

The Introvert

Diversity Inclusion Representation In the Outdoor & Life

The Campaign is slowly
kicking off!

The Treasury of Folklore
by Dee Dee Chainey is out
now!

Shipshape Smithy Flash
Reviews



Issue No.10

www.deecrute.com

Table of Contents

05

Indie Business of the Month:
Dee Dee Chainey

Author & Storyteller

07

Exploring the world through
cultural heritage:

A journey with The Treasury of Folklore

11

Nature Kaleidoscope:

September

12

September Foraging
Basket

14

Shipshape Smithy's Flash Reviews!

A Natural History of Dragons: A Memoir by Lady Trent by Marie
Brennan

15

An Artist's Connection to Nature

By Stefanie Smith

Table of Contents

19

The Wheel of the Year:
Mabon

By Jennie Smith

22

Diversity Equity Inclusion

Slowly but Surely

From the Editor

September 22nd marked the Autumnal Equinox and the beginning of Astronomical Fall. Head to **The Wheel of the Year: Mabon** by Jennie Smith to learn about this festival on **page 19**.

Stefanie Smith writes on **Nature for Wellbeing** on **page 15**, and Shipshame Smithy has another **Flash Book Review** for you on **page 14**.

September Foraging Basket is full of autumnal bounty, along with **Fall Nature Kaleidoscope**, on **pages 11 to 13**.

The **Diversity+Equity+Inclusion** section has some updates for you too! Learn more on **page 21**.

Lastly, this month's **Independent Business** section, welcomes **Dee Dee Chainey** and her **new book** on **page 5**. Dee Dee writes exclusively for the Introvert on page: Exploring the world through cultural heritage: A journey with The Treasury of Folklore.

As always! I would love to hear from you!



Dee Dee Chainey

Editor-in-Chief

The Introvert



Editor-in-Chief

Dee Crute

Photographers

Dee Crute

Shipshape Smithy

Collumnist

Shipshape Smithy

Our Contributors

Dee Dee Chainey

Storyteller & Author of The Treasury of Folklore series

Stefanie Smith

Stefanie is an Artist, Printmaker, Painter & Art Teacher based in South East England.

Jennie Smith

IPagan and green witch studying herbalism for over 20 years.

Indie Business of the Month

Here in the Introvert, we believe in independent small businesses and craftsmen that promote the values of old: honesty, quality, and sustainability, creating community by supporting real connections between human beans.

Dee Dee Chainey Author & Storyteller

Dee Dee Chainey is an archaeologist by training, and co-author of The Treasury of Folklore book series. She is founder of **The Cultural Futures Hub**, a digital community space, and co-founded **#FolkloreThursday**, a popular website and online community.





Ready to embark on your own journey through folklore?

Get your copy of *A Treasury of Folklore* [here!](#) or visit the [online exhibition](#).

The Treasury of Folklore, co-authored by Willow Winsham and illustrated by Joe McLaren, was released by Batsford Books in August 2024.

As the *Treasury of Folklore* series was originally planned as a single volume, this book is a compilation of our favourite tales from three previous books.



Follow Dee Dee's work on social media to learn about folklore and storytelling, and be in the know about news and events!

Facebook: [Dee Dee Chainey Folklore](#)
Instagram: [@deedeechainey](#)

Twitter: [@DeeDeeChainey](#)
Website: <https://linktr.ee/deedeechainey>

Exploring the world through cultural heritage: A journey with The Treasury of Folklore

By Dee Dee Chainey

While writing my new book, *The Treasury of Folklore*, co-authored by Willow Winsham, I wanted to celebrate the diversity of global cultures while highlighting the shared humanity that binds us all – I'm a firm believer that folklore, and our cultural heritage in general, always has the potential to do this, if we approach it in the right way.

We carefully selected stories that resonated with us, but we tried to do more than that: we were dedicated to representing the authentic original essence and language of each tale. By doing so, we hoped to address the critical issue of cultural appropriation and honour the traditions and heritage of the communities from which these stories and customs originate. This collection is a testament to the living traditions of these cultures and their relevance in today's world.



“These stories offer a glimpse into the human spirit's desire to reach beyond the tangible world and connect with the infinite.”

Despite the unique details of each story, we discovered common themes of fear, dreams and wonder that resonate across the cultural heritage of people across the world. Through exploring similar tales from around the globe, we found the themes our global tales contain are universal, and the way each community relates to the landscapes around them is uncannily similar. For the series, we explored how humans interact with three different types of landscape they live in: waterlands, our seas and rivers; wooded worlds, our woodlands and forests; and finally, starry skies, our skies and heavens. Each landscape holds its own unique place in the lives of communities across the globe.



The sea has always been a central element in human life, shaping the existence of coastal and island communities. It is a force of nature that is both majestic and formidable, capable of giving life and taking it away. Folklore is rich with tales of daring adventures on the high seas, where heroes and heroines encounter gods, monsters, and mysterious lands. These stories capture our fascination with the ocean's vastness and its capacity to symbolise the unknown.

In our folklore, the sea often represents human desires and fears, embodying the allure of adventure and the perils of the unseen and unknown. Legends and folk tales frequently speak of ghostly remnants of sunken towns, where the haunting sounds of bells can sometimes be heard ringing from beneath the waves. One such legend is the Breton tale, the Lost City of Ys, where the town is threatened with a great flood, and the people beseech the king to sacrifice his demon daughter to fix the disaster she is accused of causing. The king does just this, then flees on a magical horse as the only survivor. Since then, versions of the tale have been found as far as Cornwall in the UK. Similar tales are found across the world. Whether hailing from the icy, turbulent waters of the Northern Hemisphere or the warm, exotic seas of the South, our water tales reflect a deep respect and fear of the ocean.

Wooded worlds

Rivers, too, hold profound symbolic meanings in folklore. They often serve as boundaries between different worlds or spiritual realms, guiding souls to the afterlife and providing paths to otherworldly encounters. Rivers symbolise opportunities for transcendence and enlightenment, urging us to rise above our mortal limitations.

Together, seas and rivers teach us about the dual nature of water as a source of life and a powerful, sometimes perilous force, challenging us to confront our deepest fears and desires.

Trees are fundamental to life on Earth, their roots weaving through the soil to support ecosystems and provide oxygen, food, shelter and fuel. Ancient cultures recognised the vital role of trees, viewing them as sacred beings that connect the heavens and the earth in tales of World Trees from many cultures: from the Norse Yggdrasil, the Hungarian Sky-High Tree to the Yaxche of the K'iche people of Mesoamerica. Trees were seen as homes to spirits and gods, integral to the cycles of life and death. Today, we continue to depend on trees, transforming them into books and other tools of communication.



Our relationship with trees is profound and enduring, shaped by both cultural traditions and personal experiences. From pine trees, seen as a symbol of longevity and good fortune in Japan, to yews, linked to the Otherworld in Celtic mythology, trees hold a special place in our hearts and histories. They symbolise strength, resilience, and continuity, standing as living testaments to the natural world's ability to nurture and sustain life.

In folklore, trees often serve as bridges between different realms, vessels of divine presence, and symbols of our connection to nature. In Finland, bears' skulls are sometimes placed at the tops of pine and spruce trees, linked to the tale of Otso, the sky bear, said to have come down from the heavens and cradled in the boughs of a tree.

Hunters place these skulls in the branches to return them to the stars, honour them and ensure their reincarnation, continuing the cycle of life. Trees remind us of our roots and the timeless bond we share with the earth and its myriad forms of life. Through their stories, we gain insight into the profound relationship between humans and the natural world.

Starry skies

The sky has always captivated human imagination, inspiring awe and wonder as we gaze upward. From rainbows and constellations to weather patterns, the sky connects us to the cosmos and to each other. Throughout history, the sun, moon and stars have guided travellers, influenced agricultural cycles and shaped religious beliefs. The heavens have been seen as the dwelling place of gods and the canvas for countless myths and legends.

Stories about the origins of celestial bodies, the movements of planets, and the forces of nature reflect our quest to understand the universe. As we journey through the folklore of the skies, we encounter tales of divine battles, and the eternal dance of light and darkness. Four thousand years ago, in ancient China, solar eclipses were believed to be caused by a dragon eating the sun. This is a common theme, and similar beliefs exist as far as Armenia. For the Moroccan Berbers, the culprit is a winged jinni who lurks in an underground lair. Yet, the tale tells the sun is too hot; the jinni regurgitates the sun, which always returns to the sky.

These stories offer a glimpse into the human spirit's desire to reach beyond the tangible world and connect with the infinite. They remind us that while we may never fully grasp the mysteries of the universe, we are united in our awe and reverence for the skies above.



Conclusion

As we conclude this journey through folklore with the publication of this collection of tales and traditions from across the series, we reflect on the profound truths we have uncovered about humanity. Folklore, with its rich tapestry of myths, legends and traditions, reveals the shared wisdom of our communities across the world. These stories, encoded with symbolic meanings, make the complexities of life easier to understand and pass down through generations, and to the people around us today.

Throughout this book, we explored diverse landscapes and the traditions that arise from them, discovering both unique customs and universal themes. From the sacred rivers and mythical creatures of our waters to the majestic trees that connect the earth and sky, we see how deeply intertwined we are with the natural world. The skies above remind us of our place in the universe, offering both guidance and inspiration.

Our journey through our shared cultural heritage has shown us that folklore is more than just stories; it is a way of seeing the world anew, appreciating its magic and wonder. As we return to our daily lives, let us carry with us the wildness of the forests, the mystery of the seas, and the timeless wisdom of the skies. These tales remind us of our shared humanity and the enduring connections that bind us to each other and to the world around us.

Nature Kaleidoscope: September

By Dee Crute

It began! The whole of nature is touched with opulence! The crowns of the trees are dazzling with saffrons and crimsons—a result of fantastic chemical changes within the leaves! Emerald greens disappear with chlorophyll breakdown—an energy "absorbing" pigment—and carotenoids, flavonoids, and anthocyanins come to the fore, giving the leaves autumnal hues and protecting them from the light damage, delaying their fall.



The season's magic unfolds all around us! The hedgerows are bejewelled with ruby and amber berries, inviting resident and migrating birds alike. Keep an eye out for Redwings and Fieldfares, Blackcaps and Whitethroats!

Don't forget to look down at how beautifully woodland and pasture floors are bedecked with glistening fungi: Amanitas, such as edible Blusher or deadly Death Cap, cute Panthercaps, and magnificent Fly Agarics. Look for brightly coloured Russulas (Brittle-gills) and colour-shifting Witches Hat (Blackening Waxcap).





September Foraging Basket

By Dee Crute

We all can share the bounty of early autumn! Foraging roots us in the moment, helping us recharge after the demands of modern life.

The stillness of mind transcends to our bodies, helping to regulate our hormones and thus fighting stress. But being still has other benefits!

Within a few minutes, you will realise that wildlife is starting to gather around you! Take this chance to observe birds and critters while you harvest berries and mushrooms.

In this issue, we will look into hedgerows and nuts!

But let us reflect on this abundance and, more importantly, how it changes with climate. We take nature for granted and rarely see the signs that are out there. But noticing and documenting the changes—perhaps in your nature diary—will help you see how fragile the ecosystem is.

What can we do to protect our environment?

Sustainable foraging is everyone's responsibility, but we can do so much more! By reusing and mending, we can reduce waste, and by supporting our local charities, such as the Wildlife Trust, we can aid nature conservation. Every small action counts, and we can make a significant impact together!

Hedgerow Jewells & Wild Snacks You Will Be Nuts About!



Rosehips



Look for tripe, deep red-coloured wild rose fleshy seed pods along woodland fridges and hedgerows. Cook them for jams, jellies, or syrups, which are great for winter colds and lurgies.

Haws



Those crimson mini apple-like berries are absolutely delicious! But don't try to eat them raw! Cooking brings out their sweet flavour. Add them to your Hedgerow health syrup, and make a jam or jelly. For savoury dishes, add some vinegar and create a Hawthorn Ketchup!

Elderberries



Eaten raw, elderberries can cause an upset stomach, so don't lick your fingers! Apart from syrups and jellies (yes, again), elderberries are perfect for autumnal tipples—wine or gin. Speaking of fermentation, you can also make elderberry vinegar—perfect for salad dressings and meats!

Sloes



Who hasn't heard of Sloe Gin?! Best if picked after the first frost - which disrupts the cell structure and helps release the juices! Some say they are too tart for eating raw. I disagree. I enjoyed them with a grimacing smile.

Hazelnuts



Or Cobnuts! Nutty and scrumptious! Even nuttier and sweeter when roasted, giving off the taste of nostalgia. Pick them when still green, and keep them in a dry and dark place until they are ripe!

Beech nuts



They are beloved by squirrels, badgers, and birds and often forgotten by us! I like to nibble on them on my autumnal hikes, but you can also add them to salads.

Shipshape Smithy's Flash Reviews!

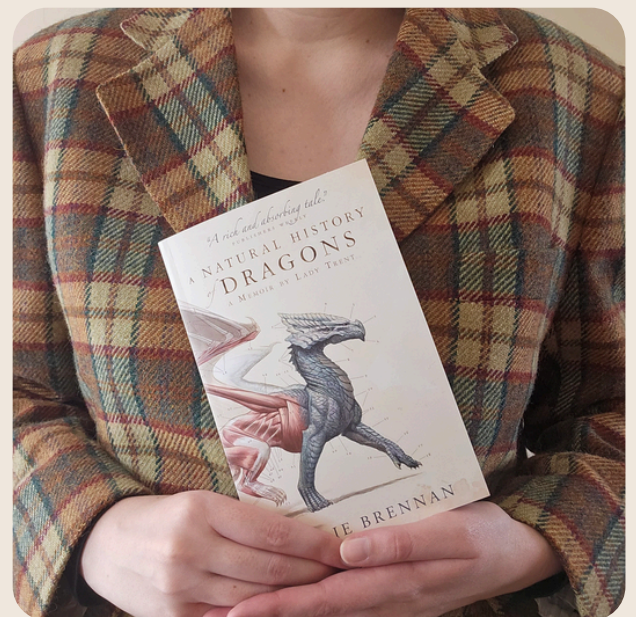


A Natural History of Dragons: A Memoir by Lady Trent by Marie Brennan REVIEW

Do I recommend this book?

Yes, it is a great historical fantasy.

There is so much to like about this story – the unique take on the dragon genre, the drama, the action! But I want to talk about the main character. The book is told in memoir format, with an older version of the character telling the story of what her younger self did. I found the younger version annoying, snobby and naïve, and this is intentional. The older version I really liked – self-assured, open-minded and honest. The author very cleverly played the characters off each other, using the older one to comment on the younger version of herself and the world she inhabited. I don't think I have ever seen this before and it was done so well. Combine that with a charming romance and the scientific study of dragons (everyone's dream job), and you have a great book!



Did I enjoy it?

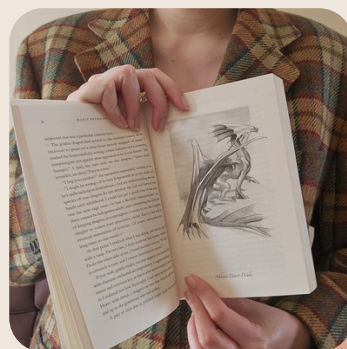
Very much!

Any criticisms?

It took a bit too long for the action to start.

Will I read the sequel?

Yes.



Read more Flash Reviews on the Introvert Bookstagram web page!

Follow Shipshape Smithy on Instagram @shipshapessmithy

An Artist's Connection to Nature

Text and Photography by
Stefanie Smith

As a child, I was enthralled by Beatrix Potter's illustrations. I loved copying her drawings - transporting myself from my nan's North London terraced house to a wildlife haven in my imagination. Not that I needed to; my nan's garden was a haven itself - bursting with marigolds and antirrhinum in the summer and full of sparrows and toads.



For a London dwelling, it was a wonderful wildlife home, and I loved 'borrowing' flower heads to study and making intricate miniature gardens and allotments in an old handleless frying pan.

I would spend hours with soil between my small fingers, making ponds with Cherry Bakewell tins, collecting stones small enough for rockeries, and begging my nan for cocktail sticks to use as runner bean poles. When my work was done, I would take coveted flower heads inside to draw and paint.

Garden centre visits were another favourite, and it wasn't always just about the café. I loved trailing behind my mum as she pointed out the names of things and rescuing begonia heads that had grown too heavy for their stalks.

I would take them home and marvel over them before sketching them. I had already decided that I was going to be Beatrix when I grew up. Although that hasn't happened, it certainly started an obsession with creating art inspired by the seasons and the small, often overlooked treasures they offer.

“Engaging all of my senses in such a calm and peaceful way never fails to ignite wonder and the longing to recreate nearly everything I’ve seen in various printmaking processes or simply pencil and paint.”



When possible, I will start the day walking my labrador, Flo.

And it is on these walks that we both potter around the woodland: Flo looking for good smells and I for fungi nestled in the bodies of trees, butterflies resting on fern, a treecreeper creeping in the tree tops, the sound of Spring’s first Chiff Chaff – that will calm my often-cluttered mind – and my shoulders will lower at each earthy scented breath.

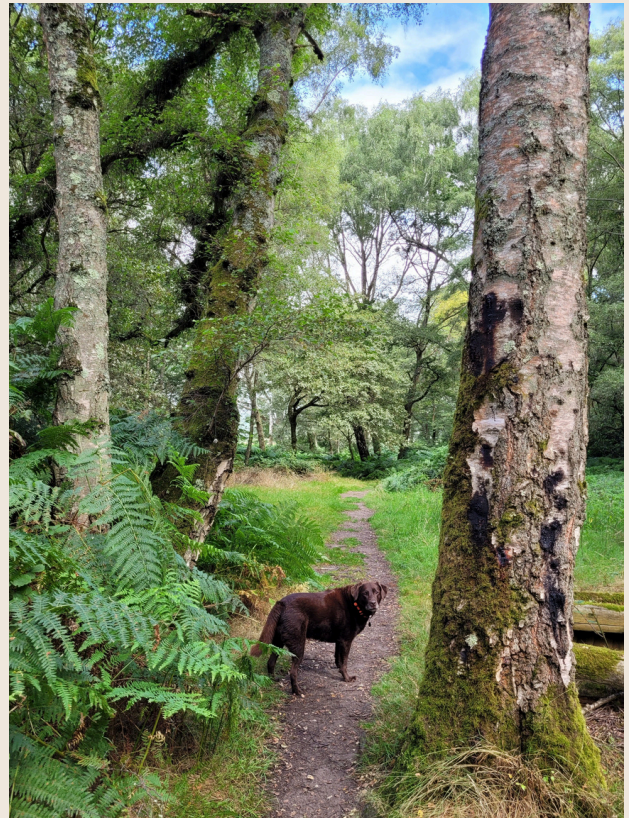
Engaging all of my senses in such a calm and peaceful way never fails to ignite wonder and the longing to recreate nearly everything I’ve seen in various printmaking processes or simply pencil and paint.

A longing to be reminded of how I felt in that moment, of the treasures that engaged the senses.

Nature has always been represented in art, from cave paintings of animals thought to be over 40,000 years old to the Art Nouveau movement, which used stylised organic forms as a reminder of the beauty in natural patterns in response to the growing industrialisation in Europe.

Have you ever wondered about the feelings that occur when you are outside with the sky as your ceiling? What happens to us when we walk in the woods, away from unwanted distractions and begin to hear the bird song, feel the warmth of the sun on our faces, notice the air laden with the earthy scents of the woodland – when we pause to notice the small things?

According to the Mental Health Foundation, 73% of UK adults surveyed in their YouGov poll said that connecting with nature had played an important part in managing their mental health during the pandemic. Studies have shown that spending a short time outside can reduce cortisol levels and boost serotonin and dopamine*.



It is this need, to be reminded, that can be fascinating. Virtually all of my artwork is inspired by our daily wanderings, and I know from talking to fellow artists and friends that I am not alone in my desire to produce artwork inspired by our natural environment and wildlife.

There is passion in highlighting an appreciation and the plights of endangered species. The noun 'obsession' is often repeated, together with fascination and love of our natural world.

Our state of mind when away from technology, in woodlands, by the sea, and in quieter, less populated places is also discussed.

For myself, the feelings that come from our woodland adventures drive a want to look into almost microscopic detail,

and drawing, painting and printing enable me to marvel at flora and fauna at an even greater depth.

Many artists and makers hope that by sharing their artwork, they will create something that others will connect with at some level. As I explore my continuing love of the seasons and surroundings, I know that this is my hope.

I hope that fellow bird lovers will see the Nuthatch that I have burnished into a copper plate, and it might trigger a memory of themselves watching and listening to one, too.

That's the main point, I think: to recreate the feeling of freedom that walking in the woods, or wherever it may be, to visually create a sense of wonder and awe at the natural world.

***Mental Health Foundation Research and Report: Nature: How connecting with nature benefits our mental health, [Read Here](#)**



Stefanie is an Artist, Printmaker, Painter & Art Teacher based in South East England.

You can enjoy her Artwork & Art workshops on www.stefaniesmithart.com

If you want to bring nature home, you can purchase Stefanie's art on [Etsy](#) or from Cat & Fox Creatives [here](#).

I, myself, am a proud owner of the Red Toadstool!

Follow Stefanie on [Instagram](#) for beautiful photography and nature connectedness!

The Wheel of the Year has turned again...

Mabon



Text and Photography by
Jennie Smith

Mabon, also referred to as the Autumn Equinox, falls between September 20th and 24th and is the second of three festivals (Lughnasadh, Mabon, and Samhain). This year, Mabon is observed on September 22nd.

Day and night are equal, and after Mabon, the days get shorter as the nights get longer.

Mabon is a time to prepare for the coming winter, celebrate the harvest, and focus on balance, abundance, and gratitude. For us modern pagans and witches, Mabon is a time to connect with the cycles of nature and give thanks for the abundance of Mother Earth.



Mabon Correspondence

Colours: *Red, orange, yellow, brown, green*

Animals: *Squirrel, owl, fox, raven, wolf, horse, eagle*

Crystals: *Golden topaz, hematite, amber*

Herbs: *Echinacea, sage, hyssop, rosemary, mugwort, cinnamon, bay, yarrow*

Flowers: *Marigold, sunflower, chrysanthemum*

Altar decorations: *Apples, acorns, pumpkins, gourds, leaves, corn, flowers, candles, cauldron, besom, crystals*



I love all the seasons, but there is something about Fall that I absolutely love. The cosy feeling of getting comfy with a book, a big blanket, and a warm drink, the changing leaves and beautiful colours, and the crunching leaves underfoot (and pumpkin everything).

Below are some ways that you can celebrate Mabon:

- Decorate your altar
- Visit a pumpkin patch
- Go on a nature walk
- Leave an offering to the nature spirits or animals by creating a nature Mandala (see below)
- Write in your gratitude journal
- Have a ritual bath
- Perform a spell, ritual or meditation to celebrate balance and gratitude
- Prepare for winter by making cold remedies
- Work in your garden, preparing for winter
- Eat fresh local apples or bake with apples

***I wish you all the magic of this beautiful season.
Mabon Blessings, witchy friends
Jennie Smith @nature_seasons_magic***



Mabon Mandala

I created this as an offering to the nature spirits. I used a mini pumpkin from a local pumpkin patch and herbs, flowers, and leaves from my garden. The beautiful red leaves are from my blueberry bush, and I also included marigold flowers, mums, rosemary, and hawthorn berries from my hawthorn tree.

Use anything local or include food for the animals (such as seeds, nuts, berries, etc.).

Instructions:

1. Gather your supplies
2. Find a peaceful spot outside
3. Choose a centre and build your Mandala by placing the items
4. around the centre in a circular
5. pattern until you are happy
6. Spend time meditating on the
7. meaning of Mabon, the beauty of
8. the season, and the bounty of Mother Earth.



About Jennie

I'm Jennie. I live in Ohio with my husband and our three kids, ages 19-22. I am a special education teacher of high school students with multiple disabilities. I am also currently working on my master's degree. I am a pagan and green witch. I have been practising green witchcraft for many years and studying herbalism for over 20 years.

My hobbies include gardening, herbalism, reading, and outdoor activities like hiking and kayaking. As a green witch, I work with nature and the earth's energies. I love working in my garden, working with different plants, flowers, and herbs, and making teas, tinctures, lotions, and salves with them.

For me, to be a green witch means living seasonally, finding magic in the mundane and recognizing the sacred in everyday life (working in my garden, talking to my houseplants while watering them, mindfully sipping my tea, etc), and living in harmony with nature.



Diversity Equity Inclusion



By Dee Crute

Slowly but Surely

The work is progressing!

Head to deecrute.com to explore our brand new website, which reflects our DEI goal and—at last—introduces the campaign:

"The Outdoors for Wellbeing and for Everybody"

The DEI Questionnaire and the campaign's dedicated page are almost completed. However, the campaign still needs the last touches and the completion of its own social media platforms.

DEI journalism has kicked off, too, with two interviews soon brought to you herein!

There is much work behind the scenes, including some collaborations, so watch this space!

The Introvert

