



House of Grimassi
Pathways to Knowledge
Ash, Birch and Willow



Your requested information packet

Dear Seeker,

Thank you for your interest in the Ash, Birch, and Willow tradition. As per your request we are pleased to send you this informational material. We hope you will find that the Ash, Birch, and Willow tradition *calls to you*, and that we will have the pleasure of you joining us on this Path.

ABW was created in 2006 by authors Raven Grimassi and Stephanie Taylor-Grimassi. It is a unique tradition that provides inner teachings and training that was once available to only a few. This situation has been corrected with the opening of the ABW tradition to any sincere seekers.

ABW does not focus on any specific cultural expression such as Celtic, Nordic, German, French, Italian, and so on. Instead the system expresses the commonality of pre-Christian European pagan beliefs and practices. In this way ABW has wider appeal and excludes no one because of nationality bias. This all inclusive nature of ABW is but one of its unique elements.

Please read the material in this information packet carefully and completely. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact us.

With all good wishes,

Raven Grimassi & Stephanie Taylor-Grimassi



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WITCHCRAFT VERSUS WICCA

Among the popular views today is the notion that Wicca is a religion invented by Gerald Gardner in the 1950s, and that witchcraft is something different from Wicca. Attached to the latter is the perception that witchcraft is the practice of magic and is not a religion. We also find the debate as to whether or not witchcraft is ancient or modern in how it is practiced in contemporary times.

In the tradition of Ash, Birch, and Willow we look at rooted concepts. Historian Jeffery Russell notes that the word *wicca* first appears in a 9th century trial against a man accused of using magic. In this usage the word indicates a man, and the feminine word of the period was *wicce*. It is from these words that the modern *witch* is derived. When we look at the usage of the word “wicca” in the 9th century we can safely conclude that a known group of people existed who could be called *wicca/wicce*. Unfortunately the records of this period are insufficient in order to reveal what the system of practice was as a whole.

In the 1950s an Englishman named Gerald Gardner wrote about a tradition of witchcraft that he claimed was the survival of an ancient religion in Britain. He associated this tradition with the word *wicca*. In the following decades, Wicca developed into structured religion based upon ancient concepts.

Among the ancient concepts, we find witches such as Medea depicted as a priestess of the goddess Hecate. This is among the earliest presentations of a witch in a religious role. In various ancient literary writings we also find references to witches associated with a triformis goddess (who in most cases is identified as Hecate, Diana, Proserpina). This demonstrates that at least the concept existed in ancient times.

In the tradition of Ash, Birch, and Willow, we do not engage in the tired old debate as to whether or not witchcraft is a magical practice or a religion. We also do not engage in debates about what is Wicca versus witchcraft and whether or not they are the same thing. Instead we offer teachings and practices that are rooted in ancient beliefs and customs that are made applicable to modern times. In this regard the tradition of ABW is ever ancient and ever new.

In essence, ABW is a religion and spiritual practice that also includes magic. It is a system that is intimately linked to the living cycles of nature and the divine emanation therein. It is through the

eight Sabbats (Wheel of the Year) and through the lunar rites, that personal alignments can be made to the forces of nature and the supernatural tides of our inner spirit. A deeper and



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meaningful understanding of the Wheel of the Year is revealed through carefully constructed mythical tales of a mated goddess and god pair who function together as animators of nature from season to season. The journey of the soul through each lifetime is reflected in the mythos of the Goddess and God.

As a magical system, ABW incorporates the Old Magic of pre-Christian practices that are native to ancient Europe. This magic involves spirits, deities, forces and powers. It also involves techniques for developing personal power and the “magical personality” of occult legend. The magical system of ABW is a nice balance of primal magic and ritual magic. It is closer to peasant witchcraft than to ceremonial magic (although traces of both do appear).

ABOUT THE COURSE OF STUDY

The Course of Study offered to you is, in essence, an “outer-court” training period that can lead to initiation into the tradition. It consists of nine monthly lessons that introduce you to the core and central teachings of ABW. These include an overview of such topics as:

1. The view and role of Deity
2. The ritual structure of ABW (altar setup, circle casting, tools, etc)
3. The seasonal rites
4. The lunar rites
5. Magical training and the Occult Arts
6. Non-material realms of existence
7. Spirits, faeries, and other beings
8. Inner Mystery Teachings
9. Ethics and codes of conduct



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INSTRUCTOR BIOS

Raven Grimassi and Stephanie Taylor-Grimassi are a teaching team in the ways of Old World Witchcraft.

Raven Grimassi is a practicing Witch, teacher, scholar and an award-winning author of over 20 books on Witchcraft, Wicca, Magic, and Inner Mysteries Traditions. He brings to the table over 40 years of personal experience, study, and an in-depth understanding of these fields. Raven is a popular lecturer and workshop presenter all across the United States. It is his life's work to preserve the roots of pre-Christian European spirituality and mystical themes. His published books include such classic works as *The Witches' Craft*, *Witchcraft: A Mystery Tradition*, *Old World Witchcraft*, *The Grimoire of the Thorn-Blooded Witch*, *The Cauldron of Memory*, and *Communing with the Ancestors*.

Raised by an Italian native mother, Raven's early years were filled with the lore of Old Italy. In the summer of 1969 he discovered Wicca and spent many years involved with various groups and traditions. These included Celtic Traditionalist Wicca, Brittish Wicca, and the Pictish-Gaelic Tradition. Raven also studied under Lady Sara Cunningham in the 1970s. In the 1980s he created the Arician Tradition, which had roots in Italian Witchcraft. He later left the Italian Path in 2004. He is now the co-director of the Ash, Birch and Willow Tradition, a non-cultural system of Old World Witchery, a system rooted in the commonality of old European Traditions without a focus on any singular culture.

Stephanie has been a practitioner of Wicca & Witchcraft for over 20 years. She is a 3rd degree initiate of a Celtic Traditionalist system of Wicca, and a 3rd degree initiate of Italian Witchcraft (the Arician Tradition). She is a legally ordained clergy of Witchcraft. Stephanie has studied, taught, and used the magical arts as tools of transformation throughout her lifetime. She is also a Tarot reader, astrologer, and a teacher of Old World Witchcraft.

They are co-creators and co-authors of the two Oracles decks, *The Well Worn Path*(2005), and *The Hidden Path*(2007; both now out of print.).

In 2006, Raven and Stephanie formed the Ash, Birch and Willow tradition of Witchcraft, and together they co-direct and co-teach the ABW Tradition through the House of Grimassi (a Mystery Tradition Fellowship) devoted to preserving pre-Christian European traditions). Through this Fellowship they offer home study courses on older forms of Witchcraft with students around the globe.

Raven and Stephanie currently live in New England and divide their time, respectively, between operating RavensLoft.biz cyber store, teaching workshops, co-directing the Mystery Tradition Fellowship known as the House of Grimassi, and of course, writing!



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COST OF THE COURSE OF STUDY

The cost of the Course of Study in Ash, Birch, and Willow is \$35 per month plus an initial \$10 one time administration fee, meaning that for the first month, you will be charged a total of \$45. Membership includes a monthly lesson for nine months, a private discussion Group forum online, networking opportunities, and unlimited access to instructors through email. With the first lesson, students also receive a pouch containing several objects to be used for alignment to the spirit of Ash, Birch, and Willow.

If you know that another demanding commitment of your time is planned over the 9 month period in which you want to take this Course of Study, please wait until you are truly able to focus on the Course.

Please understand that this is not a Course of Study for people merely wanting to add to their eclectic practice or for those **not** wishing to practice a complete tradition of Witchcraft. If you have come to a point in your practice that you are ready for the next step, then apply for this Course of Study.

If you have questions or would like more information, email us at ash.birch.willow@gmail.com.



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If you would like to contact us please do so via one of the following methods

Mail House of Grimassi
P.O. Box 80607
Springfield, MA 01138-0607

E-Mail – ash.birch.willow@gmail.com

Phone - 413-301-7252

Form check list

All of the following forms must be completed and returned in order for your registration to be complete.

- Registration Form
- Tuition Agreement
- Contractual Agreement
- Copyright Notice
- My Personal Commitment

Please mail all of your completed forms to

House of Grimassi
P.O. Box 80607 Springfield,
MA 01138-0607



House of Grimassi
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REGISTRATION FORM

Date: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____

Email address: _____

Birth date: _____



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TUITION AGREEMENT

I understand that I am registering for 9 monthly lessons. I authorize an initial charge of \$10 as an administrative fee along with \$35 for my first lesson (\$45 total first charge). I further authorize 8 subsequent monthly charges thereafter of \$35 each month for the remaining eight month period to the conclusion of this Course of Study. Total charge for the nine month course is \$315.00 (not including the initial administrative fee of \$10). **I understand that I am obligating myself to this financial commitment regardless of my choice not to participate or not to complete the Course of Study.**

Monthly auto credit/debit card

Credit Card:

Visa # _____

MasterCard # _____

Discover # _____

Expiration date _____

CCV # _____ (Last three numbers on back of card in signature area)

I authorize the Raven's Loft, on behalf of the House of Grimassi, to charge my card as provided in the contractual agreement for the course of study.

PayPal Subscription created through Raven's Loft

If you would like to pay for the course in full, please send a check or money order made out to **Raven's Loft** along with the registration forms.

Signature: _____ Date: _____



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COPYRIGHT NOTICE

(AND AS IT HARM NONE)

Please note that the writings of any author are considered to be "intellectual property." This means that it is his or her creative production. Authors make a living off of their writings just as anyone does from the work they do or the things they produce. When someone copies an author's work in any manner and either gives it away to someone else or resells it, the author is therefore denied his or her rightful payment for the product. In effect this equates to robbing the author of his or her earnings. Such an act is called "intellectual theft" and is harmful to the author because it decreases his or her ability to make a living.

In consideration of this fact, the student must sign this agreement not to reproduce the material contained in this course in any form whatsoever, and not to allow others to do so. This signed form must be returned along with the registration form.

I certify that I have read the copyright notice and agree not to make copies of the course material or allow copies to be made by others in any form or manner whatsoever.

Legal Signature

Date

Printed name of student



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MY PERSONAL COMMITMENT

I accept membership in this Course of Study with the commitment to study monthly and to complete the Course. I have considered the time and financial commitment in this decision and feel I am able to apply my time and pay the tuition that will allow me to take this Course without interruption. I understand that a period of commitment between student and teacher is traditional in the study of Witchcraft, and I intend to honor this tradition.

In consideration of the teachings of the Old Ways, we value your word, which speaks to the character and integrity of the individual giving it. Although we do understand that circumstances and events arise in everyone's lives, please communicate with us to keep us informed of any changes that would shift your life focus or incur a financial burden.

All we ask is that you honor your agreement and if you encounter challenges to your commitment please communicate and explain why. This will help us help you by considering alternatives.

Signature _____ Date _____



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CONTRACTUAL AGREEMENT

I, the undersigned, acknowledge that I have read the Course Description, Course Tuition, Copyright notice and Personal Commitment. I understand that the Course of Study is intended to be a monthly electronic lesson format with payment made in advance of receiving each monthly lesson.

I understand and agree that I will continue to be charged for lessons until the course is completed. **I understand that I am obligating myself to this financial commitment regardless of my choice not to participate or not to complete the Course of Study.**

I understand that if my debit/credit card is declined or the information becomes outdated that it is my responsibility to correct immediately. If I do not attend to this after being notified, I understand that I will be put on inactive student status, which means I forfeit receiving lessons and I cannot participate in the group list discussions until I reconcile the matter and will be responsible for any surcharges do to my neglect.

I certify that I have read the copyright notice and will not make copies of the course material or allow copies to be made by others in any form or manner whatsoever. I further agree not to share the Course of Study material with anyone not registered in the Course, nor allow anyone to read the material. I also certify that I am 18 or older as of the signing of this document.

Student signature

Date