

Body, Mind & Spirit / Tarot



Explore the Vast Wisdom and Mysteries of the Cards

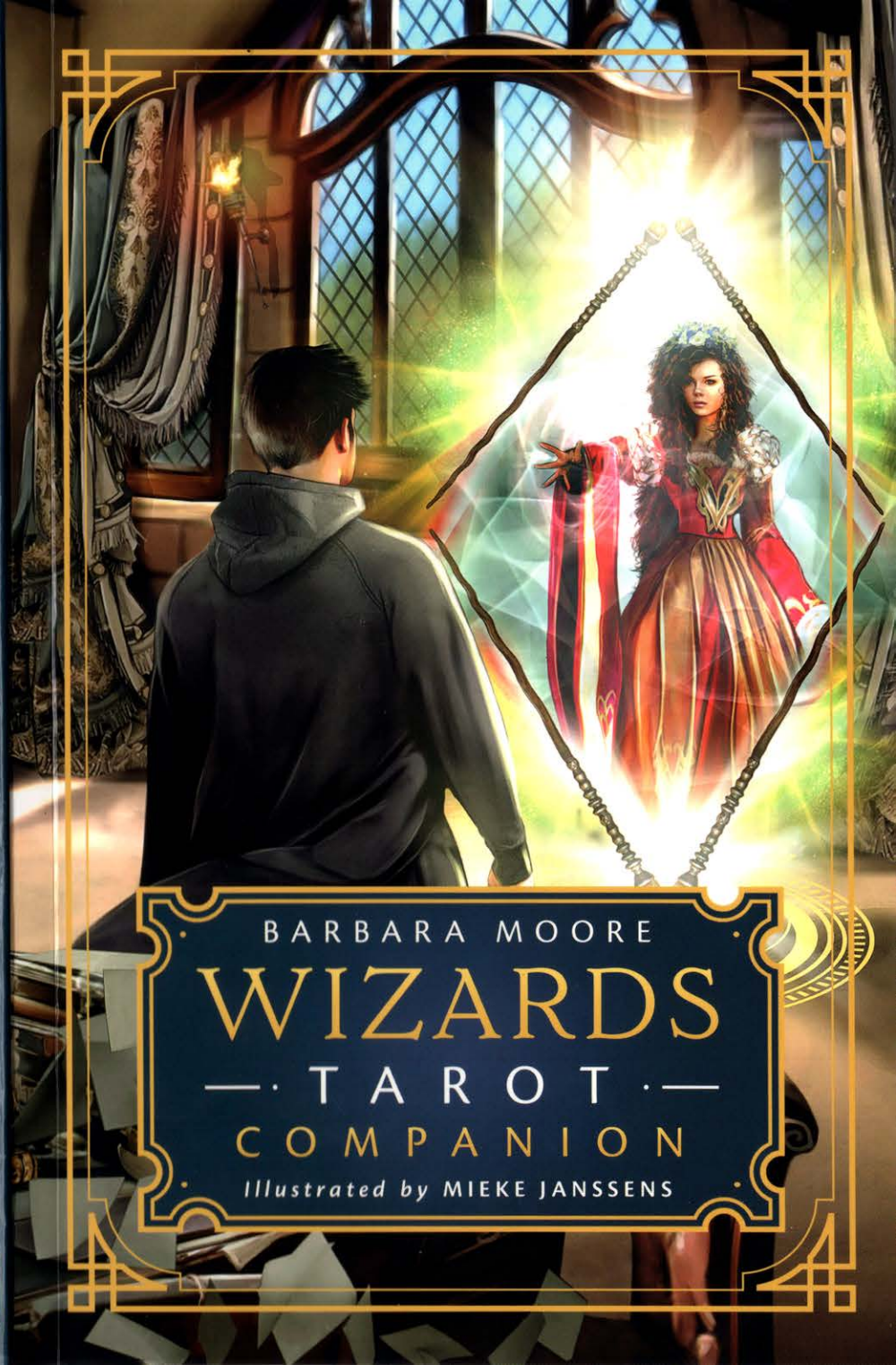
Tarot cards, much like the magical arts, are imbued with deep knowledge and mystery that practitioners of many paths can use to hone their skills. This full-color guidebook introduces you to the intrepid spellcasters and magical tools of the deck. You'll learn to masterfully interpret the meanings behind every colorful artifact and every knowing look on a wizard's face.

Wizards Tarot Companion guides you card by card through the deck, weaving you into a story full of magic and wonder. Featuring a variety of spreads, easy-to-understand interpretations, and analyses of wizardly symbols and themes, this book turns your readings into enchanting adventures.



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WIZARDS TAROT COMPANION • MOORE •



BARBARA MOORE
WIZARDS
— TAROT —
COMPANION

Illustrated by MIEKE JANSSENS



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About the Author

At a party in the early 1990s someone put a tarot deck in Barbara's hands; she's held on tightly ever since. She believes tarot provides just enough structure so that we don't get lost as we explore the mysteries, plumb our dark corners, and locate our North Stars.

Barbara has published a number of books on tarot, including *Tarot for Beginners*, *Tarot Spreads*, *The Steampunk Tarot*, *The Gilded Tarot*, *The Mystic Dreamer Tarot*, and *Tarot of the Hidden Realm*. Writing is solitary work and is relieved by teaching tarot at conferences around the world. Barbara also loves working directly with clients, helping them uncover guidance and insight in the cards.

Connect with Barbara online at

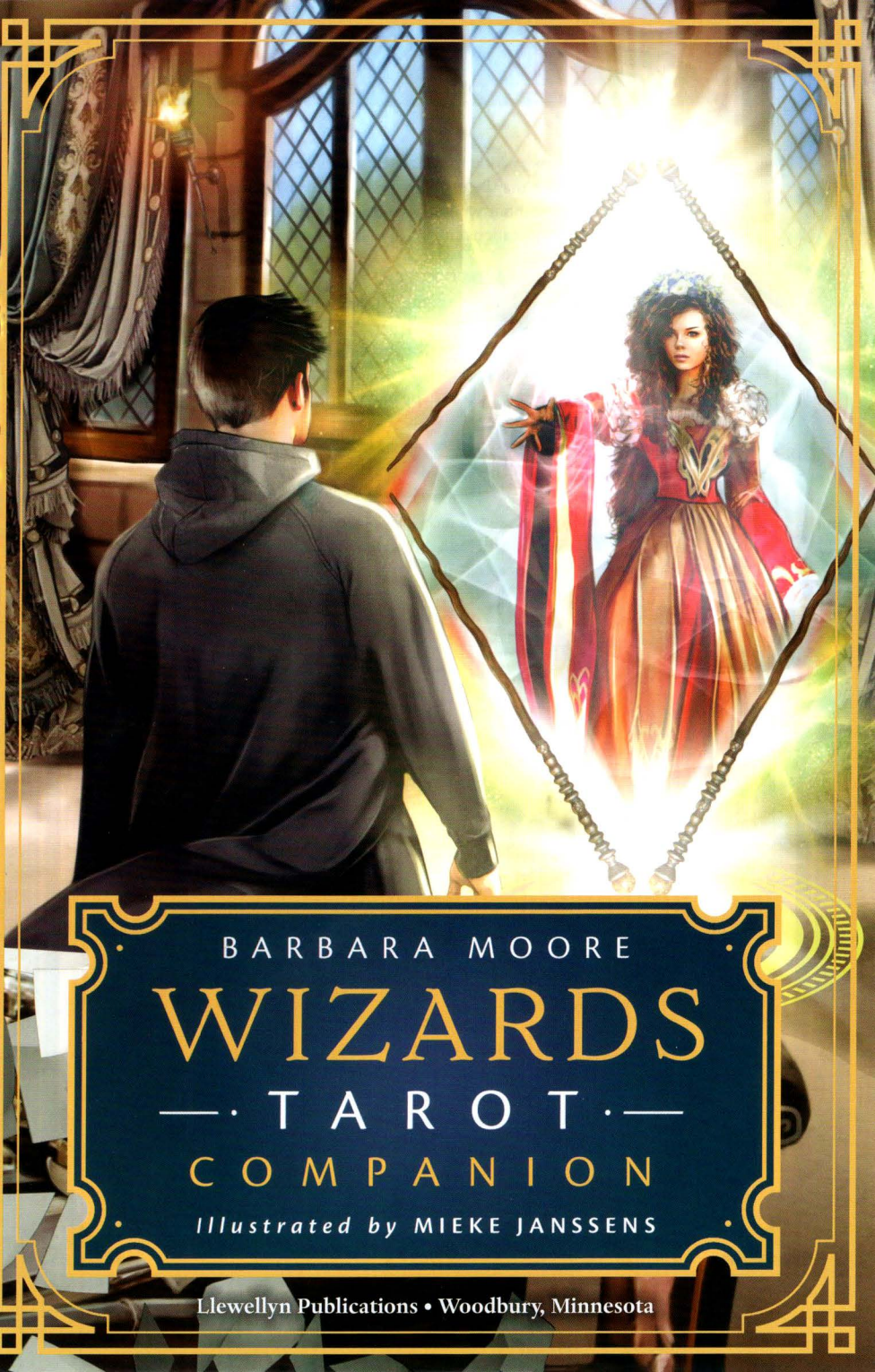
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About the Artist

Mieke Janssens is a freelance illustrator living and working in Belgium. She likes to tell stories with her art, with a big influence from cosplay and mythical fairytale creatures. Her favorite tools to work with are a Wacom tablet and Photoshop. The subjects she prefers the most are dragons and character design. Her passion for fantasy you will find not only in her illustrations, but also in her children's books and comics. In her free time she enjoys painting and fitness (which, according to her, is needed when you sit at your computer for hours). If she could choose one thing, it would be to keep a dragon as her pet. (No matter the size!)



BARBARA MOORE

WIZARDS

— · T A R O T · —

C O M P A N I O N

Illustrated by MIEKE JANSSENS

Llewellyn Publications • Woodbury, Minnesota

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FIRST EDITION

First Printing, 2020

Book design by Samantha Penn

Cover design by Kevin Brown

Illustrations © 2020 by Mieke Janssens

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ISBN 978-0-7387-6028-5

The *Wizards Tarot* kit consists of a boxed set of
78 full-color cards and this perfect-bound book.

Llewellyn Publications

A Division of Llewellyn Worldwide Ltd.

2143 Wooddale Drive

Woodbury, MN 55125-2989

www.llewellyn.com

Printed in China

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INTRODUCTION



Magicians, witches, warlocks, sorcerers and sorceresses, mages, enchanters, conjurers, and wizards: there are all kinds of magic users. The only thing they have in common is that they all use magic in some way. Some have a basis in the real world. For example, it is easy to find plenty of actual practicing witches. Less common, but still represented among our modern magical folk, are magicians. Magicians and witches draw on historical tradition and knowledge, some following fairly strict codes or belief systems. Other than witches and magicians, though, it is harder to nail down commonly accepted definitions for the other types of magic wielders.

Wizards are more commonly found in stories, myths, literature, TV, and movies. Because we are less inclined to have specific ideas about wizards and because there are (as far as I know) no actual rigid characteristics that all wizards must have, our concept of wizard is more vague, less easy to pin down. Because they exist mostly in the realm of story, they are a great theme to blend with tarot. Tarot images include plenty of symbols, and symbols are also less easy to pin down. Symbols are multilayered and complex. Combining tarot with wizards allows plenty of room for creative play. Throughout the cards and this book, we'll explore how adding wizards to a deck enhances traditional meanings as well as how they deepen meanings or even take them in a different direction.

If you picked up this tarot set, you are probably interested in wizards, magicians, and all sorts of magical beings. You might even be a fan of magical literature and movies. If so, you might notice some of the

nods to magic users and wizards from popular culture. Don't worry if you aren't into fantasy literature or movies. The references in the deck are subtle and are not required to interpret or use the cards. They are more like sprinkles on top of a cupcake. Some of the influences on this deck include the Harry Potter books and movies (of course!), the All Souls trilogy, the Dresden Files, the Magicians trilogy and TV series, and the Hollows series. Because stories get into the subconscious, there are probably even more influences that I'm not consciously aware of. I would love to hear what connections you find!

If you are a beginner, here is what you need to know to get the most out of this book. Chapter 1, *Of Tarot and Wizards*, explains what tarot is and the structure of a deck, as well as how wizardry shapes this deck. Chapter 2, *Reading the Cards*, is an introduction to doing a reading. This chapter also includes a cheat sheet of ideas to keep in mind about tarot. Even if you opt not to read the whole chapter, take a look at the two cheat sheets, especially if you are new to tarot.

Chapters 3–5, *The Major Arcana*, *The Minor Arcana*, and *The Court Cards*, present basic, traditional meanings of each card. Each of these chapters has an introductory section that explains commonalities within the group and hints for interpretation, so make sure you check those out in addition to the individual card pages. Many people will not read these chapters page-by-page but will instead simply reference the appropriate page when a card appears in a reading. This is a totally fine way to use these chapters.

Chapter 6, *Spreads*, has a small collection of spreads. You'll find a few classic spreads as well as some wizardly-themed layouts.

The *Wizards Tarot* is designed to be used as any other Rider-Waite-Smith-style deck. You can use it for any type of reading and in the same manner you would use any other tarot deck. One of the cool things about combining a theme with tarot is that you can explore both the theme and tarot itself more deeply. Chapter 7, *The Magical Path*, assumes a basic

understanding of the cards (gathered from chapters 3–5 or through your own experience). In this chapter, we get to explore the more wizardly aspects of the cards, including notes about symbols or themes that are not covered in the basic meanings and are more useful for personal reflection than divinatory readings.

The division of interpretations, basic and wizardly, exists for the ease of beginners. For a novice laying out their first spreads and looking up definitions (and this is a perfectly acceptable way to get started with reading), seeing paragraphs of text, some relating to pretty out of the ordinary concepts, might be overwhelming. One of the most challenging things about doing readings is moving from relying on the book meaning of the cards to blending the meanings together in a way that is useful and relevant to the question being asked. Keeping the interpretations basic to start makes it easier to focus on combining the card meanings.

Making this deck and writing this book has been a fun and illuminating adventure. I hope you enjoy using them as much as I loved making them.



— • CHAPTER 1 • —
OF TAROT AND
WIZARDS



Let's begin with talking about tarot before adding wizards to the mix. For most people, tarot cards emanate wisdom and mystery. The big question is where did all that wisdom and mystery come from? Was it woven into the very first tarot decks ever made? It's possible, since they were created using symbols and stories that would be easily recognized by the people of the day. But when the cards were first created, they were used simply as a deck of cards to play a specific game called *tarocchi*. As far as we know, the original cards were not used for fortune-telling. My belief is that over time, we humans have used the cards in ways that imbued them with wisdom and mystery. Also, if we approach anything with a sense of wonder and awe, we are likely to be met with wonder and awe in return.

The oldest decks certainly had their own kind of wonderfulness, as they were hand painted and dripping with gold leaf. Over the centuries, the imagery on the cards and the uses for the deck have changed. The earliest decks share the same structure but had some very different images from modern decks. In addition, as far as I know, there is no one complete existing set of the earliest decks, which date back to the mid-fifteenth century. If you are hoping to find the original or real tarot, you probably won't ... at least not on this plane of existence.

Today there are four main types of tarot decks. The most influential tradition and the one that most modern American-designed decks follow (including the Wizards Tarot) is the Rider-Waite-Smith Tarot (RWS) published in 1909. The Marseille Tarot is older than that, from around the early eighteenth century. It isn't very popular in the United States for one important reason: more than half the cards do not have scenes on them hinting at the card meaning. They only have suit designators, like our regular playing cards. The Thoth Tarot was published in 1969, although it was created about thirty years before that. It is less popular probably because one of its creators, Aleister Crowley, has an infamous and (to some) troubling reputation. However, this deck, and others that follow its tradition, does have a loyal following. The Thoth Tarot comes from the same tradition as the RWS, but Crowley chose to express some of the concepts differently and also to use the traditional numbering of Justice as VIII and Strength as XI. The final tradition is really the tradition of individualism, uniqueness, and creativity. There are plenty of wonderful decks that keep the basic structure of tarot, but within those structures do not follow the RWS, Marseille, or Thoth traditions. Instead, they shine light in new areas, bringing fresh voices and new insights to the cards.

You probably know that there are lots of divination and inspirational decks available. While all can be called oracle decks, not all oracle decks are tarot decks. The important difference is the structure. Oracle decks don't have a specific structure common to all oracle decks, like tarot decks do. Oracle decks may have a structure created by the deck designer or may have no structure at all, being just a collection of words and images. A tarot deck has a very specific design, which is part of what makes it such a great tool for humans. The structure helps with both learning card meanings and interpreting readings. There are two main parts: the major arcana and the minor arcana. Don't be put off by the word *arcana*; it derives from Latin and means "secrets." The major arcana has twenty-two cards numbered 0–21. The cards have names such

as the Fool, the Lovers, Strength, and the Moon. The minor arcana has fifty-six cards divided into four suits. Each suit has cards numbered 1–10 and four different court cards called the Page, the Knight, the Queen, and the King. You'll learn more about each category in the introductions to chapters 3–5.

Although the cards have been around for centuries, the way we use them has expanded. Lots of people still use them to play *tarocchi*. Not one to enjoy card games, I've never played *tarocchi* myself, but I have watched it being played at tarot conferences. From what I understand, it is complicated and a lot like the card game Bridge. However, the most popular use of tarot cards is divination, usually through readings. These days, though, people use the cards for all sorts of things, like journaling, meditation, finding creative inspiration, problem solving, ritual creation, casting circles, doing altar work, art projects, and as creative writing prompts. You can experiment with other ideas, or you can stick to doing readings if that is your preference. Don't let anyone tell you that you can't use the cards how you like.

Through my teaching, I've learned that people often come to the cards feeling nervous, maybe worried they'll "do it wrong" or misinterpret a card. Maybe it is because there are so many books available and so many resources on the internet, in addition to programs, classes, and workshops. Back when I learned tarot, there was no internet and very few books, so most of what my friends and I did was experiment and play. As with so many things, the rich well of information easily available is both a blessing and a curse. More than anything, please try to have a relaxed feeling around your tarot journey. Nothing bad is going to happen. I'm pretty sure you will not accidentally summon a demon into your kitchen.

There is a very good reason why you won't "do it wrong" or misinterpret a card. From the beginning, tarot has changed. The images, the numbering and order of the major arcana, the meanings of the suits have

all developed over time. People say that tarot is a mirror. If that is true, then it is going to reflect the ideals and beliefs of those who look into it. As the collective human consciousness evolves, it is natural that the tarot itself evolves. Even someone who has studied and worked with the cards for thirty years can look at a card they've looked at thousands of times before and see something new in it. Relax and trust yourself. You have a potentially long and fascinating journey ahead of you.

Another reason you won't make any tragic mistakes is because your brain is designed to read and respond to symbols. You might not have much experience in working with them, or at least not conscious experience. Sadly, our culture doesn't have a lot of shared symbols in the same way that, say, Renaissance Europe did. You might see a white flower on a black flag and have no idea what to think about that. With practice and a little guidance, you soon will. This metaphor might help: our bodies were designed to walk but we aren't born knowing how to walk. We have to learn and practice before we can do it with some grace and without much thought. It's the same way with symbols and tarot. To help you start noticing symbols, you will notice some references in this book to commonly used symbols and possible ways to interpret them within the meanings for the major arcana. If you aren't used to reading symbols, be prepared to feel awkward and just keep going. I promise, it'll get smoother and easier. If it helps, maybe think of them as emojis, since so many of us are getting quite good at having entire text conversations comprised solely of emojis, which are a lot like symbols.

The most important thing you can do to move from ungainly to insightful is to practice and develop a personal relationship with the cards. One of the great lessons that flows through the entire deck is balance, so it makes sense that a balanced approach to study and practice works best for tarot. Traditional meanings and disciplined study are important, but they are only one aspect. Think about music. You can study musical theory and analyze a written score and that will bring one

level of understanding, but it is not the same thing as hearing, singing, or playing the song. If you understand the theory, you will play better. But if you never pick up your instrument, all that theory is lifeless. I've seen too many students who are afraid to practice or do a reading until they feel like they've somehow learned everything a card means. Each card is a door into vast worlds of possibility and can mean many things. I don't know if anyone knows everything every card can mean. A large part of what the cards will mean for you when you read them will come from your relationship with them, from the dance that you do together, and that will only come through working with them. So be sure to get out of your head and shuffle your cards.

Part of your tarot journey might include personal revelation and self-discovery. It's been said that to study the Buddha is to study the self. The same can be said of tarot. Even if you think you want to use the cards for practical readings about the everyday problems you face, over time you may find a deeper interest unfolding. Here is where we start transitioning to the wizardly part of tarot. There is a magical tenet, "as above, so below." This saying means that what happens on a higher plane happens on a lower plane (and vice versa). Affirmations utilize this tenet. By saying and thinking things on one plane (your mind), you create change in another (reality) as your actions change to reflect the repeated words. It is actually deeply embedded in the tarot. Among tarot readers, the Magician has become the spokesperson for "as above, so below," based on what a magician does and visually on the pose of his arms in most RWS-style decks. One arm is raised up as if channeling energy from above and one arm points downward, as if directing that energy toward the earth.

A key characteristic of wizards is that they learn through books. There are so many great ancient texts on alchemy with plenty of strange symbols and ideas, so wizards often study the art and science of alchemy. Like the study of the Buddha or tarot, the pursuit of alchemy is also a

metaphoric journey. One of the uses of alchemy was to turn lead into gold. Perhaps that was truly a literal goal of many alchemists. Over time, though, we've come to understand that alchemy is also a metaphorical journey of transforming one's self into a higher version. It is a way to become the best you that you can be.

As mentioned in the introduction, there isn't a commonly accepted definition of a wizard, but we understand it to mean a type of magic user. The term *wizard* usually implies a lot of wisdom (the roots for this word mean wise, philosopher, sage) and also knowledge generally gained through books. Wizards all begin somewhere and probably aren't born with any more innate wisdom than the rest of us. Throughout the deck you'll notice younger people, particularly the Pages, who are in the early stages of learning and do not have the wisdom of their older counterparts. Reading and practice takes time. Studying tarot is a great way to begin to develop your own wizardly aspects.

Because everything in tarot, as well as in a lot of magical work, is metaphorical, we can shift the definition of magic from literal to symbolic. A common description of magic is creating change in the world according to one's will. That is a goal for many magic workers. For some, there is another way to use magic, and that is to achieve complete control of the self and thereby enjoy complete freedom of will. Without having control of yourself, including working through and eliminating things like pet peeves, buttons that others can push, goats others can get, and triggers, you can never really be free. These things cause you to react automatically, without thought, and that means your free will in that moment is not engaged. If your will is not the driving factor in your decision making, then you are not experiencing free will. If magic is making change in the world according to your will, then you need to access and express your will if your magic is to be effective.

As you spend time with tarot, and if you are interested in the wizardly side of tarot, you will see the deeper lessons in the cards. You will

find yourself asking more often, “Is this reaction really in alignment with my will, with my values?” Once you start thinking that way, you will certainly begin transforming into the highest version of yourself. You don’t have to do special readings to find this knowledge, although you certainly can. Even an apparently mundane reading about whether your ex will come back to you can reveal plenty of insight into yourself and your own behavior and how it does or doesn’t align with your highest ideals. Remember, the cards are keys that open doors that lead to worlds of wisdom and insight. You can access all that goodness by studying the cards and by doing readings, so let’s get started with learning how to lay out and interpret the cards.



— · CHAPTER 2 · —

READING THE CARDS



Learning to read the cards is not a linear process. You won't just learn the meanings and be done and ready to read. Your understanding of the cards will grow over time. But don't let that stop you from doing readings, because unless you actually start doing readings, you will miss important knowledge that only comes from experience. In addition, if you focus too much on the book meanings, you might become rigid in your interpretations and have a harder time blending them with the question and position in the spread. I've read that formulas and things that work in an ideal, controlled environment don't work in real life. Book meanings are like formulas in an ideal environment. Practice allows you to take the formulas into the real world so that you develop the skills to shift from ideal to actual. Intersperse your study with practice. Trying some of the exercises listed below will also help you form a relationship with the cards.

Don't forget that your intuition plays a big role in doing a reading. While it is true that some people are more skilled at accessing their intuitive side, we all have those abilities. Before going any further, give it a try and see. You'll probably surprise yourself. Think about something you have coming up: a meeting, a party, a difficult conversation, a project. Ask the cards something like "What can I do to prepare for _____?" Shuffle any way you like and draw a single card. Don't look up the meaning. Observe the image, note the name, number, rank, and/or suit. What thoughts or feelings come to mind? How are they relevant to your

situation? How can you clearly verbalize the information you've gathered into a coherent sentence or two? After you have formed your interpretation, you can compare it to the interpretation in the book. However, do not assume you got it wrong if yours is different. Instead find ways that the book meaning and your intuitive one connect, or maybe explore the same thing but from a different angle. The book descriptions are so short that they cannot cover all the possible meanings. But your intuitive meaning and the book meaning are both connected to the image, so there is certainly common ground, even if not readily apparent. Reading the cards is all about finding connections, so this activity will strengthen that skill.

Using a single card for a reading is common, especially for beginners, but there are plenty of professionals who prefer drawing just a single card. In fact, working with a single card is a good way to really get to know it. A popular learning tip is to draw a card each morning. This is not a reading but a daily way to connect with a card. Reflect on the card and write down your initial thoughts. Read the interpretation and blend that into your notes. Keep the card in mind throughout the day, paying attention to situations, phrases, other images, or anything else at all that connects somehow to your card.

Another fun exercise is to take all the cards of one suit from your deck and lay them out in numerical order. Keeping in mind the suit's meaning, use the cards to tell a story with the meaning as the theme. Tell any type of story you like. It can be based on or reflect your actual life, your ideal life, or any fictional story you enjoy. The important part is telling a story that unifies the cards and reflects the theme. These are key skills in reading tarot. This activity helps you practice blending the cards into a single message and shows how the energy of the suit moves through the numbers. Alternatively, you can take all four cards of the same number and compare and contrast them. This helps you learn the meanings of the numbers and understand the sometimes-subtle differences between similar cards, which will add nuance to your readings.

Because most people think of tarot cards as individual entities with fixed meanings, new readers often simply state the book meanings one by one. They sometimes feel frustrated because the reading doesn't make sense. When there is more than one card in a reading, they influence each other. Learning to smooth the transitions between cards in a reading is one of the most important yet elusive aspects of crafting a useful message or answer. Practice this by shuffling your deck, pulling three cards, and reading them as a story. The first card is the beginning of the story; the second card is the middle; and the third card, the end.

Intersperse these exercises with actual readings for yourself or your family and friends. Let people know that you are still learning; this will take some of the pressure off. If you run out of people to read for and want more practice, do readings for a made-up person, a character in a TV show you watch each week, the plot of a movie you are going to see soon, or celebrities in the news.

Keep track of your readings, particularly when you are first learning. Include the question, the spread used, and which cards fell in which positions. Write out your interpretations and condense all your notes into a final, clear statement. After the situation you read about has reached a conclusion, revisit the reading. Note the interpretations that worked. And, since hindsight is always 20/20, see if there are cards you would interpret differently now. This doesn't mean you were wrong, but that you are learning. Identifying ways to improve is part of becoming a better reader. If readers, both new and seasoned, make one big mistake it is spinning answers to make them more positive. This is normal. We all want happy outcomes and when reading for someone else, we really hate to give bad news or news that we know will upset them. Learning to communicate difficult answers with compassion and clarity is developed through practice and experience. Also, you shouldn't assume that what may look like "bad news" to you is bad news for the querent. We may assume that the Death card would bring bad news to anyone, however, if someone is hoping that an

unhappy marriage will end or a sick loved one's suffering will end, it might be considered a "good" card to them. Likewise, we may assume the Ten of Cups or Pentacles brings a "good" reading, but to someone who feels like they are being trapped or doesn't want to be in a serious relationship, that would be unwelcome news. The best that you can do is practice, think about how you would want to be treated, and try not to judge information as good or bad, because it is all relative to the querent. Revisiting your readings will help you see where you are inclined to spin answers.

Depending on how you shuffle, you might notice some cards come into the reading upside down (the top of the card is at the bottom relative to you). These are called reversed cards. Some readers do not use them and simply turn them right-side up. Others incorporate reversed cards into their readings. It is entirely up to you, although most teachers suggest that beginners add reversals only after they are comfortable doing readings with upright cards. When you are ready to use reversals, you can use the reversed keywords for the majors and numbered minors, which are listed in this book. For the court cards, use the extreme or negative aspects of the card, listed in this book.

Speaking of shuffling, you can shuffle however you like. There is no magic formula. You don't have to cut the deck with your left hand into three piles or anything like that, unless you want to. You can draw cards from the top of the deck, or you can fan the cards out, hover your hand over them, and pick the ones that ping you or give some other indication that they should be picked. Very intuitive readers often use the fanning method.

When doing a reading, there are still a few steps that come before shuffling. The very first thing to do is think about the topic of your reading. What is the situation? Who are the key players? What is it exactly that you want to know? Keep in mind the adage "don't ask if you don't want to know." To test whether you really want to know something, imagine how you would feel or react if the reading gave an answer that you don't want.

Once you develop your question, pick a spread that can answer that question. Chapter 6 includes a few spreads that can work for most questions, as well as some more specific spreads. Most beginners start with three cards. After you gain experience working with spreads, or if you are a bold adventurer, work with larger spreads and experiment with modifying spreads to better suit your needs. You can even invent your own spreads. Spreads are not sacred or magical. They are a tool, like the cards, to help you discover what you want to know.

You have your question and spread, so now it is time to shuffle. Once your cards are mixed to your satisfaction (for most readers this is intuitive, although some always shuffle the same number of times for each reading), draw from the top or fan the cards. Place one card faceup in each position, as indicated in the spread. Having all the cards faceup gives you an “at a glance” impression of the reading and makes it easier to read the cards in relation to each other. Some readers place the cards facedown and turn them up one by one, interpreting as they go. However, this can lead to disjointed readings that sound like those app or computer-generated ones.

Before starting the interpretation, take a few slow breaths and look at the cards as a group. You can get a lot of information about a situation before interpreting individual cards. Notice repetitions in numbers, suits, symbols, or even colors. Repeating suits or numbers indicate strong themes in a reading. For example, several Aces tell you that the situation has the strong potential for a new beginning. Multiple Tens let you know that a situation is nearing a conclusion. Lots of cups cards means there are lots of emotions involved or the situation concerns relationships. Missing suits have meaning too. If you are reading about a romance and there are no cups but lots of wands, then there is a lot of passion but no intimacy. If there are lots of pentacles, perhaps the couple is staying together for financial reasons. Don't try to formulize this step or you might get bogged down in details. Use a light touch and you will develop your own methods and

will learn more naturally. There is a cheat sheet at the end of this chapter with the associations for the suits and numbers that I use in my readings. Feel free to use them and also to adapt or change them over time if your experience brings forward different connections.

Now that you have an overview, begin interpreting the cards one by one, remembering to use the spread position to shape the final meaning. This could be as simple as shifting the book meaning from present to past or future tense. It could also take more thought, especially if what you consider a negative card falls in a positive position or a positive card falls in a negative position. Learning to do this just takes—you guessed it—practice. You can find books that explain what each card means in each position in a specific spread, and these are great but usually keep you relying on the book longer. It is better to learn the skill of adapting cards rather than trying to memorize all possibilities, which seems like an impossible job.

The final step is to take all the information you discovered in the reading and organize it in a way that gives you (or the person you are reading for) a clear, concise answer. Many people skip this step, and when they are done interpreting, they are left with a sense that something was said, and things are probably fine, but it all sounds kind of vague. Since you began with a clear question, ending with a clear answer brings a nice sense of completion to your reading.

Cheat Sheet: Reading Tips

1. When “you” is used in the meaning and advice sections for the cards, it refers to whomever the reading is for, which may not be you personally if you are reading for someone else.
2. Present tense is used throughout this book for ease of writing, but modify the meanings to past, present, future as appropriate to the spread.

3. Gender and age descriptors you may read in the card pages or see in the images are symbolic. Gender is about the nature of the energy and age is about relative experience.
4. The reversed meanings for the court cards should be taken from the more extreme or commonly considered negative keywords.
5. No book meaning can cover every possibility. It is your job as a reader to adapt the meanings to give a coherent and useful reading.
6. For the most clarity and ease, have a clear question before you begin.
7. Regularly review the short intros to the card groups until you are familiar with them.
8. Interpret the reading using your intuition or what you already know first before looking up the meaning.
9. Interpret your readings out loud. This encourages you to slow down, analyze the cards, and form clear answers.
10. Write down your readings, including the question, spread, and cards. Revisit the reading once the situation has played out and make notes about what was spot-on and what could have been interpreted differently.

Cheat Sheet: Basic Steps for a Tarot Reading

1. Decide your question.
2. Select a spread. Try simpler spreads at first and explore more complex ones when you feel confident; you can find many example spreads in chapter 6.
3. Shuffle your deck.
4. Draw the cards and place them in position faceup.
5. Look at the spread as a whole and get a first impression.
6. Note repeating numbers, symbols, suits, and ranks.

7. Note any absence of suits.
8. Draw conclusions based on steps 5–7.
9. Interpret each card in position, keeping in mind the other cards and the question.
10. Consult the card descriptions in the book if you need more guidance.
11. Clarify the answer as concisely as possible.

Cheat Sheet: Suits and Numbers Keywords

WANDS: will, passion, drive, projects, career

CUPS: emotions, relationships, intimacy, creativity

SWORDS: intellect, reason, communication

COINS: the physical world, the body, the senses, resources

ACES: new beginnings or opportunities

TWOS: relationships, choices, or decisions

THREES: creativity, growth, or teamwork

FOURS: stability, structure, or stagnation

FIVES: conflict, loss, or chaos

SIXES: communication or problem solving

SEVENS: reflection or assessment

EIGHTS: movement, speed, or power

NINES: completion or solitude

TENS: endings

— • CHAPTER 3 • —

THE MAJOR ARCANA



The major arcana cards demand special attention. They represent important milestones in your life, as well as hold huge archetypal energy. If there are a lot of majors in your reading, you know that there is probably more going on than you thought. The name and the image will give plenty of clues to the card meaning. The keywords will help activate your memory or can be used for easy reference. Each card has a longer interpretation to guide you in developing a fuller understanding. Also, because the majors are so full of wisdom, each card features a paragraph about the advice offered by that card. You can blend the advice into any reading, or you can simply pull a card at any time to get immediate insight. The advice sections also include references to symbols in the card that relate to the interpretation being discussed. These are included for those who are interested in the symbols used, but you do not have to memorize them to read the cards. However, many readers find that the symbols help remind them of the interpretations.



O. THE FOOL

KEYWORDS: beginnings, innocence, freedom, spontaneity, adventure, youth, idealism, faith, purity, fearlessness, carelessness, eccentricity, apparent foolishness

REVERSED: folly, foolishness, carelessness, stupidity, negligence, distraction, naïveté, recklessness, risk-taking

Meaning

You are at a crossroads facing a simple decision. Simple doesn't always mean easy, and while the choice is simple—jump or not jump—it is also a hard decision. You don't know what lies ahead and you may not even have a clear idea of where you want to go, but you can't deny the urge, the curiosity, the wonder about what might be possible if only you were brave enough to take the leap. Maybe you are worried that it is a foolish choice and that others won't support you. No one is going to push you. If you're going to do it, it has to be your choice.

Advice

You can't know where your leap will take you, although the other cards in the reading might give you clues. If you decide to leap, the white dog lets you know that you are not alone but that your higher self travels with you and will warn you of danger. Take only what you need, like the small pack in the image. This might be more about emotional or mental baggage than physical items. The red feather and white rose, respectively, remind you to move forward with pure intentions and follow your passion.



I. THE MAGICIAN

KEYWORDS: will, talent, skill, creativity, manifestation, communication, magic, action, awareness, power, resourcefulness, concentration, eloquence

REVERSED: trickery, manipulation, deceit, cons, lies, misuse of gifts

Meaning

If you are wondering about whether or not you can attain a specific goal, the Magician votes yes. You are poised to accomplish something magical. You have the drive, commitment, knowledge, and skills to do whatever you are considering. Knowing you have all that power might feel heavy, because with great power comes great responsibility. Having confidence in your decision helps you feel more comfortable with casting the spell, taking the action, or saying the words that you want. The bottom line is that if you want to do the thing, you surely can. Just be sure that you really want to.

Advice

The Magician's power comes from whatever he believes the source of magic is as well as his belief in magic. The infinity sign on his hat and the position of his arms show that he channels magical energy from that place and directs it to earth in order to create change in the world. This is what magic is. But with the Ouroboros, a snake eating its tail, doing magic on earth is really a metaphor for the inner work of self-transformation. The red and white flowers remind you to make sure you are connected to your higher self, deity, highest values... whatever serves as your personal North Star... so that your intentions are both pure and in line with your will. Make sure you are confident with your ability to work with the necessary elements—as represented by the wand, cup, sword, and pentacle—to achieve your goal.



II. HIGH PRIESTESS

KEYWORDS: secrets, initiation, mystery, silence, wisdom, understanding, intuition, insight, subconscious, unrevealed future

REVERSED: shallow knowledge, secrets, hidden agendas, passion, conceit

Meaning

You stand on the threshold of an initiation. An initiation provides knowledge, insight, or wisdom that cannot be taught or learned through reading. It can only be gained through experience. There is no way to cram or prepare for this event. Technically, every moment of your life has prepared you and this is more like a moment of truth, to see how all your living has served as preparation. It is a test of who you are. You probably feel really uncertain and even frustrated because you don't know what is expected of you or what to expect. Plumbing the depths of what makes you you is a gift, even if it doesn't feel like it right now.

Advice

While you might not be able to prepare for this specific experience, you do have tools to help you negotiate it. Give up your ideas of black/white, true/false, and good/bad. The path between the black and white pillars lets you know that you will enter an area of grey where things are subtler and more complex. Know your values and align them with your actions, advice offered by the equal-armed cross pendant. The situation may appear mundane, but know that it is a metaphor, a resonance of a deeper, more important journey, as indicated by Persephone's pomegranates on the sleeves. Rely less on logic and trust your intuition to help you connect with the flow of the universe, like the dress turning into water.



III. THE EMPRESS

KEYWORDS: abundance, fertility, creativity, pleasure, beauty, happiness, comfort, nature, motherhood, mother, nurturing, love, pregnancy, generosity

REVERSED: dependence, codependence, laziness, stagnation, smothering, stubbornness, creative block, gluttony

Meaning

You have the delight, honor, and responsibility to create or nurture abundance. The Empress brings you the soil, the seeds, the sun, the rain, and the time to plan for and create a lush life. In short, you have the resources to plant a garden, but it is up to you to follow through and make good use of the gifts you are given. Part of honoring these favors includes appreciating and sharing them. The Empress is the ruler of the wheel of life, from birth to death to rebirth. For you this means the project may be a long one. She also symbolizes your own inherent power and strength. This card can also indicate a positive answer to questions about pregnancy or overall health, as well as issues related to motherhood.

Advice

Acknowledge that you are in this for the long haul, which is indicated by the stars on the hat that represent cycles of time. Have a clear vision of what you want to create, as the Empress does with her garden out the window. Nurture your body and soul so that you have a deep well of love, inspiration, strength, and power to draw on (as suggested by the pomegranates, cakes, tea, books, and pillows). The books and cat remind you to rely on a good balance of reason and intuition. Most importantly, remember to enjoy what you are doing, your own creations, and sharing generously with others.



IV. THE EMPEROR

KEYWORDS: stability, structure, power, authority, leadership, control, protection, stewardship, order, boss, fatherhood, father, ambition, reason, logic, confidence

REVERSED: tyranny, rigidity, inflexibility, controlling, cruelty, abuse of power, poor leadership, undisciplined

Meaning

It's time to look at the big picture. You have a finite amount of resources at your disposal. In order to make them last or to make the most of them, you have to create a plan. Maybe things have been flowing really well lately, but life is made of cycles and that means taking account of what you have and assessing future needs. This can apply to finances, material resources, time, or energy. The Emperor contains a lot of fiery energy and a desire for action, but he, and you, must put personal desires on hold. Right now, the greater good or larger need claims your attention. The Emperor can also represent issues of fatherhood or authority.

Advice

The Emperor isn't the most fun card for many people, because it comes with both authority and responsibility, and his crown lets you know that you are being asked to take on a challenging role. Know that, like a dragon, you are in a position to protect whatever needs protecting, whether that means resources or people, and that you, like fire, have the power to do so. The intricate throne suggests that the situation may be complex, but the staff with a crystal reminds you that you have the ability to master it, even if you'd rather do something else. Create systems and plans for efficiency. Weigh needs versus resources. Keep in mind long-term goals.



$$\frac{g(x) - f(x) \cdot g'(x)}{g^2(x)}$$

$$\tan(\alpha + \beta) = \frac{\tan \alpha + \tan \beta}{1 - \tan \alpha \tan \beta}$$

$$\sin(\alpha - \beta) = \sin \alpha \cos \beta - \cos \alpha \sin \beta$$

$$f'(x) = \lim_{\Delta x \rightarrow 0} \frac{f(x + \Delta x) - f(x)}{\Delta x}$$

$$\cos 2\alpha = \cos^2 \alpha - \sin^2 \alpha$$

$$\log ab = \frac{1}{\log a} + \frac{1}{\log b}$$

$$\cos^2 \alpha = 1 - \sin^2 \alpha$$

$$\cos 2\alpha = 1 - 2\sin^2 \alpha$$

$$\arctan y = -\alpha$$

V. THE HIEROPHANT

KEYWORDS: education, teaching, learning, knowledge, conformity, tradition, institutions, group identity, values, guidance, orthodoxy, rites, blessing, status quo, social conventions

REVERSED: fundamentalism, repression, intolerance, fear, guilt, extremism, restriction, cults, abuse of position

Meaning

Perhaps you have high ideals but don't express them in the world. Maybe you aren't sure what your values are, so your actions have a chaotic element to them. Either way, you are being asked to connect your beliefs with your behaviors. You might become your own Hierophant, or you might need to seek one out. The Hierophant's title comes from the word *hierophany*, meaning the manifestation of the sacred. A hierophant teaches how to express lofty beliefs and spiritual aspirations in everyday life. His goal is not following arbitrary rules, but instead mindfully bringing faith to life and manifesting the sacred in this world.

Advice

The Hierophant is like a sacred chiropractor who helps align your core. Be practical like he is, combining theory with real-world application. Make sure to learn methods of self-reflection, most importantly being honest with yourself (as symbolized by the information on the chalkboard). Your everyday actions point to your true values, represented by the lotus on the hat, so if you are confused about your values, just review your daily actions (including spending) and your values will be clear. If you don't like what you see, determine what values you'd rather express and then change your actions to meet those values. If you want to be a better person, a more aligned and balanced being, get all your energy moving in the same direction.



VI. THE LOVERS

KEYWORDS: choices, crossroads, trust, communication, relationships, partnerships, togetherness, love, affection, sexuality, harmony, engagement, attraction, duality

REVERSED: separation, disharmony, suspicion, jealousy, obsession, infidelity, fear of commitment, loss of love

Meaning

You are feeling plenty of excitement and maybe some trepidation, and no wonder—the possibility of an important connection is staring you in the face. Maybe romance is in the air and you are being asked to commit to someone. Perhaps it is a job, project, group, or hobby seeking you out. You know how important this choice is and are weighing the pros and cons. You are also cognizant of the potential problems. You also know that even though you are scared, you want to accept, to connect, to become more. If your reading is about love, this card represents a deep, lasting love rather than new, giddy romance.

Advice

This card is both extremely, complexly abstract and very simple. The simple is this: the decision you face has already been decided by your heart. All you have to do is make the choice that makes your heart feel happy and peaceful. The complex aspect is understanding the nature of the connection you are about to make. Two powerful forces, represented by the green and yellow pillars, will come together and create something more than the sum of the parts, symbolized by the pentacle. Passion (indicated by the flames) is combined with discernment (indicated by the apples, which are the fruit of the knowledge of good and evil). Recognize all this potential, take a deep breath, and reach out to take the hand that is offered.



VII. THE CHARIOT

KEYWORDS: drive, ambition, control, direction, determination, success, triumph, victory, will, movement, progress, speed, travel, conquest, battle

REVERSED: lack of control, delay, opposition, stagnation, no direction, aggression, cancelled trip, car trouble

Meaning

Are you feeling like you are metaphorically packed and ready to go? Like you've made all your plans and prepared everything you think you will need? The Chariot says that you've learned the lessons you need to learn, or as much of them as you can manage theoretically; now it is time to put your lessons into practice. You will feel awkward and clunky, maybe similar to the way you did when you first learned to ride a bike or drive a car. That's okay. You'll never develop mastery unless you take the reins and go. You are on your way to achieving your ambitions.

Advice

The Chariot card is unique because it includes a symbol from each of the proceeding cards: lotus, dragons, stars, pillars, union of sun and moon. This means that everything you've experienced up until now will play a role in getting you to the next level of your journey. Don't worry about feeling out of your depth; that's natural. You will never figure out what needs adjusting without a test run. If you find things aren't going as smoothly as you like, understand that it can be two things. Either you simply need more experience to gain the grace you'd like or you are still integrating a past lesson. Review cards I–VI and see if you can identify what area you need to work on.



VIII. STRENGTH

KEYWORDS: strength, gentleness, patience, compassion, healing, integration, courage, heart, control, discipline, fortitude, assurance, potency, virility, lust, instinct, ability, mastery

REVERSED: weakness, overbearing, force, cowardice, fear, shyness, lack of discipline, control, or patience

Meaning

You are facing some difficult battles right now and will need to muster all the strength you can. The attacks could be coming from other people, pressures from work, or from your own dark shadow self. Either your fears will engulf you (and no one wants that) or you will find a strength of character, of mind, of heart, of soul that outshines anything you've previously imagined. The type of strength needed is not brute force, but rather a more potent kind of power that stems from compassion and understanding. Trying to strong-arm the situation might work in the short term, but for long-term benefits, you will have to explore the deep roots of this problem.

Advice

Do your shadow work by looking for the parts of yourself that you have denied or deemed unworthy. Those parts of yourself that hide treasures, hoard them like a dragon, that you need in order to be the person you came here to be, and that the world desperately needs. Find the wounds, examine them with love (as represented by the red roses), heal them with compassion and understanding (as represented by the white gown), and claim your lost part. If you are dealing with other people, extend them the same love. Create a space filled with magic, like that from the wand, where you or someone else can heal, because that is the greatest strength of all.



IX. THE HERMIT

KEYWORDS: solitude, introspection, philosophy, meditation, withdrawal, contemplation, wisdom, guidance, seeking, mysticism, privacy, prudence

REVERSED: introversion, agoraphobia, ostracism, exile, paranoia, loneliness, isolation, extreme withdrawal, self-absorption, social misfit

Meaning

Do you just want to be alone? The Hermit says yes, you need to withdraw and eliminate all the noise of the outside world. You may or may not have a specific decision to make. It might feel more like you are full and need to digest. This card has three phases. First, you create space and time so that you can be alone for whatever period you're able to manage, from an evening to a full-out retreat. Second, without bringing in further outside input and working only with your thoughts and feelings, come to a conclusion about all that you are considering. Third, return back to normal life and offer what you've discovered as gifts to your community. These could be revelations you have to share or perhaps your own improved and more authentic behavior.

Advice

Try to keep your time alone as clean as possible. The mountainous, remote location suggests avoiding talking to others, and that includes reading, watching, or listening to new information. Eliminate distractions. Commit your focus, like the light from the lantern, to sifting through all the information you already have, represented by the items on the staff. You are being called to find your authentic self and you can't find it through the eyes of others. The Hermit's journey isn't an easy one and it can be lonely. You can do it; it's only temporary. Most humans aren't meant to stay in hermit-mode for too long.



X. THE WHEEL OF FORTUNE

KEYWORDS: fortune, chance, cycle of life, opportunity, destiny, fate, good luck, movement, turning point, annual event

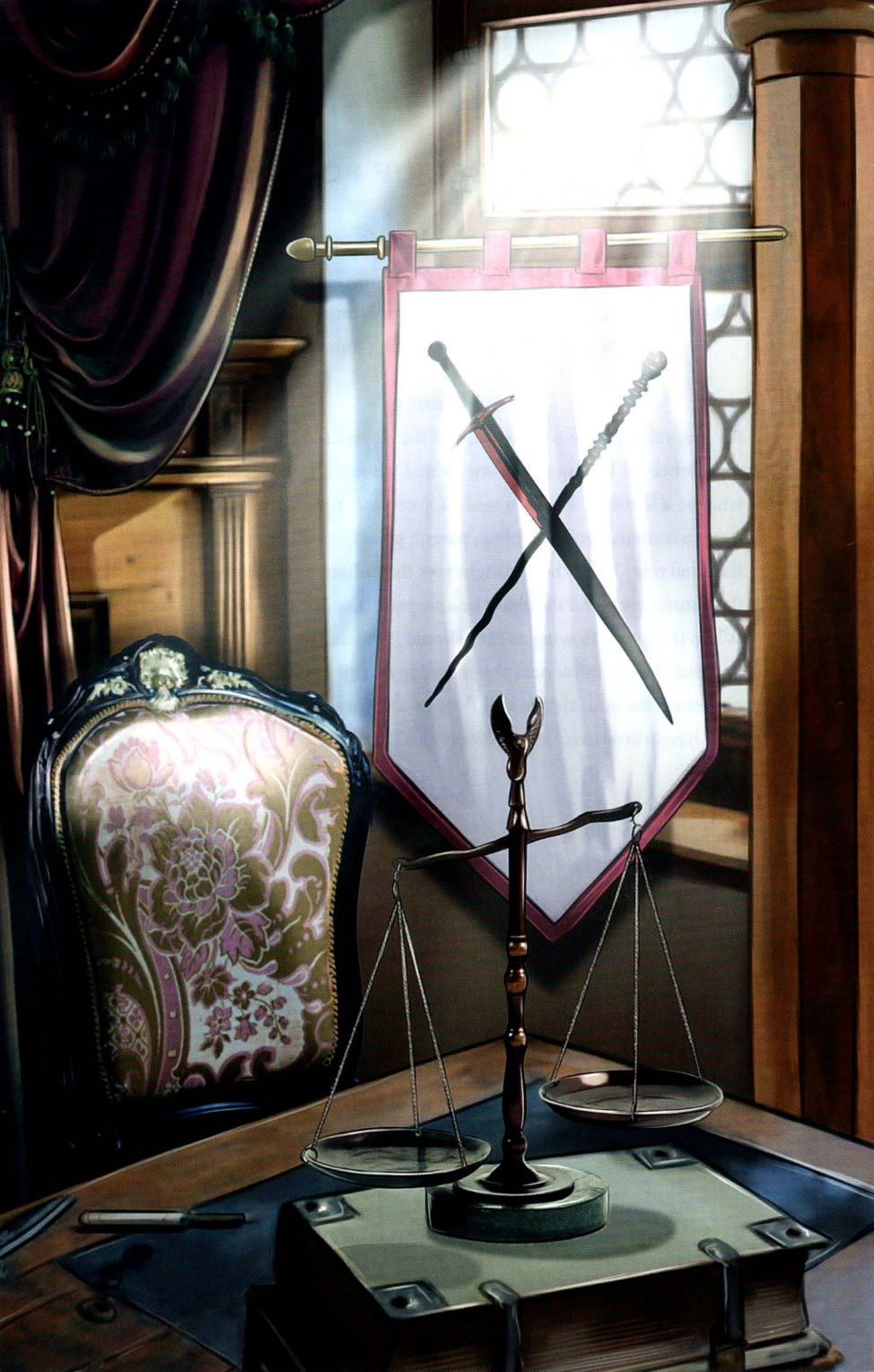
REVERSED: bad luck, out of control, misfortune, failure, unexpected setback, reversal, delay, repeating unhealthy cycles

Meaning

For everything there is a season, and the Wheel reminds us of that. Our experience of life isn't just one wheel, though. Life is wheels within wheels: a lifetime, a year, a season ... or your time spent in childhood, being a student, spouse, sibling, parent, grandparent, or in a certain professional role. The Wheel upright says that whatever is coming is part of the natural cycle and shouldn't be a surprise (that's the job of the Tower). When things are flowing as they should, there is a feeling of "rightness," and that feeling influences the meaning of this card as "lucky." So, if it comes up for you, things will flow in a natural way and maybe you'll even have a little extra special good luck, too!

Advice

Sometimes the normal flow of life includes things that we might associate with the bottom of the wheel: death, endings, things falling apart. The Wheel keeps turning and there is no stopping it. Even death doesn't stop it, because matter decays and becomes something new. You can control a lot in your life, but not everything. When faced with inevitable turnings of the Wheel, know that you can always control how you respond to anything that comes your way.



XI. JUSTICE

KEYWORDS: justice, karma, cause and effect, equality, truth, responsibility, integrity, fairness, judgement, contract, legal action, lawsuit, trial

REVERSED: injustice, imbalance, dishonesty, hypocrisy, complications, abuse of power, red tape, bad decisions

Meaning

Do you expect life to be fair? Life isn't fair and the Justice card isn't about fairness, by which we usually mean "equality." We can't say that from even before birth any two people have exactly equal amounts of anything, let alone everything. Martin Luther King Jr. said that the moral arc of the universe is long and bends toward justice. This card is about true justice, about doing what is right, about restoring balance, and about taking responsibility for actions. Depending on your behavior, this card may be welcome or feared. It may feel like you can't see justice at work because sometimes it takes a while and sometimes you don't know the whole story. The bottom line of this card is that whatever bed you've made, it's time to sleep in it.

Advice

First, make sure you aren't fretting about fairness, about everyone having equal shares. That's not realistic or mature. If you are certain your actions have been in alignment with your own highest values, stand your ground and trust that justice will prevail eventually. When it does, be as gracious about it as possible. If you know that you haven't behaved according to your ideals, then don't try to argue or defend yourself. The scales say it is time to acknowledge the mistake and accept the consequences. The sword and the wand remind you to learn from the experience and resolve to live more impeccably in the future.



XII. THE HANGED MAN

KEYWORDS: reversal, letting go, sacrifice, suspension, surrender, withdrawal, restriction, crisis, delay, restraint, detachment, enlightenment, transformation, initiation

REVERSED: limbo, martyrdom, indecision, self-sabotage, narrow-minded, punishment, imprisonment, treason

Meaning

At first, you might feel really uncomfortable and a little panicky. Being in limbo is never fun, and in fact, most people get tarot readings because they cannot stand to wait for an outcome. They want to know, for better or worse, what will come. The Hanged Man says no, now is not the time for knowing, at least not right away. This card is a process that begins with hanging tight. Once the initial discomfort fades or you become used to it, you can begin to see the world from a different point of view. The experience ends with revelation. Releasing control and adapting to circumstance help you gain a deeper understanding that you couldn't have gained otherwise.

Advice

As the relaxed posture suggests, don't try to fight this time of being able to do nothing. Accept that you can't know what will happen or even what exactly this experience is about; that knowledge is, like the books in the house, inaccessible to you right now. The more you relax, breathe, and observe both the world around you and your inner workings, the more easily the moments will pass. Not only that, but it is essential if you want the gift of insight and understanding promised by this card, represented by the sunlight streaming through the trees and his hands in water. View this as the gift it is, even if you have to sacrifice your comfort zone to earn it.



XIII. DEATH

KEYWORDS: death, rebirth, endings, mortality, loss, change, failure, destruction, severing ties, transitions, transformation, inexorable force, elimination

REVERSED: loss of hope, decay, corruption, depression, inertia, holding on

Meaning

Death is a natural part of life. This card doesn't usually represent physical death (although it can) but more often it is about a conclusion, time of transformation, or a release. You might not like it; endings and change are always hard, even if we know they are positive or in our best interest. When this card comes up, be aware that if something needs to leave your life, it will do so. While real death can be sudden, in tarot the Death card is more organic, so the ending you are facing shouldn't be a huge surprise. This doesn't mean you won't mourn, deal with grief, and work to get back on even footing. It does mean that a glorious transformation is on the horizon.

Advice

You might, like the man in the image, feel scared or want to resist this experience, but try to feel the true nature of this card. You will find kindness, compassion, and love in Death, as you can see by her expression. This experience will also be a cleansing, releasing what is done and retaining only what is pure and essential, as represented by the black cloak and white roses. Be open to exploring what this encounter with Death is like. Act and react, move and flow; be willing to dance with Death. Find the grace. Don't be surprised if you feel yourself changing, growing wings like a phoenix rising from the flames, just as the man in the image is.



XIV. TEMPERANCE

KEYWORDS: temperance, self-control, balance, moderation, harmony, synthesis, patience, health, combination, blending, management, unification, synthesis, synergy, guides, angels

REVERSED: imbalance, excess, temper, one-sided relationship, irreconcilable differences, short term focus

Meaning

You are in the right place at the right time and everything you do feels seamless and elegant. You feel magical and tapped in. Temperance is a card of perfect, graceful balance. Balance is not always equal measures of something; it is much subtler than that. It is a state of self-control through moderation. Sometimes the stars align and you achieve this extraordinary flow seemingly by accident. More often, it is because you paid attention to circumstances, your environment, yourself, and your goals. This is how you know when to adjust to accommodate changes in circumstance, environment, yourself, or your goals. If you can move through the world maintaining this state, you will always act with confidence.

Advice

Temperance advises you to do what you need in order to flow with the universe, like the lemniscate she is creating in the image. Make sure you are firmly grounded, emotionally and physically, as symbolized by her shoes with water and earth symbols on them. Her gold and silver cups suggest that you combine appropriate measures of reason and intuition. The red triangle reminds you to make sure your will is strong. Be clear about and follow your highest ideals that guide you like the sun symbol on her hat. As if that wasn't enough, do all this without striving but always from a place of peace, like the woman in the image. This sets the stage for an alchemical process that transmutes lead into gold and elevates you toward your best self.



XV. THE DEVIL

KEYWORDS: bondage, obsession, materialism, temptation, shadow, fear, doubt, lies, violence, deviancy, ignorance, sexuality, hopelessness, lack of options, trapped, scapegoat

REVERSED: abuse, addiction, violence, evil, weakness, detachment, breaking free, reclaiming power

Meaning

The Devil isn't an external force that makes you do things. You make your own choices. In short, this card is letting you know that you've chosen to bind yourself to a behavior, person, situation, or way of thinking that isn't healthy for you and isn't in line with your values. These possibilities don't only include obvious things like drug addiction or abusive relationships. It could be a soul-sucking job or a poverty mindset. Even things we consider positive or healthy can become a trap, like a compulsive and obsessive need to exercise.

Advice

Things become Devil-level problems because they are tempting and give us something that we think we want, which is why we have an attractive Devil here. It's important to know that you are not fated to stay bound. Maybe you'll need help, but you can get free, just as the unbound man and woman did. The longer a behavior lasts, the stronger it gets. Like the wands feeding the Devil, your actions and thoughts are feeding the connection between you and the thing you are bound to. When a problem reaches the Devil stage, it is strong and might feel scary or overwhelming or impossible to overcome. That's only true if you believe it and if you refuse to reach out for help. Of course, that can be hard because shame is a big part of the Devil's wiles.



XVI. THE TOWER

KEYWORDS: sudden change, upheaval, adversity, downfall, destruction, catastrophe, misery, disaster, ruin, chaos, release, awakening, freedom, escape

REVERSED: fear of change, prolonged upheaval, obstacles, difficulties, losses, oppression, imprisonment, tyranny

Meaning

The Tower brings unexpected change. The building represents a world view that you've built over years. It includes everything you've come to rely on, everything that you believe to be true, and everything that has made you feel safe and secure. Because it seems like such a part of you, you can't imagine life without it. While it worked well for a time, it no longer serves you. Some things are not healthy for you anymore. This card promises a clean slate, which is wonderful, but first you have to face the destruction, deal with your emotions, and assess what remains. Then you can begin to build again.

Advice

Once the Tower blows, you might have a rough landing, like the person falling from the tower, so try to find a way to land as safely as possible. That could be hard, as you won't have much time; a change like this usually happens fast, like a lightning strike. Be prepared to question everything you believed, because it will all be blasted wide open, like the books here. Your way of thinking will be changed, as represented by the hat-shaped tower falling. Try to accept what is happening. Don't try to keep too much from your old life. Pick only those things that are still healthy and beneficial. Even though you can't see how yet, this experience will bring gifts and opportunities.



XVII. THE STAR

KEYWORDS: hope, faith, healing, cleansing, renewal, guidance, peace, blessing, tranquility, serenity, inspiration, optimism, happiness, promises, wishes

REVERSED: lack of faith, hopelessness, discouragement, feeling lost, broken dreams, dashed hopes, unfulfilled wishes, missed opportunities

Meaning

You've been through a hard experience and are probably feeling pretty wrecked. The Star promises much needed refreshment. Under its gentle light, your wounds are soothed, your mind calmed, your heart comforted. If you are blaming yourself or others, this is a good opportunity for forgiveness and healing. After the initial triage when you can actually think again, you may realize that you feel lost, unsure of which way to go. Just as sailors navigated the seas by the stars, you will also find guidance here.

Advice

The most important advice for the Star is to be kind to yourself and not rush the healing process. Our culture barely condones taking a day off when sick, so most of us have a hard time taking the time to actually heal, whether physically, mentally, emotionally, or spiritually. There is enough time, like the never-ending water from her cups, so allow the healing to flow over you. If you rush, you might miss the gift of finding your North Star. After a traumatic experience, don't just head off in any direction. Find your guiding star. Learn its location so you can follow it any time, no matter the circumstances. If you fully immerse yourself in what this card offers, you will find true magic and wisdom, as symbolized by the ibis.



XVIII. THE MOON

KEYWORDS: secrets, illusion, deception, imagination, mystery, subconscious, confusion, falsehoods, cycles, bewilderment, anxiety, insecurity, dreams, nightmares, visions, psychic ability

REVERSED: secrets revealed, mysteries unveiled, insomnia, trouble sleeping, irrationality, shadows, danger

Meaning

The Moon can seem romantic, mysterious, inspiring, creepy, scary, or even terrifying. It heightens the gifts of intuition and creativity. It calls forth fears. It creates delusions. Because the moon appears to change in the sky each night, waxing and waning through its cycles, this card indicates a changeable situation. What might be true today may not be true tomorrow. The moon reflects light, but it is shadowy and conceals as much as it reveals. Things that seem lovely in the moonlight may be monsters by the light of day, and vice versa. If you are feeling uncertain and befuddled, don't blame yourself. Things really are obscured.

Advice

Because you know that under the light of the Moon things are not necessarily as they seem, put off making important decisions. Chances are you probably don't have all the facts and maybe some of the ones you do have aren't actual facts. On another level, this card represents facing fears. In fact, often with the Moon card, our biggest fears come into play, symbolized by the lobster. Don't let your fears distract you or force you into decisions you may regret later. The moon changes each night and therefore this time of confusion will change as well. The best you can do is have faith and wait.



XIX. THE SUN

KEYWORDS: happiness, joy, fun, optimism, enthusiasm, glory, clarity, consciousness, success, celebration, energy, vitality, good fortune, greatness, life

REVERSED: ego, false impressions, delayed happiness, depression, burnt out, over exposure, drought, partial success, incomplete victory

Meaning

The Sun is one of the simplest cards in the deck and represents a time of joy, confidence, and clarity. You have a strong sense of knowing exactly who you are in the best possible way. You know where you want to go and what you want to do. As a bonus, it all feels joyous. The Sun means light, life, clear vision, joy, a strong sense of self, and certainty of will. You know you can trust yourself. Functioning without doubt can be so freeing. The cool thing about all this is that you didn't earn any of it. These are your birthrights as a human being, and in this moment you are enjoying them to the fullest.

Advice

When you are under the light of the sun, you just *are* and it is good. The white horse suggests that your intentions are pure, and you are happy to follow them wherever they lead. Your thoughts are in a place of light, life, and love, as symbolized by the sunflowers on her hat. Your will is creating magic in the world, like the fire from her staff. You feel free from doubts. It's all just so good. Enjoy it as long as you can, letting all that light and warmth fill your soul. Store it up so you have some to draw on when times are darker.



XX. JUDGEMENT

KEYWORDS: rebirth, renewal, rite of passage, calling, vocation, awakening, change, decision, forgiveness, redemption, absolution, judgement

REVERSED: doubt, forsaking vocation, ignoring a calling, avoiding change, unhealed wounds, lack of forgiveness, delay

Meaning

The state of lifelessness seems to creep up so slowly as you ease into routine and acceptance. Suddenly you are numb. Life is heavy and lacks joy and meaning. Luckily you are about to wake up. Underneath the layers of habits and boredom is a part of you that knows why it came to this world, and it wants to live its purpose. The Universe also wants you to live your purpose. So the Universe calls out to your soul and your soul responds, recognizing truth. You might literally feel like you just received a big wake-up call. Of course, you get to decide whether you want to answer or not.

Advice

Books are wonderful, but the static nature of type on paper can also represent being stuck in a rut, perhaps becoming a kind of coffin, a box that you reside in. Wisdom is a living thing (symbolized by the owl) and it calls to you. Take your eyes off the page, off the ideal and theoretical, and listen with your soul. Forget what has always been and open up to something new, something alive in ways you never imagined. Here is an opportunity for your actions and ideals, your everyday life and your soul's purpose, to connect, like the silver and gold of the tree. The advice here is simple: hear the call and respond with a big "oh, yes!"



XXI. THE WORLD

KEYWORDS: completion, success, perfection, achievement, accomplishment, victory, reward, unity, wholeness, fulfillment, endings and beginnings, celebration, center of attention, travel

REVERSED: delays, hesitations, false starts, stagnation, rut, incomplete work, lack of closure

Meaning

Life is full of beginnings and endings, some happy, some sad. You have reached an ending that is really a great achievement. A goal that you set for yourself is now a reality. The journey was long and not always easy, but now that you have completed it, you know that it was worth it. You've changed in fundamental ways, ways that will shape the person you will become. The lessons learned, skills acquired, and tools gathered will all help you in your next grand adventure.

Advice

After putting so much time and energy into a long-term project, it may feel strange to be done with it. You might not know what to do with yourself. There will be a temptation to jump into the next big thing right away. Try to resist that temptation and just enjoy your victory, which is symbolized by the laurel wreath. Let your passion settle down and find a natural, resting rhythm, like the red ribbon. In fact, let all your energy rest and find balance, just as sylph, nymph, salamander, and gnome represent elemental energy finding a place on the circle. Once you've allowed yourself enough time to celebrate and recover, look around, assess your options, and take the first step toward your next adventure.



— • CHAPTER 4 • —

THE MINOR ARCANA



The minor arcana, comprised of the cards numbered 1–10 in each of the four suits, is the largest part of the tarot deck. These cards represent the activities of everyday. The great gift of tarot is that these cards can tell all the stories of human life. In them, we can find all of our loves and losses, joys and sorrows, triumphs and failures.

Each suit represents a different area of life. The wands show what drives and inspires us. The suit of cups reflects our emotions as well as our relationships, which are emotional connections to others. Swords reveal the workings of our minds, which can be our best friends or worse enemies. Pentacles tell us about our resources, our bodies, and our relationship with the physical world. The numbers on the cards are also connected with what we face in daily life like choices, chaos, order, need, prosperity, assessment, connection, solitude.

To facilitate learning and to eliminate flipping back and forth when referencing cards, each minor card includes the keywords for the suit and a description of what the number represents. The cards are grouped by their numbers so that it is easier to see the similarities and differences.



ACES



As the first cards in the suits, the aces represent new beginnings. New beginnings are filled with potential just waiting to be realized. It is easy to disregard something as small as an ace because we don't realize how much exists within that tiny spark. They are like acorns that hold within themselves an entire oak tree ...and even a whole forest of trees because the tree it can grow will also have many acorns. If you get an ace in a reading, recognize the potential and know that you have the ability to put it to good use.

Because aces are offered by a disembodied hand, they are considered gifts. While they are freely given, they must be accepted. You can always choose to ignore it. But don't take long to decide. Another characteristic of the aces is that they exist only for a short time. Pick it up or it will soon vanish.



ACE OF WANDS

KEYWORDS: desire, passion, will, drive, inspiration, potency, energy, enterprise, confidence, courage, optimism, setting goals, invention

REVERSED: delay, dissatisfaction, lack of energy, impotence, a missed opportunity



Wands represent fire, will, passion, courage, drive, career, projects, goals, desires, and action.

Aces are a new beginning, gift, or opportunity filled with potential. They are freely given and must be accepted and used or they vanish. Use them well!

The Ace of Wands comes into your life with a burst of energy, pulsing with inspiration and affirmation. If you've been considering doing something, this card shouts "do it!" Your will is the starting point of all action and of all magic. The power of fire doesn't tell you what to do; it affirms that you *can* do what you want to do.

If you've been feeling stuck, this ace suggests doing something, anything, to channel the energy being offered. If you have no idea what you want to do, try anything, take some kind of action, so that you can experience the energy of fire. That alone can ignite your passion and help you find your way and that is a gift in itself.



ACE OF CUPS

KEYWORDS: relationship, peace, love, healing, grace, creativity, joy, overwhelming emotions, intuition, affection, forgiveness

REVERSED: separation, resentment, bitterness, stagnation, lack of connection, rejection of Spirit, a missed opportunity



Cups represent water, the soul, relationships, emotions, creativity, imagination, friends, family, and receptivity.

Aces are a new beginning, gift or opportunity filled with potential. They are freely given and must be accepted and used or they vanish. Use them well!

The Ace of Cups brings you soul-quenching renewal. Whatever your spirit needs, you will find it in this gift. Love, healing, grace, creativity ... your spiritual bucket is about to overflow. Our souls and emotions fuel our actions and our magic, so be prepared to feel extra powerful in the most beneficent way. If you've felt drained, make sure you drink more deeply to replenish you well.

This card can also mark the beginning of a new relationship or connection. Keep your eyes and heart open for a new friend, romantic or platonic. Maybe you need a new relationship with yourself. If so, this gentle ace offers forgiveness and perhaps you can extend some of that to yourself.



ACE OF SWORDS

KEYWORDS: Logic, intellect, reason, truth, victory, decision, clarity, action plan, justice, knowledge, communication

REVERSED: Indecision, faulty logic, kneejerk reaction, miscommunication, confusion, failure, injustice, a missed opportunity



Swords represent air, the mind, intellect, logic, thoughts, communication, truth, problems, solutions, and action.

Aces are a new beginning, gift, or opportunity filled with potential. They are freely given and must be accepted and used or they vanish. Use them well!

If you've been seeking a solution or a bright new idea, the Ace of Swords cuts through problems and confusion with ease. Clarity is a great gift that helps you organize your thoughts and communicate with others. As a tool of intellect, the sword represents your ability to understand and learn, which is essential to effective action and magic. Use this gift to develop a strategy that will allow you to achieve your desires.

The sword is double-edged, making it extra powerful and extra dangerous. It is important to manage your thoughts and use care with your words or you could do damage to yourself or others. This card is also associated with ideas about truth, another tricky subject. Be careful to let truth guide you, but also be flexible. "Truth" can feel absolute, but it changes as you grow.



ACE OF PENTACLES

KEYWORDS: abundance, resources, money, wealth, health, comfort, pleasure, creation, luck, achieving goals, preparation

REVERSED: lack, lost resources, physical concerns, seeking money for its own sake, a missed opportunity



Pentacles represent earth, the body, diligence, resources, the physical world, creation/manifestation, and receptivity.

Aces are a new beginning, gift, or opportunity filled with potential. They are freely given and must be accepted and used or they vanish. Use them well!

Today is your lucky day! Tradition names the Ace of Pentacles as one of the most favorable of all cards because it contains potential for both material and spiritual growth. The pentacle is a magical and powerful symbol, containing all four elements and spirit within the circle of human will. Whatever you begin during this time will flourish in ways you cannot even imagine.

Preparation is an often-overlooked aspect of the pentacles, and it is an important one for our mundane and magical lives. Our lives are sprinkled with spontaneity, but the bulk of life happens through planning and practice. It doesn't matter how much you desire something, how strongly you feel about it, or what great ideas you have—if you don't pull it all together with practical action, your dreams will have a hard time manifesting.



TWOS



Life is filled with choices. Having the ability to make one's own choices is an important part of freedom. However, we have to make hundreds of decisions every day and sometimes we've used up all our decision-making energy. Perhaps we are facing a decision that we simply can't figure out how to approach. Maybe we have to make a choice in our love life, career, or domestic situation. Maybe we need to figure out just the right words to communicate effectively. The twos are all about choices and decisions, particularly those that will upset the status quo and move our stories forward.

The cards don't just show you the fact that you have to make a choice, something you probably knew before you started the reading. Tarot is much cooler than just that. Whatever suit the two is in provides a clue about how to make that decision. The twos both point out the issue and provide a solution.



TWO OF WANDS

KEYWORDS: vision, energy, authority, ability, determination, dominance, intention, business or career proposal or decision, confidence

REVERSED: indecision, confusion, lack of vision,
a business deal falls through



Wands represent fire, will, passion, courage, drive, career, projects, goals, desires, and action.

Twos are about choices and decisions. A decision needs to be made and the status quo upset before events can move forward. The suit of the card is a clue about how to make that decision.

Having too many choices (and even two can be too many) can be overwhelming, often causing paralysis. The Two of Wands counsels you to pick based on your passion. However, we all know that isn't always as easy as it sounds. The real choice here is between your true and false passion. Consider whether a desire comes from your deepest will (true passion) or has been imposed on you by others, by society, or by your own emotional wounds (false passion). Wands are also the suit of courage and you will need that to make the right decision.

If you want to set the world aglow with magic, pick the path that engages your authentic heart and encourages you to push the bounds of your courage.



TWO OF CUPS

KEYWORDS: union, partnership, connection, falling in love at first sight, harmony, love, feeling in love, kindred spirit, attraction, romance

REVERSED: discord, argument, unrequited love, repulsion, rejection, rose-colored glasses



Cups represent water, the soul, relationships, emotions, creativity, imagination, friends, family, and receptivity.

Twos are about choices and decisions. A decision needs to be made and the status quo upset before events can move forward. The suit of the card is a clue about how to make that decision.

Your choice here is whether to connect or not connect with a person, group, idea, or activity. The decision to join with another in some way involves investing your emotions and forming a relationship. This opportunity has a lot of potential for healing and to become part of something larger than yourself. The best unions create a whole that is worth more than the sum of its parts. Take a chance and see what comes next.

This card can also indicate a moment of falling in love, or at least being really interested in where something might lead. At this early stage, it is too soon to tell how long it will last, but the value is in whatever you can learn or experience by exploring this new connection.



TWO OF SWORDS

KEYWORDS: needing to make a decision, insufficient data, lack of facts, denial, feeling conflicted, head and heart in opposition

REVERSED: ignoring facts, refusing to choose, lying to yourself



S words represent air, the mind, intellect, logic, thoughts, communication, truth, problems, solutions, and action.

Twos are about choices and decisions. A decision needs to be made and the status quo upset before events can move forward. The suit of the card is a clue about how to make that decision.

The Two of Swords is about reason, but the sea and moon show that intuition plays a role in this decision as well. This card tells you that to make this decision well, you have to use everything at your disposal. The ravens are Odin's companions, Thought and Memory, so you will rely on past experience and logic. Because wizards believe that power and knowledge are increased through dedication and study, Odin, a Norse god, is an appropriate connection, since he sacrificed much in the pursuit of wisdom and knowledge. However, the blindfold lets you know that you don't know everything and probably won't before action is required.

Once you have all the facts you can gather, you must rely on your intuition to know just how to wield those swords. You may be in a complicated situation, but have confidence that when you blend intellect and intuition, you can dance through this with grace.



TWO OF PENTACLES

KEYWORDS: multitasking, balance, tight budget, comparison-shopping, allocating resources, calm or Zen-like behavior in the face of crisis, a false choice

REVERSED: robbing Peter to pay Paul, financial distress, awkward situation, stress, frenetic energy



Pentacles represent earth, the body, diligence, resources, the physical world, creation/manifestation, and receptivity.

Twos are about choices and decisions. A decision needs to be made and the status quo upset before events can move forward. The suit of the card is a clue about how to make that decision.

This Two of Pentacles is definitely an ideal to reach toward rather than a representation of what real life often feels like. Modern life includes a lot of juggling of time, money, and attention. Because we are being told, very loudly, not only what to want but to want everything, our priorities get lost in the frantic attempt to have everything. This card is about how to balance a budget or schedule and about how you allocate your resources, although that really tells you what you value. Some say that if you want to know a person's values, simply look at their budget and schedule, because how they spend their time and money shows their true ideals.

This card reminds you that to achieve a calm, fulfilling life without the frenetic stress of modern consumerism, you need to find your true center, your unquestionable priorities, and let your resources (time and money) flow to them. If you feed what means the most to you, it will be easier to find the resources, creating a balanced cycle, just like the pentacles in the lemniscate.



THREES



The numbered cards of the minor arcana take us on a journey from beginning (with the aces) to the end (with the tens). The threes, sixes, and nines are considered completions of mini-cycles within the larger story. The ace is the beginning, the two is a choice, and the three is the result of that choice. The threes are also connected with the Empress card, which is also numbered three. All cards sharing the same number share a connection. Just as the Empress expresses growth and abundance, so do all the minor threes.

We usually associate growth and abundance with positive experiences. As you will see, that is not always the case. Sometimes more is not better. If we have something troublesome in our lives, we generally do not want it to grow. The suits themselves will reveal what happens when our choices come home to roost or give advice on how to bring things together.



THREE OF WANDS

KEYWORDS: optimism, expectation, attraction, law of attraction, prepared, culmination, return on investment, focus

REVERSED: delay, discouragement, missed opportunity, poor judgement, bad decision, distraction, dissatisfaction



Wands represent fire, will, passion, courage, drive, career, projects, goals, desires, and action.

Threes are about synthesis and growth and are a mini-completion on the journey to the tens. The suits describe what happens when things come together or how to bring things together.

Wands are about action, inspiration, and passion, so why is our wizard so glum? This is the stage in the plan when you've done all you can do except wait for results. You are excited, and understandably so. You've worked hard, maybe doing some complicated or risky stuff, and are dying to know how it will work out. But the best thing you can do is be patient. Watch for any potential issues that may mess with your desired outcome and be prepared to take action, but don't fiddle just for the sake of having something to do.

This might be an uncomfortable time for you because things are in flux, and since your inner fire doesn't have an outlet, maybe find some engaging activity (physical exercise is a great choice) so you don't blow up at people around you out of pure frustration.



THREE OF CUPS

KEYWORDS: friendship, family, casual parties, joy, fun, abandon, abundance, celebration, connections, savoring the moment

REVERSED: excessive partying, the morning after, awkward situations, feeling left out



Cups represent water, the soul, relationships, emotions, creativity, imagination, friends, family, and receptivity.

Threes are about synthesis and growth and are a mini-completion on the journey to the tens. The suits describe what happens when things come together or how to bring things together.

The Three of Cups celebrates emotional and social connections. When people come together in love and friendship, they help each other become the best versions of themselves that they can be. Under the light of the moon, these wizards explore not necessarily who they are but who they might be and how they change in relation to others. Differences draw them together instead of separating them.

This card represents an informal gathering, so getting together with friends is probably just what you need. If you are feeling discouraged, it can help you remember who you really are. It can also show you glimpses of possibilities that you might want to develop and ways that you have grown. It's a good time to let the people you love know that you care about them and be grateful for the connections in your life.



THREE OF SWORDS

KEYWORDS: unwelcome knowledge, painful truths, heartbreak, heartache, betrayal, disloyalty, unfaithfulness

REVERSED: confusion, painful miscommunication, malicious words, hurtful lies, needless cruelty



S words represent air, the mind, intellect, logic, thoughts, communication, truth, problems, solutions, and action.

Threes are about synthesis and growth and are a mini-completion on the journey to the tens. The suit describes what happens when things come together or how to bring things together.

Some new information comes to your attention, causing pieces to fall into place and illuminate a distressing situation. Holes are cut into what you thought was the truth. This is never fun, although sometimes it is freeing, especially if you've felt like something has been wrong for a while. It's possible that the information was there all along, but you only now realize all the ramifications.

The first moments of realization can feel like a storm that blows through your world, causing damage and messing everything up. Once the storm passes, you will use the same logic that led you to this conclusion to help rearrange your life. Maybe you'd rather keep raging or crying. Maybe your heart is broken. But you will pick up the pieces and make everything right again.



THREE OF PENTACLES

KEYWORDS: teamwork, creation, skilled work, making something of value, contributing to a worthwhile project, highlighting abilities

REVERSED: ineffectual design by committee, shoddy work, not pulling your weight, not doing your best, contributions ignored



Pentacles represent earth, the body, diligence, resources, the physical world, creation / manifestation, and receptivity.

Threes are about synthesis and growth and are a mini-completion on the journey to the tens. The suit describes what happens when things come together or how to bring things together.

When skill, vision, and creativity come together, magical things can happen. The Three of Pentacles can represent working as part of a team or using all aspects of yourself while working alone. Either way, the outcome is charmed. You make things all the time, but this time it's special.

If you are working with others and things seem stagnant, try to encourage everyone's best talents. People are usually happiest when doing what they are good at and will be better team players. If you are working alone on something that is stuck, make sure you are drawing on all aspects of yourself. Make sure your vision is clear, your plan solid, and skills up to snuff. Stir in a little passion and things will turn around before you know it.



THE FOURS



A stool may have three legs, but a chair with four legs is far more stable. The fours are all about stability. They are like a square box that holds the essence of each suit. We know that life, time, energy, everything is always in motion, but there are times when the flow slows down, as close to a standstill as it can get. The fours represent this experience, when nothing seems to move, no new energy comes in, and no existing energy moves out.

Like all things, stability is not good or bad in itself. Its appropriateness is determined by the situation. Not all energy does well in a stable environment. Cups/water and pentacles/earth are energetically passive. When they are slowed down, their nature becomes stagnant. Wands/fire and swords/air are active energy and when slowed down by the energy of the four, they become softer and gentler.





FOUR OF WANDS

KEYWORDS: holiday, party, celebration, gathering, honoring someone or something, successful completion of an endeavor, award ceremony, communal achievement

REVERSED: plans go awry, celebrating too soon, discord, arguments



Wands represent fire, will, passion, courage, drive, career, projects, goals, desires, and action.

Fours act as a container, like a square box, holding the essence of each suit, creating a lack of movement. Not all energy does well in a stable environment and it can turn stagnant.

The Four of Wands represents a cause for celebration (see, the waiting in the Three of Wands paid off!). Fiery energy has been cultivated, directed, and contained, making it easy to apply to a specific purpose. Maybe you didn't open a portal to another world, but you've kept your energy well under control and your focus laser sharp and the results are pretty amazing. If you are tempted by distractions or by celebrating too soon, this card reminds you that reliable, diligent work is required to finish the job.

Traditionally, this card has been more about a formal celebration marking an achievement or milestone, such as a wedding, graduation, new job, birthday, etc. Whether this card is talking about your own achievement or someone else's, remember that celebrating and honoring accomplishments is an important part of the whole process.



FOUR OF CUPS

KEYWORDS: discontent, dissatisfaction, ennui, boredom, lack of gratitude, depression, resisting change, stagnation, lack of inspiration

REVERSED: deeper depression, unhealthy or dangerous responses to boredom, taking pleasure in wallowing

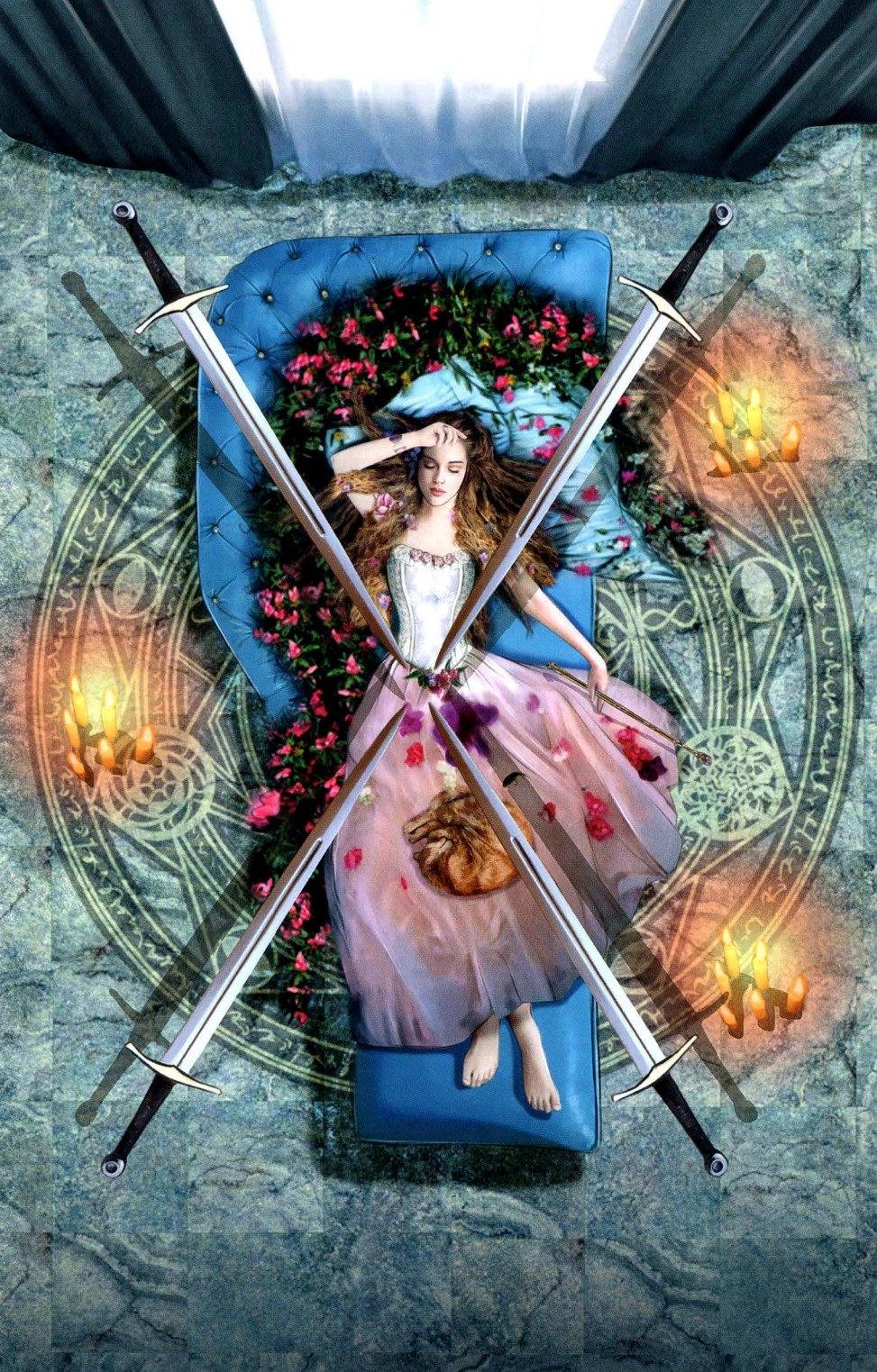


Cups represent water, the soul, relationships, emotions, creativity, imagination, friends, family, and receptivity.

Fours act as a container, like a square box, holding the essence of each suit, creating a lack of movement. Not all energy does well in a stable environment and it can turn stagnant.

Water grows stagnant if it doesn't flow. This wizard has been sitting alone in his office too long. The books and tools that were so exciting and inspiring are now gathering dust. His emotions are dull and heavy, unfit to fuel anything healthy. He needs something fresh and new to wash away his ennui. Luckily, there is a shiny new cup glittering for his attention just behind him, if only he could wrest his eyes away from the cups that are boring him silly.

Don't be like him. When you find yourself swamped with stagnation, don't wallow in it. Get up. Go out. Breathe fresh air, fresh ideas. If you can't get out, at least change your playlist. Music is a great, quick way to get energy moving differently.



FOUR OF SWORDS

KEYWORDS: rest, retreat, meditation, peace, recovery, regrouping, careful consideration

REVERSED: denial, useless obsessing, procrastination, disordered thinking



S words represent air, the mind, intellect, logic, thoughts, communication, truth, problems, solutions, and action.

Fours act as a container, like a square box, holding the essence of each suit, creating a lack of movement. Not all energy does well in a stable environment and it can turn stagnant.

When you're facing a tough situation, your thoughts can circle endlessly in your mind, wearing you out but not leading to any useful solutions. It's tempting to keep doing that because you feel like you're doing something. The real answer seems counterintuitive: take a nap. Naps take different forms. You could take a real nap or a metaphorical nap, such as meditation, a mindless distraction, or a different kind of mental game, like a puzzle.

Taking a break from a problem, according to the Four of Swords, is just what you need right now. Keep in mind that this will not make the problem disappear. It will still be waiting for you. The difference is that your mind will be refreshed, like pushing a reset button. Now you can see things differently. And who knows, maybe the solution will come to you in a dream.



FOUR OF PENTACLES

KEYWORDS: possessiveness, guarding and managing resources, saving, protecting, stewardship

REVERSED: greediness, hoarding, taking what isn't yours, misuse of or carelessness with resources



Pentacles represent earth, the body, diligence, resources, the physical world, creation/manifestation, and receptivity.

Fours act as a container, like a square box, holding the essence of each suit, creating a lack of movement. Not all energy does well in a stable environment and it can turn stagnant.

When you don't feel secure, the natural inclination is to clutch and hold all that you can. It is okay to do what you need to in order to feel safe. Whether it is saving money, creating a pantry holding the summer's harvest, or working alone on a project, the Four of Pentacles applauds your wisdom. Generosity is a virtue, but so is being sensible. Perhaps you already know what the future need will be (saving for a bill that will come due) or maybe you are putting aside for unforeseen needs. Make sure you have a safety net, protect your assets, or keep your million-dollar ideas safe at this time. Reserve your strength.

The Four of Pentacles can be a slippery slope. Beware of sliding toward greed, hoarding, or paranoia. There is a thin line but a big difference between being sensible and crazy.



THE FIVES



The fours brought stability but life can never stand still, so the fives come to the rescue. Their chaotic energy can either save the day or make things seem worse. Things will never be boring with fives around. They bring movement to stagnant situations, breaking us free and allowing movement. They can also exasperate an already confused or messy situation.

The fives have always gotten a bad rap and are often attributed with bringing problems or trouble. That's because humans generally don't like change. Again, tarot proves how useful it is because whether it feels to us like the Five is saving the day or making things worse, the cards always have an answer or solution within them. By shaking things up, we can see things in new ways and are open to fresh solutions.



FIVE OF WANDS

KEYWORDS: competition, conflict, debate, group efforts, committees, strong personalities, differing opinions, no shared goal, lack of leadership

REVERSED: fights, aggressiveness, willfully causing trouble, unproductive criticism



Wands represent fire, will, passion, courage, drive, career, projects, goals, desires, and action.

Fives are chaotic, bringing movement to a stagnant situation or exasperating an already confused one. They can either create new problems or, if we are lucky, bring fresh solutions.

Working with others brings both benefits and challenges. Groups have a unique energy that you cannot replicate on your own. Other people have ideas that can encourage creative thinking. Those with better skills help you to improve, especially through healthy competition.

However, without a good leader or shared vision, it is easy for things to fall apart, particularly with a team of very creative, complicated thinkers. Egos can start to take over, leading to arguments and unhealthy competition. If you find yourself in this situation, try to redirect the flow and get everyone back on task. It takes a lot of effort to direct that much energy and if you aren't up for that, excuse yourself and take away at least some of the chaos until things calm down.



FIVE OF CUPS

KEYWORDS: mourning, feelings of loss, sadness,
regret, repentance, bitterness, frustration

REVERSED: self-pity, obsessing over the past,
beating yourself up, failure to mourn



Cups represent water, the soul, relationships, emotions, creativity, imagination, friends, family, and receptivity.

Fives are chaotic, bringing movement to a stagnant situation or exasperating an already confused one. They can either create new problems or, if we are lucky, bring fresh solutions.

The Five of Cups symbolizes the emotional response to loss rather than the loss itself. When it comes to a change, whether truly traumatic, like the death of a loved one, or ones that might seem mundane (but still deeply affect you), such as the loss of a job, a romantic breakup, losing your home, or even the ending of your favorite book or TV series, adjusting to life after loss takes time. Make sure to allow yourself the space and the freedom to feel and honor your grief. Keeping it boxed away won't help with the healing process.

On the other hand, don't stay in mourning for too long. If you continue, you begin indulging rather than processing your feelings. Without moving toward healing, this sadness could shift toward depression and become your new normal. After the right amount of time, turn around and notice what you still have and be grateful.



FIVE OF SWORDS

KEYWORDS: victory, defeat, humiliation,
aggression, poor sportsmanship

REVERSED: a pyrrhic victory, dishonor



S words represent air, the mind, intellect, logic, thoughts, communication, truth, problems, solutions, and action.

Fives are chaotic, bringing movement to a stagnant situation or exasperating an already confused one. They can either create new problems or, if we are lucky, bring fresh solutions.

The Five of Swords, like all the swords, can suffer from clinging too tightly to black and white ideas of “truth.” When you get too caught up in your own notions of what is true and right, you may try to silence those who hold opposing opinions. By silencing others, you don’t convince them; you take away their power, at least for a time, and leave them feeling resentful and defensive.

This card advises you that your plan for victory may bring about your desired short-term outcome, but asks you to consider if that is really what you want in the long-term. Bullying and coercing people usually causes bigger problems down the road. Besides being a bad strategic move, it is just not very nice. It is more important to be the person you want to be than to win at any price, especially if the outcome isn’t what you really want.



FIVE OF PENTACLES

KEYWORDS: poverty, lack, need, hunger, bankruptcy, ruin, destitution, health concerns, rejecting help, pride, being blind to possible aid

REVERSED: neglecting yourself or your finances, relying on charity unnecessarily, taking advantage of others



Pentacles represent earth, the body, diligence, resources, the physical world, creation/manifestation, and receptivity.

Fives are chaotic, bringing movement to a stagnant situation or exasperating an already confused one. They can either create new problems or, if we are lucky, bring fresh solutions.

You might be feeling financially strapped, physically weak, completely overscheduled, or lonely for companionship. Your need is real, but this card suggests that your suffering is not. No, it's not just changing your state of mind that can help, but the possibility of relief that can end your pain.

It can be hard to ask for help when you need it, even if you know where to go, even if what you need is right there in front of you. Your life and your mind might be stormy and scary, but don't let pride stop you from being safe and comfortable. In this case, what you need is available and you probably know the source. Just ask and then remember this feeling for the next time you are in the position to help someone.



THE SIXES



The sixes are the next mini-cycle conclusion. This cycle includes the establishing of stability with the fours, which is consequently turned topsy-turvy with the fives. It ends with the sixes bringing in a new normal that incorporates the remaining remnants of stability and the lingering shreds of chaos. The sixes are almost always looked at fondly because they follow difficult times. They bring with them a sense a relief and make us feel grateful.

In the sixes roles are redefined, goals are assessed, and rewards handed 'round. One of the most interesting things about the sixes is that they show collaboration and relationships, but the relationships are unequal. For example, the Two of Cups shows two equals connecting, but the Six of Cups shows someone older and someone younger, indicating not necessarily a literal chronological difference but a hierarchy.



SIX OF WANDS

KEYWORDS: victory, honor, achievement, recognition, pride, public ceremony, accolades, accomplishment, success, triumph

REVERSED: failure, being overlooked, disappointment, humiliation, dishonor, shame, taking credit for someone else's work



Wands represent fire, will, passion, courage, drive, career, projects, goals, desires, and action.

The fives upset the stability of the fours, and the sixes reestablish normality. Roles are redefined, goals assessed, and rewards given, with a focus on collaboration and relationships.

Sometimes it looks like a hero did it all on his own, but really heroes are supported by their communities. The Six of Wands is a communal celebration of an achievement. The conquering wizard is the focus of the victory party, but really the joy infuses and benefits everyone.

This card represents accomplishing something that took great effort and probably a lot of courage. You earned all the praise, so enjoy it. Make sure to accept your accolades with grace, remembering to share the good feelings with everyone else and thank all those whose support made it possible. If you haven't yet faced the challenge, be encouraged that things seem to be lining up to ensure a positive outcome.



SIX OF CUPS

KEYWORDS: nostalgia, happy memories, kindness, innocence, selflessness, generosity, innocent pleasures, unconditional affection

REVERSED: living in or romanticizing the past, insincere actions, manipulation, buying affection or friendship



Cups represent water, the soul, relationships, emotions, creativity, imagination, friends, family, and receptivity.

The fives upset the stability of the fours, and the sixes reestablish normality. Roles are redefined, goals assessed, and rewards given, with a focus on collaboration and relationships.

Large gestures and dramatic actions are awesome, but it's good to remember that small acts of kindness can also change the world in ways we can't imagine. You never know how some little gift and gentle word will ripple through time and affect the future. Well, you kind of do know, at least in this case, for the Six of Cups lets you know that your actions now will have bigger consequences. Pay attention to those around you and be ready to give exactly what is needed.

This card also has a warning, for often sweet moments are connected to memories. You might be looking back fondly on a past with rose colored glasses or longing for a time that no longer exists. Nostalgia can feed the soul, but don't let it keep you from creating new memories that will warm you and others in the future.



SIX OF SWORDS

KEYWORDS: journey, heading toward safety, escape, flight, travel, assistance, admitting defeat, impossible situation, protection, shelter

REVERSED: remaining stuck, delay, worsening situation, unseen danger



Swords represent air, the mind, intellect, logic, thoughts, communication, truth, problems, solutions, and action.

The fives upset the stability of the fours, and the sixes reestablish normality. Roles are redefined, goals assessed, and rewards given, with a focus on collaboration and relationships.

When a situation is beyond repairing, sometimes the best you can do is leave. This is no time to be a hero but instead to call on one. Your situation is dicey and complicated, and you've probably worn yourself out with trying to solve it. Find someone you can trust and who has the means to help you. Then comes the hard part: let them help. You don't have to do everything on your own.

Even after your escape plan is in motion, manage your thoughts and calm your fears. If you don't, they can become blocks to freedom. Don't let your concerns cause delays or create new problems. Focus on the immediate situation. You can play mind games with yourself later if you want. If you are the one aiding someone else, part of your job will be helping them keep calm.



SIX OF PENTACLES

KEYWORDS: charity, fairness, gift, donation, grant, scholarship, loan, sound judgement, taxes, fees, sharing the wealth, asking for help

REVERSED: denial of grant or loan, stinginess, cheapness, uncharitable judgement, unfair taxes or fees, refusing to ask for or accept assistance, being unable to help when asked



Pentacles represent earth, the body, diligence, resources, the physical world, creation / manifestation, and receptivity.

The fives upset the stability of the fours, and the sixes reestablish normality. Roles are redefined, goals assessed, and rewards given, with a focus on collaboration and relationships.

You have immediate needs that are usually met with earned income. Sometimes you want resources for bigger projects, such as funding an education or big home repairs. For these needs, turn to different sources, like grants, scholarships, and loans. The Six of Pentacles represents resources available for long-term goals. This card in your reading lets you know that such support is available to you.

However, this investment won't just show up in your bank account. You'll have to apply, maybe jump through some hoops, convince people with authority that your need is a worthwhile investment. Pentacles are about creating and distributing wealth, so you will have to show how you will make good use of the resources.



THE SEVENS



The sixes reestablished a sense of normalcy, but life keeps moving. Oddly enough, there isn't actually much movement in the sevens. In fact, the main figure is only actually moving in one of the suits, the swords. So how is our story being pushed along with the sevens? These cards are akin to the twos because, ultimately, a decision is needed. Unlike the twos, this decision isn't necessarily presented to us. Rather, it is the result of our own reflection.

As we reach certain levels of achievement, it is natural to evaluate our lives in order to determine our next steps. The sevens represent a time for assessment. As we decide what is working, what isn't, what we want but don't have, what we believe in or what we don't, we usually uncover a choice. We have to decide to take a stand, take an action, or take something from someone. It's an important moment because once we move to the eights, we won't have time to think.



SEVEN OF WANDS

KEYWORDS: defending, protecting, valor, courage, standing up for beliefs, bravery, resolve, taking action

REVERSED: defensiveness, overreacting, being easily offended, looking for a fight



Wands represent fire, will, passion, courage, drive, career, projects, goals, desires, and action.

As we reach certain levels of achievement, it is natural to evaluate our lives in order to determine our next steps. The sevens bring the energy of assessment into the forefront.

The Seven of Wands represents a time of crisis. You will feel the pressure from all angles and might not know what to deal with first. You have to determine what must be handled and in what order ... or perhaps find a way to make it all stop with one perfect act.

You have some advantages in this situation. If you are being attacked, then you have something worth defending. Perhaps that is what you will be assessing—not whether to fight but whether it is worth fighting over. In addition, you are in a good position for defense and also for seeing the big picture, making it easier to notice potential consequences. You have choices and the information needed to make them, although you will have to think fast as events are developing quickly.



SEVEN OF CUPS

KEYWORDS: confusion, fantasies, choices, imagination, dreams, illusions, lack of focus, wishful thinking

REVERSED: fears, daydreams interfering with responsibilities, escapism



Cups represent water, the soul, relationships, emotions, creativity, imagination, friends, family, and receptivity.

As we reach certain levels of achievement, it is natural to evaluate our lives in order to determine our next steps. The Sevens bring the energy of assessment into the forefront.

You have dared to dream and now you have quite a nice collection. Dreams don't do a lot of good set on a shelf like a decoration. If you do that, after a while they become mere fantasies. To manifest your desire, you have to take the cup and drink.

Having too many choices can be as bad as having none. It is overwhelming and could make you feel paralyzed until you end up doing nothing. You might be worried about making the wrong choice. Remember, this is a card from the suit of cups, and that gives you a clue. Your choice won't necessarily be the most exciting one, the most logical one, or the most potentially lucrative one; it will be the one that you feel, in your heart and blood, wants to come alive.



SEVEN OF SWORDS

KEYWORDS: stealing, rescuing, stealth, dishonesty, sabotage, sneakiness, stealth, traitor, spy

REVERSED: exposure, failure of dishonorable plan, caught in the act



Swords represent air, the mind, intellect, logic, thoughts, communication, truth, problems, solutions, and action.

As we reach certain levels of achievement, it is natural to evaluate our lives in order to determine our next steps. The sevens bring the energy of assessment into the forefront.

At first glance, it looks like this wizard is making off with some books. The haste and the covered face make it look like he doesn't want to get caught. Is he stealing the books? Rescuing them? Liberating them? Sometimes the real story all depends on who is telling it.

The Seven of Swords invites you to ask who is taking what from whom in this situation. Then investigate why, what is the end goal? If you are the one thinking of taking something, even if for a good reason, you might want to consider a different plan. This one might be too dangerous or even too far from your guiding values to be right for you. You might feel like this is your only option, and perhaps it is, but at least try to find an alternative path if possible.



SEVEN OF PENTACLES

KEYWORDS: assessment, evaluation, reflection, measuring
return on investment, harvest, rewards, appraisal

REVERSED: disappointment, missed opportunity,
harvesting too soon, plan didn't work out



Pentacles represent earth, the body, diligence, resources, the physical world, creation/manifestation, and receptivity.

As we reach certain levels of achievement, it is natural to evaluate our lives in order to determine our next steps. The sevens bring the energy of assessment into the forefront.

There are times in life when you've done all that you can but still have to wait, whether it is fruit ripening on the vine, a pie baking in the oven, or an elaborate alchemical experiment. You can't rush the fruit, the pie, or the experiment; that only leads to ruin. Unlike the time of waiting in the Three of Wands, this period should be used for review.

Check and double check everything, because there is still time to make adjustments. Evaluate your process and determine if there are ways you can improve quality or efficiency next time. If there is still time after that, just keep a close eye on everything. A watched pot will eventually boil, even if it feels like it takes forever, but an unwatched pot is likely to boil over.



THE EIGHTS



Just as the fives brought chaos to a situation, creating stress and change, the eights bring speed and power. The sevens were almost a full stop, but once the action is taken or the decision is made, the situation moves to the eights, meaning things are going to happen very quickly. There won't be much time to think and plan if things go awry. Plus when things are moving fast, any small movement or change can make a mess of everything.

The power isn't always external, though. Often it is yours for the taking or it might feel as if it were thrust upon you. If the energy is within, then use it or ground it because if that power isn't channeled, it can become a loop and a trap.



EIGHT OF WANDS

KEYWORDS: speed, swiftness, events set in motion, travel, messages, communication, things running smoothly, reasonable consequences

REVERSED: chaos, confusion, delays, frustration, swimming against the current



Wands represent fire, will, passion, courage, drive, career, projects, goals, desires, and action.

The eights are filled with power, which usually propels you forward with great speed. If that power isn't channeled, it can become a loop and a trap.

The Eight of Wands is all speed and action! Even though things are happening quickly, nothing should be a surprise. Events have been set in motion, at least to some extent, by your decisions. You have taken steps to direct events toward a specific outcome. The movement in this card is orderly, so things should go as planned and the result should probably be what you reasonably expect.

There are many moving parts to this situation. Because they are all rushing toward their destination, any additional impact can either change that course or, more likely, cause a lot of chaos. If you want to change the result, simply throw in a monkey wrench. Just know, though, that you won't be able to control what happens. Traditionally this card has also represented messages and travel.



EIGHT OF CUPS

KEYWORDS: quest, journey, search, discontent,
dissatisfaction, unhappiness, mission

REVERSED: settling, accepting second best,
running away, making excuses



Cups represent water, the soul, relationships, emotions, creativity, imagination, friends, family, and receptivity.

The eights are filled with power, which usually propels you forward with great speed. If that power isn't channeled, it can become a loop and a trap.

Have you been in a phase of your life when everything was good, maybe even great, but you still felt with all your heart that you had to leave it? You might be in search of a missing piece to bring back or a new place to be. It's hard because you cannot deny the urge to go but you cannot logically justify why you must. Others might find it hard to support you because they cannot understand why you would want to give up everything you have. As we all know from Blaise Pascal, the heart has reasons that reason can never understand. That is, sometimes things that are felt in the heart cannot be explained logically.

It's okay and perfectly normal. Everyone has feelings like this at some point. The wild moon calls and that song reverberates in your blood. All you can do is put your affairs in order, make what preparations you can, and go. You probably don't even know precisely where, but just as you trust your heart in this moment, rely on it throughout this adventure.



EIGHT OF SWORDS

KEYWORDS: feeling trapped, restricted, dangerous situation, limited options, helplessness, complex problems

REVERSED: victim mentality, giving up, seeing problems where none exist



Swords represent air, the mind, intellect, logic, thoughts, communication, truth, problems, solutions, and action.

The eights are filled with power, which usually propels you forward with great speed. If that power isn't channeled, it can become a loop and a trap.

The Eight of Swords describes a situation of helplessness. You feel trapped, powerless, and surrounded by danger. If this is actually true, then maybe put down the cards and call a professional; get the help you need. However, that is really what the Eight of Swords represents. If you've gotten this card, then it is probable that the situation is due more to your thought processes than reality. Thoughts can move crazy fast and it is so easy for them to create a loop, a vicious vortex of despair.

Thoughts and feelings shape each other, so your current thoughts are feeding the feeling of hopelessness. Luckily, you can manage your thoughts and change the way you approach the situation. Your mind, like a sword, is a powerful tool. Learn to use your mind in ways that help you rather than get in your way.



EIGHT OF PENTACLES

KEYWORDS: work, skill, craftsmanship, artisan, diligence, dedication, focus, drive, determination, steady progress, satisfying work, attention to detail

REVERSED: shoddy workmanship, workaholic, boring job, tediousness



Pentacles represent earth, the body, diligence, resources, the physical world, creation / manifestation, and receptivity.

The eights are filled with power, which usually propels you forward with great speed. If that power isn't channeled, it can become a loop and a trap.

In the Eight of Pentacles, your power is being channeled into a loop with a very positive effect. Repetition helps create skill and speed in whatever you are doing. Practice is really the only way for all except the most gifted to improve. Doing something over and over in itself will eventually lead to improvement. However, in order to maximize your efforts, add discipline and discernment. If you examine each creation with a critical eye, you will learn to identify mistakes and ways to improve.

This card can sometimes represent monotonous activities, but mostly it is about doing something for the satisfaction of gaining skill. There may be boring phases or times when you can't figure out what the problem is, but the overall trajectory of the card is fulfilling mastery. Remember that practice makes perfect and diligence is its own reward.



THE NINES



Nines are the last card of the mini-cycles. This cycle included assessment and power and ends with us standing alone with what we've created. These cards are associated with the Hermit, also numbered IX. In all these cards we see a solitary figure who has to come to terms with their decisions and actions and the resulting life they've created for themselves. In addition, they bring up situations and concerns that you must work through alone. How you do that will shape your identity in important ways.

In the fours the passive suits of cups and pentacles didn't fare well. However, in the nines they are quite happy, showing contentment with their choices and their life. However, the wands and swords that were so lovely in the fours are miserable in the nines, feeling stressed, weighed down, and trapped. Active energy needs something to bounce off of, while passive energy needs room to flow.



NINE OF WANDS

KEYWORDS: protecting, defending, stamina, loyalty, strength, discipline, wounded warrior

REVERSED: hopeless cause, martyrdom, disloyalty, defensiveness, stubbornness



Wands represent fire, will, passion, courage, drive, career, projects, goals, desires, and action.

The nines are cards of solitude and fullness. Each one brings a situation you must work through alone, which will shape your identity and who you will become.

Batten down the hatches and prepare for a siege. You've already been engaged in some kind of struggle or battle and have gained a short respite. Progress has been made but the situation isn't over, although because this is a nine, it is nearly done. You just have to hold on a little longer.

It is possible that the worst is over and maybe there won't be another attack, but you should remain cautious, guarding that which you're committed to protecting. How you behave in this moment, this transition between chaos and completion, will shape you. Because you are worn out, your response will be more likely to rise up within you rather than be one based on calculated logic. Will you grow paranoid? Will you be a gracious victor? Will you demand payment in kind for every insult visited upon you? Will you abandon your commitment?



NINE OF CUPS

KEYWORDS: wishes fulfilled, contentment, satisfaction with life, pride, hospitality, sensuality, worldly pleasures, happiness

REVERSED: overindulgence, smugness, dissatisfaction, resting on laurels, selfishness



Cups represent water, the soul, relationships, emotions, creativity, imagination, friends, family, and receptivity.

The nines are cards of solitude and fullness. Each one brings a situation you must work through alone, which will shape your identity and who you will become.

Traditionally, the Nine of Cups was called the wish card. Before a reading started, fortune-tellers of old would tell sitters to make a wish. If the Nine of Cups came up anywhere in the reading, it meant that the wish would come true. It is similar to the modern interpretation: you feel like your wishes have been realized and you find the results extremely satisfying.

Because this is the suit of cups, the happiness likely involves your emotional state, your relationships, or your creativity. This goodness didn't just happen; you worked for it and you get to feel good about yourself on so many levels. Life is never static, so this contentment cannot last exactly as it is. The question is how will you proceed? Will you continue to grow in positive ways or put things on autopilot? Enjoy the moment but nurture your wish or it could dissipate or stagnate.



NINE OF SWORDS

KEYWORDS: obsessive thoughts, sleeplessness, nightmares, worries, guilt, despair, oppression

REVERSED: insomnia, overuse of sleeping aids



S words represent air, the mind, intellect, logic, thoughts, communication, truth, problems, solutions, and action.

The nines are cards of solitude and fullness. Each one brings a situation you must work through alone, which will shape your identity and who you will become.

It's bad enough when cruelty comes from others, but it's even worse when it comes from within. We are so very skilled at torturing ourselves. If the Nine of Swords comes up, then you are probably not sleeping due to a racing mind. On these dark nights of the soul, you replay all your mistakes, real or imagined. You worry about things that will probably never happen. You imagine people thinking horrible things about you.

The trick isn't just recognizing the experience but developing the tools to deal with it. There are probably only grains of truth in what you are worrying about and your mind blew them up into big, scary monster thoughts. Since you created them, you can unmake them. Will you allow nights like this to rob you of rest or will you manage your mind? People have different methods: meditation, journaling, listening to music, making lists. What will be your approach?



NINE OF PENTACLES

KEYWORDS: discipline, self-confidence, individual achievement, material wealth, safety, security, solitude

REVERSED: not following through, dissatisfaction, looking for external praise



Pentacles represent earth, the body, diligence, resources, the physical world, creation/manifestation, and receptivity.

The nines are cards of solitude and fullness. Each one brings a situation you must work through alone, which will shape your identity and who you will become.

The Nine of Pentacles is a favorite among tarot readers, representing a wonderful life created by one's own efforts. This is not just about a single goal. You have created a life that suits you perfectly and is not dependent on anyone else. You had confidence in yourself, you knew your own mind, you acquired the skills needed to achieve your aims, and you exerted the discipline needed to hone and apply those skills. In short, you rocked it.

It seems like you've already shaped who you will become, so how does recognizing your achievement change you? Because you've done so much on your own and you've gained a sense of security and independence, you might have become isolated. Will your next step be to immerse yourself more fully into a hermit-like existence? Or will you open the gates to your empire and let someone in to share it with you?



THE TENS



While the nines show a saturation or fullness, they are not the end of the sequence. The tens bring us to the point of overflowing, saturation, and excess. They are also the realization of the aces' potential. Although they are the end, to us they feel as if they are just a little past the end, like fruit that is just a little overripe. This is because they are indeed overripe fruit, and they contain the seed, the new ace, for the next cycle.

As in the nines, the active suits suffer in the tens, being overburdened, reminding us that we can indeed have too much of a good thing. The passive suits, though, shine at their very best, with cups and hearts overflowing. Whether the tens point you toward a fairytale ending or a collapsing under the pressure of your life, know that it is, like all the cards and life itself, just a moment before the next cycle starts again. So either enjoy it as much as possible or move through it with as much grace as you can muster.



TEN OF WANDS

KEYWORDS: burden, obligations, numerous opportunities, duty, responsibility

REVERSED: physical exhaustion, oppression, tyranny, subjugation

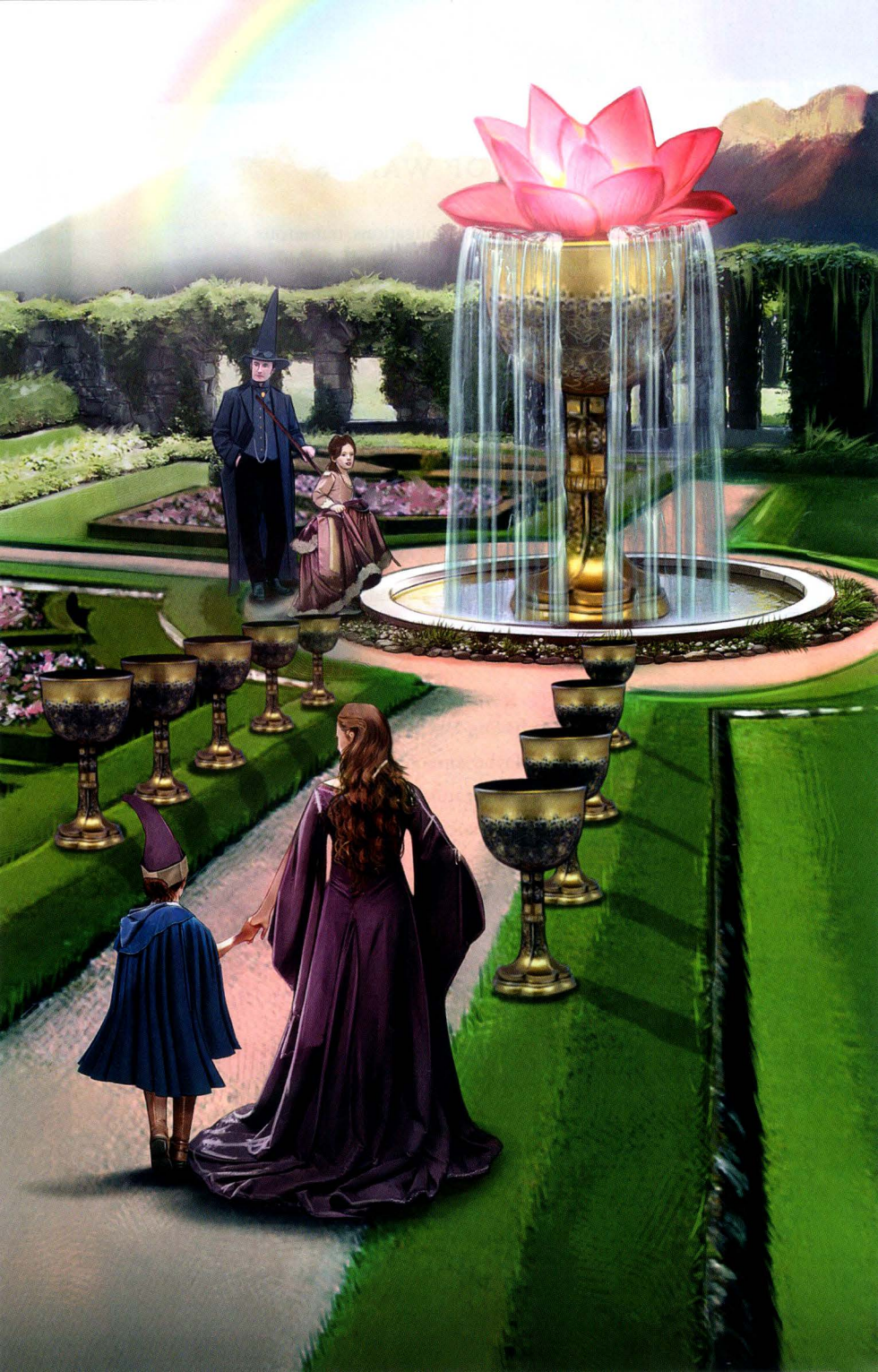


Wands represent fire, will, passion, courage, drive, career, projects, goals, desires, and action.

The tens tell stories of completion, fulfillment, and excess. They are sometimes the realization of the aces' potential. Other times they are warnings about having "too much of a good thing."

The Ace of Wands brought you passion and inspiration. As so often happens, one great project sparks ideas for others. Whether you fear missing out on something, worry about not having enough work, or feel addicted to the stress of having too much on your plate, it looks like you have a lot going on. Maybe some of your opportunities came with unforeseen obligations or strings attached.

Sometimes you have no choice but to carry on with every opportunity but when all the things that brought you joy become burdens, reconsider your commitments. Prioritize, eliminate, delegate. Make a list of projects in order of priority. If you can't drop anything, maximize efficiencies. Bring others on board to help lighten the load. Carrying too much for too long never ends well. Something will suffer: maybe the work, maybe your well-being. Be sensible.



TEN OF CUPS

KEYWORDS: family, domestic bliss, optimism, comfort, tranquility, peace, sanctuary, joy, happiness, deep affection

REVERSED: family disputes, arguments, unhappiness, false front, separation, broken promises, betrayal



Cups represent water, the soul, relationships, emotions, creativity, imagination, friends, family, and receptivity.

The tens tell stories of completion, fulfillment, and excess. They are sometimes the realization of the aces' potential. Other times they are warnings about having "too much of a good thing."

If you are looking for that fairytale "and they all lived happily ever after" ending in a tarot card, you've found it. While nothing lasts forever, the Ten of Cups promises at least a time of perfect peace and harmony between family and dear friends. Relationships are satisfying and stable due to careful, loving nurturing. Your emotional state is robust; you are so secure that you can easily feel comfortable and at home in any environment.

Keep your well full so that you can continue to bring freshness to your relationships. Don't let them become stagnant, a pale imitation of a living connection. Allow them to grow and change. Don't become wedded to an ideal that can't be maintained. Love your relationships for the continual wonder they bring and don't try to freeze them in the past.



TEN OF SWORDS

KEYWORDS: surrender, ending, disaster, defeat, ruin, stop fighting, giving in, giving up, acknowledging endings

REVERSED: melodrama, refusing to let go, denial



S words represent air, the mind, intellect, logic, thoughts, communication, truth, problems, solutions, and action.

The tens tell stories of completion, fulfillment, and excess. They are sometimes the realization of the aces' potential. Other times they are warnings about having "too much of a good thing."

No matter how hard you try, no matter how right you are, no matter how unfair it is, you cannot win them all. You know that this situation is done and no amount of complaining, fighting, or scheming can change it. You can look and look and not find a solution. Close the book, pull the swords out of your back, recover ... and move on.

Maybe there is a lesson here. Did you take a sword of truth and turn it into a complex worldview that finally collapsed on itself? Did you turn the swords on yourself? Are you using the situation as an excuse to not do anything or to be a drama queen? Use this as an opportunity to change your thinking. Maybe someone turned their truths against you, which manifested as hate, prejudice, or cruelty. If this is the case, learn to shut that nonsense down fast.



TEN OF PENTACLES

KEYWORDS: stable family, security, wealth, abundance, comfort, roots, plans for the future, connection, balanced and healthy life

REVERSED: keeping up with the Joneses, insincerity, pretension, domestic troubles, debt, family problems



Pentacles represent earth, the body, diligence, resources, the physical world, creation/manifestation, and receptivity.

The tens tell stories of completion, fulfillment, and excess. They are sometimes the realization of the aces' potential. Other times they are warnings about having "too much of a good thing."

A healthy tree has deep roots, a strong trunk, and branches that reach for the sky. Your current family tree (however you define family) is in great condition. Your roots are your inheritance, which could be material, spiritual, cultural, or simply how you grew up. Your trunk is the life you have created, your home, family, work, friends, hobbies, spiritual practices, everything. Your branches can be children but can also be plans for the future, projects that affect the world outside your sphere, or any legacy you leave.

Pentacles are about the material world, but they are more than that. The symbol has five points, one for each element and the one at the top shows that all the material elements serve a higher good or Spirit. The Ten of Pentacles lets you know that you truly do have it all. At least for now.



— • CHAPTER 5 • —

THE COURT CARDS



The major arcana cards show us the important events in our lives and are like the themes to our stories. The minor arcana present our everyday lives and are like the plot and stage setting of our lives. The court cards make the stories come alive because they are the people in them. They can represent us in our various roles and aspects and they are also other people. When a card represents someone involved in your situation, that card provides information on what they are like and also what motivates them, so you can find ways to work with them more effectively. Some people say the court cards are difficult. Well, they are no more difficult than actual humans.

There are a few key things to remember about the court cards. First, do remember that in tarot gender is symbolic. Just because a woman is on the Queen of Pentacles doesn't mean it represents a literal woman; it can be an aspect of any human, male or female or nonbinary. Likewise, age is symbolic not chronological. A young person on a card means anyone who *feels* young or inexperienced in that particular situation not necessarily that they are young. If you use reversals, it is common to use the more negative personality traits for the reversed meaning.



THE PAGES



Shown as younger people, the pages have all the characteristics of youth. They are excited, enthusiastic, scared, nervous, impatient, and curious. They are having feelings they may not understand and experiencing things that are foreign to them. They want to be involved, to discover their own power, to be valued and seen as human beings. Understanding their motivations and what drives them gives us insight into how to best work with them. If the card represents yourself, it helps you understand your needs in the situation.

In addition, pages are in the midst of learning something new; they are students. This means, of course, formal education or even informal or casual learning. It can also mean learning something new just in life. Anyone of any age can become a student of something. Switching careers, the ending of long-term relationships, children moving out, all these life-changing events make us students, with all the thrills and fears that brings. Understand what they are going through, show some compassion, and you should be able to work out anything with them.



PAGE OF WANDS

KEYWORDS: student, curious, enthusiastic, young, inexperienced, willful, ego, passion, instinctual, action-oriented



Pages are learning about something, in a formal setting or as a new experience. Understand what they are going through and you can work with them more efficiently.

Energetic, charismatic, and fond of attention, the wands are often leaders. Getting things done quickly can lead to taking on too much or not finishing.

This young page's bold confidence wants to shine, but his fragile ego gets in the way. He fears looking ridiculous but wants to jump into every new experience. His energy and instincts are among his greatest assets. When bored, he is edgy, unpredictable, and even dangerous. He needs help curbing his dependence on external validation, his anger, his frustration, and, to be blunt, his temper tantrums, in order to mature. Given the opportunity to explore, grow, and shine, he has the potential to be very powerful.



PAGE OF CUPS

KEYWORDS: student, curious, enthusiastic, young, inexperienced, emotional, creative, intuitive, reflective



Pages are learning about something, in a formal setting or as a new experience. Understand what they are going through and you can work with them more efficiently.

Sensitive, loving, and creative, the cups enjoy beauty, art in all forms, and connecting with others. Sometimes they take things too personally.

Full of curiosity and wonder, this young page immerses herself in whatever she is learning or experiencing. When she commits to something, she is all in and all earnestness. She needs guidance in learning to protect her heart without becoming cynical. Immaturity, unrealistic expectations, over sensitivity, and a tendency toward secretiveness can make her hard to deal with. When given a safe place to explore, she will discover the emotional resources needed to mature into a sensitive, caring adult.



PAGE OF SWORDS

KEYWORDS: student, curious, enthusiastic, young, inexperienced, logical, rational, intelligent, communicative, decisive



Pages are learning about something, in a formal setting or as a new experience. Understand what they are going through and you can work with them more efficiently.

Smart, excellent communicators, and lovers of facts, the swords are idealistic but can become too committed to what they consider the truth.

Smart and sure of himself, this page loves practicing his abilities. His ideals and search for the truth drive his quest for perfection. He lacks finesse and sometimes wields his sword like a club. He collects information like a magpie and, unfortunately, can sometimes be gossipy or hurtful with his words. He needs experience to release his judgemental nature and stop oversimplifying situations. When shown how to navigate shades of grey while maintaining ideals, he can become a creative, out-of-the-box thinker.



PAGE OF PENTACLES

KEYWORDS: student, curious, enthusiastic, young, inexperienced, practical, cautious, generous, able, resourceful



Pages are learning about something, in a formal setting or as a new experience. Understand what they are going through and you can work with them more efficiently.

Practical, down-to-earth, and cautious, the pentacles are resourceful and patient. They can slip into materialism, greed, and laziness.

This inquisitive and capable young page is curious about the physical world, loves the connection between the material and spiritual realms, and takes pride in being prepared. She practices with patience and humility. She is usually a collector, either of information or physical items. Because of her connection to the material world, she needs guidance to avoid greediness, hoarding, or materialism. Once she develops a balanced understanding of the connection between the physical and spiritual realms, she will be able to move mountains for the right reasons.



THE KNIGHTS



Knights are known for attaching to an idea and following it at all costs, but mostly they are known for needing to take action. Knights are very focused on a specific task and may not be aware of everything going on around them. They have a lot of energy, some experience, and plenty of opinions. Their confidence can be overwhelming, but it can also be channeled and used to positive effect. Understand that they need something they really believe in before they can commit to a project or course of action. Their suits give you clues about what they value most. Figure out what they want, give them a clear task, and let them do their thing.

Sometimes knights are not interested in someone else's quest, so you may not be able to engage them or to channel their energy in a way that supports your goals. In these cases, it is best to clear their path and stay out of their way. Their speed and selective blindness (to all but their own goals) can lead them to wreak havoc on the best-laid plans.



KNIGHT OF WANDS

KEYWORDS: warrior, quick, confident, immature, somewhat experienced, willful, ego, passion, instinctual, action-oriented



Knights are very focused on a specific task and may not be aware of everything going on around them. Understand their goal to either engage or avoid them.

Energetic, charismatic, and fond of attention, the wands are often leaders. Getting things done quickly can lead to taking on too much or not finishing.

Driven by will and passion, this knight wants her own way and will stop at nothing until she gets it or until she is distracted by the next awesome idea. If you want her on your side, you'll have to capture her capricious attention. Once you do, she'll devote her boundless energy and instinctive insight to your cause. When left to her own devices, she is almost always oblivious to any damage she may cause during her quest. Luckily, such intensity never lasts long. So, if you cannot engage her, just stay out of her way until she wears herself out.



KNIGHT OF CUPS

KEYWORDS: warrior, quick, confident, immature, somewhat experienced, emotional, creative, intuitive, reflective



Knights are very focused on a specific task and may not be aware of everything going on around them. Understand their goal to either engage or avoid them.

Sensitive, loving, and creative, the cups enjoy beauty, art in all forms, and connecting with others. Sometimes they take things too personally.

This knight is a romantic dreamer who wants more than anything to follow his heart. Being a knight, he can be more interested in romantic ideals, artistic expression, and fantasies than in actual relationships. He is willing to move through tumultuous emotions if that's what it takes to achieve his holy grail. When he becomes that focused, he might neglect other aspects of his life. He is less distractible than some knights and can be hard to pull away from his current quest. Logic will not dissuade him from the importance of his heart's desire.



KNIGHT OF SWORDS

KEYWORDS: warrior, quick, confident, immature, somewhat experienced, logical, rational, intelligent, communicative, decisive



Knights are very focused on a specific task and may not be aware of everything going on around them. Understand their goal to either engage or avoid them.

Smart, excellent communicators, and lovers of facts, the swords are idealistic but can become too committed to what they consider the truth.

When convinced that her view is the truth, this knight will fight for that truth with everything she can: her formidable logic, skillful arguments, and (sometimes cherry-picked) evidence. She holds as tightly to her ideals as she does her sword. A warrior of words, she can create amazing, beneficial change in the world, or she can destroy a person with blunt observations and sharp words. She doesn't have strategic experience, but what she lacks in long range vision she makes up for with speed.



KNIGHT OF PENTACLES

KEYWORDS: warrior, quick, confident, immature, somewhat experienced, practical, cautious, generous, able, resourceful



Knights are very focused on a specific task and may not be aware of everything going on around them. Understand their goal to either engage or avoid them.

Practical, down-to-earth, and cautious, the pentacles are resourceful and patient. They can slip into materialism, greed, and laziness.

The epitome of devotion, this young knight brings stamina and patience to any task he takes on. He is less driven by ideals and instead is more interested in completing a goal to his best possible ability. The slowest of the knights, he knows that timing is important and will wait for the perfect moment before acting. He is also the most reliable of the knights and can be trusted with almost any job. His caution can be a benefit but also a weakness. All growth requires risk, so he sometimes gets stuck in ruts that are hard to get out of.



THE QUEENS



Queens are interested in connections and relationships. Out of all the courts, they are most likely to be a true friend and ally. They have experience, maturity, and authority. Whether in a formal capacity or casual, queens like the role of teacher, advisor, or mentor. They are worth having in your corner. You can lean on them for support and guidance. When they show up in your spread, they are like a gift, but one that you have to convince to open itself to you. Their suits give clues about what engages their support and how to approach them. If the card represents you, it tells you what aspect of yourself will best help the situation.

Queens are like any other person, though, and sometimes have their own agendas and weaknesses. Again, the suits will help you identify those so you can watch out for them and avoid getting tangled in messes that aren't yours.



QUEEN OF WANDS

KEYWORDS: nurturer, observant, insightful, mature, experienced, willful, ego, passion, instinctual, action-oriented



Queens are interested in connections and relationships. They are often teachers or mentors, either formal or informal. Lean on them for support.

Energetic, charismatic, and fond of attention, the wands are often leaders. Getting things done quickly can lead to taking on too much or not finishing.

Strong and confident, this powerful queen excels at inspiring others. Because boldness has served her well and because boring and boldness do not usually go together, she encourages others to take courageous action. She sincerely wants you to be the best you can be and thinks that she knows what that is. Because of her keen instincts, she is usually right. However, she can push too hard and with her strong personality, it can be hard to push back. Her passionate drive is inspiring but can be overwhelming for some.



QUEEN OF CUPS

KEYWORDS: nurturer, observant, insightful, mature, experienced, emotional, creative, intuitive, reflective



Queens are interested in connections and relationships. They are often teachers or mentors, either formal or informal. Lean on them for support.

Sensitive, loving, and creative, the cups enjoy beauty, art in all forms, and connecting with others. Sometimes they take things too personally.

This watery queen thrives on deep, personal relationships. The world, she feels, can always use more rich complexity and true beauty, so she is all for adding to it in any way she can, whether as an artist or supporter. Because of her strong intuition and sensitivity, she observes a lot and can give solid guidance, especially in terms of personal connection or heartfelt, creative expression. Some may find her intimacy cloying or off-putting, because she can be needy. But she is a sweet balm for any soul in need of gentle empathy.



QUEEN OF SWORDS

KEYWORDS: nurturer, observant, insightful, mature, experienced, logical, rational, intelligent, communicative, decisive



Queens are interested in connections and relationships. They are often teachers or mentors, either formal or informal. Lean on them for support.

Smart, excellent communicators, and lovers of facts, the swords are idealistic but can become too committed to what they consider the truth.

This queen has tasted the good and the bad of life, so she isn't at all naïve. She usually isn't bitter or cynical but has a wicked wit that can sometimes be cruel. She has learned to take care of herself and advance her goals. Her keen mind and impeccable discernment can identify deception a mile away or tease out the most tangled knot to find the truth at the center of any mess. She's amazing at crafting strategies and is willing to help others as long as it doesn't negatively affect her and her plans.



QUEEN OF PENTACLES

KEYWORDS: nurturer, observant, insightful, mature, experienced, practical, cautious, generous, able, resourceful



Queens are interested in connections and relationships. They are often teachers or mentors, either formal or informal. Lean on them for support.

Practical, down-to-earth, and cautious, the pentacles are resourceful and patient. They can slip into materialism, greed, and laziness.

Quiet, practical, and homey, this queen is happiest at home or wherever she feels secure. Often working behind the scenes, she is the one who makes sure all the details are attended to and all resources used to their fullest potential. Plus, she probably has whatever you need in her purse. No matter what she decides to do, from creating a new recipe to starting a business, she does it impeccably. Her vision isn't limited to decorations or food. She can just as easily create a retirement portfolio as she can accessorize an outfit.



THE KINGS



Kings represent people with experience and authority. Kings focus on the big picture and the greater good rather than on individual relationships. They are often responsible for others, for resources, or for policies. Even in personal relationships, they often have a different point of view than others. In readings, they usually represent someone who has or has control over resources you need or want. They are most likely of all the Courts to signify someone you may not know personally or have access to.

Because kings are more distant and difficult to reach, establishing a connection can be tricky. It is important to know their motivations and drives. Understanding how to approach them will help you make that contact. Once you have their attention, knowing their motivations will allow you to present your case in a way most likely to gain their support. Their suits tell you how to do this.



KING OF WANDS

KEYWORDS: authority, balanced, powerful, mature, very experienced, willful, ego, passion, instinctual, action-oriented



Kings manage resources, usually in a group setting. They focus on the big picture. Enlist their experience and authority.

Energetic, charismatic, and fond of attention, the wands are often leaders. Getting things done quickly can lead to taking on too much or not finishing.

This king loves daring plans. Sitting still or waiting quietly are the worse things anyone can ask of him. He seeks channels that direct his boundless passion and energy toward accomplishing something worthwhile. Mundane, mediocre, or merely practical goals have little interest to him. To gain his support, show how a plan will further his goals, engage his passion, or use his energy and resources in exciting ways. Don't bother him with emotional pleas, detailed arguments, or bottom lines.



KING OF CUPS

KEYWORDS: authority, balanced, powerful, mature, very experienced, emotional, creative, intuitive, reflective



Kings manage resources, usually in a group setting. They focus on the big picture. Enlist their experience and authority.

Sensitive, loving, and creative, the cups enjoy beauty, art in all forms, and connecting with others. Sometimes they take things too personally.

While sensitive and compassionate, this king is no pushover. His biggest struggle is balancing his heart (and the hearts of others) and tolerance with his responsibilities and the greater good. He wants to lead with kindness while establishing effective systems. Trying to make everyone happy is hard on him and he rides the waves of his own and others' emotions as well as he can, keeping an even keel and doing what must be done. Even though he is guided by his heart, he is not interested in immature emotional outbursts.



KING OF SWORDS

KEYWORDS: authority, balanced, powerful, mature, very experienced, logical, rational, intelligent, communicative, decisive



Kings manage resources, usually in a group setting. They focus on the big picture. Enlist their experience and authority.

Smart, excellent communicators, and lovers of facts, the swords are idealistic but can become too committed to what they consider the truth.

This king serves the ideals of reason, truth, and logic. He does so through clever plans, intricate strategies, and excellent communication. While he may seem cold, distant, and self-contained, he, too, must feel comfortable to be at his best, and his true safe place is defined by clear rules. His job, at least in his mind, is to discover the truth of any situation, question, or problem and implement that truth through systems and processes. He has no patience for excess passion, emotions, or practicality.



KING OF PENTACLES

KEYWORDS: authority, balanced, powerful, mature, very experienced, practical, cautious, generous, able, resourceful



Kings manage resources, usually in a group setting. They focus on the big picture. Enlist their experience and authority.

Practical, down-to-earth, and cautious, the pentacles are resourceful and patient. They can slip into materialism, greed, and laziness.

Open, friendly, and calm, this king is probably the most approachable of the kings. He values the things that make life pleasant, and for him that includes an efficient home and work space, fulfilling work, and items of quality. Making things easier and better are his specialties. He measures success by how much one enjoys life rather than how many resources one has. It was probably a King of Pentacles who said “work smarter, not harder.” Don’t waste his time with drama or nitpicky complaints. Life is too short for such nonsense.



— • CHAPTER 6 • —

SPREADS



Tarot cards are like parts of a story. The question tells us what the story will be about. The spread used is the plot and how the story is told. The cards and their interpretation tells the story. You bring the questions and the interpretation. You have your cards and the meanings. All you need now are the spreads and then you can start weaving your own tales.

Like the cards themselves, spreads are tools. They are not sacred. You won't "do them wrong." In fact, you may discover that you like creating your own spreads, either for general use or for each individual question you read about. Making a spread is the best way to make sure that everything you want to know gets represented. You may realize that there is one spread you love and use for every reading; there are plenty of readers who work that way. As you look at the spreads in this chapter, one might be just perfect except for one or two positions. Feel free to eliminate or redefine the spread positions. It is completely acceptable to modify any spread you want to use.

This chapter will give you a few spreads to get started, beginning with some of the most traditional and moving toward some more wizard-themed ones. You can find hundreds of spreads online and in other books. You can invent your own. You can modify any that you find. If you are really interested in more spreads, as well as how to use them and learn to create your own, check out my book *Tarot Spreads: Layouts and Techniques to Empower Your Readings*.

Single Card Readings

The simplest reading is to ask a question and pull a card. This method works particularly well for very intuitive types or for those who love to dive deep into a card.

Three Card Readings

Three card readings are among the most popular with beginners as well as experienced readers. The number three is very satisfying to humans. We love the completeness of it. There is a beginning, a middle, and an ending implied in any collection of three. Three points are needed to make any geometric shape. Three is the number of harmony, wisdom, and understanding. The third time is the charm. Fairy tales and jokes use the number three. Three cards lend themselves to all kinds of possibilities. Usually three card spreads are laid out as three cards in a horizontal row, like this:



Here are some different examples of spread implications:

- Past, present, future
- Choice A, choice B, deciding factor
- What you have, what you need, what you want
- Problem, cause, solution
- Situation, action, outcome
- Strengths, weaknesses, advice

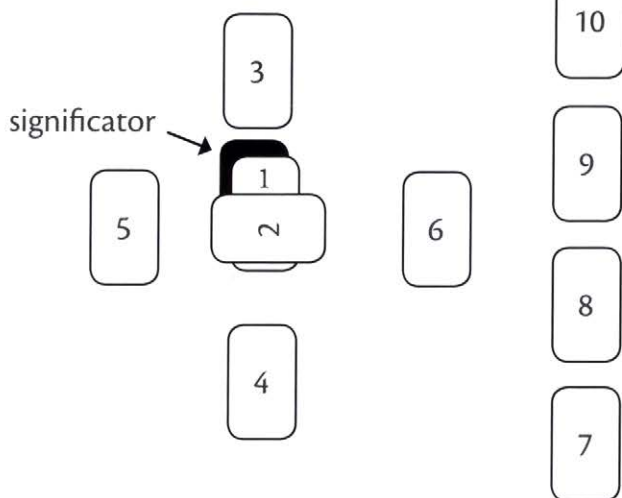
- Body, mind, spirit
- Start doing, stop doing, continue doing
- You, your relationship, your partner

Celtic Cross Spread

The Celtic Cross is a well-known spread and people either love it or hate it. Some find it limiting and some find it freeing. Try it for yourself at least a few times before you decide what you think. You may see other versions of this spread. After all, it's been around for over one hundred years, so there are bound to be alternatives.

One reason some do not like it is because it involves a lot of cards, which can be overwhelming. However, breaking it down into smaller mini-spreads makes that easier. For example, the first mini-spread is the cross in the center, made up of the Significator, the Covering card, and the Crossing card. These cards, read together, very concisely create a picture of the situation or conflict concerning the querent. Card 5, the Significator, and Card 6 together make the familiar three-card spread of past-present-future. Cards 6 and 10 show the trend of future events. Cards 3 and 9 tell what the querent wants, hopes for, or fears. Reading these cards in these combinations also allows you to use your skills in reading card pairs and elemental dignities to add nuances to the reading.

The Significator card is simply the card that represents you. In the past, readers would assign a significator to a client based on astrological sign or physical appearance. Modern readers simply consider the position as any other in a spread. The card is placed just as any other card in the reading.



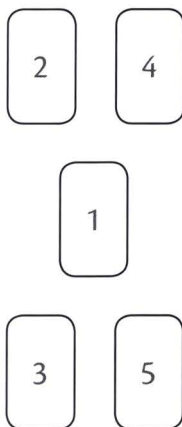
S. Significator: you

1. Covers: the influence that is affecting you
2. Crosses: the obstacles or energies working against you
3. Crown: your ideal or goal
4. Foundation: the basis or foundation
5. Behind: influences that affected you but are now passing away
6. Before: what is likely to happen next
7. Yourself: how you see yourself
8. Your house: the influences of circumstances or people around you
9. Hopes and fears: your hopes or fears
10. What will come: the culmination, resolution, or outcome

Supporting Transformation

When people start exploring magic, they think it is about changing the world, shaping it according to their will. There is truth in that, of course. But the more you study magic, the more you realize it is about transforming yourself. I've heard it said of magic that you are the spell and that your job is to cast yourself. This reading helps you do that. You can use this spread whenever you feel your present transformation has stalled and you want to get it moving again.

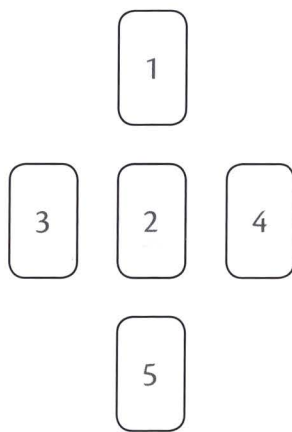
Most readings are done with a full deck shuffled together. You can do that with this one. You could also separate your deck into five little decks: majors, wands, cups, swords, pentacles. Pull card one from the majors; card two, wands; card three, cups; card four, swords; and card five, pentacles.



1. What is ready to transform
2. How to nurture it spiritually
3. How to nurture it emotionally
4. How to nurture it intellectually
5. How to nurture it physically

Your Best Self

If you hit a roadblock while learning a new skill or moving through a specific experience, this spread will help you break through. It will pinpoint the main issue and give you advice to overcome it.



1. Goal: What to set your sights on; the next stage in your advancement
2. Challenge: The nature of the current challenge
3. Strength: Your strength that will be most helpful
4. Weakness: What you should downplay or avoid doing
5. Advice: How to use your strength to counterbalance your weakness and successfully overcome the challenge

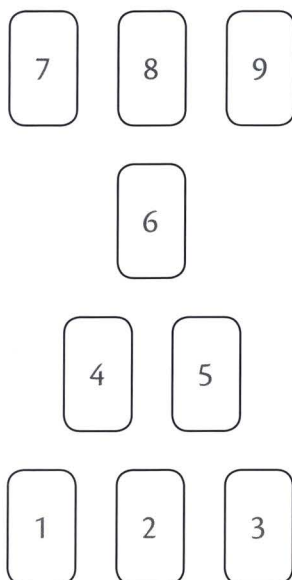
True Magic Spread

There are different opinions about the stereotypical pointy hats that are sometimes found on the heads of witches, wizards, magicians, and sorcerers. Some say that the connection came from the idea that the point is like a horn and therefore connected with the Christian Devil, although that seems far-fetched to me. I like the idea that these pointed hats rep-

resent a magical practice known as the Cone of Power, however, I don't actually know if this is a real connection. The Cone of Power describes when a magic user raises magical energy and directs it according to his or her will.

Use the True Magic Spread to look at any situation or question with fresh eyes. It can help you see what you may have missed and discover some magical ideas.

The bottom row of the spread, cards 1–3, represent the gathering of energy (or resources), which is the first step in creating a Cone of Power. The second row, cards 4 and 5, focus on how to increase and amplify the energy. The top card of the pyramid, card 6, shows how you plan on directing the magic you've gathered. Cards 7–9 are the outcome or results.



Gathering Energy

To accomplish magic in the world you direct energy in accordance with your will. Like most things magical, this is a metaphor. In mundane terms, it is like this: if you want to buy something expensive (that is, it is your will to acquire the thing), you have to gather the money (energy) and give it to the person or company that has the item (directing the energy). If your will is to run a marathon, then you gather the energy (build stamina through training) and direct it to the goal (sign up and show up for the event). To do anything, you have to gather energy, whether that means some sort of physical resource, mental ability, or skill, and then direct it toward your goal. This spread helps you prepare for any project you want to accomplish.

1. What you have: The energy or resources that you have, whether or not you realize it.
2. What you need: Energy or a resource that will benefit the situation. You should make an effort to acquire it.
3. Who will help: This is someone who can help you. They may be right under your nose, so don't overlook anyone's value.

Amplifying Energy

4. What to do: This is an action you should take to increase the power or benefit of the energy or resources represented in cards 1–3.
5. What not to do: This is something that your non-magical self thinks is a good idea, but that your magical self knows will be counter-productive in the situation.

Directing Energy

6. Your will: This is your will, your goal in this matter, and determines how you are directing your magic onto this plane. It is a great opportunity to make sure your intentions are what, well, you intend.

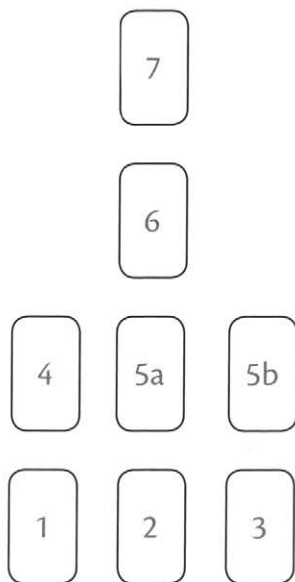
Probable Outcome

- 7–9: Outcome: These cards show the outcome or results of your work. If the outcome isn't what you hoped, double-check your Will (card 6).

Bonus tip: If you don't like the outcome, leave the spread out and go through the remaining cards to select a new card for your Will (card 6). Make sure it is one that you can embrace and really believe. Then shuffle the remaining cards and see what the new outcome is. You can do this up to two times. If after that the outcome still doesn't please you, consider giving up the project for now. After letting it sit for a while and maybe finding new ideas, try again.

The Alchemical Spread

Alchemy, the science of turning lead into gold, is also a metaphor for the transformation of the self, which is where the true magic of the world lies. This spread guides you through the tricky and sticky process of transforming. Here's a clue based on personal experience: only work on transforming one aspect, habit, thought pattern, emotional reaction, etc. at a time. This is hard work and best to keep it focused so as to not get confused or overwhelmed.



1. Calcination: What aspect of the self is to be transformed?

Calcination is the process of heating and decomposing raw matter in preparation for transformation. In this case, it means thinking about and identifying your ego, self-doubt, or any behavior that isn't in line with your core values.

2. Dissolution: How is that aspect counter to your ideal self?

Dissolution is the processing of removing unneeded material. Through truly seeing the ways your behavior is not supporting your core ideals and clearly seeing exactly what kind of energy your actions are putting into the world instead, you can start eliminating what you no longer want.

3. Separation: What is the main way you express the aspect to be transformed?

Separation is the process of, well, separating and identifying materials in order to clearly see and assess them. We all have learned behaviors and authentic behaviors. If we are lucky, they are the same thing, but mostly they are different, and here is where many of our struggles come from. This step encourages you to look at your behaviors closely so that you can decide which are authentic and which you do out of obligation or fear or even just habit.

4. Conjunction: New awareness about the aspect to be transformed. Conjunction is the process of letting everything simmer for a while. You may think that all your thoughts and feelings have been analyzed and sorted, but there is still more. You've cleared some space and created some clarity, and now comes the hard part: waiting patiently and quietly, paying attention to whatever thoughts and feelings bubble up from your unconscious and pop into conscious awareness.

5. Fermentation: Release of the old and rebirth of the new.

The process of fermentation begins with the decomposition of your old self and concludes with new vision and new life.

5a. Putrefaction: what to expect when the aspect to be transformed dies.

5b. Spiritization: what to expect when your rebirth begins.

6. Distillation: How to best support and nurture your rebirth.

Distillation is the process of integrating the material of ourselves back into a whole. For this inner alchemical work, distillation means engaging in practices and behaviors that reflect your new emerging self.

7. Coagulation: Your new transformed self!

Coagulation is the process whereby two opposites become one. Your ideal self and your everyday actual self that goes to work, cleans the house, runs errands, and so on, are in harmony.

— • CHAPTER 7 • —

THE MAGICAL PATH



The Wizards Tarot can be used just like any other tarot deck. The wizardly aspects do not negate or override traditional tarot meanings. In this chapter, we'll look more closely at some of the symbols used in the cards and some of the wisdom they hope to share. For many tarot readers, here is where the awesome potential of tarot is found. The real power of tarot is not telling the future, but telling you who you are, because who you are will determine your future.

The true goal of a wizard's path (as well as other spiritual practices) is to have complete control over yourself and total free will. These are essentially the same thing. As long as you are reactive rather than responsive, you have no free will, because you are being controlled by external circumstances or internal mental or emotional loops (sometimes called triggers). The way you think and feel can influence your actions, and your actions can shape how you think and feel. It's another way that the saying "as above, so below" is expressed in our lives. Another theme that threads through tarot is balance. Maintaining your balance, no matter what situations you find yourself in, is a great way to stay in control of yourself. We'll explore these themes throughout the cards.

Many readers see the major arcana cards I–XXI as a spiritual journey that the Fool, 0, takes. It is the archetypal quest we are all on throughout our lives, called the Fool's Journey. The most common way to view the experience is to lay the cards out in order in three rows of seven cards each, with the Fool alone at the top. The first row is the beginning, or

in terms of the Hero's Journey, the departure. The second row is the middle, or the initiation. The third row is the ending, or the return. If you know Joseph Campbell's work, this will sound very familiar. You can find out more about this way of exploring the Fool's Journey in books I've written, other tarot books, and even online. In fact, you can even see a series I wrote on the topic on the Llewellyn blog. The first article in the series is called "A Study of the Fool's Journey 1."

Another way to look at the Fool's Journey is as one of separation and connection. The Fool leaves his existence as part of all that is to become his true unique self. Yet part of the Fool's soul continues to long for reconnection to the Divine. The first part of the journey, then, begins with the Fool's "fall" into the material realm and continues through his discovery of all that is uniquely him. The second part of the journey is how the Fool finds connection. Use either of these ideas (the three-part hero's journey or the two-part separation-connection journey) on your own to help you clarify your own beliefs about your path and your relationship with the cards.

In the meantime, let's look at some of the themes in the individual cards. Not all the cards will have anything particular to note, so don't worry if there aren't entries on each card. It's not a printing error. One of the challenges of writing card interpretations is trying to keep all the types of information given consistent in each card entry. This chapter is less structured and is meant to be a casual look at some of the interesting aspects of certain cards.

As mentioned in the introduction, there was no way I could create a wizardly deck without being influenced by the literature and movies I've loved. I know that many others who are interested in wizards have their favorite books, series, and movies. I mention a few of the more overt nods to specific books and shows in the notes below. It isn't necessary to be familiar with them to understand the card. And who knows, maybe you will find a new series to fall in love with!

The Fool begins the journey as an innocent soul with a drive to become. The white rose represents innocence and purity while the red feather indicates her will, her drive to express herself in the world. Her companion, the white dog, can be her conscious, a distraction, or maybe it is what evolves into the lion in the Strength card. Symbols are multifaceted and layered. They can mean one thing in this moment and something else in the next. Her staff and small bag might be her past lives, her innate understanding of the elements, or the natural skills she is born with. Most Fool images show the figure looking up, not paying attention to where she is stepping and therefore more falling off the cliff than choosing to jump. I like the idea that she is making the decision to leap. Her will, her unique soul's purpose, urges her to manifest, but the part of her that loves the connection to spirit has some reservations. This way of thinking about it emphasizes the idea that she has a choice, that she indeed has free will, which is a crucial theme in wizardly studies.

The Magician represents the embodiment of will, the part of the Fool that wants to manifest and express herself in the world; we can think of this part of ourselves as our ego. The Magician is all about how the world works and what he can do in that world. It is a very externally focused card, although he is also the embodiment of "as above, so below." He knows that he draws energy from elsewhere and directs it through himself into reality, creating change. He is surrounded by tarot's symbols for the four classical elements: wand/fire, cup/water, sword/air, and pentacle/earth. He stands on a pentacle, which is an incredibly important and powerful symbol. It represents the four classical elements serving spirit (the upper point of the star) and inscribed by a circle showing all this power is held within human will. His hat has an infinity symbol and there is an ouroboros around his waist, both acknowledging the interconnectedness of all things. The red and white flowers on his tunic resonate with the Fool's red feather and white rose.

The High Priestess represents the part of ourselves that remembers and longs for connection with the Divine, with spirit, with all that is. She is most commonly associated with our intuition, but more specifically with that part of ourselves that knows differently, that knows on a subconscious level and therefore often without words. Her dress flows back and becomes one with the water behind her, strengthening that connection to the subconscious. She stands before two pillars, guarding the entrance to an initiatory experience. Part of an initiation is that while you might prepare for it through spiritual practices, you can't know exactly what to expect. You are meant to go into it blind, and the test is how you respond to what you experience during the initiation. The pomegranates on her sleeves evoke the myth of Persephone, who travels between the underworld and the physical world.

The Empress, like the High Priestess, has pomegranates on her gown, but this time we think of Demeter, the mother of Persephone, who held the world in winter until her daughter was returned. The Empress is the great mother, the earth, and the cycles of life.

The Emperor is the great father and the energy of the sun, companion and equal to the Empress. The Empress and the earth provide the resources necessary to life and the Emperor's job is to make sure the resources last through the winter so the community can survive.

The Hierophant is the archetypal teacher. He teaches how to do things. More importantly, he teaches why to do things. We often confuse him with real world church leaders of various (usually Christian) religions and thus often have a low opinion of this card. Remember he is symbolic of the ideal version of a teacher, one who encourages thinking for yourself. His main goal is to create a space where you have clarity about your values, about the highest ideals that shape your beliefs, thoughts, and actions. His three-tiered hat and the stars on his cloak represent the idea that everything flows from your internal North Star. In short, he wants you to be fully in control of yourself and therefore fully free.

A pink lotus appears on the Hierophant's hat and on other cards in this deck. It is not a traditional symbol in the RWS deck, but one that I've adopted. Like all symbols, it has many meanings, such as rebirth, purity, and spiritual awakening. It roots in the mud and grows up through the water, clean and lovely.

Many people think that the Lovers card is about love and romance, or at least what you are passionate about. Sometimes we talk about the card as the union of opposites, which in actual practice is as vague as it sounds. Astrologically, this card is associated with Gemini and the element of air and is therefore actually about choices. Usually when cards evolved over time, they come closer to modern values. Older cards showed a man choosing between two women. But with the rise of romantic love, the image shifted to just two people joining together. Since most divinatory readings are about love, it makes sense that the Lovers are stuck in this interpretation. What we are seeing in the card, though, isn't necessarily finding the love of your life but in making a choice that makes your heart and soul feel complete (uniting all aspects of yourself). That might mean choosing a person, or it could mean picking a certain path, job, project, or group. Traditional cards show an angel above the couple, blessing them. Here we have the pentacle, indicating that the choice is made consciously and in a way that honors all parts of yourself, including your spirit.

The Chariot is a fascinating card. As the last card in the first row of seven, it is the culmination of all the lessons and wounds gained in those previous cards. This is why many images of the Chariot include symbols connecting it to the first six cards. The archetypal tarot path is the story of an ideal journey. However, real life isn't always ideal. We don't only learn useful and healthy life lessons. Sometimes we are wounded in ways that change our behavior or thought processes going forward. It is this baggage that we carry with us, as well as our skills and wisdom. The baggage

forms the basis of the lessons we will work through in the second row and the skills and wisdom that will help us deal with these challenges.

Strength is about the most difficult strength of all: the ability to accept, forgive, and heal yourself. The dragon represents the shadow, where so many of your treasures are hidden away. Through wounds and hard experiences, parts of yourself were separated and labeled “bad.” But you need all the parts of yourself in order to live your soul’s purpose, so you need to get those parts back. Those are also the things that create a reactive self or triggers. It is hard work to face our scariest internal dragons, but it is necessary work if we want to be the free souls we were born to be.

The Hermit is, compared to the other majors, a very straightforward card. The staff represents all that he has learned and relies on to help him travel. I like this version with the addition of the talismans, emphasizing that the single staff holds multitudes.

The Wheel is often less interesting than other major arcana cards visually, but its deepest meaning is complex and often overlooked. The Wheel of Fortune usually shows a classical wheel with creatures riding it, their fortunes rising and falling with each turn of the wheel. Modern versions often shift this to a wheel of the year, emphasizing the natural cycles of life. This one connects with both but takes a slightly different approach. We’ve given a nod to chaos theory and fractals with the outer edges. The four main rings are the four classical elements. The white one is water, which is represented by snowflakes (frozen water). The green is earth, with growing leaves. The yellow is air and features astrological symbols. The red is fire and has runes spelling out *abracadabra*. In the center is the pentacle, the symbol of all the elements in service to spirit and under your control. The outer edges are the uncertainties or chaotic events that can throw you off balance. The closer you operate toward the edge, the more reactive you are. Staying close to the center means you are less affected by external circumstances and are more stable.

Justice in tarot can be tricky. Does it mean human justice or universal justice (sometimes called karma)? Is justice meted out based on intentions or outcomes? Because the majors are archetypes, it makes more sense for it to represent universal justice. This is why there is no human figure in the card.

Wizards love to study alchemy, the process of turning lead into gold. This process is metaphoric and means that we are changing ourselves from our base self to our highest self. In the process of transformation, there comes a point when we let go of who we were and have to exist for a while not knowing who we will become. Since wizards rely so much on books and knowledge for their identity, this wizard is separated from his library, his sense of self, while he connects to the waters of his subconscious and receives clarity, as shown by the sun shining through the trees.

There is more alchemy in Temperance. Her shoes have the symbols for water and earth while the gold and silver cups are fire and air. The red triangle is fire and the red circle and dot on her hat are the sun. Temperance is associated with Sagittarius, a fire sign. In alchemy, there are different grades or types of fire, and for true personal transformation to occur, the wizard has to access the highest grade of fire, symbolized here by the sun symbol on her hat. Using the metaphor of the caterpillar and butterfly, Death is the moment of ceasing to be a butterfly. Temperance is the time spent in the cocoon, dissolving and being rearranged into something new.

For many, the Devil is harder than Death to face and deal with. After Death and Temperance, our new selves are ready to face the world! And the Devil says, "Oh, yeah? You think you're ready? Let's see about that." Then the Devil brings you face to face with your worst fears, your deepest addictions, your very worst behaviors, your most unhealthy thought processes, and your most shameful emotions. Even though you feel new and improved, you are shocked at how hard these challenges are. The reason is because you cultivated those habits for many years. You nurtured them.

You gave them life. Once something has been alive, it will fight to stay alive. Your devilish tendencies know when you mean business and do all they can to thwart your good intentions and survive.

The Tower is another straightforward card, although readers spend a lot of time explaining it, because we usually do that with what we consider challenging cards. In the process of transformation, it can mean that once you've transformed, very often your life then falls apart. You are different and how you think and feel about your life will change. Because you are different and those around are used to you being a certain way, when you behave differently, they don't always know how to respond. It can throw your relationships into chaos.

After the trauma and anxiety of the Devil and the Tower, the Star brings much needed healing and a space to rest. She holds the same cups as Temperance, showing that the realizations gained in Temperance are being integrated. She is standing on the water, able to feed it but without being consumed or drowned by it.

The Moon brings us one more chance to face our inner demons. The lobster traditionally represents our deepest fears rising up from the waters of subconscious. The two dogs symbolize two types of fears, internal and external.

When we meet the Sun near the end of the journey, we begin to reconnect with the purity and passion of the Fool. The white horse, gown, and hat are her purity and innocence of spirit. The fire and sunflowers as well as the brilliant sun are her passion and also clarity of mind.

Judgement brings us more alchemical symbolism, in the Arbor Diana (also found in the Three of Pentacles). The tree is a result of the alchemical process and in some literature represents a new level of life. Wisdom perches in the tree, and the wizards' spirits respond to her silent summons. Many tarot decks show people being called by an angel out of graves; here the books are the coffins that hold the dead. They

were bound by the pages they studied but are now invited to transmute abstractions and theories into life.

When you reach the World, you have achieved the outcome of whatever quest you've been on. In wizardly terms, you've completed the cycle of individuation and reintegration. You became your true unique self and reestablished your connection with the Divine and all that is. What was theoretical is now experiential. The elemental energies are represented by actual creatures rather than symbols: the bird for air, the nymph for water, the salamander for fire, and the gnome for earth. And you are stepping through a portal ready for a new adventure.

The Two of Swords has always been one of my least favorite cards, so I was shocked when the image for this card came to mind, since it is one that I love. Although more sci-fi than fantasy, there are some mystical elements to the TV series *Firefly* and the movie *Serenity*. In particular, the character River Tam has intense but chaotic psychic experiences. We aren't sure whether these are natural skills or a result of the government messing with her brain or both. This card is inspired by River's role at the end of *Serenity* when she decides to take action even though the odds are insurmountable. The way she moves in that scene reminds me so much of how it feels to be in a Two of Swords situation.

The Three of Pentacles shows another Arbor Diana. In the All Souls trilogy by Deborah Harkness, when Diana adds a drop of blood to the tree she and her friend made, it comes to life and bears fruit.

The Four of Wands shows a portal opening to another world. In *The Magicians* book and TV series, when the time is right, when all things are aligned, doors are opened and the human children are able to travel from earth to the magical realm of Fillory.

The Six of Swords gives a nod to Sirius Black and his motorbike, which Hagrid borrows in a few of the Harry Potter books.

In the 7 of Cups the symbols are as follows, starting at the top left:

Amber flame and circle with three dots represent honey.

Green flame and spiral represent fertility.

Silver flame and crescent moon represent silver.

Purple flame and diamond, dot, and triangles represent spirit.

White flame and half circle with dots represent purity.

Gold flame and circle with dot represent the sun.

Red flame and half circle with lines represent life.

The skull with the glowing orange eye sockets in the Eight of Pentacles will be recognized by Harry Dresden (the Dresden Files series) fans as Bob the Skull. Bob is a spirit of pure intellect who guides and assists whatever wizard owns the skull, which is the vessel in which he lives.

Another Harry Dresden homage holds center stage in the Nine of Wands. Harry is famous for protecting anyone who needs protecting no matter how big the monsters are that are coming at him.

Although the child is female in the image, the scene of the Ten of Pentacles reminds me of Lily and James Potter from the Harry Potter series. Maybe that is Dumbledore in the background, a spiritual and magical grandfather figure.

The clocks in the trees of the Five of Cups and Knight of Pentacles are inspired by the clock trees created by the Watcherwoman in the Magicians trilogy by Lev Grossman. In the Five of Cups, I thought about the old tradition that when someone dies the clocks are stopped, and also that mourning requires a period of time but eventually that time must end and normal life must resume. The Knight of Pentacles knows about the importance of timing and that's why the clock trees appear in his card, too.

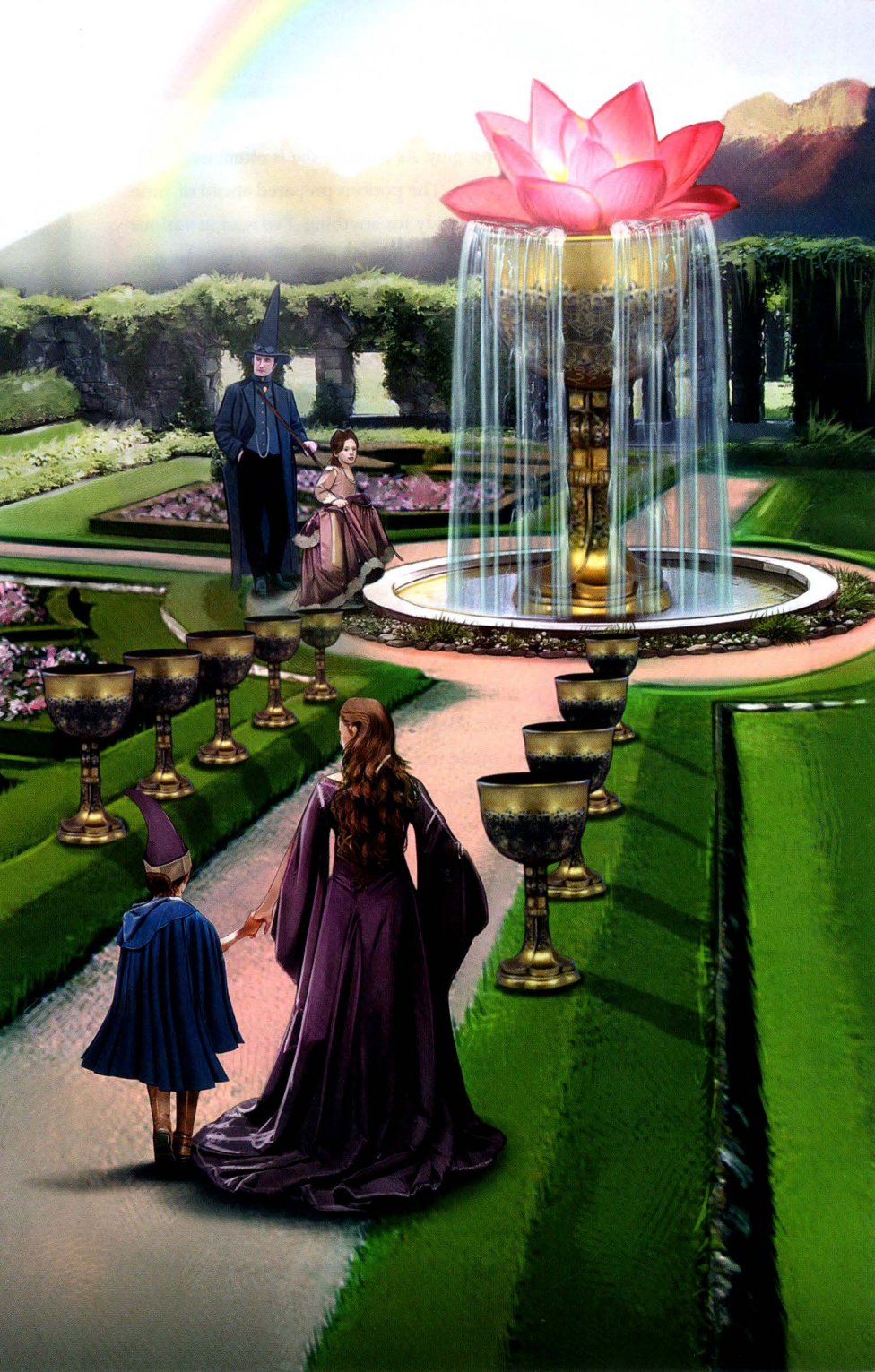
All of the pages like to think of themselves as ready for action. They can be impatient and feel like they know everything. The Page of Pentacles is the only exception to this. Like all the pentacles court cards, she

moves more slowly, more thoroughly. As a result, she is often, ironically, the most prepared of all the pages. The potions prepared ahead of time and kept handy symbolize being ready for anything. I've read in various novels that one of the most important things for a wizard is to be prepared, so the idea of planning ahead, thinking ahead is significant to a wizards tarot.

Because the queens are associated with intuition and psychic abilities, each image has an animal representing the queen's connection to other realms of knowing. The Queen of Wands has the traditional black cat. The Queen of Cups has a turtle. The Queen of Swords has an owl. The Queen of Pentacles has a rabbit.

The King of Swords and his throne appear to be floating, indicating that he lives mostly in his head and is sometimes out of touch with the real world.

It is common to think of the court cards in different ways, and you may notice that deck designers use different names. One reason is that some people think that pages, knights, queens, and kings are no longer relevant to how we think about the world and that it would be better if we used ranks or titles that made more sense to modern people. The ranks reflect a progression from beginner or lowest to master or highest. For example, instead of page, knight, queen, and king, you might see seer, seeker, sybil, and sage, or perhaps apprentice, journeyman, teacher, master. In magical work, I think of them as representing different aspects of the magical process, using their rank's traditional elemental association. Pages, as earth, represent preparation, a key ingredient to magical success. Queens, as water, represent emotions, which are the source of magical power. Knights, as fire, represent the will of the wizard. Kings, as air, represent learned skills and knowledge.



CONCLUSION



Whether you consider yourself a wizard or not, whether you identify with some other magical title or not, know that you are magical. In fact, you are magic. You have all that you need to become highly skilled and effective, whether you want to change the world or change yourself or both.

Remember, to study tarot and to study magic is to study yourself. Tarot is a journey into wisdom. Along the way, the cards are useful tools for divining the future, accessing insight, and finding guidance. They may also come to be friends that you rely on to help mirror your true self back to you.

May you be prepared, powerful, and skilled.

May you move with clarity through your life.

May you and your magic be a walking blessing in the world.

May you find and fall in love with your true self.

