

BRIANA SAUSSY

MAKING

Weaving Together the Everyday and the Extraordinary

MAGIC



BOOK EXCERPT

PRELUDE

Somewhere in the world right now there is a young man collecting railroad spikes. He is walking the tracks while the sun rises, picking up the big iron nails that are pulled up and cast aside by the force of the speeding trains. Once he has enough, he will take them back to his newly purchased property, sink them into the soft earth, magically nailing down his home and land and protecting all who dwell upon it with the strength of iron.

Somewhere in the world right now a woman kneels down as she strikes a match, lights a candle, closes her eyes, and recites a blessing for her beloveds. After rising up on creaky knees, she kisses the face of her favored holy helper, offering up a tin *milagro* tied to a bright ribbon as a gesture of thanksgiving. She is not alone, for there are many others, speaking to their chosen saints, angels, and holy helpers too.

Somewhere in the world right now a child is recounting her dream, while a grown-up listens, helping her make sense of it and asking her of the ways that the dream world speaks to the world here and now.

Somewhere in the world right now a couple about to wed sits down together. They eat figs and dates, drink champagne, and laughingly fill a clear crystal jar with layers of golden honey, red and pink rose petals, and orange flowers, before topping it off with a bit of hot cinnamon, so that their relationship will

always be sweet, their marriage blessed, and their lovemaking spicy.

Somewhere in the world right now a mother prepares a sacred bath for her son who is moving into puberty. She adds roots and flowers, leaves and stems, oils and salts, so that her child is protected and safe as he navigates the ever more intense labyrinth that is young male adulthood.

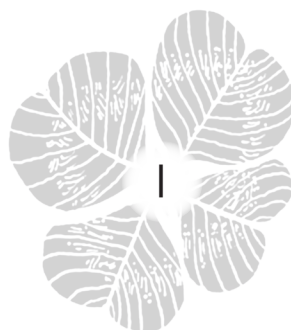
Somewhere in the world right now a soon-to-be father sees his partner struggling in the early pains of labor and draws an old knife out of his pocket, placing it under the birthing bed, so that its honed edge can cut the pain of labor as easily as it cuts through butter.

Somewhere in the world right now people are building their altars, making offerings, praying down hard, and discovering the power of the extraordinary in a thousand unique ways. They are not priestesses in remote mountains or shamans in hard-to-find villages. They are ordinary people with families, jobs, worries, and loves, just like you and just like me. They are men and women, old ones and young ones, creating better, deeper lives.

Somewhere in the world right now there are people from every conceivable culture, walk of life, and set of experiences who all have one thing in common: they have remembered. They are making magic.

Are you ready to make it too?





REMEMBER YOUR MAGIC

The universe is full of magical things
patiently waiting for our wits to grow sharper.

EDEN PHILLPOTTS, *A Shadow Passes*

Now it is time to remember ourselves, not just a little bit or piece by piece, but wholly and completely. Now it is time to remember our magic. Magic of leaf and root, hearth and home, needle and thread, candle and prayer, feather and fang. Magic that weaves all that is extraordinary back into right relationship to our everyday lives, bridging the ways that we have grown divided—against ourselves and each other. Magic that heals and restores. Much of what you need in order to make this magic you already have in your home. All of what you need to make this magic resides in your brilliant, crimson, beating heart.

Magic is a wild animal. It is hawk and eagle, raven and owl, coyote and fox, wolf and wildcat, badger and bear. It shifts into all of the shapes and forms in between. Magic has been hunted and harried, tortured and trapped. It has witnessed its kin killed and its natural habitats destroyed. And like all wild creatures that find ways against the odds to survive, magic has grown careful and cautious, wise and wily. It is seen only in glimpses—a flash of eye, a swish of tail, a blur of motion—and then we are left with only trees and shadows and stars. It cannot be

pursued in the usual ways. It is not something you can buy with money, earn through good behavior, or attain through the heat of drama and risk. The wilderness in which this particular wild animal resides is not found in some faraway and exotic place. It is here, and it is absurdly, wildly, free.

For magic, like the wild itself, is not found in a place we go to. Rather, it resides in the places where we always are. Magic moves through the wilderness of the soul and is found in the soul soil of everyday life and experience. It is found in the doing of the laundry, the making of beds and grocery lists, catching up with friends, having babies, taking lovers, going to school, making money, commuting to work, buying clothes, and cooking dinner. Every single one of these acts has been marked up and down and all around with the paw prints of magic. Each seemingly banal activity bears magic's scent trails and claw marks.

It is hard to see this at first and almost impossible to believe. All mysteries, so we are told, have been discovered, named, bagged, and tagged. There is nothing unknown, nothing of wonder to find here,

nothing to see. This conventional wisdom has been the greatest teacher in the present age, and it has taught us incorrectly. A world without wild things is greatly diminished; this we know. The same is true for lives lived without the touch of magic. In all places we look, magic is a mark carrying depth and scope, an essential ingredient for a life well lived.

Magic is present in our earliest civilizations in the form of a dazzling array of rituals, ceremonies, and holy places both made and found. It has moved through all of our great religions, despite what the

official teachings and proclamations might say. It has even traveled in surprising places like the roots of rational thought and philosophy fathered by Socrates, a man who heeded a wise oracle and listened to the voice emanating from his soul. When we begin to see all of the places where magic has walked and stalked, denned and fed, we see clearly that it has been with us, loping, running, flying by our side and throughout our daily lives since time beyond time. Where else would we expect to find it if not exactly here in our midst, hiding in plain sight?



BRIANA SAUSSY is a writer, teacher, spiritual counselor, and ritualist dedicated to the restoration and remembering of the sacred arts. She combines a practical and creative approach to spirituality that includes the riches of the perennial world religions, the contributions of modern psychology to the search for meaning, and the often overlooked bodies of wisdom contained in folk magic, divination, and storytelling practices. Briana studied Eastern and Western classics, philosophy, mathematics, and science at St. John's College (Annapolis and Santa Fe), and is a student of ancient Greek and Sanskrit.

Briana comes from a diverse lineage of South Texans whose ethnic heritage includes Scotch-Irish, Cherokee, Chickasaw, Mexican, and Jewish roots, and who have informed her own direct experience with survivals of fragmented folk magic and storytelling traditions. She lives in her hometown of San Antonio, Texas, with her husband and two sons, as well as various furred, finned, and feathered friends. For more, visit brianasaussy.com.

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