

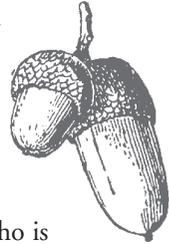
CHAPTER 3

LOVE MAGIC

*Ki shan I Romani,
Adoi san' I chov'hani*
(Where Gypsies go,
There the witches are, we know.)

—OLD ROMANI POEM

The Romani word for “witch” is *shuvihani* (masculine, *shuvihano*), sometimes shortened to *shuv'ani* and, in some areas, to *shu'ni*. The term, also sometimes spelled *chuvihani*, means a witch in the old sense of “wise one”—one knowledgeable in all aspects of the occult. Trigg says that the shuvanis “served the important function in gypsy society of being able to both bless and curse, heal and make sick . . . the chuvihani is one who is respected for both wisdom and knowledge of magical beliefs and practices.”⁶ They carry all the knowledge of the social taboos and of rites and rituals like baptism and marriage. Witches are never considered evil or repugnant in any way by Gypsies. They are simply individuals with special knowledge and/or power that is used for good or bad, according to his or her desires.



LOVE AND MARRIAGE

In the past, the marriages of Gypsy children were arranged. This is seldom the case today, though it does happen on rare occasions, as Clébert tells us:

Among some Gypsy groups traces remain of the marriage of children before puberty: in general, between eight to fourteen years of age. Such

6. Elwood B. Trigg, *Gypsy Demons and Divinities* (Secaucus, NJ: Citadel, 1973), p.28.

unions are decided upon by the parents and, for a certainty, without the consent of the interested parties. The ceremony is limited to a simple formality, and the children remain with their own families until they have reached puberty. There is never any cohabitation. At the moment of puberty (and when no unavoidable difficulties have arisen), a second ceremony seals the effective union. Yet the custom of precocious marriage is becoming increasingly rare, at least among western Gypsies.⁷

Clébert also speaks of there being three main forms of marriage: “abduction (by force or consent), by purchase, and by mutual consent.” Abduction and outright purchase are rare today. More generally, the parents of a teenage boy decide which girl in the tribe is most eligible for him (though, today, the young people’s feelings for one another are given definite consideration). They then meet with the girl’s parents and, if they agree, come to an arrangement regarding her dowry. Then the couple is regarded as engaged.

To accidentally put
your left shoe on your
right foot is a sure sign
of an accident to come.

There is no engagement ring, as in *gorgio* society, but the girl is given a gold coin that she wears around her neck. This is usually an

English sovereign—a Queen Victoria Jubilee sovereign is especially esteemed. The girl may be as young as thirteen, but sixteen is more common. The boy may be anywhere from sixteen to eighteen.

It isn’t uncommon for two Romani families to make a marriage arrangement and agree on a dowry, only to find that the young couple don’t care for one another at all. Or worse, that they are in love with someone else. Many times, the solution for the son or daughter is to elope with his or her true love. When this happens, the couple stay away for several weeks, but eventually return to seek forgiveness. Invariably, they are severely reprimanded in front of the whole tribe, but then accepted back as husband and wife. If the son or daughter has done the unforgivable and eloped with a *gauji* or *gaujo* (non-Gypsy), they are seldom, if ever, accepted back and have to travel the roads alone from then on. This is more often the case when a Gypsy girl marries outside the blood than if a boy does so. If a non-Gypsy woman (*gauji*) is accepted into the tribe, she has to show complete submission to her mother-in-law and is generally forbidden to leave the camp for any reason.

If all goes according to plan, the engagement is honored, the dowry is paid, and the festivities begin, with Gypsies traveling from miles around to attend the wedding. It is amazing how quickly the Rom can get messages out

7. Jean-Paul Clébert, *The Gypsies* (London: Penguin Books, 1967), p.211.

to far-flung members of the tribe when necessary. Rather than a best man and maid of honor, a married couple is chosen to act as sponsors for the bride and groom. They act somewhat like the godparents at a baptism, in that they are available to help, advise, and give support to the couple from then on.

The actual wedding ceremony varies tremendously from tribe to tribe. The central point occurs when the two young people promise always to remain true to one another. In fact, in some tribes, that is really all there is to the ceremony! In others, there are exchanges of bread and/or salt, red *dikkos*, and red flowers. There are even reports of couples cutting their wrists and mingling their blood and tying their arms together with a red cloth, but this is very rare today. Shortly after birth, a Romani boy is given two gold earrings, which he always wears. At the wedding ceremony, he gives his bride the right earring. It is, therefore, possible to tell if a Rom is married or not by whether he wears one or two earrings.

In some Gypsy weddings, the couple jumps over a besom, or broomstick. In others, they leap across long branches of broom. This obviously ties in with magical beliefs, since broom figures in many charms for fertility and for protection from evil spirits. The eating of a cake or small loaf into which has been baked some of the bride's and groom's blood also has connections to magical charms.

The bride's finger is entwined with a small posy or ring of flowers, later to be replaced with a gold ring when the two of them, together, have earned the money to pay for it. This joint purchase shows their partnership in life.

The wedding celebrations may go on for days, with much feasting, dancing, and singing. This is a time for general truce, with all disagreements and quarrels forgotten. Songs and dances play an important part in the celebration. In his book *Gypsy Demons and Divinities*, Elwood Trigg says:

Special words, gestures, songs and dances called *debla*, *alborea*, *cachucha* and *mosca* form the most important part of a very ancient magical rite. The *debla* contains remnants of various incantations, probably brought by the Gypsies from India for the purpose of appealing for the blessing of the beneficent spirit or spirits who are thought to preside over all such ceremonies. The *alborea* is likewise very primitive and may very well be

If your right ear tingles,
or itches, someone is
speaking well of you. If
your left ear tingles, they
are speaking ill of you.
To find out who it is, call
out loud the names of all
those you think it could
be. The tingling will stop
when you call out the
correct name.

the predecessor of flamenco. The other two parts of the rite, though less magical in their purpose, still contain elements considered necessary to the completion of the total ceremony.

The bride's virginity is of paramount importance. At many Romani weddings, the bride and groom retire early in the celebrations, with the groom returning some time later to display the bed sheet (or more frequently, a white silk handkerchief) with the telltale bloodstain. This is then cause for even greater rejoicing!

LOVE SPELLS

Love spells frequently play a part in the coming together of the future bride and groom. They include spells to discover who loves whom, spells to encourage a shy lover, spells to draw a lover, and spells to get rid of an unwanted lover. And love magic does not end with a marriage. There are spells for keeping a spouse faithful, spells for bringing children, spells for family harmony, and spells to heal a rift. Gypsy love spells use a variety of potions, talismans, amulets, and charms.

Finding a Prospective Mate

There are several ways to find out who or what type of person you will marry. One spell—from the old days of *jallin' a drom*, or “traveling the road”—calls for the woman to take the seeds of an apple she has eaten and mix them into some dampened earth taken from under where her vardo or bender stood the previous night. She then spreads the earth and seeds in the middle of a crossroads. If a man is the first to pass over the seeds, she will marry a young bachelor. If a woman is the first to pass, she will marry an older man, one who may have been married before.

Another spell for determining your prospective mate calls for you to obtain an apple from a widow without thanking her for it. Eat half of the apple before midnight and the other half after midnight. You will then dream of your future spouse. One group of Gypsies says that this must be done on St. Andrew's Eve (the night of November 29, although many Gypsies adhere to the Old Style calendar and celebrate the Eve on December 10). Others say it must be done on the night of the Full Moon. Still others say it really doesn't matter when you do it!



Choosing a Mate Using a Pendulum

If you are trying to choose a mate from several equally appealing people, try using the Gypsy pendulum. Gypsy shuvasis often use pendulums, especially for divining information on health problems. They often keep one they have made tucked into their *putsis* (pouches) or hanging around their necks. You can create a pendulum by carving a piece of wood or bone and fastening it to a length of cord, then decorating it with magical symbols. You can also write the names of potential mates on a sheet of paper, with the names going out from the center like a star. Make sure that no name is directly opposite another. Then, go to the woods and find an acorn. Tie the acorn on the end of a nine-inch length of red silk thread and hold the end of the thread so that the acorn hangs down like a pendulum. Sit with it suspended over the center of the paper, just off the surface. Say aloud each of the names written on the paper. Then, clearing your mind of them, concentrate on having the ideal mate. The pendulum will start to swing back and forth, along the line of one of the names. This is the one who is right for you. If it should swing exactly between two names, then write just those two names on another piece of paper—one horizontally and the other vertically—and try again. It will then swing along one name only.

Another old Gypsy way of deciding between suitors is to write each name on a slip of paper and roll the slip into a ball of clay. Then drop the balls into a cauldron of spring water. The ball that first rises to the surface carries the name of the true love.

Divining Your Future Spouse

German Gypsies say that, to divine your future spouse, you must scratch the letters of the alphabet in the dirt. They don't have to be in a straight line; in fact, it's better if they're not. Just scratch them, in no particular order and with a generous space between them, over a roughly circular area. Then take two horseshoes and walk nine paces away from the letters. Turn your back on them and pitch the horseshoes, one after the other, over your shoulder at the group of letters. The two letters you hit are the initials of the one who is to be your mate. If only one horseshoe hits a letter and the other falls outside the area, then you have only one initial to go on, which can be for either a first name or a last. If both horseshoes fall outside the area, you may try again. You can have up to three tries. If the shoes still do not fall on any of the letters, you will not marry that year.

Gypsies in Transylvania believe that divining your future spouse must be done on the eve of the New Year. At that time, throw an old shoe up into

a willow tree. If it catches on a branch—even if it falls down again after a moment—it means you will be married in that coming year.

Drawing a Mate to You with Stones

Sometimes, the one you desire doesn't seem to know that you exist. Here is a spell told to me by an old shuvano named Plato Sheen, in the *Nevi Wesh* (the New Forest) in England. Plato was what is known as a “black blood” (*kaulo ratti*)—a pure-blooded Romani. He assured me that this spell always works!

Find thirteen white stones. You may get them anywhere, but it's best if you go for a walk and find them as you walk along. However, if necessary you may gather them over a period of time, picking up white stones you see until you have thirteen. On the first Friday after a New Moon, lay out the stones on the ground in the shape of a heart. Then lie flat on the ground, with your heart over the heart of stones. Close your eyes and concentrate on the one you want to attract. Think of everything about him or her: physical appearance, interests, job, and so on. Then sit up and rearrange the stones into his or her initials.

Now lie down again with your heart over the stones. This time, concentrate on yourself: your looks, interests, feelings, especially your interest in this person. After you have done this for a while, gather up the stones and tie them up in a piece of white cloth. Carry this bundle with you until the Full Moon. By that time, the person will have been drawn to you.

Let me make a point here: *Do not concentrate on having this person fall in love with you.* That would be to enforce your will over theirs. Your goal should be simply to cause the person to notice you. If that happens, the rest will follow if it is meant to be. If it's not meant to be, it won't. As the old saying goes: Let nature take its course.

Drawing a Mate to You with Herbs

Another way to attract the attention of someone you love is to sprinkle special herbs on his or her food. Lovage (*Levisticum officinale*) is an herb that can be added to food or drink for this purpose. When serving chicken (or *hotchi-witchi*, hedgehog, as the Rom do), sprinkle a little lovage over the portion to be served to your love ten minutes or so before it finishes cooking. This will increase his or her love for you and ensure faithfulness. It can also be sprinkled onto soup. Lovage can also be sprinkled in your bathwater. Soak in the tub for a while and you will find the object of your desire is drawn to you almost as soon as you step out.

Coriander can increase passion when dropped into a glass of hot mulled cider or hot wine, the Gypsies say. Likewise a teaspoonful of catnip (*Nepeta cataria*) brewed in a cupful of water makes an excellent tea that, when sweetened with a little honey and drunk by you and your lover just before bed, can ensure warm “togetherness” throughout the night.

To Discover Your Future Spouse

There are one or two (perhaps even three or more?) people in whom you are interested and who could turn out to be your future spouse. But which one will it be? Here’s a way to find out. This ritual should be performed on the night of the Full Moon.

Sit alone in a room that is absolutely quiet, with no sound of traffic, television, radio, or anything. On a table in front of you, lay out a piece of black cloth. On the cloth, stand a clear glass tumbler filled right up to the brim with water. Place a lighted white candle to the left of the glass of water. This should be the only light in the room. To the right of it, burn some incense—sandalwood, frankincense, or jasmine are best.

Close your eyes and take two or three deep breaths. In your mind, see the faces of the possible spouses in front of you, but keep your eyes closed. Say the following, three times:

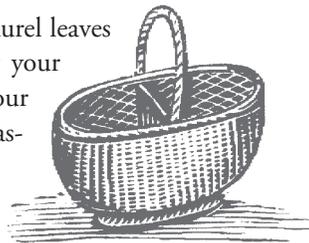
Scry, scry, scry for me.
 Bring the face that I must see.
 Let me gaze on my future mate
 To know which lover will be my fate.

Try to clear your mind of everything, so that when you open your eyes and gaze down into the water, you will be able to accept anything that appears there. Then, open your eyes and gaze down into the water. You will see the face of the one who is to become your spouse.

To Attract a Lover

Use this spell when you have a lover who is not as attentive as you wish. You know they love you, but . . .

Sit before a dying fire with a small basket of laurel leaves between your knees. Gaze into the fire and clear your mind of all but thoughts of your lover. Keeping your gaze fixed on the fire, dip your left hand into the bas-



ket, take out a handful of the leaves, and toss them onto the fire. As they burst into flame, chant out loud the following:

Laurel leaves that burn in the fire,
Draw unto me my heart's desire.

Wait till the flames have died down, then repeat the action and the words. Do it a third time. Within twenty-four hours, your lover will come to visit you.

To Rid Yourself of an Unwanted Lover

Some people are wooed by persistent would-be lovers—those who won't take no for an answer and who won't leave them alone. This is the ideal spell for such a situation. It should be done during the waning cycle of the Moon—that is, after the Full Moon and before the New Moon.

Light a roaring fire, then go outside and pick up two handfuls of dry vervain leaves. (You can place them on the ground there ahead of time, if necessary.) As you pick up the leaves, shout out the name of the one you wish to be rid of. Turn and go back into the house (or cross to the fire, if you are doing this out in the open) and fling the leaves onto the fire with these words:

Here is my pain;
Take it and soar.
Depart from me now
And offend me no more.

Do this for three nights in a row. You will hear no more from the unwanted one.

To Make Yourself Known to Another

If you love another who doesn't seem to notice you, this spell can bring you to his or her attention.

Find the footprint in the earth of the person whose attention you want to catch. Dig up the footprint (or more correctly, the earth in which it is impressed). Take the earth to the nearest willow tree and, making a hole in the ground at its base, put the earth holding the footprint into the hole. Fill the hole with the original dirt. As you bury the footprint, say:

Many earths on earth there be,
I make my love known unto thee.
For he (she) is the flower and I the stem;
He (I) the cock and me (she) the hen.

Grow, grow, willow tree!
Sorrow not for the likes of me.

From then on, you will find that the person for whom you yearn will indeed start to notice you. Where it goes from there, of course, is up to you.

To Make Yourself an Object of Desire

This is a spell that is best performed on May Day, the first of May. As with most of these spells, it can be done by a man or a woman.

Climb to the top of a hawthorn tree and break off about twelve inches of the topmost branch. Carry it back down to the ground with you. With the broken end of the limb, mark a circle about three feet in diameter on the ground on the east side of the tree. Stand in the circle facing east and, holding the twig above your head, say the following:

Opré the rooker, adré the vesh
Si chiriklo ta chirikli;
Telé the rook adré the vesh
Si piramno ta piramni.

(Over the tree and into the woods
Are male and female birds.
Under the tree and into the woods
Are male and female sweethearts.)

Now stick the branch into the ground in the middle of the circle and walk away without looking back. George Borrow, in his 1874 book *Romano Lavo Lil*, gives a similar rhyme as part of a song called “The Squire and the Lady.” He does not give a literal translation, but has obviously tried rather to make a poetic rendering into English. Borrow translates the verse as:

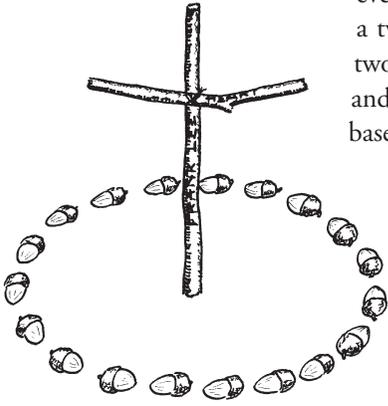
I see, I see upon the tree,
The little male and female dove;
Below the tree, I see, I see,
The lover and his lady love.⁸

To Give a Would-be Lover Courage

Here is another example of sympathetic magic. This spell is excellent if you have a lover who is extremely shy and very reluctant to declare his or her love.

8. George Borrow, *Romano Lavo Lil* (London: Murray, 1874), p. 153.

As in the previous spell, you need a piece of branch from a tree. This time, however, you need not climb to the top of the tree to get it. You should, however, break it off the tree yourself rather than picking up a twig that has fallen. Actually, you are going to need two twigs from an oak tree—one about six inches long and one three or four inches long. You will use these as a base for making a doll figure that represents your lover.



On the larger piece of wood, scratch, paint, or write in some fashion the name of your lover. On the shorter piece, scratch the word “heart.” Now take the smaller twig and lay it across the larger, about two inches from the top, to form a cross. Tie it in place with a hair, or several hairs, from his or her head. Stick the wooden figure into the ground at the foot of the oak tree and lay down a circle of acorns all around it.

Kneel in front of the figure, facing it and the tree, and say:

Fill your heart with the strength that is here;
 Feel the oak driving out all fear.
 Say the words to bring joy to the heart,
 And never again will we be apart.

Leave and return the following day. If the stick figure still stands, kneel and repeat the rhyme. Do this for seven days in a row. If the figure stands throughout, then all will be well and you will soon be together. But if, for any reason, the figure is not standing any time you go to it, then there will be some obstruction to the two of you getting together.

To Make Someone Think of You

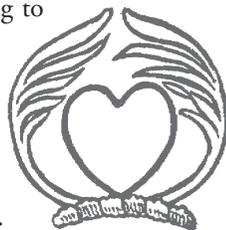
For this spell, you need a small mirror, like a woman’s pocket make-up mirror. Take a photograph of yourself and put it behind the mirror. Then take a photograph of the person you want to think of you and place it face down against the front of the mirror, so that the two photographs are facing one another, but with the mirror between them. Wrap the three objects in a piece of red paper or cloth, and fasten it securely so that the cloth cannot come undone and the photographs cannot come away from the mirror.

Take the package to the home of the person you desire and hide it somewhere in the house where it will not be discovered. Gypsies used to hide it in the rafters or in the thatch of a roof, but these days, you have to do the best you can.

Some Gypsies say that you don't even have to take it to the person's home. They say that just the fact of having the pictures fastened to the mirror, back and front, will do the trick. However, others say that it is essential that it be placed in the person's home. So if you want to play it safe, I suggest hiding it there.

To Narrow the Field

Three possible lovers . . . which one to choose? Before going to sleep at night, write down the names of the contenders on separate slips of paper and place them under your pillow. When you get into bed, lie with your eyes closed and concentrate on each of the possibilities, one at a time. Slip your hand under the pillow and pull out one of the slips. Do not look at it (it's best to do this when the light is out, anyway). Just drop it onto the floor beside the bed.



In the morning, slip your hand under the pillow again and pull out another slip of paper. Drop that on the floor as well. The remaining name is the one for you. You can do this with more than three names, of course, pulling out more than one each time, just so long as only one is left at the end.

To Broaden the Field

Having too many suitors can be a problem. You may need to narrow the field. But what if the reverse is true? What if you have only one, or perhaps two, suitors, but you feel you would like a far larger group from which to choose? How do you broaden the field?

One way is to work a little Gypsy magic. From a piece of pink cloth, make a drawstring pouch about three inches by six inches. On one side of the pouch, embroider your initials (or full name). On the other side, embroider a heart. This embroidery should be done with red silk thread. Place one large and two small acorns in the pouch (or one for each admirer you have).

Every morning when you rise, go out into the woods and pick up the first acorn you find. Place it in the pouch with the others. Do this until you have a total of eight acorns—one to represent yourself (the large one) and seven others to represent seven admirers. Do this as soon as you get out of bed, before you have coffee or anything to eat.

Every night, sleep with the bag under your pillow. During the day, wear it suspended from a red ribbon under your clothing against your skin. (Some say it should hang over your heart; others say it should hang down between your legs.)

Within three days of completing the collection of acorns, you will start obtaining new admirers. You can eventually have as many as seven. If you decide you want to stop at six, or five, or fewer, just stop wearing the bag. You can then get to know them all and make your choice!

But what if you live in the city and there are no oak trees close by? First, make quite sure that there really are no oak trees. It's surprising how many cities have parks within easy reach that we just don't notice or simply assume are not there.



If your nose itches early in the morning, you will receive good news later in the day. Gypsies in the west of England say that the itching nose means that you will have company come to visit that day. A nosebleed is an omen of bad luck.



Look around. See what's out there. As with so much of magic, it's really the thought/feeling and the action that you put into a spell that generates the force for the magic. So whether it's acorns or pop-tops, you can have success.

To Carry Your Lover to You Across Land and Sea

There is nothing worse than being separated from the one you love. It often happens that the Rom get separated. When they do, they work a little magic to speed their reunion.

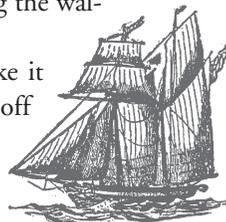
Take half a walnut shell and drill a small hole near the edge. Thread a length of red thread through the hole and tie a knot in the end to secure it. Fill a bucket with water and float the walnut shell in it. Holding the end of the thread, say:

Come to me, over land and sea.
Return at once to my side.
By Gana's love do I make this plea,
That together we may abide.

Hold the end of the thread in your hand over the pail of water, with your index finger pointing down into it. With the shell at the outer edge, start to stir the water so that, as you stir, the thread winds onto your extended finger.

Repeat the rhyme, saying it three times in all, by which time the thread should have wound completely onto your finger, bringing the walnut shell tight up against it.

Lift the shell out of the water by the thread and take it outside (if you are not already outside). Slip the thread off your finger and put it inside the shell. Now bury the shell at the front door to your home. This will bring your lover home to you.



Who Will It Be and When?

You have a number of admirers and just don't know which is the right one. You're also curious to know when you and that "right one" will finally tie the knot. How do you determine these things?

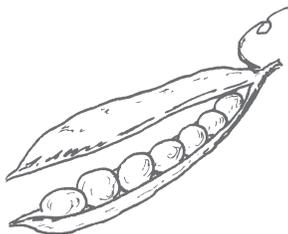
The Gypsies do it with acorns. This spell is usually done on a Wednesday, though a Friday can also work well. First, gather as many acorns as you have admirers, plus one to represent yourself. Then take a sharp knife and scratch the initial of each person on an acorn.

Fill a bowl with water. Take up the acorns and, holding them in your hands, concentrate on the people they represent. See each of them in turn and study the things about them that attract you. Now open your hands and drop the acorns, all together, into the bowl of water. The acorn that floats closest to yours is the person most right for you.

Next, remove all the acorns from the bowl and throw out all but your own and that of the "finalist." Hold these two in your cupped hands, over your heart, and say:

Gana, Gana, when will it be?

Then throw the two acorns back into the bowl. If they stay floating close together (within about three inches of one another), you will be marrying within the year. But if they float a good distance apart, it will be a long engagement.



To Learn Whom You Will Marry

Another way to determine whom you will marry is to use a bowl of water and a flat stick. Take an earthenware bowl and fill it at least half full of water that has been taken from a flowing stream. Lay a flat stick or piece of wood across the bowl, from one edge to the other, to represent a bridge over a river or stream.

On the night of a Full Moon, place the bowl of water and stick underneath your bed. Just before you sleep, concentrate on an actual footbridge over a stream. Tell yourself that you will dream of it that night. Not only will you dream of the bridge, but you will dream of yourself crossing the bridge and, halfway over, falling into the water. But have no fear, someone will come to rescue you.

With these expectations built up in your mind throughout the day and reinforced just before you sleep, you will actually have that dream. Whoever comes to your rescue and pulls you from the water is your future spouse.

To Draw the Full Power of Love from Your Partner

In effect, this is a spell to overcome impotency or frigidity. Take equal parts of rosemary, lemon balm, and sage. Dry them, then grind them into powder. On the night of the New Moon, light a charcoal briquette and sprinkle the powder on as incense. Let it burn as you make love. As you lie together and the smoke rises, both of you say:

Herbs of love bring strength anew.
 Let times of stress be very few.
 Join two hearts and let love flow,
 To consummate and end our woe.

Do this every night you make love until it is no longer necessary.

To Have Luck in Love

The Gypsies believe that to find anything red means luck in love. If you find a piece of red thread, red wool, a red button, or any red object, pick it up and carry it with you for luck. It will serve as an amulet.

As you stoop to pick the object up, think of the person you love and say:

Red is my blood
 And red is my heart.
 Lucky in love;
 Never keep us apart.

To Find the Key to Your Heart

It is considered very lucky to find a key. Any sort of key is lucky, but an antique one is especially so. As with the finding of something red, there are words to say at the time of finding it:

The key to your heart lies on the ground,
The key to your heart has now been found.
I lock up your love with the heart of my own,
I'll guard it forever with the love I have shown.

As you say these words, think of the one you love and of the two of you being together forever. Sleep with the key under your pillow for nine nights, carrying it with you during the day. Then put it away in a safe place.

To Pay Down the Devil

Romanian Gypsies have a tradition of paying off the Devil at a wedding, so that he will not put the evil eye on the marriage. This is accomplished by the bride placing a silver coin under her left arm and holding it there, with her arm tight against her body, for the duration of the ceremony. Then, as she and her new husband leave the wedding site, she allows the coin to fall inconspicuously to the ground. Anyone who later finds this coin will enjoy seven years of good fortune, they say.

To Forgive a Mistake

Most of us make mistakes at one time or another. Sometimes it's hard for two lovers to forgive, depending on the enormity of the mistake. This little ritual will make it easier to forgive and, in so doing, bring you together again, perhaps even closer than before. This spell requires the participation of both parties, showing the forgiveness of the one and the remorse of the other.

Light three candles—two white and one red. Sit facing one another holding hands (left hand in left, right hand in right). Have the guilty party admit his or her guilt; have the injured party say, "I love you. I forgive you." Then release your hands and place a coin (Gypsies use a silver coin) in a dish. Have the guilty party take a white candle and let its wax fall onto the coin. Have the injured party do the same with the other white candle. Then have the guilty party take up the red candle and let its wax fall on the white wax on the coin, saying: "Let my love for you cover the hurt I have caused, that evermore we may be as one."

Join hands again and kiss over the coin. Then take the coin out and bury it in the ground at the foot of a willow tree.

MAGICAL VEGETABLES

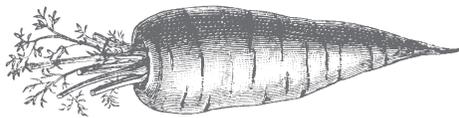
There is a type of sympathetic magic performed by some shuvanis that uses vegetables and herbs to effect change. Here are some spells that use that power.

To Arouse a Mate

In the food you are preparing, include carrots, parsnips, cucumbers, and celery. These should never be cut crosswise, but may be cut lengthwise. As you prepare these vegetables—wash and/or pare them—concentrate on your mate and say the following spell:

Here is strength,
 Here is strength.
 Here is joy, Here is joy.
 Pleasure comes easily,
 Pleasure comes willingly,
 Pleasure comes!

Repeat this seven times as you prepare the vegetables, all the time seeing your mate as you would like him or her to be. It is said that this simple charm can cause a person to stop halfway through the meal and make passionate love to the cook!



To Keep a Faithful Spouse

If you have suspicions about your wife's or husband's faithfulness, work this old Romani spell. It is said never to fail.

Take two large potatoes, scrub them clean, and cut them in half lengthwise. You will use just one half from each potato, so you can throw away or cook the other two halves. With a sharp-pointed knife, scratch your own name on one half. On the other half, scratch your spouse's name. Place the two halves face to face so that they resemble one whole potato. Stick a new three-inch nail through the potato, with the head of the nail on your spouse's

side and the point coming through on your side. Then bind the whole thing around with red silk thread.

Go out into the garden or to some piece of common land and, in the light of the Moon (it doesn't have to be Full, but it should be waxing, that is, moving from New to Full), bury the potato at least seven inches deep. As long as the potato remains undisturbed, your marriage will survive.

To Heal a Rift

This spell is similar to the one above, but uses an apple rather than potatoes. If you and your spouse have had a tiff, or even a major argument, obtain a large red apple and cut it in half—not lengthwise (from stem to tip), but across. Now take two cloves—one to represent yourself and the other to represent your spouse—and hold one in each hand for a few moments as you concentrate on your true love for one another. Then stick the cloves into the cut surfaces of the apple—one in each half. Put the two halves of the apple back together and push a thin stick (preferably myrtle or hazel) through the core to hold it together.

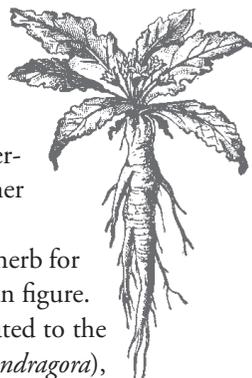
Now take the apple down to the bank of a river, stream, or lake and throw it out into the middle with the words:

Gana, rejoin us,
Even as the apple has been rejoined.
Bring us the sweetness of Love
And of Life.
And let all disharmony
Be washed away forever.

To Attract a Lover with Herbs

It is said that, if you put just a pinch of bethroot (*Trillium erectum*) in whatever you are cooking, the person to whom you serve it will be drawn to you in a very strong, romantic way. (Another way to draw your lover to you without using herbs is to obtain one of his or her shoes and keep it underneath your bed. This supposedly will draw the shoe's owner to that bed.)

The mandrake root has also been considered a magical herb for centuries, because it grows naturally in the shape of a human figure. The American mandrake (*Podophyllum peltatum*) is not related to the European variety (*Mandragora officinarum*, or *Atropa mandragora*), but all varieties are poisonous, so they should not be taken internally



except under medical supervision. Many Gypsies carry a piece of mandrake with them, either on their person or in their vardo. It is used first and foremost as a protection amulet, but it can also be a positive love amulet.

Take a piece of mandrake and hold it in the smoke of a wood fire onto which alder or juniper twigs have been thrown. Turn the mandrake root in the smoke and chant the following:

Yek, dui, trin, (one, two, three)
Yek, dui, trin,
 Let my luck from here begin.
 Protect and keep me all my days
 And bring true love in all the ways.
 Let my heart so joyful be;
Shoon, dick, te rig dré zi.
 (Hear, see, and bear in mind).

Place the piece of mandrake in a green silken bag, which you can hang around your neck.

To Keep Two People Close

Here is another charm that can keep a married couple together, drawing them ever closer to one another. It can be done by either husband or wife, or by the two together if they wish.

Take a blade of grass and hold it in your mouth, between your lips, so that it protrudes. Face the east and kneel. Think of your spouse for a few moments; then, taking the blade of grass in your left hand, hold it up high and say:

Where the sun rises
 Will my love be by my side.

Replace the grass in your mouth. Turn to the west and kneel again. Think of your spouse for a few moments, then, taking the grass in your right hand, hold it up high and say:

Where the sun goes down
 Will we ever be together.

Replace the grass blade in your mouth and stand. Face north and think of the two of you together. Then remove the blade once again, cut it into fine pieces, and mix it in with some food. Eat the food with your husband or wife.

To Attract a Mate

Young Gypsy girls, when preparing vegetables for cooking, look especially carefully at the peas they are shelling. If you ever find seven peas in a pod, keep that pod for spell-working.

Place one half of the pod over the door of your vardo—or the main door into your house. Keep the other half in your pocket or somewhere on your person. The first eligible male to enter your home will be drawn immediately to you, and will be the one you will eventually marry.