

QUANTUM SOCKS (Anzi Abundance Talking Socks)

written by Holly

June 2, 2010

By Holly Lisle

Anzi Sock knitting pattern, Quantum entanglement talking socks, Anzi, Anzi Talking Socks, Anzi Knitting Rules, Anzi Knitting Mantras, and Anzi teusyls 2006, by Holly Lisle, All Rights Reserved.

This is the knitting pattern only. Quantum Socks should be knit with intent. If you wish to alter the pattern to invoke something other than abundance from the universe, or if you wish to use the Anzi knitting mantras:

- The Anzi Knitting Mantras are here.
- The Anzi teusyls (magical power symbols) are here.
- The Anzi color/dye chart is here.

Before swapping out colors or changing designs, make sure to read the rules and the prayers.

WARNING: Random changes may invoke unexpected quantum results. Knit at your own risk.

You'll need:

- Needles: Size (4 US) (3.5mm) four double-pointed needles
- Size (2 US) (2.75mm) (12 UK) four double-pointed needles (or sizes to get gauge)
- Stitch marker

- Norwegian knitting thimble to simplify two-color yarn work (not required, but I love mine)
- 5 oz total of various worsted-weight wool or wool-blend yarns (I used Wool-Ease because it was available. To duplicate the Anzi Abundance Talking Socks as shown, you'll need:
 - Lion Brand Wool-Ease Chestnut Heather 179 (or dark reddish brown)
 - Lion Brand Wool-Ease Wood 232 (or blended green/brown patterned)
 - Lion Brand Wool-Ease Grey Heather 151 (or light grey)
 - Lion Brand Wool-Ease Forest Green Heather 180 (or dark green)
 - Lion Brand Wool-Ease Mushroom 403 (or beige/ lt. brown)
 - Lion Brand Wool-Ease Red Sprinkles 112 (but only because my yarn store didn't have a plain red, and I ended up having to pick off the sprinkles.) (or any pure red—PREFERABLY any pure red. Sprinkles are not an Anzi thing.)

Stitches used in this pattern that are not explained in the pattern:

Long-tail Cast-On

K(number)

P(number)

SSK

K2tog/ P2tog

sl(number)—Slip stitch from one needle to the other without either knitting or purling.

Kitchener Stitch

Ideally, of course, you'd do these socks in handspun, hand-dyed wool (or alpaca, or wool/silk) using the natural dyes in the Anzi Magic Tables. But, in fact, we're dealing with quanta here, so less magnificent yarn will still get the job done. Feel free to alternate the yarns mentioned for any similar-colored worsted-weight (or DK-weight yarns, if you're a loose knitter). Remember that wool (or any natural fiber) is better for socks than acrylic, because of the sweaty-feet issue. Elasticized cotton could work, too, if you enjoy working with it. I hate the stuff.

Sock Style: Worked top-down, two heel variants, (or your preference), shaped flat toe with Kitchener Stitch close (or your preference).

Gauge: Upper sock through completion of heel 21st to 4"

Foot of sock, not including heel, 26 st to 4"

START WITH (4 US) needles.

With Mushroom 403

TOP RIBBING:

Using the long-tail cast on, loosely cast on sixty stitches (if you're a tight knitter, cast on around two needles, then pull one out), slide twenty st onto each of three needles.

STAIR-STEP MANEUVER (ssm):

Once you have made sure that you have not twisted your cast-on row, slip your last stitch on your left needle over your first stitch on your right, and pull the first stitch through the last stitch, sliding it onto the left needle. Done correctly, this will leave you with your first and last stitches hooked through each other and with each of them on the opposite needle from where they started. Remember this maneuver. You'll

be using it again when you need to eliminate stair-steps in your braids and teusyl patterns.

Slide a stitch marker between the first and last stitches.

K2, p2 for 11 rows.

At your stitch marker, change yarn to Wood 232 (For this and all color changes, knit the first stitch with both yarns, and then wrap in tails on back side of work for next three or four stitches.)

K2, p2 for 4 rows.

At your stitch marker, change yarn to Forest Green Heather 180

K2, p2 for 11 rows.

ANZI POWER BAND

THE GROUNDING BAR

At your stitch marker, change yarn to Chestnut Heather 179

Knit one row. At the stitch marker, change to purl.

Purl one row. At the end of the row, use the STAIR-STEP MANEUVER (ssm) to keep your grounding bar unbroken all the way around.

THE POWER BRAID

At your stitch marker, change yarn to Grey Heather 151 AND Red Sprinkles 112.

Knit all stitches in row, starting with red and alternating one red stitch and one gray stitch to the end of the row.

At your stitch marker, bring both yarns to front. You will be purling all stitches in this next row. It's what you do with

the yarns you're switching that makes the braid.

If you're a Continental knitter, you have this easy. You wrap red yarn around the index finger of your left hand to feed into the next stitch, and grey yarn around your thumb to keep it out of the way. You purl a red stitch into your knit red stitch, then with your thumb, bring the red yarn DOWN OVER the grey yarn. Catch the grey yarn with your left index finger to feed into the next stitch, bringing it UP UNDER, and hold the red out of the way. All you're doing is twisting each yarn you use down over the yarn from the previous stitch, and catching the yarn you're going to use in the next stitch, twisting them in the same direction each time.

English knitters have the choice of either knitting one color in each hand and twisting with the left hand, knitting both colors from the right hand but twisting with the left, or trying the Continental method.

As you can guess, continually twisting the yarns in the same direction is going to add some serious twisting to your two yarns. It all works out though, because in the next row you're going to untwist everything. Just keep pushing the twisted part back out of your way, and work the entire row to the stitch marker.

At the stitch marker, purl your red into the red stitch from your previous purl row. This time, bring the grey yarn UP OVER the red yarn to your index finger, and twist the red yard DOWN UNDER the grey yarn to your thumb. Work the entire row in this fashion to the stitch marker.

If done correctly, your yarn will be completely untangled and you will have a red and gray braid with neat Vs of each color.

At the stitch marker, change yarns and work another GROUNDING BAR.

TEUSYL PATTERN – GIVE THANKS TO SPIRIT

Work Pattern 7, remembering to turn upside-down so you're knitting the top of the pattern at the top of the sock. Hatchmarked squares will be knit in Grey, empty squares will be knit in Forest Heather Green. knit additional space between each pattern, and on first row of pattern, knit connecting stitch in Grey to next pattern, all the way around the row.

Knit row in Forest Green Heather, except for connecting stitch in Grey marked by black dot.

Knit one row in grey.

ANKLE BAND

At the stitch marker, change yarn to MUSHROOM.

K2, p2 for 13 rows.

The Anzi do not leave any circle unbroken, so you now bring in the heel color so that the heel will have a solid ankle band of the same color to keep the sock grounded. Ungrounded socks are "wild," and can have unintended effects for the wearer and the maker.

So ...

At the stitch marker, change yarn to WOOD.

K2, p2 for four rows.

HEEL FLAP

When you reach the stitch marker, slide five stitches from the right side of your right needle onto the needle beside it. Slide five stitches from your left needle onto the needle beside it.

(If you've made socks before and prefer working a heel flap on

just one needle instead of two, work your stitch marker to the center of one needle, with fifteen stitches on either side of it. Divide the remaining thirty stitches between the other two needles.

Finish the remaining 15 st after the marker in k2, p2. You'll end up splitting a rib. This is okay.

Turn your work.

Select one of the two heel flap styles below.

FANCY HEEL FLAP

If you want ribbed and cushy:

You are now working on the inside of the sock. On this and every inside row:

Sl 1 as if to purl. Purl across row. Turn.

*Sl 1 as if to knit, *k1, sl 1 as if to purl*. Repeat * to next to last stitch. K1. Turn.*

Repeat for a total of 26 rows. (Count rows from the inside. It will look like you have half as many on the outside).

PLAIN HEEL FLAP

If you prefer a plain heel:

Sl 1 as if to purl, then purl all stitches to end of row. Turn.

Sl 1 as if to knit, k all stitches to end. Turn.

Repeat 24 times, for a total of 26 rows.

TURNING THE HEEL

On your next wrong-side row, sl1 as to knit, p15 st (one past the marker), p2tog, sl1. Leave 11 st unworked. Turn.

K4, k2tog, sl1. Turn, leaving 11 st unworked.

P5, p2tog, sl1, turn, leaving 9 st unworked.

K6, k2tog, sl1, turn, leaving 9 st unworked.

P7, p2tog, sl1, turn, leaving 7 st unworked.

K8, k2tog, sl1, turn, leaving 7 st unworked.

P9, p2tog, sl1, turn, leaving 5 st unworked.

K10, k2tog, sl1, turn, leaving 5 st unworked.

P11, p2tog, sl1, turn, leaving 3 st unworked.

K12, k2tog, sl1, turn, leaving 3 st unworked.

P13, p2tog, sl1, turn, leaving 1 st unworked.

K14, p2tog, sl1, turn, leaving 1 st unworked.

P15, p2tog, turn, all stitches in this direction now worked.

K15, k2tog, sixteen stitches remain, heel is now turned. Your marker should be between stitches 8 and 9 on the needle.

THE GUSSET

CHANGE NEEDLES to (2 US) (2.75mm) (12 UK)

Change yarn to Forest Green Heather.

With the right side of the sock facing you, use a crochet needle or your first size 2 US needle to pick up each slipped stitch along the edge of the heel flap (17 stitches).

With second size 2 US needle, k15 st off next needle, AND WITH SAME NEEDLE k15 st off third needle. (30 st on needle)

With third size 2 US needle (with or without use of crochet needle), pick up 17 st from other side of heel flap, AND k8 st from turned heel, to marker. (15 st on needle)

Marker is now off sock. Needle to left of where marker will be Needle 1. Needle 2 is the front of the sock. Needle 3 is the needle in your right hand.

With 4th size 2 US needle, k8 st remaining off of last size 4 US needle, knit until 3 st remain on Needle 1.

K2 tog, k1.

Knit all stitches on Needle 2.

On Needle 3, k1, SSK*, knit all remaining stitches.

On first stitch of Needle, ADD MUSHROOM yarn to Forest Green Heather.

ROW A Knit complete row without decreasing, alternating 1st Mushroom, 1st Forest Green.

ROW B At Needle 1, knit Forest Green into each Mushroom st, and Mushroom into each Forest Green st. Knit to last 3 st, k2tog, k1, knit all st on Needle 2 alternating green and tan, on Needle 3, k1, SSK, finish row.

Repeat ROW A.

Repeat ROW B.

ROW C End MUSHROOM yarn, and with Forest Green Heather, knit around row without decreasing.

ROW D At Needle 1, knit to last 3 st, k2tog, k1, knit all st on Needle 2, on Needle 3, k1, SSK, knit remaining st.

Repeat, alternating ROW C and ROW D until you have 15 st on Needle 1 and 15 st on Needle 2.

THE FOOT

Continue with Forest Green Heather until you have about about 1" total, including plain green part of gusset. Be sure to try sock on at this point to see whether you'll have enough room on the sock for 2.25" inches of SPIRIT BAND and another 1" of Forest Green Heather, plus 2" of toe. If you need to go longer or shorter, increase or decrease equally in the current band of dark green and the one after the SPIRIT BAND.

SPIRIT BAND

GROUNDING BAND

At Needle 1, change to Chestnut Heather. Knit six rows.

SPIRIT FOCUS BAND

At Needle 1, change to Grey Heather. Knit two rows.

At Needle 1, add in Red. Alternate k2 grey, k2 red to end of row. Repeat, knitting grey into grey and red into red.

At Needle 1, remove Red. Knit two rows of Grey Heather.

GROUNDING BAND

At Needle 1, change yarn to Chestnut Heather. Knit six rows.

REMAINDER OF FOOT

At Needle 1, change to Forest Green Heather. Knit same number of rows you knit in previous green band.

TOE SHAPING

At Needle 1, change yarn to WOOD.

ROW E Knit to last 3 st, k2tog, k1.

At Needle 2, k1, SSK, knit to last 3 st, k2tog, k1.

At Needle 3, k1, SSK, knit to end of needle.

ROW F Knit all st on all needles. No decreases.

Repeat ROW E and ROW F until you have 8 st left on needle 2 and 4 st left on each Needle 1 and Needle 3.

Slip stitches from needle three to needle one. Bind off using Kitchener Stitch.

Repeat for second sock.

n_worldbuilding

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Quantum Socks Stuff

written by Holly

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By Holly Lisle

- What is Quantum Knitting?
- Quantum “Talking” Socks—Free Knitting Pattern
- The Make-Your-Own-Magic Section
 - Anzi Knitting Teusyl Examples

- Anzi Knitting Teusyls
- Anzi Knitting Mantras (and color theory)
- Anzi Knitting Colors and Dyes

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Quantum Socks are up

written by Holly

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By Holly Lisle

Excluding the rules for designing your own pair of safe socks (Anzi Talking Socks, or Quantum Socks), all the Quantum knitting stuff is up. I'm coming down with something, so the Safe Socks Rules will have to wait.

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The Quantum Socks Pattern in the works

written by Holly

June 2, 2010

By Holly Lisle

I'm about finished with the Quantum Socks knitting pattern—stunned by how tough it is to write a knitting

pattern, by the way. After that, I'll have to put together the Anzi Knitting Rules and the Anzi Mantras and a yarn color chart. I figure I'll be able to post the thing in the Tangible Magic section of the site some time next week. Also working on a foreword for a collaboration Zette and I did. That will be showing up in the bookstore.

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Quantum Entanglement, God Immanent, and Talking Socks

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So I got to reading about quantum entanglement and thinking about how it could be used in with worldbuilding to create a magic system. Quantum entanglement is the extraordinarily cool fact that quanta—the very, very smallest, indivisible particles that are force carriers for the matter of the universe—form connected pairs, and these pairs have connections to each other that are not hindered by space or time. A quantum particle in one place that is acted upon will respond ... while its connected quantum particles elsewhere will ALSO respond identically, and simultaneously, no matter how far away they are. (Or perhaps even in which universe they exist.)

This little bit of science is perhaps the fantasy writer's great motherlode of workable magic, and I tripped over it, and dug into it, and fantasy gold started raining on my head. Let me show you why.

(Beyond this point, we drift from science into my speculation.)

Everything contains quanta. Not just light, but you and me and the kitchen table and the stars scattered across space and through time. You, through the connections of your quanta, are connected to the Eiffel tower, and some chick in Monterey, and the planet Venus, and the star Alpha Centuri, and perhaps to the moment and the place of the birth of Leonardo da Vinci, and to some eight-eyed scientist in another universe. Right now. And when your quanta get pinged, all these things to which you are connected register the hit. And—here's the golden part—when all of those things to which you are connected register the hit, YOU get pinged.

It's all very small. It might seem insignificant. But what if it isn't? What if those pings are what are registering when you suddenly think of your best friend from high school, and then the best friend, out of the blue and after fifteen years, calls you the same day? What if those pings are registering when three different people in three different parts of the world stumble over the same new scientific theory at the same time, and start pursuing it independent of each other?

What if those pings are registering when you have the sudden, very bad feeling that you need to get off the road right now, and you do, and a truck comes around the corner the very next second, on your side of the road, where you would have been if you hadn't listened to your gut?

What if those pings are registering when you ask God, however you may perceive God, for something, and that something

happens?

What if you could connect to these pings on purpose, through meditation or prayer or biofeedback or because *You Can Build A Mainframe From The Things You Have At Home*? (* Title of an old computer-geek filk that I happen to love. Sorry about that.) Could you learn to control what you heard? What you saw? Could you track what is going on somewhere else in the country? In someone else's country? Could you and a hundred other quanta listeners track down Osama bin Laden with just your minds because you're all connected to his quanta? Could you create a cure for some heinous cancer? Could you turn a hurricane around? Could you listen to the birth of the universe, or witness life on another planet, in another star system?

Magic, all of those things. But maybe not.

Maybe all the stuff our brain is doing with the 90% that doesn't look like it's doing anything is related to connecting with quanta, with listening to pings. Maybe your gut has a quanta listening station built in, too.

Maybe God is connected quanta—the part of each of us that is also part of everything and everyone, everywhere, everywhen—that knows everything, that feels everything, that is everything, eternally. God immanent. A number of religions have described God in this fashion—maybe the folks who follow those religions are listening to their quanta.

So, if your magic system is based on quanta, if you're going to utilize the principle that everything is connected to everything else and that all these connections are in constant, immediate communication with each other, how do you make that work?



Why? Well, because socks are fun to make, first of all, and if you're going to do magic, it might as well be fun. Next, the technology for making socks is available to the most primitive and the most sophisticated people equally. Also because socks are useful and warm, and they are a physical, tangible point of contact between the maker and the wearer. Because socks can come in any colors, any patterns, any styles. And you can have people agree on what those colors and patterns and styles mean. **Agreement on meaning, that is, language, is critical.**



The demo socks I've shown here are Quantum Socks—or Talking Socks, to the Anzi people, whose culture I'm thinking about and developing as I make the socks. I've decided that the Anzi created a small language to embed prayers and, eventually, communication with other Anzi, in their clothing. They started with colors, each of which has a meaning and a meditation. They moved on to simple patterns; braids and blocks and checks and bands. And then they created glyphs. The glyphs embed the specific desire of the maker into clothing in visible, readable form.



The green, brown, gray and red Abundance Socks on the right (in the picture above) carry the Give Thanks To Spirit glyph in a continuous band.

The blue, green, white, tan, and rose Winds of Change, Waters of Serenity Socks on the left (in the picture above) carry the Summon Spirit, Invoke Change glyph in a continuous band.



Each color has a meaning, the placement of each band has a meaning. (Yes, I have worked out the placements and meanings. Iâ€™m deeply geeky that way.)

So whereâ€™s the magic?

In the quanta. The act of willing something, of praying for it, of visualizing it, pings the quanta (in my worldbuilding system). The act of putting oneâ€™s will into a tangible, visible form allows others who know the language to ping the quanta again, simply by seeing the patterns and reading the language (because the act of observation changes that which is observed, remember).

The Abundance Socks give thanks for something needed. They acknowledge the Anzi belief that as soon as you put your will into the system, the system answers simultaneously, though you may not see the results immediately. So when the Anzi pray, they don't pray for something. They give thanks for it, because whether they have what they need yet or not, they accept that Spirit has already answered.

From a real-world perspective, I started in on the first Abundance Sock, working out the magic of it as I was making it, and the next day, got word that THE RUBY KEY and a second book sold for nice money—news that I desperately needed. Were the socks, the prayer, and the quanta involved in this? Dunno. It makes an excellent story, though, donâ€™t you think?

Talking Socks. They talk to Spirit, they talk to people, maybe they talk to quanta.

Iâ€™ll put up the background material (color meditations, band patterns and theory, and glyphs) and a pattern for the socks in the Reader section of the site as soon as I can. I have to write the sock pattern first (Iâ€™ve never written a knitting pattern before, so that in itself may take some time.)

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Socks That Don't Fit

written by Holly

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By Holly Lisle



I bought some good sock yarn. Lovely hand-painted 100% merino wool spun so fine I had to knit it up with US 0 size needles. I'd thought to make myself a really spiffy pair of socks, and sock construction being what it is, you try socks on as you're making them and adjust the fit as necessary, and when you're done, they fit you perfectly, so I was not foreseeing anything untoward happening.

I did them as quantum socks, though not in Anzi patterns, because I figured I needed some socks to wear outside the house, and the Anzi socks are pretty...um...*cultural* looking. Meaning that Matt laughs at them. I did the Anzi meditations, though, and I knitted Serenity, Prosperity, and Health into them.

And when I finished the first one—quite an undertaking in itself, because these things go eighty stitches round, and a couple hundred stitches down, so that we’re talking about roughly 16000 stitches per sock (or about 32000 the pair), it didn’t fit.

Remember what I said about socks you make for yourself always fitting, because you constantly try them on? I tried the sock on. It fit until I finished it, and then it was too big.

The only conclusion I could come to was that I wasn’t making that pair of socks for me.

So I knit the second one, and in the meantime discovered the person whom the socks *would* fit, and who happened to be in need of some Serenity, Prosperity, and Health. So they’re going out in the mail to her tomorrow. Meantime, though, they really are some spiffy socks. My design, the first things I’ve ever made on size 0 needles (think “toothpicks” for those of you who are reading this but don’t knit). And I wanted to post the picture I took of them, and brag just a bit.

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The Serendipity Workshop: Lost on the Border at Twilight

written by Holly

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By Holly Lisle

Finding – and Using – Your Life's Essential Strangeness

- You mention a friend you haven't heard from in twenty years . . . and three days later you receive an e-mail from that friend.
- Your child tells you who is on the other end of the phone . . . before you pick it up – or even stranger, right before it rings.
- Your car keys vanish, only to reappear an hour later, right where you thought you left them all along.
- Your dead publisher visits you in a dream and through an intermediary, gives you an angle on a story you're writing that fixes the biggest problem you've been having with the story, and makes the conflict a million times better as a side benefit.

We experience all sorts of little oddities in our lives – from *deja vu* to serendipity to bits and pieces of the purely inexplicable, we brush up against the borders of an unknown realm daily. Mostly, we ignore these tiny excursions into weirdness. Or if we don't ignore them, we brush them off with raised eyebrows and a nervous laugh. We prefer the universe we live in to be brightly lit, sensible, secure . . . **comfortable**.

Only no one has ever written a really good book from a position of comfort. If you aren't twitching at least a little, if your material doesn't make you nervous, if you aren't afraid, you're not doing anything real.

So, in our search for what is real and what is scary, let's take a tour of your life, and all the oddities you've been looking past in order to pretend you always see sunshine in some of those shadowy corners.

But all this stuff is superstitious nonsense, isn't it?

Maybe. Big, definitive "I dunno" here. Some of the

synchronistic events that happen in our lives may have some scientific explanations. Spend time reading the “what-it-all-means” sections of books on quantum physics and the simple act of deciding to get out of bed in the morning can start to take on an air of surreal significance. At the quantum level, we may all be connected; may all be resonating at the same rate. We may all be part of something bigger. It won't kill you to read a few books on the subject, just to give yourself the information to form an opinion.

But why these weird events happen in our lives is not actually the point. These things **do** happen. The four examples I gave at the start of this workshop all happened to me.

The trick with finding value in such oddities is to pay attention to them, to notice each event.

And that's where this workshop will start. With observation. A single caveat: If these exercises make you feel uncomfortable . . . well, my first inclination is to say, “Good, you must be onto something,” but if you find yourself too uncomfortable, or if participating in part or all of what we'll be exploring will violate religious or personal codes, just give the offending section or sections a miss.

With that out of the way, let's head for the borders of the familiar, for the twilight realm . . . because it's time to get a little lost.

I'll give you three exercises, and at the end of the workshop I'll offer some suggestions on how you can use the data you'll obtain to add something unique to your writing.

Exercise 1:

For this exercise you'll need

- a cheap ring-bound notebook small enough to carry around with you all the time

- a pen, maybe with a light in it so that you can, if necessary, write at night
- persistence, and a spirit of discovery

(But then, if you didn't already have all these things, you wouldn't be a writer.)

Procedure:

1. Keep track of unexpected things that happen during the day. This isn't just limited to big strange things like knowing who's on the phone before you pick it up, but also little strange things – talking with your spouse about an episode of a t. v. show, and having that show air that day, little feelings of deja vu, having little household objects appear or disappear – as you start actually keeping track of the oddities, you'll be startled by how many peculiar things happen to you in a day.

2. But don't stop with things that happen when you're awake. Try remembering your dreams, too. Along with dream events that seem to have some real-world correlations, (and great story ideas, of course), keep an eye open for people. People you know, dead relatives or friends, people you don't know who tell you interesting things. Dreams lie well across the border into the realm of the weird, and they offer up some truly bizarre nuggets.

Do this exercise every day for at least a week. A full month would be better.

Exercise 2:

You'll need

- a tape recorder
- a friend, or better yet, a fellow writer who is willing to try something a bit odd
- a box of envelopes

- small objects one or both of you have found or brought with you (they have to fit in the envelopes, and all the envelopes have to be the same). Individual car or house keys, rings and necklaces, and photographs all work well for this game.
- your notebook and pen

How to play:

1. Number the front of enough envelopes to give you one for each object. Place the envelopes face down, and shuffle them thoroughly.

2. Place one object into each envelope and seal the envelope, making sure neither of you gets a look at the number of the envelopes the objects go into. It also helps if you can each keep the other from seeing the objects you've contributed.

3. Spread the envelopes out in front of you, numbered sides up. Pick an envelope, and in your notebook, write down the number on it. Then, rest your non-writing hand on the envelope, relax, and while leaving your hand on the envelope, start writing the first things that come to mind. Write down colors, sounds, impressions of places, descriptions of faces – anything you think. When you run down, move to the next envelope, write down the number on it, and repeat the process. Leave as much space beneath each description as you used for the description itself.

4. When each of you has written something for each of the envelopes, start opening them, one at a time. In the space beneath the appropriately numbered entry, write down what the object was. Then each of you read aloud what you wrote about the object, and the person who knows the details of it will point out anything in the description that actually connects with the object itself.

5. Do this exercise at least three or four times over a period of one or two months, preferably with the same partner. Look

for any improvements in descriptions, accuracy, connection with objects. Look for specific objects that you routinely do well with. Look for those that you never get any links to at all.

Exercise 3:

For this exercise, you'll need

- an Internet connection
- a cheap spiral-bound notebook
- a pen OR
- a friend who can read tarot cards, palms, or perform some other form of psychic reading (most people have at least one, though they usually don't know it)
- a tape recorder and empty cassette tape (get a 90 or 120 minute one)
- your handy-dandy notebook and pen, of course

If you're going the Internet connection route, you can try this site's Strangeness Tools.

Or cadge a brief reading from the friend – a general reading, nothing where you ask questions. Record the reading, and over the time period specified by your reader, keep track of which things in the reading were on but obvious, which were off, and which really surprise you.

Alternatively, take a bit of time to learn to read cards yourself. You can look at this from either the Jungian archetypal perspective, wherein all cards will have meaning to you because they play off of deeply embedded archetypes, and your subconscious creates meaningful stories from each of the images drawn; or from the connection-to-magic perspective, wherein you touch the twilight border when shuffling and drawing the cards, and connections to the Other-realm affect those that you draw. Either way, you'll find out some fascinating things about yourself, your characters, your

worldbuilding, and more, by learning tarot.

I suggest tarot rather than astrology, psychic reading, or other methods because tarot for the purpose you'll be using it is a simple mechanical skill. You memorize card meanings, you memorize positions they land in, and you figure out odd synchronizations in your story or your characters by reading through the layout you through. It isn't magic. It does occasionally feel like it.

If you decide to go the second route, I can recommend either the book **Learning the Tarot**, by Joan Bunning, which teaches the readily available Universal Waite Tarot deck, or the book **Motherpeace: A Way to the Goddess Through Myth, Art and Tarot**, which teaches the feminist-oriented Motherpeace deck. Most men, and a lot of women, will be more comfortable with the images and approach of the first set.

DON'T waste time or money trying to find a good psychic reader on the Internet, locally, or on the phone. **You aren't looking for an actual psychic reading. You're doing this to get different angles on your fiction.** You're doing this to get background – you can get good background for free.

Putting It All Together

Okay. You've done some tapping along the border, spent a little time feeling lost and uncomfortable.

Now what?

You're going to have come up with a lot of dead ends. Everyone does. But along with all of those dead ends, you'll have discovered a couple of places where you got close to the border – where you and the strange and the unnerving came nose to nose.

Start playing around with the things that you really couldn't explain away. Let's say that you got a tarot reading that just

blew your socks off. Or maybe you discovered that you have dreams in which your dead relatives come to talk with you, and when you listen you find out that things they say actually offer answers to your current problems and challenges.

First, ask yourself how you can use these events, just as they are, in a story.

Second, start extrapolating from your starting point. Create a character who dreams of dead people in her sleep because she actually drifts into the realm of the dead – and then have something happen to strand her there, or let her fall in love with someone there, or . . .

Third, take a look at how what you've experienced has changed your world view. Create a universe in which the little oddities you've encountered are more common, more reliable – give a rationale to the force that stands behind them. Then start writing in that universe.

Sit down and brainstorm story ideas that incorporate the things you've uncovered. Head back to the border for more material if you need it. Keep the journal, read more envelopes, keep your hand in with the tarot deck. Get hold of books on the strange and the inexplicable. Yes, they're full of nonsense, but they're also full of fascinating events that can be shifted, twisted and turned until they become novels that have some real bite.

The things that touch us deeply are those that are true. In order to write fantasy well, you need to have a visceral connection with the truth that what we can see in the universe is not the whole of the universe. When you know in your gut that something (no matter how small) exists beyond the realm of human understanding, you'll discover that this realization colors your work and adds a richness and depth to it that you would never have thought possible.

Good luck getting lost. Good luck being uncomfortable.

Remember how it feels – because as soon as you’ve unnerved yourself, you can pass that experience on to your reader in a gut-grabbing tale that he’ll never forget.

Now get going. Twilight is coming and the border is waiting.

(reprinted from **Holly Lisle’s Vision: A Writer’s Resource** Vol. One, Issue 4 – Jul/Aug 2001)

NOTE: I offer a comprehensive introductory class based on my fiction-writing and publishing experience. It’s called *How to Write Flash Fiction that Doesn’t SUCK*, and it is no-strings-attached FREE, including a private classroom, downloadable lessons, and a friendly, well-moderated forum where you can work with other students. I hope you’ll try it out.

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Starting Type-In

written by Holly

June 2, 2010

By Holly Lisle



Still don’t like my ending. Am hoping inspiration will strike between now and Monday.

When I get this done, I have to tell you about the deep worldbuilding for Project Blue. It involves quantum entanglement, God immanent, and talking socks. The pair shown

are Abundance Socks. They're based on the magic system the protagonists in my new world use. The Abundance Socks are only talking to spirit—some of the later pairs, deeply subversive, will be talking to other people.

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