



*This was first an entry in the solitaire game design challenge. It is meant to be played alone and earnestly.*

*A game about accepting the power within yourself.*

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*Dedicated to Sev.*

## *Teen Witch*

This is a game about being a teenage girl who is a witch. It is played all alone. It will help you find strength and beauty, but it is dangerous.

To play the game, you need:

- A candle, with a few hours of burn time
- More candles, in the future
- Something to anoint with: blood, paint, mud, wine, honey, else
- Simple, potent things: ginger, garlic, dried sage, bay leaves, salt, coriander, various powders and perfumes, spices, potpourri, essential oils, else
- Something to mark the floor with: paint, chalk, ash, permanent marker, blood, else
- If you don't want to mark the floor, something to cover it with: a sheet, mats, cardboard, else
- A few simple containers: a bowl, a small drawstring bag, a wine glass, a shoebox, else

## *On Truth*

There is an important truth about the world that must be understood and trusted if this game is to work.

That something is a fiction doesn't make it any less real.

## *The Secret Place*

In order to play Teen Witch, you need a secret place. It needs to be a place where no one can see you, and no one can hear you as long as you only whisper. It needs to be somewhere where you can light candles, mark the floor, and whisper secrets.

Your bedroom will likely work, unless you share your room and the person is home. The forest will work. A bathroom or storage locker or attic might work, too.

## *Before Playing*

In order to play this game, you must be a teenage girl who is a witch. If you are not these things already, you must become them before playing.

If that task seems impossible, go back and re-read "On Truth." You need to create this fiction and explore it until it becomes real.

If there are things you don't know, about being a teenager or a girl or a witch, then you make it up and you explore it until it feels real.

Convincing yourself that you are a teenage girl witch will be tricky. Perhaps begin by walking slowly about your secret space. Notice how you place your heel when you step. Place it more tentatively. Now, more confidently. Which one left you feeling closer to your goal? Good. Walk like that. Explore changes in your breathing, how you carry your shoulders, how your arms sway. Try licking your lips as a teenage girl might. Try licking your lips as a witch might.

The fiction doesn't need to be perfect. You don't need to convince yourself absolutely. It doesn't need to be 100% real. As long as there's some part of you that's convinced that you might be a teenage witch, you can move on to play.

## *On Witchcraft*

Before we move on to describing play, a mention must be made. We know, perfectly well, that magic doesn't exist. We aren't stupid. But this is one of those things - just because it's a fiction doesn't mean it's not real.

## *To Play*

Sit in your secret place. Be still. When you are ready, light your candle.

At no stage should you feel rushed or pushed to do something you don't want to do. If the game feels weird or uncomfortable, first be still. Think about that feeling; hold on to it. Perhaps the feeling will pass over and through you and you can continue.

Lighting your candle lets the magic in. It will be weak and tentative at first, and you will want to coax it.

Over time, you might develop little rituals and incantations that coax the magic. At first, though, the key is simply to become familiar with the tools and the feeling of witchcraft. Try pouring some of your anointing fluid into a container - a bowl or glass, perhaps. Swish it about. Smell it. Put two fingers in it. Spill some onto the floor, and leave it there. Crush a few bay leaves, draw a small circle on the floor in front of you, else.

This gentle play will coax the magic in, and at the same time it will allow you to build a relationship with your ingredients and your secret place.

Take as long as you would like to. If you never move beyond the stage of experiencing your ingredients, this is okay.

Eventually, you may be ready for a spell. Spells are taxing work, and under normal conditions, you'll only want to do one or two per session. It is essential that you believe your own fiction, before moving onto spells. If you don't, then you should retreat back to earlier steps and spend more time in them - until the whole experience becomes palpable and real. If you have to keep going back to the first stage, where you become a teenage girl, then do that.

When it feels real, and you are ready, begin your spell.

There is one spell included with this game, located at the end, called Secret Beauty. When first learning to be a witch, start with Secret Beauty. If it doesn't work the first time, try again in your next session, until it does work.

Once you've succeeded at Secret Beauty, you are ready to try new spells.

Spells are very personal. They rely on logics that are developed and contained within your secret place. Remember when you took the time to learn and experience your ingredients? Think about the inner truths that you learned about those things. Did cardamom feel impossibly old? When you draw a circle very slowly, what do you suppose that means? I've used honey and interlocking triangles to forgive the dead, but that probably won't work for you - you'll need to utilize your own secret logics and your own lived ingredients.

Generally, anointing yourself will bring the spell inside of you in some way. Anointing the floor will bring the spell inside of the floor, else. Marking the floor will generally make some piece of the puzzle more tangible and manipulable. Playing with potent ingredients generally alters the substance and tone of a spell.

When you make a new spell, it's a mixture of interpreting and deciding. You're like a raft captain.

To do more than one spell under a single candle will strain the candle. Be careful about this - figure out how to keep the magic strong and the candle peaceful. If I plan to do more than one spell under a single candle, I take time to coax the magic between spells. I sprinkle cinnamon on the ground around me, and taste just a pinch of it. Cinnamon is used for appeasement and seduction, in my secret place. You'll want to figure out your own logics for this sort of thing.

When you are finished whatever spells you are doing, thank your secret place. Don't just whisper the word - touch the bowl you anointed yourself from, trace your fingers across any markings on the floor, experience your ingredients once more, chant, breathe deeply, be still, kiss your own wrists, else.

Then pack up and hide your tools.

## *More Candles*

At the start of each new session, you may grant yourself a new candle. You don't have to, but you may.

You may also bring with you new ingredients, new anointing fluids, new containers. You will, of course, need to learn to communicate with these things. When I got seriously into magic, I often found myself browsing the spice aisle in strange specialty grocers, buying things I'd never heard of. Don't buy ingredients from magic shops, though. You'll find them to be strained and bound, censored even. It's like bringing an impertinent professor into your place of private study.

Back to candles, though. You may add one to your collection each session, if you wish. Don't feel like you must, though - that is greed, and it will weaken your connection to the candles.

During play, you may light additional candles in order to welcome more magic into the room.

You may light additional candles for bravery.

You may light additional candles in order to do additional spells.

You may light additional candles in order to trap a spell or a thing inside of them. If you wish to bless a person, perhaps with Secret Beauty or with something else, then place the spell within the candle and blow it out. Give the candle to the person. If they light it, they will release the spell - if it works.

## *Sharing Witchcraft*

There are two ways to learn to be a teen witch. The first is to read this book. The second is to have someone teach you.

If you want to teach someone to be a Teen Witch, the process is straightforward but hard. You must both be teenage girls. She must create a secret place and invite you into it. These steps are very hard! Remember this, and be patient. Perhaps wait outside the space while your friend becomes settled in their fiction - she can invite you in when she is ready.

You must present her with her first candle, and introduce her to her first ingredients. The process of becoming comfortable with her space and her ingredients will be doubly hard with you present. You will have to lead gently, at every step of the way. Be obvious in your demonstration - use elongated motions when you move, breathe deeply when you smell a spice, else. Make sure that she joins in, and does more than simply imitating you.

You will teach her the first spell - it can be Secret Beauty, or something you have discovered. Don't try to impress your friend with fancy or dangerous spells - no conjuration or spirit channeling, else. Start with something comfortable, and trust that she'll learn the rest in her own time.

Be especially sure to thank the space when you are done, for you were a trespasser upon it. Say blessings, be still, dust cinnamon, kiss the wrists of your host, else.

## *Future Sharing*

You may feel the desire to do witchcraft with someone again, after teaching them. This is good, and allowed. Both of you should still have sessions of Teen Witch on your own, at least from time to time. It's important that your magic never be contingent on the will and whim of another.

## *On Attire*

You might wonder what clothing is best suited to witchcraft. The first priority is that you feel comfortable and safe. To this end, sweatpants and a t-shirt are a good starting option. The second priority is that you feel like a beautiful teenage girl. To this end, fabrics which feel smooth and delicate can be good. Items which feel sexy to wear can be good also, so long as you feel safe and comfortable in them. If you are not actually a teenage girl, make sure that your attire makes the fiction seem more real and not less.

The third priority is that you wear what helps you do your magic and be a witch. To this end, you might want to explore little baubles and trinkets, items of black and purple, whatever you think adept witches wear.

If you are brave, maybe you will perform your magic in bare flesh. Only do this if it makes you feel comfortable and safe. Only do this if it makes you feel like a beautiful teenage girl. If you try it, you will likely find your magic to be quite potent and sexy. Personally, I felt a little startled and overloaded by the experience, and went back to clothes within two sessions.

Attire, like everything else, ultimately depends upon your secret logics and lived experiences. Experiment, session to session.

## *On Malicious Intent*

You might wonder if magic can be used to do harm. Yes, it can.

However, listen closely to your ingredients. Pay attention to what your anointing fluid wants, when you place it upon your brow. You will quickly realize that most ingredients do not want to do harm. You could always force them to, but it would only distance you from them.

There are some ingredients, however, that do wish harm and malice upon the world. Cayenne is one of them. I personally don't touch these ingredients, because I don't want to be poisoned by them. You must ultimately make your own choices in this matter.

# Secret Beauty

To begin, draw a wavy and crooked circle around yourself, on the floor. Anoint the circle, and then yourself. This establishes, in a way, that you are the circle.

Take the harshest ingredient you have. Use your judgment in determining which ingredient is the harshest, or what that even means. Crush some of that ingredient up, and toss it on the floor in front of you. If you have hate for yourself, expunge it now, as best you can.

Draw the circle again, a little more evenly. You are becoming more even, more true, more centered. Take the next harshest ingredient you have, and crush a little bit up. Scatter it. If you still have hate for yourself, expunge it now, as best you can.

Continue this process, until your circle is true and your ingredients are soft. With your hatred expunged, you will realize your secret beauty.

If it doesn't work the first time, do not worry. You will have become more familiar with your ingredients, and will have expunged some hate. It will be easier when you try again, in future sessions. Eventually, the spell always works.

This is a truth spell and a healing spell.

