

CULTURE

THE WITCHING HOUR: **STEP INTO THE MODERN OCCULT**

by [Alex Brzezicka](#)

TikTok spells, cottagecore and crystals galore: something wicked this way comes.

This Halloween, we put a spell on you. Nothing to be scared of though. The oblivion we offer is sweet like the scented candles and incense sticks. It's crystal clear that magic is alive and among us. Only settings are a bit different, from creaky cottages, dark woods and word of mouth (quiet though so we won't burn on a stake), the witches migrated to the digital dimension of TikTok #witchtok, Instagram and YouTube and populated black screens of every, even most respectful, household.

It's so embedded in pop culture that when thousands of witches, including Lana Del Rey, in 2016 joined forces to place a mass hex on Donald Trump in 2016, nobody was really shocked but cheered on the spiritual circle. In 2018, the University of Edinburgh has appointed its first pagan honorary chaplain and over lockdown many went down the Wiccan way, exploring the themes of magick and nature. With Halloween creeping in, we pay respect to the dark icons that enchanted us when growing up and cleanse the air for a new coven to take over.





For many of us Elvira, *Charmed*'s sisters Halliwell or *Harry Potter*'s Hermione Granger were the epitome of feminist bad-ass energy, able to go from supernaturally lovely to seeking bloody revenge at the drop of their spikey hats. Needless to say, some still have shivers thinking of Yubaba from 'Spirited Away' if they've watched it as a kid and soft spot for 'Kiki's Delivery Service' main character and, obviously, the black cat, Jiji. Just cute. Though last decades spooky cultural artefacts are still worth digging into, it's about time to move on to the modern obsessions. Gen Z, born and bred on the most potent magical soil of the Internet, has its own musings and practices.

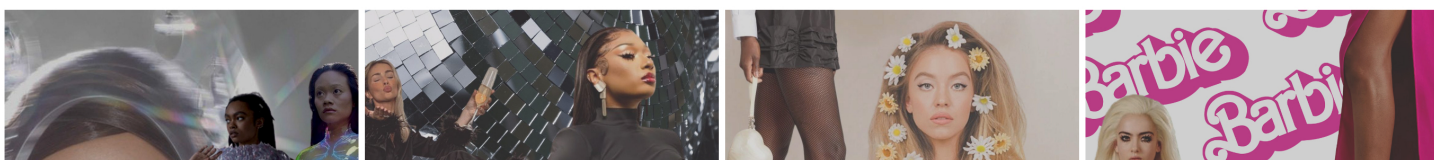
The Netflix revamp of our favourite coming of age witch series, *Chilling Adventures of Sabrina*, lingering with everything celestial on the wide spectrum of occult, Satanism and Christianity, got us absolutely gagging over the good-evil teenage dilemmas, diverse character representation and, obviously, the bad-ass protagonist. Anyone thirsty for some more magical grotesque has to dip their fangs into *The Love Witch*, as absurdly pleasing as deeply disturbing, black comedy marrying slashers, Hitchcock and 60s aesthetics. It's a truly bewitching cult classic.



Today, the real-life witches scout for initiates and exchange spells on social media. Witchtok hashtags with over a billion views attracts anyone interested in the supernatural. It's a cosy home of cottagecore (a romanticized interpretation of western agricultural life), crystals and astrology tips. Creators like @coko_thewitch or @hothighpriestess attract millions with their DIY spells guides, tarot readings and a fair share of straightforward positive energy. Both content and community are usually LGBTQ+ driven, providing new, and so needed, perspectives on the magical realm. WLW witch chapter enchants thousands worldwide who deserve and demand to be included in the narrative. Through fan art and short videos, they manifest their magnificent presence.

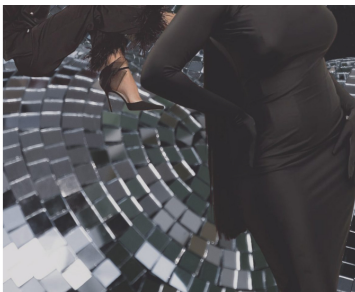
Even though the mainstream cultural dialogue around the subject is only the tip of the iceberg, it opens up doors to deeper inner self-reflections and often sparks up more of a genuine interest in witchcraft. After all, in the midst of chaotic lives, chasing imaginary concepts of success and money, magic doesn't seem that irrational. What's more, it gives us the power to face our demons head-on and the possibility for spiritual growth. Over time, the archetype of the witch went under some structural refurbishments, polished over and over by the next, more aware and open-minded generations. Yet one thing hasn't changed. Witches are still the personification of independence and divine femininity with a strong connection with nature and the need to heal their communities. Though the system worked really hard to transform the witch into an evil incarnated, it failed. Anyone fearing their fierce energy should pinch themselves to check if they haven't fallen victim to one of patriarchal curses. Shake off the illusions. The witching hour is upon us.

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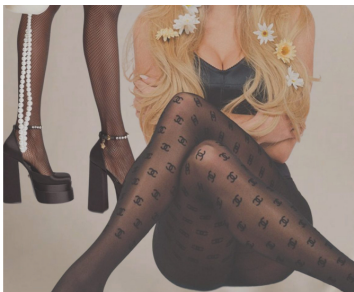




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