

PF-London Samhain Open Ritual 2016

Three witches in the centre of the room, stand around a cauldron.

Attendees form a full circle around the room. Many will be masked.

Witch One:

A gathering be here tonight.
Mortals some and others sprite.

Witch Two:

'Tis the time of Hallow's Eve.
Samhain magic let us weave.

Witch Three:

Then three times round, a circle cast,
For present, future and the past.

Witch One:

All ye gathered share our spell
Repeat our words, as we do tell

The witches move into a triangle around the edge of the circle and simultaneously move round deosil, repeating:

By the power of witch's blade
Here now be the circle made.

Once they have circled three times, they return to the centre.

Witch Two:

We weird sisters, hand in hand,
Posters of the sea and land,
Thus do go about, about:
Thrice to thine and thrice to mine
And thrice again, to make up nine.
Peace! the charm's wound up.

Witch Three:

So too, then, we'll summon thus,
To raise the winds to guard this place.
Boreas! Zephyrus! Notus! Eurus!
Airy spirits turn to face.

The witches turn to the East (then South, West and North, respectively)

To the East!
Ye mighty spirit, we implore
Oh ye, light and temperate one
Guard our circle, keep it sure
And we bid ye, hail and welcome.

To the South!
Ye mighty spirit, we implore
Oh ye, bringer of the storm

Guard our circle, keep it sure
And we bid ye, hail and welcome

To the West!
Ye mighty spirit, we implore
Oh ye, cool and gentle one,
Guard our circle, keep it sure
And we bid ye, hail and welcome

To the North!
Ye mighty spirit, we implore
Oh ye, who is cold and strong
Guard our circle, keep it sure
And we bid ye, hail and welcome

Witch One:

Fair is foul, and foul is fair:
Hover through the fog and filthy air.

Witch Two:

Now o'er the one halfworld
Nature seems dead, and wicked dreams abuse
The curtain'd sleep; witchcraft celebrates
Pale Hecate's offerings, and wither'd murder,
Alarum'd by his sentinel, the wolf,
Whose howl's his watch, thus with his stealthy pace.

Witch Three:

Fire, flame and many a name
The old ones here be gather'ed
Draw back that curtain, let free those shades of night
Reveal great Hecate's door swung wide
Come fairy footfalls, too, for all be free upon Samhain
Some howls be more than wolves, come crept about this place.

Witch One:

The spell! The spell!

Round about the cauldron go;
In the poison'd entrails throw.
Toad, that under cold stone
Days and nights has thirty-one
Swelter'd venom sleeping got,
Boil thou first i' the charmed pot.

Double, double toil and trouble;
Fire burn, and cauldron bubble.

Second Witch

Fillet of a fenny snake,
In the cauldron boil and bake;
Eye of newt and toe of frog,
Wool of bat and tongue of dog,
Adder's fork and blind-worm's sting,
Lizard's leg and owlet's wing,
For a charm of powerful trouble,
Like a hell-broth boil and bubble.

ALL

Double, double toil and trouble;
Fire burn and cauldron bubble.

Third Witch

Scale of dragon, tooth of wolf,
Witches' mummy, maw and gulf
Of the ravin'd salt-sea shark,
Root of hemlock digg'd i' the dark,
Cool it with a baboon's blood,
Then the charm is firm and good.

By the pricking of my thumbs,
Something wicked this way comes.
Open, locks,
Whoever knocks!

Hecate:

Behold Hecate, the mistress of your charms,
The close contriver of all harms,
Have been 'ere call'd to bear my part,
To show the glory of our art.

O well done! I commend your pains;
And every one shall share i' the gains;
And now about the cauldron sing,
Live elves and fairies in a ring,
Enchanting all that you put in.

The witches dance about the cauldron, singing three times:

Dance the ring, luck to bring,
When the year's a-turning.
Chant the rhyme at Hallows-time,
When the fire's burning.

When the song ends, the witches return to the centre and to Hecate.

Hecate:

Your vessels and your spells provide,
Your charms and every thing beside.
I am for the air; this night I'll spend
Unto a dismal and a fatal end:
Great business must be wrought ere noon:
Upon the corner of the moon
There hangs a vaporous drop profound;
I'll catch it ere it come to ground:
And that distill'd by magic sleights
Shall raise such artificial sprites
As by the strength of their illusion
Shall draw on to all confusion:
He that spurns fate, scorn death, and bear
Hopes 'bove wisdom, grace and fear:
And you all know, security
Is mortals' chiefest enemy.
Hark! I am call'd; my little spirit, see,
Sits in a foggy cloud, and stays for me.

Puck emerges from the cauldron.

Witch One:

What strange sprite is this?
A fairy kin to lead amiss?

Puck:

I'll follow you, I'll lead you about a round,
Through bog, through bush, through brake, through brier:
Sometime a horse I'll be, sometime a hound,
A hog, a headless bear, sometime a fire;
And neigh, and bark, and grunt, and roar, and burn,
Like horse, hound, hog, bear, fire, at every turn.

Witch Two:

Woe betide the mortal, who on this night
Has not a mask to hide from fairy sight.

Puck begins to look around the crowd and pulls out anyone not wearing a mask

Puck:

Up and down, up and down,
I will lead them up and down:
I am fear'd in field and town:
Goblin, lead them up and down.

Puck continues to repeat this, until he has gathered several people and placed them in a group around the cauldron.

Puck:

What rare creatures these mortals be
And what fun, at least
Know not whether I be brought here
To play with them or to feast!

Now the hungry lion roars,
And the wolf howls the moon;
Whilst the heavy ploughman snores,
All with weary task fordone.
Now the wasted brands do glow,
Whilst the screech-owl, screeching loud,
Puts the wretch that lies in woe
In remembrance of a shroud.
Now it is the time of night
That the graves all gaping wide,
Every one lets forth his sprite,
In the church-way paths to glide:
And we fairies, that do run
By the triple Hecate's team,
From the presence of the sun,
Following darkness like a dream,
Now are frolic: not a mouse
Shall disturb this hallow'd house:

Puck retrieves the cakes and wine from the altar, and begins to coax his victims with it.

Puck:

A little of this fairy food?
Just a morsal, just a taste
A drop of wine to wet your throat?
No mortal could resist these cakes.

Would you eat my fairy food?
Could I tempt you then to stay?
Such a Goodfellow am I,
I never would lead thee astray

Just one bit of fairy food?
A single bite is all it takes.
Temptation is a mortal's way,
Give in to me, for goodness sake.

*If anyone goes to take the food, the witches must stop them and tell them not to.
Once the food has been refused, Puck replaces it on the altar.*

Puck:

'Tis a terror! A terror true,
For Samhain night is death and drear
Know ye not the things you do?
For sprite and spirit ruleth here!

Morpheus calls from beyond the circle

Morpheus:

Hold there!
Hold there, I say!

Hold thy tongue and hold thy hand

Puck:

Fear! Fear!
Another draws near!

And who art thou to give Puck a command?

Morpheus enters the circle

Morpheus:

I am the hidden truth of night
I am the midnight land unseen
I am the vision taken flight
I am the lord of every dream

Puck:

Morpheus! My lord
Shaper of dreams, weaver of nightmares
But why do you come?

This is not your land

Morpheus:

Foolish Puck, do you not know?
My realm is in the in-between
Upon the path from life to death
There you'll find the land of dream

Tonight, tonight, is Samhain night
When all the land's 'tween life and death
So all the land is mine to wander
And weave my dreams with every breath

Puck:

But why Lord, do you stay my hand?
Do you think these mortal be so grand?

Morpheus:

Because here is a place that is not a place
And now is a time that is not a time
This circle stands to guard those here
And unto them is grace divine.

Puck:

Pfft
So be it, spoilsport
I'll withdraw my tricky ways

Morpheus:

Enough, old sprite and hush your tongue!
For now I speaker of older days

Morpheus begins a pathworking for those gathered

Friends, be still and close your eyes
And I shall weave a dream for you
I'll take you to a place unseen
Where life and death are balanced true

Witch Three addresses the gathering, to prepare them for the God's pathworking.

Morpheus takes up the lantern from the altar and walks the circle

Go back, go back, and let your mind be still.

Take deep breathes. Breath in and breathe out. Feel yourself beginning to relax. That feeling of relaxation is moving down through your body. Down, from the top of your head, down over your face, relaxing and moving down to your shoulders, which loosen, the tension falling away from them. With deep breathes, the feeling of relaxation moves down through your body, down through your chest, to your waist and then down to your hips and to your legs. The muscles in your thighs relax and then your calves relax. And finally, the feeling of relaxation moves to yours feet and you feel any stress and tension, slipping away, being released from your body, so that you are fully and completely relaxed.

Let your mind be still and here me, as I guide you.

It is night time.

You find yourself seated at home. Sitting in your favourite chair. It is peaceful and quiet. All is still and you look around the room, taking a moment to enjoy the comfort of your own space. As you look around, you begin to catch the beautiful scent of food. Is it baking? Perhaps a home-cooked meal? It smells amazing. The food must be in the next room, so you make your way through into where the food is. There, you see a wonderful meal, spread out in front of you on the table, with two places set. One of these places is for you, but the other one is to be kept empty. You take a seat at the table, looking down at all the wonderful food in front of you. The looks of it and the rich aroma, make your mouth water – but you cannot eat yet. You are waiting for someone to join you.

Outside, in the distance, far away, you hear a loud drumming and quickly you go to the window to see what is happening. Looking out the window, you see that the night sky is awash with a beautiful borealis of greens and purples. Then, from the horizon, you hear the sound of great hunting horn being blown. You throw open your window and gaze towards to open horizon. Something is moving over the horizon and beginning to sweep across the land. Like a great cloud, a fog begins to spread out, touching every piece of the land and coming towards you.

But you are not afraid.

Figures move in the mist. Spirits of the dead, returning once more, to enjoy time with the living. You know that your guest will be here soon, so you place a candle in the window, to welcome them in. A sacred light to guide them and to banish the shadows.

You watch the sky, glimmering with the amazing glow, weaving between the stars.

The light of your candle flickers, announcing your guest's arrival and so, with a deep breath, you return to the table and take your seat. Sitting across from you is the spirit of a loved one and they smile at you.

Listen to them. What do they have to tell you?

--pause--

From outside, once more, you hear the bellow of the great hunting horn.

Your guest departs and you stand and return to the window.

You begin to hear the drumming once more, in the distance. But as it grows louder, you realise that it is the pounding of horses hooves. In the sky, you see a great hunting party, thundering across the heavens, driving the mists of death in front of them.

At the head of the hunting party, you see the great lord of the hunt, himself. He rides atop a mighty horse and he blows his horn to summon the dead. He is the kind king. The grey one. Master of world beyond.

He and his hunters push the mists along and the wandering dead are taken among his host. The lost are found and he leads home all visitors on this night.

He leads the dead to the underworld. The veil parts and then falls still once more. Like a river, time flows. And all is as it should be.

Eventually, the sky clears and the phantasmal lights fade.

So, you return once more to your comfortable chair. Sitting, you consider what you have been given on this night. You consider what has passed and what is yet to come and know that the great hunt will return once more.

So then, take a deep breathe. Breathe in and breathe out.

When you are ready, open your eyes and return to this sacred space.

Puck:

A fine story, Lord, but why do you tell it?
It is not true, none of these things ever really happened.

Morpheus:

It is my Mystery
Things need not have happened to be true. Tales and dreams are the shadow-truths that will
endure when mere facts are dust and ashes, and forgot.

Puck:

A blessing then! A joy it be,
So then I shall return times three
Let us dances again, again
About, about, around, around
Merry make and peaceful be,
All share a Samhain dance with me

The witches and Puck move to take places in the circle of attendees, joining hands and leading them in a dance around the circle. As music plays, they chant:

Dance the ring, luck to bring,
When the year's a-turning.
Chant the rhyme at Hallows-time,
When the fire's burning.

Once the dance has finished, witch one moves back to the centre of the circle, to end the ritual.

Witch One:

Spirits of the air be free
Depart to hill and vale and dell
Friends to us you'll ever be,
And so to thee hail and farewell!

And all ye friends that gather here
To celebrate our blessed Samhain
Merry meet and merry part
And merry meet again!