



## ON BEING A WITCH

Hag!  
- Rob

So here you are, holding my book. Perhaps you're already an apprentice witch looking for extra guidance on the future. Maybe you've been earmarked by a witchfinder as someone with 'potential' and you're wondering just what that might mean. Or possibly you're simply curious about what might be in these pages and are looking forward to correcting me, pretending you haven't read it, or treating me with a lethal amount of politeness next time our paths cross. Whether you've bought, begged, borrowed or stolen this book, you are welcome here.

This book was written over a number of years and I've lost some dear friends along the way. Their teachings live on in these pages. As do their notes, which I've retained for posterity. They live on in me. And now, I hope they will live on in you too.



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For me, finding my personal path to witch-hood was hazy at best. But it also involved a book – *The Goode Childe's Booke of Faerie Tales*. Not exactly a guide to being a witch so much as a guide to not being one. The teller of these tales clearly imagined the 'goode childe' would empathize with the noble princes, beautiful princesses, brave woodcutters and those who abuse the letter E. Not me. Princes were dull and mostly made of chin. I didn't have the poise, breeding or the good hair to be a princess. Besides, they mainly seemed to do daft things with spindles or apples, or else sat around waiting to be rescued. Their lives were both dangerous and boring. Woodcutters appeared a little more competent. But, aside from the occasional break to kill a talking wolf, I wasn't sure I wanted to chop wood all day. And since I've never been that good with an axe, we were approaching dangerous and boring territory again.

Witches, now they seemed *much* more fun. Okay, there was a certain amount of being shoved in ovens by greedy children or talking to mirrors, so danger was a given. But witches were dangerous and *exciting*. They got broomsticks, wands and magic spells. And, as I imagined back then, they went to learn witchcraft at a special school. Probably taken there on the back of a unicorn or something equally magical like that.

But witchcraft isn't about magic or showy spells. At least not most of the time. It's largely about hard work and realising that true magic – true *power* – is not about understanding spells, but

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understanding people. Hearing their spill words – the things they almost say, but don't or can't. Being a witch is about facing your fears and understanding that even if something isn't your fault, it's your responsibility. It's about being a voice for the voiceless and standing between the light and the darkness. And, more often than not, it's about having a piece of string on you.

If you're still with me, then maybe this is the life for you. I'm glad because the world needs witches and witchcraft. In whatever form they take. As you tread the path you've chosen you will learn the lessons of those who gift you with their wisdom and knowledge. They will become part of you. Because you are not just a witch, you are all witches that have come before you and will come after you. This isn't *really* my book. It is our book. As for the school, it's not a place, it's all places. Just look around you. You're already there.

