The Way Back to *Magic*

A PRACTICAL MAGIC WORKBOOK



advaya

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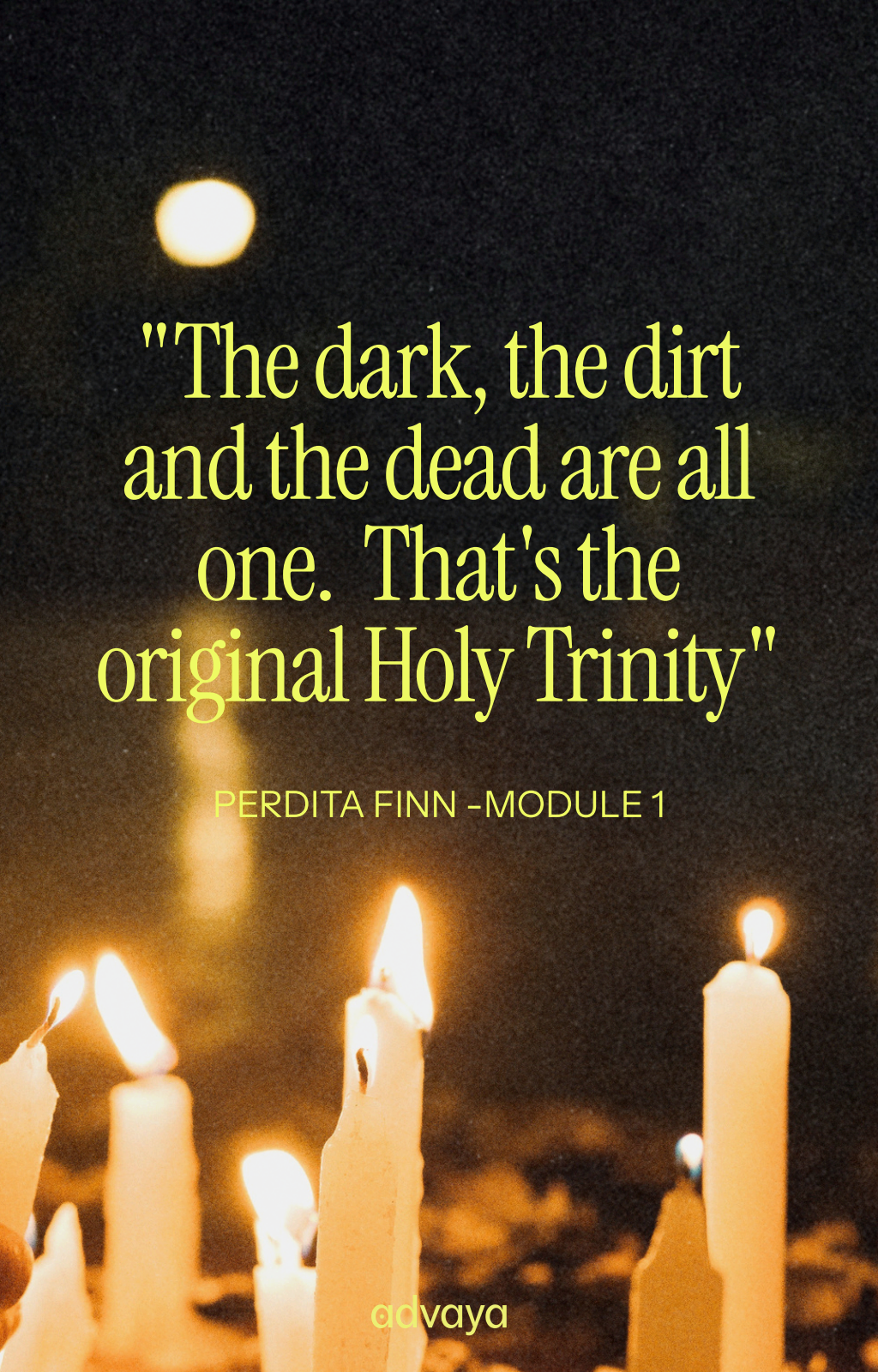
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"The dark, the dirt and the dead are all one. That's the original Holy Trinity"
PERDITA FINN -MODULE 1
advaya

SESSION ONE:

Litanies of the Dead

Names are powerful. We hear our name called out in a crowded room and turn to see who wants to get our attention. To know the name of a fairy fairy-tale character is to be able to summon their power and magic. When Isis found the secret name of Ra, she could summon his magic to her.

Most mantras and traditional prayers begin with the invocation of a name: Hail Mary. Om Namah Shivaya. Holy patroness in time of need, St. Rita. Hey you, Granny Nell.

Many religious traditions include a practice of reciting the names of the patriarchs, the enlightened masters, or the important ones who have gone before us. A psychic friend I know loves to walk through old graveyards saying the names on the tombstones aloud—and connecting with the dead beneath the ground.

Each of us can create our own litanies of the dead. Put the list in a document on your computer—or find a beautiful book and begin jotting down names. The more you collect, the more will come to you. A friend who died in high school will pop into your head for no seeming reason. You will dream of a long-gone teacher. A surprising saint will keep showing up in your day-to-day life. There is no limit to these names.

I try to include everyone. I don't want to leave anyone out because I do not want to be left out.

Categories to Explore

Relatives: mothers and fathers, siblings, children, grandparents and great grandparents, cousins, aunts and uncles, step-parents.
There is no need to do formal genealogy. But if you have ancestors that the family has talked about—the great grandfather who was a pirate, the way back ancestress who had six husbands—you can include them.

Friends: From throughout the various stages of your life. They do not have to have been close friends. People you have known in one way or another.

Teachers: Guides. Helpers of one kind or another.

Neighbors: Visit old neighborhoods and collect the dead. Remember these people. You may have to check from time to time to see if they are still living or not. The old lady down the street. The woman who lived behind the grocery store. The cranky guy whose house you never wanted to go to on Halloween.

Pets: Bodies may be small but every soul is large. Don't leave out any beings who have lived and passed with you. Cats and dogs. But goldfish and hamsters and even sea monkeys count too.

Accidentals: The dead will start showing up. The raccoon hit and dead by the side of the road. The deer. The frogs squashed into the pavement. Each of these beings is a soul, everyone of these souls recognizes you for who you really are. If you are a nurse or a doctor or an emt this list may be very long. Or perhaps you were the first person at an accident. You may not have known these people in life—but you met them at their death. Include them.

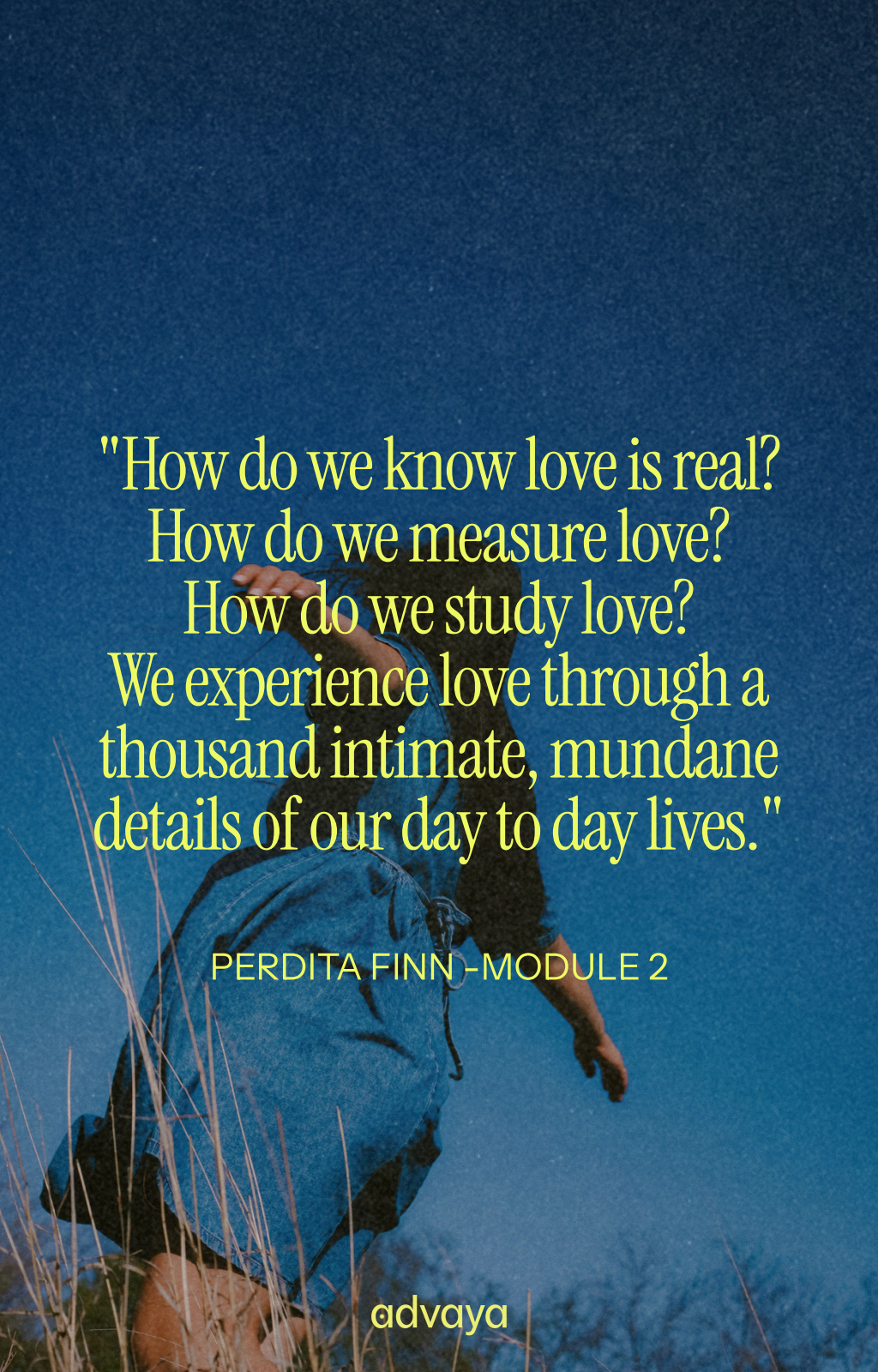
The miscarriages and abortions: Your own and those of people close to you. These are powerful soul appointments, initiations into the underworld if we acknowledge the power of our guides.

Plants: Trees. Flowers. Plants that have been powerful in your life. Don't forget all of those houseplants that gave their lives for you.

Saints: You may have traditional ones that appeal to you from various religions traditions such as St. Anthony or Ganeshe or Maximon. There may also be secular saints, celebrities in life who seem to have an uncanny power from the other side for you, such as Elvis or

Mothers: Your Mothers from all the lives you remember and do not remember. Your racoon and whale and willow mothers. Your river mothers. All of your ancestral mothers. Begin to feel them in your dreams. Note when they show up for you.

The Monsters: We all have them, those beings that in life hurt us, terrified us, even destroyed us for a time. We must remember in death that they can no longer hurt us. The living hurt the living not the dead. You may want a separate page for them in your litany. But we all have them. And in our fury at what they have done to us is great power that we can learn to summon. They can no longer hurt you. It is time for them to atone for what they have done.


"How do we know love is real?
How do we measure love?
How do we study love?
We experience love through a thousand intimate, mundane details of our day to day lives."
PERDITA FINN -MODULE 2
advaya

SESSION TWO:

The Art of Fretting

None of us needs to manage life on our own. Our ancestors are standing by to help us overcome obstacles, seize opportunities, answer our yearnings, and make the impossible possible. They long to be involved with us again, and they have resources we cannot imagine.

To give them an assignment is to offer them the possibility of an ongoing, blossoming relationship. The tasks that we give to the ancestors are opportunities for them to show us they are really there. We call on an old uncle who had been a mechanic when we are trying to buy a used car. We invite a beloved grandmother to help us pull off a family reunion without a hitch. When I need things to grow, I ask my mother the gardener. We ask the dead to watch over our kids, help us with our work, and get us out of jams. Our ancestors called on the dead for help with everything—from finding food and medicine to seeking shelter and warmth to reuniting with loved ones. We, too, can seek the help of those who have gone and call upon their generosity, their interests, their talents, and their expertise. When we do, we will experience the lived reality that no one is ever lost to us and no one is ever alone.

1. Make a list of everything you need:

- For your body and your health
- Your work and your day-to-day life
- Your home
- Your car
- Your relationships with family and friends, co-workers and neighbors

2. Make a list of everything that feels impossible or too late but that once upon a time you wanted:

- To do
- To be
- To experience
- To connect to
- To love and cherish

3. Note the impossible knots in your life:

- The relationships
- The problems and issues that won't go away
- The intractable perplexities

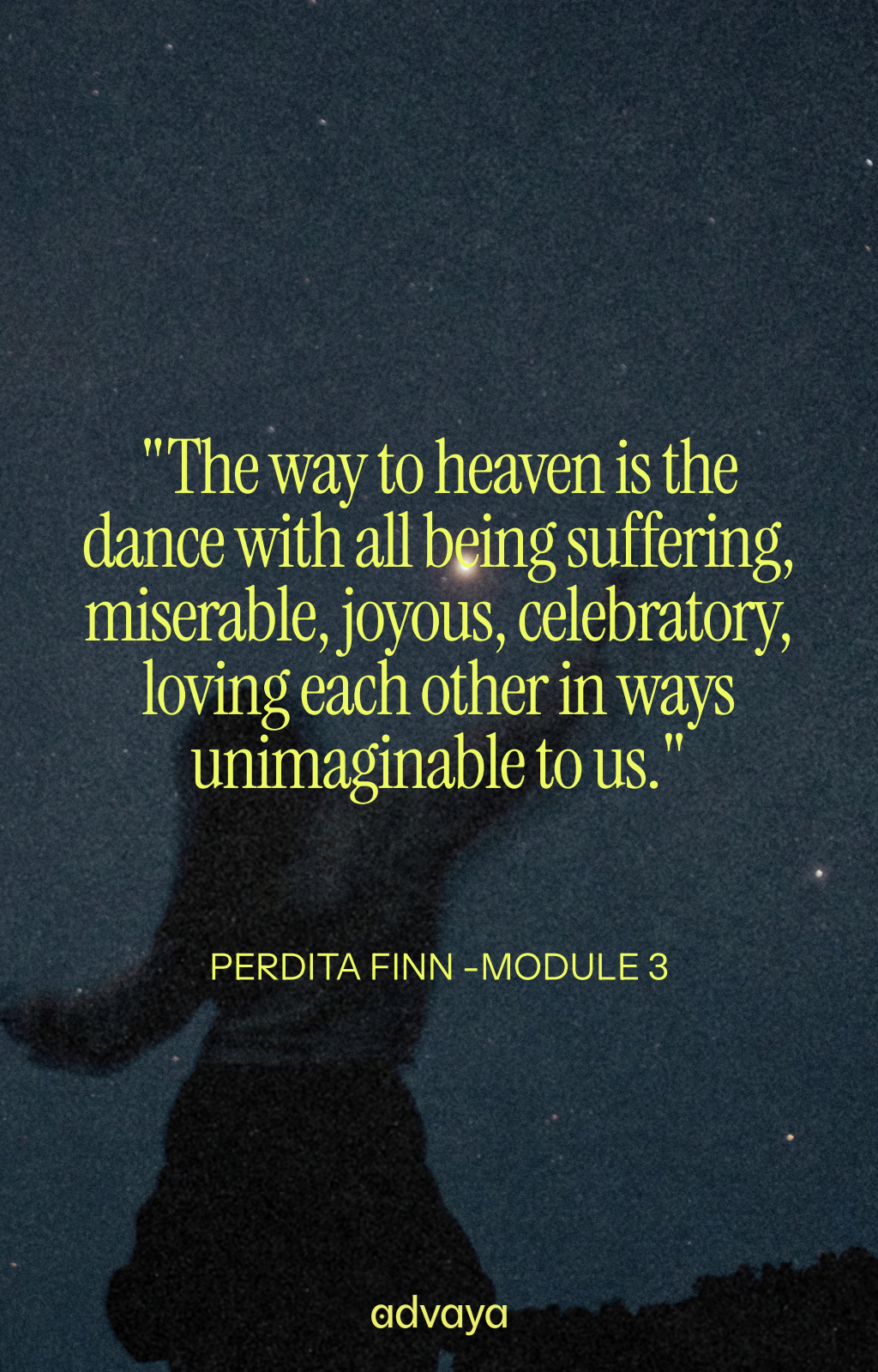
Now:

To each of these worries and stresses assign someone on the other side. Let this person—a grandmother, a great uncle, a former teacher, a friend who's passed on—hold it for you, solve it for you, figure it out, take care of things.

Give each body part that hurts to someone on the other side. Let someone manage the car, and someone the septic system and another the roof.

You can also summon mothers and fathers, friends and lovers, children from other lives. Bear mothers and oak mothers and otter mothers and sparrow mothers.

Some problems will resolve easily. Some will take longer.
Find five minutes each day to check in with your various teams.


"The way to heaven is the dance with all being suffering, miserable, joyous, celebratory, loving each other in ways unimaginable to us."
PERDITA FINN -MODULE 3
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SESSION THREE:

We Contain Multitudes

We've all been here before. But we do not remember most of those lives—just as we do not remember most of our days within a single lifetime. We retain impressions from experiences both traumatic and triumphant, but of the vast epochs of ordinary being that have made us who we are, we can catch only the vaguest and most fleeting of sensations.

We cannot catalog or document all our past lives, but we can acknowledge our intimations of immortality. Behind us are vast mysteries. Within us are multiplicities. This is true not just of ourselves, but of every being we meet. That child was once our teacher. This homeless man was once our child. We are all connected to each other in more ways than we can possibly imagine.

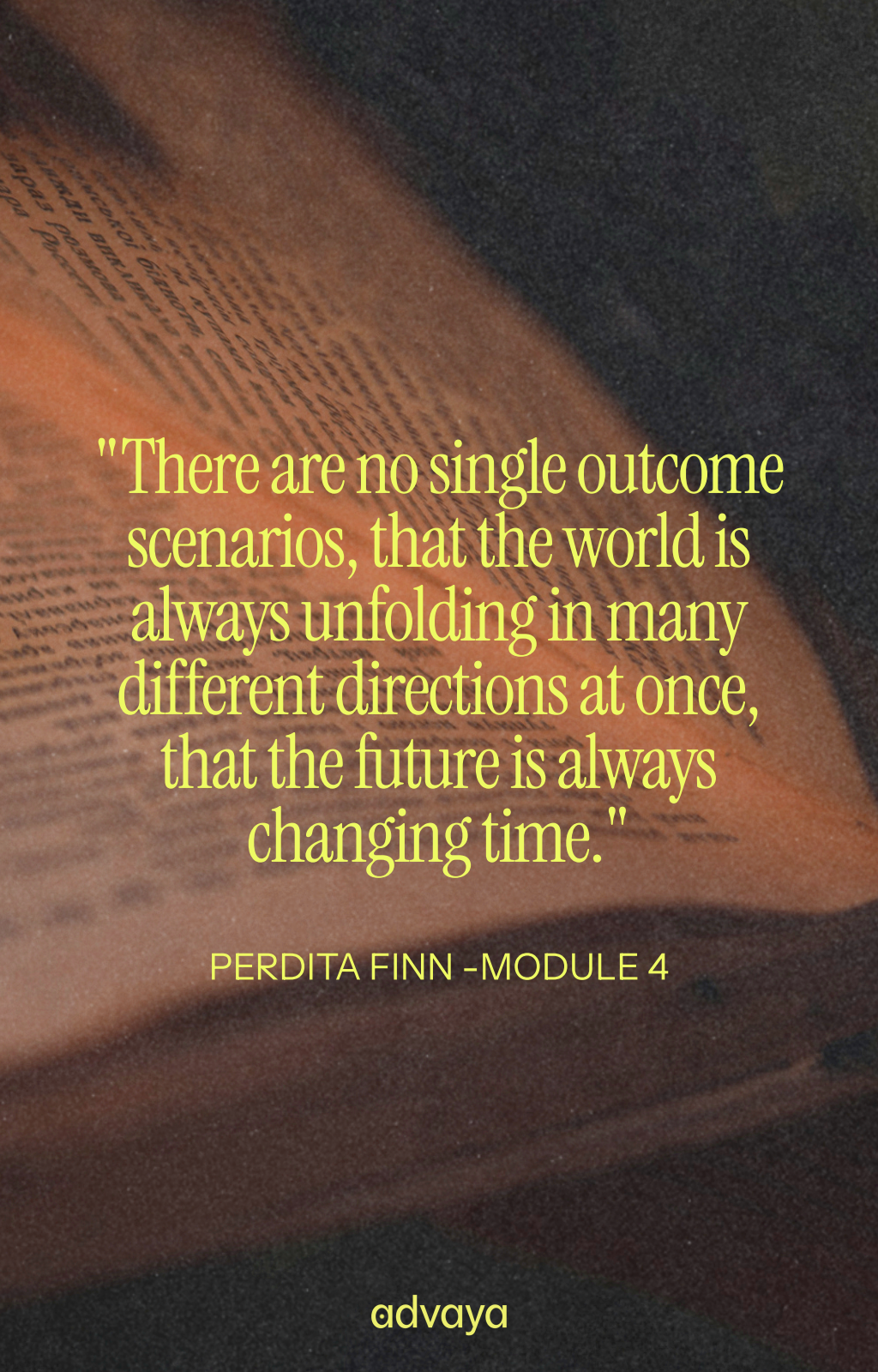
On Any Given Day, in Any Moment, Ask Yourself the Following Questions:

- What animal do I feel within me right now?
- What tree is sending its sap up through my soul?
- When I was a creature of the air, I...
- When I was a begin of the sea, I...
- When I dwelled deep in the earth, I...
- When I was stone, you would have found me here.
- When I was a river, I flowed through this land...

Within us are 10,000 x 10,000 x 10,000 lives but those lives are on a need-to-remember basis. We remember them when we need them. When we need their strength, their wisdom, their talents, their grief, their songs, their passion, their purpose and their power.

When you do this exercise, whenever you do it, ask yourself, Why do I remember this today?

(NOTE: When you do this exercise, do it quickly and try not to think about it. First thought, best thought. Trust the natural power of your own intuitive imagination. We are all psychic if we can loosen up our awareness and trust what comes through.)


"There are no single outcome scenarios, that the world is always unfolding in many different directions at once, that the future is always changing time."
PERDITA FINN -MODULE 4
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SESSION FOUR:

Earth as Oracle

The world itself is an oracle deck. The birds fly back and forth across the veil. The flowers bring forth the messages from the underworld. The sky above us, the weather around us, the moon appearing in the darkness—all are written by the dead themselves. The old runes were simply the living trees in the groves. Our ancestors knew this world and its language. They recognized the plants and the animals and even the stones as their kin. They knew the whole Earth was speaking to them, and they knew how to listen to what the world had to say.

We can recover that lost conversation at any moment, wherever we are. We can learn the names of the plants and the animals and the fungi. We can become intimate with the behavior of birds and the rhythms of the moon. We can listen to the wind and feel the very ground beneath our feet bearing us up and supporting us.

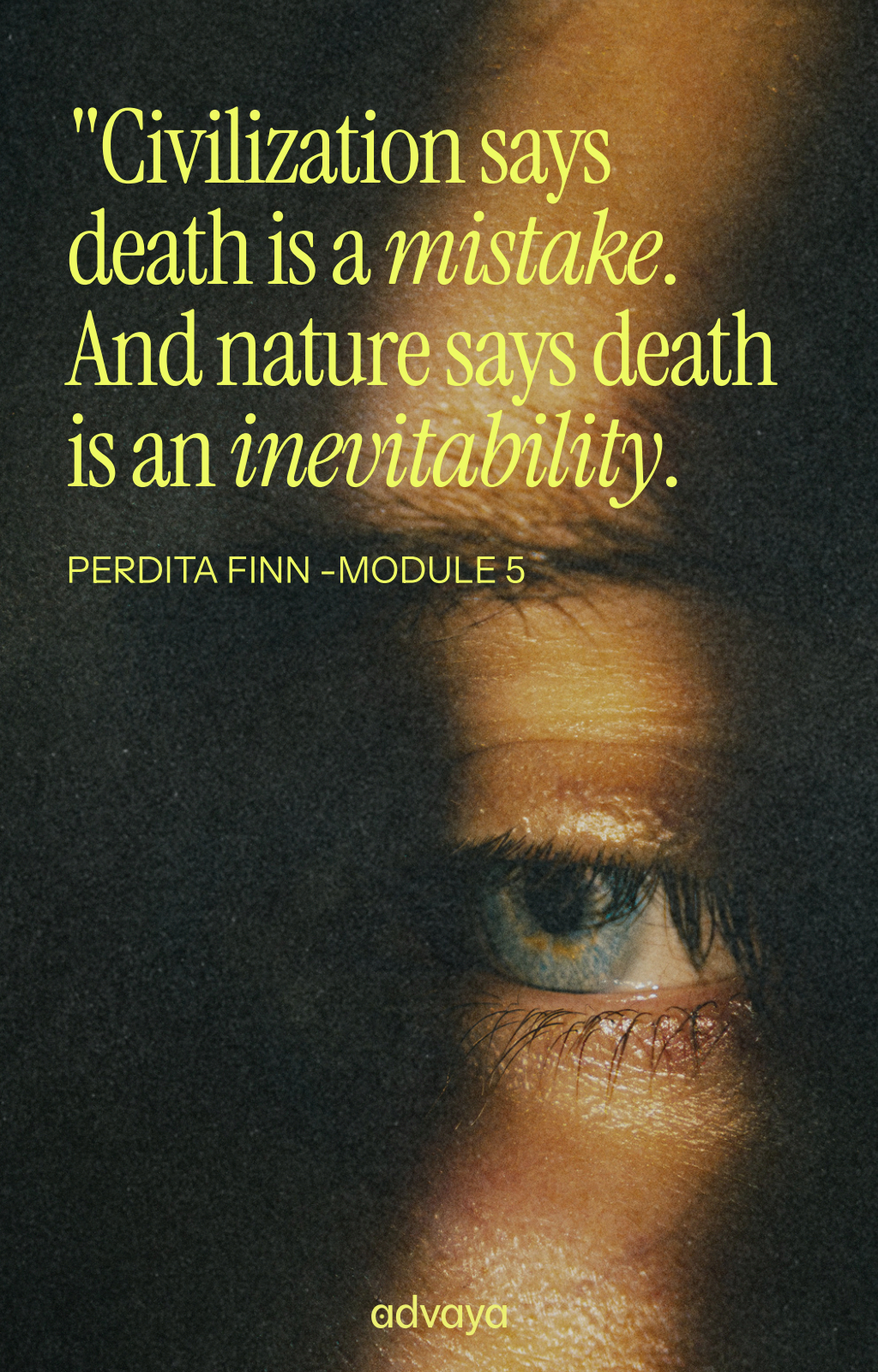
What's to keep me from seeing signs and messages everywhere?

In truth, there are signs and messages everywhere—but as modern people we have forgotten how to listen to them. Our prophets of science are reading terrifying messages in the natural world, but what is most surprising is how many people cannot read them for themselves. Perhaps it is time for us to begin paying more attention.

The more we speak to the dead, the more attuned we will become to the voices of the animate everything.

- Get to know the living beings in your ecosystem.
- Learn the names of the trees—and get to know the shapes and features and habits of particular trees.
- Learn the names of the insects, the flowers, the weeds, the little beings who inhabit space with you. Notice how they behave. Notice what is ordinary for them, so that you will recognize when they behave in extraordinary ways.
- Become familiar with the moon, the stars, not in an abstract intellectual, or even astrological way but with YOUR moon and YOUR stars, the way you see them, the way they appear to you...notice again when the ordinary becomes extraordinary.

Remember that all other beings speak the language of the dead. Only humans have lost their fluency with the ancestors. The owls, the rain, the mountains, the bears, the roses will all teach you again to speak the language of your soul.


"Civilization says death is a *mistake*. And nature says death is an *inevitability*.
PERDITA FINN -MODULE 5
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SESSION FIVE:

DIY Beatification

In the Middle Ages most people made their own saints. They did not wait for a papal decree to begin asking for help from someone well known on the other side. Before religion became homogenized, people still held on to their ancient pagan practices—the most powerful of which was asking the dead for help. You called on the Madonna of your choice (and every Lady had a different flavor) but your town also had a patron saint (often a demoted goddess), your profession had a patron saint, and you had a personal saint that you were named for or with whom you shared a feast day. If you had a leg ulcer you called on one saint, and a toothache upon another. You had a whole team on the other side—and if somebody remarkable departed from the world, you had system for integrating them into your personal pantheon. Mostly that meant you asked them for a miracle when you needed one.

There is no one from the other side you can't call upon. You do not have to have known a soul personally before they passed, you do not have to be related to them, you do not have to understand your connection to each other.

Begin by thinking about a problem, issue, or knot in your life that you would like some extra help with.

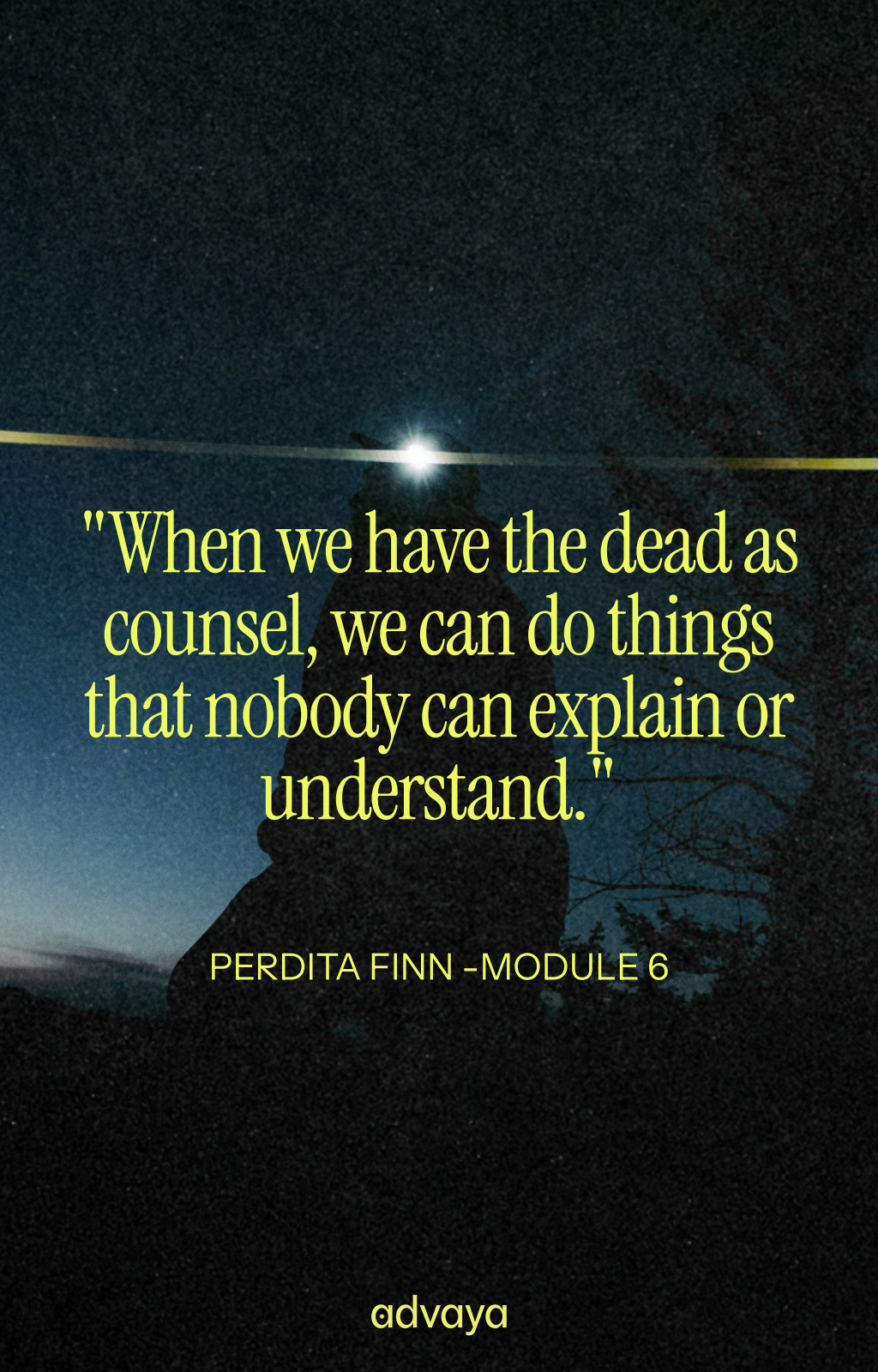
- Who is the patron saint of this particular issue? Google is great for this question, and one book I often recommend is Judika Illes *Encyclopedia of Saints and Mystics*. It's a great non-denominational resource.

- This "saint" could be a seemingly mythological figure—the Goddess Anu or Brigit, Dionysus or Poseidon, Ganeshe or Jizo. What matters is your feeling, your intuition, that you want to work and play with this soul in some capacity.

- You might also find that your saint is someone in the popular media—David Bowie or Janis Joplin, Princess Diana or Harriet Tubman. Again, you just have to trust that feeling of connection and not necessarily understand it.

- Add this name to your daily ritual. Get to know each other. See what happens.

- Eventually you will have your own Book of Miracles for your favorite saints.


"When we have the dead as counsel, we can do things that nobody can explain or understand."
PERDITA FINN -MODULE 6
advaya

SESSION SIX:

Let the Healing Begin

How do we give our ancestors back the complexity of their stories, their lived reality, and their overlooked powers? We know so little about so many of them, especially the women. Sometimes all we have is a single story or a banal fact. Yet from even the most delicate thread we can begin to spin, with our intuition and our imagination, all that has been forgotten. Each of us is psychic, whether we acknowledge it or not, and the ancestors are waiting to inspire us.

If all we know is that this old grandmother made quilts, we can imagine how she can help us piece together our lives. If this ancient aunt traveled across an ocean on her own, she is who we call on for courage. If our mothers and grandmothers were victims of trauma and violence, they are uniquely aware how to help us avoid danger and oppression.

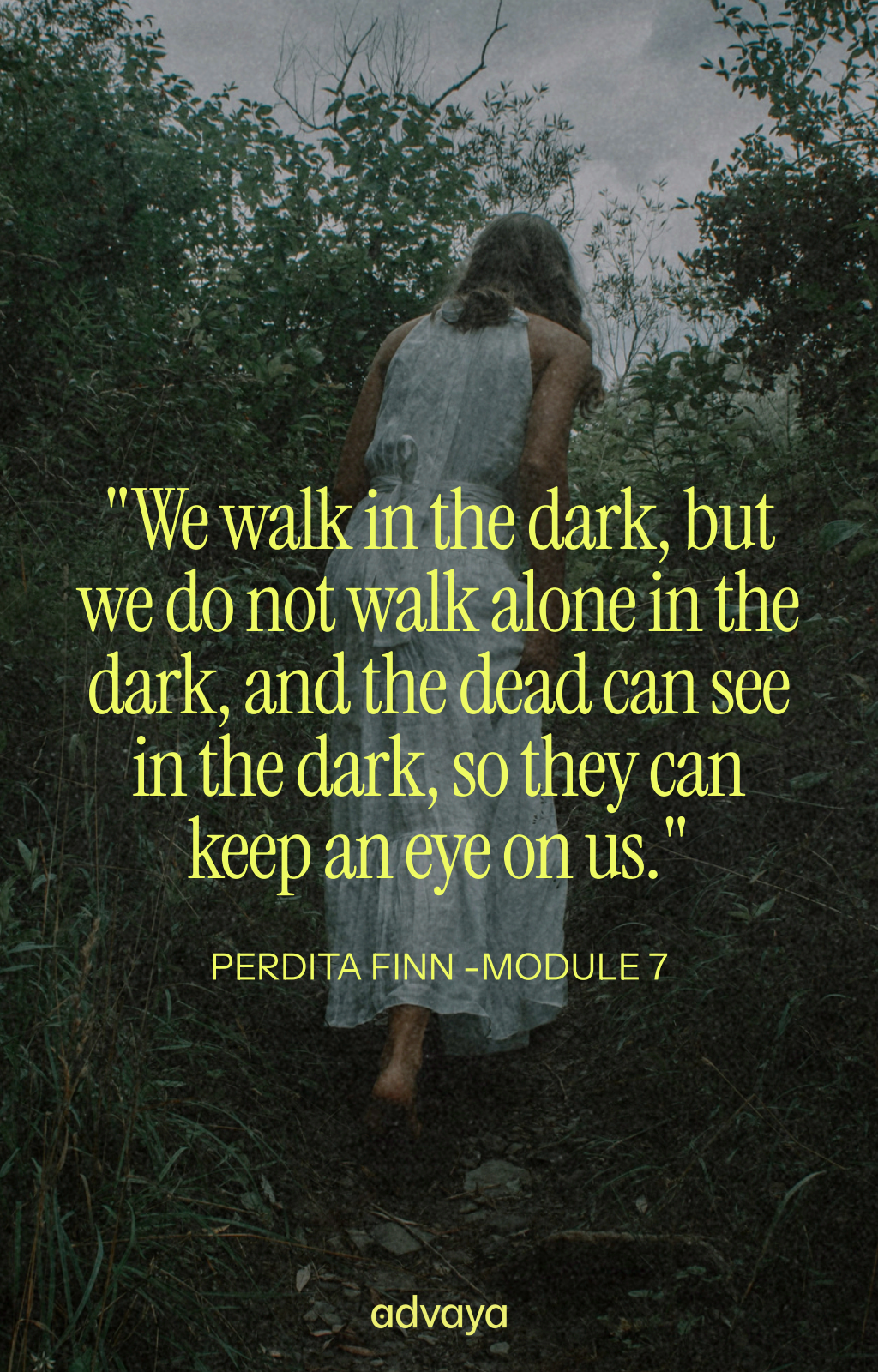
Nothing is coincidental. The little we know is exactly what we need to summon our oldest mothers.

• Find the name of a woman who died as a slave, a witch, or vilified by patriarchy. She might be biologically related to you—or she might have been an indigenous woman murdered near where you now live, a woman enslaved where you grew up, a woman tortured and killed in the land of your ancestors. Most of all, let your intuition guide you to the woman who needs to be remembered.

• Say her name out loud. This is your most powerful spell. This woman is your protector and your guide and your mother. She has known the worst that patriarchy can do to us and she is ready to guide our empowerment and our healing. If you are scared or anxious, call on her. The dead no longer need healing, they have recovered the long story of their souls. They are ready to repair the world.

• Make a doll, a poppet, to represent her on your altar. Often, in an age before photography, women made little dolls to help them remember those they loved on the other side. They took twigs and wove them together with twine and thread. A bit of wool became some hair. They had only to gather a little bit of this and a little bit of that to make a magic portal to the land of the dead. Create your protector out of the detritus and remains of your life. Go outside and gather branches, fronds of ferns, dried wildflowers and herbs, feathers, shells, stones, acorns, and seeds. Weave sticks together with thread or yarn to give her arms and legs. Dry an apple for her head. Make her body from a corn husk. Decorate her with old bits of cloth, buttons, leftover earrings, a broken necklace. You do not need to buy anything to make her. She is already in your life and ready to come into being.

• To hold these dolls is to summon the magic from our ancestral grandmothers. Children hold poppets as they fall asleep and take so many forgotten mothers into their dreams. Make for yourself a mother to hold in your hand, to hold on to when you are frightened, and to bring to you the wisdom and guidance you need for your life. Now you know her name. Say it out loud as your mantra.


"We walk in the dark, but we do not walk alone in the dark, and the dead can see in the dark, so they can keep an eye on us."
PERDITA FINN -MODULE 7
advaya

SESSION SEVEN:

The Way Back to Magic

Daily Routines

- Are you asking the dead for help each and every day? Even if it is a designated minute in the morning or before bed. Dailiness. Make space for the dead in your home and in your day. Tend your altars, your litanies, and your petitions.

- Ask yourself about your dreams each morning. Write them down in some way. How are you dreams giving you experiences of the other side? The dead themselves showing up, the long story revealing some of its secrets, and messages coming through from the mothers at the bottom of time.

- Do you have a team on an intractable problem? How do you relate to your team each day? What new petitions and helpers emerge?

- Do you let yourself daydream with the dead—waiting in line, in the car, dozing before a nap, in the bath. What unexpectedly is coming through?

Noticing the Dead in the World

- ·What do you notice about how the dead are talked about by everybody else? In ordinary conversations, in the media, in books. What do you want to say about how they are treated?
- Where do you see intimations of the long story—and about how reclaiming it would change our world?
- What do you do when the dead show up unexpectedly? As a saint, a gravestone, mentioned by a casual acquaintance?

Listening to the Language of the Soul

- How are the dead transforming your experience of everyone in nature? The animals, birds, insects, flowers, mountains and rivers?
- What are you dreams of the land, you reveries about the earth, your wildest wonderings in the dirt?

A Star in the Darkness

- What is the prayer you would hold for lifetimes? What is the spell you would entrust to the dead of the earth?

YOUR GUIDE

Perdita Finn



Perdita Finn spent years apprenticing with the psychic Susan Saxman before writing Take Back the Magic: Conversations with the Unseen World and Mothers of Magic: Summoning the Wisdom of Our Ancestors, and co-founding the Way of the Rose fellowship with her husband Clark Strand — a practice built on "ecology, not theology." Her work is about reclaiming the intuitive, ancestor-guided magic that a rationalist education trained out of most of us: talking to the dead, reading signs, trusting the body's knowing. So many people are hungry right now for meaning outside the institutions that used to supply it, and Finn teaches something older than any curriculum — how to listen to what can't be measured.

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The Way Back
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