

THE CARTOMANCER

THE
ALICE TAROT
an interview with creators
KAREN MAHONY
& ALEX UKOLOV

MARKETING TO
CURRENT CLIENTS
with Jenna Musler

THE FOUNTAIN TAROT
a review by Bonnie Cohen

TAROT'S
FORMATIVE
YEARS
with Sheryl Smith

KABBALISTIC VISIONS
a review by Benicelli Wenz

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Mission Statement

Our primary goal is to support an inclusive and mutually supportive community of Tarot, Lenormand and Oracle card readers worldwide through a quarterly journal that includes:

Well written informative articles by a wide range of experts for cartomancers of all levels, from novice to professional.

High quality divination inspired art from around the world and full color samples from some of the best recently published and classic decks for readers to explore.

A Marketplace for authors and artists to publicize and promote their books, decks and other Tarot, Lenormand and Oracle related products and upcoming events of interest to the community.

A public forum for letters and editorials that offer respectful and supportive commentary on topics of interest to the card reading community at large.

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ON THE COVER



The Alice Tarot

The cover image is the Ten of Cups from *The Alice Tarot*. Read an interview with deck creators Alex Ukolov and Karen Mahony on page 7.

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NEXT ISSUE

The winter issue will be available in November and we are featuring the *The Didactic Tarot* by Jeffrey M. Donato



EDITOR'S NOTE

 We are absolutely thrilled with the reaction to our first issue of *The Cartomancer*! So many people have said such nice things, and membership to our Facebook page has grown tremendously. We are accomplishing what we intended to do – reach out to the metaphysical/divination world, offer timely, quality material, and engage everyone in an exchange of thought.

Many thanks to those that shared images and information on their decks – it takes time to put all of that together, and we appreciate it. Many thanks to those who submitted articles – your understanding of your subject, and ability to connect with our readership, is amazing!

We are new and we are growing. Three individuals have been added to our editorial staff, each bringing a unique perspective on their subject. Pamela Steele (www.steelewizard.com/ and www.wizardspets.com) is now offering a reading to a few individuals in each issue. In her “Ask The Wizard” column, she will be doing a one card draw from either the Steele Wizard Tarot or the Wizard’s Pet Tarot. Game on!

Sherryl E. Smith (<http://tarot-heritage.com/>) has jointed us to do reviews of historical decks and books, along with writing a column on Tarot and history. Sherryl is a top notch researcher, so again we say ... Game on!

Also joining us as a reviewer is Benebell Wen (www.benebellwen.com), author of *Holistic Tarot: An Integrative Approach to Using Tarot for Personal Growth*. A book we highly recommend as you’ll see in this issue’s review section.

We are excited to have these three talented, knowledgeable people join *The Cartomancer* team!

Jadzia did a lovely interview with Tarot Visions (Charlie and Rose Red). You can listen to it here: <http://tarotvisions.podbean.com/e/tarot-visions-the-cartomancer-magazine/>.

Bonnie chatted with some online friends, and the subject of the cost of shipping outside of the U.S. came up. We do have a digital edition, but these individuals wanted a print version, and were put off by shipping costs. One of them made the suggestion that they get together and have the magazines shipped to one address to save money. We thought this was a wonderful solution, and really hope that this can be worked out. At this point we are looking into setting this up for the UK, Europe and Australia. We’ll have more information about that soon.

A special thank you to our non-staff proof-reader December Lynd for helping to make this magazine have fewer typos. And to Jay DeForest for all of his shipping efforts!

We hope that you enjoy the *Cartomancer*, and that you consider contributing to it. Sharing information will only make our divination community that much stronger!

Blessings,
Jadzia, Jay, and Bonnie

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ABOUT US



JADZIA DEFOREST is a Tarot reader, instructor, and author residing in Portland, Oregon. She is co-author to both the *Tarot Learning Cards* and *Astrology Learning Cards* decks, published through Devera Publishing & Distribution. She is also the director of the Northwest Tarot Symposium, an annual tarot conference.

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JAY DEFOREST is a professional Tarot & Rune reader, Co-author of the Living Magick Learning Card series, and owner of TheGuidingTree.com, an online Body, Mind & Spirit shop.

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Jay lives in Portland, Oregon with his wife, Jadzia, in their 99 year old house full of cats, plants and tarot decks.

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BONNIE CEHOVET is a professional Tarot reader with over twenty years experience, is a CTGM (Certified Tarot Grand Master), and a Reiki Master/Teacher. She is a published author, including *Tarot, Birth Cards, and You* (Schiffer Publishing, 2011). *Tarot, Ritual, and You* (Schiffer Publishing, 2013), and *Surviving the Holidays* (through Amazon.com). She is co-author, along with Brad Tesh, of *Seek Joy ... Toss Confetti* (through Amazon.com).

Her reviews and interviews can be found on her site (www.bonniecchovet.com), and on the Aeclectic Tarot website (www.aeclectic.net/tarot). Her writer's blog can be found here - <http://www.bonniecchovet.blogspot.com/>.



SHERRYL E. SMITH writes about tarot history, reviews decks and books of historical interest, and offers readings at www.tarot-heritage.com. Her website is a resource for exploring tarot's 550-year history, and for learning to read with the Tarot de Marseille and other historic decks.

Her website is <http://tarot-heritage.com/>



PAMELA STEELE is a registered massage therapist, professional bar tender, event organizer, horse trainer and has taught tarot reading, art and belly dancing. With over 50+ years art experience and over 35 years reading tarot, Pamela has created the *Steele Wizard Tarot*, the *Wizard's Pets Tarot* and the currently in-progress *Eternal Seeker's Tarot*. She gets bored easily and can be distracted by everything or nothing. Her founding passions are fantasy art and horses which you will see blended into many tarot images. She has shown and sold art internationally for over 30 years and her work has graced graphic novel covers, D&D publications, the German Sci-Fi Annual, coloring books, children's books and new age books and magazines. She's online at www.SteeleWizard.com.

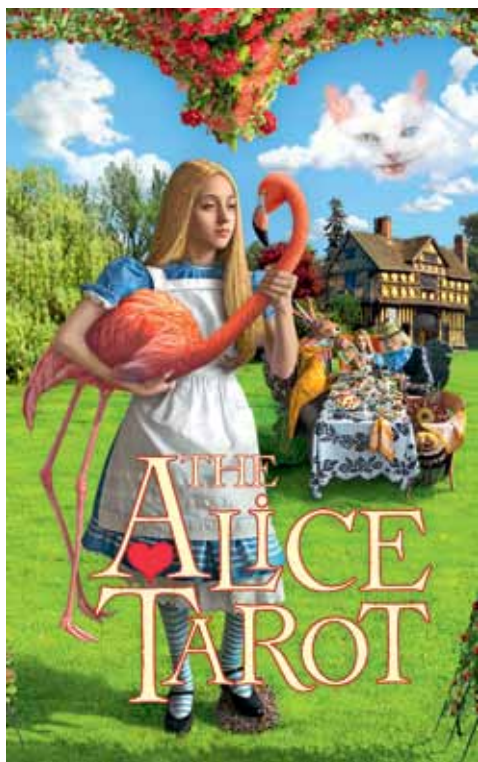


BENEBELL WEN is the author of *Holistic Tarot: An Integrative Approach to Using Tarot for Personal Growth* (North Atlantic Books). She loves reviewing tarot and oracle decks. Read more about her work with tarot at www.benebellwen.com.

THE ALICE TAROT INTERVIEW

WITH KAREN MAHONY AND ALEX UKOLOV

with Jadzia DeForest



When The Alice Tarot was published I saw it all over Facebook. The brilliant colors and fascinatingly detailed artwork caught my eye immediately. I am so excited to have this wonderful imagery as this issue's cover art!

Q: Why and how did you get into tarot?

KM: All sorts of reasons! I have always been interested in magic. Alex, being brought up in the Soviet Union, had less exposure to it.

It was a card reading, done in a rather dull little hotel room in the centre of Prague, that predicted that if I moved here, I would meet a man who I would work with and also fall in

love with. I did the reading twice because it seemed so very unlikely. It came out with almost exactly the same cards each time. When Alex and I got together, only a few months later, a tarot deck seemed the obvious project for us.

Q: What has been your inspiration for creating several tarot decks?

KM: Partly because we realised, after being here in Prague for a while, that Prague didn't have its own tarot, and it clearly needed it! We thought we would just make The Tarot of Prague and then probably go on to doing other things. We never imagined eventually making seven decks.

Q: You have a very unique art style. Can you tell us more about it?

KM: I'm not sure that we have one style; we see ourselves as designers and so we tend to adapt our style, to some extent, to the needs of the design we're working on. The Tarot of Prague was a collage, carefully done and involving quite an amount of reworking and redrawing of the elements. The Baroque Bohemian Cats' Tarot was done with miniature costumes and models and was more of a digital composition than a collage. The Bohemian Gothic Tarot, in contrast, was based on antique photographs, many of which we had to re-photograph (because they were faded and in poor resolution)



as well as redraw and recompose. By the time we got to The Alice Tarot, we were working more filmically, in a technique that's quite similar to film CGI.

We tend to work very slowly and painstakingly. At times this is frustrating as it takes us so long to complete a deck. But it gives our work a certain look and "finish" that perhaps is quite distinctive. We also love colour and tend to use very rich colouring in all our decks. I suppose it's one of our stylistic hallmarks.

Q: Tell us a little about the process from a deck creator's view. What do you feel were your greatest challenges in creating this deck? And, which parts were easiest?

KM: The main issue came from the style and technique which as I've already said, is very slow to produce. We had to begin by making costumes and collecting props before we could even start any photography. Then simply photographing Alice herself took the best part of a year, as we were only able to do one or two scenes at a time due to their complexity.

When we realised that we were taking weeks to make some of the images, we thought we would have to do a deck with fully illustrated Majors and Courts and decorated, rather than illustrated, "Minors" (in fact more like Pips than the Minors of the RWS). However, at some point we decided to go ahead and do a full 78 card deck – which ended up being 79 cards as we included a second Lovers card. It was a huge project, easily the most time-consuming one we've ever undertaken.

Which parts were easiest? None of it! Well, I'm joking but in a way it's true. It was just a huge project, and apart from producing the images, it demanded a lot of research into the history of the Alice books and the criticism and commentary that's sprung up around them.

AU: Some scenes took a lot of preparation and complex

My advice would be never to rush the artwork. Always sketch it out first just to check the whole concept and how the cards work together in terms of style, meanings and content.

photography, for example The Tea Party, which needed to reflect the 19th century period of the original book (though we adapted this to a rather fantasy Victorian style). We used textiles, china, even cutlery, that was vintage or antique, and we even made the cakes quite old-fashioned. Getting all this together took a long time.

The easiest cards were the ones that were mostly done with photography and that required very little digital artwork. The Eight of Coins is a good example.

Q: The Alice Tarot has a great companion book. What is included in it?

KM: Thanks! Well, we always have thorough discussions of each card in our companion books, and The Alice Tarot companion is no

exception. We give standard Rider Waite Smith meanings and also more specific Alice interpretations.

We also give background to the cards and information about the particular scene we chose. A little more unusually, there is also "Further Notes" section for most cards, that gives historical information. This helps to put each image in a broader perspective and, we hope, gives readers more associations and possible interpretations to work with.

Q: You've done a lot with your tarot images by using them on different merchandise items like tarot bags, purses, and scarves. Tell us a little about Baba Studio and the diverse use of your tarot images.

KM: We're a design studio first and foremost, so of course we use some of our imagery (not just tarot, but also other images) on our other products. Interestingly, we find that not every tarot image works well on, for example, a bag. It's very much a matter of working out what will look good and then, if necessary, sometimes adapting the image accordingly.

In the last three or four years, we've moved beyond simply putting an image on to an item, and



we're doing more "all over" designs especially for the bags, scarves, jewellery and, soon, clothing. You will still spot some elements from our card imagery though!

Q: Do you have any advice for artists and authors thinking of creating their own deck?

KM: Well, the main thing is to work out why you want to do it. It takes a lot of time and effort to make a good deck and if you start out with some misconceptions you may end up being disappointed.

For example, we occasionally see people thinking that it's a way to make money easily and it definitely isn't! It only makes sense to create a deck if it's something that you want to do essentially for personal and creative reasons. If it then sells well, that's great and a bonus.

Having said all that, it's also vital to think about how a deck will read. There are some quite gimmicky decks around these days that I can't imagine actually using. You can tell the decks where the designer has really thought about how the cards will read. It makes a huge difference.

AU: My advice would be never to rush the artwork. Always sketch it out first just to check the whole concept and how the cards work together in terms of style, meanings and content. Sometimes when you sketch all 78 cards you see that there is too much of one type of image (or two little) and you will need to alter your first ideas.

Once you've sketched, complete just two or three images and get some feedback and critique on these from knowledgeable people. Don't hesitate to change images if they don't work, even if you like them as a piece of art!

Later, you may not need so much feedback (and sometimes it can even be confusing) but in the early stages, it can be very useful.

Q: What are you working on now?

KM: We are finally getting close to finishing a Marseilles style deck featuring mythical creatures that we've been doing



in collaboration with a Russian artist for... wait for it... more than eight years! Other things came up in her life and she abandoned the work, but then came back to it in the last year or two. The way the collaboration works is that we design the deck and sketch out each card roughly. She does sketches for us to comment on and ask her to alter as necessary. Then she does the final, very detailed, pen and ink drawings.

The last stage will be for Alex to colour those images and collate them with borders (this deck is quite traditional looking and needs borders), and for me to write the companion book in partnership with another author. We needed someone more familiar with the use of Marseilles decks than I am to help with the book. We think that it may all be ready to print in autumn 2016. The images are extraordinarily beautiful, so hopefully it will be worth all the time.

We are also working on several other projects including a fairytale photo-shoot for a well-known US magazine. We're excited about this! I don't know if tarot will come into it, but as anyone who knows our fashion and fantasy photos will have noticed, the cards often do sneak their way in there.

Oh, I should also mention the tour of "Magic Prague" that we're organising for next April. It's the first tour that we've offered, though we've been asked about this many times in the past. It will focus on the magical and esoteric history and mythology of this amazing city, and we'll be working with The Tarot of Prague. Actually using the deck here is a unique experience and we're very much looking forward to sharing this.



Q: Where can readers find out more about your tarot decks and other designs. Oh, and the tour!?

KM: Please visit our Facebook pages and our online shops. There's a lot to see and we love to talk to people via Facebook. There is even a thriving group for Alice Tarot users, where you'll get lots of support from fellow enthusiasts and

some great Alice information and links.

<http://baba-store.com>

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TAROT'S FORMATIVE YEARS

by Sherryl E. Smith

Have you ever wondered why the tarot deck looks the way it does? Why four suits? Why those major arcana cards instead of some others? Why twenty-two instead of twenty, or twenty-six?

Me neither!

I've never questioned the deck's structure any more than I've questioned why a car has four tires and a steering wheel. But I've discovered that investigating how the tarot deck gelled into its traditional form can tell us a lot about why it exists at all.

It amazes me to think that the tarot deck has barely changed in over 500 years. There was a brief period very early in tarot's development when the number of cards in the deck fluctuated. Some decks had more court cards, and some had fewer trumps (major arcana). Artists experimented with different ways of depicting the tarot archetypes, just as they do now. By 1475, the tarot deck that we know today was completely formed and quickly becoming the most popular card game in Europe.

Four Suits

The four suits came first, at least fifty years before the twenty-two trump cards were added to the deck.

The concept of playing games with little squares of colored paper (or bamboo or papyrus) traveled down the Silk Road from China, through the Persian Empire, to India and Arabia. Each culture had unique cards with a distinctive size and shape. The number of suits and the total cards in a deck varied from one country to another. By the time card playing reached the Egyptian Mamluk Empire in the late middle ages, the deck had been consolidated into four suits of cups, scimitars, polo sticks and coins. Arab sailors and merchants introduced these cards into European seaports about 1370.



chalices and gold coins. When printers changed the suit symbols on playing cards to hearts, diamonds, spades, and clubs around the year 1500, the tarot deck was unique in keeping its

traditional suit symbols.

The Italian suit symbols of swords, batons, cups and coins were standard in all tarot decks until the late 19th century when occultists like Oswald Wirth, Paul Christian and A. E. Waite, who belonged to esoteric societies like the Rosicrucians and the Golden Dawn, altered the suit symbols to represent ceremonial magicians' tools (wands, pentacles, swords and cups). These same occultists changed the first major arcana card from a street performer playing a cup and ball game to a ceremonial magician with the four suit symbols on his table.



Court Cards

The Mamluk deck that was the ancestor of European card games had three court cards: King, First Viceroy and Second Viceroy. Because of the Muslim prohibition against depicting living beings, these cards were abstract designs with labels. Europeans re-designed the court cards to show familiar types of people.



Tarot went through an early phase of experimenting with different numbers of court cards. One deck had three couples: King and Queen, Knight and Lady, Page and Maid. The Italian tarot deck probably settled into the familiar four court cards because they were an obvious choice for residents of warlike Italian city-states. The court in each suit is made up of the ruler and his wife, the soldier-knight who was essential to the state's survival, and the page, who was a knight in training.

The Trump Cards

The twenty-two trump cards were added to the playing card deck about 1435 as a fifth suit that always ranked above the other four in the game of Tarot (Tarocchi in Italian). These additional cards were called "triumph" cards, or trumps, until the 19th century when occultists redesigned the cards to add more magic and mystery to the deck. Occultists renamed the trump suit the Major Arcana (Greater Secrets), while the rest of the deck was designated the Minor Arcana.

Unfortunately, we have no examples of the kind of tarot cards ordinary people played with in the first 75 years of the deck's history. We can't be sure how many trump cards they used and what they looked like. But museums have preserved a luxurious deck painted on gold leaf that belonged to the Duke of Milan. This deck was created in the early 1450s, less than two decades after the game was invented. The Trump cards had no names or numbers on them, so we can't be sure what order

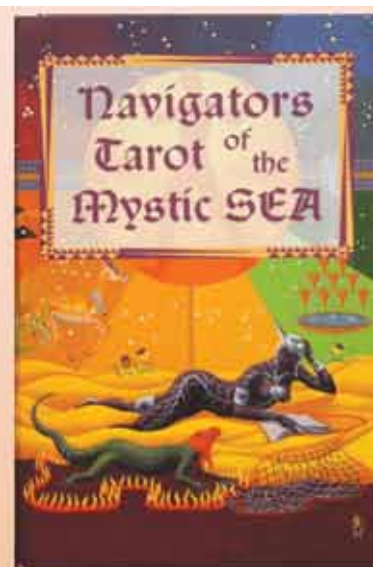
the cards were in. But the imagery is unmistakably the same major arcana cards that we use today: Emperor, Chariot, Lovers, Hanged Man, and all the other familiar archetypes.

Just before the year 1500, an Italian priest wrote a list of tarot trumps on the edge of a sermon. He named the same cards in the same order we use today. The first deck we know of with names and numbers on them was printed in Lyons, France in 1557. It has the same cards, in the same order as contemporary decks. It seems that tarot did not go through an early period of evolution where the deck could have gone in radically different directions. There's a sense of inevitability about the tarot deck structure.

No matter what deck you use, or how radically the imagery has been updated, the third card is a maternal figure, the sixth card denotes love or passion, the thirteenth card is an archetype of death or transformation, and the twenty-first card is the pinnacle of development. This procession of cards emerged from the collective unconscious of late-Medieval

Europe and has been inspiring art, creativity, and philosophy for over 550 years.

Card images from ClassicoTarocco di Marsiglia, Il Meneghello, 1996.



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PROBLEM SOLVING WITH THE TAROT

by Bonnie Cehovet

Tarot can be used in many different ways. We can use it as daily guidance, to understand a person or an issue, to meditate, as a tool for writing ... whatever we can envision, we can use Tarot for. One of the reasons is that the Tarot gives us an objective perspective of our situation or issue. Once we have that objective perspective, we can move forward to make the decisions that we need to make, and take the actions that we need to take to work our way through our issues.

We can look at the Tarot as a highly usable tool for problem solving – whatever the problem may be, in whatever area of our life it may be. One of the easiest layouts to use to get information that will help us solve a problem is the three card Past/Present/Future spread. With this spread we can get a basic overview of any situation, whether it is job related, family related, financial in nature, or related to relationship (whether that relationship is professional, personal, or familial).

Our client is wanting to make a move to another state. The problem is that they want to make sure they are doing the right thing. Using the three-card Past/Present/Future spread, we draw the following cards, from the *Parallel Worlds Tarot* (Astrid Amadori, 2014).

Card number one represents the client's past, and how they got where



they are now. This is the core of their problem/issue. They drew the Eight of Cups (Abandoned Success). In this card we see five standing cups, one laying on its side, and one leaning. In the background we see a robed figure, with their hands lying in their lap. There is a sense of peace in this card. The client is consciously moving away from something that they have work hard for. It is no longer of great import to them. Old ways of looking at things are being released so that new ones may come in. The energy here is of change and transition. Swift movement. Specific to the client's question, continuing to living in their current location is what is being released. They have learned their lessons, and are ready to move on. A new life awaits them in a new location.

Card number two represents the present – where our client is at this time. They drew the Seven of Coins (Success Unfulfilled). Here we see seven coins lines up in two rows at the bottom of the card. At the top of the card we see two white lilies. The energy here is one of projects that have not been successful. The client's goals are not being met. Their current environment



is not conducive to them being able to manifest the life that they want. They are willing to work to manifest their dreams, but their efforts are not paying off. While your client is appropriately rooted in the present, they are taking a long term view of where they are, and where they want to be. There is a need to focus on the areas of their life that will benefit them the most. (This

we can see as an action step – focus on what needs to be changed, and release that which is no longer working.) It is time to recognize where your client's frustration is coming from, and help them to release it. (This is another action step – recognizing and releasing the frustration in their life.)

Card number three represents the future, and what might happen if they make this move. They drew the Three of Wands (Established Strength). Here we see three upright wands, connected with a bright red ribbon. The wands are standing in lush green grass, with a body of water (the unconscious) behind them. In the background we see mountains, and a bright yellow sun overlooking them. The feeling here is of warmth, prosperity, and dreams fulfilled. The client's efforts have paid off, and they are enjoying life. Opportunities abound for them. Expansion and progress are key words here. Your client is planning well and carries great motivation with them.

The root of the problem/issue here is that the client has come through one phase of their life where they found success, learned from their experiences, and have consciously chosen to move on. The moving on was their action step. Currently they are living in an environment that is not conducive to attaining their goals. They are discontented – the work

they are putting in is going nowhere. Recognizing this is an action step for where they are currently. The (near) future shows opportunity and prosperity. The action step to be taken for the future is to take a leap of faith and make the physical move they are contemplating.

As you can see from this small reading, the Tarot allows us to solve problems creatively by thinking outside of the box. We move outside of the realm of logical reasoning into a space where anything is possible. The imagery in the card opens the reader to a whole new world of possibilities. The magic is not in the cards, it is in the process.

As a reader, when you sit down to work with the Tarot to resolve a problem, you might want to take the following into consideration:

1. How are you (or your client) perceiving the problem/issue?
2. What is your emotional reaction to the problem/issue?
3. Is the real problem different from how you (or your client) perceive it? What is the root of the problem/issue? What are some of the pertinent related issues?
4. What steps can be taken to resolve the problem/issue?

With these answers in mind, the reader chooses a deck they feel appropriate to the question, and either chooses a spread that they are familiar to work with, or develops an appropriate spread. The Tarot acts as a bridge between our conscious and unconscious selves –it helps give us clarity, and helps us to see what role our emotions are playing in the process of resolution. The Tarot connects us with spirit, so that the decisions we make and the actions we take are for the highest good.

It helps to allow our intuition to come to the forefront. We need to allow the images to talk to us – What

do the colors in the card tell you? What is the action in the card? How can the action in the card be translated into action that can be taken to resolve your client's problem/issue?

In general, the Major Arcana represent archetypal forces, while the Minor Arcana pips (numbered cards) represent everyday influences. The Court Cards may represent an individual around the client, and their influence on the process. The client's story evolves from these cards.

Listening to our intuition is an important part of the process of problem solving. It doesn't take a whole spread to gain insight into a difficult problem. A word of information can be gained from a single card. Choose a deck that you feel will respond to your question, and begin shuffling. Quiet your mind, and concentrate on the problem you are addressing. Think about the effect that it is having on your life, and what some of the related issues might be.

You can consciously choose a card that represents your problem, or you can do a random draw. Take a moment to simply look at the card that you have chosen. What are the predominate colors? Is the scene a city image or a rural image? How do you feel about that? Are there animals in the scene? What are they doing? How do you relate to them? Are there people in the scene? What are they doing? Are they happy? Are they sad? Do they remind you of yourself, or of someone in your life?

Take the thoughts and feelings that you get from the card that you have chosen, and apply them to your problem. What new perspectives do you have? What actions can you take? What might your next step be?

As an example, let's say that your client is having a problem with someone at work. They need to know

how to deal with this individual in a positive manner. The card drawn was the Nine of Coins (Material Gain), from the Parallel Worlds Tarot (Astrid Amadori, 2014). Here we see nine coins, in front of a door that appears to be locked. In the upper right hand corner we see a hand, with a lit match. This card represents abundance, and a sense of security.



There is a feeling of happiness and contentment here. This represents what can be achieved with the problematic person at work. Both your client and the individual they are having problems/issues with are looking for success, and to achieve their goals. The focus for your client is to recognize what is important to the other person, to see what their goals are, and to act in a manner that helps them to achieve their goals. This is their action step. This will set a positive tone, and make them more amenable to, at the least, treating your client better, and at best, reciprocating in helping your client achieve their goals. Your client will be using their own self-confidence in a win/win manner. Showing patience will bring about the desired result here.

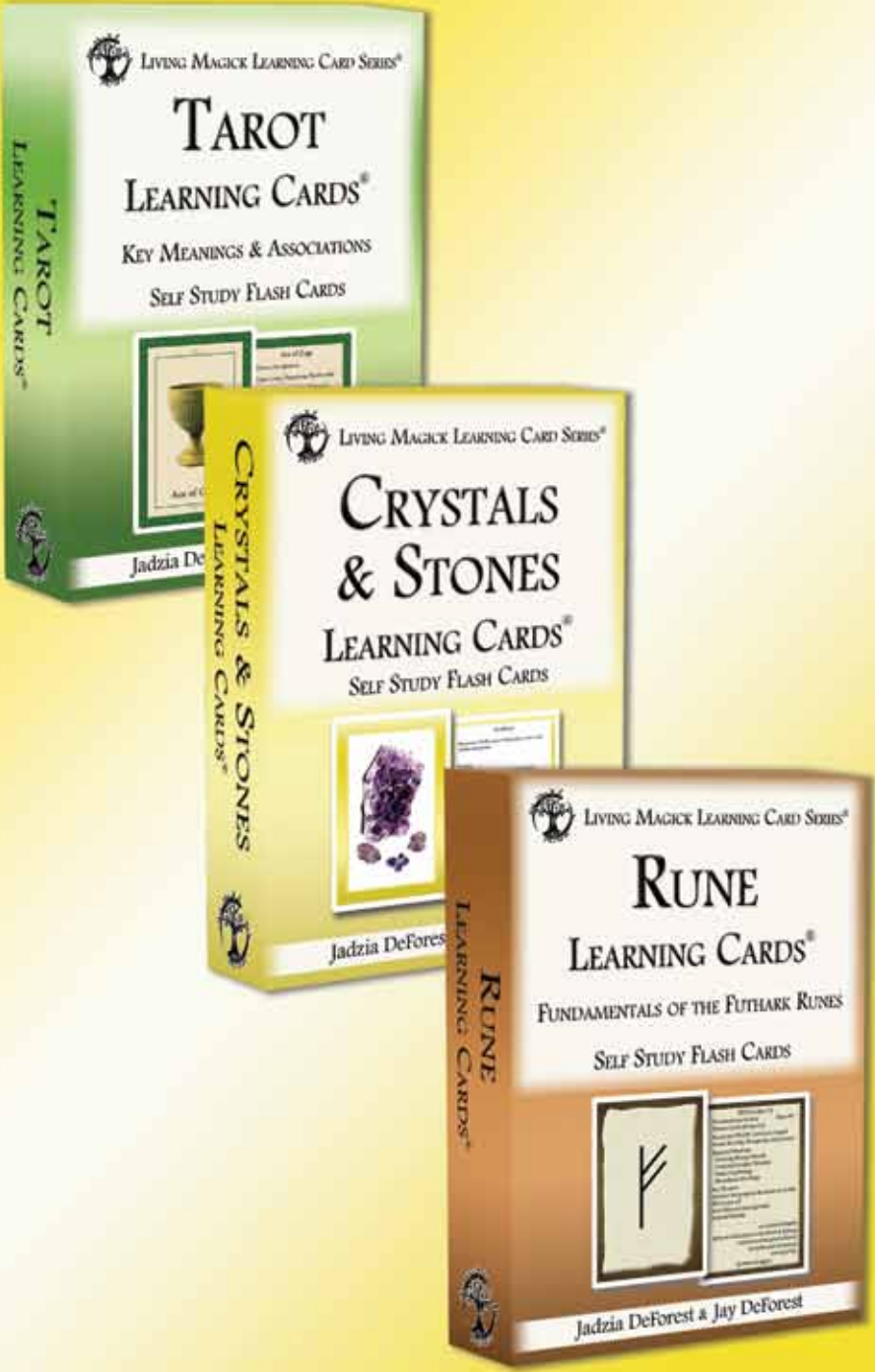
We need to remember that each of the 78 cards of the Tarot has 360 degrees of meaning. Each card needs

to be read in the perspective of the question being asked. The information that comes through may surprise you! Even the so-call “difficult” cards have their place. They show us areas where we may not be seeing the full picture, or where our own perspective is a bit askew.

The process of problem solving flows from defining the problem, to looking at alternative steps to take for resolution, to choosing one or more steps to take, and then taking them. The structure of the Tarot is such that it is a very helpful, useful tool in focusing on each step of this journey. It helps us to focus, and to open ourselves up to new perspectives. It is something that we can use for ourselves, or for others, to help take back control of our lives.

Card images from Parallel Worlds Tarot by Astrid Amadori, 2014.

THREE POPULAR LIVING MAGICK LEARNING CARDS DECKS ARE BACK!



The image displays three boxes of 'Living Magick Learning Card Series' by Jadzia DeForest. The top box is green and white, titled 'TAROT LEARNING CARDS®' with the subtitle 'KEY MEANINGS & ASSOCIATIONS SELF STUDY FLASH CARDS'. The middle box is yellow and white, titled 'CRYSTALS & STONES LEARNING CARDS®' with the subtitle 'SELF STUDY FLASH CARDS'. The bottom box is brown and white, titled 'RUNE LEARNING CARDS®' with the subtitle 'FUNDAMENTALS OF THE FUTHARK RUNES SELF STUDY FLASH CARDS'. Each box features a small image of a card from the series. The boxes are arranged in a slightly overlapping, descending manner.

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ON LEARNING TAROT

by Jadzia DeForest

There are a few different approaches to learning the tarot. The first is what I call the “intuitive” approach. This approach to learning to read tarot cards is done by using your intuition, feelings, and personal insights into what each card means. A student who is learning the tarot with this method may go through the deck and write down interpretations based on their gut responses about the images and symbolism in each card. An intuitive approach to learning tarot consists of asking yourself questions such as: “What does this card mean to me?” and “How does this card make me feel?” Many students who learn tarot through the intuitive method never read tarot books or take classes. They nurture a personal relationship with their cards.

Getting to know what each card means to you is a necessary part of fully understanding and appreciating the significance of the tarot. This is an especially good approach if you are reading the tarot for yourself as a daily practice or for spiritual development. However, when it comes to reading for others this method of learning may be incomplete. When finding your own interpretations of the cards you are projecting your life experience and circumstances onto each tarot card. That’s why this method is good for spiritual and personal development but is lacking when reading tarot for

other people. When reading for others the reader needs to be objective and not apply personal situations to their client’s reading.

The second way to learn tarot is to read books, practice, and memorize meanings. This is what I call the “studied” approach. There are many books on tarot for the beginner, intermediate and more advanced student. There are even tarot decks that make it easier to memorize what each cards means, like the Tarot Learning Cards.

The studied method is a really good place to start. You begin by learning the basic, generally accepted meanings of each card. By memorizing a little bit about each tarot card you will always have a prompt for the card meaning when doing readings for yourself or others.

The drawback to the studied approach is that some students get stuck in what they have memorized for the card interpretations. For example, in every reading the student may always say that the meaning of the Four of Cups is “boredom”. When in fact, the card’s interpretation changes depending on the question of the reading, where it

is positioned, what cards surround it, and many other factors. There are too many possible ways to look at the Four of Cups to memorize them all.

For some students the intuitive approach is the easiest because they are very in touch with their intuition, feel confident reading the symbolism, or have difficulty with memorization. For others the studied method is much simpler and gives a sense of accomplishment with each card memorized. Solely learning tarot in either method has always seemed incomplete to me. The studied approach does not build self-confidence or develop intuition and the intuitive method overlooks the fundamentals.

A mix of these two methods has always seemed like the best approach to me. Blending the intuitive and studied learning will give a student the most benefit. Read books, a variety of books by different authors, on theories and practices of tarot. By reading you can find themes and keywords that are easy to remember because they fit with what you see in the imagery of each of the cards. Learn your basics: What tarot is, the cards common themes, the system of tarot, history, myths, etc. But

don’t stop there. Once you have a firm grasp on the fundamentals make the tarot personal by coming up with your own interpretations of each card. You may find that the Five of Swords has one meaning for you in a certain deck and a different emphasis in another deck.

Once you have the basics down, the best way to learn the tarot is to give readings. To build self-confidence, do readings for friends





and family without looking up the meanings in a book. Interpret each card by what you see in the imagery, how the card makes you feel, and what you have already learned about the card.

Once finished with the reading look up the cards in a book to confirm your interpretations (or see how they differ based on the topic of the reading). Remember, there is no real “wrong” meaning for a card, unless it is out of context with the question.

Once you feel proficient with the cards, and if you want to read for the public, I always recommend volunteering for a psychic fair or reader’s fair. The idea may be intimidating at first, but by being a reader at a psychic fair your confidence and skills will improve significantly. You can expect to give five to ten minute readings, one after another, in a fast paced environment. It really is the best way to practice!

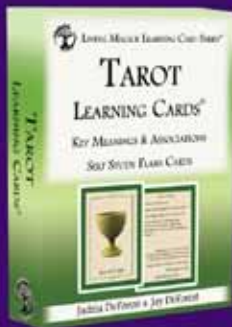
Read books, attend classes, study, learn your basics, exercise your intuition, come up with your own interpretations, give readings, and

you’ll be well on your way to becoming a proficient and knowledgeable tarot reader. Just remember, the pursuit of tarot is a life long journey.

Rider Waite Tarot used with permission of US Games Systems, Inc., c. 1971 All rights reserved.

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A FORTUNE WORTH TELLING

by Jay DeForest

It's a classic image... Candles cast an eerie light on a wizened figure dressed in colorful, if not downright gaudy clothing, veils & scarves. Darkly hued fabric drapes the walls, chairs and tables. Heavy jewelry glints in the shadowy light as gnarled fingers spread out aged and tattered cards. Peering out through eyes made mysterious by heavy liner, and with a deep and foreboding tone, 'The Fortune Teller' reveals portents and omens of things to come.

On the one hand, many people love the fanciful imagery and other worldly feel of the Fortune Teller's parlor. Sadly, it has also come to be associated with charlatans, frauds and tricksters. Many people fear being taken advantage of by those claiming to have "knowledge from beyond", or information that can only be revealed for a price.

So, how do we cherish the richly textured look and feel of the "Fortune Teller", while steering away from the predatory image of someone looking to take advantage of people through their emotional vulnerability? How do we find the balance between offering deep, insightful readings and allowing people to enjoy the fun and mystique of having a "Fortune Teller" in full costume at a party, fair or festival?

Many professional readers scoff at the idea of embracing the "Fortune Teller" motif and offering it as a form of entertainment. I can understand their feeling, considering how many

unscrupulous readers use the imagery and tools to milk potential clients for all they can get. I know firsthand that such people do exist, having fired a few of them when I owned a metaphysical store. And yet, I do feel that there is room for a more positive approach to this question than for all of the good, ethical and conscientious readers to shun the idea of ever doing readings for a party or public event.

When Jadzia and I started offering "Fortune Teller" bookings a few years ago for everything from birthdays and bridal showers to corporate holiday parties, renaissance fairs and other public festivals, we saw it as not just a way to make part of our living, but also as a means of educating the public. We know that our clients usually want the classic "Fortune Teller" look, and we provide that for them. We make it clear that we can offer a range of reading types from very light and inspirational to more in-depth and thought provoking, as may be appropriate to the setting and the querent, but that we are not predicting the future or being harbingers of doom and despair.

In actuality, nearly all the readings we do, have a certain degree of education to them. We offer explanations about how divination works to help a person discover their own answers to the questions they have. We show how the cards are a reflecting tool that calls their attention to details relevant to their particular situation. We tell them that the cards do not "tell them" their

future, nor direct them to making a specific choice or decision. In short, each person who sits at our table is getting a mini-Tarot lesson. And, they are getting helpful information to take away, whether they are getting a 3-card "Fortune for the Day", or a full in-depth reading.

I think that by clarifying one's definition of "fortune", one can, in good conscience, reclaim the term "Fortune Teller", and with it, the fun mystique that it embodies. For me, the definition of "Fortune Telling" would be along the lines of "Using divination tools to help someone examine their circumstances, and gain insight as to what they should be focusing on in the present and near future." Notably absent from this is the concept of telling anyone what to do, or predicting what their future holds in store.

From this perspective, I am able to introduce many people every year to the beneficial aspects of divination. Whether someone is just getting a reading for fun at the party or event, or they are coming with a specific question, they are going away with a little more information than they sat down with and I feel like that's, well... A Fortune Worth Telling.



Dear Wizard, Do you need to be able to read all three major styles of Tarot to be a good Tarot reader?
Signed, Non-Scenic Pip

Dear Pip,

After consulting the tarot (of the RWS persuasion) I present you with the Wheel of Fortune to help with your dilemma. Of all the cards in the deck, the Wheel is by far the most wishy-washy. Sometimes up, sometimes down, sometimes it rolls right over your foot. In spite of this, the message



it brings is there is wisdom in other planes of existence and how you get there is up to you. So, do you need to master all

3 styles?

In a word; No. Think of it this way... you want to go to a Grateful Dead concert being held in the Mojave Desert on Easter Sunday. You can drive, ride your bike, strap on your roller skates or take the bus. It doesn't matter how you get there, as long as you arrive. So choose your Wheels and go! But pick one. You only have one butt and it's not possible to sit on both a bike and in a car at the same time. Not to mention driving or riding with skates on your feet is tricky at best so don't try this at home.

The same applies to mastering divination. Say you have started down a particular tarot path and the road starts to narrow and the scenery is getting boring, time to look around and see what else is out there. The trick is to find what works best for you and roll that wagon till the wheels fall off...at which point, you will have arrived (yes it's a word, I just made it up) and can bask in your mastery of the craft. Later, if the Muse of Tarot tempts you to other styles, you may want to explore and experiment. But you don't have to. You can remain monogamous in tarot.

Roll On!

~The Wizard

Dear Wizard, I recently had a reading and the reader kept calling me a "queer ant". What did he mean?
Signed, Straight but not Narrow Bee

Dear Bee,

I consulted the tarot on your behalf and the High Priestess has appeared to help with your confusion. She advises

to take note of under currents and unseen influences as you have a special patron god. In this case, the reader was seeing



into another realm where you have the protection of the God of Insects, Tithonus, as the hints were given in both his referral to you as a "queer (meaning odd or unusual) ant" as well as your signing as "-Bee".

This once mortal being married the Goddess Eos which granted him god-like status and immortality. Other than that it did him no good what-so-ever other than his wife's social standing. Tithonus is, however, your unseen motivating force and is not to be trifled with in any form.

The advice here is to roll with it and try not to step on any ants, swat any bees, or annoy Tithonus, the minor and insignificant God of Cicadas. But if you do happen to get into a bind, have a chat with his wife; I'm sure she'll straighten him out.

Tarot On!

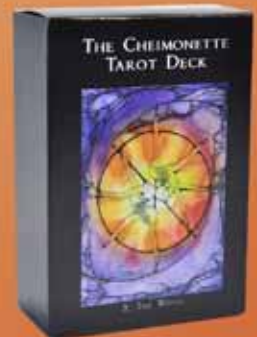
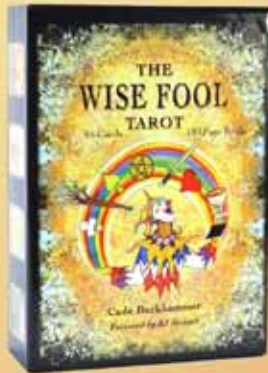
~The Wizard

**Have a question? Send it to Ask the Wizard on our website:
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Tarot Art



SINGING SERPENT TAROT

ELEANOR ROYCE



The Song the Serpent sings is often a hushed and remote whisper in the dark, barely audible, drowned by a cacophony of other sounds. At times it is a vibrant urgent calling and, on occasion, a beautiful melody underscoring our existence. It is carried on the breath of a wind, the dance of a wave upon sand, a flicker of a flame, in the beat of a heart and upon a flap of a moth's wing. It is everywhere and nowhere in particular, ancient, primal, constant and eternal, a Song that remains forever the same. It is the Soul Song, Spirit Song, Deep Self Song and this Song belongs to us all — we need only but listen, learn and sing along.

Unlike many of the decks available today, this deck is not themed beyond all recognition, but rather based firmly in the visual tradition of Tarot, albeit with a unique twist, coil and slither. For the Tarot to retain its power and purpose this artist/author holds the essence of its archetypal imagery and meanings must remain intact. This deck does have its own insignia, of sorts, for in each card the Serpent is present. Here, the Serpent is the wise guide that leads through the marvelous journey of the Tarot. The images are hand drawn, printed on quality lined card stock, presented in a customized box, come with a home-printed little white book and black organza bag. The deck is limited to just 100 copies.

www.nakthag.com/#/singing-serpent-tarot/

At the beginning of the new millennium Kate Silver and Charlene DeLong began a grand collaboration which culminated in the birth of the New Earth Tarot. Their efforts, through hundreds of hours of meditation and conversation, brought forth a new deck that is a passageway for healthier and happier individuals and a more peaceful and sustainable world. Kate Silver drew these circular cards using vibrant, spirited colors to bring strength and life into each image. New Earth Tarot honors the rich diversity of the world's people, with images drawn from a global array of human experience.

These two women have written two deeply meaningful companion books for the deck: The New Earth Tarot: Tarot for a New Era of Personal and Global Awakening, by Charlene DeLong and the soon to be published: The New Earth Tarot Handbook, by Kate Silver. The Second Edition of the cards along with Kate's book will be available August 2015. A limited First Edition is currently available from www.newearthtarot.com and on Amazon.com.

NEW EARTH TAROT

CHARLENE DELONG



PEARLS OF WISDOM TAROT

ROXI SIM



The Pearls of Wisdom Tarot was a seven year artistic journey through the structure of the Tarot. Not based on any other deck, the Pearls of Wisdom has its own symbolism rich with elements of the Triple Goddess; the language of flowers and Runes. Dubbed the most optimistic deck out there, the Pearls of Wisdom is filled with bright colours and whimsical imagery which is sure to uplift and inspire.

Born out of great sorrow, the loss of my health, my nine year old son, followed by the loss of my mother, the creation of the Pearls of Wisdom Tarot became my art therapy. It is my hope that the images in this deck, along with the optimistic pearls of wisdom, will bring a measure of healing to all those who use it. May you find your own Pearls of Wisdom along the way.

www.RoxiArtWork.ca

Life can really be tough and unforgiving. This collaborative deck arose out of a desire to help life push back against all the forces in our world that work to end it. Each of the 78 artists involved was asked the question: "How does this image help us get from a place of loss and suffering to a place of joy and remembering?" These 78 cards are each of their answers.

In part this project was inspired by the courage of a Canadian hero, Terry Fox, who after losing a leg to cancer ran 143 consecutive marathons to raise money and awareness about the disease. 100% of the Triumph of Life Tarot Project profits will be donated to the TerryFox.org to fund cancer research .

This project is completely run by volunteers and is moving towards production over the summer. To follow its completion please swing by <http://thehermitslamp.com/tol> or join us on Facebook.

The images are the 8 of Swords by Lynn Fang, Justice by Monica Bodirsky, the 5 of Wands by Andrew McGregor, and the 2 of Coins by Dy Langdon.

THE TRIUMPH OF LIFE TAROT PROJECT



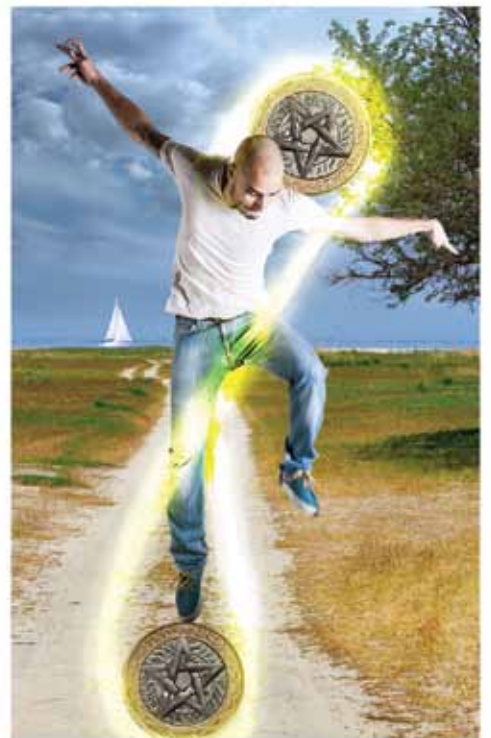
5 of Wands



8 of Swords



Justice



2 of Coins

78 TAROT NAUTICAL

78 ARTISTS COLLABORATE FROM AROUND THE GLOBE

XV The Devil



by David Van Gough

Whimsy



by Amy Brown

XVIII The Moon



by Luca Federici Carey

XXI The World



by Jasmine Becket-Griffith

Meeting in a secret Facebook group, the collective works hand-in-hand to develop their cards, adhering to traditional symbolism and meaning while still bringing a fresh fantasy perspective to the tarot community. Each artist is assigned one card to interpret through their art with only one rule; that the art be nautical in theme, a theme chosen by the project's Kickstarter backers.

"Every single artist this year absolutely nailed their card. The artworks are true masterpieces and we are so excited to introduce this to the tarot and art community, says founder and director Kayti Welsh.

Kayti, an artist herself, along with friend and art director Delphine Lévesque Demers, have carefully selected each of the 80 artists involved in this tarot project.

The 78 Tarot artists are planning on a two-month exhibition in Seattle, Washington to finish up the 78 Tarot Nautical project. The 78 Tarot Nautical artwork will be on display at Eight and Sand Gallery starting December 12th, 2015, and running through January 2016 at Push/Pull, also in Seattle.

Artists should inquiries to info@seventy-eight-tarot.com.

Questions and comments about the 78 Tarot Nautical Kickstarter can also be sent to info@seventy-eight-tarot.com.

This unique deck of 67 cards are a vessel for the ancient mysteries, invoking the divine sciences of the unseen to give you greater awareness, more clarity while activating your Higher Consciousness Guidance. This establishes a Trust easing your way more and more into your own Oneness and stimulating a long forgotten deep Knowingness and Abundance of life.

These cards are to support your Spiritual Transformation and Conscious Evolution with Awareness.

They are a vessel for the Divine Science of the Unseen, woven masterfully together with evocative guiding messages from the Ascended Masters. The images hold a healing power and ability to transmit encoded information, which can be recognized and understood on a cellular level. The cards spark a remembering; activating a deep knowing, and a doorway might open more and more to your Higher Consciousness Guidance, Love and Oneness within You.

Sa'arah Esther Felix plays in the Realms of Alchemizing Energies in various forms.

She has the gift to connect people with their Heart and Soul, and uses Spiritual Art to convey feelings and information unraveling and activating the DNA.

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This sheet of Tarot de Marseille style cards is part of the Cary Collection of playing cards, in the Beinecke Library at Yale. Circa 1500.

Reviews



KABBALISTIC VISIONS: THE MARINI-SCAPINI TAROT

Review by Benebell Wen

Author: Marco Marini
 Artist: Luigi Scapini
 Publisher: Schiffer Publishing
 Pub. Date: 2014
 ISBN 978-0-7643-4662-0

*K*abbalistic Visions: The Marini-Scapini Tarot (Schiffer Publishing, 2014) is a box set with a tarot deck and perfect-bound companion book. The deck presents a Kabbalistic leitmotif throughout the Marseille or Continental tarot architecture, i.e., the esoteric deck style pre-dating both Waite's Rider-Waite-Smith and Crowley's Thoth. Marco Marini is the intellectual and scholarly engine behind the deck's genesis while Luigi Scapini is the artist who brings Kabbalistic Visions to life.

Luigi Scapini is a well-known name in the tarot world. He came out with the popular Medieval Scapini Tarot back in 1988, the Shakespeare Tarot in 1996, and has recreated several editions of the historic Cary-Yale Visconti Tarocchi, among other notable tarot projects. Scapini has a background in both architecture and esoteric studies. He is a professor of art history and considered an academic expert in

15th century Italian art. Seeing his hand influence a Kabbalah-based tarot deck is an incredible treat and Marini could not have found a better artist for the project.

Per the Marseille or Continental structure, the deck features Justice for Key VIII and Force (also known in other decks as Strength) for Key XI with the four Minor suits being Wands, Cups, Swords, and Coins. There is silver gilding along the edges of the deck and a semi-glossy finish. The cardstock is thick and sturdy, and at 3.25" x 5.375" dimensions, are larger than typical tarot cards. The card backs are reversible and feature Scapini's vibrant illustration of the seven heavens per Kabbalistic Jewish mysticism.

Each card face depicts an open scroll with the tarot card illustration on the scroll. Behind the scroll is a solid black background that takes up roughly a quarter of the surface area of each card. I don't like how much passive space there is on each card. I would have preferred less black border and a more attentive focus on Scapini's scroll illustrations.

The art for the deck is entirely hand-drawn. Even the card titles and

numbering are rendered by hand, which I love. The medium here appears to be mixed, using pencil, ink, and watercolor, which give the illustrations a bold, vibrant aesthetic. Scapini utilizes an ornate, two-dimensional artistic style iconic of 15th century medieval art and illustration. Most of the drawings are done in single-point perspective.

The Marini-Scapini Tarot reinterprets the 78 cards of tarot

through a Kabbalistic framework, expressing the cards through the Tree of Life and the 22 letters of the Hebrew alphabet. More than its Kabbalistic foundations, however, the Marini-Scapini Tarot brings much of the two creators' gnostic point of view to the deck. In Key II: The Popess, we see the Venus of

Willendorf representing that high priestess energy. Key VI: The Lovers features the sun and moon binary. Key XII: The Hanged Man calls to mind the story of Jonah from the Abrahamic religions. There seems to be a



reference to the story “The Lady, or the Tiger?” in Key XVIII: The Moon.

Key XX: Judgement (spelled Judgment in the book, but Judgement on the card) reminded me of imagery



more typically iconic of The Devil in tarot, though Marini’s card description in the companion book explains the intellection for the art. The figure is female and three-headed, symbolizing the Supernal Triad. Boxed and confined beneath her is the Vitruvian Man, a reference to a 1490 sketch by Leonardo da Vinci, in the cage of Malkuth, the lowest sephirah on the Tree of Life. And yet it is here, from this position that the Vitruvian Man possesses the potential to reach the highest sephirah,



toward the revelation of IHVH.

While earlier I noted the influence of medieval art in Scapini’s work, here we also see many Eastern mystic and religious references. In the Two of Wands, there is a reference to Kali and her outstretched tongue, a symbol of power and even bloodlust. Per Marini’s companion book, the Two of Wands represents the devouring aspect of Chokmah, which can lead to indescribable power and domination. The Taj Mahal and white lotus blossom are pictured in the Princess of Cups and the seven chakras of Hindu and yogic traditions are embedded into the Princess of Coins.

A meditating Buddha exemplifies the deck’s Seven of Wands. The Buddha has his right hand formed into the jnana mudra, which represents the dharma wheel, or wheel of the law. Incidentally, the meditating Buddha suspends a set of balancing scales from the hand mudra. The companion book notes that the Seven of Wands shows the Buddha suspended in the Yetziratic dimension, maintaining balance in the world of Formation. The two pants of air coming from the nostrils are symbolic of the power of breath. Thus, the card means clarity in judgment, the ability to make a constructive decision, and as symbolized by the two pants of air, great inner energy or verve.

Some of the cards feature English Golden Dawn adopted astrological decan correspondences, such as the Two of Swords, which integrates the moon and Libra glyphs into the art. Some of the illustrations are mid-century modern, such as the Four of Wands, Four of Cups, Eight of Cups, Nine of Coins, or Ten of Wands. The Six of Wands represents victory and success, but per the companion book, is also indicative of possible health matters, as illustrated with a 21st century relay race.



The standout feature of this deck set is the companion book by Marco Marini. Marco Marini is a researcher and academic in the Kabbalistic discipline, in archetypal symbology, and other esoteric studies. He has taught the Kabbalah for over 15 years in Italy and England and has been widely published on topics relating to the Kabbalah, numerology, and the Hebrew culture.

The companion book is 252 pages in length, and 5.5” x 7.5” in dimension. The book and deck come in a beautifully prepared high-gloss magnetic top flap box. At a retail price of \$45.00, the set is an investment, but well worth it if you’re interested in the intersection between tarot and the Kabbalah. The set also comes with a high-gloss 14” x 20” poster print illustration by Scapini of the Tree of Life.

The companion book opens with an in-depth explanation of the Tree of Life and its structure, and a full-page essay on each sephirah. We get into the Four Worlds (IHVH; Atziluth, Briah, Yetzirah, and Assiah) and then the Three Ways (Way of the Body, of the Soul, and of the Spirit), upon which the foundations of the Three Septenaries in esoteric tarot are based. Building on that, Marini then explains the letters of the Torah, the three mother letters, seven double letters, and twelve simple

letters per the Sepher Yetzirah.

Great attention is then devoted to each of the Major Arcana cards, tying in traditionally established tarot meanings with Kabbalistic principles. The Fool, for instance, depicts the 22 letters around him, symbolic of the Creator guiding the fool's conscience through the journey of acquiring knowledge of the Creator's universe. Each card illustrated by Scapini is steeped in Kabbalistic principles and deeply symbolic. The companion book does an extraordinary job of explaining each of those principles and the significance of the symbolism.

After a description of the card and its essential themes, Marini offers a more practical application of the card with a subsequent section on divinatory meanings, i.e., the application of that card if it appears in the past, present, future, obstacle, or final result positions in a spread. Likewise, the Minor Arcana follow the same structure, beginning with essential themes and followed by practical divinatory meanings.

The Minor Arcana are subdivided



into one chapter focused on the court cards (King, Queen, Knight, and Princess) and another on the decans, or pips (Aces through Tens). Finally, the book is rounded out at the end with four amazing reading systems, or spreads, such as the Kabbalistic Cross, a six card spread that resembles the central cross layout from the Celtic Cross.

The tarot is “the most ancient system of communication used by men” and is a language that can be “universally understood and accepted by humanity,” asserts Marini. Marco Marini and Luigi Scapini have come together to produce a monumental work for both the study of the Kabbalah and the study of tarot. I have not seen a more in-depth study of the Kabbalah and tarot than the Marini-Scapini.

While the publisher's deck description notes that the cards can be used by both novice and experienced readers, the novice will only be able to work proficiently with the deck if he or she comes with a background in the Kabbalah. I would approach Kabbalistic Visions as an advanced study deck for readers who want to deepen their understanding of mystical esoteric and Kabbalistic traditions. Kabbalistic Visions is a marvelous showcase of Scapini's art that transcends time-space with its blending of medieval style illustration, Eastern esotericism, contemporary narrative scenes, and fine detailing work that animates Marini's staggering knowledge of the Kabbalah. I highly recommend.

© Benebell Wen



EGYPTIAN LENORMAND

Review by Bonnie Cehovet

Author: Nefer Khepri, PhD.
Artist: Nefer Khepri, PhD.
Publisher: Schiffer Publishing
Pub. Date: 2014
ISBN 978-0764347764

Khepri gets two thumbs up from me for the use of the color purple! Aside from being a very spiritual color, it always makes me smile. The 41 cards (36 traditional cards, two activation cards depicting the Eye of Horus, card 28 – Pharaoh and God, card 29 – Priestess and Goddess, and card 29, Cat), along with the companion book, come in what is now traditional Schiffer packaging – a well constructed hard cardboard box, with a magnetic, lift top lid, and a lovely ribbon to open the lid with. Khepri has taken the traditional Lenormand system, and upped it a bit. I was impressed to see on the cover that the Lenormand deck and guide are to be used for divination, healing, and magic. Things that those of who use Tarot, Lenormand, and Oracle decks do anyway, but in this case the intent is placed there by the creator. The cards were channeled through Egyptian gods and infused with special energies. Magic indeed!

The 175 page companion book (at approximately 8.5” by 5.75”) is a nice sized book, and very easy to handle. The deck is dedicated to Khepri’s mother, who saw it in a vision while in hospice



care. Every image was channeled (except for The Child), including the colors. All images were hand drawn with a drafting pencil, colored in, with the lines gone over in Copic black in markers. The deck was finished on what would have been her mother’s 87th birthday.

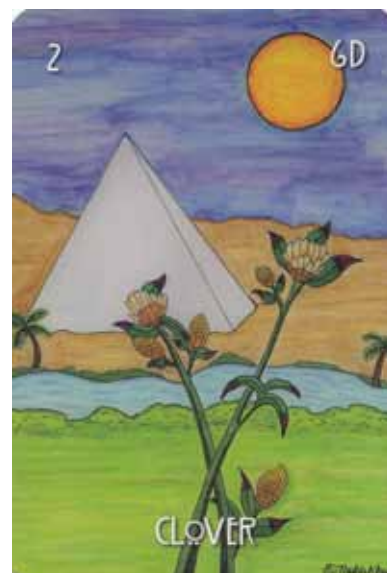
The traditional Lenormand structure has been followed, with the theme being Egyptian gods and culture. There are two cards each for the people cards (cards number 28 and 29), each card showing the same background. Card 28 is titled Pharaoh on one card, and God on the other, while card 29 is titled

Priestess on one card, and Goddess on the other. Several of the cards have been retitled:

8-Sarcophagus (The Coffin)
11- Crook & Flail (Whip/Broom)
14 –Desert Fox (Work)
15-Sacred Cow (The Bear)
17-Ibis (Storks)
19-Oblisk (The Tower)
26-Scroll (The Book)
36-Djed Pillar (Cross)

In her introduction, Khepri talks about the difference between the Tarot and the Lenormand, and the kinds of questions applicable for a Lenormand reading. Each card is presented with a color image, the card number and name, the playing card association, keywords, ancient Egyptian meanings, and a section on how to interpret the card.

There are also sections on the Work card and how to use it, interpreting the cards (complete with exercises), working with location, choosing a significator, a five card spread (with a sample reading), a seven card spread, and a ten card Pyramid of Isis spread. Also covered are the Quintessence of a reading, a section on activation of the deck for healing and magic (lovely, well researched, well written text, showing



respect for self, the deck, and the process!), sections on using the deck for health and healing, and using the deck for manifestation, a comprehensive card associating each card with an Egyptian deity, and a sample spell.

The cards themselves are 2 ¾” by 4” (convenient for smaller hands!), with a glossy finish. The card backs show the Eye of Horus over a pyramid, and are not reversible. The card front shows the card name, the card number, and the playing card association.

2 Clover –The companion book describes the energy of Clover as showing a temporary (fleeting) turn of luck. Khepri advises the reader to keep their eyes open for opportunities when this card shows up. Quick decisions and fast actions are the word of the day!

12 Birds – The companion book describes the energy of the Birds as representing an exchange of information and ideas – discussions leading to an agreement beneficial to all. Under the ancient Egyptian meaning, we see the Khepri has depicted the bird as Ba, the spiritual double of the living person.



20 Garden–The companion book describes the energy of Garden as a place where family and friends gather to socialize. The ancient Egyptian meaning is much the same.



21 Mountain –The companion book describes the energy of Mountain as something that needs to be surmounted. You have to work through it or around it to achieve your goal.



31 Sun – The companion book describes the energy of the Sun as one of great success, and of being acknowledged for that success. It is a sign of being respected. The ancient Egyptian meaning shows the Sun as the source of all life.

Due to the renaming of several of the cards, and the addition of new cards, some may not consider this a traditional Lenormand deck. My view is that the Lenormand, as with the Tarot, can expand to a certain extent and still be

regarded as a Lenormand deck.

I love the color, imagery, and gentleness of this deck. And that Khepri has spoken out about some of the more esoteric uses for the cards (healing and magic). The deck is easy to use, and the companion book (guidebook) provides gentle but strong guidance on how the reader can achieve the goal(s) they are looking for. I would go so far as to say that this deck also functions as a learning deck for Lenormand style reading.

© Bonnie Cehovet



THE GOLDEN TAROT: THE VISCONTI-SFORZA DECK

Review by Sherryl E. Smith

Author: Mary Packard
Artwork: Rachel Clowes
Publisher: Racepoint Publishing
ISBN 978-1-937994-09-9
Theme: Historical reproduction
www.racepointpub.com

Shortly after seizing control of Milan in 1450, Francesco Sforza had his favorite artist, Bonifacio Bembo, create the most expensive tarot deck in history. Using pigments made from precious stones like lapis lazuli and malachite, the artist painted tarot



figures on a background of shimmering embossed gold. This luxurious deck still exists, divided between three museums in Italy and New York. It's called the

Visconti-Sforza deck after the family names of the duke and his wife.

In the past few decades, publishers have been reprinting a steady supply of this deck. Most versions are photo-reproductions of the cards as they exist in museums today, with chipped paint and peeling gold exposing the red backing. A previous owner poked holes at the top center of every card, damaging the surrounding paint and marring the deck's beauty. A few publishers have touched up the images so they appear like new. Racepoint's production is one of these.

The images in this deck are very faithful to the original. In fact, they're often an improvement. The faces are livelier and more expressive than in the original deck, the lines are sharper, and details are easier to read.

This deck deserves the name "golden" thanks to its antique gold borders, the soft gold background on the pip cards, and its overall mellow glow. The cards are 3.25 x 6.5 inches -- slightly smaller than the original but much larger than standard tarot decks. The deck retains the original 2:1 ratio between height and width, keeping the original look and feel of the cards.



The Devil and Tower, as well as two suit cards, are missing from the original deck; so every publisher hires an artist to recreate these cards. These replacement cards are the first thing I look at when evaluating a Visconti-Sforza deck. I note whether the cards seem to belong with the rest of the deck, and if the imagery is reminiscent of mid-fifteenth-century Italian art. Nearly every publisher, including Racepoint, creates anachronistic Tower

and Devil cards that are more appropriate for a seventeenth-century French deck. But the cards in this deck have some redeeming features. They are nicely colored to blend in with the rest of the cards. I especially appreciate the authentic medieval touches that show the artist did some research rather than just copying a Tarot de Marseille. The Devil in this deck wields a two-

pronged grapple, a favorite torture device of the Inquisition. In medieval art, the Devil is often shown prodding sinners into Hell with a grapple. The Tower has a red sun in the upper corner,





a feature in the earliest decks that was dropped in later French tarot.

This is the only Visconti-Sforza publication packaged as a book/deck set. Upon opening the sturdy, black, flip-top box, we find the deck housed in a separate box, a 144-page hardback book, and a purple polyester spread cloth. The book has color photos of every card along with card interpretations, spreads and sample

readings.

In the front of the book, the author gives a compact history of tarot from its beginning through its adoption by 18th century occultists. Color photos of renaissance art add depth to the discussion. I have a small problem with the author's version of tarot history because she believes that Neoplatonism, alchemy and Hermeticism were implicit in tarot from the beginning. But ancient



hermetic texts weren't translated into Latin and made available to Italian scholars until 1484, a half-century after tarot was invented. Interpreting tarot through the lens of Neo-Platonism is just as valid as seeing it in the light of Jungian archetypes, Qabalah, or the hero's journey. But I don't believe tarot was created to embody any of these.

This deck is one of my favorite versions of the Visconti-Sforza. The cards are hard to shuffle, but worth the effort, because they have a presence I don't feel in other decks. If you want a lovely Visconti-Sforza deck for reading, or if you are new to reading with historic decks and aren't sure where to start, I highly recommend this deck/book set.

Card images from the Golden Tarot.

© SherryL Smith

Tarot

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Lenormand

HOLISTIC TAROT

An Integrative Approach to Using Tarot for Personal Growth

Review by Bonnie Cehovet

Author: Benebell Wen
Pub. North Atlantic Books
Pub. Date: 2014
ISBN: 978-158394835-4

A Holistic Approach, allows us to see the thought process behind Wen's writing. Wen terms the Tarot a "science of the mind". She states that the Tarot "represents the spectrum of human archetypal conditions and personalities, which can be used by the modern day practitioner for psychological projective evaluation".

Wen also describes the Tarot as a holistic tool, which is inclusive of the body/mind/spirit connection of the individual as a whole. Holistic Tarot is not for the faint of heart. It is not a roadmap for fortune telling. It is all about accessing the unconscious so that individuals can come to understand their past and their present, and make decisions that manifest the future that they want.

Wen is actively anti-fortune telling. As a reader for many years, I feel that fortune telling has its place. Tarot can be put to a better use, but fortune telling is a valid use of these amazing cards, and this should be acknowledged.

Probably the bottom line to me is Wen's statement that Tarot analytics is about using the Tarot to empower ourselves. That is THE most important thing that the Tarot can do for anyone.

Chapter Two is entitled "A Concise History Lesson". Being able to picture the history of the Tarot, through various cultures, gives the reader an edge in understanding and working with the cards. She ends this chapter by noting

that many holistic health practitioners now use the Tarot for mental healing and psychotherapy. And that the Tarot has been adopted as a practice of secular spirituality.

Wen covers the darker cards in the Major Arcana – Death, The Devil, and The Tower from the perspective of the individual addressing their fears. She also addresses concepts such as synchronicity, apophenia (perceiving patterns or connections in random or meaningless data), and patternicity (finding meaningful patterns in meaningless noise). She also discusses concepts such as the Forer Effect, Divine and Occult Theories, and the Myth of the Divination-Fulfilling Prophecy.

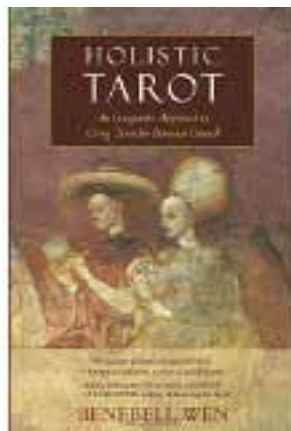
Wen moves on to choosing a deck, listing Rider-Waite and Rider-Waite derivatives. I wish she had mentioned my primary reading deck, but it didn't make the cut! She does give some very good tips on how to choose a deck, though.

At this point we start getting into the cards, using the Rider-Waite-Smith Tarot as a baseline to build on. I am someone who dearly loves charts, maps, graphs – basically, all things visual. Visual aids on connecting the dots between the cards and their various correspondences in my opinion make learning a lot easier, so this is a "must read" chapter.

Something that as a writer I did naturally was to keep a journal of my Tarot journey. Wen addresses this in an interesting manner, telling the reader that a journal "should" contain such topics as a personal glossary of card meanings, a log of readings, along with client notes, card reflections, and practice development. Wen presents a template for recording client readings that I find very useful.

I love the use of keywords with the Tarot. When I was a beginner. There

I knew that I wanted this book as soon as I heard about it. Of course, we are talking 874 pages, which is a bit intimidating. So I let it sit for a while ... for quite a while. Finally I sat down and started looking at it. It is all that it promises to be, and more. It is well researched, has an all encompassing scope, and reflects a combination of practical advice with clear guidance. The weaving together of Western esotericism with Eastern philosophy



presents us with a solid, multi-dimensional platform for working with the Tarot.

Chapter one provides a format for the book – entitled Tarot Analytics,

wasn't a lot of information out there. I bumbled around until I found some really good Tarot groups on the Internet, and started to get to know people. I can remember being in a very prestigious group, and someone referenced the LWB. I had no clue what that was, and I wasn't about to ask, and expose my ignorance! Lucky for me that someone else did ask, and I became familiar with the ubiquitous "Little White Book". Keywords are presented for each of the 78 cards in both the upright and reversed positions.

Wen refers to keywords as a starting point, and I totally agree with her. She notes that the 22 cards of the Major Arcana are generally seen as representing spiritual, psychological, or ideological concepts, while the 56 cards of the Minor Arcana are seen as representing human concerns, people, places, or the material world. One of my favorite charts is the one that lists the energy (Yin/Yang), the Element (Fire, Water, Air, Earth), the Major Arcana cards, and the elemental interpretation.

One thing that bothered me was that Wen refers to the "popular" ordering of the suits as Wands, Swords, Cups, and Pentacles. There is another "popular" school of thought that orders the suits as Wands, Cups, Swords, and Pentacles. This is the one that I most often see.

Note: I should note here that many of the references in Holistic Tarot are Golden Dawn oriented.

Wen discusses each of the cards, with their associations, upright and reversed meanings. She then moves on to signifier cards. According to her this is the typical first step in the process of doing a reading. This would only be so for those that read with signifiers (the card that represents the client). Signifier cards, when used, are drawn from the Court Cards. Wen also discusses choosing signifier cards by the

client's date of birth, or by the nature of the question.

There is a very good presentation on the "First Operation", a preliminary step to doing a reading, popularized by Paul Foster Case. This is followed by a chapter on interpreting the Court Cards. I adore the charts here – charts are gold in presenting information! One of the gems in this chapter is discussing the significance of two, three or four of the same Court Card appearing in a spread. Nice case studies appearing here too!

I am very much a traditionalist, so I was drawn to Wen's chapter on shuffling, cutting, and drawing. Cut with the left hand only! This is how I was taught, and this is what I still do. There are some great graphics in this section showing how to do the cutting and drawing.

In the fundamentals of reading spreads Wen presents a one card spread, a two card spread (with layouts), a three card spread, an alternate three card spread, a four card spread, combination spreads, a five card Simple Cross spread, a five card Essential Keys spread, a five card Fixed-Term Analysis spread, a six card Dyadic Cross spread, a six card Six Points spread, a seven card Horseshoe spread, a seven card Seven Chakras spread, a seven card Personality Tree spread, a ten card Insight spread, a ten card Celtic Cross spread, a ten card Waite Celtic Cross spread, a ten card Crowley Celtic Cross spread, a ten card Tree of Life spread, an eleven card Pneuma Crossing spread, a twelve card Zodiac spread, a twelve card Specific Question spread, a twelve card Lemniscate spread, a twelve card Six Faiths spread, a Grand Profile Life Assessment spread, a traditional fifteen card spread, the Chai eighteen card spread, a Ba Gua spread, an alternative layout for the Ba Gua spread, Eden

Gray's Three Aces spread, and the Celtic cross with a shadow card. Each spread is presented with case studies.

Wen also addresses consideration of the spread landscape (including shadow cards, devising a Tarot spread, analyzing a Tarot reading, understanding the five components of circumstance, reassuring Seekers/clients when a reading seems negative, reading the Tarot for yourself, the setting for a reading (and energetic supplies), the value of meditation, and inappropriate questions. Defining inappropriate questions is very important to both the reader and the Seeker/client. It sets the sacred boundaries for a reading. Wen does well in suggesting how to rephrase questions so that the Seeker/client is satisfied. Wen also goes into ethical considerations, Tarot and love, Tarot and professional development, using the Tarot as a crisis management tool, and working with the Opening of the Key.

I appreciated the extensive appendixes, as it takes this book even further into the "reference book" category, and allows the reader easy access to the meat of several different topics.

This is a very in-depth book, well researched, well presented, easy to read and easy to follow. The reader can go straight to the chapter that interests them the most, as each chapter in this book is stand-alone. Know that this book is based on Waite-Smith concepts. For those that read with Thoth or Marseille style decks, this book may not be for you.

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PSYCARDS

Set your Psyche free

Review by Jadzia DeForest

Creator: Nick Hobson
Artist: Maggie Kneen
Language: English
ISBN: 978-0880794015

*P*syscards are a set of 40 cards based on Carl Jung's archetypes. First published in the 1980s, they are still being printed today. The card set comes in a tuck box with a little booklet. The booklet introduces the Psycards system, basic meanings for each card, a couple of layouts, and information about where to learn more about the cards.

The cards measure about 2.5" by 4.5", a very easy size to shuffle. The paper is decent cardstock, coated, and has good quality printing. The card backs are a repeating pattern in black, red, and tan and the fronts have beautiful, full color illustrations. Each card is numbered at the top and the bottom contains the card's title.

Psycards have been called a simpler version of tarot and there are, not surprisingly, similarities between these cards and the tarot's Major Arcana. For example, the Psycards deck has The Fool, Death, Mother and Father (Empress and Emperor), The Moon, The Sun, The Sage, Destruction (with

a burning tower as part of the image), The Scales, and The Wheel.

As a fan of the Lenormand system, I also found that there are several cards that crossover. Most specifically, The Tower, The Home, The Tree, The Voyage (Ship), The Message (Rider), and of course the Mother (Woman), Father (Man), Moon, Sun, and Stars.

The Psycards system has a few cards designed for simple yes/no type readings, they are: Now, Never, No, and Yes. There is also a card specifically for the querent called The Inquirer, in the spreads they suggest using this card as a signifier. The rest of the cards are the following archetypes: The Body, The Home, Work, The Skills, Money, Friendship, Fortune, The Father, The Mother, Birth, Death, Libido, Destruction, Peace, The Sun, The Moon, The Stars, The Tree, The Scales, The Tower, The Wheel, The Beauty, The Warrior, The Liar, The Stranger, The

Sage, The Fool, The Beast, The Message, The Voyage, The Puzzle, Prison, Liberation, The Cave, and Union.

For the most part the card meanings are literal, The Home card means the house and domestic life and the Money card means wealth. A few cards that

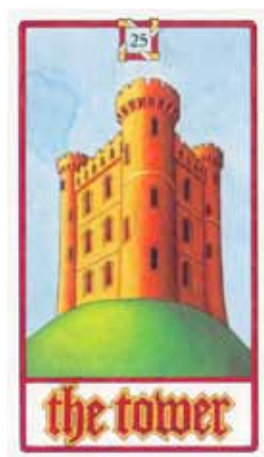


may not be so easy to interpret based on their appearance are:

Fortune, which means your destiny or fate rather than riches or luck.

The Death card means the ending of something, not literal death or dying.

The Sun deals with the masculine archetype including logic, extraversion,



and masculinity. While The Moon is the feminine, intuition, and imagination.

The Stars are specifically aspiration and ambition.

In this deck The Tower represents over-confidence and the ego.

The Fool is both a joker and the artist.

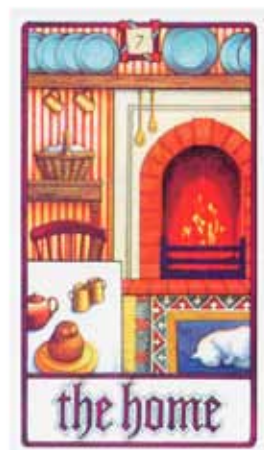
In the booklet, on How To Use and

Enjoy Psycards, it talks about how the cards have different interpretations for different people. The author encourages readers to decide what each card means to them individually and to explore the symbols on a personal level.



The artwork is in a beautiful, vibrant medieval style. The Liar is a dancing jester holding a mask, The Skills has a crossbow and arrows, Peace is the inside of a cathedral, and Friendship shows three people sitting around a table in a tavern. The illustrations are clean, not overly crowded scenes, and to the point.

Using the cards is quite easy. For anyone familiar with the tarot or Lenormand we are already acquainted with this symbolism and it is a fun little deck to read with. It seems like a good fit for beginners as well. The cards are direct and simple in their archetypal representations. I can see why Psycards



have been around for so many years!

On their website you can get professional Psycards readings, take their courses, and learn more about this self-exploration system.

I would recommend this delightful deck. Its simplicity and straightforward card meanings are appealing. The depth of the information you can get from a simple seven card reading is astounding as well as, I've found, very accurate, insightful, and helpful.

For more information visit:
<http://www.psycardsusa.com> and
<http://www.psycards.com>

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Did you create a
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Lenormand deck?

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a book on
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THE FOUNTAIN TAROT

Review by Bonnie Cehovet

Creator: Jonathan Saiz
Author: Jason Gruhl
Designer: Andi Todaro
Publisher: Self-Published
Pub. Date: 2014

“Ultimately, the Fountain Tarot exists to make a difference in people’s lives – in your life. We hope you find insight, beauty, and endless joy in this deck for years to come.”

~ From the book.

The Fountain Tarot is a 79 card deck, with the extra card being The Fountain. This card (assigned the value of infinity) represents the external context beyond human experience in which anything and everything can happen. It certainly already has happened to me – I had a senior moment when attempting to open the box that the cards come in! It has a magnetic closure, and opens along the long side of the box. But it doesn’t stop there! The top flips back, and then the



second side flips back, so that the cover is lying flat. (It is equated to opening a book.) The box is a beautiful grey, with the words “The Tarot” in black script on the cover, and the deck logo and name in raised grey/white lettering. There is an accompanying 110 page LWB (Little White Book), which has a black cover, and a grey spine. The deck name and logo are in grey/white lettering on the front of the booklet.

The Fountain Tarot uses a base of geometry, Internet culture, art,

and spirituality. It really is a stunning presentation, based on original oil paintings by Jonathan Saiz.

Aside from the extra card, the deck follows a traditional format. The Major Arcana titles are the traditional titles, with Justice at VIII and Strength at XI. The suits are Wands, Swords, Cups and Coins. The Court Cards are King, Queen, Knight and Page.

“Every Tarot symbol, figure, and scenario within this complex deck tells its own story, but in combination they are also something more – an intuitive alchemy of contemporary form and emotion.”
~ From “Note From the Artist”

The LWB touches on the history of the Tarot, and on the function of the Major and Minor Arcana. The Major Arcana cards are broken into the following categories: Physical, Spiritual, Ethereal, and The Fountain. Keywords are given for the numbers and for the suits. Spreads include the Three Card Spread (with three different formats), a five card spread (The Fountain Tarot Spread), and a ten card spread (the Celtic Cross). Each card is presented with the card name and number, a key phrase, a description of the card, and upright and reversed meanings. A

bibliography and bios are included at the end of the book. The card descriptions are text only, no images.

The cards are 2 ¾” by 4 ¾”, on sturdy but lightweight stock, with a matt finish. The backs carry a design by Andi Todaro that includes all of the colors used in the deck. The design is reversible. The card edges are gilded with reflective silver foil,



which adds a stunning effect. Care would be needed with shuffling, but it is well done, so I don't think there would be a problem. (Perhaps this is one instance where the reader does the shuffling, and not the client.) The card front includes a white border, with the card name and number along the top for the Major Arcana, the card number and suit (all in text) along the bottom for the pips, and the card title and suit along the bottom for the Court Cards.

The imagery in this deck is a bit fantasy, making use of human form, along with sacred geometry. It easily draws the reader into its own world, as the figures and the geometric patterns interact. There is a great deal of detail, with a careful choice of color. The suits each carry an overall color scheme – Cups are blue/green, Coins yellow/green, Wands yellow/red, and Swords are dark, with flashes of light and color.

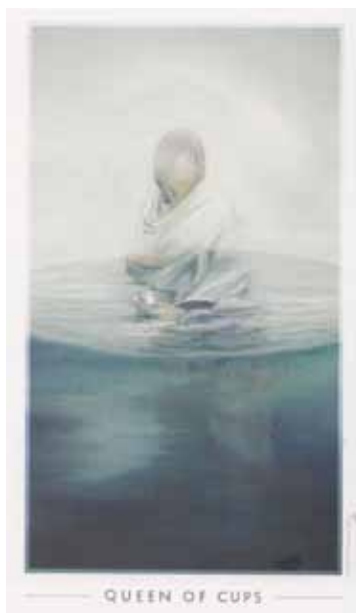


King of Coins – Ordered Stability

Quite the King that you want around when decisions need to be made, and things need to be done! All about practicality and traditional values.

Queen of Cups – Motherly Devotion

This is the mother card of the deck – warm, compassionate, caring. This



Queen knows what you are capable of!

Ace of Swords–Powerful Clarity

This Ace is all about raw power and clarity! This sword cuts through that which holds up our identity, allowing us to see a truth, an insight, or a new approach.



Two of Wands – Two Choices

There are two valid choices, but only the energy to develop one. Dithering will lose the Seeker the opportunity that is being offered.

The Fountain – Be

This card is outside the cycles of birth, death, time, and form. It is the nameless, changeless source of which everything is a part.

Death – A Significant End

The death of something significant. A new future awaits.

Justice–Fairness

Justice is rational, logical, and objective. The concern here is for what is needed in real time, not in what may exist in your mind.



The Fool – Boundless Innocence

The Fool is suspended between spiritual and earthly existence. He is a newly born soul embarking on a new venture.

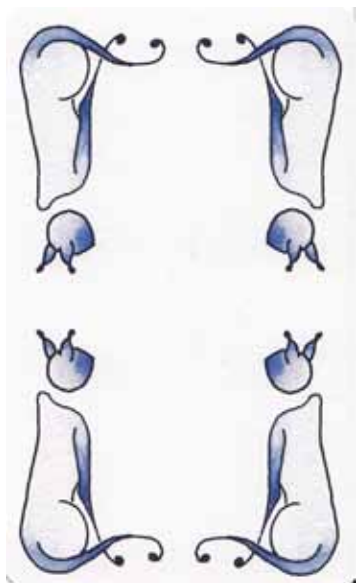
This is definitely not a teaching deck, as it does not show traditional imagery. However, it is much more than a collector's deck, or even an "art" deck. It has a way of opening up other worlds, and drawing the reader into them. I will certainly use it for all sorts of things – readings, meditation, journeying, ritual ... the ways in which this deck can be used are limited only by one's imagination!

BLEU CAT TAROT

Review by Bonnie Cehovet

Author: Beth Seilonen
Artist: Beth Seilonen
Pub. Schiffer Publishing
Pub. Date: 2013
ISBN: 978-0-7643-4553-1

Being an aficionado of felines, this deck drew my attention the first time that I saw it. I was amazed that it came out in 2013, and I was just now seeing it! The Bleu Cat Tarot is a 78 card deck, using traditional titles (the Hanged Man becomes “Hanged”), with Strength at VIII and Justice at XI. The suits are Plants (Wands), Feathers (Swords), Fishes (Cups), and



Balls (Pentacles). The Court Cards are King, Queen, Knight, and Page. The 78 card deck and 95 page companion book come packaged in the (now) traditional Schiffer hard cardboard box with a magnetic, flip top lid (and the tiny piece of ribbon that allows the lid to be opened easily, and never ravel, or looks beaten up).

In her introduction, Seilonen notes that the Bleu Cat Tarot is based upon the antics of her own Siamese cat, Isis. Isis comes to life as Seilonen shares stories from the various stages of Isis life. She is one clever, determined little kittie! The deck is dedicated to our lovely feline companions... something that I do appreciate. My cats have gotten me through many hard times, and helped to celebrate the good ones!

The suit emblems in this deck are reflective of a cat's point of view. In the suit of Plants (Wands), we see cats devising creative ways to dispose plants. (My boys could add a few of their own!) In the suit of Feathers (Swords), we see how a cat would react to seeing a bird steal food from a dog's dish. In the suit of Fishes (Cups), we see how a cat

would reflect on spiritual rejuvenation. In the suit of Balls (Pentacles), we see that even the simplest things can create a sense of abundance and happiness.

The cards are presented with the title, a small black and white image, and a short paragraph about the card (as reflected in the upright position).

The spreads presented at the back of the companion book include the four card Looking Out My Window spread, the four card Serving Reality spread.

The cards are 2 7/8" by 4 3/4". The cardstock is one that would have to be treated with care, as it will not stand up to rough handling. The backs show a stylized Siamese cat in each corner, and are reversible. The artwork is black and white line drawing, with a bit of blue thrown in for flair.

The Fool shows a very daring Siamese at the edge of the roof of a house, about to pounce on a bird that has just taken flight. I have seen my boys do this numerous times – I always vote for the bird!



The Magician shows a Siamese standing upright, with both paws raised,

and a feather in his right paw. To his right we see a plant in mid-air, upside down, leaves falling to the ground, and a dish of food sitting on a table.

The Seven of Balls shows an upright Siamese, leaning on a shovel, Over his head we see seven spirals.

The Nine of Fishes shows a Siamese sitting in front of their food bowl,



which carries the symbol of a fish. He holds a fish between his paw, and four

fish are lined up on either side of his head.

The Queen of Feathers shows a Siamese standing upright, with a long feather in her left hand, and a butterfly in mid-air over her right shoulder.

The Queen of Plants shows an upright Siamese, holding a branch with leaves in front of her. On the floor in front of her we see a mouse.



Hanged (the retitling of the Hanged

Man) shows a Siamese sitting upright on a table, holding a mouse toy by its tail over a waste basket.



The Hermit shows a Siamese sitting upright on a table, contemplating life.

This is a very gentle, lovely deck that can be used in reading for all ages and backgrounds. It presents a fun moment in the day!

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Articles

MINDFULNESS, THINKING AND THE SUIT OF SWORDS

by Heather Mendel

*The dreamer awakes, the shadow goes by,
When I tell you a tale, the tale is a lie
But ponder it well, fair maiden, good youth
The tale is a lie, what it tells is the truth.*

From Alice Kane

*W*e love stories — in fact, we are our stories. It is said that Divinity also loves stories — so much so, that the human family was created. Teller, listener and the story itself draw three different dimensions into the same time-space, weaving an ephemeral interconnection of imagination, words and images. In the case of the storytelling power of the timeless and timely Tarot, each deck creator, reader and querent approaches the cards with their own perspective, experience and beliefs resulting in diverse interpretations that, other than for the purists among us, enhance the magic and mystery of this imaginative oracle.

Several years ago, while out walking near our home in San Luis Obispo, a very large insect, totally unfamiliar to me,

walked across my path. I stopped, fascinated as I watched it wend its way, seemingly oblivious of me. What was it, I pondered, trying to fit it into some known category of insects. Once home, I could not rest and started a search on the web — even calling the entomology department at the local University. I finally discovered it was a Jerusalem cricket. How perfect for a rabbi's wife, I thought! Then in reflecting on this incident, I wondered why it had been so important for me to be able to identify and label this wondrous creature? Did knowing its 'name' change the mystery and wonder of the experience? It certainly satisfied my intellectual curiosity and desire to sort, separate and classify and yet, on the other hand, if anything, it detracted from the magic of experience of simply being present to the wonder of nature.

Leaders in the evolving field of mindfulness, Jon Kabat-Zinn and Eckhart Tolle are making us aware that perhaps the strangest paradox in which we find ourselves on our human journey, is the one that begs us to find balance between the polarities of thought and presence — ego and essence.

The optical illusion demonstrates that there is more than one reality that we are able to access, depending on whether we focus on foreground or background — both are real, both are important. We can enter either at will — the only thing we cannot presently do is enter both at the same time. Similarly, we can be engaged in 'thought' or we can be 'present' — just not at the same time.

Ego is in control of thought, memory, hierarchy and temporality whereas essence offers the experience of the eternal and present moment, commonality and universality. So connected are we to the incessant inner chatter of thought that most of us are unaware that we are not that voice. Consciousness seems to reside in the listener as we can experience for ourselves when we notice the voice and the fact that we are engaged in listening.

Ego and essence, thinking and presence — both are dimensions of our own reality. We use the gift of thinking to solve problems as they arise, consider alternatives, and plan for future possibilities. Ego has access to memory, personal and collective, that allows us to enter history and the past. Thinking serves the ego — that important yet temporal aspect of self that allows us to navigate through the physical reality of our lives, coming into being when we are born, and expiring when we die.

What then of our essence — the equally important, eternal aspect of ourselves that dwells in the present moment? Essence or soul-force is our link to a broader, universal consciousness — that ocean in which we float and of which we are a part. The present moment cannot be accessed by thought, no matter how brilliant. It has to be experienced.

Thought, out of control, is the ego-driven, incessant voice we hear — and often listen to, that maintains an assessment of where we are, what we are doing — or should/could be doing and where we could/should be headed. Such thinking maintains a constant critique of our performance, raising doubts about our competence and ability, reminding us of past failures. This internal chatter maintains a close connection to the pain-body — that reservoir of painful memories in which our ego's needs have been thwarted. If we identify totally with the inner voice and believe this is who we are, we find ourselves robbed of any ability to escape its persistence, and in desperate need of respite.

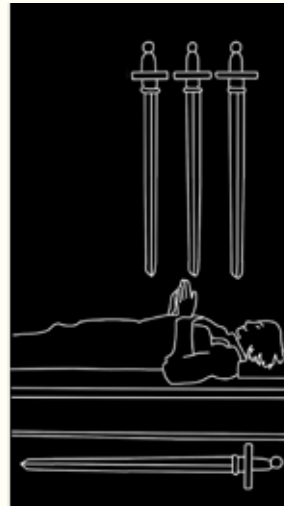
As we become aware of differences between the voice and the listener within, we open ourselves to a fuller consciousness. Such experiences are hard to describe because they arise from vast limitless and formless realms that synch more closely to imagery and feeling than to language.



it) as a tool with which to navigate our way in the physical world; however, at times we also need to still the incessant, inner chatter that prevents us from being conscious, awake

and aware. We need to seek a balance between the two.

Nowhere is the paradoxical dilemma of thinking/presence

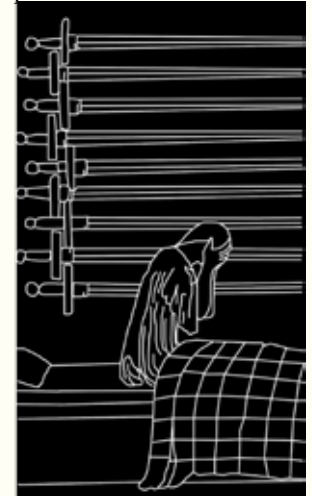
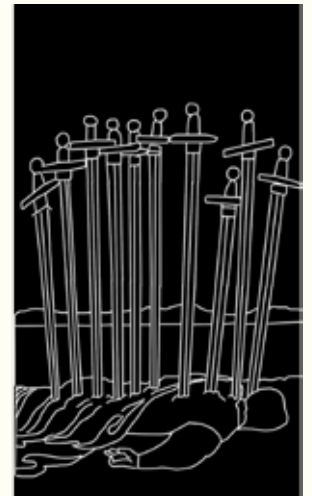


better illustrated than in the most challenging suit of the Minor Arcana — that of Swords, representing the world of air and thinking. Is it possible we find this suit so challenging because we are only now beginning to understand the differences and potential of both aspects of our being?

The troubling nature of the suit of Swords is that the tale it tells seems to build upon itself, reeking havoc as the story of

separation evolves, dragging in its wake sorrow, heart-break, stealth and pain. Exponents of evolutionary consciousness suggest this is the same pathway down which total reliance on the egoic mind and its internal, incessant voice can lead, if not balanced by moments of awareness and presence, in which we are able to enter the stillness — formless and limitless.

Swords, physical and metaphoric, are pointed, their blades double-edge and razor sharp. Swords cut away, cut through and cut out. They are implements of war, weapons that symbolize power and domination with the potential to inflict debilitating pain and loss of life. Metaphorically, a sword can be used to cut away illusion or as one might say, 'get to the point' — the fabric of our belief system that we individually



and collectively weave as an interpretation of reality that keeps us from experiencing the present moment. Are we willing to use and honor our thoughts to dispel illusions of separation or to build and accentuate them? Do we use the gift of thinking as problem-solving or problem-inducing?

As Tarot enthusiasts, we can ask ourselves how the inter-relationship of 'thinking' / 'being

present' affects our reading?

Once aware, are we able to understand that we have a choice of dwelling in the world of belief, memory and potential as seen only through past experience, personal and tribal, or step away to silence the voice and open ourselves to what is happening right now? In the midst of the present evolution of consciousness, we are moving away from depending on mental abstractions that are devoid of life. We are beginning to acknowledge that for thousands of years before intellect reigned supreme, intuition was honored, and with it, an awareness and appreciation of the animating and unifying life-force that exists in everything.

Ego or essence? Thinking or being? Foreground or background — and if not now, when? The challenge is ours.



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The *Sacred Mandala Lenormand Oracle*, released in October 2014 is the latest creation of South African born mystic, author and artist HEATHER MENDEL. Her earlier work, *The Syzygy Oracle: Transformational Tarot and The Tree of Life*, Dodona Books, 2013 offers, in image and word a primer on Kabbalah, Tarot and conscious evolution with a daily spiritual practice for developing trust in our intuitive wisdom.

PIP PIP HOORAY!

by Cheryl Fair

*There is no such thing as an
“unillustrated pip” card.*

Even though I’ve had decades of exposure to divination using cards, I only came across the term “unillustrated pips” when I decided to connect with the tarot community, last year. The first time I heard it, it made me wince because it made no sense. Once I became aware of the expression, I saw that it is being used often in the tarot community.

Clearly, someone who didn’t know what they were saying came up with this nonsensical term and others copied it, rather than correcting the originator.

The term “pip” refers to small, easily countable items. Among other things, the term is used to describe the small seeds in some fruit, the dots on dice or dominos, and the symbols on playing cards. To refer to the Ace through Ten of each suit in a tarot deck as “pips cards,” indicates that they are the numbered cards and that each card will have an illustration of small, easily countable items on it to show which number the card represents.

An illustration (according to Webster) is “a picture or diagram that helps make something clear or attractive”. In visual art, when the artist depicts a recognizable object, then the image is referred to as representational. Some types of representational images include still life, landscape, portraits, and scenes from everyday life. Illustrations can be representational or non-representational. An example of representational illustration would be a picture of a cup. An example of a non-representational illustration would be a mandala. An example of no illustration would be a blank page.

With dice and dominos the pips are normally dots. With cards, we get additional information about the card by using a “pip” illustration that is in the shape and color of the suit it represents in the deck. Playing cards have four suits, Diamonds, Hearts, Clubs, and Spades, so when you see four small hearts arranged on a plain white background on a playing card, you know that it is the Four of Hearts, without having any other information added. You are able to play card games with only this information.



In a tarot deck the four traditional suits are Wands, Cups, Swords, and Pentacles, and so the pips used are usually depictions of those implements that are associated with the suit. Rather than four hearts on a plain white background, a tarot deck could have four cups on a plain white background and the reader would know that the card was the Four of Cups. The pips define the card and give the reader/player all of the information needed. Any other illustration or decoration on the card is optional and could be either helpful or a distraction.

Since more than half (40 out of 78) of the cards in a tarot deck are pips cards, it is important for tarot readers to know what they are looking at when they draw the numbered cards. As people who are guiding other people by imparting knowledge, it is essential that card readers are not just regurgitating surface knowledge that they’ve memorized.

The traditional meanings of the tarot pips cards are derived from the suit and the number, as well as any other design elements the creator of the deck has chosen to include. The earliest European decks, such as the Visconti di Modrone deck, Tarot de Marseilles, and the Visconti-Sforza deck (All from the 15th Century), did not use scenic

illustrations on the pips cards, yet to call them “unillustrated” would be completely erroneous. The illustrations of a specific number of swords, cups, wands, or pentacles/coins are used to define each pip card. The Sola-Busca tarot, from the late 15th Century, may have been the first to use scenic illustrations on the pips cards. Later, in the early 20th Century, Pamela Coleman Smith and Arthur Edward Waite created the Rider-Waite deck, with scenic illustrations, many of which were based on the Sola-Busca deck.

The Rider-Waite deck evolved into the Smith-Waite tarot



deck that is used as the inspiration for so many of our modern tarot decks. When a deck has scenic illustrations on the pips cards, those illustrations are one interpretation of how the meaning of the number and the suit apply to life as that deck creator sees it.

Layers of meaning

Each suit has a meaning based on the element it represents. In western metaphysical tradition we use four elements, Earth (the material realm), Fire (action), Air (thought) and Water (emotion), which correspond to Pentacles, Wands, Swords and Cups. The four element theory is an important base for various belief systems and schools of thought.

Each numbered card has a meaning based on numerology. Numbers have been used for divination purposes for centuries. Pythagoras (571 BC – 495 BC, St. Augustine of Hippo (354 AD – 430 AD), and countless others have written volumes about the metaphysical meanings of numbers. There are superstitions and beliefs concerning the meanings of numbers in every culture. From the rudimentary knowledge of the metaphysical meanings of the numbers 1 through 9, to theories of harmonic cosmology, the deeper meanings of numbers cross all cultural boundaries and give clues as to how things work on a macrocosmic scale.

Tarot readers are interpreters of symbolism for the purpose of application to the querent's situation. By simply using the information found in the suit and the number, the reader can discern the basic meaning of the card. When analyzing that information in the context of the reading (position of the card, other cards in the layout, etc.) readers can construct a narrative that will help the querent to better understand their own situation.

The pips cards in most decks do show more than the suit and number of the card.

Meaningful non-scenic design elements used include planetary symbols, colors, element symbols, representations of gemstones or crystals, plants and flowers, and a variety of non-representational elements that create borders and backgrounds. Some readers prefer non-scenic illustrations on the pips cards and some prefer scenic illustrations. Many readers, myself included, use different decks for different situations.

Regardless of which deck(s) you prefer to work with, it is important to learn to look closely at each design element

used. Noticing each detail and understanding the meaning those details, help the reader to impart knowledge clearly to the querent.

At least a rudimentary knowledge of metaphysical thought and symbolism is essential for a card reader to help their clients get the most from a reading. Carefully examining the illustrations on pips cards, while applying a knowledge of symbolism, gives the reader a wealth of information, while leaving the reader the freedom to interpret and intuit the details, in regards to the rest of the reading and the querent's specific question.

Study of the correspondences between various metaphysical practices should be part of any reader's preparation for setting themselves up as an interpreter of the cards. When I teach a class in tarot reading or astrology, I always suggest that the students obtain a reference book such as "The Magician's Companion" by Bill Whitcomb, or some similar encyclopedic guide to explain the connection between the various models of symbolism.

Having this knowledge makes for better card readers, no matter which type of deck they use.

As card readers and as deck creators, we are specialists. It is our responsibility as specialists, to use terminology that is enlightening, rather than confusing to others. In addition to being able to communicate the meaning of a reading to a client, we need to make sure that we are able to describe our tools adequately. For the sake of clear communication, and for clarification in our own minds when reading cards, I am suggesting that we eradicate the use of the term "unillustrated pips" when we actually mean "non-scenic pips".

© Cheryl Fair



CHERYL FAIR is a freelance photographer and filmmaker, and a practicing professional astrologer. She is the creator of the Magical Realism Tarot, and comes from a family background of card divination. Cheryl holds a B.A. in Visual Arts and a Juris Doctorate. See more of Cheryl's work www.cherylfair.com or www.magicalrealismtarot.com.

MARKETING TO CURRENT CLIENTS: CREATING LASTING SUSTAINABLE RELATIONSHIPS

by Jenna Matlin | Queen of Wands Tarot

*H*ave you ever had a great session with someone and felt that their concern ended the moment you left the door? Conversely, have you had a relationship with a service provider and grew to care for that person as much as she did you and did your service provider grow into a truly irreplaceable relationship? As a client you no doubt quickly figured out where you stood and from there you either decided to move on or stay. It is easy to turn the charm on for the first time client, but does that attention to service and relationship building begin to slip as you focus on getting new clients?

In terms of marketing dollars, the standard belief is that a new client will cost anywhere between 4-10 times a current one. It is an expensive proposition to ignore marketing efforts targeted to current clients. Unfortunately, most marketing education is aimed only at bringing new clients to your tarot table; there are countless articles about bringing in new clients but fewer concerning client retention.

Despite what may be on offer for people looking for marketing advice, the sign of a sustainable practice is one where, after a few years, there is a healthy mix of returning clients and new. If your practice seems to attract new clients without keeping the ones already served, this can be a warning sign. Steering away from the “one and done” interactions to focus on building relationships over time, even if that client comes only once a year, will mean one more reading hour that

was cheaper to retain and maintain.

Often we might think, “If the client wants a reading, she will just reach out.” But just because a client has had a reading does not mean they will keep you on their short list. Clients get busy with their lives and often forget that you are a resource beyond what they initially came for. The onus is on you, the



practitioner, to work on maintaining the relationship.

Sometimes we shy away from contacting past clients; assuming their silence to mean lack of interest. Usually, this is untrue, most clients think fondly of the experience but do not have the time to reach out, or keep putting you down the list of things going on in their lives until they forget completely. Unlike other service professionals who build strong bonds because of regular contact, the nature of tarot readings mean we see people infrequently (usually). The infrequency of our work is the very reason why we must pay special attention to current clients. Just like any relationship, distance over time means that more effort must be exerted to keep the connection strong.

In the social media world, it is easy to get caught up in the tarot community. It is fun to write blogs and create pages that are targeted to those who love tarot like you do. However, depending on your client base, this actually might not be in your business’ best interest! Your social media should be aimed at cultivating the relationship you have with current clients as well as attracting new.

As an example, think about the things you write about on your blog or on your social media: are these things that speak to the problems or hopes your clients reveal to you in your sessions? Are you targeting your writing and advertising to them in a way that creates space for their needs, concerns, and dreams? Write



a list of at least 20 things you have noticed from your clients; the trends, the reasons why they come in, and the things they wonder or are anxious about. You will have an engaging list of topics that will certainly interest and engage clients between sessions.

Besides online communities, other things you can do to engage clients is to keep communicating with them outside of sessions. Perhaps you can send them a birthday note, with a one card reading, or send your clients an email a few months after the session just to say hi. My personal best practice is to keep a log of who I saw and when. Excel can easily do this and there is no need to purchase fancy client management programs. Keeping a log will help you identify which clients you might want to reach out or send a special deal to. You can also give your regular clients referral bonuses and special gifts like extra time.

In addition to logging the dates, it is also a good idea to keep notes on your clients. When you begin to see a high volume of people and many of them infrequently, it will be hard to remember who and what they came in for. I don't know about you, but I have a terrible memory about the sessions themselves, I think it has to do with switching in and out of intuition-space, and so quick notes help me stay on track. I write about 4 sentences at the end of the session and it takes about 2 minutes of my time. When past clients schedule again, I review my log, making sure that I remember the names and situations my clients were concerned about.

As a general rule, shifting away from the 'one and done' mentality to thinking about marketing as building relationships is key. Shifting relationship building from finding new clients to include growing relationships will build a sustainable practice. It is less exhausting to maintain a reading practice when half of all weekly appointments will be with

people who already connect and love what you do for them as opposed to the revolving door of always new clients. As you gain a certain kind of gravity in your community, watch for the tipping point where referrals are coming in, people are talking about you, and coming back; this is all very good news and a sign of a healthy business. Creating some techniques

to foster this sooner will only help your practice in the long run.

© Jenna Matlin



JENNA MATLIN, M.S. is the owner of Queen of Wands Tarot based in Philadelphia, Pa. Jenna also founded the 'Not Your Mother's Tarot' Meetup group in Philadelphia, authored the Ebook: "Have Tarot Will Travel" available on Amazon and runs the Professional Development Program via the Tarot Association.

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TAKING ON THE TOWER AND REACHING AN ACCORD

by Pamela Steele

When I was a kid I knew the world was a good place... a safe place. It didn't matter where I was; I knew I was safe and loved. Then, decades passed and I became more, shall we say, 'vintage'. During those years tarot became my passion. And eventually I began the task of creating the Steele Wizard Tarot. But as we all know, when making plans, life tends to happen.

I believe in order to fully understand a card, you need to live it. That being noted, one of my most challenging Tower Times came after an unexpected, and in my opinion, uncalled for, 'trial by fire'. For weeks prior to an epic meltdown, the Tower card appeared in every single daily spread. A series of events immediately followed which became a truly down-to-earth, heartfelt experience of this card. These events, in turn, made Marine Corps boot camp look like a grade school track and field day. In keeping with my traditional pattern, it nearly killed me more than once in ways I had never imagined.

There I was, alone and broke. The roof leaked and my ex had maxed out my credit cards immediately before fleeing the province with his lover. I had a badly sprained thumb and no back up plan for work. Soon, I was in the middle of bankruptcy and a divorce. Not to mention only a few days away from completing the companion book for the finished drawings for what would become the Steele Wizard Tarot.

By spring of that year, my breaking point was so far behind me it wasn't even a dot in the rear view mirror. In complete frustration, I stormed outside and screamed at the heavens "GOD!!!" Being raised southern Baptist had me believing this particular deity to be an imaginary friend for grown-ups, but I was at my wits end and thought it wouldn't hurt to ask. But

since I wasn't in any frame of mind to ask nicely, it was more of a threatening demand. Either way, it worked. And by the grace of whoever was listening, I had an utter and complete melt-down, complete with tears, snot, and much wailing and gnashing of teeth. It was uplifting and cleansing.

Later that day, after a lovely pity party of one, I finally came to the conclusion: I'd always loved a challenge. And so began part two of the saga that was an unfolding Tower adventure. (Don't try this at home, kids.)

I began to sift through the wreckage of my life (and there was much more, trust me) and see what could be salvaged.

I first realized I was far from being alone. There were Talisen, our sentry that strongly resembled an Egyptian Arabian horse; Moe-Joe the four pound Chihuahua; Dinger, the farm dog who was best described as mobile aromatherapy for a feed lot; and Bear, a long-haired white Manx and the true proprietor who graciously let me pay the bills and feed him. Alone? Never!!!

Leaky roofs can be compensated for with 5-gallon pails. Saving rainwater saves the environment. How very noble of the roof to be concerned for the planet's welfare.

What of the endless calls from bill collectors? For a while I tried to play nice. But after much deliberation and no compromise on the part of the creditors, I realized there's no financial crisis a simple bankruptcy can't make go away. It is pure entertainment to chat with some fool who thinks I could possibly be intimidated. I was in my Tower time and the playing field was being leveled. Threats are just so much hot air.

It is challenging to work without a thumb. Even Bear had a measure of sympathy as running the non-electric can opener was an epic adventure. For almost a full second

he actually looked concerned. But on the upside, it's a long way from my heart so no chance of complications.

I metaphorically threw the entire mess up in the air and what landed, stayed. Life became very streamlined. So streamlined in fact it gave the appearance it could go really fast. There was no excess baggage, which is why that divorce was a good thing. With the stroke of a pen, I got rid of 178 pounds of ugly fat, whose name shall be kept confidential.

I would never blame my ex for all the chaos. It takes two to make or break a relationship. We simply had different life objectives. He wanted to drink and party while I wanted to create an empire.

I eventually remembered prior to this epic saga, Maya (my



cousin and best friend) had spoken a few words of profound wisdom to me. She took my face in her hands, looked me in the eyes and said ‘You know I love you. You know I want you to be happy. So I’m going to tell you this because I love you and your happiness concerns me. You are destined to do great things. You need a man as strong as you who can accompany you in public without a muzzle and a leash.’ I never said a word. A big part of me knew she was right. But another part



of me had been so afraid of being alone I would have burned every drawing and manuscript to not be alone. How pathetic. In a very real way Tower energy had cornered me into making a choice. In the end, I sold my house right after clearing bankruptcy and invested in publishing the Steele Wizard Tarot set.

For me the Tower also came to be about

revelations. I now know it’s ok to ask for help rather than maintaining the dysfunctional belief that I’m a 9-foot tall invincible super hero. My first clue? No cape! I also learned to be more flexible. Rather than deal with a do-over reminder, flexibility became a life-long habit. I’d rather drop a chimney brick on my foot than repeat that one, so it’s best to keep these types of Life Lessons close by.

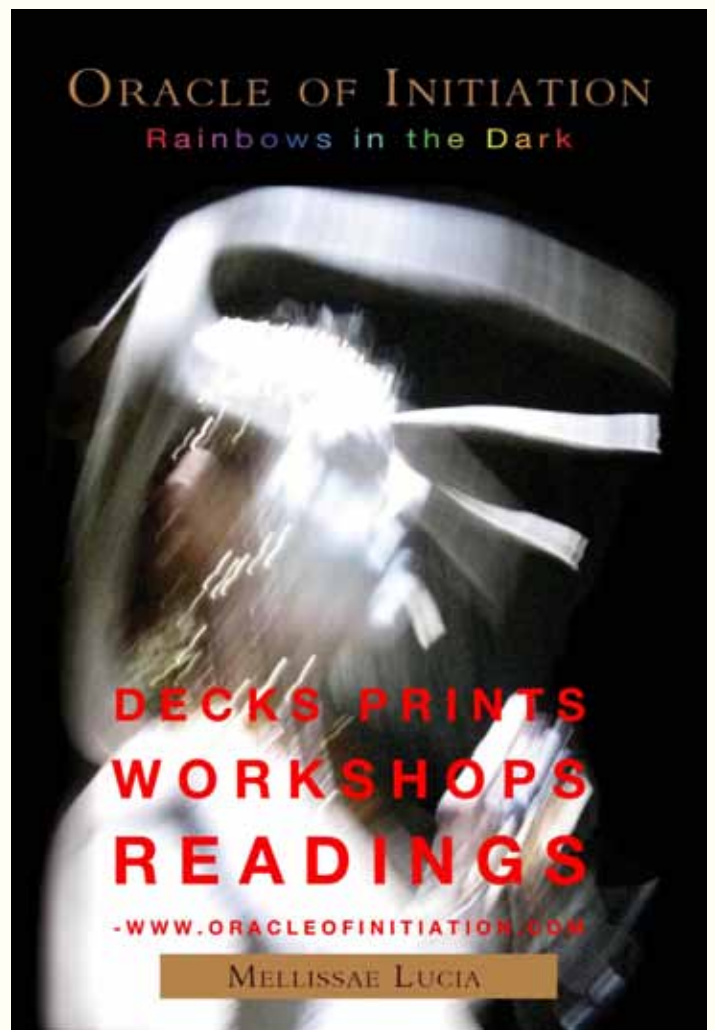
To sum it up, either I would let life beat me and be miserable or I could start over... literally, which brings me right back to where I began all those years ago.

The world is a beautiful safe place that’s perfect for an adventure. I still don’t know where it’s all going, but wow, what a ride.

© Pamela Steele



PAMELA STEELE is a registered massage therapist, professional bar tender, event organizer, horse trainer and has taught tarot reading, art and belly dancing. With over 50+ years art experience and over 35 years reading tarot, Pamela has created the *Steele Wizard Tarot*, the *Wizard’s Pets Tarot* and the currently in-progress *Eternal Seeker’s Tarot*. She gets bored easily and can be distracted by everything or nothing. Her founding passions are fantasy art and horses which you will see blended into many tarot images. She has shown and sold art internationally for over 30 years and her work has graced graphic novel covers, D&D publications, the German Sci-Fi Annual, coloring books, children’s books and new age books and magazines. She’s online at www.SteeleWizard.com.



THE TAROT HIDES ITSELF IN THE HIEROPHANT:

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE SPIRITUAL SEEKER AND THE TAROT READER

by Shada McKenzie

Tonight, while spending some time with one of my decks, the question ran through my mind, which card best signifies the Tarot itself? In the same way we might choose a significator for ourselves or our clients, what would the card be that the Tarot would select to represent itself? I thought about this for a moment and then the image of the set of keys placed at the feet of the Hierophant came to mind.

They are the very keys that open the doors to the Higher Self.

Without the Hierophant, or other guides acting as an intermediary between the earthly and spiritual realms, we remain embedded within the limited understanding that the physical world is able to offer us.

The perceptions offered by our five senses can only take our awareness so far. We need a connecting passageway, or at least most of us believe we do, to access the higher understanding of our inner cosmos as well as the outer physical realm that goes further than our limited ways of perceiving can travel.

The Tarot and the Hierophant are not one and the same. I don't believe that the energy of one card can symbolize its totality. However, the Tarot has been hidden within the image of the Hierophant. It is the set of keys that have been unassumingly placed at his feet – a secret that has been hidden right before our eyes. These are the keys that open the doors to the rest of the Major Arcana. They also have the capacity to unlock the answers we seek whenever we consult the Tarot.

By engaging with the energy of the Hierophant, we develop an understanding of the limitations of the physical realm. The Hierophant points to the heavens, showing us that there is vastly more to existence than what we can immediately

sense. Even within the physical realm, there is the cosmos, both inner and outer, that extends to remote distances far beyond what our immediate senses are able to perceive.

The Hierophant's hand gesture also figuratively points towards the nonphysical terrain of our mind – a reality with the same epic proportions as the cosmos our bodies inhabit. This is the truth despite the fact that most of us generally operate almost entirely in the region of conscious thought.

We have been dropped somewhere in the midst of this boundless terrain, but feel very much trapped by these limitations. We are so entirely trapped that we cannot even see the key to open the doors that is placed right before our eyes. We need a guide. The Hierophant is our guide. The Hierophant helps us to journey to places that we cannot because he has found the key that will unlock the doors.

I have run across many Tarot readers who have a very negative relationship with the Hierophant. He is disdained by many for his spiritual power and authority. He is resented for

the doctrine that he upholds as well as for his connection to long held traditions that are deemed by many to be conservative and outdated.

Perhaps these individuals would do well to reconsider, particularly since Tarot readers are the Hierophant! When we engage with the Tarot, we are acting as that point of connection between the two realms. We are the passageway that leads to the door that opens us to new realities.

By utilizing the deck of Tarot cards that gets shuffled in our hands, our circle of perception is able to extend beyond our ordinary imitations.

Just like the Hierophant, this advantage gives Tarot readers a certain level of power and authority. We have our own doctrine and long held traditions that connect us – there is nothing about us that is inherently iconoclastic. In fact, it calls for a level of conformity to these conventions that have been passed down. The Hierophant's purpose is to give others access to higher states of reality – this is what we offer our clients in a Tarot reading. Like it or not, we are intimately affiliated with the Hierophant, and the cards on the table are our keys.

It is likely the image of the Pope that has traditionally appeared on the older decks, such as the Tarot de Marseille and the Rider-Waite-Smith deck, that so many readers have an issue with. Many modern deck makers have given the card a major makeover in an attempt to distance it from its Catholic connotations, such as Kim Krans has done in her *Wild Unknown Tarot* deck.



Krans obliterates the pope and replaces it with the magical and mysterious crow. But if you compare the two cards you will see that they are actually both still speaking of the same energy. In the Rider-Waite-Smith card the Pope's raised hand acts like an antennae that will passively channel the messages received from the divine realm. Like the Pope, the crow also is passively receiving a message as it is delivered to him in an electric flash of insight. As the lightning bolt strikes the key, the crow is compelled to open its beak and deliver the divine message. Drawing the two cards even more closely together, the bolt of light contains the same colors as the Pope's robe.



They even share similar shadow traits. The Pope can become a false guide if he becomes too attached to his power. The crow has a trickster nature and cannot ever be fully trusted to share the wisdom he transmits with a full accuracy. If neither the Pope nor the crow can be fully trusted, how can the querent be certain that she is directly connected to the divine when she attempts to connect to it through this intermediary? How can she fully trust their revelations?

She can't. In order to be true to herself, she must question her faith in the process and preserve a level of doubt in the message being conveyed. The querent must also learn to discover her own set of keys that will enable her to expand her awareness to the extent that the need for the intermediary can be eliminated. She already has access to her keys, but until she is able to see this for herself the intermediary will be needed.

If we take a look at the journey through the Major Arcana, we can see that the Hierophant is located still very close to the beginning of this adventure. He is an important stepping stone on our life path that helps us connect to something greater than ourselves. We are meant to use him until we grow to the point where we discover that we do not need him any longer. By exposing us to something greater than

ourselves, he serves a significant purpose on the path, but he is certainly not the end of the journey. He helps us to see that we are greater than what we perceive ourselves to be. But until we discover that we have access to our own set of keys we will continue to need his guidance.



As Tarot readers, we not only can serve as that passageway, but we can also act as mentors to our clients, helping them to learn to discover their own set of keys. Every session I have with a client also serves as a lesson in the Tarot. I share my understanding. I encourage them to look into the cards themselves in order to build their own relationship with the images to increase their circle of perception. I believe that it is the responsibility of the

Tarot reader to place the power back into the hands of the querent.

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SHADA MCKENZIE is a Tarot reader, artist and educator. She offers one-on-one personal Tarot training and readings where she lives in San Cristobal de Las Casas, Chiapas Mexico. Written email readings can be ordered through her website, The Circle and the Dot.

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MY JOURNEY FROM DISCOVERING TAROT, TO CREATING A UNIQUE DIVINATION DECK

by Casey Scanlon

I am a person who believes in the Wonders and Magic of the universe and that there are no coincidences. I witness my world from an outsider's point of view when and if things start to get difficult for me. I simply take a step back from living in it and look for the reasons for what is going on, for I also believe there is a reason for everything. I have believed this since I was a young adolescent.

There was an exact moment when I can trace the beginning of this belief. My whole family was returning from a road trip to New York City in our VW Bus. My father decided we weren't in a hurry and so we would take the scenic route instead of the speedier Thruway. We were driving along happily, even singing, when a big Semi truck passed us and he threw a rock which came flying at our windshield and cracked it in a big way.

Everyone in the family had the same reaction. They all said we should have taken the busier thruway, then this wouldn't have happened. I was silent. In that moment I was figuring out, that we did exactly what was best for us. I had a strong sense that if we HAD gone the other way, we would have had a much worse encounter with a semi truck, resulting in injury to one of us rather than to our vehicle.

When I offered this reaction to my family, I was "poo poo-ed" by them because there was no way of proving it. But that was the beginning of a kind of knowing for me that has helped me to be strong in times of difficulty.

As I grew there were many other incidents and events that added to this knowing and trust in the universe that I have come to have. I have learned to see some of the messages that the universe sends me. Sometimes I see something curious, or just a little uncommon, and the image of it lingers with me. Then if I see the same thing in a short period of time I make a mental note of it. Often, I happen to see the same sort of thing again soon, and it's then that I begin to look for the message in it.

I understand the universe is trying to tell me something so I step back, become the witness, and search for it. Often the message is clear, simple and pertinent and I don't have to search long. This is a kind of Divination in itself.

But there are times when we are too mired in our "stuff" to see what we are being shown. This is when we turn to friends, advisors, the stars, or our cards. In my adult life, I have been guided to a supportive, loving group of like minded friends.

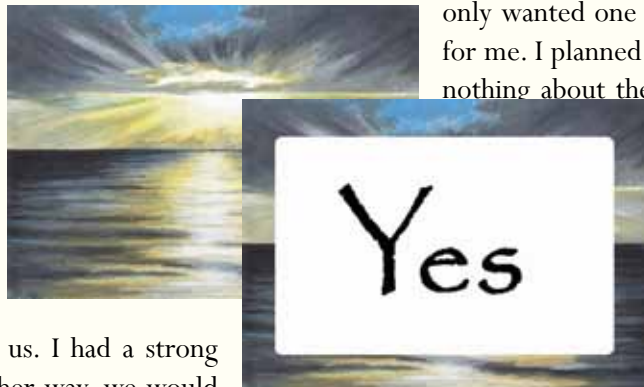
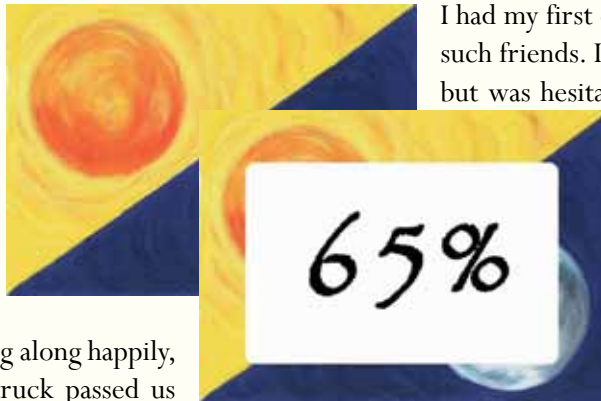
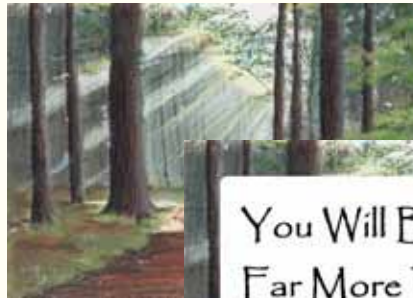
I had my first experiences with Tarot with a couple of such friends. I was intrigued and enjoyed the process, but was hesitant to participate in a bigger way. They all had their own decks, and many of them. With all of the variety and different meanings of the cards, I was confused and didn't know where to start.

I began to want my own deck eventually, but there were so many decks out there to choose from. I

only wanted one deck, so I wanted the perfect one for me. I planned to wait until I knew more. I knew nothing about the Arcanas and suits except that to

do a better reading you had to understand the many basic meanings of each card. Also, I hesitated because part of me was still that young adolescent that was scoffed at by family for her beliefs. This new exposure to Tarot, and consideration of

procuring my own deck, coincided with a conversation I had with another beloved friend, whom I believed relied too



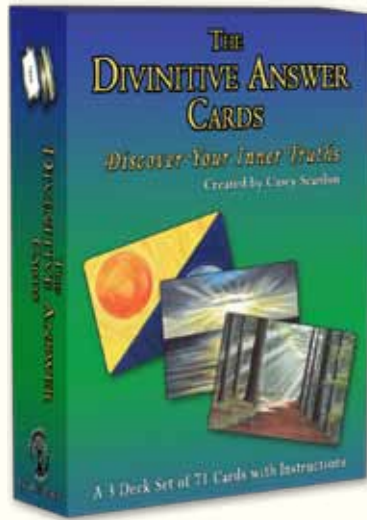
heavily on outside advice, and readings from astrologers and psychics. I tried to tell this friend to look inside and trust self for the answers. I have always had a firm belief that that is where true answers lie, deep down we know what is best for us.

This made me think, maybe that's the key. I don't need to buy a Tarot deck. I should just come up with my own deck with answers from inside myself. Also, at the time, I had recently read an article that taught me the power of Yes and No in learning your heart's desire. I decided I would create my own personal "Tarot" deck based on that power. (I hadn't even heard of divination decks yet).

So I thought my "Tarot" would have 2 decks. I would have an answer deck with all of the answers I could think of to any dilemma type question. And I would have a Yes or NO deck. But I didn't want it to only be a two card deck, so I made an equal number of Yes and No I cards and threw in a blank for another twist. My friend suggested rounding out the two decks with a third Percentage deck to give the Yes or No strength, or the Answer conviction. That appealed to me, because 3 is a very magical number and symbolizes, Mind, Body, Spirit, and many number of other holy Trinities...Morning, Noon, and Night...Maiden, Mother, Crone...Larry, Moe, and Curly.

And so, The Divinitive Answer Cards were born. This was in 1998. I made them just for myself at first, satisfying my urge for a "tarot" deck of my own. I thought of them as Tarot for the layperson, because I was a tarot layperson. But I played them with my friends and they were such fun, we laughed a lot and soon they all wanted a deck. They are much faster to interpret for someone who doesn't know a thing about tarot or divination, because the answers are connected clearly to your feelings.

I used the cards off and on thru the years, thinking I may try to share them on a larger scale one day by getting them published since they worked so well for me and people seemed to enjoy them. It was interesting to see how the answers evolved a little as I changed over time. I had been making subtle changes to my cards since I conceived of them, making them more for the public and less for me alone. I test marketed them one Market Night in my town at the time. I was delighted to find that 14 year old boys were interested in asking my cards a question! I thought if that group were interested then surely they are suitable for anyone!



Finally, 14 years after their conception, the Divinitive Cards came into their own when I got them published with the help of Devera Publishing, (then Living Magick Publications). Though my cards were originally intended for myself to help make my life's decisions, they are now intended for anyone and everyone to help them get to the core of their wishes. I called them The Divinitive Answer Cards because they won't give you the DEFINITIVE answer. Because you divine your own answer, they give you the DIVINITIVE answer.

The Cards and I have come a long way. It was an unhurried and thoughtful journey from concept to full fruition. And it was a very valuable journey of self-discovery that I recommend to anyone out there who has a deck idea, yet is hesitating to move forward. Creating an oracle deck is not only an unfolding of self, but a revelation of self to the world you are living in. Whether you put it out there for the public or not you still learn a great deal from the creative process.

And, when you put it out there for the public, another kind of journey begins, and new kind of learning happens. Fears and uncertainty can be faced and conquered, as you market what is in essence, an aspect of yourself. In fact, I am still working on this.

To find out in more detail about the cards themselves and how to use them check out the website www.divinitiveanswer.com.

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CASEY SCANLON was raised in the beautiful Adirondack Mountains, which nurtured in her a love of nature. She now resides in the Cascade Mountains of OR. The mountains and woods gave Casey a deep and underlying trust in the knowledge of the universe. She is an artist, yoga instructor and has a passion for making chocolate.

TAROT ARCHETYPES, PAST LIVES AND SACRED CONTRACTS

by Geraldine Amaral

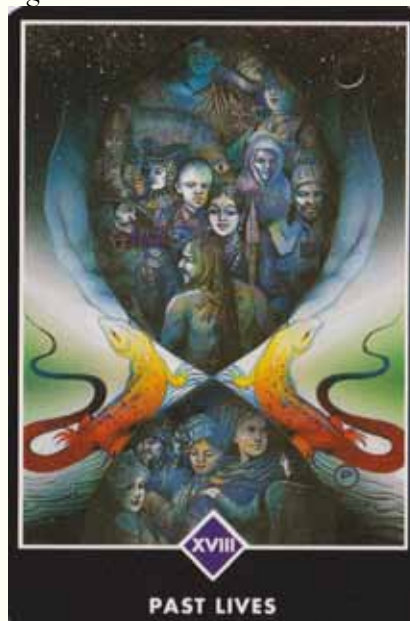
*A glimpse into the eternity of our existence
is a gift, and understanding the function of
karma in our lives can be a wake-up call.
The events in your life are trying to show
you a pattern as ancient as the journey
of your own soul.*
(Osho Zen Tarot)

Do you ever wonder why we humans have a tendency to make the same mistakes over and over? Or maybe you know people who seem to be completely stuck in their lives and can't seem to break out of their negative patterns? As we progress on a spiritual path, it seems that we ought to be able to explain and interrupt such negative, self-defeating and repeating life patterns. According to the Osho Zen Tarot, based on the teachings of Osho (Indian mystic, guru and spiritual teacher), difficult life experiences are really a "wake-up call" – attempts to show you "a pattern as ancient as the journey of your soul." In the Osho Zen Tarot deck, Key Number 18 of the Major Arcana is named "Past Lives."

But in most traditional decks, Key number 18 is the Moon Card. The imagery of the Moon card suggests that information is bubbling up from the unconscious (as depicted by the creature emerging from the water). It suggests that we are being influenced by information which is hidden – either from within our own consciousness, or from those around us who may be withholding information from us. We are not aware of these motivations and patterns from within, or from without. They are unconscious. Similarly, as in the "Past Lives" interpretation

in the Osho Zen Tarot, our past life agreements may operate within us, at unconscious levels. Although the name of the card has been changed to "Past Lives" in the Osho Zen deck, the meaning is not that dissimilar from the standard meaning of the Moon card. They both suggest influences from hidden realms.

The imagery and implications of the Osho Past Lives card raises many questions about the existence and influence of past lives on our current lives. The Osho Zen Tarot book describes this card as the "cosmic mother . . . revealed within are many images, faces from other times." This is a reference to past lives – "many faces within . . . from other times." But I think the meaning of this card can be interpreted in a little different way, beyond just "past lives," as a separate concept. There is a belief that has become popular and wide-spread that is related to past lives. Authors, such as Carolyn Myss (Sacred Contracts) and Eben Alexander (Proof of Heaven) have brought the concept of past lives and "Soul Contracts" into our awareness. These Soul Contracts offer us an explanation for why people suffer, why we get stuck in repeat patterns, and why we have the life experiences that we have. It is a belief system that proposes that we, ourselves, design our soul's plan for our lifetimes, in conjunction with our Divine Guidance. In this collaborative process, we determine what kinds of archetypal experiences and people would be most useful and helpful to our continued evolution and soul progression. Each lifetime offers a different set of archetypal learning experiences. Like the Osho Zen card's imagery, there are "many faces" and many experiences that propel us along in our soul progression.



It's an intriguing concept, isn't it? It suggests that all the experiences and relationships you are having, or have had -- with you parents, children, friends, enemies, lovers, co-workers, are in your life because you made an agreement with them prior to this lifetime to support each other's spiritual growth. In fact, these Soul Contracts permeate every part of our lives. They are the agreements we make before we incarnate into a particular lifetime and they set up every aspect of our lives – such as our personality traits, our careers, our physical

attributes, the people in our lives, the family we are born into, the archetypal experiences that we have -- everything

that makes each one of us who we are. All of it was agreed to by ourselves and the other souls involved for the singular purpose of helping our soul growth and evolution. Each one of us chose the lessons on which we would focus, with an eye to hopefully mastering that particular issue. Each one of us decided which wounds we would attempt to heal. Further, we exchange contracts with each other and the contract outlines what and how we will be with each other. These experiences and people are typically archetypal, rather than specific, and offer the context for us to navigate our lives. In fact, every relationship and experience is an opportunity to grow and transform our lives, asking questions such as “Why would I choose this situation, or that situation? What am I learning in this situation?”

“Karma” simply means the natural law of cause and effect which states that for every action, there is an appropriate reaction. The purpose of karma is to lead us to higher levels of evolution and wholeness. The Osho Zen Tarot companion book states that the “real point [of past lives] is to see and understand the karmic patterns of our lives, and their roots as an endless repetitive cycle that traps us in unconscious behavior.” Indeed, the knowledge of our patterns can lead to an awakened state of consciousness -- one where we are no longer conditioned to act out of old patterns -- an awareness in which we can begin to untangle the past, moving toward a state of being in which we no longer react to present events from the lens of the past. We begin to interrupt self-defeating and self-sabotaging patterns. Now that is true liberation!

If we want to delve deeper into our individual Soul Contracts, we must look at the archetypal experiences we are having -- not necessarily the specific events and people, but how these people and events represent patterns or templates of human experience. As soon as you are able to view your life from these archetypal levels -- seeing the patterns that emerge, especially patterns that repeat themselves -- in relationships, behaviors, experiences and even patterns of thoughts that comprise our core beliefs -- the more we can learn about our soul agreements. All such patterns relate to our soul's evolution.

Each one of us, on a soul level, makes a decision to come forward into a specific life, at a specific time, as part of this orderly progression of spiritual planning. The poet Haliz

said, “This place where you are right now God circled on a map for you.” God circled this very place on a map for each one of us! The Soul Contract is the map or blueprint of our lives, a navigational tool that guides us through the twists and turns, the ups and downs. How we each respond to these life experiences will help us determine, from the soul level, how to craft future lives. What did you agree to learn this time? Your Soul Contract tells you the particulars.

I am sure you've heard it said before: We are all Divine Souls, having a human experience. Thus, there is a Divine plan which is unfolding in our lives. From this perspective, the current life is simply the latest “chapter” in the eternal life. Our souls developed the very life plan that we are now living! In this paradigm of existence, we meet with a council of advisors and elders prior to our birth, and we map out our lives according to the life experiences we need to have.

We come to Earth to experience the scripts we wrote and agreed to play out. As you might expect, once we are born, we forget the details of our agreements and contracts and that is why we experience anger or blame towards others who have wounded us in some way. We now know that from a karmic perspective, this is useless. How can you blame someone for playing the very part that you assigned to him or her so that you could learn the very lessons you incarnated to learn?

Myss describes these soul agreements or soul contracts as “Sacred Contracts” -- a brilliant terminology. It tells us that the experiences we have are part of a Divine order that we may not be able to see or understand, but that is moving us forward on our evolutionary path. These Sacred Contracts are the prescription we wrote for ourselves in order to fulfill our Divine potential. Dick Sutphen, author of *Soul Agreements*, says that we should “Think of your life as a story you wrote while in spirit, prior to incarnating upon the Earth.” He says that we construct experiences to help us rise above our fear-based emotions, to learn to face life with acceptance, to stay in the present, without judgment and blame.

What about free will under this scenario of pre-natal soul planning? We do have soul or “sacred” contracts that map out the life experiences necessary for our soul's evolution, but we still have free will. There is an internal “plan” that directs our thinking and actions, but through study, prayer, self-awareness, and meditation, we can learn what we need to learn, and move on. Personal responsibility still operates in this paradigm -- we are the directors of our lives -- a refreshing idea when you consider that we live in a victim-



driven culture. Even though we are living the life we set up, the body we ourselves designated, we do have some degree of free will as we live out our contracts. We can change aspects of our lives. We select the circumstances before we come to our “earth school,” and map-out what we hope to achieve, but we still have free will to decide which actions we will take (or not take) to achieve the goals we set for ourselves. Our fate is still in our own hands as we choose to move forward, or not, in the plan that we have set forth for this lifetime.

Now, once you begin to identify, explore and understand your own Soul Contracts, you can clearly see how they have worked in your life. Your repeating patterns start to make sense. The meaning of the events in your life make sense. You can gain a clear understanding of what it is you came to accomplish in this lifetime, what your own destiny is. There is a saying that states: “The two most important days in your life are the day you were born and the day you find out why.” Your Sacred Contract can help to reveal the “why.” This is one of the main reasons that I love Tarot. These images inform us of the archetypal experiences that we are working on in the current phase of our “education” and evolution. They show us a “snapshot” of the themes in our soul agreements.

So perhaps now you have an inkling of why you chose your particular contracts. Think about your life experiences. Imagine what your life would be like if you had not had certain experiences. Whatever difficulty we experience, it is a way for us to learn, or not to learn, from the challenges we face. Soul agreements enable us to understand the spiritual reason for our experiences. When we place our life experiences into the context of the eternal and spiritual, it gives us a sense of power, preventing us from feeling like victims. It helps us to focus, not on the difficulty that is transpiring, but on the larger question of what we can learn from what is happening. That is the key: How can I use this experience to grow and evolve? From this new perspective, we can discover our soul’s plan for this particular “chapter” in the many other chapters in our eternal story. Perhaps today can be an important day in your life. Meditate on the Osho Zen Past Lives Card, or use it in a spread of your choice. Allow the imagery to help you learn the “why” of your life. God Bless you!

References/Recommended Reading:

Sacred Contract: Awakening Your Divine Potential, Carolyn Myss

Soul Agreement, Dick and Tara Sutphen

Your Soul’s Plan: Discovering the Real Meaning of the Life You Planned Before You Were Born, by Robert Schwartz

Journey of Souls: Case Studies of Life Between Lives by Michael Newton

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Card images from the Osho Zen Tarot and the Morgan Greer Tarot



REV. GERALDINE AMARAL is the author of *Tarot Celebrations: Honoring the Inner Voice*, creator of “Tarot 1-2-3,” an instructional video and has been writing for *Pathways Magazine* for 20 years. She fell in love with the Tarot about 30 years ago when she had her first reading and has been using, studying and writing about the Tarot ever since. She utilizes Jungian/archetypal psychology and Divine Metaphysics in her work and is a respected/gifted intuitive counselor and nationally-known teacher. She focuses her work on how to apply the Tarot’s esoteric principles in pragmatic ways as well as for insights and personal transformation. Her classes provide a unique blend of spirituality, psychology, philosophy, humor, literature and personal empowerment methods. She is an ordained minister in the UMC Churches. She can be reached at geraldine@thespiritualtarot.com. You can visit her website www.thespiritualtarot.com.

9 FACES OF STRENGTH

by Charmaine Del-Bianco

What is strength?

How is it perceived?

Where is strength?

Dictionary.com defines the human quality of strength as “the capacity to do, to act, to resist or to endure”.

You are brought to your knees. Everything is ripped away from you. No money, no home, no children, no partner, no parents, no siblings, no friends, no car. No one ever speaks your name. People betray you. People mock you. People are coldly indifferent to you. Poverty. Isolation. Toothless. Group gas-lighting. Nothing left for sure? Wrong. Your life. Your sadness weighs so heavy that you are torn out of your sleep at 4 am with such sharp pain wrecking your heart that you start to say your goodbyes in your mind and think “this is it, I’m going out on my own--even now at this time of my life. Now, life has taken everything from me”.

You believe that as you metamorphose from a child into an adult your Strength increases within your World. No. For me, it was the loss of Strength. Strength was experienced as surrendering, going with the flow and saying “yes” to everyone’s needs, even to strangers. Or, Strength was demonstrated by being overpowered by domination, control, predation, deception and manipulation. To shame. To humiliate. To mock. To control the finances. To deceive by omission so that faulty decisions could result in loss or damage. And to intentionally be unhelpful so that you become weak, isolated, dependent and denigrated.

So what could I do? Turn inward. As I uncovered the

numerology of the Major Arcana by their names, I found these 9 types of personal strengths illustrated in the Major Arcana (RWD) and they are:-

1. Willpower (The Lovers, The Hermit, Wheel of Fortune)
2. Courage (Death)
3. Uprightness (The Chariot)
4. Persuasiveness (The Fool, The Magician, Strength, The Moon)
5. Stability (The Hanged Man, The Star)
6. Attitude (The Empress, Judgement)
7. Humanity (The Hierophant, Justice)
8. Might (The Devil)
9. Moving Forward (The Tower, The Sun, The World, The High Priestess)

I found these prevalent residing strengths by studying the name numerology of each of the Major Arcana cards and this is what I discovered.

Are you ready to come with me on an inner adventure? Let’s go! Then, be open, feel the cards and then come back to me and let me know how this interpretation sat with you.



Willpower

...“*what lies in our power to do, it lies in our power what not to do*”...

Willpower includes Self-Will and a Higher Will. Will Parfitt, (1994, Adaptation of Assagioli's definition of Higher Will) describes our Higher Will as asking us to:

- investigate first
- be deliberate (i.e.: use past experiences to choose among possibilities)
- decide (which action is the best possible one at the time)
- affirm the goal (stay connected to your decision)
- plan (work out how best to achieve the goal)
- execute (direct one's energy through action to meet the goal)

The Tarot cards of the Lovers, The Hermit, The Wheel of Fortune, and Temperance reflect how best to use our

everyday Will and Higher Will.

1. The Lovers

It is time to choose one partner over another. Your Will is called upon to dissolve one relationship to turn to commence another. Leave with your best foot forward, and lead into the future with your best foot forward. Goodwill (Love + Will) is your Strength.

2. The Hermit

Someone has betrayed you. You decide to go it alone. Or, alternatively you decide to turn inward “to see through the dark” to what your instincts and intuition are saying to you. The latter is your Strength.

3. The Wheel of Fortune

“As above, so below” is your key Strength. To click the Wheel of Fortune forward into motion, we imagine (Higher Will) our vision, our change in the world, supporting it with motorized physical action (Self-Will)

4. Temperance

Your Strength is balanced action. Moderate the interaction of physical self with subtle imaginative Higher Will. There could be a need to be economical with Love, Sex, Generosity and Monetary resources. Balance the experiences of solitude with enjoyment of Heart centred groups.

Courage

Dictionary.com defines courage as “the ability to do something that frightens you or to have Strength in the face of pain and grief”...

The Death Tarot card represents the strength of Courage in the Major Arcana

1. Death

The Death card is your Strength.

You made it! The adversity has stopped! Your Strength is to give creative intelligence a second chance. You place your trust and faith in yourself (your Imaginative/Higher Will) and Self-Will to rebuild your courage and life. You reopen yourself to the thought that there is an invisible intelligence revealing itself through coincidences and synchronicities to get you through into the next phase of your life.

Uprightness

Dictionary.com defines uprightiness as “behaviour where you show your trustworthiness, decency and honourableness when you best can”...

1. The Chariot card is the card of Virtue, here.

Do we participate in a love triangle? Do we continue the family karmic warfare pattern between the eldest daughter

and younger sister? Do we continue to allow lust to rule our relationships where you not only learn to hate and disrespect your partner but also hate the person you become with your partner? Do you relocate home and country because you no longer fit your circle of trust and loyalty? This is the challenge of the Black Sphinx (the Deconstructive Road) and the White Sphinx (the Constructive Road) in our life. The key Strength here is choosing harmlessness over harmfulness.

Persuasiveness

Persuasiveness is where you use your speech to inspire or prompt someone into action. The Self-Will action in speech is reflected by these Tarot cards: The Fool, The Magician, Strength, and The Moon.



1. The Fool

Your strength is to inspire others into action via displaying the prompts of your instincts using humour as a playful catalyst.

2. The Magician

There is a descent of inspired creativity. You improve the colour of your vocabulary. Your Strength is becoming a relaxed yet confident communicator.

3. Strength

As you build and express your inner Strengths of love and faith you transform your Lower-Self (Sulphur) into the expression of your Higher-Self (Gold). You become tenacious. You begin a challenging project despite the fear and emotional strain.

4. The Moon

You awaken and connect to your inner world of dreams, intuition and psychic phenomena. Your Strength is intuition.

Stability

The dictionary defines stability to mean “the degree of resistance to change, or, disintegration. And/or, not being prone to wild fluctuations in emotions.” The Tarot cards here are: The Hanged Man and The Star.

1. The Hanged Man

Your Strength is to do “what you think is best to do” with what you know and with what resources you currently have, despite others saying you see things upside down. A healthy sense of independence is being built.

2. The Star

Your Strength is creativity. As peace and calm enters into your heart, the more beauty, peace and calm you produce tangibly and intangibly in your life. You write an article, paint a beautiful painting, or discover Haiku poetry.

Attitude

The Dictionary defines attitude as “a consistent or settled way of thinking and feeling about something” The tarot cards involved here are: The Empress and Judgement.

1. The Empress

The key Strength here is to mother ourselves and others through nurturing habits and activities. We simultaneously apply our instincts (Feelings) and intellect (Logic).

2. Judgement

The key is to turn all your problems over to your Higher Mind (Superconscious) at night before you fall asleep. You may also find yourself to be over emotional and need to work at being more logical and detached in your approach during the day with your decisions.

Humanity

Humanity is defined by “love, kindness and social intelligence”. The Tarot cards her are: The Hierophant and Justice.

1. The Hierophant

Your key Strength here is being humane. You do that by creating your own personal philosophy as to how to give and receive love and kindness

2. Justice

Your Strength here is to remain flexible. The light bulb switches on where you need to make “adjustments” to love, sex, courtship and service.



Might

The Dictionary defines might as “the intensity of energy or power of which one is capable of using and applying to in life”.

1. The Devil

The key Strength is inner knowledge to uncover insight on how to break free from your oppressor and the burdened life you are forced to live.

Moving Forward

The Dictionary defines moving forward as “the conscious deliberate decision to release feelings of vengeance towards a person or a group who has harmed you, regardless of whether they deserve your forgiveness or not”. The Tarot cards here are: The Tower; The Sun, The World and The High Priestess.

1. The Tower

The key Strength is being willing to be open to new ideas so that you can shape and build the next phase of your life.

2. The Sun

The key Strength is feeling “expectant” of good things to come around the corner whether that is gained from the possibilities inherent in your soul, focused discovered philosophy, or the inherited belief of your Ancestors.

3. The World

The Strength here is learning to say “no”. To move forward we need to experience a “no”, a closure of the old in order to embrace the new. Be pragmatic.

4. The High Priestess

The key Strength is to be able to ride out a karmic experience without trying to control or dominate the situation at hand. That is, you respond to provocations but you do not provoke incidents.

It is now the 21st Century. This Century leads with the number 2 which is the call for us to make choices that foster and build human connections and better relationships.

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CHARMAINE DEL-BIANCO is a biddy tarot reader at www.biddytarot.com. Charmaine hopes that whatever small part she has to play she can be part of the movement to enhance our relationships and our lives.

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Humor

SERENA'S TAROT LIGHTBULB JOKE

by Serena Powers

Q: How many Major Arcana does it take to screw in a light bulb?

A: All of them:

- The Fool has already started before anyone else is ready.
- The Magician assembles an array of objects that might be needed, displays them to best advantage and starts discussing how to go about it.
- The High Priestess sits in the background, knowing one thing is missing but says nothing.
- The Empress fusses around making sure it is safe and nobody gets hurt.
- The Emperor tells everyone he thinks it should be done right now and starts delegating responsibilities.

- The Hierophant offers advice on the missing part after consulting with the High Priestess.
- The Lovers umm and ahh about what wattage bulb to put in this time.
- The Chariot charges in and starts doing it himself regardless of the others' protests.
- Strength surreptitiously places what's needed into Chariot's hands and gets it done her way.
- The Hermit suggests a candle in a lamp would provide light in the meantime.
- The Wheel of Fortune laughs and reminds everyone that the light will need changing again in the future.
- Justice works out whose turn it is to change the light and whether the division of labour is being delegated fairly.
- The Hanged Man sits back and contemplates how darkness can change our lives.
- Death points out mournfully that this was bound to happen and how everything ends.
- Temperance tells Death to chill out, it all evens up in the end.
- The Devil tries to blame the Hanged Man for causing the light to blow and creates bad feelings all round.

- The Tower suddenly starts ripping out the original light fitting so he can create a whole new more basic look.
- The Star marvels at new beginnings and says how much she's looking forward to having the light working again.
- The Moon continually offers conflicting advice, confusing everyone until he wanders off to the relief of all.
- The Sun wants to redesign the whole room around a much brighter light.
- Judgement examines the globe to see whether it truly was its time to blow and ponders whether the globe can be recycled.
- The World suggests that any problems with the light are temporary: we had light once, we will have it again, and suggests focussing on the bigger picture.

Meanwhile, the Fool has already finished changing the light bulb and is off doing his own thing.

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Visit her website at www.serenapowers.com

SERENA POWERS is an Australian based tarot reader. She has been studying and using many forms of divination for over thirty years. Her website is www.serenapowers.com

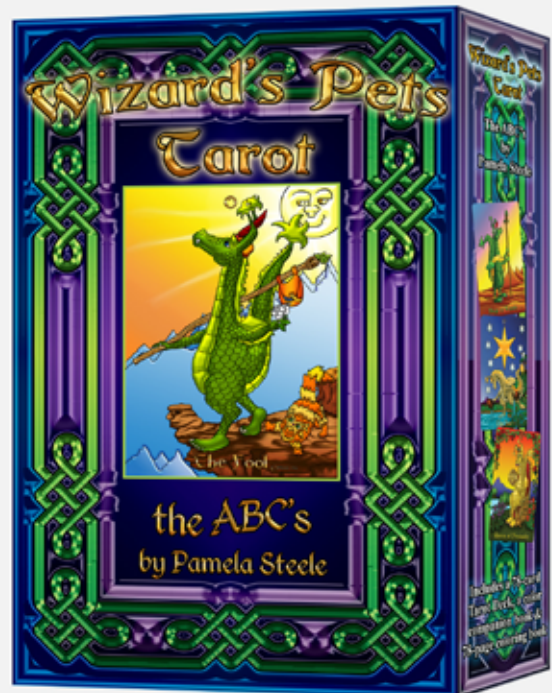
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