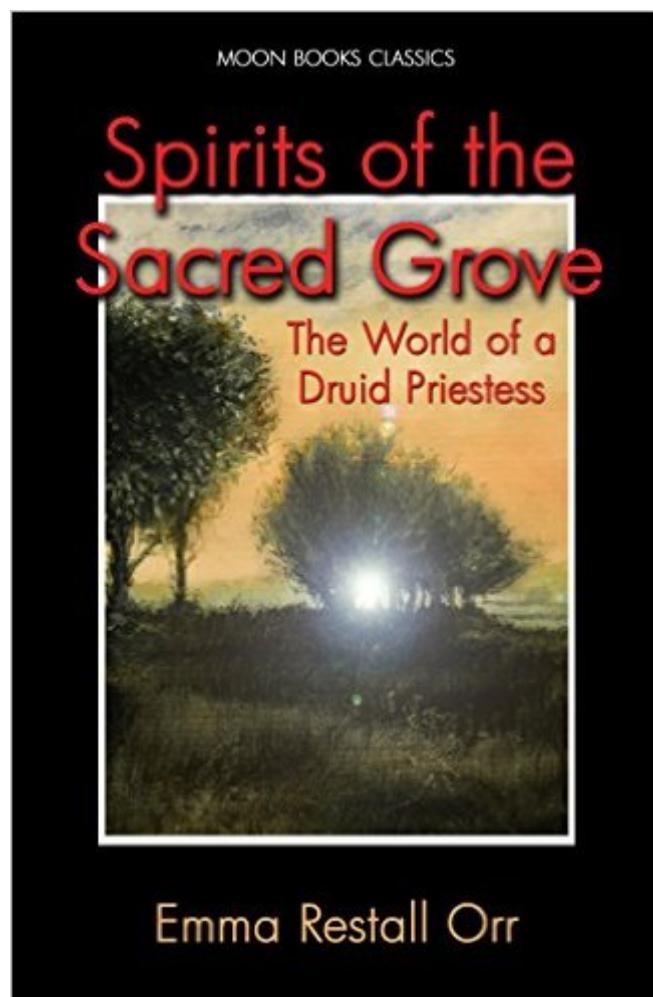


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Spirits Of The Sacred Grove



Emma Restall Orr



Synopsis

For many, the word Druidry conjures up images of white-robed figures involved in esoteric rituals. But modern Druidry is not wrapped up in a veil of secrecy - it is celebrated openly, in the sunlight of the meadow or the shady leafiness of forest glade. Druids are passionate about the environment, and their worship is above all focused on Nature through the celebration of the changing seasons of the year. Spirits of the Sacred Grove is a very personal journey through the seasons seen through the eyes of a modern female Druid. Emma Restall Orr takes the reader through the cycles of nature, from the chaos of Samhain or Hallowe'en into the dark of winter, through the energy of spring and into the bright summer months - then back through autumn to Samhain. At the same time she acts as a guide along the paths of the sacred rituals. Spirits of the Sacred Grove reveals Druidry as an accessible and compelling spiritual path that offers enormous potential for personal healing and empowerment. Exploring rites of passage and weaving in references to many other spiritual traditions, this book is an intensely rich mixture of the ideas and images of a Pagan Druid priestess.

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Customer Reviews

As I see it, there is one very serious problem with the neo-Pagan movement: we are so focused on the mysticism inherent in our Way that the true mystics among us are often lost in the sea of poseurs. While I believe that we all partake of the mystic experience from time to time, there is in my mind a great difference between the average Joe like me and the "everyday mystic;" that is to say those who seem to actively live in a state of mystical awareness. Christian literature is rife with examples of these folk: Meister Eckhart and Hildegard of Bingen are among the better known, but

former Dominican Matthew Fox and the late Thomas Merton also come to mind as relatively contemporary examples. And let us not forget the late Mother Theresa. Whether Ms. Restall Orr is an "everyday mystic" or not is best left up to the individual reader to decide. For my part, I feel she is either an authentic Pagan mystic, or an extremely accomplished impostor. But I tend to lean toward the former, because even the best poseur is ultimately incapable of counterfeiting the true passion that I find mirrored in Emma's work. Her antecedents aside, I found this work to be very inspiring, even though I am Wiccan, and not a Druid. Still, I am captivated by the depth of feeling, understanding and devotion that Emma expresses in her work. She is, in my mind, a mystic trying diligently to describe the nature and quality of her experience of the Divine, in the context of her Pagan beliefs. I strongly feel that the Pagan community could benefit immensely from more works of this type, expressing the heart of our faith, and fewer "how to" manuals.

First and Foremost, this book is not a text book. It is a very personal account of life through the eyes and experience of a highly intelligent, talented and very special druid priestess, who is not "flaky" by any means and who has been practising and living her craft for most of her life - certainly more than 10 years. This book transports you to Emma's world - a truly magical place which most of us can only dream of glimpsing. This book is real and inspiring, Emma's language is pure poetry and I feel sad for anybody who cannot see the beauty and passion in her words and who cannot be truly inspired by them. Druidry is the quest for Awen, divine inspiration ... it is not about new age magical practices. If you are a pagan, buy this book. If you are not a pagan, buy this book!

Thank Goodness this isn't another "how-to" roast apples at Samhain or "how to" read a ritual poem straight from the book--there are countless examples of those. Instead, this is written straight from the experience of a Druid master...several days or events in her life, and does not tell the reader what to think or how to be. Discovering how Emma sees and connects with the world is moving, real and extraordinary. This is one of my five-must-haves in my own collection. If you are stuck entirely in your mind, or have a problem with non-ordinary reality, however, this won't be for you, because Emma sees and speaks with tree spirits daily. She is deeply connected to her grove and may call forth Pan. Not just 'pretending,' mind you! It is truly revealing of a person who lives communion with nature, not just one who goes through the motions in costume, which is such a refreshing break from the posing that goes on in nature-religions-culture. This book is invaluable to those practicing shamanism, and/or communicating with spirits of nature. But first, you have to believe.

I've been a practicing Pagan for over eight years, and this is one of the best books I've ever read. No, it's definitely not a how-to manual. Instead, it is a heartfelt, deeply moving, and inspiring look at a woman whose Pagan faith is woven throughout her day-to-day life. I agree with the previous reviewer who said that our community needs less how-to books and more essays of this nature, because all of the spells, rituals, and instructions in the world won't let someone truly know how it feels to live our faith. This book, though, does an excellent job of it.

I happen to be a druid, although not in Emma's British Druid Order. I thoroughly enjoyed the book. I have to agree with the previous reviewer, though, it is NOT a textbook! It is a personal, poetic and, perhaps, slightly flakey answer to the question "what is druidry?" framed as a journey through the sacred year. As a practitioner, I drew some wonderful insights from reading the book, simply by seeing ideas presented in a different light than I'd seen them before. Conversely, I can see how someone from one of the more Reconstructionist or magically- oriented druid groups might find this book to be silly, simply because they think that druidry "should" be something else. There are multiple types of druidry around these days, and Emma's is one of them. This book gives the flavor of her path, but it teaches as an example, not as an instruction book.

Spirits of the Sacred Grove is not a "how to" book. It is a rich, deep, powerful, gloriously exotic perception of the world which many see to be dusty and bitty and mundane. An intimate journey through the seasons of the year, this book is truly an inspiration.

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