

ELDER WOLF INFORMATION

What you need to know as Elder Wolf – the easy stuff

What to wear/carry?

The archetypes costume box has a red cloak – good to wear all the time, especially as the story refers to it. Being out in the rain, however, might make impracticable to wear. If weather protection can be on the red scale, that's good.

There is also an orange skirt with shisha embroidery (optional – I had an alternative).

Generally, in my memory (and practice) EW carries a basket. Contents optional, though there is a cute doll in the archetypes stock which is a granny one way up and Red Riding Hood the other way up. Knitting/crochet have featured. And it's a good place to stash water, schedule ...

The basket can be a useful signal on Friday during the processing. If it's left outside the room where EW is, then Cos can find her without having to go into each room to look.

Do I need blacks? No

How long to wear 'costume'

Thursday lunchtime (arrival of women) to Saturday evening after the feast.

All the archetypes de-role at this point, EW last.

This means you don't need 'feast' clothes, unless you want to change during/after the de-role.

Where do I have to be when?

Thursday	arrival	Inside the portal	Greet women, introduce EW and your availability, show them where to go next.
	Archetypes	Goddess realm	Meet questions for women
	Sword Circle ShadowWork pre, Bones, check-in	Goddess realm	In attendance
Friday	Breakfast	Fire	Bless the breakfast Tell the Elder Wolf story
	During day	Carpets	Circulate & Support
	End of Day	Fire	Blessing the day, offering the skins to the fire – to the women to put on the fire. NB the skins are not natural fibre, so encourage women to take small pieces for burning.
Saturday	First thing	Lodge	Vigil outside lodge, support

	Post Lodge	Lair	This will probably be the first Cos meeting you've been able to get to since Thursday morning!
	Gift of Life	Goddess Realm	In attendance, timing the senses process
	Council of Archetypes	Goddess Realm	In attendance
	Feast	Goddess Realm	EW leads the women to the Goddess Realm for the feast. Blessing/ thanksgiving with women and co.s before entering
	After Feast	Goddess Realm	De Role

Wisdoms

- EW does her own thing. Especially on Friday she can be where she wants when she wants. It's possible to take breaks if needed.
- EW does not need to be universally sweet or soft. Tough and acid can be useful.
- EW does not need to know everything, the answer to every question

- EW does not need to answer immediately to any question
- EW can admit that a question is tricky
- EW can suggest that a woman might already have the answer to her own question
- EW can answer questions with questions
- You do not need to 'put on' EW; she is within you; trust this, take your ego out of her way; be simple.

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Beyond the Portal – Thursday, arrival: KEY POINTS

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- Assess where each woman might be – how much they might need at this point
- WELCOME (doesn't need to be smiley)
- REMIND her that she's just taken the first step on her initiation
- ASK her if she's taken enough time over the (unless maybe she's taken a while to come through)
- REMIND her that she's in a container of essential silence
- TELL her that you are ELDER WOLF and she can speak with you at any time
- TELL her how to find you – that you will be in RED and that women in BLACK will seek you out if necessary
- DIRECT her to customs – the next stage

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From Nicola

"You've just entered the portal into your initiation space. Have you taken enough time for yourself to honour these steps?" If she nods or says No, I say "Take a bit more time to let yourself feel within the deliberateness of your entry." She may go back and stand there for a moment or two. I only do this with women who seem harried or frantic.

With most women I start with, "You have just entered our container of Essential Silence. I am Elder Wolf. You can always come and speak with me, if ever you have an urgent need to talk with someone. I will always be wearing my red cape. If you do not see me, let a woman in black know that you need to speak with me, and she will find me for you. Gazing at her, helping her be present with me and sensing if she got what I said. Then I say, "Now take your bags (I point to her luggage that she has placed at the side of the tree) and carry them with you up to the top of the lawn where the woman in black stands there. (I'm pointing as I direct her) She will tell you what you will next do."

I forgot to add I often give a welcome, especially if she has deer-in-headlights fear going, I look at her very kindly, slowly, intentionally, and say "Welcome to Women in Power. You are welcome here just as you are." I watch for a breath and body settle, that she is seeing and hearing me. And hopefully landing.

From Angela

BB: You have intentionally crossed thru the portal into our realm of Initiation.

In this container I am known as Elder Wolf. (My demeanor is calm, patient, gazing directly at them.)

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Assess where each woman might be – how much time they might need at this point WELCOME (doesn't need to be smiley)

REMIND her than she's just taken the first step on her initiation

ASK her if she's taken enough time over that (unless maybe she's taken a while to come through)

REMIND her that she's in a container of essential silence

TELL her that you are ELDER WOLF and that she can talk to you at any time TELL her how to find you – that you'll be in red, and that women in black will seek you out if necessary.

DIRECT her to customs – the next stage

This is a container of Essential Silence.

If at any time you feel you must talk with someone, I am the one you can come to. You can always come and speak with me.

You will see me around. You will recognize me in my red cape.

If you cannot find me, go to a woman in black, and ask her to find me for you.

She will do that right away.

Gather your bags and go now up the hill to the woman in black who stands there waiting. (I am turning and pointing.)

Kate's

I met almost all the women with "Welcome. You've just taken the first steps in your initiation. Have you taken enough time to honour these steps?" Two women went back and re-entered. Only where women had spent some time within the trees did I leave this out.

To all, I reminded them about the container of Essential Silence, and explained that they could talk to me at any point if they needed to, that I would always be wearing red, and that if they couldn't see me, they could

ask a woman in black to find me.

Their next stop after me was Customs, so I then directed them to take up their bags from the tarp, and 'there's a white tent beyond the pink bush: that is where you need to be next' (the rhododendron was in bloom!).

One woman was clearly in overwhelm, so I invited her to sit on 'my' bench under the oak for a while before she moved on.

Direct eye contact is important, so is a steady breath and a careful pace. Give them time to hear – both you and their own responses – at each point. Don't break the mode – even the directions onwards are part of what is happening.

Story: Friday breakfast at the fire

How this goes will depend on whether you want to tell or read the story. Versions shift, inevitably, (two follow) and if it's told, then there is likely to be more shift. Try to use UK English (so 'wardrobe' rather than 'closet' for instance). I left out reference to Virginia Woolf, because I wasn't sure the reference would be sufficiently universal – talked about finding the name in the phone book, though others carry the nature. I also softened the reference to vegetarianism so that the family tendency is to meat – so as not to imply a denigration of vegetarians!

For me, connection with the listeners is really important, so I chose not to sit, but rather to wander around and between the groups on the tarpaulin. Routes through may be limited, and unless the grass is dry, you may need to stay on the tarp if you've taken your shoes off, but being able to take the tale across and through the group reduces the 'front' and 'back'ness of an audience and allows connection more closely with more women.

If telling, it seemed to me that the **most important elements** – i.e. the

thematic ones – of the story are these (the repeating ones are in red):

- The commonality of story – so “this is ‘my’ story, but whenever we hear someone else’s story we hear parts of our own, and whenever we tell our story others will hear parts of theirs”. It’s good then to make this point and to reference, ask, check in with any emotion/ response that might be **shared**.
- Grandma howling at the moon (you can link this to the howl heard on the last journey)
Grandma’s wardrobe and the cape – like one in Mum’s wardrobe. It wasn’t clear to me from the written story whether there was one cape or one cape each. I chose the latter, as more inclusive.
- The advice she gives when she refuses the cape
Not fitting – first at school then into puberty
First bleed at home – gift of cape and repeated advice
Fear in the woods, especially that her blood may be the trigger for a predator
Powerlessness
Eyes which are familiar as well as frightening
The bite
The **not looking back**

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Version from Nicola

Gather yourselves around.... I want to tell you a very important story...a tale...

Sometimes tales are woven into ourselves, our lives, and this is the tale of mine.

I come from a long line of powerful women... many women who've gone before... You've likely heard this story before, but never quite this way; never with the secrets & mysteries I will tell you here. Every woman has a story, as you do also. So I have many Great Granddaughters..... You may even recognize one... Virginia Wolf. And this is the story of my Grandmother and the power she taught me to own.

When I was a young girl, I loved nature. I loved being in the wild, & the forest, & going to Grandma's house. Now Grandma was a little odd. I'd sometimes go to her house for dinner, and she'd have strange things hanging around her cabin. There would be herbs hanging to dry, fresh deer meat... we'd often have venison stew. She was known for going out late at night and howling underneath the moon...

One day, I went into her closet... fur coats... and there was a beautiful red cloak. I recall seeing that in mother's closet... She told me when the time was right, I'd learn about the women's mysteries. In the meantime, she said what is important for you to remember is, "Always remember who you are, and don't loose any parts of yourself. It's all precious, every part, & every part is important."

The years went by & I grew a little older. And the time came for me to go off to school (engage women): And how many of YOU have stories like mine? And Oh how I missed my mommy & how I felt so different.... different from all the girls. And I missed my Grandmother, I missed someone teaching me...

I found a way of criticizing myself so I would fit in. Things got worse.... So I had to forget about some of the parts of myself, & even then it didn't

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Taking the power she feared – the wolf nature Shape-shifting – to a form she never knew she had

seem to work. I didn't fit. I DIDN'T FIT.....(Elaborate).

Except when the full moon came. Ahhh, so familiar. The scent, memory. I remembered my Grandmother...

Then an odd thing began to happen. My breasts began to swell, to change. I began to feel so awkward in my body. Did you ever feel awkward in YOUR body? ... And when I was home from school during a holiday one time, I began to have my first menstruation, my first drops of blood. It frightened me. It was then that my mother brought out the beautiful red cape that had been in my Grandmother's closet. At long last, I got my cape! So mother packed a picnic lunch with ham sandwiches, & chicken legs, & a hot mug of rabbit stew – this is part of a long lineage in our Wolf family. My younger sister, she wanted to be a vegetarian, but no way in the Wolf family.

So mother told me to take the basket to Grandma's house. And she said, "Remember all the parts of yourself. Things are not always as they seem."

Hmmm... I remembered Grandma saying that.

So, the journey through the woods began.

Have YOU ever had a long journey through the woods? And the journey began and I was happy... fun... open field...then I came to a dark place... saw a dark shape... heard a howl – it frightened me. I started running.... Faster... forest became thick, thicker... got tangled... kept going... running

faster. It (use the word “IT” here) was stalking me. My heart raced. I felt I was in danger. Maybe a wild animal caught the scent of my blood. And then I saw It, & It was a wolf. It was near... frighteningly near. We stopped & looked into each other’s eyes. The eyes were familiar to me, yet they held me in fear. I knew I was powerless. I began to run again. Footsteps... ran faster... faster. There was a clearing just ahead.

(Engage women): Have you ever felt fear? Powerless? No where to go?

I turned around once more, and that’s when the wolf leapt toward me. The mighty paws brought me down. The eyes looked at me... strangely familiar eyes. AND THE WOLF BIT ME ON THE NAPE OF MY NECK. And I was terrified for my life. I pounded & screamed out. Bleeding, I rolled out from underneath the wolf’s clench. I ran as fast as I could to the clearing, through the clearing, never looking back. Sometimes you don’t

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want to look back.

At last, I entered my Grandmother’s house, scratched, bleeding, afraid... & I called to her. “Grandmother, where are you?” And I heard a voice, a low deep voice that didn’t sound like her voice.

(Low voice): “I’m in my bed, Red Riding Hood.”

So, I went in. It was otherworldly. There seemed to be a mist, a haze, through which I was looking. I went over to her and said, “Grandmother, what big eyes you have.” And she said in that low voice that I could hardly recognize, “The better to see you with, my dear.”And I looked at her confused.

So I said, “Grandmother, your nose, it’s long, & furry. What happened to your nose?”

(Low voice): “The better to smell you out with, my dear.”

And I realized I might be in serious danger, because Grandmother was starting to look a lot like that wolf.

“Grandmother, what large, white, sharp teeth you have.”

(Transformation): And it was here that I realized I had a choice: I could either be the young maiden who was just hunted down, bitten, nearly dead, OR I could draw from a power I vowed never to be like. I reached down inside of me for a change of my nature, maybe by owning my Wolf name. And I decided to take the risk to be the very power that I feared, for the protection and well-being of my own life. And in that moment, have you ever heard of shape-shifting? Where you find a form inside of you you never knew you had, but was likely there all along? Well, I made a choice. And in that very instant, something came out, and it seemed that I, myself, grew claws, teeth, & as I heard her answer,

(low voice): “The better to eat you with,” I rose up, waiting, not for any hunter with an ax; I rose up with teeth, claws and said,

“NO, YOU WON’T, NEVER!!!”

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And in that moment, a strange thing happened in that enchanted mist. The eyes that had been so familiar became my Grandmother’s eyes... Nose returned to that familiar nose of Grandmother..... And her mouth..... Beautiful face... And I, too, my claws receded, my teeth..... etc...

And she began to cackle, and cackle, and said:

(normal Grandmother's voice): "Well done, my Granddaughter. You are now initiated with a power that is your own power to be used in the way you choose."

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