

Foreword

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The faery tradition encompasses a wide range of themes, sources, and interpretations. The core tradition is many centuries old, and new presentations appear with each generation, in tradition, in story and song, and nowadays in popular entertainment. There has been a disturbing tendency in recent years to reduce faery material down to the most simplistic trite entertainment possible...a contrived simulation of faery lore rather than a true connection to this most ancient spiritual tradition.

No matter what form it takes, the main premise of faery magic is that there are spirit beings that occupy the land and sea, that are of the mysterious world behind, within, and beneath, manifest nature. This premise is thousands of years old, and found in traditions worldwide: every country, race, and culture, has its version of the faery tradition. Next come practices, which are ways of building and sustaining relationships between humans and the many faery races. These practices vary widely, but all have a core of connection with one another, no matter where they are found. It might seem, to the thoughtful reader that while religion so often brings strife, the faery tradition implies and offers unity and amity, worldwide.

The work of Daphne Charters is a classic example of a particular way of relating to faeries, something which is uniquely British, and specifically English. It carries the stamp of English culture of the early 20th century, rather than (say) that of the Ireland or Brittany, Scotland or Scandinavia, each having related but very different faery traditions. The seership and writings that Daphne produced are in a direct line from the upsurge of interest in faeries that swept through Britain, England especially, during and after the First World War of 1914-1918. Her understanding and presentation of the faery allies is closer to that of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, creator of Sherlock Holmes,

who strongly believed in faeries, than it is to that of W B Yeats, or of Fiona Macleod who is perhaps the most profound esoteric writer on faery mysticism and magic, who wrote in the late 19th century, before the First World War swept away the old Europe forever.

The upsurge of interest in faeries that manifested in Britain in the early 20th century was part of the intense cathartic changes brought about by the First World War, and went hand in hand with an upsurge of Spiritualism, which in those days was often linked not so much to the ancient folkloric faery tradition, but to psychic explorations regarding faeries. This approach continued well into the 1950's, and is, indeed, the overall ambience of Daphne's visions, vocabulary, and writing. Nowadays this uniquely English vision and interpretation has been absorbed into the world of the fantasy novel or cartoon or fairy postcard. Yet to Daphne this was not whimsy or fantasy, but the real experiences of her direct communion with spirit beings who were close to her, and who, she asserted, are always close to us all.

While her language and approach to the faeries is strongly cultural, strongly 20th century middle-class English, much that Daphne reveals is timeless, and could equally well have been found in ancient Greece or Celtic Europe thousands of years ago. The cultural viewpoint is different, but the core insights remain more or less unchanged. An interesting example of this is found in her descriptions of her guide or ally Normus, revealing the depths of the Earth to her. She seems to be uncomfortable with this vision, but does not (as Christians tend to do) describe it as evil or to be shunned. These episodes might remind us of the testimony of the 17th century Scottish witch Isobel Gowdie who said at her trial that she was taken to the center of the earth, where she dined with the faery king and queen in a place full of light.

We can trace this UnderWorld theme in faery tradition back to the most ancient sources. It is found in the metaphysics of the Greek/Sicilian philosopher Empedocles (circa 490-430 BC), who saw the volcanic core of

the Earth as a source of cosmic birth and creation: the star power within our planet. Nowadays marine biologists have discovered that where the volcanic fires rise deep in the oceans, new life forms abound, hitherto unknown to modern science. This reiterates the deepest teachings of the esoteric faery tradition, namely that life originates in the heart of the planet and rises to the surface. Curiously, materialist evolutionary theory based on the work of Darwin, says something similar.

There are many connections in Daphne's work to ancient philosophy, magic, and metaphysics. Nevertheless, her visions and her writing are uniquely her own, and certainly not based on source books or study. This gives them a powerful naïve quality, an undeniable genuineness, so different from those fairy-fashion pot-boilers that merely quote and regurgitate lore and information from other books. Indeed, in her day, such copyist commercial faery books hardly existed.

As someone who has experienced lived and taught the esoteric faery and UnderWorld tradition for over 30 years as a source of transformative and power spiritual magic, I recommend to you the collected writings of Daphne Charters.

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