boughs became one of my favorite “sit spots” during my adolescent years—a place to return to and remind myself of who I was.

Then one spring, I got very ill—too sick to make the hike to visit her. We got heavy rains that saturated the soil, and then the winds came. Hundreds of trees across the valley came crashing down in those storms, their steadfast roots previously loosened by the moisture. When I finally was well enough to walk out to visit her, I discovered that my beloved Grandmother Ponderosa had come crashing to the ground. It was absolutely shattering. I fell to my knees, sobbing, as I experienced the first great loss of my life. (I'm still tearing up just writing about it now.) It may seem dramatic to be that upset about a tree, but she came to mean so much more to me—a kind of sacred kindness, a place of warmth and safety.

This elixir is my ode to Grandmother Ponderosa and all that she represented to me. I love adding it to everything from warm milk to pancakes when I'm craving that strong quiet support and unconditional love. To me, it tastes like sunshine in a bottle! Perhaps you'll find the same comforting presence in your own brew. Since it's extra-special to me, I dressed up the bottles with burgundy sealing wax. I've included directions on how to make that as well.

## PONDEROSA VANILLA EXTRACT

### Ingredients:

20 vanilla beans, cut into chunks  
4 cups vodka  
A couple of clean pine cones  
½ cup pine nuts in the shell  
Small handful of pine needles

### Directions:

Place the vanilla beans into a sterilized glass jar and cover in vodka. Let sit for 2 to 3 months. Gently crush the pine nuts in the shell and add them to the jar, along with the pine cones and pine needles. Let infuse for another 4 to 6 weeks. Strain through a fine mesh sieve and bottle.

## MAKING SEALING WAX

*Making your own sealing wax is a fantastic way to dress up home-infused extracts, vinegars, cordials, and other shelf-stable treats. Keep in mind that you'll be dealing with hot wax, so this activity is not appropriate for children and you'll need to take some safety precautions.*

### You'll need:

A tray lined with aluminum foil  
A clean tin can  
1 part hot glue sticks, cut into small pieces  
2 parts crayons, papers removed  
A little beeswax, optional  
String  
Masking tape  
A couple of bamboo skewers  
Heat-proof glove  
Sealing wax stamp, optional  
Gold ink pad, optional

### Directions:

First, prepare your work station. Making the wax is a messy process, so you'll want to cover your work area with parchment paper or aluminum foil. You'll also need a protective glove in case you spill any of the wax as you dip. Place the hot glue sticks and the crayons into the clean tin can, then place that on the aluminum-foil-lined tray and put it in the oven. Set it to your lowest setting (no higher than 200°F)

While everything is melting together, tie some string around the neck of each bottle, then put it across the top and tape down (at least halfway down the bottle). The string will make it easier to remove the wax when you're ready to open the bottle, and the tape will hold it in place while

you dip it.

Using the bamboo skewer, stir the mixture in the can every 10 minutes or so until everything is melted. Stir well to create a smooth mixture. Remove the pan from the oven. Put the heat-proof glove on your dominant hand. Carefully dip the top of each bottle in the warm mixture, then flip right-side up to cool. You can stamp the top with your wax sealing stamp now, if you'd like.

*Tip: The crayons will make the mixture more brittle, the hot glue will make it more flexible. Adjust the proportions to your liking. If you don't like the way a bottle looks when it's been dipped, the mixture is fairly easy to peel off when warm. You'll need to reheat it at intervals if you're using it for lots of bottles. It takes a little getting used to, but then it's easy to get a pretty look!*

Reishi was called the mushroom of immortality in ancient China, as it was believed to be a cure for many age-related ailments. It represented a sort of spiritual potency, including well-being, connectedness, and longevity. It's showed up in artistic images since at least the 15th century and has been cited for thousands of years in scripts and texts as being a special tonic for emperors. It was (and still is) used as a daily tonic in Asia, where it is thought to benefit vital energy, or qi. It is joined by another mushroom about which the same claims have been made: the chaga fungus that grows on birches in northern forests and tastes faintly of root beer and vanilla. Added to these are a number of other medicinal mushrooms: tumor-fighting turkey tails gathered by hand in Oregon, immune-boosting anise shelf mushrooms from my home in Idaho, and nerve-strengthening lion's mane mushrooms from a dear friend in British Columbia. (Thank you Bill!)

But what to do with this magnificent blend of medicinal mushrooms? Make hot chocolate, of course! A warm drink is one of the best ways to get all the benefits from these mushrooms. Raw, the medicinal tree mushrooms included in this blend are tough and woody, very different from the

gourmet varieties you might add to your soups or pasta. The most helpful medicinal components of these tree mushrooms—the polysaccharides and triglycerides—need a little time to break down. Ideally, you should cook them over low heat for a long period of time to extract all the good stuff.

So without further ado, here are the directions for making your own bio-available medicinal mushroom cocoa blend. It takes a bit of time, but if you don't have the time to wait each chance you want a cup of hot cocoa, this technique will create a bio-available instant cocoa blend that can be enjoyed on-the-go! This mix is easily customizable too. If you'd like to exclude the sugar or use regular granulated sugar, go for it. You can stir it into any kind of hot milk to drink, though I often prefer it as more of a cocoa tea just mixed into plain old water. (You can also add powdered milk or coconut milk to the mixture itself.) I've added some other warming spices such as anti-inflammatory turmeric, black pepper to make the turmeric more bio-available, stomach-warming ginger, and circulation-supporting cinnamon. Oh, and cardamom, because it's delicious. Feel free to add or subtract as you see fit!

*This makes 2 to 3 cups of mix, depending on the ingredients that you add.*

**Ingredients:**

- 1/2 cup brandy*
- 1 tablespoon powdered lion's mane mushrooms*
- 2 teaspoons powdered chaga mushrooms*
- 2 teaspoons powdered reishi mushrooms*
- 1 tablespoon powdered turkey tail mushrooms*
- 1 tablespoon anise shelf mushroom (or red-belted polypore)*
- 2 vanilla beans*
- 1/2 tablespoon turmeric*
- 1/2 teaspoon ground black pepper*
- 1/4 teaspoon sea salt*
- 1 teaspoon cardamom pods*
- 2 teaspoons ground ginger*
- 1 cup cocoa powder*
- 1 cup sweetener of choice (I used granulated honey)*
- 1/2 cup coconut milk powder, optional*
- 2 teaspoons ground cinnamon*

**Materials:**

- Crock pot or thick-bottomed saucepan*
- Dehydrator with nonstick sheets for liquids (or cookie sheet with nonstick finish)*
- A silicone mat*
- Coffee grinder*
- Bottles or bags to package it in*

In a small bowl, mix together all the various mushroom powders. Place half the mixture in a small jar and add the vanilla beans, chopped into small sections. Top with the brandy. Leave overnight. This extracts the alcohol-soluble constituents of the mushrooms.

Pour the infused mixture into a crock pot along with the rest of the mushroom mixture and the turmeric, black pepper, salt, and cardamom. Add 3/4 cup water. Turn the crock pot on low and leave for at least 12 hours and up to 24 hours. Check on it every three hours or so to make sure there's still enough liquid and nothing is sticking to the bottom.

If not using a crock pot, place the ingredients into a thick-bottomed saucepan. Turn the burner on as low as possible and put the lid on. (The mixture should never boil or bubble.) Let it cook for at least 12 hours, checking on it occasionally to make sure it hasn't boiled dry or started to stick. If you need to leave, just turn the burner off and leave the pan covered, then resume heating when you return.

After your mushroom mixture has infused for at least 12 hours on low heat, turn off the heat and let it cool to

a tepid temperature. Pour it through a strainer to remove vanilla bean pieces and cardamom pods. Add the ginger and cocoa powder and stir well to form a thin paste. Spread the paste onto the dehydrator sheet or cookie sheet. If you're using a dehydrator, set it to the lowest heat setting and run it until the brown mixture has dried completely. If you're using a cookie sheet, set it somewhere warm and well-ventilated and let it air dry, which could take a few days. (Make sure to keep it covered by a screen or an upside-down box to keep out dust or insects.)

Crumble up the brown paste, then grind it back into a powder using the coffee grinder. You may have to work in small batches.

Add the reground cocoa mixture to a large bowl, then mix in the coconut sugar, optional milk powder, and the cinnamon. Your mixture is now ready to consume!

To drink, add a heaping teaspoonful to a mug of hot milk or water and stir. Package your homemade medicinal mushroom hot chocolate in pretty containers for sharing with your family and friends!

## MEDICINAL MUSHROOM COCOA

*by The Wandersmith*



# TREE SLICE PANCAKES

by The Wondersmith



The gradual changing of the seasons is punctuated by clear, wonder-filled markers of passing time: the first frost, turning autumnal flowers into sparkling jewels and edging grass blades with tiny diamonds; the first freeze, creating ice bubbles at the edges of muddy puddles before they dissolve in the morning's sun. And of course the first snow.

You can just picture it, can't you? That rush of excitement on childhood mornings as you awoke to discover a world transformed. That spine-tingling ozone smell hanging in the air. The crisp white blanket creating a landscape that is all texture and light. The anticipation glittering in your chest, promising a new season of outdoor play and festive celebrations: Winter has arrived.

With it comes a gentle stillness that settles on all of us. We can almost feel the energy of the trees settling down into the roots. We sense the hordes of nuts and seeds stowed away by wise little critters who have spent the past few months industriously working in preparation for this day. We think of the firewood pile out back and feel thankful for fall days spent carrying log rounds back to the trailer that will keep us warm through many more snows. These all mark a sudden cessation of autumn's steady gathering.

It's as though nature is breathing one big exhale, a sleepy sigh announcing that the world is going to rest, the trees are going to

nap, the squirrels are going to snuggle in among the results of their frantic fall activities. Harvest season has officially ended, and winter's magic has descended. But unlike the earth and trees and squirrels, we don't have to rest. We can pile on the snow clothes and run out the door with gleeful abandon to make the first snowmen, throw the first snowballs. We can dig out the skis and the skates and the mismatched mittens and too-small snow boots to revel in the wonderland so graciously delivered to us. But first, we're going to need some breakfast. Let's make it a special one.

What better way to engage with seasonality than to mark the momentous natural occasions each year? Sure, we can set a date on a calendar and plan our festivities around that ... but doesn't it feel exciting to let it sneak up on you, to fall into a multitude of mini-celebrations with every beautiful change? This year I challenge you to make a bigger deal of the little shifts. Let yourself be filled with the wonder of the first snow the same way you were when you were a kid. And then, let your stomach be filled by these beautiful pancakes, made from ingredients you probably already have on hand, celebrating the harvest of grains you've already put away. Let their tree-ring pattern remind you of yule logs and firewood and community—things to keep you warm on the long winter nights to come.

## TREE SLICE PANCAKES FOR CELEBRATING SEASONAL CHANGES

These exceptionally fluffy and tasty pancakes are an ode to the things we've stockpiled for winter. Foraged flours especially take a lot of processing and work, so it's fun to showcase them in a recipe like this that really lets them shine. I love using earthy and deep curly dock flour and sweet and nutty acorn flour in hearty winter dishes, and these pancakes show off the best of both worlds. No worries if you weren't quite as active a squirrel as me, though; store-bought substitutions work just as well. The finishing touch on these show-stopping pancakes is the addition of vanilla ponderosa extract, the flavor of sunlight on ponderosa bark infused into one precious bottle. (But yes, you totally could just use vanilla.)

I like to top my pancakes with golden syrup, a discovery I made while living in Canada. It tastes of caramel and sparkles like amber and is a bit thicker than maple syrup, which would also be delicious with these tree-inspired pancakes.

### Dark mixture:

*1/4 cup all-purpose flour*  
*1/4 cup curly dock seed flour*  
*(or buckwheat flour)*  
*1 teaspoon baking powder*  
*1/2 tablespoon sugar*  
*Pinch salt*

### Light mixture:

*3/4 cup all-purpose flour*  
*1/4 cup acorn flour*  
*(or whole grain flour)*  
*2 teaspoons baking powder*  
*1/4 teaspoon salt*  
*1 tablespoon sugar*

### Wet Mixture:

*1 cup milk*  
*2 large eggs (or 1/2 cup applesauce)*  
*4 tablespoons melted unsalted butter, plus extra*  
*for skillet (or vegan butter)*  
*3 teaspoons ponderosa vanilla extract*

### Directions:

Mix the light mixture in one bowl, and the dark mixture in another.

Whisk together the ingredients for the wet mixture in a liquid measuring cup.

Pour a third of the wet mixture into the dark mixture and the other two-thirds into the light mixture. Beat

both until just combined. Transfer the mixtures to condiment squeeze bottles.

Heat a large skillet over medium heat and melt a little butter on it.

Working quickly, make a series of concentric rings in the skillet with the dark mixture, then add the light mixture on top and (very gently) spread to cover. When the bubbles at the edges pop and stay open, flip the pancake and cook on the other side. Cook until lightly browned and done through the middle.

Serve with butter and syrup and a dose of excitement.

*Miss Wondersmith highlights the beauty of her Pacific Northwest home through her handcrafted glass and ceramic artwork, recipes featuring foraged foods, and carefully curated experiences for strangers (which she gives through invites hidden in public places). Visit her online at [thewondersmith.com](http://thewondersmith.com).*



## FROM OUR READERS

This month we asked our readers:  
How do you stay cozy when it's cold outside?

Illustrations © Guinevere von Sneeden

I live in northern Denmark where the word *hygge* is omnipresent. Its traditions and ways were passed down from my grandmother, who lives in an old fishing village near the sea. The way I embrace coziness during the cold winter months is by warm woolen socks, and then I love to light candles and make decorations with an autumnal nature feel. It is true *hygge* for me. —*Mia B. Rasmussen*

*Hygge* ... thick wool socks, fire in the hearth, lots of candles burning, cashmere throws, hot cocoa and tea, homemade soups, and homemade healthy cookies and breads. Having cinnamon, orange peels, and cloves simmering on the stove. Soft conversation with loved ones and friends. Kitties and dogs snuggling in front of the fire. A walk in the snow, in the forest and loving the cold, crisp air. —*Sandy Cline*

I snuggle in front of the heater with a nice warm, thick blanket; a hot cup of tea; and my fat orange cat on my lap. I'll get lost in a good book or an issue of *Enchanted Living* and may even create some art as the wind blows bitterly outside. —*Rachel Cavazos*

I stay cozy by creating gorgeous images when I return from the cold wintery scenery in the forests surrounding me and the icy vistas of the Great Lakes beyond. It helps to have a roaring fire, candles flickering, and a cup of hot coffee ... maybe with a few drops of spirits? —*Sarah Chisholm Photography*

I light a fire in the outdoor fire pit and sit under the stars in a comfy chair under some blankets and with a hot drink in my hands. My dad usually joins me, and we just ponder the universe together. —*Jelena Ljubisic*

To stay cozy I wear flannel pj's and warm slippers and have dandelion or calendula tea from my garden. I have big warm blankets that my two dachshunds share with me. The kitty sits on top while the dogs burrow under. I usually read, write, or prepare art paper for my next painting. —*Laura K. Benfer*

Books are a must for a cozy experience! Nothing relaxes me more on a cold winter night than losing myself in a good book. —*@robin.cheryl*

My friend's hot tub on the deck as snow quietly falls around. —*Jeremiah Rau*

Cutting out patterns for cloaks. Lighting my black candle to honor ancestors. Hot chocolate while watching Halloween movies with my black cats! —*Maggie Brown*

I make a batch of homemade bread, then snuggle on the couch under my faux-fur blanket with a cup of tea or warm spiced wine and a good book. Inevitably, my dog and cat snuggle next to me, and we watch the light change in the forest outside the window. —*Jody Helme-Day*

A long walk in the snow to get our blood pumping, then shedding all our layers as soon as we walk in the door. After that we have tea and whatever I've baked recently. —*Alex Wilson Gildner*

A cat in my lap, a fire in the fireplace, and glass of wine in hand! —*Susan Saale*

This is how to stay cozy: I wrap myself in a weighted blanket filled with lavender. You heat it up in the microwave and then place it deliciously around the back and shoulders. This, paired with a mug of honey milk, is a great way to snuggle in. —*Kim Malinowski*



It is said  
"The fox changes his fur  
but NOT his reading habits."

(smart fox)



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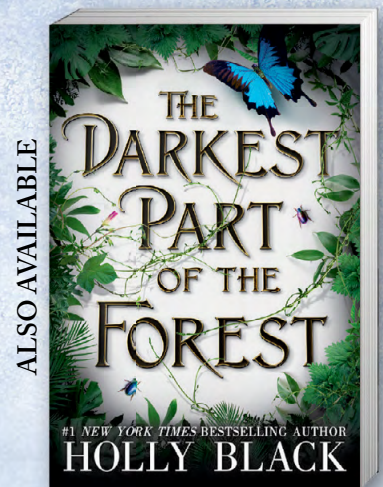
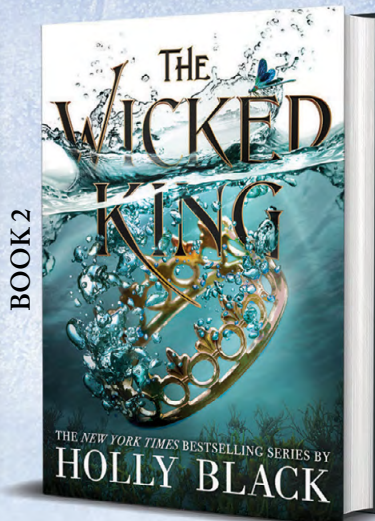
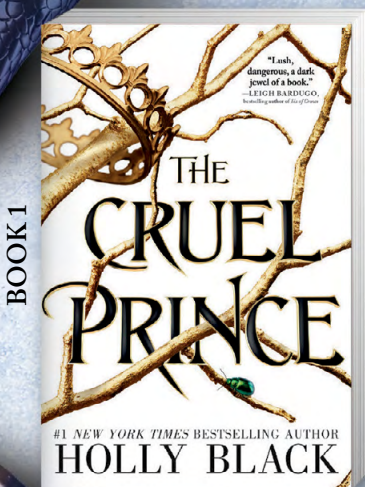
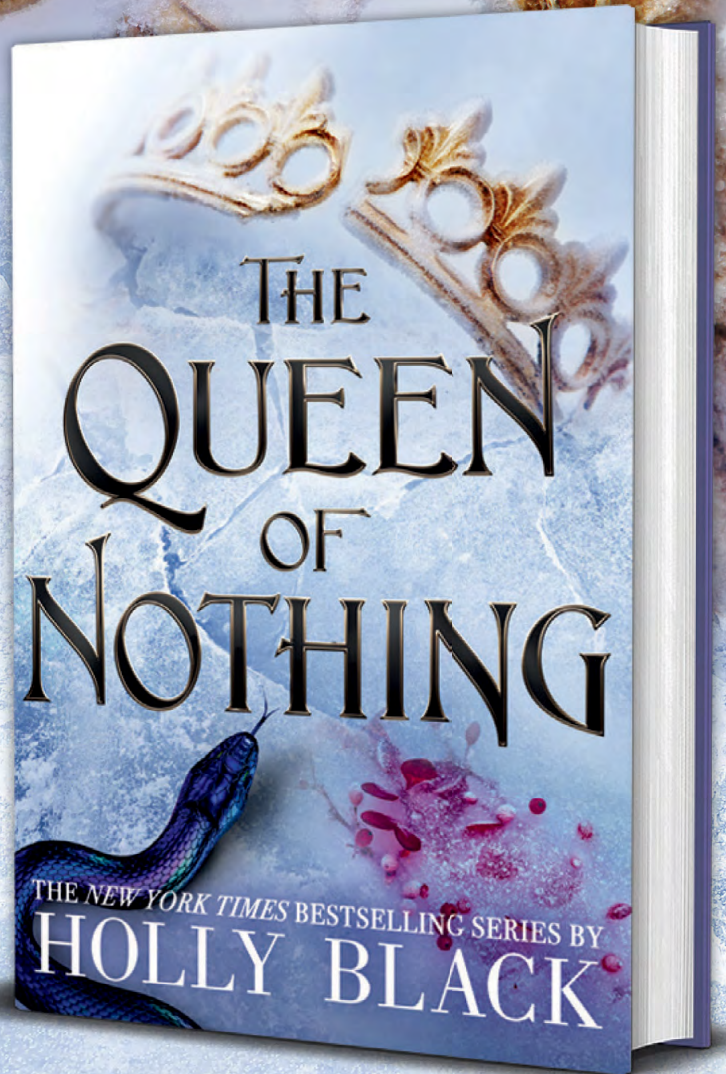
"This utterly charming, absolutely beautiful book gives insight into so very many aspects of Faerie. I almost wish I could come to it not knowing much about faeries; it would then be an amazing voyage of discovery. Even with my knowledge, I was still surprised and enchanted! I love it!"

♥ Wendy Froud

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