

GUMBO

ya ya



The Legend of
LaLaurie: Inconvenient
Truths and Tales of the
Haunted LaLaurie
Mansion

St. Nicolas, the Bringer
of Gifts & Reanimator
of Corpses

Simple Money Tea

Ancient Milkshake
Love Spell

Black Witch's Salt

New Year's
Protection Bottle

Preserving Traditions,
One Foot at a Time

No.4

Copyright 2013 Creole Moon Publications

Gumbo Ya Ya #4 2013 is published by Creole Moon Publications, Prescott Valley, AZ. 86312, USA. Copyright © 2013 Denise Alvarado, All rights reserved. Photographs and illustrations copyright 2013, Denise Alvarado or are in the public domain. Individual articles are under copyright of their respective authors.

No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, or mechanical, including photocopy, or any information storage and retrieval system, without permission from the authors, except in brief quotations embodied in critical articles and reviews.

ISBN-13: 978-1494445737 (paper)

ISBN-10: 1494445735 (paper)

Primary Category: Body, Mind & Spirit/Magick Studies

Country of Publication: United States

Publication Date: 12th Moon in the year 2013

Language: English



www.creolemoonpublications.com

CONTENTS

St. Nicolas, The Wonderworker and Bringer of Gifts by Denise Alvarado	8
Petition St. Nicolas on Behalf of the Less Fortunate by Denise Alvarado.....	19
Simple Money Tea by Madrina Angelique.....	20
Ancient Milkshake Love Spell by Carolina Dean.....	21
Black Witch's Salt by Denise Alvarado.....	22
New Years Protection Bottle by Madrina Angelique	26
The Legend of LaLaurie: Inconvenient Truths by Alyne Pustanio.....	27
Tales of the Haunted LaLaurie Mansion by Alyne Pustanio.....	30
Preserving Traditions, One Foot at a Time..... by Oskar Yetzirah.....	38

OFFICIAL LEGAL HOOPLA

Feel free to pass the ezine around but do not extract the content and use it for any commercial or personal purpose. The ezine must be left intact as it is and may not be resold on any download or torrent sites. or anywhere else. To do so is a violation of federal copyright laws and violators will be pursued to the fullest extent of the law.

ABOUT GUMBO YA YA

Gumbo Ya Ya is the Conjure Art-zine published by Creole Moon Publications. In each issue, you will find different information about New Orleans-style conjure, Texas Conjure and Southern Hoodoo in general. Yes, there may be a few things from the old grimoires or something else off the beaten path, but hey, that's called creative license. The purpose of the publication is to get folks talking and thinking, thinking and talking—all at the same time—you know, like a true Louisiana gumbo ya ya!

Gumbo Ya Ya provides up to date information about the goings-on of Creole Moon Publications and our special sister projects and partners: Hoodoo and Conjure Magazine, MedicinesandCurios.com, Conjure Club, Crossroads University and anything else I feel like writing about and promoting.

Have comments or questions about this zine? Feel free to email me at gumboyaya@creolemoon.com

Brightest blessings,

Denise Alvarado

Editor in Chief

Creole Moon Publications

Website: <http://www.creolemoon.com>

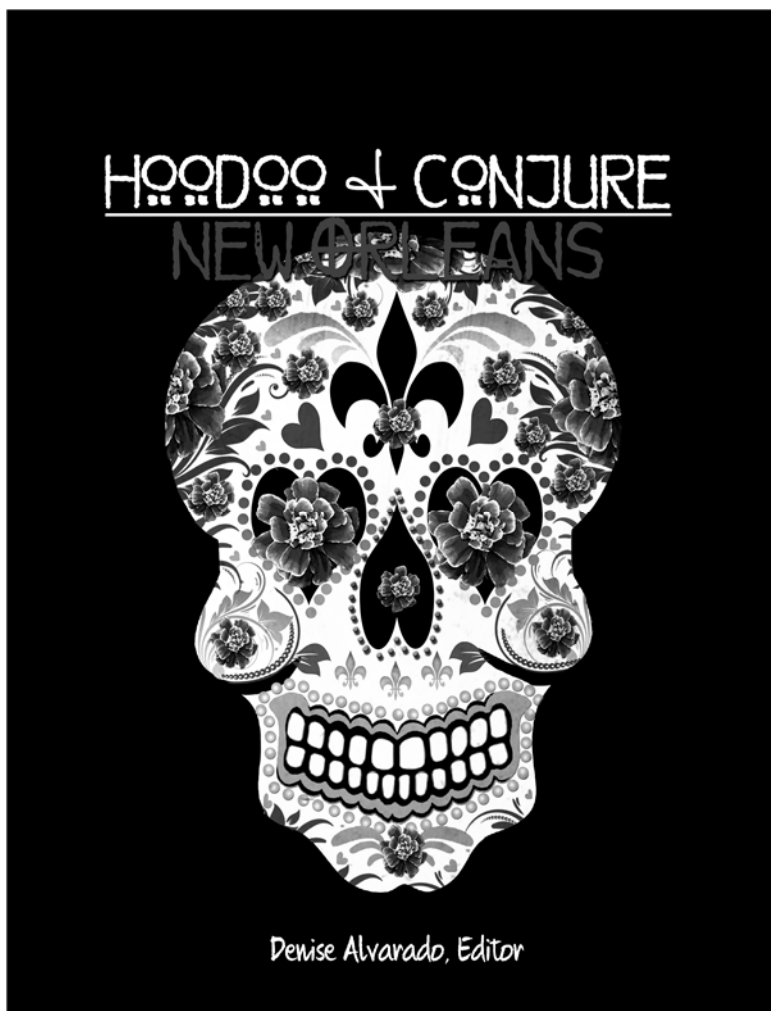
Blog: <http://conjureart.blogspot.com>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/hoodooandconjure>

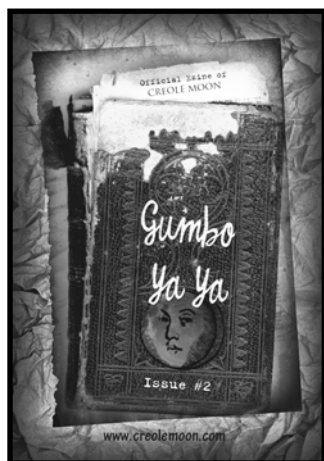
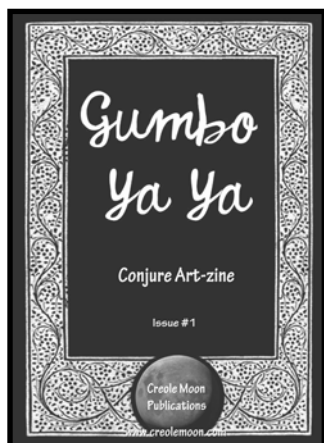
Official Fan Page:

<https://www.facebook.com/AuthorDeniseAlvarado>

Hoodoo and Conjure New Orleans



Available Now!
www.creolemoon.com/journals.htm



GUMBO YA YA

Back Issues!

ALL FREE DIGITAL DOWNLOADS!

Formulas & Spells

Prayers & Blessings

Saints & Spirits

Louisiana Conjure

Hoodoo & Rootwork

Creole Recipes

West African Recipes

History & Information

Conjure Tips

Tools & Supplies

Herbs & Roots

Stories & Folklore

Choice Moments

Quotes

New Orleans Voodoo

And more!

www.creolemoon.com/zines-ezines.htm



ST NICOLAS

Bringer of Gifts and
Reanimator of Corpses

by Denise Alvarado

It sounds like a nightmare straight out of *American Horror Story*, and certainly not what we would typically imagine when thinking of jolly ole St. Nick. It was during a time of great famine, and the people were hungry—so hungry, in fact, that some resorted to the most desperate of actions in order to quell their hunger pangs. For example, one person—a butcher—lured three innocent children into his shop, proceeded to chop them up and began preparations for selling them as packaged meat. But first, the bodies had to be placed in brine and cured. Nicolas was in the area at the time, busy doing what he usually does, caring for the less fortunate and feeding the hungry. He realized what had happened when he had a vision of the butchered bodies of three children curing in barrels. Horrified and determined to right the wrong, Nicolas performed his first miracle by resurrecting the three children from the dead through his powerful prayers. Needless to say, the butcher was on the naughty list that year.

In a different version of this story, the slaughtered victims were three clerks (or theology students) as opposed to children. The three clerks needed a place to stay for the evening and asked to spend the night at the butcher's home. He agreed, and then promptly murdered all three. The butcher's wife—clearly a sociopath—suggested her husband turn the dead bodies into meat pies. Nicolas saw through this evil crime and through his powerful prayers, brought the men back to life. These stories explain St. Nicolas' patronage to children, clerks and students.

As with any legend, there are naysayers who do not believe either of the aforementioned stories. To them, the story of St. Nicolas's ability to raise the dead is absurd and can be attributed to a simple matter of mistaken identity. The real story, according to the doubting Thomases, begins with a man with three daughters who were unable to find husbands because they were dirt poor. The man's solution to the problem was to pimp his daughters out to the streets and into a life of prostitution. Now, St. Nicolas's parents died when he was a young boy and as his folks were well off, he inherited an obscene amount of money with which he pledged to utilize for charitable work. Upon learning of the family's desperate plight, he took the opportunity to act upon his pledge.



St. Nicolas, however, was a very humble person and was not into doing charitable work for public recognition. So, true to his reputation of performing acts of kindness on the downlow, he took a bag of gold coins (or gold balls depending on who tells the story) and tossed it into a window of the man's home in the dead of night. There was enough money for a nice dowry for the eldest daughter, and she was married soon thereafter. St. Nicolas did the same thing for the second and third daughters, all of whom were subsequently married and all three spared from a life of prostitution. During his third attempt, however, the father actually saw St. Nicolas toss the gold into the window. Forever grateful, the man was able to express his deep gratitude to St. Nicolas for the kindness he had shown his family. This story is the origin of St. Nicolas' patronage to brides and pawnbrokers.

In another version of the story, Nicolas tossed the bags of coins down the chimney, one by one. According to this legend, one of

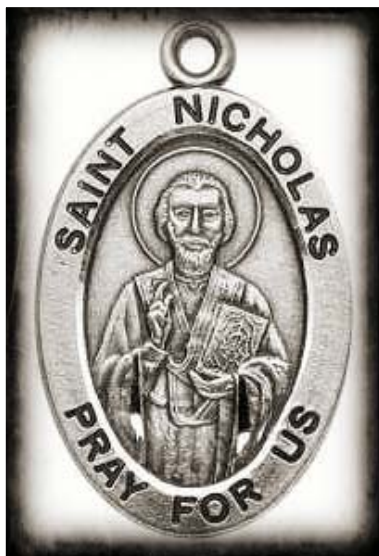


St. Nicholas and the Schoolboys
From "Ancient Mysteries Described"

Victorian depiction of St. Nicolas resurrecting murdered boys, from *Ancient Mysteries Discovered*, 1823, p.d.

the bags of coins fell into one of the daughters' socks that had been carefully hung by the chimney to dry. This version of the story gives birth to the tradition of hanging stockings on the fire-place mantle for St. Nicolas, who, upon crawling down the chimney, fills them with goodies.

And, this is the part of the story where the mistaken identity comes into play. Paintings and artistic renderings of St. Nicolas and his iconography sometimes feature three bags of gold. According to this explanation, the three bags of gold have been mistaken for the heads of three children, giving rise to the murder by dismemberment tale. Personally, I'm not sure which of the stories is more absurd, raising the dead and reassembling chopped up bodies or mistaking three bags of gold for the heads of three children. In my opinion, the latter seems as much of a stretch as the reanimation story. But whose to say? It is supposed to be a miracle, after all.



Whatever may be the case, it is not putting dismembered bodies back together, fighting cannibalism, or reanimating corpses that put St. Nicolas on the world map. Before he was a saint, Nicolas (270 – 6 December 343) was well-known for his generosity and gift giving. It is said he would secretly put coins in the shoes of those who left them out for him, and he would routinely help the hungry and the needy. He was a true philanthropist. Because of his generous nature and penchant for giving gifts, he became the role model for the modern day Santa Claus.

Indeed, St. Nicolas is arguably the most popular saint in all the world—second only to the Virgin Mary. He is known by different names depending on the country and region in which he is venerated. Santa Claus, Saint Nicholas, Father Christmas, Sinterklaas, Kris Kringle, Odin the Wanderer, Jule Nisse and Joulupukki, are but a few names he goes by. In Louisiana, he is known as Papa Noel.

Papa Noel is the New Orleans version of Santa Claus and, like New Orleans, a fog of mystery and myth surrounds him. He doesn't own a sleigh as it wouldn't be practical traversing the swamps and bayous of Louisiana, and he has no need of reindeer because it is said the Creole food would make them too fat to fly. Instead, he moves about in a pirogue, a narrow, flat-bottomed

boat that can penetrate the deepest swamp. Some say he has 8 fat alligators and a red-nosed loup garou to pull his pirogue. Others say no, the alligators are just close friends, the loup garou is a distant cousin, and it's Papa Noel who has the red nose (he's quite fond of Ponche au Lait, Reindeer beer and crawdads). The bon fires are lit all down the levees to help guide Papa Noel to the children in the area and they light up the swamp so his alligators can see while delivering all those gifts to the boys and girls along the bayous.

Despite his popularity, however, it is said that very little is actually known about St. Nicolas' life and very little historical evidence exists to substantiate the legends that abound. I don't know about either of these conclusions, as I found quite a bit of information when conducting research for this article. We know he was the Bishop of Myra in Lycia in the fourth century and that he died on December 6, 345 or 352. We also know his birthplace—Parara, which is a city in Lycia in Asia Minor. We know that he traveled extensively on his mission to help the needy. It is said that after he made a pilgrimage to Egypt and Palestine he "was cast into prison" during the persecution of Diocletian (Diocletian



Photograph of St. Nicholas Church in Bari, Italy where the Holy relics of St. Nicolas are housed, by Robert Bellamy, 2006, p. d.

ATTRIBUTES OF ST. NICOLAS

Feast Day: December 6, May 9 (Translation of Relics)

Patronage: children, students, sailors, fishermen, ships, sailing, mariners, merchants, bankers, scholars, travelers, bakers, pawnbrokers, prisoners, captives, brides, chemists, the hungry, the falsely accused, repentant thieves, archers, pharmacists

Qualities: Justice, charity, love

Symbols: Ship, shoes, book, anchor, children, bishop's robes gold

Offerings: Bishop's wine, Creole du chocolat, Creole du coco, St. Nicolas milk punch, Papa Noel Hot Cocoa Mix, Mulled Creole Cider, St. Nicolas wyn, pizza, soups, wheat bread, random act of kindness in his honor, candy canes, oranges, chocolate coins

was a Roman emperor who instigated one of the worst periods of Christian persecutions in history, and incidentally, St. Expeditus was also martyred during the Diocletian persecution some years earlier in 303). According to Ott (1911), "Nicolas was released after the accession of Constantine and was present at the Council of Nicea. In 1087 Italian merchants stole his body at Myra, bringing it to Bari in Italy" (Ott, 1911, par. 2, lines 1-3). Hence, he is not only known as Nicolas of Myra, but also as Nicolas of Bari.

In Nicolas' time, people were appointed to sainthood by the unanimous consent of the people, typically based on their exceptional deeds, miracles performed, and martyrdom. In addition to those miracles already described, St. Nicolas is known for performing many other miracles. Aside from his skill as reanimator of corpses, he was able to calm stormy seas by blessing the waters, making him patron saint of mariners and fishermen. He became patron to prisoners and lawyers when he personally intervened to prevent three innocent men from being executed. And if that is not enough, he is also said to have multiplied the grain on a ship in sufficient quantities so as to alleviate a widespread famine. According to Le Saux (2005), "A ship was in the port at anchor, which was loaded with wheat for the Emperor in Constantinople. Nicolas invited the sailors to unload a part of the wheat to

help in time of need. The sailors at first disliked the request, because the wheat had to be weighed accurately and delivered to the Emperor. Only when Nicolas promised them that they would not suffer any loss for their consideration, the sailors agreed. When they arrived later in the capital, they made a surprising find: the weight of the load had not changed, although the wheat removed in Myra was enough for two full years and could even be used for sowing" (Le Saux, 2005). This latter miracle solidified St. Nicolas' patronage to chemists, bakers, and the hungry.

The cult of St. Nicolas in the Greek Church is ancient and popular in Russia. In fact, he is honored and considered patron saint of numerous places, including Greece, Naples, Sicily, Germany, Austria, Belgium, Switzerland and Moscow. In Germany, Switzerland and the Netherlands he is celebrated on his feast day, December 6, at which time gifts from him are believed to be secretly given to children.

St. Nicolas's holy relics continue to be preserved in the church of San Nicola in Bari. It is said that an oily substance with great medicinal and healing powers, referred to as *Manna di S. Nicola* or *Manna Santa*, flows freely from them (Ott, 1911). It was later determined that it is not oil at all, but pure water that sweats from his bones. Pilgrims are drawn to view the manna because of the number of miracles St. Nicolas is believed to continue to perform though the sacred liquid. Devotees seek health in mind and body by either drinking Holy water that is infused with *Manna Santa*, or by sprinkling the manna-infused Holy water onto the area of the body in need of healing. Since 1980, the Manna Santa has been extracted every May 9th during a formal ceremony called the *Feast of the Translation* (referring to the transition of his relics from Myra to Bari) headed by a delegate of the Pope.

Attributes of St. Nicolas

In Wagner's (1894) *Manners, Customs and Observances* in the chapter *Patron Saints and their Observances*, St. Nicolas is described as "the patron of serfdom, and, therefore, of Russia, because he protected the weak against the strong, the oppressed against the oppressor, the poor against the rich; of travellers, sailors, and merchants, because he on several occasions allayed a tempest at sea when invoked by the mariners; of poor maidens, because, out

of compassion for a distressed nobleman about to sacrifice his three daughters to a life of infamy, he cast three purses of gold through his chamber window under cover of night, to enable the girls to marry honourably; of boys, especially scholars, from the astounding miracle related in the legend, to the effect that he restored to life three school-boys whom a wicked innkeeper had murdered and salted in a tub; of parish clerks, because of scholars, who were formerly styled clerks; and of thieves, for having once prevailed upon a gang of robbers to restore their plunder. “

Recipes for Offerings

Some of the offerings listed above for St. Nicolas are traditional foods and drinks made in various countries to celebrate their respective versions of St. Nick. A few recipes are for the Louisiana manifestation of St. Nicolas, Papa Noel and are based on traditional Creole recipes passed down from the women in my family. Here are a few recipes to get you started.

Créole du Chocolat

Ingredients

- 1 cake of grated French chocolate
- 1 quart of fresh milk
- Sugar to taste

Pour the milk into a pot and set on low heat. Mix the grated chocolate with a small amount of hot water and blend with a fork. Stir this into the milk, and bring to a low boil. Do not over boil or you risk losing the aroma and flavor of the chocolate. Pour into cups and add sugar to taste. Top with a little whipped cream and sprinkle some grated chocolate on top.

Ponche au Lait (Creole Milk Punch)

Ingredients

- A glass of whole milk
- 1 tablespoon of sugar
- 1 tablespoon brandy or whiskey
- Crushed ice

Dissolve the sugar in the Brandy or Whiskey. Pour chilled milk in-

to a glass about halfway to three quarters of the way full. Pour the sweetened Brandy or Whiskey over the milk and add crushed ice. Put on St. Nicolas's altar for him to enjoy.

Mulled Creole Cider with Aromatic Spices

Ingredients

- 4 quarts apple cider
- 1 cup orange juice
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 1 tsp allspice
- 1/2 tsp mace
- 1 teaspoon coriander seed
- 2 tablespoons whole cloves
- 4 cinnamon sticks
- 2 tablespoons orange zest
- 1/4 teaspoon salt

Combine apple cider and orange juice over medium-high heat. Blend well then add sugar and stir until dissolved. Add spices, orange zest and salt. Whisk spices thoroughly into the juices. Bring mixture to a rolling boil and reduce to simmer. Cover and cook 30 minutes. Strain and serve hot. For an interesting option, chill cider and serve as a festive cold punch. (From Chef John Folse & Company, <http://www.jfolse.com>).

Papa Noel Hot Cocoa Mix

Ingredients

- 8 cups powdered milk
- 1 (16-ounce) package instant cocoa
- 1½ cups powdered sugar
- 2½ cups powdered non-dairy creamer
- cups miniature marshmallows
- 6-8 ounces finely crushed peppermint candy
- Candy canes, optional

Layer everything in a large mason jar. Put ½ cup of the mix in a regular-size mug and fill with boiling water and stir with the candy cane. (From Jessica Gordon, *Shower of Roses*, from stnicholascenter.org).

References

Françoise Hazel Marie (2005). *A companion to Wace*. D.S. Brewer.

Ott, M. (1911). *St. Nicholas of Myra*. In *The Catholic Encyclopedia*. New York: Robert Appleton Company. Retrieved December 6, 2012 from New Advent: <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/11063b.htm>

Wagner, L. (1894). *Manners, Customs and Observances Their Origin and Significance*, London: William Heinemann

St. Nicholas Center <http://www.stnicholascenter.org>



PETITION SAINT NICHOLAS ON BEHALF OF THE LESS FORTUNATE

The traditional way of petitioning saints in the New Orleans Hoodoo tradition is to set up a small altar that is higher than usual, such as on a mantle. This positioning represents the fact that saints are intermediaries between people and the Creator, higher than us and lower than God. For folks who like to work with Saints, St Nicholas/Papa Noel is a good one for asking for intercession on behalf of the less fortunate and the needy. He may also be petitioned for making wishes, safe travels, and blessing in business. As a work of charity, procure a seven day glass encased candle with an image of St. Nicholas on it. Anoint the candle with St. Nicholas Oil. Place the candle on a surface that is at level with your head or higher. Place a glass of Holy water next to the candle. Knock three times on the altar in front of the image 3 times and call out his name: "St. Nicholas! St. Nicholas! St. Nicholas! Patron to children and the less fortunate, Bringer of gifts, You are a glorious servant of God the father and filled with the Holy Spirit. Through the power of the Most High, I ask for your intercession for (state your petition)." Offer St. Nicholas a loaf of wheat bread for his help and most importantly, give someone a gift who would appreciate it and who can't afford something for themselves. Thank him publicly by taking out an ad in the newspaper or on a blog or forum.



Simple Money Tea

by Madrina Angelique

You will need :

- 5 cinnamon sticks
- orange peels from 5 oranges
- 5 teaspoons of brown sugar
- 5 pinches of 5 finger grass
- 5 gold coins
- 1 pint of clear vodka



Add the cinnamon sticks, orange peels, brown sugar and five finger grass to 5 cups of water. Bring to a boil and reduce heat, simmering for 5 minutes. Allow to cool and strain.

Add the vodka and gold coins to the liquid. Place in a clean glass jar. Keep in a cool, dry place. Use 5 tablespoons per gallon of water for a floor wash, and use as a hand wash before gambling.

Brought to you by RitualWitch.com



Ancient Milkshake Love Spell

by Carolina Dean

This ancient love spell harkens all the way back to 2003 when young girls (and fabulous boys) every where summoned the boys to their yard though the magic power of the milkshake. To perform this spell, you will need:

- Vanilla Milkshake - To attract a white boy.
- Chocolate Milkshake - To attract a black boy.
- Strawberry Milkshake - To attract a ginger boy.

WORKING THE ROOT

Obtain your milkshake, with mandatory cherry on top, and go to the nearest mall water fountain. Holding your milkshake before you, walk around the water fountain backwards 7 times saying over and over: *"Here's the milkshake, where's the boy?"*

When you are done toss your cherry into the water-fountain making your wish and then carry the milkshake directly to your home without stopping or shopping for anything or even saying hello to any of your friends or acquaintances you may encounter. Once home, leave the milkshake by your front door and go inside to wait. Your boy should appear in your yard by sundown.

There is a more powerful version of this spell I could teach you, but I'd have to charge.





Black Witch's Salt

by Denise Alvarado

Black ritual salt, also called *Witches' Salt*, *Sal Negro* and *Drive Away Salt*, is a colored salt used in many occult practices. It consists of the char and soot from the bottom of a cauldron mixed with normal table salt, salt mixed with black pepper, salt mixed with charcoal, or salt dyed black. While regular salt and Kosher or Blessed salt are used for purification and protection purposes, black salt is used to drive out negativity or drive away evil influences and people from a space or person. Black salt can also be used in malevolent and defensive magic being an ingredient in foot track magic, gris gris, or used in War Water, for example.

Black salt is composed of salt plus a blackening agent. The blackening agent can be one or more of the following items: black pepper, powdered charcoal, ash, or iron scraping from a pot, pan, or skillet. Sometimes salt is simply mixed with black dye, but I find this to be the least desirable form.

Black Salt is a great conjure to have around because it is inexpensive to purchase, relatively easy to make (though admittedly a bit time consuming), and is very flexible in its application. It can be used for cleansing, protection, charging scrying mirrors, defensive magic, keeping away bad neighbors and dressing candles for revenge work, among a host of other things.

Black Salt is one of the most traditional conjures found in southern Hoodoo and rootwork, and especially in New Orleans. Following are several examples of how it is used in Hoodoo and Conjure.

Salt and Black Pepper Floor Wash for Protection

The following example is excerpted from Harry Middleton Hyatt's *Hoodoo - Conjuration - Witchcraft - Rootwork*, an extensive collection of folkloric material gathered between 1935 and 1939. The collection gives many examples of the use of black salt in a variety of ways, including a good example of its use in the form of salt and pepper in a floor wash for protection.

1459. The best thing you do, when you go out early in the morning, if you got -- before you leave your home, if you feel that such as that is carrying on around you, you take such an ordinary thing as -- take salt, black pepper, and mix that together in a bottle, and scrub your place out. Don't scrub it inward, see. Always scrub out from your place.

And with that water you mix salt and black pepper and scrub every morning before the sun rise. Make that a habitual habit to scrub in the morning before the sun rise -- every morning scrub out your door before de sun rise, and that will give you a natural protection against anything that's evil. Somebody's put something against you, down for you, that will give you protection against that. [New Orleans, La., (828), 1214:4.]

To Keep a Person from Returning Home

Black Salt is used in many variations of the *keep someone from returning* type of conjure. For example, to keep someone from returning to your home—whether a visitor or cheatin' partner—take a handful of black salt and throw it after them as they leave and holler “Get out of here and don't come back!” and they won't be able to return.

Another version of this trick goes like this: If someone comes to your house you don't want them to come back, throw a handful of black salt at them and say, “In the Name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost; move on” - and they say they will never come back again.

Yet another variation of this spell goes like this: To prevent a troublesome person from returning to the home, throw black salt

on the porch or sidewalk after them as they leave and then quickly sweep it out to the street while cursing them out.

A fourth version of this work is this: If someone comes over and you don't want them to come back, sprinkle black salt on the carpet. When they leave, take a broom and sweep it out the door and into the street and they will not come back.

Nullify Evil Conjure

If someone comes to your house and you think they are putting an evil spirit on you, just as soon as they leave, sprinkle black salt all around the chair they were sitting on and put a little on the seat of the chair, and they can't do you any harm.

To Keep Enemies Away

If you sprinkle black salt or black pepper and salt around your house, then sweep it up and burn it, it will keep your enemies away.

Remove a Conjure Put on You

If you think someone has a spell on you, put red pepper and black salt in all four corners of the room. It will take the spell off.

Bottle Spell to Curse an Enemy

To a bottle or jar of any size, add 3 teaspoons of Black Salt to thunder water (water collected during a thunder storm). Add graveyard dirt, black pepper, some Black Devil Oil and a petition with the enemy's name written on it. Close the lid and shake well while cursing your enemy. Dump the solution on the hood of your enemy's car or bury it in their yard. Alternately, sprinkle some around their doorstep or sidewalk near the passenger side door so that they will step in it and carry it into their homes and car floor mats.

Mail a Conjure

Sprinkling a little Black Salt on a letter or other correspondence before mailing it to your target will affect them through contagious magic.

New Years Protection Bottle

by Madrina Angelique

Place the following items in a clean glass bottle:

- 9 Needles
- 9 Cemetery nails
- 9 sticks of Abre Camino
- 9 pieces of Coconut shell
- 9 Rose thorns
- 9 Garlic cloves
- Frankincense
- Basil
- Mint
- Mistletoe
- Sage
- White rum



Seal the bottle with red wax. Place the bottle in a hidden area near your front door after walking with it in every room of your house.



THE LEGEND OF
MADAME LALAURIE:
INCONVENIENT TRUTHS

By Alyne Pustanio



DAlvarado 2013

"I can believe anything, provided that it is quite incredible."

Oscar Wilde, *"The Picture of Dorian Gray"* (1891)

The story is well known and, after a manner, well-documented:

On the afternoon of Wednesday, April 10, 1834, smoke and flames were seen issuing from the kitchens of one of the largest and most fashionable mansions in all New Orleans. Though it had been completed barely three years prior, the home at the corner of the Rue Royale and the Rue l'Hospital was much touted among the *demi monde* of New Orleans high society as the site of lavish dinner parties, extravagant balls, and all manner of society functions provided by the generous hospitality of its owners, Madame Delphine Lalaurie and her physician husband, Louis Lalaurie.

The alarm was sounded across the city, echoed by the frantic ringing of church bells and the rattling of anything that could make noise. Having been ravaged by fire twice in its long history, it can safely be said that, on the whole, New Orleans knew how to ring an alarm. Excitement spread quickly, and homes and businesses located near the Lalaurie home had already emptied of people. A massive crowd had gathered, gaping as smoke billowed profusely from the house and surging forth and back like waves as fire companies arrived upon the scene. As the firemen rushed into the houses, some others, among them a judge and several businessmen, rushed forward without hesitation to lend what aid they could.

Across the courtyard at the side of the house they found the kitchen already consumed by flames. The fire was spreading over the covered carriageway as the firemen and volunteers rushed headlong into the smoking house in search of anyone who might be trapped inside. In the second-story salon they encountered the mistress of the house standing as if fixed in place in the midst of the chaos, her six-year-old son clinging to the folds of her skirt and crying piteously. When asked if there was anyone trapped upstairs, all Madame Lalaurie could do was beg that her daughters be found: she did not know where they were.

The firemen dispersed to distant parts of the house as citizens and slaves together formed a chain, passing buckets of water

along and into the house. The citizen volunteers made for the stairs that led to the third story and the attics, but were surprised

to find their way blocked by an indignant Dr. Lalaurie who refused to allow them to pass. At about this time, two other men identified as the Messrs. Montreuil and LeFebvre called down from the third story that they believed some members of the Lalaurie family had fled to the attics. Almost immediately, a Msr. Guillotte called down urgently that he heard cries coming from the attic precincts. No longer content to beg leave of Dr. Lalaurie, two men – later identified as Judge Canonge and Mr. Edward Gottschalk – pushed past him and, together with the others already on the stairs, quickly mounted the stairs to the fourth-story attic rooms.

The men found the scene just as they had feared: the hallway was already filling with smoke and they could hear the coughing and desperate pleas of people trapped inside the garret apartments, the doors all locked and barred. The men looked about frantically for some tool or weapon with which to beat down the doors; soon they were joined by firemen with picks to beat at the metal balustrades that had prevented entry. Retching, gasping for air, the house crackling in flames beneath them and the crowd roaring in the streets outside, the men threw open the garret doors...

What was allegedly found behind those doors – as opposed to what was actually found – has been the pivot point upon which the entire Lalaurie legend has turned for generations. The discoveries were instantaneously exaggerated and sensationalized by the editors of the New Orleans *Bee*, which printed and dispersed pamphlets through the crowds almost as swiftly as the events were happening. To say that the *Bee* was a paper unsympathetic to the Lalauries – and to Madame Lalaurie in particular – is a serious understatement. The stories and other accounts of the event published by the *Bee* have provided fodder for a long line of tale-tellers and quasi-historians who have allowed themselves to be mesmerized by a good ghost story instead of reporting the actual facts – which in this case are, as the saying goes, stranger than fiction. Using the hateful yellow journalism of a past generation, modern sensationalist authors, calling themselves historians, folklorists, and paranormal researchers, continue to vilify and condemn the Lalauries – in particular Delphine – to this very day.

According to most accounts being peddled these days as “history,” and embellished by pulp writers and tour guides alike, the great French Quarter mansion contained a horrible creature:

though outwardly exuding sweetness, charm, and all the gentility expected of “la belle Creole,” in reality Madame Delphine Lalaurie was, says these “experts,” nothing more than a “demon in the shape of a woman.” This female monster, we are told, was responsible for the torture and torment of “hundreds” of slaves during her brief tenure as mistress of the Lalaurie Mansion. According to latter-day accusers, what was discovered in the attic that long-ago April day was a horror of mutilations and experimentations that had rendered human beings into horrific living anomalies: a “crab-woman” in a stunted cage; limbs amputated and reattached with devilish whimsy; eyes and mouths sewn shut; sex-organs hacked off, or switched between men and women; and the list goes on, altered and added-to ad nauseum.

TALES OF THE HAUNTED LALAURIE MANSION

In the mid-1980's the famous haunted LaLaurie House at 1140 Royal Street, was owned by a pair of prominent local physicians. Sociable and popular with staffers, the pair often hosted house parties in the infamous old mansion that they had made into an inviting home.

Many a ghostly tale have been recorded there since the mid 1830's and apparitions and oddities still go on there today!

The size of the home was daunting and the owners immediately designated a part of it for use as storage and overflow. This section abutted the other houses on Royal Street, while the physicians chose to live in the Governor Nicholls street side.

According to the verifiable report of Cathy, a local radiologist who was often a guest at the doctors' numerous gatherings, there were always strange and unexplainable events taking place in the home. Among these were unexplained footsteps on a blocked attic stairway near the bathroom in a remote part of the upstairs interior, disembodied voices in some of the guest bedrooms, and



La Maison Du Lalaurie, 1140 Rue Royale, "La maison est hanté!"

unexplained movements in the empty attic spaces.

One of the most unique experiences was witnessed by Cathy and one of the home's owners: while taking a cigarette break out on the interior balcony—overlooking the infamous courtyard where mutilated slaves were allegedly buried—both Cathy and the doctor distinctly heard the sound of children laughing, accompanied by invisible feet running over the worn courtyard bricks. When she asked whether some children had been invited to the party, Cathy was told that what she was hearing was the sound of ghostly children. According to the doctor, they had been heard frequently and weren't shy about how many people were around.

Another ghost that evidently wasn't shy was that of a female

who appeared shortly after the restoration of a downstairs fireplace uncovered a rolled up parchment which, when opened, was discovered to be the rendering, in charcoal, of the now-famous portrait of Madame Delphine LaLaurie. After the discovery, strange activity began to occur in the renovated room with tools and paintbrushes disappearing and even drop cloths being found bundled in the fireplace grate (unburned, of course) by the morning work crews. One local carpenter claimed to have been scared "back into" his drinking problem by the appearance of a misty "grey lady" standing at the foot of his ladder one afternoon. After feeling a tug at his trouser leg, the man looked down into a grey mist with a creepy set of glaring eyes. As he watched, the mist dissipated. Within minutes, the worker was out of the house and heading for the nearest bar to drown his fear in rum. Many believed this manifestation to be that of Madame LaLaurie, looking disapprovingly at the changes being made to "her" home.

Cathy never personally experienced the female ghost but she did have an unforgettable encounter with another entity when her physician friends eventually sold the home and she was helping them pack. Cathy was asked to go into the unused storage side of the house where there were stacks of books and medical journals that needed sorting and packing. Arriving with several boxes in tow, Cathy got right to work. This is what happened, in her own words:

"It was a creepy day and it had been raining so there wasn't much light up there. I found a lamp without a shade and used that to sort the JAMA books and the other stuff and at first I was really absorbed in the packing so I wasn't immediately aware of anything strange going on. The room I was in was really big but it was separated by a set of large sliding doors, the kind with the smoked glass in them that go back into the wall. Anyway, at one point I felt the room get really chilly; it just felt like something wasn't right. I was working with my back to the empty room, behind the sliding doors, and gradually I began to feel uncomfortable with this, so I turned around and began to work facing the doors.

"At one point I glanced up and it looked kind of like someone had put a light on in the other room, but since there were a bunch of staffers who were supposed to arrive and help with the move, I didn't really think anything about it. I stooped down to sort some

books that were on the floor and lifted up a bunch to put them in a box and I stopped short. A creepy feeling came over me all of a sudden because I looked up and realized that one of the sliding doors was open!

"I stepped over to one foot and looked into the room but didn't see anybody in there, but I started to feel like I wanted to hurry and get done, just get out of there. I started putting books into boxes in no particular order, just jamming them in and trying to keep from looking at the door. But unfortunately, at one point I felt this urge to look and my mouth just fell open!"

Standing there, with his hand braced on the doorframe, was a vaporous male figure, appearing more solid around the shoulders and waist, but WITH NO VISIBLE LEGS. His hair was longish and slicked to the side and he had a neat beard like those popular among gentlemen of the 1800's. He was wearing a white shirt with a scarf or colored ruffle around the neck and a gold-toned waistcoat. Cathy could just see the top of his brown pants.

"He just stood there and looked at me with this look like, 'what's going on here?' and then he tilted his head and just disappeared!"

Cathy relates that she wasn't scared at first, but then was struck by the delayed reaction of what had just happened. "I got the hell out there!" she says. "I ran downstairs so fast I don't think that ghost could have caught me if he tried and I wouldn't go back up there until a couple of male nurses agreed to go with me and get the packing done!"

The doctors greeted Cathy's story with a wry exchange and confided that they, too, had seen the ghostly man when they had gone into the disused part of the house. One of them told her that he had even smelled and seen the smoke from a pipe or cigar lingering in the empty air when he had gone in search of something one late afternoon.

The owners both believed the ghost to be that of Dr. Leonard LaLaurie, the doting husband of Madame LaLaurie who escaped with her to Paris after the slave torture debacle of April 1834. The owners suggested that he appeared frequently because he liked the fact that physicians were living in his home. At any rate, they claimed that although they had grown used to the activity in the home while they lived there they did not, however, regret moving when the opportunity presented itself.

Madame LaLaurie and her husband, Dr. Leonard LaLaurie,

Delphine was a reputedly beautiful woman with long, black hair, and she and her husband were renowned for their extravagant parties. They had many slaves and seemed a respectable pair, but little did the townspeople know what Madame LaLaurie did to make her slaves submissive. She had already been in court over charges of brutality, and on one



occasion after complaints of abuse, several slaves had been removed from the home, but few people would speak out against this couple, so they were never arrested—not even after a young girl jumped to her death from the second floor to escape her harsh mistress. Then, one night in 1834, a fire brought a volunteer fire brigade to the home and the LaLaurie's gruesome secrets were discovered.

were vilified and subjected to mob violence when reports were circulated that they had tortured, abused and even killed several of their slaves in their years at the home on Royal and Governor Nicholls. The newspaper reports at the time illustrate the public sentiment well. According to the New Orleans Bee, April 11, 1834:

The conflagration at the house occupied by the woman

Lalaurie in Hospital ... is like discovering one of those atrocities the details of which seem to be too incredible for human belief.

We would shrink from the task of detailing the painful circumstances connected herewith, were it not that a sense of duty and the necessity of exposing and holding to the public indignation such a wretch as the perpetrator, renders it indispensable for us to do so.

The flames having spread with an alarming rapidity, and the horrible suspicion being entertained among the spectators that some of the inmates of the premises where it originated, were incarcerated therein, the doors were forced open for the purpose of liberating them. Previous however, to taking this liberty, (if liberty it can be called), several gentlemen impelled by their feelings of humanity demanded the keys which were refused them in a gross and insulting manner. Upon entering one of the apartments, the most appalling spectacle met their eyes. Seven slaves more or less horribly mutilated were seen suspended by the neck, with their limbs apparently stretched and torn from one extremity to the other. Language is powerless and inadequate to give a proper conception of the horror which a scene like this must have inspired. We shall not attempt it, but leave it rather to the reader's imagination to picture what it was.

These slaves were the property of the demon, in the shape of a woman whom we mentioned in the beginning of this article. They had been confined by her for several months in the situation from which they had thus providentially been rescued and had been merely kept in existence to prolong their suffering and to make them taste all that the most refined cruelty could inflict. But why dwell upon such aggravating and painful particulars! We feel confident that the community share with us our indignation, and that vengeance will fall heavily upon the guilty culprit. Without being superstitious, we cannot but regard the manner in which these atrocities have been brought to light as an especial interposition of heaven.



An artist's rendition of the entryway to the LaLaurie Mansion at 1140 Royal Street, New Orleans, circa 1888.

(Since the above was in type, the populace have repaired to the house of this woman and have demolished and destroyed everything upon which they could lay their hands. At the time of indicting this fury of the mob remained still unabated and threatens the total demolition of the entire edifice).

The LaLaurie House is a real place, though it is now luxury apartments. Whatever was haunting it seems to have not left, as

there is now surfacing recent reports of disturbances. Although most of the current tenants refuse to talk about the actual goings-on in the Lalaurie house, there are still worried glances and tight lips. One of the last owners of the house was in the midst of renovating the kitchen when he found a pit full of human bones beneath the wooden floor. The investigating officials stated that the bones were relatively recent in origin, just old enough that everyone knew who put them there. The owner had stumbled across Madame LaLaurie's private graveyard. Although it is known that Delphine murdered quite a few people, an accurate count has never been made as records of how many slaves were owned at the time are sparse. The discovery of the hidden burial pit does raise the question of how many suffered under her diseased eye.

Anyone interested in seeing the LaLaurie House can do so at any time of the year as New Orleans is well aware of its history, and many "haunted tours" have sprung up. The tours usually leave from one of the many bars on Bourbon Street and walk through the French Quarter for three to four hours at a time. Although admittance to the LaLaurie House is heavily restricted, one can still stand in its shadow and feel the chill of murdered eyes looking down from the windows and rooms, begging for release from their continued existence of pain.

In 2007, actor Nicolas Cage bought the LaLaurie House through his Hancock Park Real Estate Company LLC for a reported three and a half million dollars. The LaLaurie house was put on the market again in late 2008. In late 2009, the Bank foreclosed on the house. Regions Financial Corporation purchased the foreclosed property for \$2.3 million on November 13th, 2009.

About the author: *Alyne Pustanio is the author of Purloined Stories and Early Tales of Old New Orleans, Hoodoo Almanac 2012 and Hoodoo Almanac 2013 Gazette with Carolina Dean and Denise Alvarado. She is the Creative Director and Assistant Editor for Hoodoo and Conjure Magazine. Alyne is considered the foremost authority on the paranormal and occult phenomenon and Louisiana folklore.*

Website: <http://www.alynepustanio.net>

Blog: <http://alynesvoxarcana.blogspot.com>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/alynes.pustanio>



Preserving Traditions, One Foot at a Time

by Oskar Doc Mojo Yetzirah

This Thanksgiving I was very blessed to have spent it at home with my family. Whenever I go home, I make it a point to archive conversations with family members. As my grandmother grows in age, her Alzheimer's worsens. While it has been a very

slow degeneration, we still dread the outcome. So, in the meantime, we enjoy the company of our Grandmother and count our blessings.

In our family, like many families in America, we have developed some traditions. The men gather in one location to BBQ and the women gather inside to prepare the traditional meals for the evening. The *Primos*, that is us cousins, have come to gather together, as well. We don't get to see each other as often as we used to as kids, so when we do, we reflect. We huddle together in the guest bedroom of Grandma's House, as we do every year since we can remember. We laugh and we tell jokes, we remember the good times and laugh about the bad. We can be so loud sometimes, and when we are, it grabs her attention. The door slowly opens, and a little voice yelps in. "Ey! What y'all doing? Making a mess?" "No Gra'ma, we're just talking and telling jokes." We say, and then she giggles "He he he he he...telling jokes and making a mess burros!" As she closes the door we listen quietly to see if she has gone. "I'm still here cabrones." We just laugh so loud! "Maranos hediondos!" She yells, and then walks away. We don't know if she does it on purpose, but she does it every time we get together. It is good that she does that, because it sparks the memories. "Hey, remember when Grandma..." "OH, my God! Remember how Grandma used to..." and it just goes on and on. The thing I love about smart phones is how quickly you can pull out a voice recorder. I record as many conversations like this as I can. "Remember how all those old ladies would come over all the time and we had to call them Tia?" Marcus asked "Yeah, cause we're Mexican, so we are all related!" Norbert yells, and we all laugh.

In my mind, I quietly remember. I remember what they were too young to see, or even pay attention to. I remember these "Tias" that would visit "all the time". It's funny what you remember. Things you forget, things your mind just stores away, sitting on a shelf collecting dust—until someone shakes the shelf. That dust lifts into the air, and you sneeze...things start to wake up. I remember a certain tradition, if you will, from when I was just a boy and I've yet to see it practiced in other places. It was something that my Abuela would do when her friends would come to visit. No, not just the friends that lived in her town, the other friends. The ones that would come from Dona, McAllen, Harlingen, Brownsville and even as far as El Paso and one Tia who would come from Fresno California. It was a very big deal when

these women would come to town. I remember they would usually arrive in the late afternoon, just before supper time. Everyone one would come outside to greet the new guest. "Hermanita!" Grandma would say "Que bien que Dios Mas Poderoso me permite recibir la con carino y salud. Mi Casa y Familia son de usted" (Sister, how good that God Most Powerful has allowed me to receive you with love and health. My House and Family are yours.) I remember those words because she spoke the exact same words to every one of her friends who came to the house. "Acepto su hospitalidad con gracias y bendiciones" (I accept your hospitality with thanks and blessings) was always the response.

The next hour or so was always so marvelous for me to watch. Always the same, my grandmother would walk by her friends side and my mom would lead a few feet in front with me at her side. Mom would open the door and both my Grandmother and her friend would walk in, her friend first. My grandmother would sit her guest in her chair and my mom would bring into the living room a ceramic basin and pitcher, it had belonged to my grandmother's father. My mom would set the basin and pitcher next to my grandmother as she kneeled in front of her friend. My mom would bring in a white cotton towel and as my grandmother removed the shoes from her friends feet, she would set their feet in the basin. My grandmother was about to wash this woman's feet. The water always smelled so good, filled with spring water, mixed with Anise Seeds, Cloves, Mint, Chamomile, Lavender and Rosemary. She would wash the feet and then dry them. After the feet were washed, they would walk into the kitchen, barefoot, and my mom had already set the table. Dinner was served. I would sit at the table, quiet, no words spoken, cause if I said ANYTHING, it was "The Pinch." Many of you know what I

Side note, when I asked my grandmother about the portions in the interview, she would show me with her palm cupped up and say "Oh, like this much" or with her two hands held out (like she would hold them out if she was actually holding the fresh herbs) and say "Mint, like this." Since we were in the kitchen (That is where all our important conversations happen) I grabbed the oat meal and measured what she showed me in a measuring cup. The measurements are not precise, but rounded up to the nearest measurement.

am talking about. And don't cry! My Grandmother and my "Tia" would sit there and laugh, talk, catch up, and every once in a while my mom would chime in. Years later I discovered that my mom's role was in the role of a servant. A good master can only arise out of a good servant. That is what we are taught. I had seen this growing up like clockwork, nearly every three months or so, someone was stopping by the house. I had dismissed them as I grew into High School. Mom would call and say "Tia Luz is going to be here tomorrow. " and I would respond "Ok, tell her I love her. " and go about my way. Over the last seven years, it has been "Tia so and so has passed away, we are taking your grandmother to the Valley for the funeral." One by one, my grandmother's friends were passing away. It was then that I started to ask questions. "And how are we related to them?" My mom explained to me exactly who they were. Other Curanderas and Brujas. People my grandmother knew from her youth, from her life. They would come visit my grandmother and stay for a week. They would learn from each other, and build their bonds of friendship and unity. In a recent interview with my Grandmother, I asked her about the foot washing. Why it was all so important, the arrival, the washing, the dinner. She said to me that this was in the bible, that Jesus washed the feet of his disciples, saying "If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet." "This teaches humility. It teaches you how to bow before others. That you are not greater than them. That you are the same. This is respect and honor to your ancestors. Respect and honor to your equals." "Jesus wash the feet of his students (disciples) and Maria de Magdala wash the feet of her Teacher (Jesus)" "When you wash the feet of your friend, then you show them you are a true friend. That you are only wanting to live in peace and love with them. Then you keep your feet descalso (barefoot) because you are showing your friendship, this is a holy thing, friendship. God and Moises were friends. And God told Moises, remove your shoes, because this is holy ground. So that is why we are with no shoes. We share a meal together. El Hambre es del diablo y resulta en la energia negativa (hunger is of the Devil and it results in negative energy) To eat, is to be blessed. That is why there is always bread on the table. Todo es en respeto, amor y paz...algo que las generaciones olvidan. It is all done in respect, love and peace...something the generations forget." Over the years, like I said, my grandmother's friends have all gone to the

other side except for one. Tia Clara or Tia Clarita. This holiday season, she is traveling from Corpus Christi to spend a week with my grandmother, since she is in some stages of Alzheimer's. It may be the last time they see each other, and I am going to be so very honored to participate once again in the foot washing. I plan on applying this nearly forgotten tradition into my practices, and I hope you look into it as well.

Be Blessed,

Doc

En Memoria De Tia Luz Tia Barbara Tia Nana Madrina Celeste
Doña Laura

Doña Blanca's Foot Wash Recipe

Ingredients

- Rosary
- One Large Clay Bowl
- One Pitcher
- One Gallon of sparkling spring water (Topo Chico)
- One Palm (1/4 cup) Rosemary
- One Palm (1/4) Anise Seeds
- One Palm (1/4) Cloves
- Two Hands (1/2 cup) Lavender
- Four Hands (1 cup) Mint
- Four Hands (1 cup) Chamomile

Take the water and fill the clay bowl. Take the ingredients listed above and mix them into the water in the order listed. Your rosemary, lavender and mint need to be fresh. Your anise seeds, cloves and chamomile should be dried. Use a *molcajete* (mortar and pestle) to crush the ingredients, starting with rosemary. You must stir it into the water saying "for friendship and beauty." Continue to crush the ingredients one at a time and mixing them into the water saying the following for each:

- Anise Seed - "for kindness and good memories"
- Cloves - "for heart and soul"
- Lavender - "for peace and clarity"
- Mint - "for good spirit and joy"
- Chamomile - "for longevity and unity"

Stir the ingredients in the water for a minute and say "may the waters that wash the feet of my friends bring them all these honors and blessings." Grandma says, "You say that until you are happy, it is a feeling that just makes you want to smile. Then you know it is ready." Take the waters and reach your right hand over it with your rosary, reciting the Lord's Prayer once. Then you take your right hand with your rosary and dip it into the water and recite the Hail Mary three times. Do this at noon and set outside in the sun to absorb the rays. "The Sun is good. The Sun brings life. It makes the water come to life, the water is alive when you put it on the feet."



About the author: Oskar "Doc Mojo" Yetzirah is the Owner-Operator at Midtown Mojo Manufacturers, Host for Bayou City Conjure Radio at Local Live Media, LLC. and Outreach Coordinator at United States Veterans Initiative. He resides in Houston, Texas. He can be found on Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/bayoucityconjuredoctor>



Creole Moon's Conjure Club

**FOR THE SERIOUS STUDENT OF
SOUTHERN CONJURE**

www.creolemoon.com/conjure-club.htm

If you are an information seeker, an academic interested in the inner workings of southern conjure traditions, or a practitioner of conjure yourself, you will love our Conjure Club. Each month you will receive on the average 3 to 4 digital downloads and ebooks full of information about traditional conjure workings, working with Catholic saints and folk saints,



information about herbs and roots, conjure formularies, various spirits found on the altars of rootworkers all over the South, how to work with lamps, graveyard work, bottle spells, money magic, love spells and much, much more!

Our sources of information include word of mouth from real practitioners and elders, family, friends, and a variety of anthropological, folkloric and literary sources. The editors spend hundreds of hours locating and reading out of print books and journals, and compiling information from those sources, as well. Our downloads include references for students and for individuals seeking to broaden their knowledge base even further.

The core contributors for Creole Moon are people who were born and raised in the Southern United States, and who were immersed in conjure traditions as members of Southern culture. This gives us a unique perspective that can only be seen and experienced from within the culture. Our mission is to report on our observations in an effort to preserve our cultural traditions. For more information, please visit:

<http://www.creolemoon.com/conjure-club.htm>