

The Mythic Tarot

Juliet Shaman-Burke

About the book

Delve into the enchanting world of The Mythic Tarot by Juliet Sharman-Burke, where ancient mythology and modern introspection intertwine to illuminate the timeless wisdom of the Tarot. This captivating guide transcends traditional readings by uniquely contextualizing each card within the rich tapestry of Greek mythology, breathing life into archetypal symbols and narratives that speak to the depths of the human spirit. Whether you're a seasoned Tarot practitioner or a curious novice, The Mythic Tarot invites you on a transformative journey, offering profound insights and empowering you to harness the sacred knowledge of the ancients in your own life. Let the gods and goddesses be your guides as you unlock the mysteries of destiny, self-awareness, and the universal energies that shape our existence.

About the author

Juliet Sharman-Burke is a distinguished British author, psychotherapist, and tarot expert renowned for her extensive contributions to the field of tarot and astrology. With over three decades of experience, she has co-authored several seminal works, including "The Mythic Tarot," where she deftly combines her deep understanding of Jungian psychology with the rich, symbolic imagery of Greek mythology. Sharman-Burke's academic background in psychology and her hands-on experience as a practicing therapist lend a unique, insightful perspective to her writings, making complex esoteric concepts accessible to both novices and seasoned practitioners. Her commitment to exploring the human psyche through the archetypal stories in tarot has solidified her status as a respected voice in the metaphysical community.

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Chapter 1 : Introduction to Tarot

Bridging Mythology and Divination

Tarot cards have long held a place of mystique and fascination in human culture. "The Mythic Tarot" by Juliet Sharman-Burke bridges the rich symbolism of tarot with the timeless narratives found in mythology. The book provides a robust framework for understanding tarot not just as a tool for divination but as a gateway to deeper psychological insights and personal growth.

The tarot deck as we know it today has evolved over centuries, originating in the 15th century in Europe. However, its roots go deeper, intertwining with historical practices of symbolism, mystical traditions, and early forms of psychology. Tarot's historical significance is rich, acting both as a tool for fortune telling and as a reflective instrument for personal development.

One of the intriguing aspects of tarot is its deep connection to mythological themes. Myths serve as foundational stories that convey universal truths and archetypal experiences. These stories, which have been passed down through generations, resonate with human experiences and emotions,

making them a fitting complement to the tarot's symbolic imagery. In "The Mythic Tarot", each card is linked to a mythological figure or story, providing a dual layer of meaning and depth.

The structure of the tarot deck itself reflects a journey through myth and reality, comprising 78 cards divided into the Major Arcana and the Minor Arcana. The Major Arcana consists of 22 cards, each representing significant archetypes and life stages that one encounters on their personal journey. These are the cards that convey powerful, overarching themes and lessons.

The Minor Arcana, on the other hand, is composed of 56 cards split into four suits: Wands, Cups, Swords, and Pentacles. Each suit delves into different aspects of daily life and personal experiences, highlighting practical scenarios and emotional states. While the Major Arcana depicts the substantial milestones of life's journey, the Minor Arcana fills in the day-to-day experiences, challenges, and opportunities that help weave the fabric of our existence. In essence, the tarot deck serves as a microcosm of the

human experience, capturing both the profound and the mundane. By integrating mythic narratives, "The Mythic Tarot" by Juliet Sharman-Burke enriches this journey, offering readers a deeper and more nuanced understanding of tarot as a bridge between the outer world of reality and the inner world of the psyche. This holistic approach emphasizes that the tarot is not just a tool for prediction but a means through which one can explore and navigate the complexities of life and the self.

Chapter 2 : The Major Arcana

Archetypes and Psychological Journeys

Part 2: The Major Arcana - Archetypes and Psychological Journeys

The Major Arcana forms the core of "The Mythic Tarot," consisting of 22 cards, each rich with archetypal symbolism and mythological stories that offer profound psychological insights. Juliet Sharman-Burke meticulously explores the rich narratives and characters associated with these cards, helping readers understand their deeper meanings and how they relate to the human experience.

The Major Arcana begins with The Fool, represented as a youthful figure embarking on a journey, symbolizing new beginnings and the essence of innocence and potential. As The Fool's journey progresses, each subsequent card introduces a powerful archetype, such as The Magician, who embodies willpower and the art of manifestation, and The High Priestess, who represents intuition, mystery, and the unconscious mind.

Cards like The Empress and The Emperor reflect themes of nurturing, authority, and structure. The Empress is depicted through mythological lenses as the goddess of fertility and life, while The Emperor showcases the god of order and societal law. The balance between these two cards plays out as a dance between creativity and control, nurturing and discipline.

The Hierophant and The Lovers further guide the journey, bringing elements of tradition, spirituality, and interpersonal connections into focus. The Hierophant, a figure of religious or moral authority, encourages seekers to explore established beliefs. In contrast, The Lovers delve into relationships, choices, and the harmony of opposites, often illustrated through the myth of Eros and Psyche.

As the journey deepens, cards like The Chariot and Strength highlight personal attributes such as determination, inner strength, and courage. The Chariot champions the pursuit of goals through controlled focus, while Strength, often represented by Hercules or other heroic figures taming a lion, speaks to the mastery of inner fears and external challenges through grace and resolve.

The archetypal narrative continues through the cycles of change and transformation, depicted in cards like The Wheel of Fortune and Death. The Wheel of Fortune reminds one of the cyclical nature of existence and the role of fate, whereas Death signifies transformation and the end of old cycles, making way for rebirth and new beginnings, often illustrated by the myth of Persephone and her journey to the underworld.

Justice, The Hanged Man, and Temperance present themes of balance, sacrifice, and moderation. Justice, connected with mythic figures like Themis or Ma'at, calls for fairness and moral integrity. The Hanged Man, representing figures like Odin or Prometheus, embodies the idea of surrender and gaining wisdom through altered perspectives. Meanwhile, Temperance blends elements to create harmony and balance, akin to the myth of Iris or the alchemical process.

The deeper, darker aspects of the human psyche are addressed with cards like The Devil and The Tower. The Devil, often associated with Pan or Bacchus, symbolizes the chains of materialism, addiction, and illusion. The Tower,

representing sudden upheaval and revelation, echoes myths of divine retribution and enlightenment, like the fall of

Icarus.

Finally, the journey concludes with cosmic and spiritual insights, depicted in The Star, The Moon, The Sun, Judgment, and The World. The Star, reflecting the myth of Pandora or figures of hope and inspiration, offers guidance and renewal. The Moon sheds light on illusions and the subconscious, often connected to lunar deities like Artemis or Hecate. The Sun, embodying Apollo or Helios, symbolizes clarity, joy, and success.

Judgment brings themes of resurrection and awakening, depicted through myths like the final judgment day or the story of the Phoenix. The World, the final card, represents the culmination of the journey, the integration of polarities, and the achievement of wholeness, often depicted through mythic figures who embody completion and enlightenment.

Through these mythological stories and characters, Juliet Sharman-Burke provides a comprehensive guide to understanding the Major Arcana. Each card's interpretive meaning is enriched with psychological and archetypal insights, encouraging readers to reflect on their own life's

journey and the universal themes that shape the human experience.

Chapter 3 : The Minor Arcana - Daily Life and Practical Application

Part 3 of the summary:

The Minor Arcana - Daily Life and Practical Application

The Minor Arcana consists of 56 cards divided into four suits: Wands, Cups, Swords, and Pentacles. Each suit contains 14 cards: Ace through Ten, and the court cards (Page, Knight, Queen, King). While the Major Arcana explores profound archetypes and psychological journeys, the Minor Arcana tends to focus on the more mundane, everyday aspects of life, providing insight into day-to-day experiences and practical affairs.

Each suit in the Minor Arcana is associated with specific mythological and symbolic meanings that reflect various facets of human experience:

1. ****Wands****: Representing the element of Fire, the Wandssuit is concerned with inspiration, creativity, ambition,

and action. The fiery nature of the Wands fuels passions, dreams, and endeavors. The cards in this suit can symbolize new beginnings, personal projects, and the drive to achieve goals. Mythologically, the Wands often draw on stories of heroes emboldened by their quests and the challenges they overcome.

2. **Cups**: Associated with the element of Water, the Cupssuit delves into the emotional and relational aspects of life. This suit encompasses feelings, relationships, love, and the subconscious mind. Indicative of fluidity, intuition, and inner experiences, the Cups are rich with mythical references to gods and goddesses of love, compassion, and creativity. The cards in this suit explore the depths of one's emotional landscape and interpersonal bonds.

3. **Swords**: Aligned with the element of Air, the Swordssuit represents intellect, conflict, clarity, and communication. The double-edged nature of swords reflects the themes of both mental strife and breakthrough, often dealing with matters of judgment, truth, and ethical dilemmas. These cards carry mythological connections to battles, strategies, and the heroes who rely on their wit and wisdom to navigate through

Chapter 4 : The Court Cards

Personalities and Social Roles

Part 4: The Court Cards - Personalities and Social Roles

The court cards in the tarot deck represent a fascinating bridge between the abstract concepts embodied by the Major and Minor Arcana and the tangible, everyday experiences of human personalities and interpersonal dynamics. Comprising Pages, Knights, Queens, and Kings, each court card signifies a unique blend of personality traits, social roles, and developmental stages. This section provides a detailed examination of how these cards serve as mirrors to our inner landscapes and social interactions.

The Pages, often seen as messengers or novices, symbolize the qualities of youthfulness, curiosity, and potential. They are associated with the initial stages of an endeavor or the beginning of a journey. Each Page in the four suits—Wands, Cups, Swords, and Pentacles—reflects different aspects of youthful energy and new beginnings. For example, the Page of Wands might suggest an enthusiastic start to a creative project, filled with ambition and inspiration. In contrast, the

Page of Cups could indicate the emergence of new emotional experiences or the development of intuitive faculties.

Moving up the ladder, the Knights represent the action-oriented phase of the court cards. They embody the drive, commitment, and often the restlessness associated with pursuing goals. Each Knight carries the energetic characteristics of their respective suit. The Knight of Swords, for instance, is depicted as swift and decisive, embodying intellectual clarity and brave decision-making. Meanwhile, the Knight of Pentacles represents a more methodical and diligent approach, emphasizing persistence and practicality in achieving long-term objectives.

The Queens in the tarot deck are the nurturing and stabilizing forces. They symbolize maturity, emotional intelligence, and the nurturing aspects of their suit's energy. The Queen of Cups, revered for her emotional depth and empathy, is often associated with compassion, intuition, and the realm of the unconscious. The Queen of Wands, on the other hand, radiates confidence and creativity, embodying the fiery and transformative qualities of her suit. Each Queen not only shows mastery within their domain but also represents how

these qualities manifest in the real world—through caregiving, leadership, or creative expression.

At the pinnacle of the court card hierarchy are the Kings, representing authority, mastery, and the successful application of each suit's principles in the external world. Kings are figures of control and leadership, embodying the highest expression of their suit's attributes. The King of Pentacles, for example, signifies material success, stability, and the effective management of resources. The King of Swords, conversely, exemplifies intellectual authority and justice, often portraying a figure who is a master of logic and ethical decision-making.

Each court card is imbued with mythological backgrounds that enhance their interpretive richness. For instance, the Queen of Swords might be linked to mythological figures like Athena, the Greek goddess of wisdom, who brings clarity and insight. Meanwhile, the Knight of Wands could be associated with heroes like Jason, who embarks on daring quests driven by ambition and courage.

Understanding court cards is pivotal for interpreting tarot readings as they often represent people in the querent's life, aspects of the querent's own personality, or the energies

influencing their current situations. By identifying and connecting with these archetypes, one can gain deeper insights into interpersonal relationships and individual growth. For practical application, recognizing the traits and behaviors reflected by the court cards allows one to navigate social roles more effectively and understand the dynamics at play in various interactions.

In essence, the court cards serve as a dynamic guide to understanding human behavior and social roles through the lens of mythic symbolism. By exploring these cards, readers gain a clearer view of how personality traits and social roles interplay in the tapestry of life, offering a richer, more nuanced approach to both tarot readings and personal introspection.

Chapter 5 : Reading the Cards

Techniques and Interpretive Approaches

Reading the Cards - Techniques and Interpretive Approaches

In "The Mythic Tarot," Juliet Sharman-Burke delves into the art and practice of tarot reading by offering both novice and experienced readers a comprehensive guide to techniques and

interpretive approaches. She begins by outlining some fundamental methods to initiate a successful tarot reading.

Starting with basic techniques, Sharman-Burke emphasizes the importance of creating a conducive environment. This means choosing a quiet, comfortable space where you can focus without interruptions. She also advocates for a ritualistic approach to prepare physically and mentally, such as lighting a candle, meditating, or shuffling the cards in a mindful manner. This not only helps to center the reader but also sets the tone for the reading, creating an atmosphere of respect and reverence.

One of the foundational techniques Sharman-Burke introduces is grounding and centering oneself before a reading. This practice ensures that the reader is fully present and open to receiving intuitive messages. She provides exercises such as deep breathing, visualization of roots extending into the earth, or a quick meditation to help accomplish this state of being.

Moving into actual card reading, Sharman-Burke explores various spreads and their specific uses. One of the most

renowned and versatile spreads she describes is the Celtic Cross. This ten-card spread provides a detailed look into many aspects of a querent's life, addressing their past influences, present situation, future possibilities, and the underlying forces at play. She meticulously breaks down each position within the spread and how the cards in these positions influence one another.

For readers looking for something simpler or more time-efficient, Sharman-Burke introduces the three-card spread. Typically, this spread covers past, present, and future or explores a situation from different angles: the querent's perspective, outside influences, and the potential outcome. She explains that this spread is especially useful for daily guidance or specific questions, offering quick and focused insights.

Sharman-Burke also recognizes the importance of developing one's intuition alongside the traditional interpretive frameworks. She suggests exercises to sharpen intuitive skills, such as journaling tarot readings and noting any intuitive flashes or symbols that come up during a reading.

Over time, she assures readers that these personal insights will grow stronger and more reliable.

Moreover, Sharman-Burke discusses the value of dreams and meditation in enhancing one's interpretive abilities. By paying attention to symbolism in dreams or using tarot cards as a focal point in meditation, practitioners can deepen their understanding of the cards and their meanings.

Throughout this section, Sharman-Burke underscores the importance of practice. She encourages readers to start reading for themselves and others, noting that experience and reflection are key to mastery. She suggests keeping a tarot journal to record readings, thoughts, and any intuitive insights. This practice not only tracks progress but also helps to recognize patterns and recurring themes.

In conclusion, Sharman-Burke's chapter on reading the cards

is both practical and inspirational. She provides a well-rounded toolkit comprising techniques, exercises, and interpretive strategies that cater to readers at various levels of experience. By combining structured spreads with intuitive development, she ensures that practitioners can gain both confidence and depth in their tarot readings.

Chapter 6 : Integrating Mythic Tarot in Daily Life and Spiritual Practice

Integrating the Mythic Tarot into daily life and spiritual practice involves a seamless blend of routine and introspection that can significantly enrich one's personal journey. By leveraging the mythic narratives embedded within each card, individuals can draw profound insights and meaningful perspectives applicable to their everyday experiences and spiritual growth.

One practical way to integrate the Mythic Tarot into daily routines is by drawing a single card each morning to set the tone for the day. This practice, often referred to as "a card a day," allows for contemplation and reflection on the card's mythological and symbolic meanings. For example, drawing the Ace of Pentacles, associated with new beginnings and material opportunities, may inspire someone to focus on career goals or financial planning for that day.

Incorporating tarot into meditation practices can also deepen one's connection with the mythic themes. Meditating on a specific card, such as The Empress, can invoke themes of nurturing, creativity, and growth. Visualizing oneself within

the mythological scenery of the card can provide a powerful tool for self-discovery and inner healing. This approach allows the practitioner to internalize the symbolic lessons of the myth and apply them to personal circumstances.

Tarot can also be used as a guide for personal growth by providing clarity during times of uncertainty or decision-making. By conducting a tarot reading with focused questions, individuals can explore different aspects of a situation and uncover subconscious motivations or fears. The intricate stories and characters from mythology reflected in the cards can offer guidance and alternative viewpoints. For instance, consulting the Hero's Journey embodied in The Fool card can empower one to take risks and embark on new ventures with confidence.

Another profound way to integrate the Mythic Tarot is through journaling. Keeping a tarot journal to record readings, insights, and reflections helps track progress over time and acknowledges patterns or recurring themes in one's life. Writing about personal reactions to cards, and the myths they depict, can uncover deeper layers of meaning and foster a richer understanding of oneself.

Chapter 7 : Reflecting on the Journey

Mythic Tarot's Role in

Understanding Life's Path

Reflecting on the Journey - Mythic Tarot's Role in
Understanding Life's Path

As we reach the culmination of our exploration of "The Mythic Tarot," it is important to reflect on the profound journey this book has guided us through. Throughout its pages, we have delved deeply into the interwoven realms of myth and tarot, discovering how these ancient stories and symbolic images offer a rich tapestry for understanding life's many facets.

Key themes have emerged consistently, underscoring the intimate connection between mythology and personal divination. By tracing the mythological roots of each tarot card, Juliet Sharman-Burke brilliantly illustrates how these timeless stories mirror our own life experiences, challenges, and triumphs. The Major Arcana, with its archetypal figures, serves as a guide through the psychological and spiritual milestones of human existence. Each card, from The Fool setting out on his journey to The World signifying completion and

fulfillment, represents a chapter in our own narrative, offering both insight and guidance.

The Minor Arcana brings this mythical perspective into the realm of the everyday, reminding us that the divine resides within our daily routines, interactions, and choices. Whether it's the passionate drive symbolized by Wands, the emotional currents of Cups, the intellectual clarity of Swords, or the material stability of Pentacles, these cards ground us in a deeper understanding of the forces at play in our mundane activities. This structure helps us see our lives through a lens of mythological importance, affirming that even the smallest actions contribute to our larger story.

The Court Cards further enhance our comprehension by personifying various traits and social roles that we encounter in ourselves and others. By identifying these personalities within the tarot, Sharman-Burke offers a useful framework for navigating social dynamics and personal relationships, enriching our interactions with mythic dimensions.

In reading the cards, we learn diverse techniques and approaches, honing our skills to unlock the profound wisdom encoded in the tarot deck. From simple three-card spreads to the more complex layouts like the Celtic Cross, each method provides a unique window into our inner and outer worlds, fostering a deeper connection with our intuition.

Integrating these insights into daily life and spiritual practices promotes personal growth and self-discovery. Sharman-Burke advocates the use of tarot for meditation, reflection, and guidance, echoing the ancient tradition of myths as tools for introspection. By aligning our personal stories with these mythic journeys, we can navigate life's uncertainties with greater wisdom and purpose.

In concluding our journey with "The Mythic Tarot," we are reminded that this mystical tool is more than just a method for divination; it is a profound guide for understanding and enriching our life path. The long-term benefits of integrating mythic tarot into our routines include a heightened sense of purpose, a deeper

connection to our inner selves, and an enriched perspective on the complexities of life.

As we move forward, encouraged by the insights and practices shared by Juliet Sharman-Burke, we are invited to continue exploring and embodying the rich symbolism and wisdom of the tarot. It is a lifelong journey, one that promises ongoing discovery and growth, guided by the timeless truths embedded in both myth and tarot.