



The Girl Who Kept Her Magic: Celebrating the Seasons

Laurel Ann Reinhardt

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Erin is growing up in a household whose religious faith and practices are earth-based (some might say pagan), and centered around the changing of the seasons. The story begins just after Winter Solstice (also known as Midwinter and Yule) when children have gone back to school and are sharing what they did over the holidays/holy-days. Erin is chagrined to discover that, although she loves her family's celebration of the solstice, she lacks the deeper understanding of that tradition which her friend, Rachel, has of Christmas as Jesus' birthday. Erin's mother decides to send Erin to the house of Evangeline, a wise old woman of their community, who will help Erin discover the sacred bond connecting us to the earth in all its manifestations. Erin is nervous, especially when she sees that the woman's doorknocker is in the shape of a snake, but is soon put at ease by Evangeline's warmth and simple presence. The first teaching is about the wisdom available in winter's darkness, silence, and stillness, as Evangeline teaches Erin to meditate simply by closing her eyes, rocking, and listening. Erin continues the practice, and returns to Evangeline with a poem about the first season: Imbolc/Candlemas. After that, Erin begins to look forward to her time with Evangeline, though not all teachings are so simple. In the course of one magical year Erin learns the meaning, for her, of each of the the eight earth-based celebrations: the returning of the light at Imbolc/Candlemas, the balance of light and dark of the two equinoxes, the fire and passion of Beltane/Mayday, the fullness of light or dark of the two solstices, gratitude for the first harvest at Lammas/Lughnasad, and the thinness of the veil between life and death at Samhain/Halloween/All Hallow's Eve. In the process, Erin learns how to dance, to speak from the heart (even when it is frightening to do so), and how to honor the interplay of light and shadow that is life. It should be noted that, as part of her journey, Erin has to cope with a variety of challenges, including a bully, her own resistance to being seen, and death and loss. In each of these circumstances, Erin is supported by various people in her community, including Evangeline, her mother and godmother, her father, and her friends, although in all cases she is encouraged to draw foremost upon her own inner strengths and resources. This, in fact, is the source of the title, *The Girl Who Kept HER Magic*. In addition to the story, the book has two appendices: a workbook for families to use to create their own celebrations of the seasons, and a glossary of words which which may be unfamiliar to the book's readers. There is also a bibliography for additional reading in related genres, and a short preview of *Moontime Mogenic*, the next book in the *Natural Magic* series, in which Erin celebrates her coming-of-age with two other girls. While *The Girl Who Kept Her Magic* is aimed at pre-teen and teen-age audience, it works well as a primer in alternative spirituality and ritual for young people and their parents. It also works as an invitation to all to re-discover the pure mountain stream of wisdom which flows deep within each of us. *The Girl Who Kept Her Magic* was previously published by Llewellyn as *Seasons of Magic: A Girl's Journey*, which has now gone out of print and whose rights have reverted back to me. In addition to *Moontime Magic*, I am planning at least two more books in the *Natural Magic* series: *Dreamtime Magic* (a book about dreams and how to interpret them, for all age levels but primarily for young adults) and *Jonathan's Magic* (in which Erin's 'nemesi' has his own coming-of-age ceremony).

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