

As an offering to begin the manuscripts, I give the following ritual playlet to be performed as an Esbat Rite.

Esbat traditionally means to “sport” or “frolic” and is the times Witches gather to practice their “Craft”.

Usually associated with the New or Full Moons, Esbat, however, can be done at any convenient gathering of Witches.

The following rite was performed on Dec. 2nd, 2012 at the WCC facility in their temporary headquarters at the Bavia Arts Center in Toronto, Ont.

This is copyrighted material, but I allow Covens to use the Rite for their own fun and Craft practice, as long as proper credit is given as to authorship.

It is a playlet commemorating the change of the Seasons, when the Dark Lord assumes ruler-ship from the Lady and should be performed deep in the Autumn Season.

COURT OF THE DARK LORD

When the Witches have gathered at the “Covenstead”, before entering the Ritual Chamber, the Coven Summoner, dressed as a Sinister Fawn, gives his usual admonitions before rites and then announces in a foreboding tone:

TONIGHT, YOU ARE SUMMONED TO THE UNDERWORLD, TO THE COURT OF THE DARK LORD, WHERE HE WILL RENDER JUDGMENT UPON YOU.

The Sinister Fawn then leads the Coven into the ritual chamber, dividing the people down both sides to stand back between two thrones, set at opposite ends of the chamber.

Between the thrones is a table set with food to be shared later, traditionally a ham dinner with all the necessary fixings. The ritual chamber is in semi-darkness, or very subdued light.

At the far end throne the Dark Lord sits, scowling at the people as they enter and take their places along the chamber walls, between the thrones.

Beside the Dark Lord another fawn squats, holding the Dark Lord’s Tarot Deck.

When all are in place, the Sinister Fawn says to the Dark, Lord:

ALL THE GUESTS ARE ASSEMBLED, MY LORD.

The Dark Lord rises and circumambulates the area, looking at each of the assembled “guests” and scowling. He says: PERHAPS WE WILL JUST KEEP ALL THESE PEOPLE WITH US IN THE UNDERWORLD. (One should remember, it is good to allow the cast to ad lib in character).

Returning to his place before his throne and pointing to the entrance, he says to the Sinister Fawn:

WHAT IS THAT NOISE AND COMMOTION AND “LIGHT” I SEE FROM OUTSIDE?

Sinister Fawn: I PERCEIVE IT IS THE LADY OF LIGHT APPROACHING, MY LORD! The S.F. moves to the entrance and greets the Lady as she enters, accompanied by an attendant priestess, with the Lady's Tarot Deck. (The priestess also carries a bag of unlit candles and candlesticks and lighting tool).

The S.F. escorts the Lady to her throne. She wears a bright robe covering a dark dress.

The Sinister Fawn, being the Seneschal of the Underworld, does all the deference and bowing due the Lady's station. She is all sweetness and light in character in accepting the deference. The S.F. steps aside as the Dark Lord moves from his throne to greet the Lady.

They embrace and he helps her doff her light robe and appear in her dark mien, whereupon she becomes a "shrew from Hell" type.

The Dark Lord: WE GREET THEE, LADY.....

The Lady: WAIT A MINUTE ARE YOU STILL KEEPING THIS PLACE DARK AND DREARY? CAN'T WE HAVE SOME LIGHT? I BROUGHT MY PRIESTESS TO DO THOSE HONORS.

Dark Lord: YOU WANT YOUR PRIESTESS TO REDECORATE MY UNDERWORLD?

Lady: YES, BECAUSE YOU KNOW I HATE YOUR TASTE IN DÉCOR!

Dark Lord, looking at the assembled people: EVERY YEAR SHE BRINGS LIGHT TO THE UNDERWORLD!

Throwing up his hands, he looks exasperated, stomps back to his throne, saying: ALRIGHT, GET IT DONE.

He sits and sulks, as the attending priestess moves widdershins, placing and lighting candles at the Four Corners of the Underworld.

When finished, the attending priestess sits down beside the Lady's throne.

Dark Lord, looking across at the Lady: IS THAT MORE TO YOUR LIKING, MY LADY?

The Lady: I'M COMFY. YOU MAY CONTINUE NOW.

Then the Dark Lord gets up and moves to stand before the Lady and continues: WE GREET THEE, LADY, HERE AT THE WANING OF THE YEAR. SOON, THE WILD HUNT WILL TEAR THE SKY AND WE WILL SUMMON THOSE I CHOOSE TO JOIN US IN THE UNDERWORLD.

Lady: THOSE YOU CHOOSE? RULE THE WORLD JUSTLY AND WISELY IN MY STEAD, BUT TAKE ONLY THE SICK AND THE WEAK, THAT THE STRONG SHALL GREET ME WITH THE SPRINGTIDE.

Dark Lord: THE SICK AND THE WEAK? THEY'RE NO FUN! IT TAKES THEM TOO LONG TO REGENERATE.

Looking at the assembled people, the Dark Lord smirks and says: SHE THINKS I GET THE SICK AND WEAK ONES. I ALSO GET THE UNTIMELY DEAD. YOU ALL HAVE BEEN SUMMONED HERE AS UNTIMELIES.

The Lady: THAT'S ENOUGH, HADES! YOU JUST CAN'T HAVE EVERYONE ALL AT ONCE. THESE PEOPLE MUST BE ALLOWED TO LEAVE HERE TONIGHT, SO THEY WILL BE ABLE TO GREET ME AND DO MY HONORS IN THE RITES OF SPRING.

Dark Lord: OH COME ON, PERSEPHONE! YOU MEAN I CAN'T KEEP ALL THESE LOVELY PEOPLE HERE WITH US?

The Lady: CERTAINLY NOT! WHERE WOULD THE WORLD BE IF YOU KEPT ALL SPIRITS ALL THE TIME? STOP BEING GREEDY!

The Dark Lord ponders, moves around, looking at the people and grumbling and returns to stand by his throne and finally says: ALRIGHT, AS A GESTURE TO MY LADY, WE REPRIEVE THEM ALL! He sits back down.

The Sinister Fawn, giving a loud sigh of relief, and announcing to the assembled people: PHEEEWWWW! YOU HAVE BEEN REPRIEVED! YOU WILL ALL BE ABLE TO RETURN HOME TONIGHT!

S.F. to the people: NOW SIT DOWN IN PLACE UPON THE FLOOR AND AWAIT YOUR FATE, FOR THE DARK LORD IS COMING FOR EACH ONE OF YOU. AFTER HE PASSES, IF YOU STILL HAVE AN UNRESOLVED ISSUE FROM THE LAST SUMMER AND NEED FURTHER ENLIGHTENMENT, GO TO THE LADY'S THRONE AND HEAR HER WORDS. The S.F. steps over to the table of food in the center and waits.

The Dark Lord rises, followed by his attending fawn carrying his Tarot Deck and moves to the first sitting person on his left side.

The attending fawn shuffles the Tarot and fans the deck out upon the floor in front of the person and tells him or her to select three cards from at random from the deck and turn them up for the Dark Lord to read.

The Dark Lord reads the three cards and announces to the person what they portend.

He moves to the next person in line and the process is repeated all around the circle of the assembled “guests”.

Those wishing to hear portends from the Lady, move to kneel before her throne, after the Dark Lord passes them. Her attending priestess shuffles and lays the Lady’s cards out for the unresolved issue a person tells the Lady, or follows the Lady’s direction as to a particular short reading.

When most to the readings have been done and the Dark Lord has returned to his throne, the Sinister Fawn, as Seneschal, announces:
THE FATES HAVE BEEN TOLD. NOW THE DARK LORD BIDS YOU TO FEAST
AT THE BOUNTY HE HAS PROVIDED.
THE UNDERWORLD IS NOT A PLACE OF DREAD, BUT WHERE ONE RESTS
AND IS REFRESHED TO RETURN TO THE LAND OF THE LIVING.
NOT BY THE DARK LORD’S WILL, BUT BY INTERCESSION OF THE LADY IS
ALL THIS MADE POSSIBLE.
AS YOU GO FORTH FROM HERE TONIGHT, KEEP THE LADY IN YOUR HEARTS
AND PREPARE TO GREET HER AGAIN WITH THE COMING SPRINGTIDE.

The people/Coveners may get up and partake of the offered food from the table in the center.

During the feasting, the Dark Lord moves to the Lady’s throne and takes her by the hand and both circumambulate the area smiling in blessing upon the Coveners. He escorts her back to her throne and steps to his own and sits. They may both converse with any of the feasting Coveners.

When the feasting is pretty much over, the Sinister Fawn speaks a dismissal:
TO ALL THOSE PHYSICAL AND TO ALL THOSE IN SPIRIT, WHO HAVE BEEN
ATTRACTED HERE TONIGHT: PAX TIBI, PAX VOBIS ET CONSUMMATUM EST!

The Rite is over. The Ritual Chamber may be cleared and the Coven may depart.

Those playing the parts of the Dark Lord and Lady of Light could be a Coven’s High Priesthood, or some Coveners of mature age.

This Rite is given out to the Craft to be played as is, or to be embellished as a group may see fit. Primarily, have fun with it.

It is an example of the things one would find in the books of THE SACRED PENTAGRAPH, which will be offered in the coming Year.

Blessed Be

Tarostar

Dec. 16, 2012