



LO SCARABEO

TAROT MUCHA



Tarot Mucha

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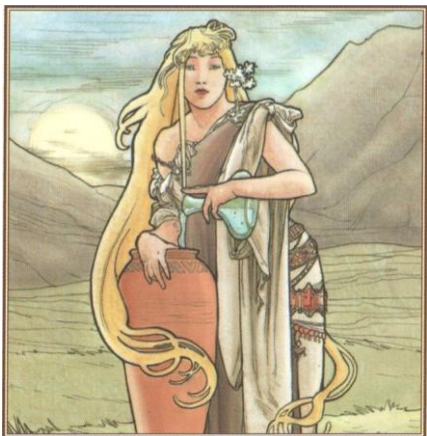
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Nature is a temple in which livingpillars
Sometimes give voice to confused words;

Man passes there through forests of symbols
Which look at him with understanding eyes.

Charles Baudelaire, from
"Correspondences," *Les Fleurs du Mal* At
the end of the nineteenth century, after
bloody revolutionary movements had set
fire to half the world, a period of relative
calm fell over Europe. The collective
imagination was captured by the idea that
the worst was over and that the new
century, now at the door, would be an era of
peace and prosperity. Advances in science
and technology were visible everywhere—
electric light, automobiles, flying machines,
cinema, vaccines for dire ailments. Even
the most skeptical were moved to
amazement and wonder.

Gazing back at this period of optimism and
happiness, prosperity and frivolity, we have
named it *la Belle Époque*, the Beautiful Era. At the
heart of this burst of brilliance was the City of
Lights, Paris. In its *cafés chantant*, artists argued
about emerging styles of painting and sculpture.
Among these was *Art Nouveau*, the New Art, a

wide-ranging movement that spread like tendrils of a flowering vine throughout Europe and on to America. Its common vision was the idea that everything made by human hands could (and should) become an art form, including architecture, jewelry, furniture, clothing, and lighting.

Alphonse Mucha stands out as one of the most important figures of this movement, for he had spent his entire life in this artistic philosophy long before it became the fashion. Indeed, Mucha never called himself an Art Nouveau artist, even though it is most often his work that comes to mind when the term is used. In the true Art Nouveau spirit, Mucha did not limit his art to painting; his gifts embraced sculpture, jewelry, stained glass, interior design, and above all, theatre. His renown is due to the wide reproduction of posters that, from the moment they appeared on the scene, defined the Mucha Style as recognizable and unique. In his figures, Mucha brought to life the longing of the symbolist poets (many of whom the artist knew) to reject a slavish depiction of reality, and to suggest emotions and moods that penetrate to the essence of things. And this essence, ultimately, is mystery.

Mystery is reflected in the beauty of the women in Mucha's posters. They are dreamy and distant, like emanations from a different plane of existence. It doesn't matter if these diaphanous goddesses bear the likeness of the famous stage actress Sarah Bernhardt (the model for Mucha's most famous posters) or are used to advertise cigarettes or beer. They are priestesses offering initiation into an aesthetic cult. These messengers of refined elegance are the evolution of the cursed women of the decadent poets and the dreamy princesses idealized by the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood. Ultimately, Mucha's femmes fatales are archetypes, at ease in the role of an allegorical Muse.

It might seem that the decision to dedicate a deck of tarot cards to the work of Alphonse Mucha is motivated only by an aesthetic choice. But the Mucha Tarot is more than just an artistic reinterpretation of the usual tarot figures. Mucha won his initial fame by creating a theatre poster that placed the central figure in a haloed frame, evocative of a saint rather than an earthly actress. Graceful ornaments that recalled icons turned a prosaic poster into an image of "the divine." It is this

quality of being imbued with deeper meaning that makes his style particularly well suited for tarot. Beyond being merely decorative, Mucha's work inspires an emotional response.

Interpreting the tarot according to the principles of composition and style of Mucha's work gives them a new perspective and clarity. The aesthetic vision in this sense becomes a true reading method, where each object depicted in the cards—the floral pattern of a dress, the decorations of a cup, a sinuous arabesque—acquires its own unique voice. The eye follows the fluidity of the lines, admiring the arc of a wave or the curve of a throat.

This path of vision is the essence of the Mucha Tarot—a flow of understanding that moves from symbol to symbol, a divinatory interpretation that is truly nouveau.

USING THE CARDS

The tarot has two parts, the Major Arcana and the Minor Arcana. The Major Arcana cards have names like the Empress, Justice, and the Moon. The Minor Arcana cards are in four suits: Cups, Discs, Staves, and Swords. Each suit is made up of ten numbered cards (Ace through Ten) and four court cards (Knave, Knight, Queen, and King).

Generally speaking, when you get a Major card in a reading, it has more significance than a Minor

card. Majors may be about situations and energies that affect your life in a powerful way or that provide important lessons for your soul's journey. Minors are more mundane and deal with day-to-day experiences, offering advice through symbols and metaphors about actions you might take (or avoid taking). The court cards represent people. They may stand for someone you know or will come to know, or you may see aspects of yourself in their characteristics. It is up to you whether you feel the gender of the court personage is important to consider. Remember that all tarot characters are archetypes, and that gender roles may not be the most important part of the message.

To use the cards, mix or shuffle them in any way that feels comfortable to you. When you feel they are thoroughly mixed, you can choose just a single card to answer your question or lay out several cards in a reading (called a spread). The meanings given in this book are just the beginning of your relationship with the Mucha Tarot. Use your own language of symbols to add additional insights. No matter what you may have heard, there is no "wrong" way to interpret a tarot card! When you are gazing at the image, let it speak to you. It is one of the great pleasures of working

with tarot to always find new meaning, even in the most familiar of cards.



THE ARCANA

- The Fool

Each of us embarks upon the journey, of life with a light heart and an innocent spirit. Every adventure we encounter along the path has the potential for joy. The Fool is the soul who travels the human lifetime seeking knowledge, understanding, and beauty. The carnation she holds symbolizes the incarnation of her spirit in mortal flesh. She has no expectations, only the willingness to live fully in the flow of life's experiences. Her worldly possessions are simple and few, carried in the small pilgrim's bag upon her shoulder. Her companion dog guides her away from the cliff's edge, for he is the part of the consciousness that instinctively protects us from harm. Heeding your instinct's guidance and the call of your spirit toward its purpose, you are always exactly where you are meant to be.

'-W Key ideas: Beginnings, openness, optimism, trust, innocence, the perfect soul

— The Magician

The Magician calls upon the energy of the universe to bring her desires into manifestation. Whatever she imagines shall come to pass when she brings the full force of her will and vision. The wand she holds in her right hand is a conduit for this universal energy and provides a focal point for her intentions.

Her left hand points to the earth, grounding the energy in reality, as if she herself were a lightning rod. On the table before her lie the symbols of the Minor Arcana: Sword, Stave, Cup, and Disc, the elemental tools of Air, Fire, Water, and Earth. The Magician has everything she needs to fulfill any opportunity that presents itself. The true magic she embodies is the belief in her own powers. This is her Art, in the highest sense of the word. As above, so below: divine and earthly creativity in perfect union. Whatever she chooses to be shall be.

🌸 Key ideas: Will power, creative manifestation, divine gifts, choices and opportunities

🌸 11 - The High Priestess

You have arrived at the temple of the High Priestess, she who reveals secret knowledge to initiates

who have earned that right. She is crowned by the waning moon, its silvery horns evoking the crown of Isis, great goddess of light and life. Ancient feminine mysteries are contained within the Priestess's book of wisdom. The still waters behind her symbolize things that are hidden in the depths—the true initiate seeks far beneath mere surface comprehension. Her temple pillars are engraved with B and J for Boaz and Jachin, the qualities of duality: dark and light, endings and beginnings, diffusion and creation. Wisdom lies between these extremes. You meet the Priestess in the perfect moment between your past and your future. She is the eternal Now. She will part the veils of illusion when you are ready to see.

 Key ideas: Wisdom, illuminated awareness, feminine mysteries, deepening

111 - The Empress

The Empress is the embodiment of Nature herself, the life-giver, the sustaining love of the earth offering its bounty. She is the source of all inborn talents, blessing each of us with unique attributes that will serve us in our mortal incarnation. The Empress nurtures these gifts within us,

encouraging as a mother encourages her children to be all they can be. All creative achievements spring from her, as wheat springs forth from the earth to feed its creatures. The Empress is crowned with dreamy poppies as well as wheat, for her power is not just in her earthly abundance but in her feminine intuition and vision. She has great dreams for you and will help you bring them into being. Honor her by living a fruitful and grateful life.

 Key ideas: Mother love, creative bounty, prosperity, nurturing care, female sexuality

'R IV — The Emperor

The Emperor is the embodiment of civilization and its dominion over nature. The orb in his left hand represents that dominion: it is the orbis terrarium, the world of earth, which is his to command. With such power comes great responsibility, and the Emperor takes his role as divinely decreed. He does not shirk his sacred duty, which is to protect his people and provide a solid foundation for the future. The scepter in his right hand is his symbol of authority. He who holds the scepter is recognized as rightful leader who is deserving of respect. "The Emperor rules his empire with

strength and determination, as symbolized by the rams' heads on his throne. Once he is set on a plan of action, he will see that it is done. Like the mountains in the distance, he will not be moved.

'-W Key ideas: Leadership, fatherly protection, power, authority, manmade civilizations, male sexuality

V — The Hierophant

The Hierophant speaks with the voice of religious authority. He is the keeper of dogma, tradition, and the laws of morality. The two supplicants kneeling before him have given over their spirituality autonomy and accept his teachings as truth. But can the soul ever be constrained from what it seeks? The spirit may find human religion too confining when it commands rather than persuades. And yet, the Hierophant blesses as well. The supplicants can find comfort through confession and absolution. A true spiritual teacher will inspire self-forgiveness and a fresh start, free of the guilt and shame of the past. Only give your trust to teachers who are worthy of that great responsibility.

🌀 Key ideas: Religious tradition, authentic spiritual teachings, comforting guidance, dogmatic control

ta VI — The Lovers

Two primal Lovers stand together in the garden of bliss. A watchful angel protects their union but cannot prevent them from making choices— both wise and foolish—that contribute to their souls' growth, both as individuals and as a pair. The tree of wisdom offers illumination and dispels illusion, and choosing to eat its fruit opens the garden gates and lets in the real world. This is the choice that marks the difference between mere infatuation and true love. The Lovers seek to know each other and to be known. They long to open their hearts' secrets to the other and to find the common beauty within. It is this longing for beauty that moves them into each other's arms. We are at our most beautiful when seen through the eyes of love.

'-W Key ideas: Soul mates, choosing commitment, the temptations of love, the immortal beloved

🌀 VII - Chariot

A conquering hero stands in his chariot of victory, a great city behind him. Perhaps this is the city he

has captured, or perhaps it is the city of his birth, awaiting his triumphant return. For the moment, he contemplates his achievement and how it fits into the flowing river of his life's experiences. The light and dark sphinxes that draw his chariot represent the positive and negative forces that drive him. His motivation to succeed may spring from a desire to serve or a desire to subjugate. His pride, power, and ambition are matched by humility, generosity, and nobility. All these qualities must pull together in harmony for ultimate success.

 Key ideas: Success, self-satisfaction, a sense of accomplishment, managing your own destiny

tQ VIII — Strength

A magnificent golden lion rests peacefully beside a tender maiden. They are under the open sky, with no need for shelter or protection, either from the outside world or from each other. Though the lion could savage the maiden with one stroke of his mighty paw, she is not afraid. The goodness of his heart is more powerful than his instinct to destroy his prey. His natural impulse to kill has been subdued by the gentle trust of the maiden. She too has controlled her instinctive fear of the beast,

allowing her to see his profound beauty. This is true courage: not the lack of fear, but the strength to move beyond it and embrace the unknown.

🌀 Key ideas: Overcoming baser instincts, conquering fears, the joining of two opposing forces in harmony

🌀 IX - The Hermit

On an icy mountaintop, a Hermit welcomes the solitude that illuminates. Withdrawn from the noise and rush of the world, she is in search of her Self, without the distractions and opinions of others. The light within her lantern is six-pointed, symbolic of the union of the water of intuition and the fire of inspiration. This alchemy combines what is felt with what is known, and leads to true wisdom. Another meaning for the six-pointed light is universal wisdom, mysteries that reach far beyond earthly limitations and into the cosmos. The Hermit is a teacher of these cosmic mysteries for those who are willing to make the effort. Only the most sincere seeker will trek to her lofty hermitage. ^Phe light from her lantern shines through the darkness of ignorance to guide those who are ready to look within.

 Key ideas: Universal wisdom, spiritual solitude, the illumined soul, retreat into sanctuary

X - The Wheel

With no beginning and no end, the Wheel symbolizes the eternal cycles of change. The stages of life, the seasons of the year, the phases of the moon—everything in our human experience is in a constant state of change. The windmill in the distance is a reminder that all of these changes are grist for the mill. What may seem like a loss now can turn to an unexpected advantage in time. Sorrowful events bring with them the gifts of wisdom and depth of character. But change must be acknowledged in the happy times as well. No joy lasts forever. The sands of the hourglass mark the precious moments as they pass. The message of the Wheel is to find your place in the circle of life as well as in the timeless experience of eternity.

 Key ideas: Time, eternity, the temporal world, the inevitability of change, fortune, luck

XI — Justice

Measuring all human deeds upon her golden scales, Justice restores balance by eliminating what is not needed. Acts of injustice meet with their rightful consequences, and her sword of truth dispels illusion. Do not think that you can avoid her gaze. She sees through any veil of self-deception in which you have swathed yourself. There is no need to fear her influence if your conscience is clear. What you have set into motion will come to its conclusion following the laws of the universe. If circumstances are not as you would have them be, learn the lesson now and be on the right side of Justice next time. The sword is yours to wield as well, when your heart is pure and your motives are true.

 Key ideas: Karma, the consequences of your deeds, facing reality, putting things back in balance

XII - The Hanged Man

Suspended from the cross-branch of a tree, the Hanged Man is amazed by beatific visions. Radiance streams from his mind as he perceives from this new perspective things he never imagined before. He is bound not as punishment, but to suspend him between the worlds and allow his consciousness to fly where it will. Grapevines

twine upon the tree, a symbol of divine ecstasy. The Hanged Man has been overtaken by this ecstatic state and can only surrender to it. Spiritual and prophetic messages rush into his open mind, taking him both deeper and higher than his mundane existence could ever know. Only when all control is handed over to the universal will can this kind of enlightenment be achieved.

 Key ideas: A new perspective, expanded consciousness, altered states of being, the open mind

XIII - Death

A long vigil ends at sunrise, and the knight who has undergone the ordeal lies naked and seemingly dead. His sword has been held in the possession of a priest, for no worldly weapon can

be of use when the enemy is Death itself. Setting aside the trappings of his mortal life, the knight offered himself on the altar of the ultimate sacrifice—to die to his old self and be reborn, purified, worthy of sacred service. Will Death claim the knight for his own or set his feet back on the path of mortality? To truly be transformed, it must not matter. Acceptance of endings is demanded, whether of life itself or merely one role in that lifetime. Something that is finished must be released. The new day is dawning.

 Key ideas: Release of what no longer serves, the end of a part of life, rebirth into a new self or situation

XIV — Temperance

At the place where the water kisses the land, a maiden performs a mystical rite to restore spiritual harmony. Pouring water from a smaller vessel to a larger vessel is symbolic of the single soul being part of the Great Soul. When we are in divine connection with all that is, we are in balance in our individual selves as well. The maiden stands in the waters of life, which flow from a common source to all parts of the universe. You too stand in that living stream. You too pour the offering of your spirit into the greater vessel of

humanity. Doing so restores you to a perfect state of harmony, for you are honoring the commitment you made when you took human form.

'-S Key ideas: Mystical union, grace, connection to oneness, balance, serenity

XV - The Devil

The Devil assumes a pleasing shape to beguile the vulnerable to give in to her temptations. She entices the weak to chase temporal goals of wealth, lust, domination—and her crooning dulcet words assure her victims that more lofty pursuits are foolish. Why strive for goodness and kindness in a world that rewards neither? The immediate pleasures are all that matter. The beauty of the Devil beckons and enchants, but look closer: she wears the ram's horns that ruthlessly batter, the peacock fan of empty pride, the batwings of the darkest netherworld. Consider carefully the things that tempt you. Tear yourself free of addictions, manipulations, and emotional bondage. Follow only those passions that lead toward the light.

 Key ideas: The allure of darkness, addiction, cynicism, separation from spirit, facing your demons

XVI - Tower

A blast from the heavens destroys a Tower that seemed unconquerable, and those who dwelled within its walls fall from the heights. The Tower was built with such a forbidding design that it not only protected its inhabitants, it effectively imprisoned them in their own creation. The Tower now stands open to the elements, its magnificent gilded dome blown away. Worldly wealth and the illusion of security matter little to the soul, which demands liberation. If you do not seek freedom on your own, the universe may give it to you in unexpected ways. Nothing can prepare you for the shock of the blasted Tower, but if you freely move beyond your small enclosure, you can avoid being thrown from it against your will.

 Key ideas: Sudden change, utter transformation, destruction that leads to creation, shock, awakening

XVII - The Star

"There are nights so diamond-clear that it seems as if the stars are close enough to reach out and touch. Capture starlight in your hands and see your own brilliance shimmering there. Let doubt fall away, all the petty cares of the earthly path. The Star tells a story of eternity that reaches far beyond any one

lifetime. All is well, and all will be well. Believe in the rightness of your place in the universe. Your psyche has a unique destiny to fulfill, foretold in the stars. Searching for this destiny is your quest, the quest of each person who takes mortal form. The Star that guides each of us shines a light of hope, faith, and infinite trust. This is the great truth: whatever you truly need will always be given. Every part of your being is made of stardust, and you can never be separated from the cosmic dance of creation.

'-W Key ideas: Purity, hope, destiny, the pattern of the cosmos, divine intention, faith

XVIII - The Moon

The goddess of the Moon welcomes you to her world of dreams. She holds her hand to her lips, for silence and secrecy are needed in this realm.

This is the place of looking within, of intuition and psychic messages. Across the waters of the unconscious lie two towers, guardians and gateways to the land beyond. Luminous drops of dew fall to fertilize the imagination. Everything looks different by moonlight, and you are meant to see things in a new light, leaving behind the sharp shadows and light of day. This is a softer understanding, a more subtle illumination. All signs and portents are to be heeded now. Fear is natural, for danger awaits in darkness. Trust your instincts, the most mysterious depths of the self.

 Key ideas: Dreams, understanding slowly revealed, feminine mysteries, intuition, the great Mystery

XIX - "The Sun

The Sun child rides forth bearing a triumphant banner that proclaims his joy. The walled garden of constraints and limitations is left behind. As surely as day follows night, the cycle of life has brought you through your troubles to a time of great happiness. The towering sunflowers show the way to enlightenment as they follow the Sun in its daily journey across the sky. Now, at the peak moment of

a summer noon, the Sun child is in his full power. He is the spirit of growth, warmth, and new life emerging. His coming foretells a time of perfect bliss, when all plans come to fruition and all problems dissolve like dew in the sunlight. Whatever you have envisioned will come to pass.

🌸 Key ideas: Happiness, a release from sorrow, growing toward the light, the warmth of love

🌸XX — Judgment

The angel of Judgment appears in all his towering majesty and cannot be avoided. The mortal souls who behold him are faced with the knowledge of their life's deeds and how those deeds will affect the life to come. This is a time of rebirth, the last Judgment, for the slate is wiped clean from this point on. Those who have the strength to stand up to the assessment of their character will move forward. Those who live in denial are doomed to repeat the old life lessons again and again. When it is time to attend to the call of your deepest vocation, whatever has been standing in your way will be brought to the forefront. Heed the angel's pronouncements with courage and humility.



 Key ideas: Self-assessment, confession and forgiveness, release from guilt, rebirth

XXI - The World

Each of us comes into this incarnation naked and pure, the essence of our unsullied soul ready for the next adventure in our evolutionary cycle. The oval wreath delineates a portal in time and space, the great cosmic egg from which the World itself was born. The angel, eagle, lion, and bull are the four fixed astrological signs: Aquarius, the element of air; Scorpio, the element of water; Leo, the element of Fire; and Taurus, the element of earth. When all the elements are in perfect and harmonious agreement, a cycle is finished and the new cycle begins. You are at such a time now. What has been undertaken is complete. It may or may not have concluded in the way you wished, but it is done. Drop the final veil and step through into the new life that awaits you.

 Key ideas: Completion, perfection of the whole, the balance of the elements, a triumphant emergence from limbo

Two

When two people experience true affinity of heart and mind, it is as if an angelic presence blesses them both. It takes courage to be vulnerable with another person, to share your secrets and your dreams. The winged lion symbolizes this courage, lifted and sustained by the wings of love. The healing caduceus is the symbol of the god Mercury, he who connects and communicates, bringing messages that convey truth to those who are open to hear them. In time, this love may deepen into commitment. For now, it is enough to gaze into the beloved's eyes and feel the world being born anew.

💞 Key ideas: Romance, idealized love, sharing from the heart, the healing power of affection

💞 Three

Some pleasures are planned and anticipated, but others spring into spontaneous delight, borne upon the breeze like a summer butterfly. A happy confluence of fortune is upon you, and the time is ripe for celebration with friends. Let the natural dance that is within you come forth, with no thought for what the wider world may think.

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🧠 Key ideas: Gaiety, merriment, playful lack of self-consciousness, sharing joys with friends

🧠 Four

Lost in fantasy, this restless spirit cannot find contentment in the actual world that surrounds her. Opportunity after opportunity is offered, but none captures her interest for more than a moment. The daydream world in which she wanders could never compare to her earthly walk. If you have let boredom, ennui, or illusion dull your life, it is time to awaken to reality. The cup of happiness is always just out of reach for one who seeks only perfection.

'-V Key ideas: Discontent, boredom, cynicism about life's possibilities, ennui, ungratefulness

🧠 Five

The elixir of life's experience has proven to be bitter and disappointing. The sense of loss is overpowering, and regrets for what might have been are holding you back. You may feel separated from the world, unable to connect to the flow that would carry you past this time of sorrow. Look to what remains unspoiled and the potential of future happiness. All is not lost.

 Key ideas: Disappointment, partial loss, an unpleasant development in an ongoing situation

Six

Summon up your memories of innocent pastimes and youthful infatuations. Recall the emotional response you felt when you first beheld beauty, and how you were able to find beauty in so many people, places, and things. Something of this past may be returning to you now. It may be as simple as your eyes being open to childlike wonder. Or it may be as profound as something precious that was lost being restored. Do not censor your feelings. Let your heart yearn.

 Key ideas: Happy memories, innocent delights, the trusting heart, old roles made new again

Seven

A kaleidoscope of options revolves before you, each offering a different focus for your next step on life's journey. Love, riches, wisdom, worldly success, adventure, spiritual awakening—all these and more are at your fingertips, but how to choose? If all choices seem equally appealing, perhaps it is not time to choose. On the other hand, perhaps you need not choose just one cup. What is your ultimate vision

of yourself? Is your spirit big enough to embrace a multitude of possibilities?

🌀 Key ideas: Confusion, too many choices, an over-abundance of possibilities, need for delay

🌀 Eight

There are times when the soul puts forth a call so compelling that it must be followed. Even when all of life's cups are filled, when the situation seems perfectly positive, something better calls you to strike out on a new path. This is not to be taken lightly. Such a calling is as extraordinary and rare as an eclipse. You know what feels right, even if the details are vague. Move forward with the knowledge that the light of understanding will reveal all in time. For now, trust your intuition.

🌀 Key ideas: Pilgrimage, vocational calling, heeding your inner voice, choosing something higher than material success

🌀 Nine

Your life is filled to the brim with satisfaction now, and the future will surely hold more. Let yourself wish for whatever you desire. Matters of the heart,

in particular, are lush and ripe with sweetness now. Have confidence in your beauty and magnetism, which will-draw all happiness and success to you. There is no need for great effort—the universe is working in your favor already. All that is required of you is grateful contentment.

🐞 Key ideas: Complete satisfaction, self-confidence, humor, a happy present and a bright future

🐞 Ten

Joy is coming to you in ways that may seem miraculous. A trouble or struggle is fading away,

and the happiness that follows is more intense because of it, as a rainbow follows the storm. This is a time of wonder, not just for you, but for those you love and for those in your fellowship. Home, health, love, prosperity—all will benefit now. Take advantage of opportunities to share your good fortune with others, not just in material ways, but in ceremonies of celebration and thankfulness.

 Key ideas: Family and community, lasting happiness, a time of peace after struggle, relief

Knave

The Knave of Cups breaks free of emotional constraints. He is willing to risk being hurt and to take a stand for what he loves. The waves of emotion may batter at his foundations, but he will not be dismayed or discouraged. His is an innocent heart that has not yet been broken. The lessons of loss have yet to be learned. Everything is felt as if for the first time: all the bittersweet pleasures of life and love. If this card does not represent a person, it can mean a time of emotional renewal or spiritual cleansing.

 Key ideas: Raw emotions, learning about relationship, innocent expectations

Knight

The Knight of Cups is the bringer of bliss. He holds aloft the Grail, the symbol of joy, and invites his beloved to drink. His bejeweled steed has no need for reins, for both rider and horse are guided solely by intuition. Logic and reason have no place here, only the call of the heart. Stepping into the sea of emotion, the Knave urges you to join him in the adventure of love. If this card does not represent a person, it can mean deeper understanding of your life's purpose or an invitation that will lead to pleasure.

 Key ideas: The ideal lover, gallantry, an offer of romance, the quest for bliss

'R Queen

The Queen of Cups understands the emotions of others as well as she understands her own. Her intuition is her strongest attribute, and she prefers to act from its guidance, rather than from the limitations of logic. Her dream life is as real as her waking life, for it reveals the inner journey her soul has undertaken. She invites you to open your own awareness and imagination. With great compassion, she offers to help you know yourself. If this card does not represent a person, it can mean

an emotional time that leads to greater understanding and a more open heart.

 Key ideas: Feminine beauty, deep intuition, compassion, understanding without judgment

King

The King of Cups has ambition that motivates him to make the world a better place for all. He believes anything is possible when people of good will join together. His deep intuition and compassion draw others to follow his leadership and join in his healing endeavors. His faith in the essential goodness of all people sustains his work. He represents the energy of a new age of harmony and universal love. If this card does not represent a person, it Can mean a calling to a spiritual or vocational path of service to others.

 Key ideas: Spiritual leadership, compassion for the world soul, loyalty in love

DISCS

The Discs cards represent the element of Earth. This is the element of work, the body and the senses, money, home, and all tangible things.

The Ace of Discs signifies the beginning of a fruitful period, in which anything you undertake will add to your well-being. Wealth will increase, health will improve, partnerships both professional and personal will flourish. Others will reach out to help you directly or with offers of material aid. Be aware: this prosperous time is a gift and must not be wasted. The opening in the garden wall is an invitation to a better life, but you must choose to walk through it.

Key ideas: Material well-being, prosperity, good health, an unexpected gift of help

Two

This is a precarious time, and you are standing on shifting sands. Take care to keep your footing as you balance multiple tasks. Be sure you are giving adequate attention to everything that is your responsibility. There is a danger of something precious being lost simply because you cannot be

everywhere at once. No captain can pilot two ships at the same time. Be realistic and cautious.

🧠 Key ideas: Life out of balance, the need to simplify or delegate, juggling too many tasks

🧠 Three

The key to a successful project is for everyone to find the role for which he is best suited and then bring those skills to bear with a happy heart. The experienced architect creates ambitious plans; the masterful artisan brings them into manifestation. When people work together toward a common goal, they achieve far more than any of them could create on their own. This is the true meaning of community.

🧠 Key ideas: Cooperation, appreciation for skilled help, creative construction, a team effort

🧠 Four

A haughty ruler sits in majesty before the city he has built to feed his pride. He takes pleasure only from the trappings of wealth. Money is his foundation and his primary motivation. Everything he undertakes is done with one eye on the ultimate profit. But he has sacrificed some of his humanity in the pursuit of gold. Materialism has closed off a

place in his heart that should care about the suffering of others. Without that, nothing will ever truly satisfy him.

 Key ideas: Attachment to material possessions, greed, fear of loss, miserliness

'R Five

Chilled to the bone and in despair, a starving beggar cries out to the heavens to come to her aid. Whatever the circumstances are that have brought her to this place, she no longer believes she can save herself and move through this time of trouble. And yet, help is very close, if she will only open her eyes to see it. Warmth, light, and sanctuary are hers for the taking. Her prayer will be answered, and welcoming arms await her when she is ready to receive them.

 Key ideas: Loneliness, self-pity, emotional and spiritual isolation, willing help nearby

Six

A wealthy merchant freely distributes largesse to the beggars outside his gates. He knows that his generosity will return to him, perhaps in unexpected ways. He could have shut himself behind his walls and ignored their plight, but an act of charity is its own reward. The humility of the people in need reminds him to be gentle with those less fortunate and to be grateful for his own abundance. It is a blessing to receive help, but the greater blessing is to give it.

 Key ideas: Generosity, true charity, philanthropy, prosperity beyond worldly possessions

Seven

There are times of celebration and momentous events in life, but much of our earthly path is made up of mundane moments—daily work tasks, routines that sustain us, small steps toward larger goals. Making each work meaningful is the key to contentment. There is deep satisfaction to be found in doing what needs to be done. Patient and

constant effort will bring great abundance in its proper time.

🧡 Key ideas: Patient labor, reward for hard work, grateful awareness of daily blessings

🧡Eight

The acquisition of skills is not accomplished overnight. Even the most gifted artisan must learn his craft. 'Through trial and error, he learns what tools work best for each task and how to express his vision through his chosen medium. So it is with any work—perseverance and commitment to excellence lead to success. You may experience some isolation as you concentrate on honoring your craft, but it will be worth the sacrifice in time.

🧡 Key ideas: Craftsmanship, dedication to pursuing excellence, right livelihood, career advance over time

🧡Nine

A wise and beautiful lady has created a garden sanctuary for herself in which she may contemplate the richness of her inner life. Here in her secret bower she is tranquil and secure, with no fear of disturbance. She is content to dwell in solitude with only her falcon as companion, for she is at peace

with herself. It has been a hard-won peace, with sacrifices and losses along the way, which makes it all the sweeter now. She chooses independence as her reward for a life lived to the

💜 Key ideas: Solitary contentment, sacrificing companionship for peace, quiet well-being and security

💜 Ten

Three generations gather in the courtyard of their ancestral home. The elder patriarch has given the responsibilities of the household over to his son, but his wisdom is still revered. The young ones are being taught to respect the family's legacy—not just in material wealth, but in tradition, honor, and continuity. There is great strength to be found in the security of a beloved house and home, and even more in the collective support of loyal family relations.

💜 Key ideas: Heritage, tradition, continuing a family legacy, maintaining stability for future generations

💜 Knave

The Knave of Discs offers assistance in all practical tasks and undertakings. His earthy attention to

detail in every step along the way brings success through worthy effort. His is not the kind of help that offers flashes of inspiration, but his loyalty and trustworthiness are unsurpassed. The more responsibility you can give him, the better for both of you. Mutual fruitfulness will be the reward. If this card does not represent a person, it can mean a gift of a new financial opportunity or a reward for hard work well done.

 Key ideas: Loyalty, trustworthy service, an exchange of opportunities

Knight

The Knight of Discs is not a risk-taker, but he makes up in determination what he may lack in boldness. He is happiest when he has a task that benefits others, not just himself. He is a good choice to lead a team effort, for he does not seek personal glory. Through steady progress, he will always achieve what he sets out to do. Do not expect great sensitivity from this Knight, but you may always expect honor. If this card does not represent a person, it can mean a time of steady work toward a goal and the need for patience, not haste.

 Key ideas: Slow but steady progress, dependability, predictable responses

Queen

The Queen of Discs is the practical mother who knows best. She offers her advice freely and it is always worth taking. She has wisdom that can find solutions to problems that may seem insurmountable to others. Her scepter bears the horns of Taurus, the sign of earthy perseverance. Once her mind is set on a goal, she will not stop until it is achieved. Her self-confidence ensures her success. If this card does not represent a person, it may indicate great progress on a project, increased material wealth, and improved health.

 Key ideas: Mother-love, protectiveness, a forceful will, taking pleasure in the earthly senses

The King of Discs has the tenacity of a bull combined with shrewd practicality. Whatever he commands to be achieved, he will see it through to completion no matter what obstacles arise. He sees the long view and builds for the future, for his primary purpose is stability. He knows that when people feel secure in their foundations, they will rise to even greater achievements. When he agrees to help you, success is assured. If this card does not represent a person, it can mean a substantial gift or loan that brings a long-held dream into reality.

🍷 Key ideas: Practicality, advice backed up with assistance, respect for material possessions and tradition

STAVES

The Staves cards represent the element of Fire. This is the element of action, will, forceful energy, transformation, and ambition.



'R Ace

The Ace of Staves signifies a creative impulse rising within you. It may be artistic or sexual or entrepreneurial—whatever the focus, your passion requires an outlet. Passive observation and overly careful consideration are no longer permitted. Any step you take in any direction will put you on the path to success now. This is only the beginning—the journey may be long and the rewards still in the far distance. But the time for action has arrived. Seize your opportunities now or they may pass you by.

🍷 Key ideas: The beginning of an enterprise, opportunities offered, a new positive attitude

Two

From the heights of her castle's battlements, a lady looks out over her vast domain. In one hand she holds a stave and in the other a globe—together they symbolize working her will in the world. The stave that is secured to the wall is power held in reserve. Her authority has not yet been tested to the fullest, but she is confident about the future. She is ready for whatever challenges may come.

 Key ideas: Anticipation of change or challenge, welcoming the future, optimism

Three

A nobleman stands on a promontory watching his ships sail out to sea while he remains behind. He knows that success depends on being in the right place at the right time, and for the present, his place is here, not setting forth on adventures. His merchant sailors and explorers will undertake his quests for him for the time being. There may come a time when he sets out into the wider world himself, and that thought contents him for now.

 Key ideas: Delegation in an enterprise or adventure, management rather than labor, partnership

Four

Three maidens prepare for a festival to mark a time of great joy. Such celebrations are vital to the human spirit, for they affirm that life is more than just day-to-day routine. When an achievement has been accomplished, a rite of passage is attained, or peace and harmony return

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after a time of trouble, we pause to celebrate. It is important to create rituals that symbolize significant events. Something or someone is worthy of such a celebration now.

 Key ideas: The blessings of peace, celebration, remembrance through ritual, holiday festivals

Five

What started as friendly competition has devolved into a real *mélée* where someone may be hurt. These warriors are comrades at arms, brothers with a common cause, and their mock battle was only meant as practice for when they face an actual foe. But their tempers have got the better of them—some imagined insult or exaggerated reaction tipped the balance from fun to ferocity. It may take a cooler head to intervene and restore the peace.

 Key ideas: Competition, struggle for power, imagined insults, need for a cooling-off period

Six

A knight returns home from his quest, bearing the laurel wreath of victory. Significantly, he does not wear it on his own head, but hoists it aloft so that all may see and take part in his joy. There is no false modesty here—he knows his success is deserved—but those who follow him are respected and share in his glory. As he progresses upward in his career, he will remember those who helped him get there.

 Key ideas: Graceful acceptance of praise, deserved recognition, a reward for good service is coming

Seven

Beset by foes, a young man stands in a posture of courageous confidence. Though he is outnumbered, he still has the upper ground, literally and symbolically. His power comes from the belief that he can achieve whatever he sets his will to accomplish. He knows he is at the peak of his strength and prowess, and he welcomes the challenge to prove himself. Even against such odds, his confidence shines.

 Key ideas: Courage in facing challenges, standing your ground, confidence attained through experience

'R Eight

A flight of staves rushes to earth, startling the maiden who was calmly traveling under the open sky. What is the meaning of this sudden apparition? Is battle commencing? Is it a portent of some message to come? All she knows in this moment is that something is rapidly changing, for better or worse, and she would be well advised to find a more secure position from which to assess the situation.

🌀 Key ideas: Unclear information, an overly hasty reply, increased activity that needs direction

🌀 Nine

All the necessary resources have been gathered. All the defenses have been strengthened. All that remains now is to gather the inner strength to face whatever presents itself. Hold a vision of invincibility and stability against any threat. Your position is secure and only your own self-doubt can shake it. Have the courage to open your eyes and gaze directly at your next challenge.

'-W Key ideas: Preparedness for the future, a position of strength, balancing inner and outer defenses

Ten

The passionate spirit reaches out to fully embrace the adventure of life, with all its opportunities and challenges. But the wise person knows when too much has been taken on. It serves no one to weigh yourself down with so many tasks and projects that none can be done well. Worse, it burdens you with immobility when your creative ambition longs to explore new worlds. Hand over some of your responsibilities; do not make yourself a martyr.

 Key ideas: Burdens becoming oppressive, unwise multitasking, burning out, exhaustion

'R Knave

The Knave of Staves has great creative potential but has not quite decided yet where to put his energy. He is inclined to bursts of enthusiasm rather than a sustained effort toward a goal.

Given guidance and support, he will come to realize his gifts and use them wisely. Too much direction, however, will inhibit his genius as it grows into its full power. Allow him to make mistakes and fail if needed. If this card does not represent a person, it can mean taking on a new role or starting a new artistic endeavor.

🌸 Key ideas: Undirected potential, the need for mentorship, enthusiasm for learning

'R Knight

The Knight of Staves may rush in where angels fear to tread. *His boldness without forethought may be foolish, but it can also lead to greatness. He is susceptible to failure more than those who never take a chance, and yet, fortune seems to follow him and keep him from true harm. He will champion any righteous cause and pursue any path that promises glory. If this card does not represent a person, it can mean a time of increased activity or unexpected travel.

🌸 Key ideas: Fearless action, possible recklessness, a surge forward in an-endeavor

'R Queen

The Queen of Staves combines intuition with practicality to spark a creative blaze that warms all who know her. She brings passion to any undertaking and inspires others to strive for excellence. When she focuses her will on a purpose, it grows with astonishing speed, like the sunflower that is her emblem. She commands great energy and power, and rules with true nobility of character. If this card does not represent a person, it may mean a

time of creative innovation, when old ways are challenged by new ideas.

 Key ideas: An abundance of talents, artistic inspiration, warmth of interest, sexual fire

King

The King of Staves is decisive and confident, with the impressive charisma of a true leader. He does not hesitate to take action against injustice or oppression, and he expects others to stand up for their rights, though he will always lend his courage and strength to those in need. Ceremony and ritual are important to him, and the way things are properly done to show respect for tradition. If this card does not represent a person, it shows a time of decision-making and taking charge of a situation that may have been dragging on too long.

 Key ideas: Inspired leadership, championing the weak, encouragement, impassioned support

SWORDS

The Swords cards represent the element of Air. This is the element of communication, conflict, the intellect, clarity, and challenges.

The Ace of Swords signifies an emerging understanding of the rationale behind your actions. Knowing why you want something is as important as knowing what it is you want. The sword of light and truth pierces through the crown of worldly attainment and symbolizes striving for a more noble purpose than mere wealth or fame. By invoking your higher self and your intelligence, you will cut through discouragement and distraction.

🌀 Key ideas: Increased understanding and clarity, focused intelligence, discernment

🌀 Two

A blindfolded lady has retreated to a secluded spot to hold vigil under the waxing moon. The swords she holds warn off any who would approach and break her concentration. She is testing her resolve and her ability to make difficult decisions on her own. Her gown seems to flow over the earth like water or moonlight. While her body is still and her senses are cut off from distractions, her thoughts flow freely, seeking the answers she needs.

🌀 Key ideas: Meditation, visualization, detachment from daily distractions, focusing the mind

🌀Three

Some pain is so piercing that it seems as if one's heart has been torn out. Such suffering can only be moved through, not avoided or denied. Whatever others may say about the need for grieving and its appropriate end, only the heart can know when it is time to pull the swords free and begin again. Let the tears fall as they will and give sorrow its due. Think carefully before you assign blame; it is unlikely that you are thinking clearly.

🌀 Key ideas: Heartbreak, grief, the need for a period of consolation and peace, emotional unbalance

🌀Four

The effigy of a knight adorns his tomb, and his swords are hung nearby in honor of a lifetime of victorious endeavor. He is at rest now and will fight no more. This scene is a symbol of strife that is permanently ended. The stress is lifted, and the battle will not be reengaged. Whatever new life the

knight will find, he is honorably released from the past and can go in peace.

🌀 Key ideas: The end of strife, deep peace, old quarrels laid to rest, an honorable conclusion

🌀 Five

A battle is concluded, and the warriors think over their victory or defeat. The knight who has prevailed gathers his spoils of war. The defeated men must decide their next step—to join with the former enemy, to journey back home, to strike out alone. No war lasts forever, and when it is over, the world will have changed. How you deal with it determines your character.

🌀 Key ideas: Conquest through forceful action, defeat, gloating or plotting revenge, life after wartime

🌀 Six

A ferryman transports a traveler across choppy water toward a farther shore. The traveler takes no active role in this journey. He sits within a shelter of swords, removed from the world, wounded and withdrawn. When he gets to the other side he will take up his life's path again. For now, he gathers his

strength and allows healing of body and spirit to do their work.

 Key ideas: Letting others carry you for a time, passive acceptance of help, recovery

Seven

In the predawn hush, a warrior sneaks into the enemy camp and steals their weapons. He does not care about honor or righteous battle. Acting on his own, he pursues victory at any price. Taking such a sly and indirect strategic position throws everything into potential chaos. The traditional rules of war no longer apply, and the danger has been increased by this rash action. The next step should be considered very carefully.

 Key ideas: Dishonor, theft, a victory through deception or trickery, a need for vigilance

ta Eight

A lady has been removed from the castle and bound in isolation as a punishment for some misdeed. Perhaps it is justified, or it may be jealousy or resentment acting against her. Whatever the cause, it appears that she has accepted her fate—her feet are not tied, and she could easily slip from the loose

bonds that confine her. Something keeps her there, something that causes her to believe in her own helplessness. Someone who believes they deserve disgrace will always manage to achieve it.

 Key ideas: Resignation, depression, lack of self-preservation, belief that things are worse than they are

 Nine

Alone in her chamber, a lady abandons her self to wild, obsessive thoughts. All her past actions, everything that has been done against her—regrets, failed love, mischance, and mistake—torment her like razor-sharp swords. This is the dark night of the soul, when all seems lost. A mind caught in hopelessness cannot imagine the coming of the dawn, but it will always come.

 Key ideas: Acute mental suffering, raging thoughts, nightmare, ghosts and painful memories

 Ten

The battle is over. It is time to bury the dead, heal the wounded, and make peace in all the ways that peace needs to be made. This is a time of sorrow as well as relief. The harshness and violence of the conflict will

not be swept away soon. All that can be done is to pick up the pieces and carry on, for to do anything else would be a defeat to the soul that could not be borne.

Key ideas: The ruin of an enterprise, cutting your losses, recovering from shock and defeat
ta Knave

The Knave of Swords is a thoughtful and contained person who considers things well before taking action. He takes time to see the larger perspective and seeks understanding in all things. He is open to new ideas and philosophies while still respecting traditional views. His mind is more receptive than his heart, at least at present, and emotional entanglements may feel like a distraction from his greater purpose. If this card does not represent a person, it can mean a time of negotiation that requires the willingness to see all sides of the question dispassionately.

Key ideas: Intellectualism, calm scrutiny, detachment from personal entanglements

tR Knight

The Knight of Swords focuses on his goals to the exclusion of all else, including the feelings of others. He moves aggressively toward what he

wants, and he may consider other people as obstacles in his path. He has no respect for the weak—either deal with him forcefully or get out of his way. The ruthless edge of his sword cuts both ways, for there is rarely true peace in his

quarrelsome heart. If this card does not represent a person, it can mean a time of hard decisions and a need for change.

 Key ideas: Ruthless or angry action, cruelty, warrior mentality, an enemy advances.

Queen

The Queen of Swords keeps her distance and does not easily welcome intimacy. Those who are worthy of her company must respect her independence and intelligence. Her mind is always working and she sees all sides of a situation clearly, which allows her to manipulate it to her advantage. Her cool detachment may seem heartless, but those few she loves are loved fiercely. If this card does not represent a person, it can indicate a need for detached assessment of the entire situation before acting.

 Key ideas: Keen intelligence, a cooling of emotions, strategy for the advancement of loved ones

King

The King of Swords is a brilliant strategist and a formidable adversary. His sense of timing allows him to succeed where more impetuous opponents fail. Though it may seem as if he is passive in his quiet watchfulness, never underestimate him. He has hidden weapons and will strike when the moment is most advantageous for his plans. If this card does not represent a person, it may mean choosing your battles wisely and not wasting your power on unworthy foes.

Key ideas: Well-considered actions, emotions kept under the surface, striking at the proper time

SPREADS

The simplest way to do a tarot reading is to formulate a question or focus on a situation for which you would like some clarity, and then choose a single card. If you want more information, draw another card, and continue until you feel finished with that tarot session. The more structured way to do a reading is with spreads that offer insights into various aspects of the situation or question. Here are three spreads inspired by the art of Alphonse Mucha.

THE SEASONS (SERIES, 1896)

This is a good general reading when you don't have a particular question and would just like some guidance about your life at the present time. Mix the cards in your preferred way, and choose four cards. Lay them side by side in a row and turn them over one by one:

Spring: What needs creative expression?

Summer: What needs to slow down?

Autumn: What is ready for harvesting? Winter:
What needs shelter and care?

A sample reading:

Spring: What needs creative expression?

King of Staves: Your gift for leadership and your fiery personality need to be expressed creatively, perhaps by taking on a new role at work or participating more actively in a community endeavor.

Summer: What needs to slow down?

Eight of Staves: Too much information is coming in too quickly for you to process. Take a break from constant media interaction, social networking, and so on, and give your mind and body a chance to rest.

Autumn: What is ready for harvesting?

Ace of Discs: A gift, inheritance, or some other form of wealth that has been in the works for some time is now ripe for the taking. Look around you for sources of prosperity and reach out to accept them.

Winter: What needs shelter and care?

Eight of Swords: Your sense of self-worth may have taken a beating and needs to be comforted and

consoled. Seek out the company of those who love and appreciate you, and don't heed those who wish you ill.

THE FLOWERS (SERIES, 1898)

Flowers appear often in Mucha's art, and one of his best-known works is a series of watercolors personifying four flowers as beautiful women. The meanings for the cards in this spread are inspired by those paintings and influenced by the Victorian language of flowers that was popular in that era. This is a good reading when you want to ask about the best way to proceed in a situation. Mix the cards in your preferred way and choose four cards:

Iris: The message

Carnation: The secret influence

Lily: The essential sweetness

Rose: The truth

A sample reading:

The question being asked is: How can things become more harmonious at work?

Iris: The message

The Hanged Man: What is needed is a new point of view and the willingness to think outside the box. Inspiration will come through brainstorming

together once it is agreed to release old limitations and look beyond the status quo.

Carnation: The secret influence

Four of Discs: Fear of financial insecurity may be influencing people's behavior to an excessive degree. Some people may be afraid to rock the boat for fear of losing their job. People in managing roles may be using this fear to wield power and prevent change.

Lily: The essential sweetness

Six of Discs: This card is the antithesis of the Four of Discs, for in this case prosperity is being freely dispersed. The essential sweetness in your workplace lies in people's desire to help each other and increase everyone's wealth and well-being. Appeal to their better nature.

Rose: The truth

Five of Discs: These last three cards, all Discs, confirm that the question is really about one main thing: money. The truth is that security and safety are assured, but people may be too caught up in fear and drama to see it. Find ways to calm those fears and changes for the good can be more easily made.

A FOUR-ACT READING

The greatest actress of her day, Sarah Bernhardt, opened the door to fame and fortune for Mucha. He was called upon to create a poster for her when all the other artists at the printing shop where he was employed were on holiday. She was so enchanted by the finished art that she gave Mucha a contract to do all her posters, as well as her stage and costume designs. That first poster was for a four-act play entitled *Gismonda*. This four-card reading is inspired by the theatre work Mucha created for Bernhardt and others.

Act One: The theme of the matter, the overview

Act Two: Who is influencing the matter

Act Three: Unexpected changes and developments

Act Four: Tie resolution and outcome

A sample reading:

The question being asked is: Is this a good time to move to a new house?

Act One: The theme of the matter, the overview
Six of Staves: The desire to move may be coming from an expanding sense of self, brought on by recent successes in work and/or your social life. You may want a new

home that more fully expresses who you are and who you want to become. It's a good idea to consider how much  ego is involved in this decision, and if moving will satisfy those urges to seem grander and more important.

Act Two: Who is influencing the matter

King of Discs: This king may represent a strong father figure who tends to judge people for what they have more than for what they are. He can be very generous, and may be urging (or tempting) you to move with promises of financial assistance.

Act Three: Unexpected changes and developments

Six of Cups: This card often represents a time of nostalgia and longing for simpler, happier times. It may be that when you seriously consider moving you find yourself unexpectedly attached to the home you have now, and moving may seem like an unnecessary complication. Or it may be that in refining your needs and wishes regarding a new home, you remember a childhood home and look for a new house based on your longing for that beloved place.

Act Four: The resolution and outcome

The Fool: This card represents a fresh start, with all the excitement that brings. The Fool sets out on new adventures with a joyful spirit, and the reading as a whole seems to be saying that if you keep this lighthearted attitude in seeking a new home, moving would be a very good opportunity for fresh energy to come into your life. With the wise and practical help of the King of Discs, you can afford to take the Fool's leap of faith!