

## Episode 90: Witchcraft in Pop Culture || Favorites and Thoughts

Welcome back to Round the Cauldron where we talk theology, philosophy, and everyday life as a modern witch. Today we're going to be talking about your favorite pop culture witches, your least favorite pop culture witches, and does pop culture even matter when it comes to witchcraft? If you're ready to hop into the show, grab some coffee, pull up a seat, and join me 'round the cauldron.

I have a few announcements before we move into talking about pop culture and witchcraft. The first announcement is holy crap, I hit 1000 subscribers here on YouTube, so thank you all so much for being here with me. Thank you for subscribing and watching and commenting and liking and even giving a thumbs down if you don't like it, that's okay. But just thank you so much. I really appreciate you all being here with me and now I get to plan a super awesome giveaway for hitting 1000 subscribers on YouTube and I'm so excited! So if you're watching here on YouTube and you're not subscribed, go ahead and subscribe so that you will know what the giveaway is. I'll make a post probably on Instagram -- actually, probably Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook -- asking what you would like to receive if you win the giveaway. I plan on having several different winners and several different types of prizes that will be given away. Some things made by me, some things purchased, and maybe some things made by others.

I haven't quite figured all of that out yet, but I'm excited to do that. And if you're watching on YouTube, leave a comment down below with something that you would like to win from a giveaway for hitting 1000 subscribers. I'd also like to give a shout out to James Feeney because he also recently hit 1000 subscribers. I will leave his channel in the description below. Podcast listeners, it will be in the show notes. James Feeney talks a lot about tarot, and I am super excited for him that he also hit 1000 subscribers.

I also want to mention that last month in October I was having a sale in my shop and I have decided to extend that sale through the end of the year. So everything in my shop is currently 20% off, no coupon required. And don't forget that when you make a purchase in my shop, 15% of every purchase is donated to the Johns Hopkins Sjogren's Syndrome Center. Last year I was able to donate \$50. This year I am looking at probably meeting that donation, but I am hoping for more, basically, so that link will also be in the description and in the show notes.

This topic was voted on by my patrons over on Patreon. If you'd like to join me over on Patreon, it is [patreon.com/roundthecauldron](https://patreon.com/roundthecauldron)...link is where the links typically are. My patrons voted to talk about pop culture and witchcraft and witches in pop culture. So since I knew this topic was going to be happening, I asked on Instagram who your favorite witches in pop culture were and who your least favorite witches in pop culture were and...I'm not sure if there are going to be any spoilers to any of the shows or movies or books that we talk about, so just know this going forward. I don't know. I'll try not to spoil anything, but I can't make any promises. And before you ask, no, I have not seen the new Craft. I plan on it eventually, I just haven't yet.

## Episode 90: Witchcraft in Pop Culture || Favorites and Thoughts

So some common favorites amongst all of you for witches in pop culture are, number one -- and many people mentioned, are the witches from Practical Magic. Sally and Gillian Owens. Aunt Frances and Aunt Jet. There were also a couple of witches that were mentioned that I had never heard of before. Bex from The Witches Cookery mentioned Nanny Ogg, Tiffany Wee, and Mistress Weatherwax. I've never heard of any of them before but they are Bex's favorite from The Witches Cookery so I will definitely look into this. I think they're from books, she said. Someone else also made mention of the witches from The Originals, and The Originals is a TV show on The CW. It is a spin-off from The Vampire Diaries. Yes, I have seen all of them. There's also now spin-off of The Originals called Legacies which also has some interesting takes on witchcraft, but I will forever be team Bonnie Bennett.

Some of the least favorite witches in pop culture that everyone mentioned were the witches from The Craft. This is probably an unpopular opinion. I know The Craft is one of those movies that really brought a lot of people into witchcraft, but not a lot of people relate to the witches in The Craft, and that's okay. And The Craft was very sensationalized because it's the media, and that's what pop culture does. Another person mentioned that they didn't really have a specific least favorite witch, but they really don't like any of the portrayals of witches where they are ugly or considered demonic. Someone else also mentioned Madison from American Horror Story: Coven, and I can definitely get behind that being a least favorite witch. If I'm remembering correctly, Madison was one of the least popular witches for people who were watching the show. She was very rude, very mean. I don't know, maybe I'm remembering wrong. I'll put a picture up of Madison from American Horror Story: Coven for those watching on YouTube, but I didn't really like American Horror Story: Coven, and I think it was just the way certain things were portrayed. Some parts of it were very vulgar for me. It wasn't necessarily the portrayal of witchcraft in general, just the show was vulgar and that just wasn't for me. I do like how it ended though, which I won't spoil that for you if you're interested in watching it.

So throughout modern history, witches have been portrayed in pop culture in a variety of different ways, and if you don't know what pop culture means, it's basically just popular culture. This is going to be things like books and movies, TV shows, music, things that are popular in that moment. So normally when I think of it, I think of it as decades or different areas, different regions. Everyone is going to have a different opinion on what the pop culture is for their particular area or decade.

What I'm going to be talking about today is the portrayal of witches in the media as far as we see them in movies and TV shows and books, because witches and magic are everywhere when we consume our entertainment. I think it's important to be aware of the pop culture portrayal of witchcraft for your area and your generation or your friends or whoever you're close to because pop culture really informs public opinion, and sometimes pop culture is the first thing that someone sees about a new subject.

I think if you're going to be open about your witchcraft practices or your Pagan practices or your spiritual practices even, it's important to be aware of the current pop culture

## Episode 90: Witchcraft in Pop Culture || Favorites and Thoughts

climate so that you can be prepared for different comments and questions. Now a lot of times someone that is out about their witchcraft and they encounter people that either don't know anything about witchcraft or they really don't care, they tend to make offhand comments like oh, can you cast a love spell for me? Or do you make potions? Or I wish magic was real, or different things like that and these comments stem from either ignorance or just...there's a word I'm looking for...apathy. They just don't care. But a lot of their opinions and encounters with witchcraft in their daily life come from movies and books and TV shows. So if someone thinks that *The Craft*, we'll use *The Craft* as an example. If someone thinks that *The Craft* is what witchcraft is, then that's going to inform how they view witchcraft going forward when they actually meet people who practice witchcraft, real witches, and not witches from a movie.

And when books and movies portray witchcraft in a negative light that can reinforce someone's idea that yes, witchcraft is bad. It's not real, it's a fantasy. It is something that is made up for entertainment purposes, or it is something that is demonic, and it stems from Satan or the devil. So for me, I like to be aware of really how witches are being portrayed in the media because I am public with my craft. I am here on YouTube. I have a podcast. I have a website. My face is connected to everything. I feel like I need to be aware so that I can help answer any questions. I can help steer people in the right direction, but I can also help cut down on the comments and the trolls that are just here to either preach their God because they think witchcraft is of the devil or they are here to just troll and make fun of and different things like that. I had a comment recently that got put in my for review or held for review section in my comments on YouTube that said that witchcraft is the reason that human trafficking exists, and I don't know if that stems from any particular pop culture thing, but it probably does, and that's a very negative stereotype -- or not even a stereotype. I have no idea where that idea comes from.

But that's a very negative view of witchcraft and they basically came into my comments and said this, you know, what you're doing is the reason for human trafficking and I'm going to report you to the authorities and, you know, you better watch out and different things like that. So if we're not aware of pop culture and the different portrayals of witchcraft, especially if we're public or we are open about our craft, it can really catch us by surprise when people ask us questions. I was watching another video on YouTube. I think it was, oh, it was a really old Pagan Perspectives video. I'll try to find the link and put it in the description, but someone had written into Pagan perspectives basically and said, hey, you know I'm getting a lot of comments from my coworkers and I don't know how to handle it and someone had said, "oh real wands can only be made by Ollivander's." And I really hope someone didn't say that to someone else because Ollivander's is fiction and that's not how magic works, but it just shows me that pop culture influences heavily the way people view the world around them.

And whether we like it or not, pop culture also permeates our witchcraft because I grew up watching *Charmed* and *Charmed* is a great show. It's obviously very sensationalized. It's very tangible with the witchcraft, you know, if you've never seen *Charmed* before, each sister -- there's three of them at a time or four of them -- it just, it gets complicated,

## Episode 90: Witchcraft in Pop Culture || Favorites and Thoughts

but each sister has their own set of powers. One has like telekinesis, one has premonitions, and one can basically freeze time. So their witchcraft in the show is very tangible. It has very physical ramifications that you can see immediately. There are also some things in Charmed that have made their way into a lot of peoples' witchcraft practices because someone sees Charmed, they think that's how magic works, and then either they start talking about it and someone picks it up as fact, or they incorporate it into their practice. Now I want to make it clear here that it's totally fine to incorporate pop culture information into your witchcraft practice as long as you're saying this is UPG, unverified personal Gnosis. It's something that you believe that is not verified by any historical fact or folklore. There's nothing wrong with that, but something that I see coming from Charmed all the time is the...it's the power of three because they are three sisters. It is the power of three, but also that magic can't be used for personal gain and that casting baneful magic will have instant consequences for the caster.

In Charmed, they can't use magic for personal gain because it's against their witchcraft and when they do, it backfires. The same thing for if they cast baneful magic. It backfires. This is pop culture at work because now, well, I don't know how prevalent it is anymore, but when you get into apps like TikTok and the different Amino groups, I have seen a lot of people say, oh, you can't use magic for personal gain. You have to use it to heal and to do good for the world. Or talking about, you can't cast baneful magic because it will come back to you. That also goes with Wicca and the rule of three and the Wiccan Rede, or the law of three and the Wiccan Rede. That's a little different, but I'm not sure if Charmed is the direct influence. It is a correlation that I see, but we do need to remember correlation does not equal causation. It is not necessarily a coincidence, I don't think, but it's something to keep in mind. Pop culture directly influences witchcraft practices, especially for people who are new to witchcraft and whose first encounter with a witchcraft practice is through pop culture and movies and TV shows and books.

I'm not one to really believe that the media's portrayal of witchcraft really needs to change, however, I can understand how it can be hurtful. And I'm also coming from a place of privilege because I live in a country where I have freedom of religion and I know not everyone has that, so I know that my religious practice and my witchcraft practice is protected under law. But some people aren't so lucky, and eventually, I think it could come to a point where the media portrayal of witchcraft is so bad or so negative that it does begin to influence more people's opinions on the practice at large. And then yes, that could create problems down the road. For me, it's kind of complex because I know that the media portrayals in popular culture of witchcraft in movies and books and TV shows is entertainment only. It's not supposed to be an accurate representation of a real witch's practice. It's not, and so when people say, "I wish magic were real," when watching shows like Charmed or Harry Potter, we can come to them, if they say to us, we can come to them and say, "I wish magic works like that," or, "real magic doesn't work like that," or "magic is real, just not like that." A lot of people like the idea of instant gratification where they can just snap their fingers and change the color of their hair or do like they do in The Craft and move their hands over their hair and change their

## Episode 90: Witchcraft in Pop Culture || Favorites and Thoughts

appearance. But real magic doesn't work like that and we need to be sort of an intermediary if you're comfortable, obviously, when people are discussing these topics.

So I mean, it would be cool if the portrayal of witches in pop culture were more realistic, but I also don't have high expectations that that would ever happen. Sort of like all -- or most -- polytheists don't like the portrayal of the Gods in pop culture. I am looking directly at you, Percy Jackson -- because it is completely baseless but it's also fiction. And I think that's where a lot of people lose it. Does that make sense? A lot of people lose it...that's where a lot of people...what am I trying to say?

I do think the pop culture representation of witches can be better because for us as witches, this is who we are and it's part of our identity and we take it very seriously. Our magic doesn't have to be serious, and it doesn't have to be complicated, but when someone is making a TV show or a movie or writing a book about you or something that you do, it can be unnerving, I guess, to read it and be like man, this is what...this is what people think of when they think of witchcraft. No one's ever going to believe that I'm a witch or that I practice magic because this is what they're expecting.

So I think we need to be available to have those conversations and to change the opinion of the general population when they consume pop culture. But I also think pop culture and the media producers need to do a better job because...oh my goodness, could you imagine if a movie came out about Christianity or being a Christian that was completely false or completely sensationalized? There would be so much uproar within the Christian community, and the movie would never make it to production. I don't want to stop people from enjoying their fiction because let me tell you, I enjoy me some fiction too. I grew up on Harry Potter and Charmed and The Craft and I continue to consume popular culture media with witchcraft in it because it's entertaining and it's fun. And sometimes it just makes me think about my own practice and different things that I can incorporate and things that I should be doing, or things that I should stop doing. But I do think there needs to be a little more respect among pop culture producers when they're talking about witchcraft. I mean, they probably honestly don't even think about it. They're just like, oh, witches and wizards and magic and flying on brooms. It's so fun! But there are real people behind these practices, and I don't think they realize it. I think it would be helpful for people like me and other creators or just in your local community to really have those conversations when people step forward with questions about witchcraft even if their questions may seem insensitive. Because you can generally tell when they don't know any better and when they're just being rude.

I wouldn't bother having conversations with people that are rude about it because they generally have no interest in learning, but for someone who is genuinely curious and just asking questions because they don't know any better, that's fine. I didn't realize I had so much to say about pop culture witchcraft or -- not pop culture witchcraft, that's something different -- about witchcraft in pop culture.

I want to talk about some of my favorite and my least favorite pop culture witches. So I am basically going to agree with everyone that said Practical Magic was their favorite

## Episode 90: Witchcraft in Pop Culture || Favorites and Thoughts

because Practical Magic is wonderful. Obviously, Practical Magic is sensationalized because it is a movie, but I think it's one of the more accurate portrayals of witchcraft in a movie that I have seen from however long ago Practical Magic was made. There are better portrayals now, but Practical Magic is very nostalgic for me and I always said after watching the movies that I wasn't going to be Sally and I wasn't going to be Gillian. I was going to be one of the aunts.

They really embody for me what living your craft is. They very much don't care about the opinions of others. They live freely. They are authentic. They incorporate their witchcraft and their magic into everything that they do, and they grow all of their herbs and they have midnight margaritas and it's just...ahhh...that would be the life to live like Aunt Frances and Aunt Jet. I also really like the Halliwells from Charmed and this is probably just a nostalgia thing for me because I grew up watching the show with my Nana, but I like the portrayal of the different moral things that they really struggle with in the show, and it's very good versus evil, very hyped up and dramatic but that's the nature of the show.

I think Charmed is really just a nostalgia thing for me. I could go back and rewatch -- I have gone back and rewatched every single episode in every single season and I'll probably do it again. I also want to talk about -- I was thinking about this last night after I already wrote my notes for this episode about accurate portrayals of real witchcraft on TV and the one show that came to my mind was the Good Witch. The Good Witch -- I think it's a Hallmark TV show. I don't really remember, but I watched it on Netflix and the Good Witch has to be one of the most accurate portrayals of witchcraft that I have seen on television. It's not sensationalized. The magic that they do in the show isn't physical. It isn't tangible like Harry Potter or Charmed or American Horror Story: Coven or whatever the other ones are.

It's very subtle, very intuitive. The main character in the show works closely with herbs and knows what all of the herbs do and uses them in medicinal and magical ways. She is very intuitive and not necessarily psychic, but one thing that she does in the show that always catches people off guard is she knows when someone comes into her store, even if she's not facing the door, and she knows who they are and what exactly it is that they need. It's very story-based and she isn't the only witch in the show. It's her, her sister, and her daughter. And it's a great show. It's very family-friendly and it's not dramatic. It's not overdone, and I just really love that I was able to watch it because I loved the way the main character connected with the town that she lives in and the different herbs and plants that she uses in her garden, and the way that she uses her intuition and her magic without being overly dramatic about it, or without it being very obvious. So I definitely recommend if you get a chance to watch the Good Witch. I watched it on Netflix, but I don't know where else you can watch it.

As far as my least favorite witches, I mean, I don't tend to watch or read things for very long if I don't like the portrayals of the witches in the books or movies, so the only one that really comes to my mind is American Horror Story: Coven, but that wasn't necessarily about the portrayal of witches. It was about the show in general. I don't think

## Episode 90: Witchcraft in Pop Culture || Favorites and Thoughts

I have a least favorite witch, but that's probably because I just haven't watched enough movies or TV shows with witches in them or I haven't read enough books. That's very possible.

I do want to give a plug here real quick to the book that I'm reading called River Magic. It is a new book out by MA Phillips, who is DitzzyDruid on Instagram. This book is brand new. It recently came out last month. No, I think it came out on November 1st, but I am reading this book. It is written by a modern Pagan, and the book is about a modern Pagan. And there's no sensational magic in it. There's no fictitious waving of wands. It's very real, and it's very good so far. I haven't finished it yet and I think I'm going to work out getting them on the show. Probably only on the podcast. I'm not sure how they feel about video, but it's really good. I definitely recommend it and I will leave the link for that in the description and in the show notes too. You can find them on Instagram and on Twitter and they also, I believe they have a website. I don't know. All of their links will be in the description and in the show notes, but it's a really good read and it's very refreshing to be able to read something about a real modern Pagan written by a real modern Pagan.

So overall I mean, there's not much that I can do as an individual to change how pop culture portrays witches in the media. And honestly, I'm not very hopeful that the portrayal would change anytime soon because pop culture and producers of media like that are all about the money and sensational and dramatic and tangible and instant gratification. All of those things sell really well. Sometimes it's the real stuff, the honest stuff, that doesn't sell so well.

Thank you so much for listening to this episode of Round the Cauldron, and I hope it made you think a little bit about your favorite and least favorite pop culture witches. If you'd like to connect with me and discuss your favorite and least favorite, you can find me on Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook and I also have a Discord group and a Facebook group that we can chat about this too. I look forward to hearing about your views on witchcraft and pop culture and I will talk to you next time.

Thank you so much to my patrons over on Patreon for all of your support. Because of you, I get to do what I love every day. Thank you, Jess, Rose, Holly, Bleu, Hillary, Bonnie, Lei, Angie, Leili, Magical Crafting, Bliss, and anyone else that I did not mention.