

PART FOUR

MEANINGS OF FOOD IN FOLKTALES: MAGICAL FOOD, INITIATIONS, CURSES, AND BLESSINGS



Food in folktales signals a beginning quest or a change in dynamics. In folktales one and the same food can bring both good and evil; it can heal and poison, hold both life and death. Sacred food alters states of consciousness and becomes a way of initiation. Folktales offer links between food and magic, as well as immortality. Sharing food is the hallmark of the heroine and the hero, as is the protection of communal food from theft. Divine artifacts (Ceredwen's cauldron, magic table cloths, etc.) provide nourishment in abundance, while the self-sacrifice of a 'divine being' paired with the integrity of a mortal heroine or hero can lead to the sustenance of the people.

INSTRUMENTS: TRADITIONAL STORYTELLING, COLOUR, INDIVIDUAL WORK WITH FOLKTALES, BREAKOUT-GROUPS, WHOLE GROUP WORK

What will we do? We will use folktales and storytelling to explore and discover:

- Food access is more than just survival, having food means status and power;
- Food in folktales can be initiation, blessing, curse, sacrifice and self-sacrifice;
- It is heroic to provide and to protect the food for your community;
- Nourishment-giving artifacts: magical tablecloths, cauldrons, etc.

Why are we doing this? We want to see what folktales can offer us in terms of:

- Insight into why we must *first* learn to sustain ourselves and grow stronger to succeed in our lives;
- *Recognition that we must do so without causing lack or harm to others.*
- Deeper understanding of the link between food and culture, food and spirit, food and human rights;

What else will you gain?

- The ability to put this all together and tell a better story
- A honing of storytelling skills overall and confidence as a story teller
- The oversight and conclusion of your journey from 'lack and plenty,' 'Baba Yaga and the seven disciplines of the medicine woman,' to 'voracious heroes and gluttonous cannibals;' and the deep appreciation of nurture and nourishment through storytelling.